THE ANDREA GAIL

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"Fishing on the Grand Banks," illustration by Le Breton, from *Voyage a Terre Neuve* ("Journey to Newfoundland"), published in 1860 by Arthur comte de Gobineau (at page 409). Online, courtesy Memorial University of Newfoundland.

When fishing boats are in the North Atlantic Grand Banks, they are days away from land. Captains cannot "make a run" for safe harbor when storms strike. There are no harbors at sea.

Like generations of fishermen before them, Billy Tyne and his five experienced crewmen knew that fact when they left Gloucester harbor in late September 1991. All sword fishermen know. It goes with the job.

Andrea Gail, the ship which was lost during 1991's "Perfect Storm." Photo online, courtesy US Coast Guard.

Billy was skipper of the *Andrea Gail*, a 72-foot "long-liner." Loaded with ice from Cape Pond Ice (whose t-shirts

are featured in the movie) and enough supplies to last the long trip, the *Andrea Gail* was making the last Grand Banks run of the season. The crew hoped it would be profitable. The sooner they got the catch they needed (more than 40,000 pounds of swordfish), the sooner they could get back home.

Although they left Gloucester at different times, the *Andrea Gail* was part of a "fleet" of about twenty-five swordfishing vessels. Her sister ship, the *Hannah Boden*, was a 100-foot long-liner skippered by Linda Greenlaw, the only woman captain in the fleet. Bob Brown owned both boats.

Swordfishing crews share the profits of each trip. Once the owner and supplies are taken care of, everyone else splits what's left. The hope is something's left. Sometimes the profits are great. Sometimes they're slim.

On this last trip of the season, Billy Tyne and his crew weren't catching as many fish as they needed to come home quickly. By the middle of October, they barely had enough swordfish on board to break even. But pounds of fish would soon be the least of worries for these long-liners.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
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Media Stream

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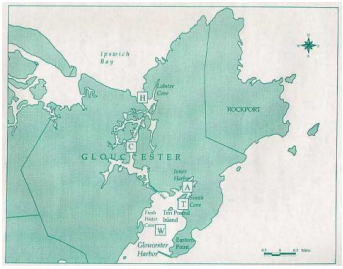

Perfect Storm - Gloucester Harbor, Map Locator
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Andrea Gail - Ship Lost at Sea During the Perfect Storm
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Hannah Boden - Sister Ship to the Andrea Gail
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