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Lt. Commander Jim Cash, captain of the U. S. Coast Guard's Madrona, welcomes members of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary aboard for what was to be a day's mission at sea until it was abbreviated by the terrorist attack on the United States Tuesday, Sept. 11.

Lake Murray coasties guests aboard Madrona

Thirteen members of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary responded to a special invitation issued by Group Charleston in early September to be guests aboard the Madrona, a buoy tender operating out of the U. S. Coast Guard's Charleston base.

The visit occurred on the morning of Sept. 11, and the planned daylong work cruise was cut short due to the terrorists attack on the twin World Center Towers

in New York and the Pentagon.

Early that morning, prior to the Madrona leaving the Charleston harbor, The Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary members were royally welcomed aboard the vessel by Lt. Commander Jim Cash, the ship's captain.

"I'm really excited having you stay with us," he said. "Unfortunately, it's not often that we have auxiliaries aboard."

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You're going to see today some outstanding seamanship, ship handling and navigation skills, which are some of the best in the fleet, and I say this because the buoy centers are really the unsung heroes in the Coast Guard. We don't get the press, we don't get the glory, we just go out and get the job done."

He explained that the focus of his crew is on safety and sound seamanship. "You'll see us put buoys next to places that other mariners don't like to go," he said. "That's our job, to get to those spots and mark them so that the mariners can safely travel our waters."

He encouraged the auxiliary guests to walk around the ship and talk to other crew members.

"They like to tell their story, they're never asked," he said. "They're out there every day doing this mission and it's a very fulfilling one. We're able to go out and look at all the commerce we're helping to come in and support the United States.

During the abbreviated cruise, members of the Lake Murray Coast Guard learned that the Madrona is responsible for the inspection and maintenance of 356 buoys and fixed structures along the South Carolina and Georgia coastlines, including the ports of Charleston, Savannah, Georgetown and Brunswick, as well as the Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the eastern part of Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands.

The Madrona is a seagoing buoy tender whose design can be traced to the pre-World War II Light House Service tenders. The original



Ron Tvorik (center) and Jim Fleming (right), members of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary, talk with Coast Guard Ensign Griffin aboard the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Madrona. Tvorik and Fleming had been leaders in arranging for Flotilla 12-3 members to be guests aboard this 58-year-old buoy tender.

design was modified to provide an armed cutter capable of wartime missions in addition to her primary mission of maintaining aids to navigation. Madrona was built in 1943 by Zenith Dredge Company of Duluth, Minn.

Upon commission, she was assigned the homeport of Miami, Fla. In addition to performing convoy duty during World War II, Madrona was actively involved in the installation of numerous new aids to navigation throughout the Southeast U.S. and the Caribbean Sea.

In April of 1984, Madrona entered the Coast Guard Ship Yard at Curtis

Bay, Md., to undergo a major renovation. In September of 1989, she was returned to service, this time to her current homeport of Charleston.

In addition to aids to navigation, missions include search and rescue, law enforcement, military readiness, environment protection and domestic icebreaking.

Members of Flotilla 12-3 of Lake Murray aboard the cruise were: Kent and Dale McCain, Stephen Pstrak, Lee Olson, Ron Tvorik, Al Morgan, Joe Richbourg, Richard Lesneski, Charles Armstrong, Mark Williams, Ryan Dunbar, Jim Fleming and Ollie Moyer.