

Wreath-laying to commemorate Titanic tragedy

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Tim Cook/The Day

Capt. Kyle Fauntleroy, right, senior chaplain at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, dedicates wreaths that will be used in commemorating the 99th anniversary of the sinking of the R MS Titanic by members of the International Ice Patrol outside the IIP offices in New London Wednesday. The IIP will deploy the wreaths over the final resting place of the Titanic, which that sank on April 15, 1912, taking with it the lives of more than 1,500 passengers and crew.

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New London - In a moment of silence outside their offices Wednesday, the members of the U.S. Coast Guard International Ice Patrol reflected on the sinking of the RMS Titanic 99 years ago and the importance of their mission.

The Ice Patrol dedicated three wreaths that will be dropped near where the Titanic sank during an iceberg reconnaissance flight close to the date of the disaster. Lt. Cmdr. Gabrielle McGrath, deputy commander of the unit, read the words that the aircraft commander will say when the wreaths are dropped.

"It is with great respect and reverence that we commemorate the 99th anniversary of the sinking of the RMS Titanic on April 15, 1912," she said. "We remember over 1,500 souls who perished on that fateful morning."

The Titanic's maiden voyage ended tragically in the late evening of April 14, 1912, when the ship struck an iceberg.

It took less than four hours for it to sink, and more than 1,500 of the 2,200-plus passengers died in the North Atlantic.

The annual wreath drop serves as a way to remember and honor those who died. In the brief ceremony outside the unit's New London offices, Chaplain Kyle Fauntleroy dedicated the wreaths.

Five Ice Patrol members left Wednesday for the deployment, the third of the ice season.

In response to the Titanic disaster, the world's major maritime powers convened the first meeting of the International Conference on the Safety of Life at Sea in London in 1913. The conference helped lay the groundwork for the International Ice Patrol.

With the exception of World Wars I and II, the IIP has routinely

patrolled
the shipping lanes to protect lives, ships and commerce traveling
between Europe and North America.
Plans are under way for commemorating the centennial anniversary
of the Titanic's sinking next year.