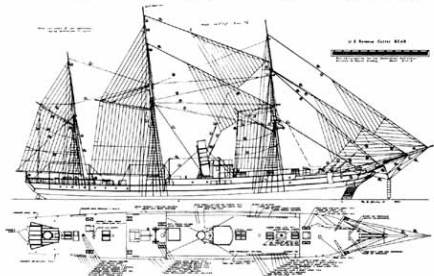


The first cutter *Bear*

Legendary ship for a legendary service



Greely Expedition launched

The expedition, under the command of then LT Adolphus W. Greely, was one of two groups dispatched on the *Proteus* to the Arctic to set up a series of observation stations.

The 25-man group took provisions to Ellesmere Island to last three years. The group members agreed that they would abandon their camp by September 1883 and make their way to Littleton Island for eventual recovery.

Unfortunately, the scheduled rendezvous never came about. *Proteus* jammed in ice. It fought its way clear only to become stopped again and again. At Cape Albert, the ice became impenetrable and began piling high against the vessel. It was crushed by the ice and sank. The fate of the Greely party was one of deadly peril.

Rescue party launched

To assist the Greely party, the United States Navy organized a rescue fleet of three ships. The newly-purchased *Bear*, under command of CDR Schely, USN; the *Thetis* and the *Alert* left with national attention and the promise of a cash prize of

\$25,000 to the men and ship who would rescue Greely and his men.

At several points through the ice, search parties were sent out. What they found was disheartening.

Notes, written eight months earlier, explained that Greely's men had food to last only 40 more days.

Schely decided to continue the search, if only to return the bodies for burial at home.

Rescuers' Nightmare

On June 22, 1884, less than two months after departure, a *Bear* search party, with LT Colwell in charge, spotted what appeared to be a human standing near the edge of the cliff. On closer inspection, the men found a nightmare.

The man was totally incoherent and ranted and raved for several minutes before Colwell determined he had found LT Greely. He deciphered that there were only seven survivors of the original 25.

Greely managed to lead the group to a horrifying scene. For months, they had been surviving on rock moss, leather sledging equipment, and whatever small game they could find. Many of the group had either

died or gone mad from privation. Those who had survived resembled skeletons. The surgeon accompanying the expedition had committed suicide.

At what was left of a camp, the rescuers found one man dead and frozen. Another sat legless and armless, a spoon tied to a stump of an arm.

Others lay about the snow, so deranged and in shock they didn't realize what was happening.

With delicate care, the crew of the *Bear* nursed the survivors back to health, except for the amputee whose wounds had been preserved by the severe cold. He developed a fatal infection almost as soon as he was placed in the warmth of the ship and soon died.

Bear meets CAPT Mike

Though the ship's U.S. career had begun with a fantastic rescue, the Navy considered the ship unfit for duty. It was transferred to the Revenue Cutter Service in 1884-5 for use in Alaska.

That's where *Bear* met CAPT Mike Healy, a man known by nicknames like "Mad Mike" and "Hell-