This is the Summer 2012 newsletter. As usual it is later than it should be!! February 18, 2012 was the 60th anniversary of the greatest small boat rescue in the history of the Coast Guard. There were events in Boston and Chatham to commemorate the event. One of the heroes of the rescue was BM1 Bernie Webber. In April of this year, the CGC Bernard C. Webber, the first 154 foot Sentinel class cutter, was commissioned in Miami Florida. The Lightship Memorial, dedicated to all who lost their lives aboard lightships, is located in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Jack McGrath
editor

As we prepared this newsletter, the Coast Guard Heritage Museum crew was greatly saddened by the loss of two of the members of the Board of Directors.

James L. Baird, Jr., was an active board member and a guide at the museum. He was also an active member of the USCG Auxiliary.

CDR Benjamin Muse, Jr., USCGR (ret) was a long-time member of our Honorary Board of Directors.

Both will be missed.
BECOME A MEMBER!

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES & DUES

**Individual** – $25  Single membership in the CGHM with all member privileges, including attending annual meeting with no voting privilege, individual admission to the museum, and a 10% gift shop discount.

**Family** - $40 Same as individual, but with additional admissions to the museum for immediate family. One person may attend annual meeting with no voting privilege.

**Supporting Member**- $100  Unlimited Museum admission & 10% discount. This is for those who want to support museum but not actively participate.

**Sustaining Member** - $250 – For those who want to show a greater level of support for the museum. Unlimited admission and 10% discount apply.

**Guardian**: 3 donor levels – Guardians receive all benefits of membership. The Guardian category includes individual recognition at the museum. The 3 categories are:

**Captain’s circle**: $500+

**Admiral’s circle**: $1,000+

**Commandant’s circle $2,500 +**
The museum received great news from the Town of Barnstable this Spring. The Community Preservation Committee approved the town’s application for funding to repair and refurbish the windows and other structural items at the museum building. The work should begin this Fall and will stop dampness issues as well as allowing us to open a few windows in the hot weather!

We have expanded the Revenue Cutter Service display at the museum. We also have a special exhibit on the Pendleton/Fort Mercer rescue for the anniversary year. (below)
In February 2012, the Coast Guard recognized the 60th anniversary of the Pendleton & Fort Mercer rescues with events in Boston, First District Headquarters, and in Chatham, site of the rescues. Rear Admiral Dan Neptun, then Commander of the First District, was present at both ceremonies, along with Congressman Bill Keating, who represents Cape Cod. Andy Fitzgerald, only surviving member of the CG36500 crew, was present at both events, along with the families of Bernie Webber, Richard Livesey, and Ervin Maske, the other crewmen. Also present was Retired Coast Guard Senior Chief Engineer Charles Bridges, the sole surviving member of the Pendleton crew, who joined the Coast Guard after the rescue. LCDR Herb Eggert, CO of the CGC Bernard C. Webber, the first 154 foot Sentinel-Class cutter. All the cutters in this class will be named for enlisted Coast Guard Heroes. The crews involved in the lesser-known rescue of the Fort Mercer were also recognized, including Ensign William Kiely of the CGC Yakutat, who received the CG Gold Life-saving medal for his efforts, as did the CG36500 crew. The rest of Kiely’s small boat crew received the CG Silver Life-saving medal.
70 RESCUED IN FIERCE NOR’EASTER:
COAST GUARD CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY
OF DARING 1952 RESCUE

Coast Guard Makes High Sea Rescue
After Tankers Snap In Two Off Cape

On February 18, 1952, a severe nor’easter with bitter cold, snow, sleet and howling winds swept through New England. East of Cape Cod 70-knot winds and 60-foot seas battered two 503-foot merchant vessels, which had not been able to make it to port. Forty miles apart the SS Fort Mercer and the SS Pendleton met the full force of the storm and broke in two, stranding 84 half-frozen survivors aboard four separate hulls, not knowing if or when they would be rescued. Only the Fort Mercer was able to send an SOS out.

The rescue operation called for the use of cutters, small lifeboats, an airplane, a sea-going tug, rubber life rafts and exposure suits, but most of all it called for the raw courage and skill of the Coast Guardsmen. The rescue crews went about their duties drenched by icy water, without food for hours at a time and death riding on every wave.

At the end of the day 70 men were rescued by the Coast Guard, Coast Guardsmen aboard the Chatham 36-foot Motor Lifeboat, 36383, and Cutters Eastwind, Unimak, Yakutat, Achashmeet and McCulloch rescued 38 men from the Fort Mercer and the four-man crew of the Chatham 36-foot Motor Lifeboat, 36500, rescued 32 men from the Pendleton.

The 36500 crew and Ensign William Kiely, the coxswain of the Coast Guard Cutter Yakutat’s small boat, received the Coast Guard’s highest award, the Gold Lifesaving Medal, and four others received the Coast Guard’s second highest award, the Silver Lifesaving Medal.

Sixty years later, the Pendleton rescue is still considered one of the greatest small boat rescues in Coast Guard history.

Schedule of Events

Noon: Opening remarks by Adm. Daniel Neptun, 1st Coast Guard District Commander
Followed by guest speaker Andy Fitzgerald, last living crewman from 36500 rescue crew
2 pm: Wreath laying ceremony at Chatham bar
4:30 pm: Remembrance ceremony at Chatham Fish Pier
Throughout day there will be:
• Historical artifacts and photographs located throughout Station Chatham
• Guests speaking at Station mess deck
• Lighthouse tours
• Station Chatham tours
• Breeches buoy demonstrations at Station
• Tours of a Jayhawk helicopter at Station
• Tours of 27-foot Station boat at Station
• Tours of the 36500, and two 42-foot Station boats at Chatham Fish Pier

*Light refreshments are available in the Station boathouse
Coast Guard 36500 Motor Lifeboat
Chatham, Mass.

The CG36500 is nothing short of a floating museum. Built in 1946, she performed admirably during her years of service at the Chatham, Mass., Lifeboat Station.

The CG36500 is a Gold Medal boat made famous by its crew of four in the February 18th, 1952, rescue of 32 survivors of the ill-fated tanker Pendleton, during a tremendous 70-knot northeasterly storm. Four Coast Guardmen took the 36500 out in this wild storm in what seemed an impossible mission. They each received the Gold Life Saving Medal for getting to the scene under almost impossible conditions and heroically rescuing the 32 crewmen from the Pendleton. They returned to the Chatham Fish Pier with 32 rescued crewmen.

Decommissioned in 1968, CG36500 was left to deteriorate until Bill Quinn and the Orleans Historical Society intervened, acquired ownership, and executed a comprehensive restoration. Homeported in Rock Harbor in Orleans, Mass., the restored, fully functional 36-foot Motor Lifeboat now once again travels the waters on Cape Cod and beyond.

The CG36500 sports a GM Detroit 4-71 diesel engine, built in 1948. The most recent and extensive restoration entailed the replacement of all decks, cabin tops and bulkheads. Afterward, the boat was taken to Mystic, Conn., for the 2009 Wooden Boat Show where she won the prestigious “Judges Choice” award. Similar awards were garnered at a boat show in Salem, Mass., the following August.

The 36500 and its sister boat, the 36,383, were replaced at Station Chatham with the 44-foot Motor Lifeboats, which has since been replaced by new 42-foot Special Purpose Craft - Near Shore Lifeboats. Due to the shallow and always changing sand bars off of Chatham, the station requires a different Search and Rescue platform. They are the only unit in the Coast Guard to have these special boats.
The Fort Mercer Rescuers
The Silver and Gold Lifesaving Medal recipients

On February 18, 1952, during a violent wind gale, the tanker SS Fort Mercer broke in two in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Cape Cod, Mass. Some time later, the Coast Guard Cutter Yakutat arrived on scene to render assistance. The seas were extremely high and very rough, with northwest winds between forty and fifty miles per hour. Visibility was poor, with intermittent snow squalls. Due to the existing weather conditions and darkness, the Yakutat could not make successful rescue attempts at that time.

On the following morning, the Yakutat launched a motor surfboat with Ensign William R. Kiely, Jr., as coxswain and Ensign Gilbert E. Carmichael, EN 2 Paul R. Black, SA Edward A. Mason, Jr., and SN Webster G. Terveilligen as volunteer crew members. The motor surfboat, which was damaged by heavy seas while being lowered from Yakutat, was skillfully maneuvered to the unstable bow section of the Fort Mercer, and encouraged the survivors to jump into the water, close to the boat, so that they could be picked up.

On the first pass, the surfboat was lifted and swept against the hull of the Fort Mercer. However, two survivors leaped into the water and were recovered by the skillful seamanship and daring of Kiely and his crew. The motor surfboat was now severely damaged and in a sinking condition, and it was necessary to return to the Yakutat. Using a rubber life raft, the other two survivors were taken off the bow section of the Fort Mercer, which capsized less than twenty minutes later.

The following information was on the reverse side of an official Coast Guard photograph: "The Yakutat spent the night of the 18th trying to shoot lines to the bow section of Fort Mercer. The 50-knot winds and 35-foot swells foiled all attempts at rescue operations. At daylight next morning, the motor surfboat was lowered, and it fought its way to Fort Mercer's bow. The men would have to jump overboard and be taken aboard the Monomoy. The crew of Mercer wanted the ailing master to jump overboard first because of his weakened condition. He was reluctant to leave his ship but the crew said he must jump or they would throw him overboard. He jumped and he was picked up. As the surfboat snatched a second man from the sea it was dashed into the side of the Fort Mercer's bow. Damaged and leaking, it was forced to return to the Yakutat. Then it was able to return. It considered a miracle in itself. The remaining two men were rescued by means of rubber rafts, with all too few minutes to spare."

For their heroic efforts, Kiely was awarded the Coast Guard Gold Lifesaving Medal and his crew received the Coast Guard's 2nd highest award, the Silver Lifesaving Medal.

The Gold Lifesaving Medal was established on June 20, 1874. It is awarded by the Commandant of the Coast Guard to any person who rescues or endeavors to rescue any other person from drowning, shipwreck or other peril of water. To merit the award of the Gold Lifesaving Medal, the rescue or attempted rescue must be made at great risk to one's own life and show extreme heroic daring.

The Silver Lifesaving Medal was also established on June 20, 1874, and is awarded by the commandant of the Coast Guard to any person who rescues or endeavors to rescue any other person from drowning, shipwreck or other peril of water. To merit the award of the Silver Lifesaving Medal, the rescue must involve such significant effort that it merits recognition, but not at the level recognized by the Gold Lifesaving Medal.

To receive either of the medals, the rescue or attempted rescue must either take place in waters within the United States or subject to its jurisdiction, or one of the parties must be a citizen of the United States or be from a vessel or aircraft owned or operated by citizens of the United States.

Despite extremely heavy seas, the Coast Guard Cutter Yakutat puts over a motor self-bailing surfboat to remove two ill survivors from the bow of the Fort Mercer.

Crewmen of the Coast Guard Cutter Yakutat draw in a rubber life raft with the last two survivors from the bow section of the broken tanker Fort Mercer. Twenty minutes later the broken hulk heaved into the air and turned keel upward to sink into the sea.

Three survivors from the Fort Mercer are shown aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Eastwind Feb. 21, 1952.
Andy Fitzgerald, CG36500 Engineman

Rear Admiral Dan Neptun (center), CGD1 Commander, (a Surfman), with Andy on CG36500
Andy Fitzgerald (r), with Last Pendleton Survivor Charles Bridges. Bridges later joined the Coast Guard and retired as a Senior Chief Engineer.
CGC Eastwind sends a raft down a line to Fort Mercer

ENS. Kiely and crew in CGC Yakutat surfboat
The **Bernard C. Webber**, the first ship of the new “Sentinel” Class of 154 foot patrol cutters, was commissioned on April 14, 2012 in Miami Florida. All of the new class will be named for Coast Guard enlisted heroes. The first is named for Bernie Webber, one of the leaders of the famed “Pendleton” rescue. These ships will eventually replace the 110 foot “Island” class cutters. The first 12 will be stationed in Florida. The CGHM was represented at the ceremony at the invitation of LCDR Herb Eggert, the CO, who has a great appreciation of the legacy of Bernie Webber.
**USCGC BERNARD C. WEBBER (WPC 1101)**

**BLAZON**

**SHIELD:** Per chevron abased Celeste and Azure, a saltire Gules edged Argent between in chief twenty (20) compasses, six (6) and six (6) all of the second and in base two anchors in saltire Or.

**CREST:** From a wreath Argent and Celeste, a life ring of the first garnished Gules, the inscription “CHATHAM LEGENDS” arched above and “FEBRUARY 18 1952” arched below of the last, charged with the representation of the Old CG 36500 on rough waves, issuant to sinister proper.

**SUPPORTERS:** On either side of the shield, two oar Or.

**MOTTO:** A scroll Argent, edged Gules, doubles Azure inscribed “DETERMINATION HEEDS NO INTERFERENCE” of the last.

**SYMBOLISM**

**SHIELD:** Blue, red, and white are the colors traditionally associated with the Coast Guard. The lighter blue on the upper portions of the shield is the official color used by the Coast Guard and signifies the coastal waters off Station Chatham. The darker blue on the lower portion denotes the treacherous seas beyond a seemingly impassable bar that Petty Officer Webber and his volunteer crew of three faced on the night of February 18th 1952. The four Coast Guardsmen persevered and rescued the thirty-two sailors, one by one, from the stem of the tanker, illustrated by the thirty-two compasses. The crossed anchors denote Petty Officer Webber’s Boatswain Mate rate. The saltire is adapted from the state flag of Florida, where the USGCC BERNARD C. WEBBER is based. The shape of the seal alludes to law enforcement and is one of the primary missions of the cutter.

**CREST:** The Old CG 36500 rides rough waves through a lifesaving ring. The CG 36500 was the lifeboat used on this daring rescue that many believed to be a suicide mission. It was under-equipped for 60-foot seas, hurricane force winds, a blizzard, and with no radar or compass. The boat was only rated for only 20 passengers, but brought home a total of 36. In 2002 Webber and his crew steered the restored CG 36500 over the Chatham Bar again on the 50th anniversary of the rescue. The ring denotes the daring rescue by Petty Officer Webber and is also representative of one of the primary missions tasked to the USCGC BERNARD C.WEBBER.

**SUPPORTERS:** The oars symbolize the search and rescue mission and represent the four crew members: Bernard C. Webber, Andrew Fitzgerald, Richard Livesey, and Irving Maske. Webber initially refused the Gold Lifesaving Medal when he learned the other three men would receive the Silver Medal. The Coast Guard awarded all four Coast Guardsmen the Gold Medal. The oars are colored gold to represent this accomplishment.

06/08/2010 SP
Pattie Hamilton, daughter of Bernie Webber and sponsor of the CGC Bernard C. Webber with Admiral Bob Papp, Commandant of the Coast Guard, left, and LCDR Herb Eggert, CO of the Webber, rear, at the Commissioning ceremony in Miami.

History board in CGC Webber galley, created by Pete Kennedy, CG36500 volunteer & Bernie’s friend.
Sinking of the Vineyard Lightship and the Lightship Memorial

During the great Atlantic hurricane of September 14-15, 1944, the Lightship Vineyard [LV 73] sank off Sow & Pigs reef near Cuttyhunk Island. Onboard were 12 crewmen who lost their lives in the sinking. There were five crewmembers ashore on leave, including Harold Flagg. They became known as the “lucky Five”.

For 40 years Harold tried to honor his crew members with the salvaged bell off the LV 73, which was retrieved 19 years after the sinking by Brad Luther’s team of divers [Fairhaven Whalers Diving Club] who were using a new form of sonar developed by Doctor Harold Edgerton of MIT that could chart the Ocean bottom. Brad Luther and Dr. Edgerton decided to try it out on the search for the Vineyard Lightship. On September 9th Brad and his team dove on a wreck thought to be LV 73. Another target was spotted on August 12th but it was not confirmed until September 9th when divers dove on the wreck.

Found in the midst of the rubble was a giant bell. They then knew they had found the Vineyard lightship. On September 22, 1963 the bell was salvaged by Brad’s crew on the Sylvia Mae. [This was the start of the Lightship Memorial.]

The bell ended up with the Cape Cod National Sea Shore on display at the old Nauset Coast Guard Station, which now belongs to the National Sea Shore. Years later, Harold went to see the bell and found kids throwing rocks at it. After contacting some Coast Guard people, Harold was able to remove the bell from that area.

Harold was then able to have the bell placed on the old Pollock Rip lightship WLV 536 which was being given to the city of New Bedford by GSA to become a museum with New Bedford painted on the side. [There never was a New Bedford Lightship.]
After 30 years of neglect by the City and despite numerous letters to three different Mayors of New Bedford dealing with the ship by Bill Collette, it continued to be disgraced by that City of New Bedford.

In 2005 I went to a Lightship talk held at Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster and met Harold Flagg, the speaker. Impressed with Harold’s talk and that the Vineyard never got much publicity in its sinking because it was WW II, I asked Harold if he would like to throw a wreath and say some words over the position of the sinking of LV 73 if I could make it happen. He said yes.

On August 13, 1995 onboard Menemsha Station’s Coast Guard 41418 [which I had arranged with the OINC of Menemsha, a friend and fellow Senior Chief] we had a small ceremony at sea for the LV 73. A wreath was thrown from the deck, after which Doug Bingham, of the American Lighthouse Foundation, and Harold Flagg spoke to honor the crew who died on LV73. It was a touching ceremony and one I will never forget.

Then came the nightmare. I had to try to get the bell off the now New Bedford Lightship to have put in a museum or some other suitable location to honor the LV 73 ship’s sinking.

I had set up a replacement bell to swap with the City’s which was off a lightship which I believe was the original bell from the Pollock Rip which the Vineyard bell replaced before New Bedford received the ship.

Three years of fights with City officials, Northeast Maritime Institute, the Drydock Project, Coast Guard involvement, threats to CG officials etc. etc. followed. Finally the representative appointed by the City [Tourist Director] Art Motta Jr. who was one of the first common sense people I met, and later became a good friend, met with us and we decided to have the bell represent all lightship sailors who died on duty as an outside monument in New Bedford. We both would consult with Harold Flagg on what was proposed, to get his input and try to meet
everyone’s or at least most concerns in order to make it happen. Not easy and took a lot of time.

The Lightship Memorial was done in three Phases. First the main ceremony on September 15th 1999, 55 years after the LV 73 sinking and now LV 73’s bell now the centerpiece of the Lightship Memorial. Then Phase two would be to have the names of all the lightship men who could be found through records etc. engraved on the memorial stone. Harold was afraid he would die [Harold was kept alive on experimental drugs than] before we raised the money to complete the final Phase and I was forced into doing two sides in Phase II, on the North side LV 73 Vineyard and on the South side Nantucket LV 117 and Cross Rip #6 engraving. With Phase II completed the rest of the names were added in Phase III. Phase II was completed on November 11, 2001 and Phase III was completed on August 8, 2002 with the final names found cut in the stone. Harold lived to see all three.

Not the end of the story.

5/26/12  As time went on and we all got older so did the Memorial to the point where it started to deteriorate with rust stains, paint on the letters missing, and paint on the pedestal in need of re-painting etc. In May, 2012, led by Everett St Louis and his wife Cathy, Ron Janard, Dave Orszak and myself, the memorial was refurbished. All are Coast Guard Heritage Museum members. My hat is off to everyone of them for keeping our history alive for future generations to see.

BZ......

Bill Collette WLV 536 Pollock Rip sailor & CGHM BOD
Everett St. Louis (l) & Ron Janard sprucing up the memorial in 2012 along with Bill Collette, who took the photo.
On March 26, 2012, a “reunion” of sorts was held at the old Salem Air Station. Organized by PA3 Connie Terrell, USCG, who took the photo, it brought together some of those who served at Salem. Attendees below.

COAST GUARD HERITAGE MUSEUM

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name: ______________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
____________________________________________
City: ________________________________________________ State:__________ ZIP__________
Phone: ________________________ EMAIL: ________________________________

USCG Connection (if any)___________________________________________________________________

Membership Level: Annual Dues
☐ INDIVIDUAL $25
☐ FAMILY $40
☐ SUPPORTING $100
☐ SUSTAINING $250

GUARDIAN
☐ CAPTAIN’S CIRCLE $500+
☐ ADMIRAL’S CIRCLE $1,000+
☐ COMMANDANT’S CIRCLE $2,500+

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Coast Guard Heritage Museum

MAIL TO: Coast Guard Heritage Museum P O Box 161, Barnstable, MA 02630

CREDIT CARD: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER

CARD NUMBER: ________________________________

EXPIRATION DATE: MONTH_____ YEAR_______

SIGNATURE: Date:
We have T-Shirts and Polo Shirts in our Gift Shop. T’s are $15, various sizes in red, blue, grey, green & stonewash. Polo’s are $30, $33 w/ pocket. Colors include blue, red, grey. Call for specific availability & shipping. We accept MC, Visa, Discover.
Bill Meininger was a BM1 who became a pilot. This very funny book is full of stories about his career that any Coastie can relate to.

$21
Members $18.90
$5 shipping

The original book about the Pendleton rescue. By the man who was there, Bernie Webber himself.

$30
Members $27
$5 shipping

A great recounting of the Pendleton rescue and the CG36500. Soon to be a motion picture (we hope)

$15
Members $13.50
$5 shipping

We have many additional titles. Please inquire.

Michael Walling has written a great tale of the Coast Guard’s actions escorting convoys in the North Atlantic

$16
Members $14.40
$5 shipping

For all you lightship sailors, here is a look at the ships that protected Cape Cod.

Now $15
Members $13.50
$5 shipping

A great photo book by Bill Quinn, longtime Cape Cod author & photographer.

$30
Members $27
$5 shipping
October 1, 2011

Dear Friend of the CGHM,

Mayday! Mayday!

That's what people say when they are in danger and need help from the Coast Guard.

Here at the Coast Guard Heritage Museum we are not in distress, but we can surely use your help! We attempt to grow and expand each year, and we always look for your support to continue to improve.

During 2011, we have added much to the museum. We revamped and expanded our Lighthouse & Lightship exhibit. We added quite a few items to our Coast Guard at War gallery, especially in the World War II and Vietnam collections. We have added a completely new exhibit on the Korean War, America's forgotten war. There have also been important additions to the Aviation section, including Rescue Swimmer items.

For the first time, we are able to give proper coverage to the Cutters, from the Revenue Cutters to the most modern Coast Guard ships. The recent de-commissioning of the CGC Chase allowed us to acquire several important artifacts, including the "Ribbon Board" that was on the bridge.

If you have visited in 2011, you have seen that we were finally able to expand our gift & book shop. Lots of good Coast Guard stuff in the shop!

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational foundation. All gifts are tax-deductible according to IRS regulations. We work closely with the USCG on preserving history, but receive no financial support from the Coast Guard or any other government agency. We depend on our membership dues, admission fees, gift shop receipts and the generous donations of friends of the Coast Guard Heritage Museum. We hope that we can count on you to make a contribution, large or small, to our efforts.

By the way, if you live here on the Cape, either full or part time, we are always in need of volunteers to help us tell the stories, or to help with the many other tasks required to keep our doors open – doors which we would like to keep open more days and hours than we are able to do at present.

We thank you for your visits, past support and interest in our Heritage. Please help us to continue to preserve and promote the remarkable legacy of the Coast Guard and its people.

Most sincerely,

William E. Collette, Senior Chief, USCG (ret)
President

MW E. Collette, Senior Chief, USCG (ret)
President