

1989 part 2

6. 1989 NBSAC Propeller Guard Subcommittee: Existing Propeller Accident Statistics

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The Subcommittee is Formed

The propeller guard subcommittee was formed at NBSAC's May 11, 1988 meeting, see chart at right. Initial members included:

1. Jim Getz, subcommittee chairman and Conservation Officer for the State of Illinois.
2. Robert Lincoln, OMC Public Relations Director and Director of Environmental Affairs.
3. Don Kerlin of USCG
4. William Fast, later indicted for union election mail fraud that occurred during his time on the subcommittee.
5. Roy Montgomery, Mercury Marine's corporate lawyer was added about a month later, along with two more men, increasing the number of subcommittee members from four to seven.

While not a member, Dick Snyder, Mercury Marine's in house expert witness in boat propeller strike cases attended the subcommittee meetings, presented to the subcommittee, rebutted presentations by others, and wrote numerous letters to the subcommittee chairman. Several of his "Snyderisms" were included in the final report.

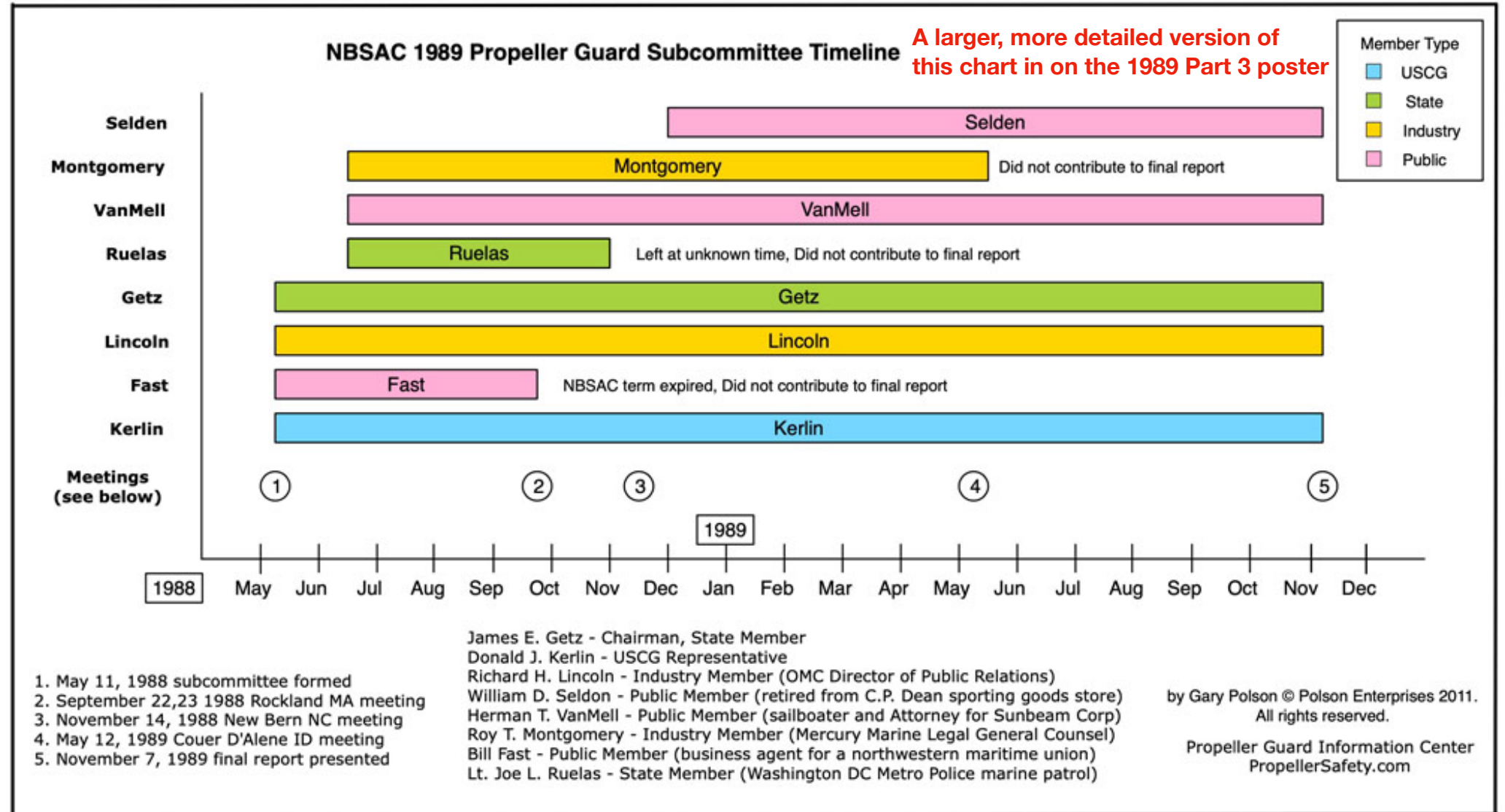
Actual BARD Propeller Accident Data

U.S. Coast Guard Boating Accident Report Database records accidents as a series of 3 Events. Many mistakenly use Event 1 data as representing the total number of accidents or fatalities.

For example, Al Marmo of USCG's letter labeled **SP2** on the large chart on the 1989 part 3 poster provided 1984 data to Dick Snyder. The data Marmo supplied showed a total of 41 "struck by boat or propeller" fatalities vs. the 8 Event 1 "struck by boat or propeller" fatalities listed in USCG's 1984 annual Boating Statistics report.

For 1984 Snyder only counted the 8 Event 1 "struck by boat or propeller" fatalities, then summed that with similar data from recent years, came up with an annual average, then reduced that by 1/3 for those he said were "stuck by boat". Then Snyder subtracted those who were struck by a propeller and drowned which amounted to about another 1/3 of the fatalities.

In the same letter, Marmo supplied 1986 data showing 59 "stuck by boat or motor fatalities" vs. the 16 Event 1 fatalities showing in USCG's 1986 annual Boating Statistics report.



Don Kerlin Accident Data

Don Kerlin of USCG was a member of the subcommittee. He updated a 1978 study of propeller accidents with more current data and supplied raw BARD data (challenging for people to understand) to the subcommittee.

One of the charges to the subcommittee was to look for trends in propeller accident data (increasing or decreasing over time). The subcommittee made no statement about trends in accident data.

We plotted the data Don Kerlin provided to them. The red trend line obviously rapidly increases which did not fit with the subcommittee's narrative.

Mr. Kerlin himself was asked about propeller accident counts by the press shortly after the subcommittee released their findings and he responded with Event 1 data.

