



Above, *The Galaxy* photographed from the Coast Guard helicopter. Shoemaker and two crewmates await rescue on the bow. [Click on the image for more information.](#)

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## Lessons from the Galaxy

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# TRAGEDY AND COURAGE ON THE BERING SEA

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### A First Person Narrative by Captain Dave Shoemaker

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*Shoemaker conducting a drill in 2009*

It was just another day at the office on the Bering Sea on the afternoon of October 20, 2002, with 20-foot seas and 30-knot winds. There were 25 men and a woman aboard the 190-foot freezer longliner *Galaxy* when the crew detected smoke on multiple decks. Within four minutes, the first violent explosion rocked the vessel and blew three members of the starboard fire team through the gear setting hatch at the stern and 30 feet through the air, into the frigid water. Even as he exhorted his crew to focus their minds on survival, Captain Dave Shoemaker, the ex-Marine and devout Christian, knew they were too far from civilization for credible hope of rescue. With his radios melting off the wheelhouse bulkheads and most of his survival gear consumed in flames, Shoemaker battled insurmountable odds and his own certainty that he and his crewmates were about to die. Today, he uses the term *divine intervention* to explain the VHF contact that enabled all but three of them to survive their journey to the gates of Hell and back. Now, hear the story straight from Captain Shoemaker's lips. It's a narrative every seaman should hear, and heed. *Lessons from the Galaxy* offers incontrovertible proof that safety training is a critical aspect of vessel operations, because it *can* happen to you. This is an educational DVD that will make your crew sit up and take notice.

*Background image. The last sighting of the burned out Galaxy after 23 of 26 crewmembers have been rescued. [Click here to see a video trailer and order your copy of the DVD.](#)*

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