

DERBY CITY SLUGGER CHAPTER

Submitted by MEC Nick Narruhn

At this past year's National Chief Petty Officer Association Convention I had the privilege to be sworn in as the first President of the CPOA's newest Chapter, the Derby City Slugger Chapter. While our name is iconic to the region, the Kentucky Derby and Louisville Slugger factory, our purpose in establishing a Chapter was inspired by the CPOA motto. "In respect for those who have gone before us, and as a guide for those who follow."

Our guide to follow locally is US Life Saving Station #10. Having been installed on the banks of the Ohio River in November of 1881, the station predated the establishment of the Coast Guard as we know it today. As the only inland Life Saving Station, it was located strategically at the most dangerous section of the Ohio River, where the falls of the Ohio became the focal hazard point. Throughout the 35 year presence of Life Saving Station #10, it was estimated that at the time it merged with the Coast Guard in 1915, service members had answered 10,000 alarms, rescued nearly 8,000 people, and saved boats and property worth more than 5 million dollars (estimated to be 13 million in today's dollars).



Living today in the city of Louisville, I am often met with a look of confusion when I share that I am in the Coast Guard. Most people are unaware of the Coast Guard's modern day mission on the Western Rivers and even less aware of its history. As a Chapter, we have learned of the acts of heroism and the hazards the members of Life Saving Station #10 exposed themselves to. It became their actions that our vision statement was formed, "Inspired by our rich history to achieve the possible".

As far too often the case, the stories of those who have gone before us are forgotten in time. In Louisville, the story of Life Saving Station #10, which would become Coast Guard Station # 276 in 1915, is yet another example of the forgotten past. Moreover, the tragic events of June 27, 1916 are not only merely forgotten, but largely unknown in the community of Louisville and the Coast Guard at large.

On that day, as two young men floated down the Ohio River, they were unable to avoid the strong currents and were carried over the falls of the Ohio. That day of Coast Guard history marks the loss of one who has gone before us, Boatman John Munz. In the course of efforts made to save these men, Boatman Munz drowned, and five other members of the crew narrowly escaped his fate. Boatman Munz would become just the 7th member of the Coast Guard to perish while serving and the 1st to do so during an active rescue attempt.

As a Chapter, we are driven by our mission to "Stimulate a culture of community, bringing local representation to active, reserve and retirees at a regional and national level." In efforts to build our community, the Derby City Slugger Chapter is raising funds to honor Boatman Munz with a memorial. Located at the falls of the Ohio, the memorial will recognize his heroic actions and the acts of those that have gone before and after him. As a Chapter it is our hope that this story both inspires you to reflect on the history of our service and to engage in your community, to bring recognition to our Coast Guard history.

To fund the memorial, a John Munz coin is available for purchase through the Derby City Slugger Chapter. Coins will be sold for \$15 and all proceeds from the fundraising will go towards the memorial. Orders can be placed through our Chapters email, derbycityslugger@gmail.com.

