



Jimmie Hobaugh

December 23, 1935 - December 4, 2014

Jimmie Harris Hobaugh, age 78, of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan passed away after a valiant battle with cancer on Thursday, December 4, 2014 in his home, surrounded by loved ones. Jimmie was born on December 23, 1935 in Noble, Oklahoma to Charles and Lottie Hobaugh. He would often remark, with tongue in cheek, "I'm just a red dirt farm boy..." He graduated from Noble High School in 1953. After high school, he took some classes at the University of Oklahoma when he met his future bride while flipping burgers at the student union. He proposed on their first date, and he married Virginia Mae Smith in May of 1954. He then joined the United States Coast Guard as a Seaman Recruit. He worked his way up through the ranks to Chief Boatswain's Mate. In 1963 he was a member of the honor guard for President John F. Kennedy's funeral. He attended Officer's Candidate School and worked his way upward from Ensign to Captain. He was stationed on shore and on ships on the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, Lake Erie, and Lake Superior in all sea conditions. It was during his time as captain of the Woodrush, a buoy tender based in Duluth, that he made his mark in Lake Superior history. During that fateful storm in November of 1975, he and his crew risked their lives to search for survivors and wreckage of the Edmund Fitzgerald. Later he would return with the Woodrush to survey the underwater wreckage. He was often called for interviews and speaking engagements about his experiences with Fitzgerald. He retired from the Coast Guard after 37 years of service in 1991, and he and Virginia chose to stay in Sault Ste. Marie rather than move back to

Oklahoma because they loved the area and the people. He worked as executive director for Le Sault de Ste. Marie Historic Sites for several years. Jimmie also found purpose in serving others through many community groups. He was a member of Bethel Lodge #358 F. & A.M., a Royal Arch Mason, a Knights Templar, a member of the St. Bonaventure Conclave of the Red Cross of Constantine, the Upper Michigan York Rite College #40, and the Michigan College Societas Rosicruciana. He earned the special rank of 33rd Degree Mason. In addition, he was a member of the Scottish Rite, past Potentate of Ahmed Temple in Marquette, a member of the Hillbillies and the Jesters, and a past president of the Sault Shrine Club, currently the treasurer. He was the treasurer for the Queen of the North Chapter #8, Order of the Eastern Star. He was also the past president of the Rotary Club of Sault Ste. Marie, past Trustee of the Elks, member of the Hiawathaland Law Enforcement Officers Association, the Soo Pilots Association, and served on the Sault Ste. Marie Airport Board stemming from his past as a private pilot. Jimmie was honored to give back to this community and its people. Jimmie loved his ever-growing family. Though scattered throughout the country and beyond its borders, he proudly bragged about each of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He had a way of making all of them feel like they were his favorite, and somehow they all were. He also had an extended "family" of people he met, befriended, and encouraged wherever he went. He was fond of distributing small laminated cards with a copy of "Desiderata" on one side and "The Man in the Glass" on the other side. He inspired many with his integrity, his tenacity, his sharp, quick wit, and his encouraging pep talks. He lived his whole life as an example to prove what he often told others, "Follow your dreams, and never give up." Jimmie is survived by his wife of 60 years, Virginia Mae (Smith) Hobaugh; his daughters, Terri (Marty) Wolski of Sault Ste. Marie, Charlotte Gentry (fiancé Kevin Brosemer) of Tennessee, Kathy (Mike) Capron of Maryland; his son, Charlie (Cori) Hobaugh of Texas; 15 grandchildren, Mandy Browning, Beth (Mike) Mugavero, Anna (Vincent) Vlaminck, Emily (Nick) Partaka, Tessa Browning,

Nathan (Megan) Gentry, Ben Gentry, Jake Gentry, Philip Gentry, Alison Capron, Ryan Capron, Nick (Catherine Lanae) Hobaugh, Stephanie (Matt) Hill, Rachel Hobaugh, Dustin Hobaugh; and 3 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his father, Charles Ervin Hobaugh; his mother, Lottie Mae (Harris) Hobaugh; his brother, Billy Ray Hobaugh; and his sister, Dolores Jean (Hobaugh) Butler. Jimmie would have also liked to express heartfelt appreciation to the doctors and nurses who cared for him in his last months of life, as well as to his many friends and well-wishers. His was truly a very full life, well-led. An open house gathering will be held from 1:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 13, 2014 at C.S. Mulder Funeral Home. Immediately following the gathering a memorial service will be held with the Masons officiating. Condolences may be left online at www.csmulder.com. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Shriners Hospital for Children - Chicago.

Tribute Wall

GC

“ Served as his XO on the CGC Fir. My condolences to Virginia, a wonderful woman.

Gary Calverase - April 11, 2025 at 04:56 PM

SC

“ I was a young Coastguardsman who served under then Commander Hobaugh at Coast Guard Station Duluth in 1973 an 1974. Saw him once at the museum in Sault Saint Marie. Had the utmost respect for him. I've sought for years the find out what happened to him. Thank you for putting my mind to rest. Dr. Carlson

Scott Carlson - June 09, 2023 at 12:00 AM

GH

“ Captain Hobaugh has my complete respect, he was a good brave man and a great Captain with total sense of duty!

Gregory Hunt - March 09, 2023 at 12:00 AM

HT

“ Movie have me courage to peruse my own dreams of becoming an artist. I will never forget our shared experience about the woody searching for the fitz.RIP sir!

Howard Trout - April 09, 2018 at 12:00 AM

RH

“ I was fortunate to serve with Mr. Hobaugh at Group Duluth, before he was in command of the Woodrush. As liaison between the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, I enjoyed his leadership and as driver when various Admirals visited Duluth, I appreciated his wisdom about life. My heart felt condolences to his family.

Rick Hulme - February 16, 2017 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ I had the honor to serve under Captain Hobaugh's last command at Group (Sector) Saulte standing watch in Soo Control (88-90). He was a man of great physical stature who through his nautical experience and professionalism gave you the confidence to achieve and upright the ship when the occasion arrived. Fair winds and following seas Captain Jimmie Hobaugh.

Craig Morris - November 11, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MU

“ Sorry for your loss Mrs Hobaugh and family. Although it has been years I think of Mr Hobaugh often. The one time I knew I had become a man was an afternoon on Jade when he helped Russ and I put up the fence in the backyard. After a hard days work Mr. Hobaugh told me he was impressed by how hard I had worked that day and to keep it up. Coming from him that meant everything. While growing up through school I remember talking to him about the Coast Guard and remember him explaining to me what a "Mustang" was. While I enlisted in the Air Force, I never forgot the "Mustang" and walked that path myself. Sir, thanks for inspiring me to work hard and be a good man. From one Mustang to the other I render my final salute. God Speed Mr Hobaugh.

Major Patrick S. Nobles, USAF - January 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

C(

“ I served with CAPT Hobough in TANEY from '80-'82. Some of the most formative years for me as a young Mustang LTJG & LT. We shared being former Boatswain's Mates, Honor Guard (he was in it when it was formed at the CG Yard before they moved to Alexandria), the last European Cadet Cruise, Night Orders written in calligraphy & sayings I still use today, and a love of TANEY's history. I used to spin him up by wearing my Coxswain's pin... since he left the enlisted ranks before the device was authorized. Intro'd him to "white hull" Maritime Law Enforcement, multiple drug busts (including multiple Courts Martial of crew members for stealing & dealing drugs from one of those busts!). From picking him up in Roosevelt Roads PR and his change of command in GITMO, to his departure two years later it was quite a time. One of his best quotes: "You know, Dick, for all those years I watched those in leadership above me and I swore when *I* got there, I wouldn't make the same mistakes. Well, I'm here now (in his 5th command afloat), and I DON'T make those mistakes... I make all the OTHER mistakes!!" His support & encouragement left a huge imprint on my 27-year USCG career (& following!)
Thank you, Jimmie & Virginia - for lessons learned, for passion, a love of tradition, and doing your best to take care of your crew and their families.

CDR Dick At Lee, USCG (Ret) - January 15, 2015 at 12:00 AM

T(

“ Highly respected Commanding Officer of USCGC Taney (WHEC 37). He expected much of us, but we'd do anything for him knowing he always "had our back." He was and is one of those rare individuals who made lives better simply by knowing him. Farewell for now, brother.

Thomas Michael, Jr. (RD2) - January 13, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CT

“ Please let me offer my sincere condolences to the family of Captain Jimmie Hobaugh. Around 1990, I was a young 24 year old enlisted Health Services Technician, Second Class Petty Officer and he was my Commanding Officer. He was a brilliant, old- school, salty ship driver--of the kind that were rough around the edges, wanted to still be at sea, and weren't politically correct for the modern times. He was adored for all of that and his work ethic, integrity, and down to earth style. One day he handed me a small, laminated card the size of a credit card that had Desiderata printed on it. I don't recall him saying anything to me at the time, other than something like "this is for you, keep it." He shaped my career and character and, frankly, who I still aspire to become more like. The card reminds me of the good memories and of people who care enough to reach out and that it's up to us if we listen to what they are saying. I, too, come from humble beginnings and quite often say that I "grew up on a dirt road in Maine." He saw something and encouraged me to apply to OCS which led to more doors opening up and more paths to follow in different parts of the world. His legacy will live on in ways that we can't even imagine with so many and with people we may not ever even know.

Christine (Gustafson) Traettino - January 01, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ So sorry to hear of Jimmie passing away. I only knew him a couple of months while we both were being treated for cancer at WMH. He told me stories as we both sat there getting chemo. I was stunned to hear about this. To his family: You have my sympathies through this difficult time.

Jill Lucy - December 21, 2014 at 12:00 AM

DL

“ Thinking of you.....

Dotty Leaman - December 20, 2014 at 12:00 AM

DK

“ Had the pleasure of serving with/for CDR/CAPT Hobaugh in Cleveland at the D9 Aids to Navigation Office. He attended our wedding in 1979. He was a great character and always had some amazing sea stories. I haven't seen him in years, but I will never forget him. He was a wonderful person and will be missed. RIP CAPT Jimmie!

Don and Kim Knesebeck - December 17, 2014 at 12:00 AM

TW

“ Mr. Hobaugh you will be missed.

Tom Wilson - December 14, 2014 at 12:00 AM

KH

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Hobaugh family and to everyone who was given the special opportunity to have Captain in your life. He was a very special person who definitely left footprints on my heart. He will be missed !!! ❤️

Kate Hoornstra - December 13, 2014 at 12:00 AM

DL

“ . You fought the good fight, but reserved a place in the history of your Nation. R.I.P. (cousin)

Darryl Lawson - December 13, 2014 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ I served under the command of Capt. Hobaugh on the Coast Guard Cutter Woodrush during the events in Nov. 1975. Of all the Capt.s I served under, he was the only one that you could really talk to. I was proud to serve with him. Thanks for all you did. Hand Salute!
Captain Woodrush

Doug Swanson - December 12, 2014 at 12:00 AM

TW

“ It is with great sadness to hear that Captain Hobaugh has departed. It was an honor to serve with him on the CGC Taney. I stand at attention and salute him farewell as he passes for blue sky and calm seas.

Tim Whiteside - December 12, 2014 at 12:00 AM

PS

“ I will always remember Jimmy... and his motto: the three "Ds" = Discuss, Delegate and Disappear. We will miss him.

Paul Sabourin - December 12, 2014 at 12:00 AM

RM

“ Our deepest condolences to the Hobaugh family. Jimmie's legacy far surpasses his search for the Edmund Fitzgerald's crew. His work as group commander (establishing the Mesquite as a dive destination) and his time with the Valley Camp Museum are also remembered. The captain was always patient with all my interview questions and I'm lucky to have met him in person. Godspeed Captain Hobaugh.

Ric Mixer - December 12, 2014 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ *My Condolences to the entire family.
I had the distinct honor to have served under the Captain both onboard Taney and again at Ninth District as "his Storekeeper" his words not mine.
Under his command and in keeping with the proud tradition of the Taney often against unsurmountable odds from fullfledge hurricane search and rescue to breaking records during gitmo training exercises We were unconquerable and adopted the phrase we have to go out ,we don't have to come back. There was nothing we couldn't or wouldn't do for Captain Hobaugh. He wore officer stripes on his uniform but was a boatswain mate thru and thru. He will live on in the memories we share and the stories we tell.
Godspeed Captain, Godspeed!
Captain departing ,Captain ashore.*

Michael Stevens - December 11, 2014 at 12:00 AM

BL

“ *Captain of my last duty station at Group Sault. I was an RM2 There from '89-'92. He was Tough as nails. He rose from Seamen Recruit, to Chief, to Captain!*

He referred to himself by his last name. I would call down from the communications center and he would simply Answer "HOBAUGH."

I was also privileged enough to be able to attend his retirement/change of command ceremony in 1991!

He is a true American Hero!

You finally are going to meet those 29 souls from November 10, 1975. "Fair winds and following seas."

Bill Lachner, RM2, USCG: 1986-1992

Bill Lachner - December 11, 2014 at 12:00 AM

GS

“ *He will be missed on many levels*

*I first met Jimmy at D9, as a S/A for CGI
I'm also a Member of Lockport Masonic Lodge 538,Knights Templar,
Joliet Conclave, Scottish Rite 32nd Degree Valley of Chicago,and
Mediah Temple*

I only wish I could be there for the Masonic Service

Grant Spooner - December 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ *A fine shipmate who made a mark on so many! Hand salute!*

BMCM Jim Pond, USCG, Ret. - December 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

D(

“ *Captain Jimmie was a true gentleman and a staunch guardian off
our country.*

*The Capt. and I shared many sea stories while working at the ELKS
LODGE.*

*Now that his ship has sailed to the other side, I'm sure he will be
remembered by many*

Sail On Captian, Sail On

David Allen, SSG, USN-USA (retired) - December 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

BD

“ *Blessings Hobough family as you celebrate the life of your dear
patriarch. May we all be inspired to live by his wonderful example
that you shared. May you be continually be comforted by each
other.*

Barbara Dunn - December 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

MI

“ Late in '75 I got a strong request to stop by CMDR Hobaugh's office. I had gone through a really hard time in the last year and had been doing some Really stupid stuff. On arriving, he talked about what I was doing and why I should stop. He wasn't my CO, I had been discharged the year before, but he was a father figure and I took what he said to heart. He talked about HONOR. To others and to my self. He changed my life around and my have saved it, also. To him: Honor - "Above All Else". Thank you Sir.

Michael - December 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

FM

“ May the Lord bless Captain Hobaugh and watch over his family. I enjoyed working with the Captain, a true sailor, and am sorry to hear of his passing.

Fred Mieser - December 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Virginia, Terri, Tessa, and the rest of Jimmie's sweet family. Bill and I were saddened to hear of Jimmie's lost battle with Cancer. All of you are in our thoughts and prayers. We will miss a good friend.

*Bill and Carolyn
Suman*

Carolyn Suman - December 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ Kathy and family, So sorry for your loss. Sounds like you're father was an amazing man. I pray for comfort for you and your family. Know he is with you always in your heart. God bless you.

Sylvia Weddle - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

PC

“ Virginia and the entire Hobaugh family, it is not everyday a legend comes into our lives. I am hurting to know we have lost the kind of man your husband, your father, and our Captain was. A truly remarkable individual and a guiding light to many, many of those who fell under his shadow. My deepest condolences and regret.
Paul (CGC TANEY, 1979-1981)

Paul Cheney - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

KV

“ Virginia I am sadden to hear Jimmie has crossed the bar. He was such a great man and taught me so much I will always remember our good times together and always respect the good Captain he was. For one final time, hand salute! Rest in Peace Captain your Shipmate Kenny Vanek

Ken Vanek - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

CL

“ Our prayers are with your family he will be missed take care luv
mike connie leask

connie leask - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

EB

“ Rest in Peace Storm Warrior

ex BM - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

Y(

“ Rest in Peace. You were so very special to so many Coasties in the Soo and many other duty stations! You were one of a kind and will be sorely missed!

YNCS Jack Pressler,USCG (Ret) - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

MW

“ So sorry for your loss. Jimmie was such a generous and wonderful man who was friendly to all. He will be missed by many.

Melissa Walters - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

RL

“ I will never forget that day in March of 1973 when the yeoman from Coast Guard group Duluth called my at Two Harbors Light Station and said the group Commander wants you to report to the group office immediately...I was scared what did I do wrong and am I in trouble I asked the Yeoman, he said relax you are ok...Thank God that I did not need a haircut and my shoes had a nice shine...And there I was standing at attention in front of Commander Hobbaugh and I was extremely nervousHe said relax and sit down, he said Petty Officer Lapp there has been a incident at Devils Island Lighthouse congratulations you are the new OinC and get your seabag and you will report to Devils Island in the morning...I was relieved but not really excited about going to isolated duty..After 30 days on the Island you would have two weeks off ,Every time I checked in at the group office Commander Hobbaugh would say are you painting the light tower with a smile, and I responded yes sir and he would smile again knowing I was not painting that huge light tower he would than say now go and get a haircut.Aye Aye Sir...Captain Hobbaugh was my favorite Commanding officer during my USCG career...May he rest in peaceBMC Robert D Lapp USCG retired..

Robert D. Lapp - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

LZ

“ Jimmie you were like a father to me. You were a friend and a mentor. You took me under your wing and always looked after me. You were an inspiration and a great role model. The 8yrs. I spent under you as the manager of the valley camp were the best. You taught me so much. I still have my copy of Desiderata! You will always hold a special place in my heart. My sincerest condolences to Virginia and the family. You were a gentle giant and much loved!

Lisa Zoller - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ Jimmie was my Capt. aboard USCGC Taney he was an inspiration to me as a Coast Guardsman and as a man. Serving under Capt. Hobough made me a better person and sailor. As a Radioman the guys in the shack were in constant contact with him day and night. Thanks to him I developed a deep love of Louis Lamour western novels which he shared with me on many occasions. R.I.P. Captain I shall always remember and admire you as an inspiration in my life. My Condolences to the entire family know that he was a well loved individual and will be remembered by all who served with him.

Rodney Suiter - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ A great great man. May you rest in peace.

Judge Elizabeth Church - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

NJ

“ Aunt Terri and Uncle Marty, I am so sorry for your loss! He sounded like a wonderful man, (no doubt since he was from Oklahoma). My deepest sympathy to you both and your family.

Natasha Wolski Jenks - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

HK

“ *Deepest sympathy. Had many fun times in the kitchen with my favorite dishwasher.*

Howard Kaiser - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

CP

“ *I am so sorry to hear about the Captain. I know he is at peace with God. I remember the Captain and smile. I know we will meet again in heaven.*

My prayers are with the family because it is a hard time. Just remember Jesus' promise we will all meet again.

Connie Picha - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ I had the pleasure of serving under Capt. Jimmie Hobaugh while stationed at Group Sault Ste. Marie and attended his retirement ceremony. Capt. Hobaugh didn't have to utter a word for you to know, without a doubt, that he was as tough and hardnosed as they come. He was a true seaman and a leader of men. He was a man any man would follow. I remember vividly what he once said to me. One day, during his usual casual visit to the operations center, right after I had just returned from attending the Coast Guard 2-week leadership and management course, in a very stern voice he said, "listen here son, I'm not sure what they teach you out there, but just remember, the Coast Guard needs leaders, not managers". By God, I knew he meant it too. Once more is, I knew he was right.

Over my 20-years in the Guard, I served under many 4 strippers. I don't recall a single one; other than Jimmie Hobaugh, that struck such a lasting memory and emotion.

Godspeed Jimmie Hobaugh, with love and admiration, Godspeed. I am sure the good captain and crew of the Fitz have been waiting patiently to thank you personally for not giving up on them.

Jon Crampton - December 09, 2014 at 12:00 AM

JR

“ Jimmy, you inspired me in many ways not the least of which was applying for OCS and becoming a Commissioned Officer. Tell Danny Danielsen his cook says hello and have a cold beverage or two with him... on me. I will never forget you my friend. Fair winds & following seas... Hand Salute! Joel

Joel Roberts, LT, USCG, Retired - December 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ My condolences and prayers to the Hobaugh family. He was my Commanding Officer on the USCGC Taney and inspired me a lot. He knew I played the trumpet and that I desired to get into the Coast Guard Band. When we docked at the Academy in New London after a Cadet cruise, he had me called to his quarters and then "ordered" another officer to escort me to the band hall to "get me an audition". Unfortunately, the band had no openings and I couldn't audition, but the fact that Capt. Hobaugh cared enough to do that meant an awful lot to me. He was indeed a great officer and man!

Regards

Chuck Fesperman

Chuck Fesperman - December 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

VR

“ My sincere condolences to the family of fellow Coast Guardsman and wonderful shpmate, CAPT Jimmie. He was truly loved by all whom he served with. Fair winds and following seas to a great man! SEMPER PARATUS!

Vince Patton, MCPOCG, USCG Ret. - December 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

CR

“ My sincere condolences. Jimmie and I crossed paths many times over the years. RIP, smooth sailing with a fair wind and a following sea.

CDR Theodore C. Scheeser, USCG Ret - December 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

BL

“ On behalf of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, and as its Grand Master, I extend our sincerest Condolences to Virginia and the family of Jimmie. He lived respected, and dies regretted.

Bill LeVeque - December 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

KE

“ so very sorry to hear of Capt. Jimmie Hobaugh. One of the very best officers I have known and more importantly, one of the greatest men I have ever known.

Kurt Echols - December 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

RG

“ Rest in peace Captain Hobaugh, you were one of the best commanding officers I had the pleasure of serving under. You inspired me to go to a 180, and to continue to advance. When I left the Soo in 89 you told me you didn't want to hear from me until I made E6- so I called when I reported to TVC in 96 as MK1, we talked a few and said don't call back until I was a Chief- in 2000 I called as I was departing as a Chief. I lost contact with you although I told stories and thought of you regularly. On dec. 7, 2014 I had thought of you and wondered how you were, when I got home I received word of your passing. Katrina(Tinker) and I send our sincerest condolences to your family.

Roger Gladdish - December 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM