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**U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard**



Press Release

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Ceremony to be Held for Discovery of HU-16 Albatross Aircraft Wreck

****Media Availability****

CLEARWATER, Fla. - The public is invited to a memorial ceremony scheduled to be held at Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, today at 1 p.m., honoring six Coast Guard flight-crew members who perished in the Gulf of Mexico during a search and rescue mission in 1967.

Coast Guard Seventh District Commander and "Ancient Albatross" (Senior Aviator), Rear Adm. David W. Kunkel, will preside over the ceremony. Invited guests include family members of the deceased crew, Congressman C.W. Bill Young and representatives from the Foundation for Coast Guard History and the Coast Guard Aviation Association.

Lt. Clifford E. Hanna, Lt.j.g. Charles F. Shaw, Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class Ralph H. Studstill, Aviation Electronics Technician First Class Eckley M. Powlus, Jr., Aviation Electronics Technician Second Class James B. Thompson and Aviation Electronics Technician Third Class Arthur L. Wilson lost their lives on March 5, 1967 while in the service of saving others.

On that night, the 40-foot yacht Flying Fish became disabled and began taking on water. A Coast Guard HU-16E Albatross aircraft, CGNR-1240, was dispatched from Coast Guard Air Station St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, Fla., to assist the vessel. Despite a heavy blanket of fog, the Coast Guard crewmembers located the Flying Fish just before 9 p.m. The aircraft made a low pass over the distressed vessel, dropped a dewatering pump and disappeared into the foggy night. CGNR-1240, with its crew of six Coast Guardsmen, crashed sometime later that evening 22 miles east of Apalachicola, Fla.

An exhaustive search for wreckage and survivors continued for 13 days. All six Coast Guard aircrew members perished and three of their bodies were never recovered.

Michael Barnette, a recreational diver and explorer, is credited with positively identifying the missing aircraft and giving the Coast Guard a precise position of the wreckage. He also provided numerous photographs and documentation for months of research correlating the wreckage to the missing rescue plane.

After receiving notification, the Coast Guard enlisted the Florida State University underwater Crime Scene Investigation dive team to validate the discovery of the aircraft and analyze the condition of the wreckage. While an official report from the FSU team is still pending, the identity of CGNR-1240 was confirmed, and there were no remains or personal effects found. The wreckage is restricted from divers and is being officially designated as a grave site for the three members of the aircrew who were never recovered.

The Foundation for Coast Guard History and the Coast Guard Aviation Association are sponsoring the placement of two bronze plaques to memorialize the crew of CGNR-1240. One will be permanently attached on a marker at the underwater site, and the other will be fixed on a monument at Air Station Clearwater.

For more information on this case, please visit:

<http://www.uwex.us/uscg1240.htm>

****Editor's Note: Media are asked to arrive at Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, located at 15100 Rescue Way in Clearwater, Fla., by 12:30 p.m.****

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The U.S. Coast Guard is a military, maritime, multi-mission service within the Department of Homeland Security dedicated to protecting the safety and security of America.