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“Discover the Sandy Hook Ship Pilots...Pride of the Port of New York and New Jersey”

Purple Mountain Press announces the publication April 2008 of *Always on Station: The Story of the Sandy Hook Ship Pilots* by Francis J. Duffy. Ship pilots play a crucial role in the commercial shipping of the Port of New York and New Jersey, but few know their story.

One of the most hazardous parts of a ship's voyage is usually the entry and exit from port...and that's why for centuries shippers have hired skilled pilots to board and navigate in and out of the harbor. New York State under the British Crown legislated the beginning of the Sandy Hook Pilots over three hundred years ago. The British realized the advantages of having experienced pilots navigate the many commercial and military ships into port. Started in 1694, the Sandy Hook Pilots is one of the oldest organizations of pilots in the world.

Steeped in tradition, the Sandy Hook Pilots raced out in their schooners, sometimes four hundred miles at sea, to “speak” with the captains of incoming vessels to sell them their services. They entered the ship from a yawl rowed along its side. The pilot climbed a swaying Jacob's ladder up the side of the ship wearing a business suit and carrying the day's newspaper in his pocket. The pilot schooners, originally built for speed, cut through the water so fast that one of them won the first America's Cup held in Britain in 1851.

Through treacherous seas, storms, shipwrecks, war, and the trauma of 9/11, the book's readers gain insight into the heroic service performed by the pilots of New York and New Jersey. It takes courage, skill, and many years of experience to become a Sandy Hook Pilot, and with the economic and environmental risks of shipping today, their role has never been more essential.

The book includes 8 chapters, a bibliography, index, and 48 photographs.

Francis Duffy is a native New Yorker, maritime writer, and photographer. His bylines for hard news, features, and photos have appeared in *The New York Times*, *New York Newsday*, and *Staten Island Advance*. He resides at 22 Saint Charles Place, Setauket, New York 11733 and can be reached at 631.650.3232.

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