



May 23, 2011

# SPECIAL EDITION!!!

## Honoring the USS *Cole*

**The Apprentice School and The Mariners' Museum will host Bob Merchant, vice president, Surface Combatants and U.S. Coast Guard Programs, Ingalls Shipbuilding, for a special presentation on the repair and restoration of the USS *Cole* on June 8. Please note the updated times and locations: 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. in the Apprentice School auditorium and 7 p.m. at The Mariners' Museum with a reception to follow. Apprentices that are currently attending World Class Shipbuilder Curriculum classes and selected pre-advanced and advanced program classes will attend the meetings in the Apprentice School auditorium. All other apprentices that would like to attend the event at the Mariners' Museum should contact Liz Moriarty (O22) at 8-2513 or Jim Hughes (O22) at 0-2682.**

On the morning of October 12, 2000, as USS *Cole* (DDG 67) was refueling in Aden Harbor, Yemen, suicide bombers detonated an explosive-laden boat directly against the port side of the ship. The resulting blast killed 17 sailors, wounded 37 others, and tore a hole forty by sixty feet in the ship's hull. The flooding that resulted from the breach in the hull threatened to sink her.

Following the heroic effort to stabilize the ship and prevent her from sinking, she was loaded onboard the Norwegian heavy transport ship *M/V Blue Marlin* for transport back to the USA. In December, she was off-loaded at her birthplace, Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, MS, where she underwent an extensive 14-month repair and restoration operation.

Bob Merchant was the Program Manager at Ingalls at the time of this horrific attack and led the team assigned to restore the ship to "like new" condition. Drawing from this experience, Mr. Merchant will chronicle the attack, the subsequent efforts to save the ship, the challenge to get her back to the USA, and the repair and restoration efforts which allowed the *Cole* to return to her homeport in Norfolk, VA.