



Lt. Jessica Shafer was offered congratulations as newly installed commander of Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment by outgoing Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Condit.

Photos by Rob Hilson/Chinook Observer

Cape D welcomes first female commander

Shafer was once stationed at lifeboat school

Chinook Observer

ILWACO, Wash. — After 141 years, Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment welcomed its first female commander during a time-honored ceremony Monday morning.

Lt. Jessica Shafer was formally put in charge of the station where she served between 2002 and 2006 with the neighboring National Motor Lifeboat School.

During Monday's traditional ceremony, departing Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Condit transferred command to Shafer, with Capt. Bill Timmons, commander of Sector Columbia River, presiding.

Shafer most recently served as executive officer at Station Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Shafer received her officer commissioning in 2013 after starting her Coast Guard career in 2002 as an enlisted member. Her first assignment out of Training Center Cape May, New Jersey, was at the National Motor Lifeboat School, which partners with Station Cape Disappointment.

During her enlisted career, Shafer earned her coxswain, heavy weather coxswain, tactical coxswain and surfman qualifications, as well as multiple boarding officer certifications.

"Surfman" is among the



Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Condit conducted his last inspection of Cape Disappointment personnel, while newly appointed Lt. Jessica Shafer conducted her first this Monday.



Lt. Jessica Shafer, center, Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Condit and Chaplain Anthony Stallings, right, listened to Capt. William Timmons' opening remarks.

Coast Guard's highest-level qualifications. In 2006, Cape D's Beth Slade was the only woman in the entire active Coast Guard with the rank,

which allows those who have

it to drive boats on search-and-rescue missions in the most dangerous conditions.

As of this March, there were only four active-duty female surfmen.

All Shafer's experience will come in handy at Cape D, one of the nation's busiest maritime search-and-rescue facilities. Operations at the cape and adjacent waters are known as the "Graveyard of the Pacific."

Condit will be reporting to the International Training Division at Training Center Yorktown, Virginia, as the branch chief of the Mobile Training Team.

Condit has been an active member of the local community during his three-year tour of duty in south Pacific County. He was promoted from lieutenant to lieutenant commander in July 2016 while stationed here.



Photos by R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Tara Erben, John Piatt, Bob Keeler and Elaine Trucke at the ribbon-cutting of a new historic marker along U.S. Highway 101 in Arch Cape.

New historical marker celebrates USS Shark

Extraordinary ship lives on

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

ARCH CAPE — The USS Shark was no ordinary ship.

In the mid-19th century, it was a trusted military vessel that fought in combat and navigated the Strait of Magellan and beyond. But it met its match in Oregon with the mighty Columbia River.

"Everything that ship did is so mind-boggling," Elaine Trucke, director of the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum, said. "It went all over the globe, then it thought it could do the Columbia Bar! And it couldn't!"

In an effort to get the Shark off the south spit, the crew chopped down the ship's three masts and jettisoned the cannons. When the ship began to break up, the crew took to lifeboats and all on board were eventually saved.

The ship's captain received information from Native Americans that the three cannons had come ashore south of Tillamook Head. Realizing it would be impossible to retrieve the ship's remains from such a remote location, they made no effort at recovery.

On Friday, volunteers and state officials converged on U.S. Highway 101 just north of the fire station in Arch Cape to celebrate a new interpretive marker dedicated to the shipwreck.

Namesake

The Shark was one of hundreds of ships sunk along the coast, but one of the most notable — and the one that gave Cannon Beach its name. The new marker stands just north of Arch Cape firehouse, where an original marker was installed in the 1980s. The new marker, made of a wood resin, includes historical information, photos and illustrations recounting the ship's story.

Annie Von Domitz, of the Oregon Travel Experience, supervised the renovation of the historic marker, in the style of the state's historical wooden beaver markers. Arch Cape resident John Piatt played a key role in working on the text and drafts, with historical support from Trucke and Jeff Smith, senior curator of the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

The postmortem is as fascinating as the Shark's career in the waters. Long after it ran aground, the search for the ship's three carronades — small, powerful cannons used to fire at ships at near range — became a local obsession.

"For decades, the cannon played peekaboo," Trucke said. One was found in 1896. Two others were discovered a day apart more than a century later, in 2008, revealed by extreme low tides and the natural loss of beach sand due to winter storms.

Piatt recalled: "The sand was way out and a girl and

her dad were out walking and she said, 'This looks like a cannon!' A couple of days later someone found the third cannon right near there."

The restoration of the three carronades became a community project, with the assistance of the Garden Club, the Arch Cape Community Club, Historic Markers Committee, the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum and the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

Funds were raised and the carronades were restored at the marine archaeology department of Texas A&M University before returning to the North Coast. Today, a replica stands at the site of the historic marker. One carronade stands at the history center and two are on exhibit at the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

How did the Shark arrive here? Trucke provided an eloquent recounting of the ship's creation and its ultimate demise.

'Manifest Destiny'

The secretary of the Navy in early 1846 sent the vessel to the Pacific Northwest to join the Pacific squadron. The ship's role was to defend U.S. interests in the Northwest and to spread the concept of "Manifest Destiny" in the Oregon territory when there was doubt about whether it would be British or American land?

President James K. Polk sent the Shark to Oregon in August 1846. The ship, 86 feet long, was designed for speed and maneuverability to navigate the waters of the West Indies.

The Shark's impressive career saw it transport the naturalist James J. Audubon in 1831 to collect research specimens. The Shark was the first U.S. ship to navigate the Strait of Magellan in 1833 en route to Peru.

According to the "Arch Cape Chronicles," by David and Alma English, in the summer of 1846 Lt. Neil N. Howison received orders to carry supplies from Honolulu in readiness to ascend the Columbia River as far as the Willamette. Their reports would assist in formulating a decision on the location of the boundary

between England and the American lands. Americans wanted the board to be 54 degrees, 40 minutes latitude, the reason for Polk's slogan, "54-40 or fight," immortalized in history books.

But due to a lag in communications, crew members were unaware that the U.S. Senate had already ratified a treaty with Britain making the U.S. border the 49th parallel, rendering the journey unnecessary. Some of the ship deserted, but the lieutenant in command was "impatient, naive and somewhat impetuous" in seeking his return south. He attempted to cross the Columbia Bar without a bar pilot. With a sparse crew and bad weather, on Sept. 10, 1846, the Shark was pulled directly toward breakers. While the crew survived, the ship was destroyed.

Jewell approves hiring deputy superintendent

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

JEWELL — The Jewell School Board has approved hiring Stephen Phillips as second in command for the next school year.

Phillips was last deputy superintendent of Beaverton School District, where he resigned after reposting an

anti-immigrant tweet.

The school board voted 3-1 Monday night to approve the one-year contract with Phillips. Board member Brian Meier was the lone vote in opposition, but declined to comment why.

Phillips will be auditioning to replace Superintendent Alice



Stephen Phillips

Hunsaker and Principal Terrence Smyth, who are both retiring at the end of next year. Hunsaker has been with the district since 2013, and Smyth since 2016.

Phillips' contract runs through the end of next school year but can be extended by the March school board meeting. He will

make \$105,000. He will be introduced at the July school board meeting.

The school board also approved a \$5.7 million operating budget, including \$2.5 million for instruction and \$2.8 million in support services. The small K-12 district, located in the Clatsop State Forest, is primarily funded by timber tax revenue.

Oregon court fast-tracks gun control petition

By DIRK VANDERHART
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Backers of a gun control proposal aimed for November's ballot got some unexpected help from the Oregon Supreme Court on Monday.

The proposal, Initiative Petition 44, has less than three weeks to collect and submit more than 88,000 valid signatures. The petition had been tied up after opponents with the National Rifle Association, Oregon Firearms Federation and other groups challenged its ballot language.

No longer. In a surprise move, the Supreme Court

announced it wouldn't entertain those challenges, which it said were "not well taken." The court instead certified the ballot language drafted by the Oregon Department of Justice.

That means supporters can begin collecting signatures immediately. They had been bracing for a weeks-long delay that likely would have doomed their chances of gathering enough signatures by the July 6 deadline.

Shortly after the announcement Monday, backers of IP 44 were still deciding how to react.

"We thank the court for their quick action, affirming

the attorney general correctly titled our measure," said Jake Weigler, a campaign spokesman. "We are disappointed the gun lobby attempted to run out most of the clock to keep voters from considering this measure. We are working quickly to determine if we see a path to qualify it for the ballot."

Dubbed "Oregonians for Safe Gun Storage and Reporting Lost/Stolen Firearms," IP 44 would force gun owners to secure their weapons with trigger locks or other mechanisms when they aren't in use or being carried. Violators of the law could face fines of up to \$2,000 and would be

liable for any injury caused by an unlawfully unlocked weapon, excluding self-defense situations.

The petition is one of two gun-control proposals that could come before Oregon voters in November. The other, IP 43, would place heavy restrictions on military-style semi-automatic weapons and magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

Pro-gun groups have also appealed ballot language for that petition to the Oregon Supreme Court. The court could rule as early as this week.

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