



Captain David Porter Dobbins may best be remembered for the lifeboat that bore his name, shown here with a crew of proud surfmen. (The U.S. Life-Saving Service: Heroes, Rescues and Architecture of the Early Coast Guard, copyright Ralph and Lisa Shanks. Used with permission).

COAST GUARD ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CAPTAIN DAVID P. DOBBINS SAR AWARD NAMED IN HONOR OF FIRST NINTH DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

The Coast Guard made the following announcement on January 7, 2007:

“For the past several years, the Ninth District’s Search and Rescue program has presented “SAR Team 9” awards to units and personnel who have distinguished themselves in the prosecution of noteworthy SAR cases. This award program has been a tremendous success in recognizing SAR excellence and in inspiring future diligence in execution of the SAR mission. In an effort to implement the district commander’s guiding principle of embracing Coast Guard history from message one and more closely link today’s outstanding SAR efforts with our heritage as a lifesaving service, CGD Nine is re-designating the SAR Team 9 Award as the Captain David P. Dobbins Award for SAR Excellence.

“The Captain David P. Dobbins Award will be presented in recognition of outstanding action, judgment, persistence and professionalism while prosecuting SAR missions on the Great Lakes. It links the performance of today to the heritage of Captain Dobbins, named first superintendent of the U.S. Life-Saving Service’s Ninth District in 1876. Captain Dobbins, a native of Erie, Pennsylvania, and a schooner master, distinguished himself operationally in many rescues, most notably the

schooner *Oneida* in 1853 and the schooner *Comet* in 1860, predating even the official establishment of the Life-Saving Service. Interested in the problems of early rescue craft and of performing arduous rescue duties on the Great Lakes, Captain Dobbins developed an innovative new lifeboat that was self-righting, self-bailing, and less than half the weight of earlier lifeboats, which was critical for his crews’ rowing. The Dobbins lifeboat was also quicker, more maneuverable, cost less than half of many prevailing designs of the times, and elements of his designs remain incorporated into today’s modern rescue craft. He also brought the first uniforms and many standardized procedures to the Great Lakes region, laying groundwork for our present-day SAR system. Captain Dobbins’ heritage lives on through today’s SAR professionals throughout the Ninth Coast Guard District.

“CGD Nine units may submit recommendations for the Captain David P. Dobbins Awards to CGD Nine. Suitable Recommendations are SAR cases that are not anticipated to be recognized through the CG medals and awards system, but rise well above routine SAR cases. Nominations may be for CG active duty, civilian, auxiliary, or reserve entities, as well as other agencies and good samaritans. Examples, although not all inclusive, include:

- A. Persons located in the water or on ice recovered alive in noteworthy circumstances (cold water, offshore, from vessel taking on water, aircraft, etc.);
- B. Persons located alive after extensive searching (beyond precomms/excomms stage);
- C. Search planning involving unusual circumstances or extensive investigative work;
- D. Otherwise routine cases conducted in extraordinary circumstances (extremely poor weather, etc.).