

The “Honorable and Ancient” Cutter Bear: A History

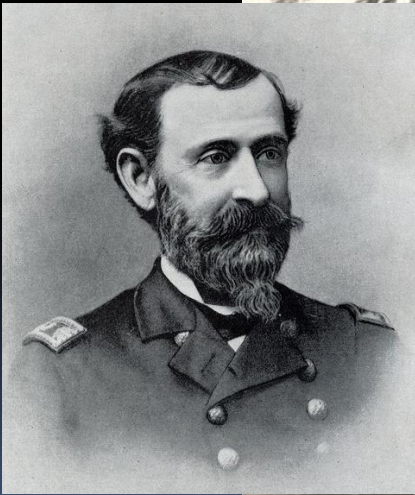


Bear's Design & Construction



Early image of the cutter *Bear*

The Greely Relief Expedition



Officers of the Greely Relief Expedition, with Lt. Greely, five survivors, Capt. W.S. Schley and engineer and Arctic explorer George Melville

Michael Augustine Healy

- **1st African-American officer in U.S. history**
- **Commander of Cutter *Corwin* and then *Bear***

"When I am in charge of a vessel, I always command; nobody commands but me. I take all the responsibility, all the risks, all the hardships that my office would call upon me to take. I do not steer by any man's compass but my own."

Captain Michael Healy



An 1880 photo of Michael A. Healy. The earliest known image of him in uniform.

Bering Sea Patrol

*"Hear the rattle of the windlass as
our anchor comes aweigh;*

*We are bound to old Point Barrow,
and we make our start today;*

*Keep a tight hold on your dinner,
for outside the South Wind blows;*

*And unless you're a sailor, you'll
be throwing up your toes."*

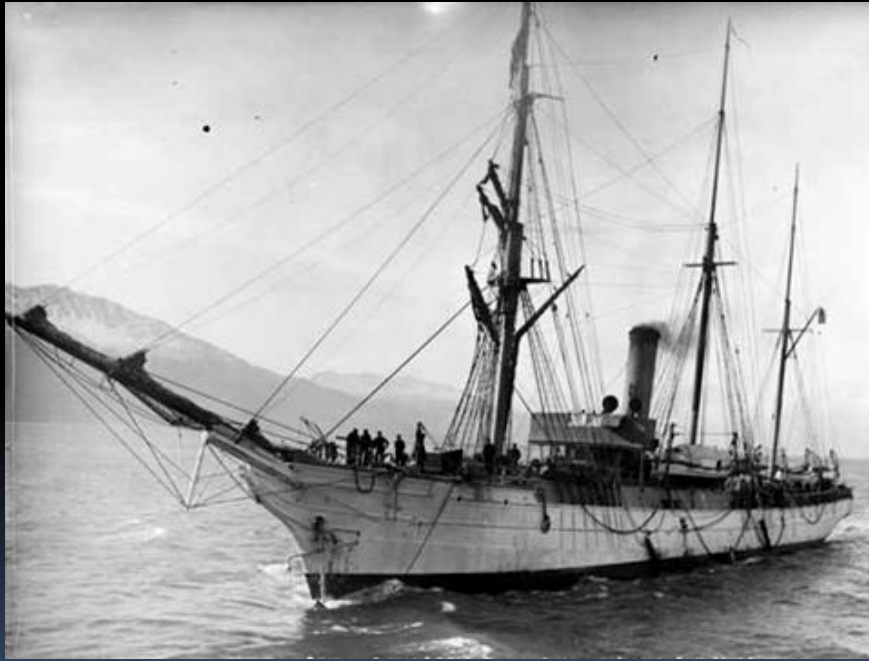
Anonymous Bering Sea veteran



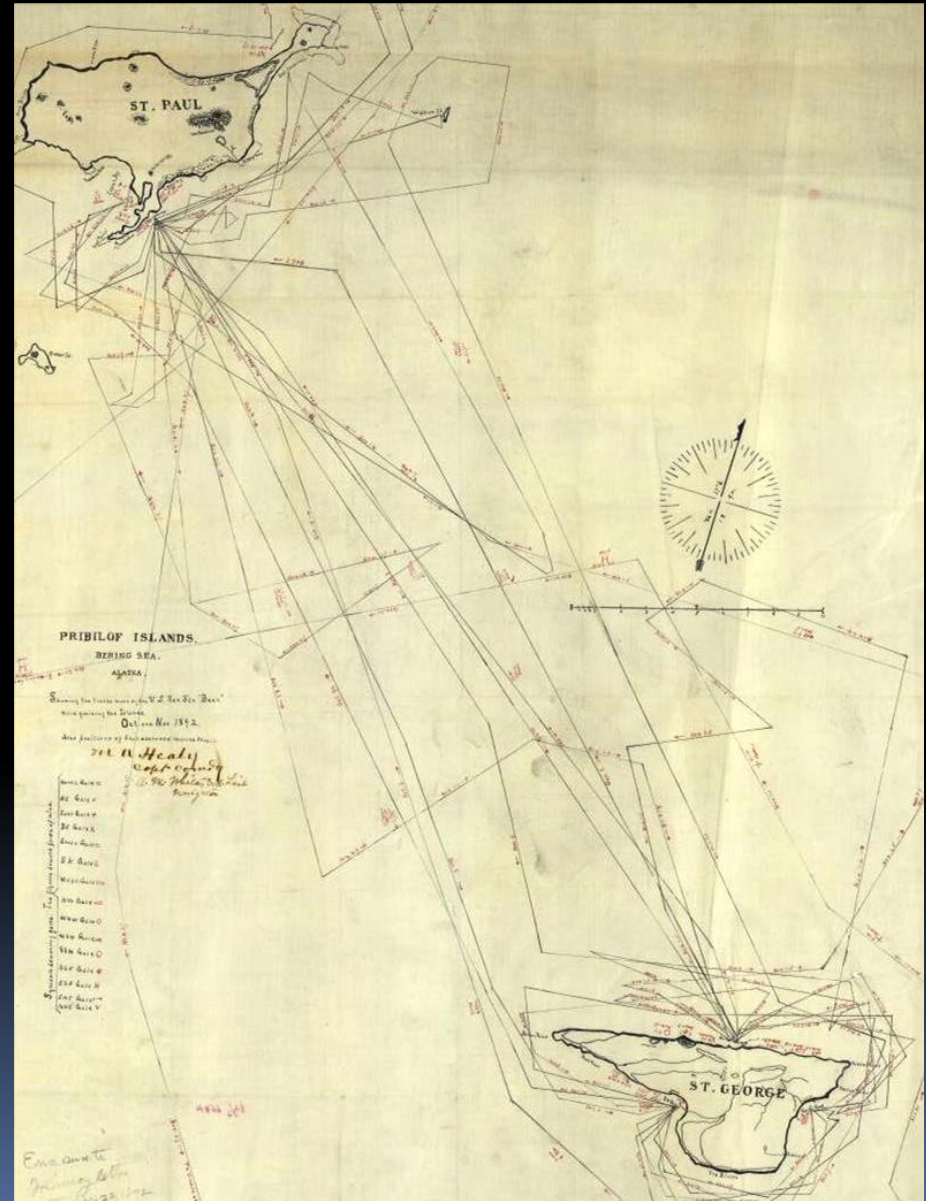
Bear on Bering Sea Patrol

Law Enforcement in Alaska

**1892 chart showing
Bear's Pribilof Island
patrols, signed by Capt
Healy and navigator**



**Bear arriving at Valdez, Alaska,
with captured Japanese seal
poachers**



Reindeer from Siberia



The 1892 transfer of Siberian reindeer by Cutter *Bear* under the command of Captain Michael Healy

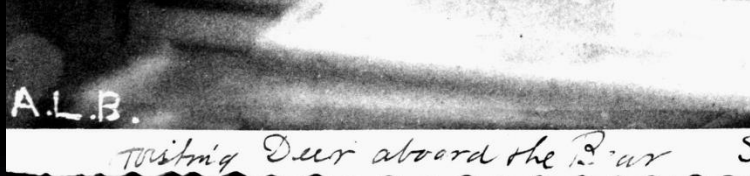
"The introduction of deer seems to be the solution of three vital questions of existence in this country—food, clothing and transportation."

Captain Michael Healy

Reindeer to Alaska



An overexposed 1891 photo showing *Bear* crew members loading reindeer on board the cutter



1892 photo showing crew unloading reindeer on shore at Port Clarence



by Sheldon Jackson landing the first Reindeer of the Herd at Port Clarence! July 4th 1892.

Bear's *Humanitarian Missions*

- Native communities
- Whalers
- Seafaring people



Stranded whalers saved by *Bear*

Native Inuits rescued by *Bear*

"In assisting private persons, neither class, race, nor creed made any difference to the Bear; degree of stress was the sole controlling factor."

Captain Stephen H. Evans

Bear as Federal Interagency Vessel

- No roads or railroads
- *Bear* served in many ways



***Bear's* smallboat supporting a US Coast and Geodetic Survey magnetic observation team**



On the Siberian coast, *Bear* supported a US Coast and Geodetic Survey team, including a four-legged team member

“Hell-Roarin” Mike Healy

- **Court-martialed then reinstated**
- **Retired as the third-most senior officer**

“to stand for forty hours on the bridge of the Bear, wet, cold and hungry, hemmed in by impenetrable masses of fog, tortured by uncertainty, and the good ship plunging and contending with ice seas in an unknown ocean.”

Captain Michael Healy



“Hell-Roarin” Mike Healy and an avian shipmate

The 1897 Overland Expedition

- Whalers trapped near Point Barrow
- Appeals to the President
- *Bear* sails north



***Bear* officers, including Lt. Ellsworth Bertholf, Capt. Francis Tuttle, Lt. David Jarvis and Surgeon S.J. Call**

Rescue at Point Barrow

- Rescue party put ashore
- 16 December- Expedition begins
- Dog /reindeer sled teams

Overland Expedition approaches whalers trapped in the Arctic ice



"Though the mercury was -30 degrees, I was wet through with perspiration from the violence of the work. Our sleds were racked and broken, our dogs played out, and we ourselves scarcely able to move, when we finally reached the cape. . . .

Lt. David H. Jarvis

Bertholf, Call and Jarvis

- Point Barrow-March 1898
- Three months
- 1,500 Miles
- Congressional Gold Medal



Bertholf, Call and Jarvis

Congressional Gold Medal specially struck for Lt. David H. Jarvis

Bear and the Alaskan Gold Rush



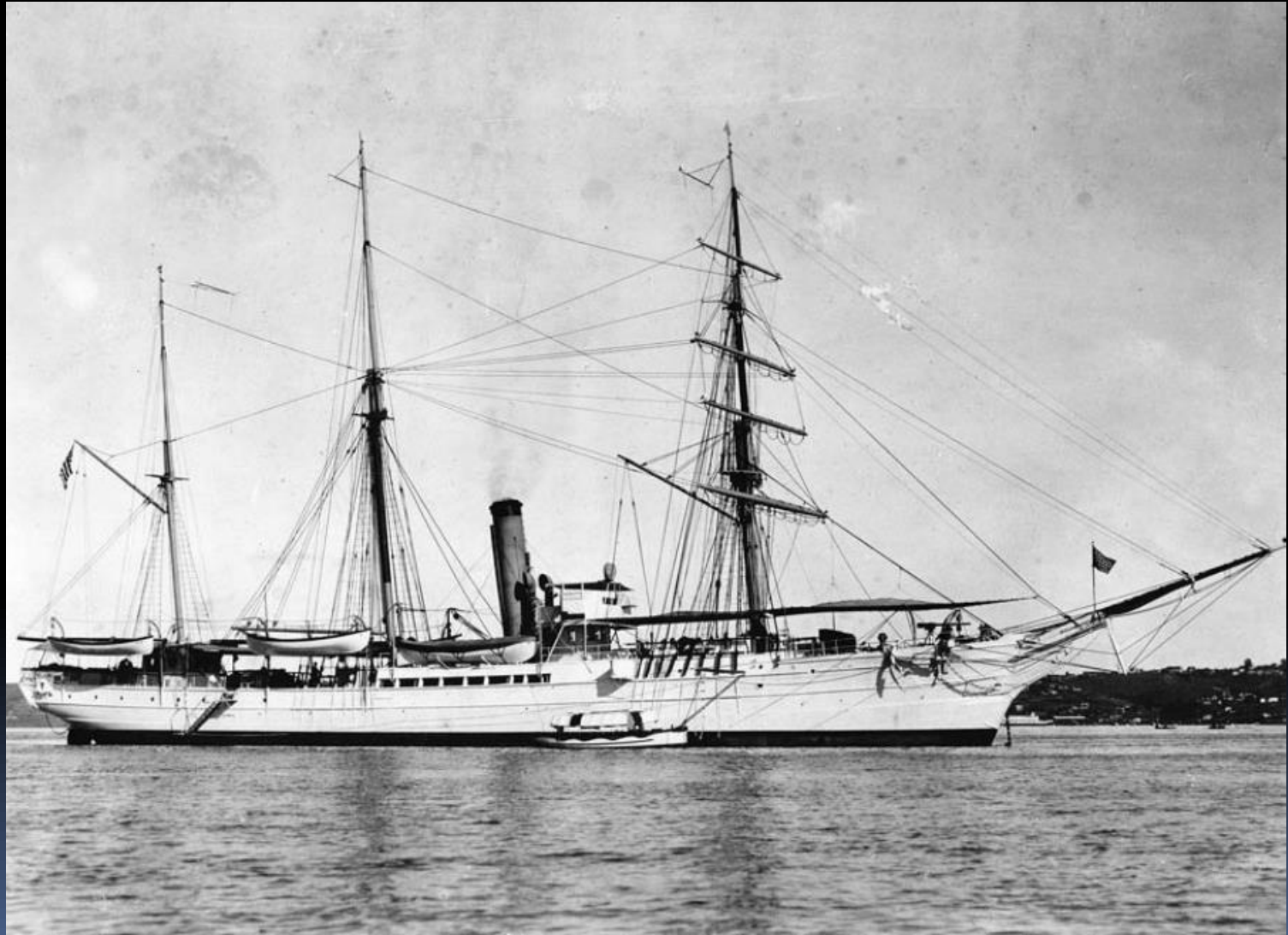
Summer housing near Nome, Alaska, for gold miners and prospectors

1906 Earthquake in San Francisco



Aftermath of the 1906 earthquake

Wartime Service, 1898-1919



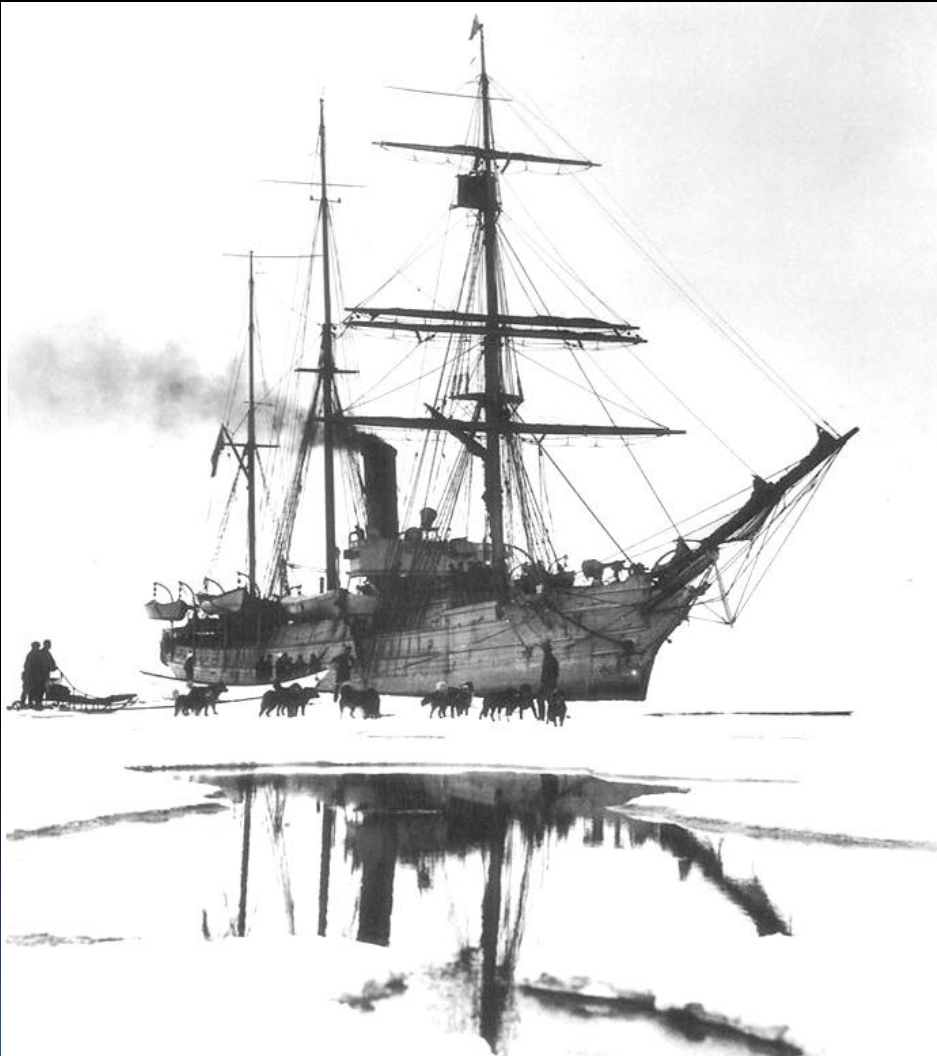
Bear shown in the early 20th century mounting a forward battery

SS Bear of Oakland



SS Bear of Oakland in dry dock

Bear with Admiral Byrd in Antarctica



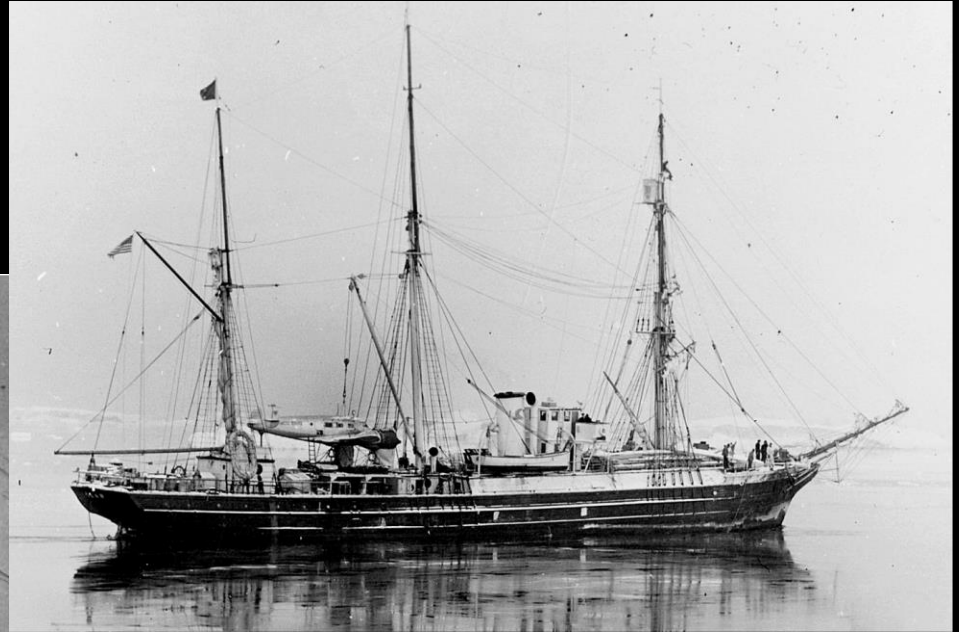
Bear in the Antarctic ice



**Polar explorer Richard Byrd
and a furry friend**

Bear with the U.S. Antarctic Service

***Bear with diesel powerplant
and float plane housed on
board***



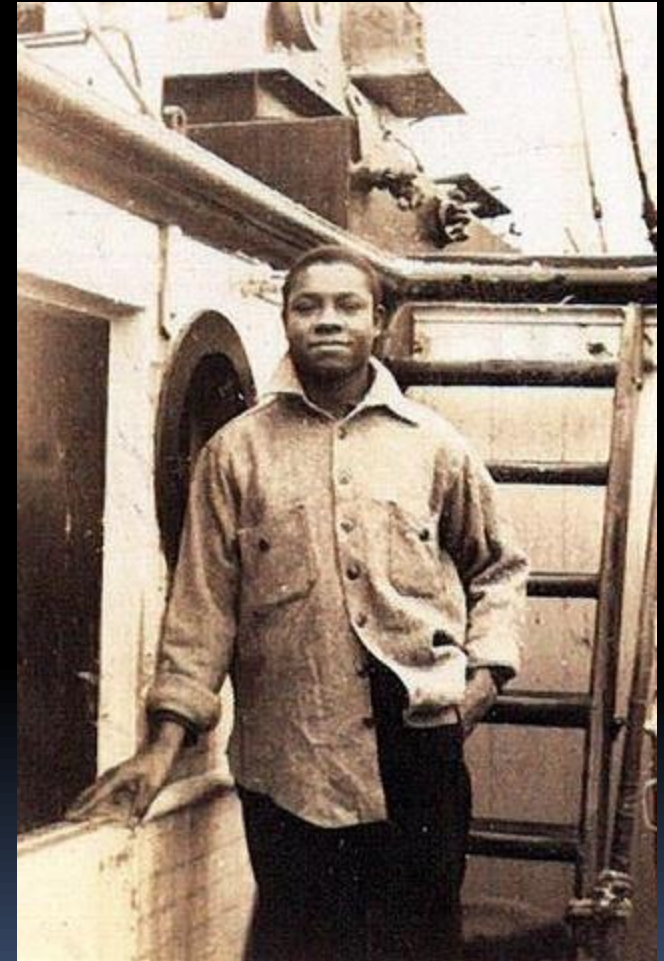
***Bear at West Base,
Antarctica, in January
1941, with a dog team
and supplies in the
foreground***

Ethnic and Racial Diversity on the Bear

- ***Bear*** serves diverse populations during its lengthy career
- ***Bear's*** crew is also diverse



Bear enlisted Asian-Pacific Island personnel for food service ratings



George Gibbs, Jr., first African American to set foot on Antarctica

World War II's Greenland Patrol



The cryolite mine at Ivigtut, Greenland

"Do a little of everything—the Coast Guard is used to that."

Orders to Greenland Command,
Chief of Naval Operations



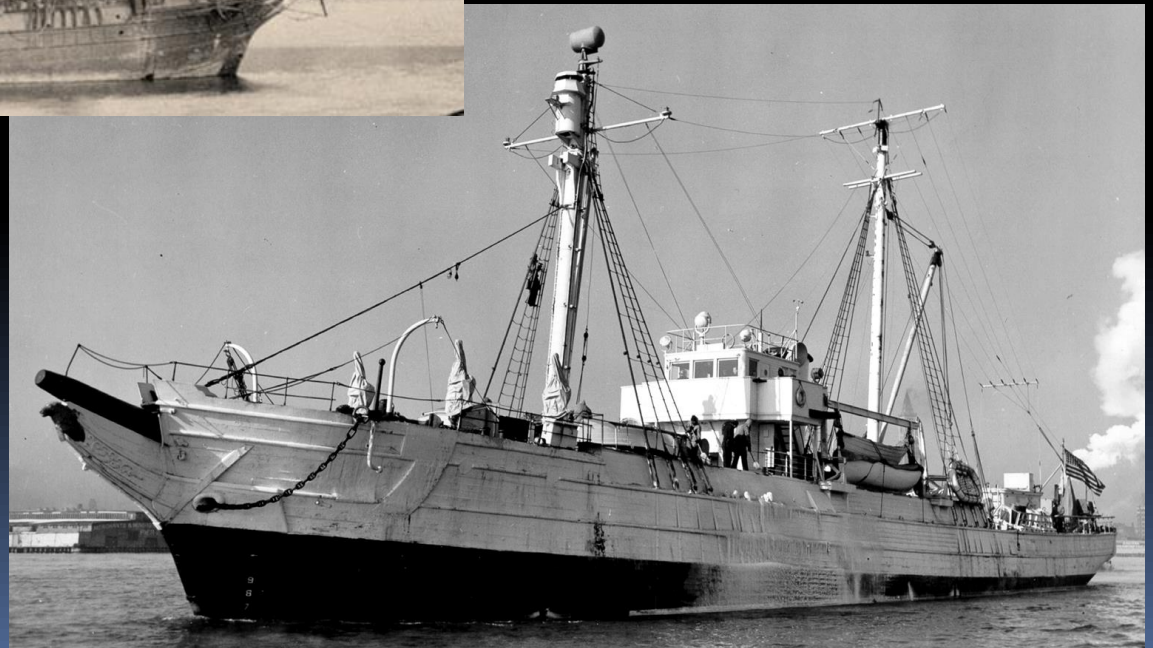
Dr./Capt. Edward H. "Iceberg" Smith during his command of the Greenland Patrol

Bear Returns to Greenland



USS *Bear* in Greenland in 1884 as part of the Greely Relief Expedition

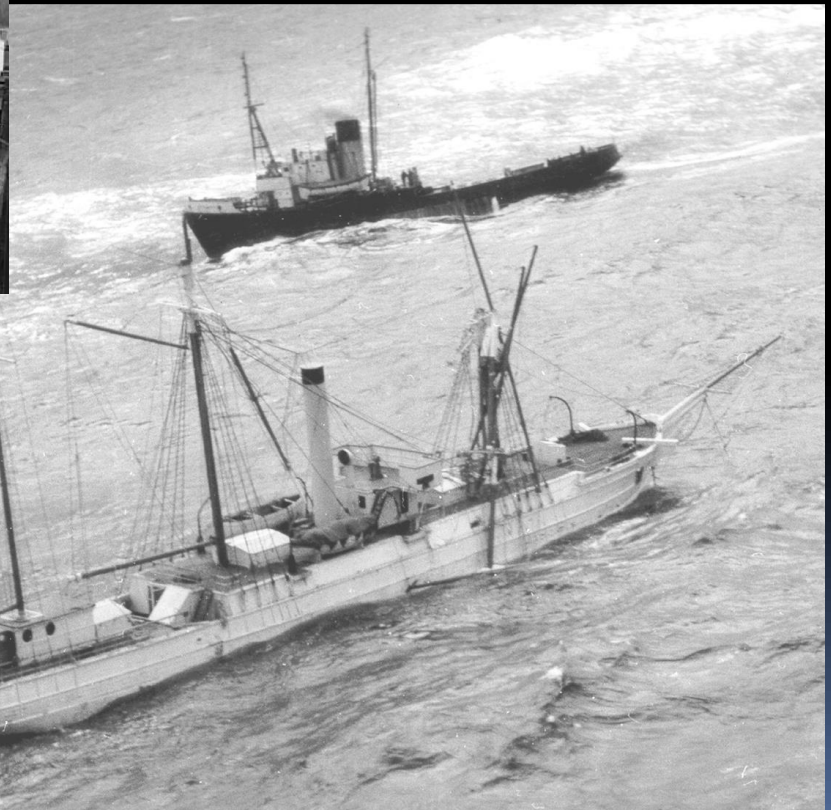
USS *Bear* (AG-29) in Greenland in 1944 as part of the Greenland Patrol



End of the Bear Story?



***Bear* in 1960 at a dock in Halifax with mast, smoke stack and diesel engine removed**



Last known photograph of the *Bear* before she sank in March 1963

Search for the Bear

- **Multidisciplinary Cadet Project:**
- **“THE SEARCH FOR THE UNITED STATES REVENUE CUTTER BEAR”**

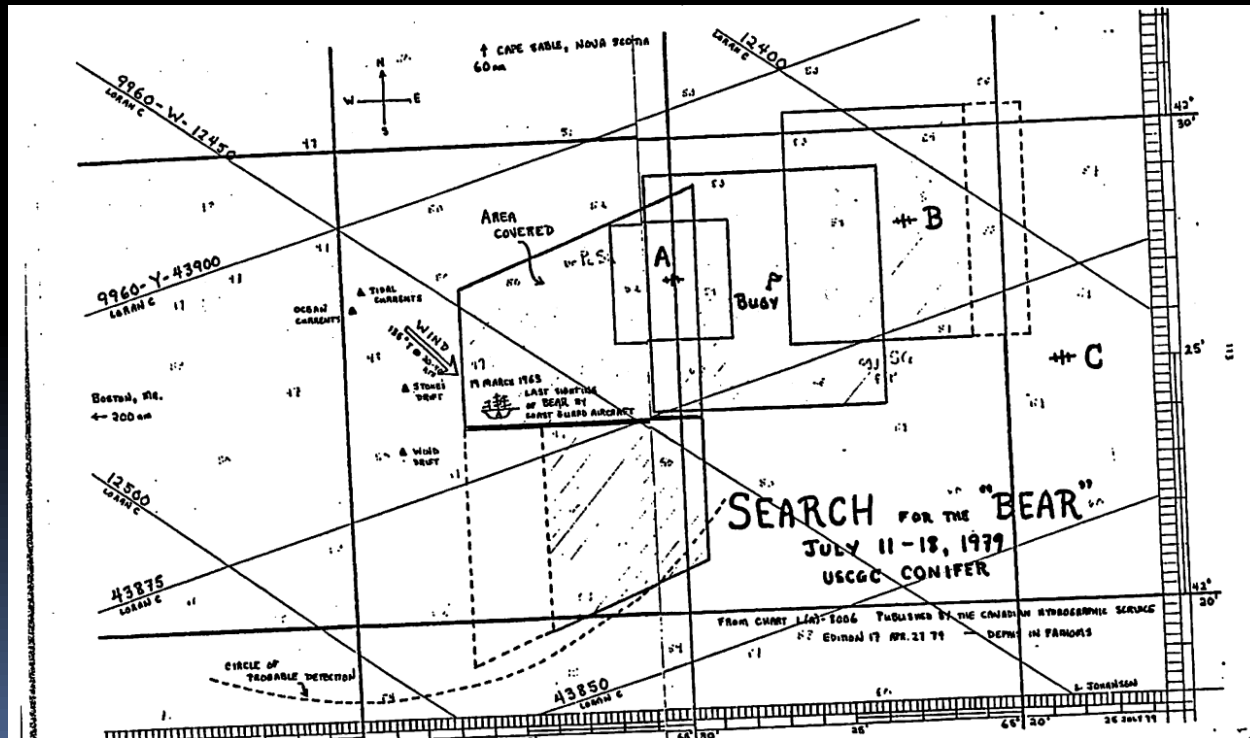
Project Highlights

- **Use of Side-Scan Sonar and the new LORAN-C navigation systems**
- **Utilization of videotape documentation**
- **1st-hand accounts from the USCG SAR pilots and skipper of tug IRVING BIRCH**
- **Documentation of facts related to the BEAR’s sinking**



1979 M.I.T. and C.G. Academy Search

- The team did not report on the actual area searched
- The team's report did not include the SSS results
- No known post-cruise analysis was done on the SSS results



Planned search area for 1979 MIT and CG Academy search project.

Deep Sea Submersible NR-1, 2007-2008

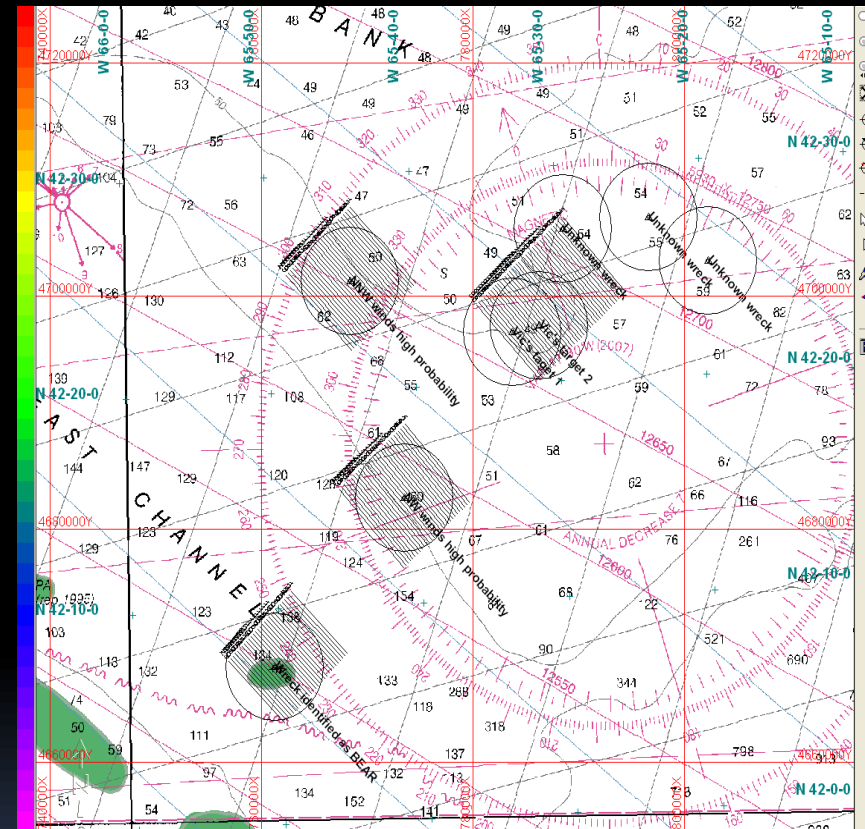
- Excellent job preserving written documents, proposals, research
- Imagery very difficult to obtain
 - Four months to locate and talk to NR-1 Commanding Officer
 - Ship's logs destroyed
 - Data passed to USCG



Current Search Effort:

US Revenue Cutter BEAR Search Team

- **Joint NOAA/USCG Team with other partners**
- **Quarterly meetings**
- **NOAA engagement:**
 - **Office of Marine and Aviation Operations**
 - **Office of Coast Survey**
 - **Ocean Exploration and Research**
 - **National Marine Sanctuaries Program**



Current Focus

- **Locate & catalog BEAR artifacts**
 - **Gather and preserve data**
 - **Conduct Surveys**
- **Find, explore, special area designation**

Bear's Historic Missions

- **Search & Rescue**
- **Ice Operations**
- **Law Enforcement**
- **Environmental Protection**
- **Humanitarian Relief**
- **Polar Research and Exploration**
- **Maritime Defense**



***Bear* breaking ice for a stranded vessel**

“USS,” “USRCs,” CGC,” “SS,” “R/V” **Bear**

*“Too bad she can’t
talk.
She’d tell some yarns.
There’s one in every
timber she’s got.
If you put ‘em all
together
landlubbers’d call it a
fairy tale.”*

Bering Sea Veteran



The Bear



Cutter Bear in her accustomed element, ice!