

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

of the
**CAPE BLANCO
 HERITAGE SOCIETY**

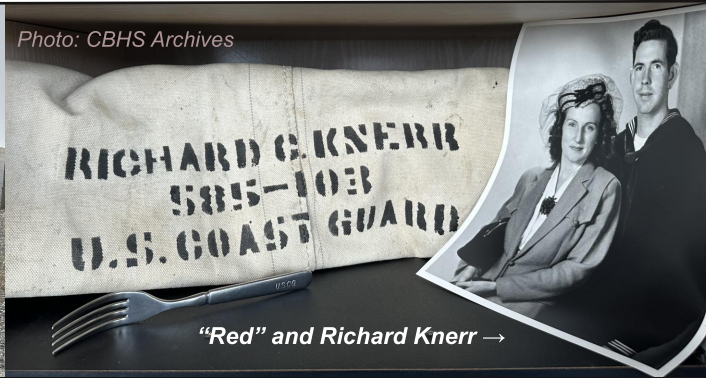


CBHS BOARD MEETINGS: Currently held at Point.B Studio at 10:00 AM on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.
PLEASE NOTE: Our meetings are open to everyone who would like to attend. We invite and encourage anyone interested in CBHS to participate!

Cape Blanco Living History ~ Memories of WWII



Photo: CBHS Archives



"Red" and Richard Knerr →



Photo: Knerr Family

L to R: Kevin, Michael and Matthew Knerr journeyed to Cape Blanco to return his kit bag and fork to the place he served as cook during WWII ('42-'44).

The Cape Blanco Lighthouse had a very special visit on September 11 2026 by the family of S1 Richard C. Knerr. His son (*Michael Knerr, born in Bandon, OR*), grandson (*Kevin*), and nephew (*Matthew*) traveled from Hermiston and Grants Pass to deliver gifts for our permanent collection in the Cape Blanco Greeting Center. In addition to these gifts, Kevin (*also a war veteran who served three tours of duty in Iraq*) read from his grandfather's memoirs recounting his experiences when he was stationed here immediately following boot camp where he "became a lighthouse keeper, beach patrolman, and eventually (*believe it or not*) a cook".

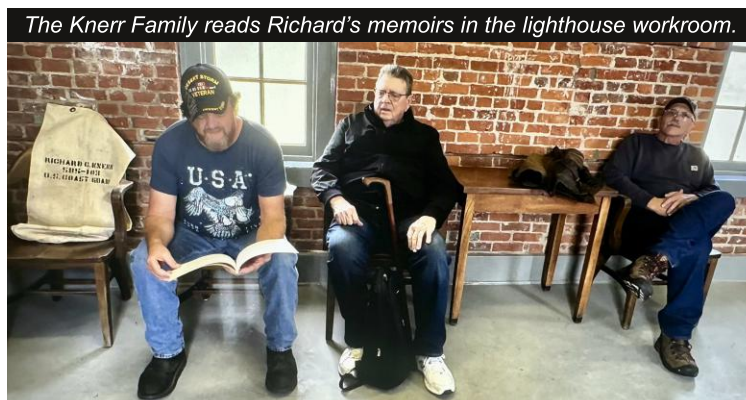
Richard's first son Paul was born soon after he was stationed at Cape Blanco. He received the news while fishing on the Sixes River. While many of his USCG mates were going out of their mind with boredom, he fell in love with the place and kept himself busy searching for gemstones, fossils, artifacts, fishing, and just looking at the ocean for hours at a time. He was assigned patrol duty and would walk nine mile patrols twice a day (*for a total of 18 daily miles*). Shortly after that Michael was born and he was informed when he was fishing once again, this time at the Port Orford Docks.

It wasn't too long before Richard took over as cook after being invited by the commanding officer at headquarters. Richard shares stories of the previous cook swabbing the floor in the galley when another coastie named Milborn came in carrying his rifle. The cook started putting him through the Manual of Arms, and part of the procedure was to back the bolt and snap the trigger and unfortunately he didn't realize there was a round in it. He fired a .30-06 right in the kitchen, scared the hell out of the cook, leaving a hole shot into the brick wall where the kitchen was (*this would have been in the early lighthouse keeper dwellings*). Another incident involved the cook making a deal for commodities that were in short supply during the war leaving "the base so far in the red we lived on beans and stew for a couple of months". After this incident, he was back cooking until the end of the war.

Richard wrote: "I didn't know a darn thing about

cooking but learned fast mostly because I thought I might get lynched." The Knerrs fondly remember his fantastic cooking and his best fried potatoes.

Richard and his wife Katherine (*Red*) lived close to the cliffs of Port Orford. Richard's memoir recalls Red standing looking out over the ocean, when suddenly she turned around and went running down the hill with her hair flying in the wind. Richard saw this huge blimp come over the hill directly behind her and it was chasing her about 30 feet over her head and every time she would turn the blimp would follow her. The guys in the blimp were having a good time laughing and waving their arms. The blimp would come and drop oranges to people at the Port Orford Lifeboat Station and Cape Blanco. ✨



The Knerr Family reads Richard's memoirs in the lighthouse workroom.

Our next Living History Movie will feature more of Knerr's memoir.

Changing Landscape: The Cape Blanco Lighthouse Greeting Center

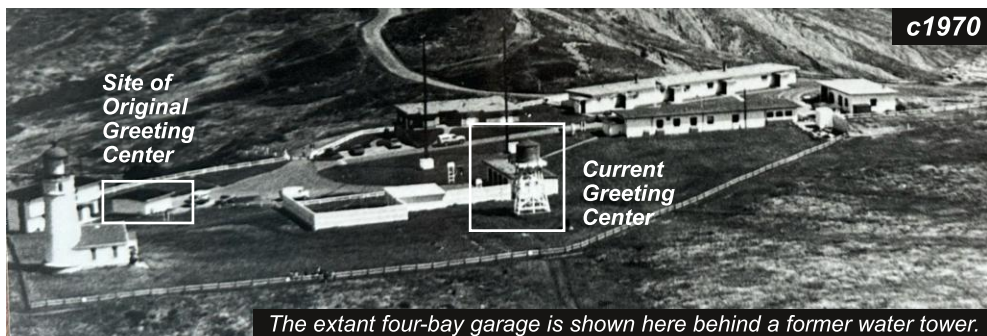
The Greeting Center was formerly housed in another building adjacent to the lighthouse.



SPECIAL THANKS to Lifetime CBHS Member Milton Nelson for contacting us regarding our recent mention of the Cape Blanco Greeting Center (*Heritage Journal*, Volume 16/Issue 3). Milt states that the opening in the renovated 4-bay garage was earlier than previously published accounts of 2015/16. Milt was treasurer then and remembers opening as early as 2012. This has inspired a closer look into timelines and the era of the USCG grounds.

The Cape Blanco Greeting Center and the grounds during the USCG era (1939 and onward) have an interesting history. The garage is one of the last extant buildings of that era. "Garage #2" was first constructed in 1953 with the first of three USCG garages being built in 1946. The latter is often cited as the extant garage construction date. (Garage #2 is identified as the extant garage

in the excellent "Cape Blanco Lighthouse: Historical Investigations" by Stephen Dow Beckham). The photo at right shows the grounds in 1959; the one below is after the removal of the two lighthouse keeper dwellings (1965 and 1967, respectively, which dates this photo c1970). New buildings are pictured on the landscape including the site of the original Greeting Center to the right of the lighthouse. We will update our research into the changing landscape of Cape Blanco in the next issue of the *Heritage Journal*. ✨



Become a MEMBER of the CAPE BLANCO HERITAGE SOCIETY



OUR MISSION: To provide interpretative and educational services for the Cape Blanco Light Station, Historic Hughes House and Ranch and the Port Orford Lifeboat Station. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax-deductible.

Mail this portion of the form with your check made out to:
Cape Blanco Heritage Society. P.O. Box 1132 Port Orford, Oregon 97465.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION	MEMBERSHIP TYPE	DUES
NAME:	INDIVIDUAL	\$ 15
ADDRESS:	FAMILY	\$ 25
CITY/STATE/ZIP:	BUSINESS or ASSOCIATE	\$ 50
PHONE:	CITIZEN HISTORIAN	\$ 100
EMAIL:	BENEFACTOR	\$250—\$500
FAVORITE CBHS SITE:	LIFETIME MEMBER/MAJOR GIFT	\$1,000
	TOTAL ENCLOSED:	