

GloucesterTimes.com, Gloucester, MA

October 29, 2011

What really happened to the Andrea Gail?

By Terry Weber

Special to the Times

In the absence of survivors, eyewitnesses or wreckage, no one can say with certainty what happened during the final hours aboard the Andrea Gail, other than she disappeared into the cold waters east of Nova Scotia.

But this week, upon the 20th anniversary of the vessel's loss and the so-called Perfect Storm, speculation continues to swirl:

How did the Andrea Gail meet her fate? Did it happen just as portrayed in the movie, when she flipped over trying to conquer an enormous wave? Did anything other than fierce weather contribute to her demise?

Many experts agree that a 72-foot fishing vessel like the Andrea Gail would have little chance surviving the convergence of multiple weather systems now referred to as The Perfect Storm, which included hurricane force winds and wave heights of more than 60 feet.

According to the 1993 U.S. Coast Guard's investigative report, the last communication with the Andrea Gail was on Oct. 28 with another fishing vessel, the Hannah Boden. The report, however, does not reflect the time of the communication.

The Andrea Gail was approximately 150 miles east of Sable Island, presumably heading home to Gloucester — but possibly headed inland for shelter or fuel. It is unknown when or how the fishing vessel lost her radio, or how far she traveled after the radio failed.

"My last conversation with Billy was typical of any that I would have with a vessel 600 miles west of me," said Linda Greenlaw, former captain of the Hannah Boden. "I wanted a weather report, and Billy wanted a fishing report. I recall him saying, 'The weather sucks. You probably won't be fishing tomorrow night.'"

In contrast with the storyline in "The Perfect Storm" movie, Greenlaw says she did not place a distress call on behalf of the Andrea Gail.

"Without a distress call (directly) from the imperiled vessel, the Coast Guard will not initiate a search until the vessel is five days overdue in port," Greenlaw said.

When Greenlaw spoke to Tyne, she said there was no urgency in his voice, and he did not indicate that he was or would be in any danger.

According to the Coast Guard's report, the Andrea Gail was experiencing 30-foot waves and winds from anywhere from 50 to 80 knots around the time of the last communication.

The conditions, though threatening, were probably not unfamiliar to Tyne who had been a successful fisherman for about a decade on other vessels, taking trips to the Grand Banks and fishing off Florida, the Carolinas and elsewhere.

Fisherman Charlie Reed of Gloucester, who stepped down permanently as captain of the Andrea Gail in the summer of 1991, said Tyne had about a year of total experience on the Andrea Gail, and about three months total experience captaining her, before he set out on his last trip in late September.

In Greenlaw's opinion, as the Andrea Gail made her way home, the storm formed overhead and there was little or no warning of the magnitude of what was to come. Predicting the storm also had meteorologists scrambling, with three weather systems on track to collide in the skies above the North Atlantic.

In his book, Sebastian Junger calls the conditions that Tyne must have experienced as a "shear change, like stepping into a room." Junger wrote that the dramatic change in weather happened after 7 p.m.

In "The Perfect Storm" film, Tyne and his crew essentially vote to head into the dangerous storm in order to save their fish from spoiling. Greenlaw acknowledged that Tyne did mention having ice problems, but that was not unusual.

"My one gripe about "The Perfect Storm" movie was how Warner Brothers depicted Billy Tyne and his crew as making a very conscious decision to steam into a storm that they knew was dangerous," said Greenlaw. "That is not what happened. The Andrea Gail was three days into their steam home when the storm hit. Whatever happened to the Andrea Gail happened very quickly."

The crew of the Andrea Gail never placed a distress call or activated an emergency signal.

Because no one knows the details of what happened to the Andrea Gail after her last communication, producers of "The Perfect Storm" movie counted on the expertise and experience of people such as Richard Haworth, who captained the Andrea Gail from 1978 to 1986. Haworth, 58, of Rockport, served as a script consultant on the movie, suggesting possible scenarios to the movie makers.

"I have my own theory," Haworth said. "The Andrea Gail was always a wet vessel; she took a lot of water on deck. Once fully loaded with fuel, water and fish, she was very low to the water.

"When she was modified," he continued, "the owner added weather siding on the port side. My theory is that water became trapped on deck partly because of the additional siding. In rough waves, with the boat rocking from side to side, the accumulating water on deck heaved the vessel to one side and toppled it."

In 1987, the Andrea Gail was retrofitted at the St. Augustine Trawler's Shipyard in Florida. The vessel was lengthened by 30 inches at the stern, or back, to allow for more fuel storage.

As Haworth noted, the portside wall was extended 3 feet with additional siding. Lastly, the whaleback deck (the deck underneath and behind the pilot house) was lengthened by 4 feet to shelter to the main deck.

Water accumulating on the deck after modifications to the Andrea Gail was not the only scenario raised.

The vessel's general stability was questioned in the Coast Guard investigative report.

"Contributing to the casualty may also be the fact that a stability review was not conducted after the modifications made to the vessel in 1987," it stated.

At the time of the Coast Guard's investigation of the incident, the owner of the Andrea Gail, Robert Brown, could not confirm if stability testing was performed after modifications. It should be noted that in 1987, and currently, stability testing is not required on fishing vessels of less than 79 feet, according to Ted Harrington of the U.S. Coast Guard offices in Boston.

"It is good marine practice to have a stability analysis done for any vessel that undergoes a major modification," Harrington said. "Most insurance companies will require a stability analysis to ensure the vessel is good, but there is no regulatory mandate to do so."

Harrington noted that Brown was eventually given a warning, but not a monetary fine, for failure to report his modifications to the Coast Guard documentation office. Harrington considered the lack of updated documentation to be an administrative matter, not a criminal one. Brown has since passed away.

Other theories are still being debated across Gloucester, especially in places like the Crow's Nest, where a fisherman never runs out of tales.

One such fisherman is Jack Flaherty, 64, with over 40 years experience on the sea. Flaherty once worked on an identical sister ship to the Andrea Gail, constructed by the same builder.

Flaherty's theory is that the Andrea Gail may have been low on fuel or had its fuel "muddied" in the rough waters. According to Flaherty, violent movement of the boat can slosh up fuel — bringing up sediment, rust, or algae. Air could also become trapped in the fuel, leading to a stalled engine or complete engine failure.

Flaherty says that in extreme conditions when the waves may be only seconds apart captains have to "jog the waves" — facing the bow into the waves to show the storm the narrowest part of the boat.

"You're going up the face of a 50-foot sea, and then dropping 50 feet into the trough. Seconds later you're climbing another 50 feet and slamming down," said Flaherty. "If your filters get clogged or there's air in your fuel, you could end up powerless in the water. Without power even for a short time, the Andrea Gail could have ended up 'side-to' a wave and been easily rolled."

According to Flaherty, even if the Andrea Gail had almost full fuel tanks, the amount of violent movement may have affected her fuel efficiency and engine performance.

"It's hard to believe it's been 20 years," Flaherty said.

"We can only guess what happened on the Andrea Gail," he said, "but it does us all good to remember and talk about the friends we've lost — not only the crew from the Andrea Gail, but all the fishermen who haven't come home from the sea."

Terry Weber is a local freelance writer. She can be reached at bartlett108@yahoo.com.

GloucesterTimes.com, Gloucester, MA

October 29, 2011

Perfect Storm: 20 years after

Memories fresh for those closest to losses

By Gail McCarthy and Terry Weber

Roberta Tyne Smith, now 60, recalls hearing the phone ring 20 years ago this weekend — at 5 p.m. on Halloween in 1991.

On the line was the ex-wife of Smith's brother, fishing captain Billy Tyne, calling to tell Roberta that the Andrea Gail was three days overdue.

"I was in the middle of getting ready to go trick-or-treating with my three sons," said Smith, who now lives in Manchester. "But life changed dramatically from that day forward.

"My biggest regret is that Billy never got to see his children grow up. Billy loved his children more than anything. He always looked forward to coming home and spending time with them."

Tyne and his five-man crew on board the Andrea Gail were lost in what is today known as The Perfect Storm.

And the telling of their story — both in Sebastian Junger's best-selling book "The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea," published in 1997, and again in the blockbuster Hollywood film of the same name, released in 2000 — has made the term "perfect storm" a common part of the American lexicon.

But memories of the storm — and the Andrea Gail tragedy — remain painful here in Gloucester, especially for the families who can never forget those days two decades ago.

The so-called "storm of the century" was a deadly combination of three weather fronts comprised of southward-moving arctic energy which collided with a northward-moving tropical storm combined with an offshore Atlantic storm. The meteorological phenomena

began developing over the western Atlantic on Oct. 26, 1991, hitting its peak on Oct. 30, and finally passing through by Nov. 1.

The trail of damage, which extended from Nova Scotia to Florida, sunk boats, killed 13 people and ravaged parts of the East Coast with damage estimated close to \$500 million.

Hurricane force winds continued more than a day, with Thacher Island clocking gusts at 74 mph, according to the NOAA information service. One weather buoy in the Atlantic recorded a wave at more than 100 feet.

Information from the National Climatic Data Center shows that Massachusetts bore the brunt of the storm's wrath, with an estimated \$100 million of damage, followed by New Jersey with \$75 million.

Gloucester paid the highest price, however, with the loss of the Andrea Gail's crew.

The storm, first referred to as the no-name or Halloween storm, left a black hole in its wake. The immediate loss was apparent with the Andrea Gail, but another generation would feel the reverberations as local children grew up without their fathers.

Both Tyne, a Gloucester native, and Billy Shatford of Gloucester, left two children behind. Crew member Dale Murphy left one child.

Families of the Andrea Gail

Growing up in the shadow of such a public tragedy would impact these young lives as well as the parents and siblings of the crew members — and all would be forever reminded in a public way of the story of these fishermen.

Smith, who had lost her other brother in 1966 in the Vietnam War, recalled how Billy loved to dress up as Santa for Christmas to make a special appearance for his children, nephews, and friends' children.

"He was so passionate about playing Santa, he bought a suit from Brown's Department Store in Gloucester," she said. "That was Billy, always having fun."

The Tyne family lived on Gloucester Avenue around the corner from the Sullivan family. Tyne recruited David Sullivan to work on the Andrea Gail when another man dropped out at the last minute. The captain also was a close friend of David's older brother Mark. In friendship and in fishing, the bond between the Tynes and Sullivans was sealed when the Andrea Gail disappeared.

Smith said she occasionally runs into the Sullivans' sister, Cathy, and in the past they have visited the Crow's Nest, the Main Street bar made famous in "The Perfect Storm" movie. There, they sometimes bump into another Perfect Storm sister, Mary Anne Shatford,

"There are reminders of Billy all over town," said Smith. "One special place is at the Boulevard near the Fishermen's Memorial. There, I sit on the bench and watch the boats go by."

"Sometimes I think about our childhood and Billy's contagious smile," she added. "My brother is never far from my thoughts and prayers. Billy had many close friends and I am touched by how many people still miss him. It was Billy's friends and my family that got me, my husband, and my sons through this devastating loss."

Remembering 'Sully'

Cathy Sullivan Mustone, 52, lost her younger brother, David "Sully" Sullivan, who was 29 when the Andrea Gail went down. He was a full-time fisherman — the last man hired for the fateful trip to the Grand Banks. Cathy learned of her brother's disappearance through a friend who had heard the rumor in town.

"Hearing about my brother's disappearance was a little bizarre, because at the time of the storm, my family lived close to Good Harbor Beach," she said. "Before the storm reached its peak, I videotaped the high tide and waves crashing in. It was a beautiful sight.

"Ironically, looking at those rough waters," she continued, "I had no idea what my brother was going through at the same time."

Shortly after hearing the news, the family met with the Coast Guard, which searched for more than a week for any survivors. The loss of the Andrea Gail also claimed the lives of crew members Dale Murphy, 30, and Michael Moran, 36, of Bradenton Beach, Fla., and Alfred Pierre, 36, of New York City.

The loss of her brother is never far from Mustone's thoughts; like Tyne's sister, she is never far from the Fishermen's Memorial as she drives by it every day on her way to work.

To remember David, each year she attends the Fishermen's Memorial Service and also places a pumpkin at the Fishermen's Monument each October. Her son Jason has a tattoo on his back that reads: Uncle David, 1991. Jason was 15 when his uncle disappeared.

"One thing I think about is that my brother would have turned 50 this year," said Mustone. "Would he be married with kids now? What would he look like? I will always picture him as young and full of life."

'Funny guy with a loud laugh'

When asked about the portrayal of "Sully" in "The Perfect Storm" movie, she said she was disappointed.

"They made my brother's character out to be a hothead," she said. "I guess every movie needs a villain, but my brother was a funny guy with a loud laugh and a big smile. He had a lot of guts and he loved fishing."

In fact, David's bravery and quick thinking made headlines on a different boat— the Harmony. One night during a winter fishing trip, the Harmony began taking on water while tied to another boat. The crew of the Harmony yelled for help, hoping to wake the nearby crew. No one woke, so David dove into the icy water, pulling himself on the ropes that tied the boats together. As a result of his bravery, the Harmony's crew was saved.

"At least in the movie, they did represent my brother's bravery in a water rescue scene," Mustone said. "He was a good man. And I just know he is at peace in heaven, safe with our Dad."

Bobby Shatford also would have turned 50 years old this past March 22.

"He was 30 when he died. He was so young — they were all so young," said Mary Anne Shatford, his sister. "David (Sullivan) was the same age and they were the youngest of the crew.

"I can't picture him being 50," she said of her brother. "I remember him as 30. That person just freezes in time. But we are lucky that he left children."

The children

Shatford's two sons remained in Gloucester, raised by their mother, Lisa Shatford O'Brien, who had been separated from her husband at the time, but was supported by nearby family members on both sides of the family.

O'Brien recalled trying to figure out how to tell her boys the news that their father — who would grill his boys peanut butter and jelly sandwiches — might not return to shore again.

"They grew up like most kids, playing sports and hanging out with friends," she said. "But they don't talk about it much."

Their older son, Bobby Shatford, now 29, graduated with the Gloucester High Class of 2000, and was part of the Northeast Conference team that won the basketball championship that year. He works at Varian Semiconductor in town, and is just a year younger than the age of his father when he died. Like his father, he loves basketball.

Jonathan Shatford, now 26, married Rebecca Baylies in 2007, and the couple lives in Maryland where he works as a veterinary technician and continues his studies.

After the film

O'Brien said she believes that the film was harder on the boys than when the book came out. In the movie version, the children of Shatford's girlfriend were portrayed, with no mention of Shatford's own two children.

But a couple of months after the June release of the film - on Sept. 24, 2000, on a wharf at Harbor Loop — a fund-raising event for "The Lady Grace a.k.a. Andrea Gail Children's Educational Fund" raised some \$18,000 that was administered by The Gloucester Fund and later distributed among the crew's children as they pursued higher education. The Lady Grace was the fishing vessel that essentially stood in for the Andrea Gail in the film.

O'Brien also noted the attention that actor Mark Wahlberg — who played the role of Bobby Shatford in the film — gave to her two boys in the wake of the film, making an effort to spend time with them, either going to the beach or going out to eat.

In a rare public moment this summer, Capt. Tyne's two daughters — who moved to Florida with their family as children — gave a moving tribute to their father at the annual Gloucester Fishermen's Memorial Service on Aug. 13. Billie-Jo Tyne-Fintel, 32 and Erica Tyne-DiSanto, 30, shared their memories before a crowd of hundreds of residents.

"Bad things do happen and how we respond defines our character," said Tyne-DiSanto. "We chose to rise from our pain and let our father's memory live on in us. Our father taught us to treasure life itself."

Bonds and memories

Mary Anne Shatford, who was one of six children, said the family developed a special bond with author Sebastian Junger, whose book gave the weather anomaly its lasting name — The Perfect Storm.

"He was so respectful when he wrote the book," recalled Shatford. "The book was bittersweet for us. We suffered our loss. But the interest created by the book brought a lot to the economy of Gloucester and the fishing industry. It made people sit up and listen about how dangerous fishing is."

In fact, the book was the catalyst that created a public appetite for television shows such as "The Deadliest Catch" and other programs related to the dangers of commercial fishing.

She recalled that Junger showed both kindness and attention to their mother, the late Ethel Preston Shatford, who had worked as a bartender at the Crow's Nest. Junger spoke at her funeral after Ethel died on Oct. 30, 1999, eight years to the day after the storm that took her son's life.

"As long as she was alive, she never got over his death," said Mary Anne Shatford. "A mother never gets over losing a child."

Shatford, a second-grade teacher at West Parish Elementary School, still receives emails from students around the country who contact her through the Crow's Next website, often because of school projects.

"I always email everybody back," she said. "I just got one last week, from a student whose class had to read 'The Perfect Storm' and they had to pick the unsung hero to write about."

'It was just a way of life'

There was more than one fisherman in the Shatford family. Rick Shatford, 53, a fisherman for more than 30 years, was working in Hawaii at the time of the 1991 storm when he learned about his younger brother's fate.

"I was out fishing when I got the news," he recalled. "They were still searching, and I ended my trip. It took me a couple days to get home to Massachusetts to be with the family."

He knows well the power of the ocean.

"I think about it when I go fishing sometimes, but when I'm not on the water, I don't think about it," he said. "But I think that book opened up a lot eyes. In Gloucester, I grew up surrounded by water and surrounded by fishing. It was just a way of life."

Rick Shattford, who had seen the film version twice before it was released to the public, said it's not easy to watch because of the emotions it can stir up.

"It's not like it used to be," he says, "but it's something that will never go away."

Times Staff Writer Gail McCarthy can be reached at 978-283-7000 x3445, or gmccarthy@gloucestertimes.com. Terry Weber is a local freelance writer who worked as a Times correspondent on this story. She can be reached at bartlett103@yahoo.com.

GloucesterTimes.com, Gloucester, MA

October 29, 2011

Tragedy, film lore still driving economy

By Nancy Gaines **Correspondent**

In the 20 years since what's now known as the Perfect Storm, the story of the nation's oldest seaport reads like a tale of two cities.

The economic impact on the home of the seafaring tragedy that inspired the best-selling book and blockbuster movie has been, by most measures, a wallop. And, in a sad paradox, it's also been a boon to a place that's been beset by a dwindling fishing industry and is now retrofitting with retail, commercial and development ventures.

The working waterfront of fishermen who go down to the sea forever — at least 30 since the Andrea Gail, says the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association — still works.

The fishing industry is worth about \$200 million to the city annually, considering the ripple effect (economists use 3.5) for shoreside businesses, taxes and temporary employment, from \$56.6 million in sales last year.

Yet, the business is a shell of itself 20 years ago. Fish landings in Gloucester were 126 million pounds in 1990; 41 million last year. At 100 boats, the fleet is half what it was when the movie hit, never mind the storm.

The Crow's Nest — the raffish hangout of the Andrea Gail's ill-fated crew — still packs 'em in, but so does the powder-blue Divine Day Spa two doors down. Cape Pond Ice, with its iconic "Coolest Guys Around" T-shirts, still sells ice and souvenirs. But across the street, mogul Jim Davis of New Balance fame wants to build a boutique hotel.

The stumble-bum saloons that tourists seem to think thrive on the waterfront have been replaced by hip venues where high-caliber bands play nightly. Fresh hot-spots offer world-class sushi, home brews, and, of course, the catch of the day, courtesy of men and women working the most dangerous job in the world.

Tourists now spend about \$110 million a year on Cape Ann, according to state figures, rendering \$2.7 million to the local tax pot.

"More than anything, the Perfect Storm has created a fascination with fishing," Mayor Carolyn Kirk said. "People who visit Gloucester are attracted not only to the working waterfront and fishing vessels, but also to the human drama of the thrill of the catch or tragedy at sea.

"In that sense, the movie has left a long-standing economic impact."

"I didn't like the movie for personal reasons," said lobsterman Joey Ciaramitaro, creator of the GoodMorningGloucester.com website, "but it helped put Gloucester on the national stage.

"We've got a cultural embarrassment of riches here," he said, "with, like, 20 free incredible things to do every night. So let the movie bring people here and they can see what we're really about."

Case in point: On a rainy noon last week, three tourists asked Gregg Sousa, owner of the Crow's Nest, if they could see "the secret photo album from the movie."

"It's not very secret," said the obliging Sousa, handing it over. The trio, including Patty Golden, an Air Force master sergeant, had come from Cincinnati to Salem for Halloween but detoured here because they were fans of the film. "Wow, this is cool," Golden cooed at the candid photos of George Clooney, Diane Lane, Mark Wahlberg et al.

They then set out to explore the scenery, shops and museum.

Sousa, who is married to Mary Anne Shatford — sister of Bobby Shatford, whom Wahlberg played in the film — has lively memories of the filming a decade ago, when Wahlberg lived and partied at the Crow's Nest, like Bobby had.

"Yeah, they all hung here," said Sousa, who has a wall full of photos from the time. "Clooney and I played basketball a lot," he says, amiably dispensing anecdotes about the filming while attaching a dignity to the fact that friends and relatives died so the stories could be told.

"Wahlberg loved to drink," laughed Sousa, "and boy was he good at it. Clooney was a sweetheart. After a day when everybody wanted a piece of him, I knocked on his trailer 'cause Ethel" — Bobby's mother and Crow's Nest bartender — "wanted to say hello.

"He couldn't have been nicer. We took pictures ... turned out it was the last time Ethel was out of her house." She died 12 years ago this weekend.

Bartender Teri Grossman estimates dozens of people a day in the summer, especially from cruise ships, still come to the bar due to the publicity attendant to the lethal Halloween storm.

On the other hand, Linn Parisi of the Discover Gloucester marketing group, said last year she polled some of the more than 35,000 people from 800 buses that visited the waterfront and found "less than half" mentioned the Perfect Storm as a reason to come here.

"Whale watching, seafood and the beaches" are the top draws, she said, "but people still talk about the movie, especially the international visitors."

For Scott Memhard, owner of Cape Pond Ice, the Storm aftermath has been worth probably close to \$2 million in 11 years of sales of clothing and memorabilia, including the Perfect Storm Landmarks Map, he said. (In the movie, a character wore a Cape Pond Ice T-shirt.)

In conjunction with the 10th anniversary of the film, Memhard printed about 100,000 brochures. He also has sold about 60,000 pieces of promotional clothing since the movie, and currently has hard-to-find Perfect Storm DVDs and paperbacks for sale.

"Its importance is elusive to quantify," said Memhard, "but it certainly added to people's consciousness of what fishermen go through to put good food on the table. And the importance of ice." Because the Andrea Gail's ice machine broke down, the crew headed back to port, running into the fatal weather.

Memhard says many visitors think the story was fiction.

"They ask, 'Where's the boat?'" he told the Times' sister publication, Cape Ann magazine. "We say, 'Well, it's at the bottom of the ocean.'"

Correspondent Nancy Gaines is the former editor in chief of the Boston Business Journal and the Improper Bostonian magazine, where she is a contributing editor.



Author Sebastian Junger reflects upon epic tale

By K.C. MYERS

kcmyers@capecodonline.com

October 30, 2011 2:00 AM

Twenty years ago today, Sebastian Junger was watching 30-foot waves destroy waterfront homes as the "Halloween nor'easter" churned up the coast.

Junger, then 29, was living in Gloucester, working as a tree climber with landscaping crews.

"I was a floundering, possibly failing, freelance writer," he recalled Saturday from the cozy warmth of his restored antique home in the Truro woods.

Hurricane Bob had walloped the Cape only two months earlier. Junger had been busy trimming trees on the Cape when he accidentally cut his leg with a chain saw.

"It got me thinking about dangerous jobs," he said. "And then this storm hit Gloucester. My girlfriend and I watched 30-foot waves roll in and destroy fancy homes on the shore. It was an incredible scene."

The next day they heard the 70-foot swordfish boat Andrea Gail and its crew of six had been lost at sea. Buoy readings from the area of the Andrea Gail's possible final location indicated waves spiked to 100 feet.

"That was so dramatic," he said. "It sounded like a good chapter for the book."

Junger wrote that chapter, sent it to his literary agent in New York City, then headed west to write about fire jumpers.

Next he went to Bosnia to either "write about war correspondents or be one myself," he said.

While in Bosnia, he got a fax from his agent: W.W. Norton & Co., an independent publishing house whose authors include best-sellers Patrick O'Brian, Paul Krugman and Michael Lewis, liked the sample chapter and offered to pay him a \$35,000 advance to turn it into a book.

The money was supposed to last a year.

But "The Perfect Storm" took Junger two years to write. With resources dwindling, he kept at it, sometimes with minimal heat in his parents' summer home in Truro. It got so cold at times that the olive oil in the kitchen froze into a cloudy glob in the jar and Junger could see his breath as he wrote.

Within months of turning in the finished book, however, it became clear Junger would not have to worry about heating expenses again.

The positive reviews were overwhelming. Soon, Junger was inundated with interviews and speaking engagements.

The book spent 189 weeks on The New York Times hardcover and paperback best-seller lists and sparked a renewed interest in nonfiction stories. "The Perfect Storm" was made into a Hollywood blockbuster starring George Clooney and Mark Wahlberg. And Junger, who followed up with "Fire," about his smoke-jumper experiences, became known as "the author of the best-selling 'The Perfect Storm.'"

Junger, now 49, has moved on from the shores of New England to the mountains of Afghanistan, where he became a well-known war correspondent with his book "War," another Times best-seller. Junger is also a documentary filmmaker, who created the Oscar-nominated "Restrepo" with the late photojournalist Tim Hetherington. Both the book and documentary chronicle the experiences of a platoon from the 173rd Airborne Brigade on a

15-month deployment in 2007-2008 to the Korengal Valley, one of the most dangerous places in Afghanistan at the time.

In many ways, Junger continues to write about the same characters he came to know in Gloucester.

"Tough young males," he said. "Some in the position because they feel they don't have other good options. Some are looking for adventure. Some are looking to test themselves and some do it because their dad did it, and they are proud of it."

"The Perfect Storm" allowed Junger to live his dream to become a war correspondent.

His life's work of writing about dangerous jobs took a drastic turn this April, however, when his friend, Hetherington, was killed at the age of 40 while photographing the conflict in Libya.

Until then, Junger willingly put himself in danger, similar to fishermen and soldiers.

But with Hetherington's death, he got too close.

"I suffered so much sorrow and grief," Junger said. "I didn't want to do that to the people I cared about.

"I immediately had a talk with Daniela (his wife) and I got out."

Junger is now working on a documentary about Hetherington for HBO.

And he's trying to start up a free three-day course, called Reporters Instructed in Saving Colleagues, to train war correspondents in battlefield medicine.

Hetherington bled to death, but the injury wasn't a mortal wound, Junger said. He could have been saved.

"I want to make it so no one hires a freelance journalist (to cover war) without it," he said.

As another nor'easter arrived this Halloween weekend, Junger, who set up The Perfect Storm Foundation to help children of fishing families, reflected on the fishermen who risk their lives and set out to the dangerous North Atlantic.

"It costs a lot to run a boat and guys are constantly weighing the risk of bad weather with the need to pull in fish. It's a dangerous job ... it just is."

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