

# Lost lantern restored to Manasquan statue



## Coast Guard auxiliary installs replica piece during ceremony

**Dan Radel** Asbury Park Press | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

**P**OINT PLEASANT BEACH – At a few minutes past noon on Sunday, Oct. 19, United States Coast Guard Auxiliarists Pete Ferro and Jim Bemiss climbed up the rocky base of the Fishermen's Memorial at Loughran's Point Park and replaced the missing lantern in the hand of the bronze statue of the mariner. • Just when and how the lantern went missing is still a bit of a mystery. It vanished sometime in the last six years, judging by newspaper archival evidence. In a 2019 Asbury Park Press story, for example, the statue had its lantern, however, in a 2024 photo taken by the Press, it is missing.

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**ABOVE: U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists Pete Ferro, left, and Jim Bemiss attach a new lantern to the Fishermen's Memorial on Oct. 19. DAN RADEL/ASBURY PARK PRESS**

**TOP: The Fishermen's Memorial seen in October 2024, when the lantern was missing. THOMAS P. COSTELLO/ASBURY PARK PRESS**



**Sunrise seen behind fisherman memorial along Manasquan Inlet.**

PETE ACKERMAN/ASBURY PARK PRESS

## Lantern

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"We're not sure what happened. It may have been stolen," said the auxiliary's Division Commander Anna Ackaway, who led the rededication ceremony attended by Manasquan Coast Guard station Commander James Bannon, Lee Gorlin, incident commander at Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay, commercial fishermen from the Point Pleasant Co-op dock and families of fishermen who were lost at sea.

Ackaway said members of the auxiliary, which is the volunteer branch of the Coast Guard, "searched far and wide," for a replica of the lantern. On Sunday, the new one was temporarily affixed to the statue for the ceremony.

The borough of Point Pleasant Beach, where the memorial sits at the southwest corner of Manasquan Inlet, will need to bolt the lantern to the hand of the mariner permanently, she said.

The memorial was dedicated in 2000, and was inspired by the tragic winter of 1999, when four clam boats sunk within 13 days of each other, claiming the lives of 10 fishermen. The

memorial is adorned with plaques carrying the names of each fisherman and guardsman who left the T-rocks of the Manasquan Inlet in their sights and did not return, having lost their lives in the Atlantic Ocean.

Much like the conclusion of Gordon Lightfoot's song "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," the auxiliary rang a bell 121 times for each and every one of them during the ceremony.

For the families whose loved ones never came home, the memorial can substitute for a cemetery.

"It doesn't get any easier. It's just longer since my he's been gone," said Alice Van Note, the mother of Dennis Smalling Jr., who perished along with Paul Matos when the Queen Anne's Revenge fishing vessel went down in 2018. Their bodies were never recovered.

"There's no gravesite other than the ocean. And I know he's not coming back through the inlet," Van Note said. "Coming here, it's an acknowledgment. He's not the only one, and I see all the plaques to the fishermen and it lets me know I'm not alone in this."

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