

RESOLUTION – 12-044

**HONORING THE M.S. NORTHERN SUN'S RESCUE OF THE
TUG "MENOMINEE" SURVIVORS OF MARCH 31, 1942**

WHEREAS, the steam tug **Menominee** was built in 1919 at the Northwestern Engineering Works, Green Bay, Wisconsin for the Southern Transportation Company and was home-ported at Philadelphia, PA. At 441 tons and built sturdy, she set deep in the water and pulled a load of four barges easily through most rough seas; and

WHEREAS, The United States Merchant Marine is the fleet of U.S. civilian-owned merchant vessels operated by either the government or the private sector that engage in commerce or transportation of goods and services in and out of the navigable waters of the United States. The Merchant Marine is an auxiliary to the Navy and can be called upon to deliver troops and supplies for the military during times of war. Merchant mariners move cargo and passengers between nations and within the United States, operate and maintain deep-sea merchant ships, tugboats, barges, ferries, dredges, excursion vessels, and other waterborne craft on the oceans, Great Lakes, rivers, canals, harbors, and waterways of the world. During WW II the Merchant Marine and the vessels they were assigned played a critical role in aiding the United States and her Allies. The Tug **Menominee** received the honor of a call to duty during World War II; and

WHEREAS, during World War II and with their essential cargoes, our nation's ships became primary targets of German U-boats and Japanese Kamikaze aircraft attacks. Along our Atlantic seaboard, it was a virtual shooting gallery for the German Submarine Wolf Packs. As a result, thousands of seamen were killed or wounded, and over 900 ships were sunk. Nearly 10,000 seamen lost their lives and most are resting in Davy Jones' Locker; one in twenty-six made the supreme sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, On 30 March, 1942, the tug **Menominee**, with her tow of three barges; the **Alleghany**, **Barnegat**, and the **Ontario**, set out from Hampton Roads, Virginia at about 12:30pm bound for New York City and Stamford, Connecticut. At 0230 hours on 31 March, 1942, the unarmed tug **Menominee** towing three barges at 4 to 4.5 knots, was attacked by German U-boat U-754 with gunfire about 9.5 miles east-southeast of Metopkin Inlet, Virginia, near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. The U-boat was spotted coming from the port bow and fired three rounds at the tug from about 150 feet. One entered the captains' cabin through a window, destroyed the radio equipment and passed through the starboard bulkhead without exploding. The tug immediately cut loose the barges and tried to escape at 11 knots. The U-boat came along the port side of the barges and fired three or four rounds at each barge, then went up the starboard side and down to port side, again firing as it went. The tug was then chased by U-754 and sank after being hit twice. One of the rounds exploded amidships and caused the ship to sink. All of the crew members were able to abandon ship where seven of the crewmen managed to swim to one of the "Carley" life rafts. Only Captain Haynie, Chief Engineer Bateman and Able Seaman Horton were eventually rescued by the American motor tanker, **Northern Sun**. Unfortunately, Able Seaman Horton died aboard the **Northern Sun**. The men were then transferred to the US Coast Guard Motorboat USCGC CG-4345 near Brown Shoal that later landed at Lewes, Delaware. After sinking the Tug **Menominee**, the U-boat turned its attention to the barges and fired about a dozen more shells, sinking the **Allegheny** and the **Barnegat** and damaged the **Ontario**, which stayed afloat on her load of lumber. The three crewmen from the latter barge had abandoned the vessel and were picked up one mile offshore by the US Coast Guard motor lifeboat USCGC CG-4063 from the Metopkin Inlet Lifeboat Station. In the meantime, the six men from the other two barges boarded the anchored **Ontario** and were taken off by the same motorboat about eleven hours after the attack. All survivors were taken first to the US Coast Guard station at Metopkin Inlet; and

WHEREAS, we honor the seamen of the Tug **Menominee** who performed their duties with honor and distinction : Leslie F. Haynie, Captain; Hershey R. Bateman, Chief Engineer; Johnnie Bateman, Ordinary Seaman; Johnnie Mitchell Bennette, Ordinary Seaman; John (Jasper) Britt, Fireman; Vincente Casquenti, Ordinary Seaman; Vincente Casqueche, Fireman; Haywood Cook, Fireman/Wiper; William Toulson Haynie, Able Seaman; Frank Kitredge Hopkins, Chief Mate; William Lee Horton, Jr, Able Seaman; George Alvin Lawson, Messman; Isaiah Lawson, Cook; James Lovitt, Fireman/Wiper; Edwin Douglas Painter, Oiler; U. S. Army Transport John L. Clem, Oiler; Frank Lewis Riley, Oiler; Henry Robertson, Fireman/Wiper; Tatem Cecil Virginus, 1st Engineer; Susan A. Moran, Oiler; Robert Lee Taylor, Fireman/Wiper; and John Lambert Timbs, 2nd Mate; and

WHEREAS, we honor the seamen of the ship Northern Sun, especially survivors Julius Todd, Sam Price and Aaron Varn whose rescue efforts saved the lives of Leslie F. Haynie, Captain, Hershey R. Bateman, Chief Engineer and William Lee Horton, Jr, Able Seaman . The service of Julius Todd, Sam Price and Aaron Varn and all crew members of the Northern Sun can only be categorized as outstanding and their courageous service stands as an enduring example to those who have laid so costly a sacrifice on the altar of freedom.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY COUNTY COUNCIL IN AND FOR NEW CASTLE COUNTY: that the County Council hereby honors and recognizes the notable dedication, duty and service of the courageous and honorable men and women who served the United States Merchant Marine as seamen and veterans.

Adopted by County Council Of
New Castle County on 03/27/2012

Synopsis: Same as Title
Fiscal Impact: None

President of County Council
of New Castle County