

# Town of Orleans Community Preservation Act Application 2025

The Centers for Culture and History in Orleans (CHO) request \$250,000 to construct a Boat House for the **preservation of the CG36500 vessel** which is wholly owned by the CHO and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Submitted by The Centers for Culture and History in Orleans a.k.a. The Orleans Historical Society.*

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## I. SECTION B - DETAILED NARRATIVE

### A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CG36500 motor lifeboat brings thousands of visitors to our town annually, and we want to keep the boat in Orleans. Known for “the greatest small-boat rescue in Coast Guard history” due to its 1952 rescue of 32 SS *Pendleton* crew members, the 77-year-old wooden vessel needs a building to protect it permanently. It is not practical for it to stay in the water much longer due to increasing costs, fewer experienced crew volunteers available and increasingly severe weather.

The CHO plans to build the CG36500’s new “home” in three-to-four years at an estimated cost of \$3 million. Most of the funding will come from Federal and State grants (due to the boat’s listing on the National Register of Historic Places), along with donations from private foundations and individuals. Only 10 percent of funding is being requested from the Community Preservation Fund. The building site is directly behind the Hurd Chapel, on land to be leased from the town next to the CHO’s existing campus.

### B. PROJECT GOALS

First and foremost, the CHO is building a permanent structure to preserve and protect the CG36500 in Orleans for generations to come. Second, this building will make the boat and its story accessible to the public year-round. Both long-term preservation and accessibility/education are Federal requirements for a National Register listing.

Our third goal is to provide context by exhibiting the nearly 400-year history of lifesaving in Orleans and the Outer Cape, perhaps beginning with the Sparrow-Hawk rescue in 1626 on today’s Nauset Beach. Doing so will honor the finest traditions of the U.S. Coast Guard and its predecessor organizations—the project’s fourth goal. Fifth, by building a world-class “destination” facility, we will create revenue streams for the town by attracting more visitor spending, and for the CHO via admission fees.

### C. LAND LEASE

Currently the CHO and Town of Orleans have a 99-year lease for town-owned property at 139 Main St. on which part of the Hurd Chapel sits. The term of this lease was authorized by an act of the **One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts** (House bill No. 3664) in 2016, which we understand town counsel has deemed still to be valid and in effect (as has our attorney). The CHO is

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asking the Select Board on December 13, 2023, for a change in this lease to include the additional square footage necessary for the CG36500 building. If ultimately approved by the select board, town voters must authorize the change ideally in the May 2024 Town Meeting.

Approval is likely to come with certain contingencies, such as the CHO securing a zoning variance for the School Road setback, a change of land use from residential to museum, and the CHO securing the necessary funding to complete the building project. If these or other contingencies are not met, construction will not begin and any grants awarded would be returned to the funding sources.

### **D. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND PUBLIC BENEFITS**

With over 6,000 items in its collection, the CHO is one of Orleans' largest and most trusted repositories of cultural artifacts, historic photographs and archival records. Most of the collection is preserved in the Hurd Chapel, and many are displayed in the 1834 Meetinghouse. Both the Meetinghouse and the CG36500 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We strive to broaden awareness and access to Orleans' history and heritage through the study and exhibition of our collection in an environment that is pleasant, inspiring and accessible to all.

The **VISION** of the CHO is to bring history and culture to life, thus inspiring a shared sense of community and pride in the rich heritage of Orleans. Our **MISSION** is to provide community gathering places for sharing history and culture of the area through education, events, exhibitions and programs that tell stories of its heritage and preservation for the enjoyment and discovery of residents and visitors. Essential to this public dissemination of our shared culture and history is the preservation of the buildings, the CG36500 and all the artifacts, documents and images in our collection.

According to the Community Preservation Project Application, Guidelines for Project Submission, eligible projects must address one or more of the uses outlined in the Community Preservation Act. We are applying under the Historic Preservation category as our project includes the preservation, accessibility and restoration of the CG36500, a requirement of National Register status.

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In addition, this project satisfies requirements per the following:

As stated by the Community Preservation Coalition, November 2002, in the Potential Uses of CPA Funds, funds may be used for preservation of items that “*are significant in the history, architecture, and culture of the town.*”

The Orleans Comprehensive Plan (OCP), Section 12.2, Historic Preservation and Community

Character, Goals & Policies outlines the Goals as: *"To preserve the important historic and cultural features of the Cape landscape and built environment that are critical components of Orleans' heritage and economy" (Page 12-1). "To ensure that future development and redevelopment respects the traditions and character of our historic village centers and outlying rural areas so as to protect the visual character of Orleans consistent with the Cape Cod Commission's Design Manual "Designing the Future to Honor the Past" (Technical Bulletin 96-001) (page 12-2).* The project we are proposing incorporates these Goals. In addition, the OCP identifies the Orleans Historical Society as a resource in Section 12.4.2 under Existing Levels of Protection. (Page 12.11)

Orleans is valued for its small-town nature, coastal location and historic significance. The Meetinghouse Site embodies what the town represents. With the Meetinghouse and Hurd Chapel now renovated, we feel it is time to focus our preservation efforts on a significant artifact in our collection, the CG36500. Locating the CG36500 building adjacent to our current site will create a more attractive destination for residents and visitors alike, consolidating programs and events in a cohesive, historic part of town. The new CG36500 Boat House will be reflective of the Nauset Beach Lifesaving Station that existed on the shores of Nauset Beach east of Pochet Island for nearly 50 years before its replacement in the mid 1930's. Together, the CHO buildings will enable full use of the CHO's capabilities to the benefit of the community and maximize enjoyment.

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## **II. ACTION PLAN, FINANCIAL DATA AND TIMELINE**

### **A. AMOUNT REQUESTED**

The CHO's request for \$250,000 in this grant application is to support the construction of an approximately 2,000 square-foot building adjacent to the CHO's Meetinghouse campus. It is estimated that the building, when all is complete, will cost between \$3.0 - \$3.5 million. This request for funds, along with the \$55,000 grant awarded to the CHO in the 2024 grant cycle will be less than 10% of the total cost of the project and devoted completely to the preservation of the CG36500 lifeboat in line with expectations set by the Town of Orleans.

More specific cost estimates will be provided at a later date once the architect (Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc.) as completed the work provided for in the 2024 CPC grant project. Expected completion of cost estimates is scheduled for January 2024.

### **B. TIMELINE FOR CG36500 BOAT HOUSE PROJECT**

- Continue grant applications
- Town approvals for site by 5/24
- Begin fundraising by 7/24
- Finalize plans, town reviews by 1/25
- Begin construction by 9/25
- Project completion by 9/26

# Town of Orleans Community Preservation Act Application 2025

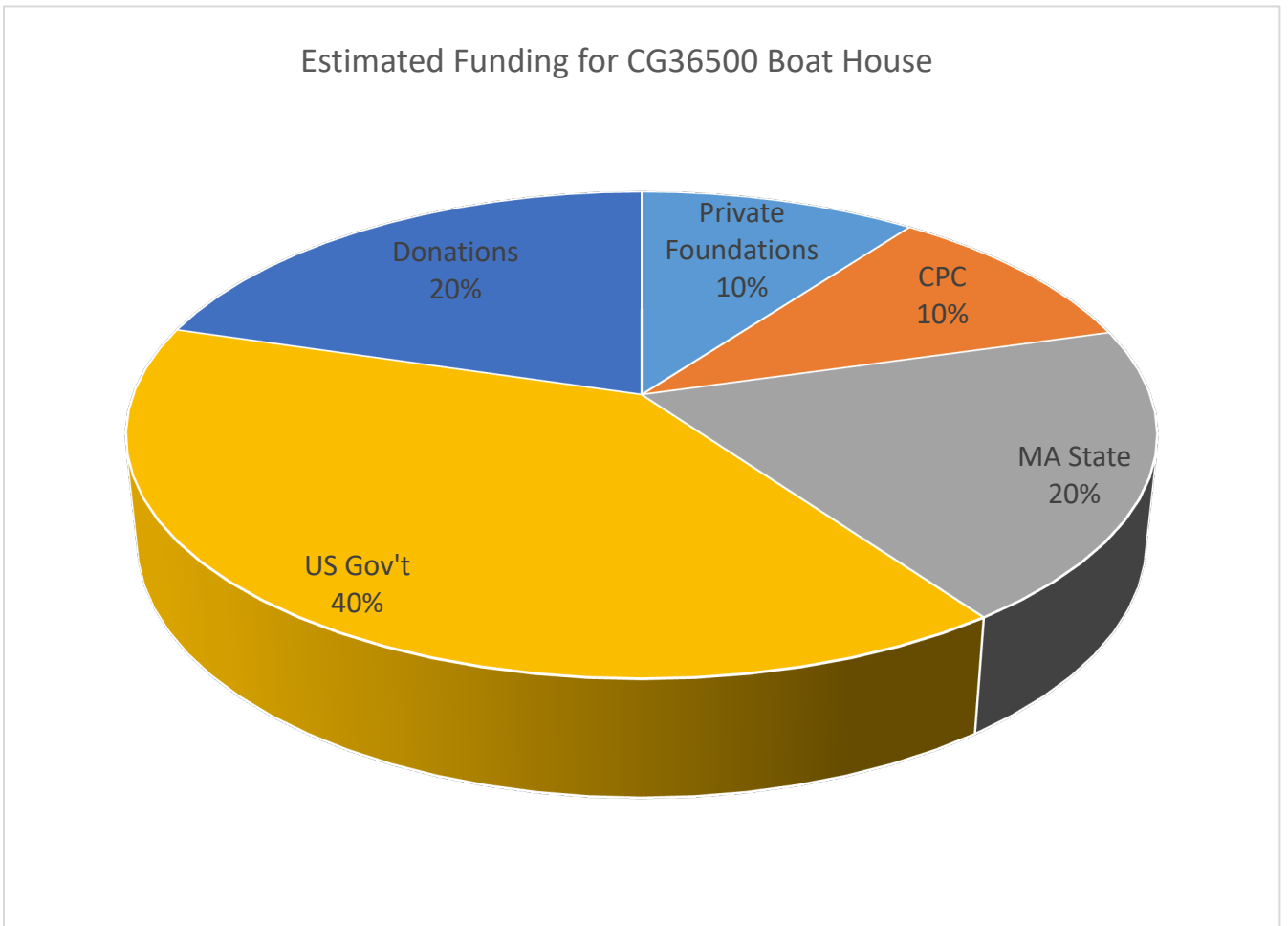
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## C. ESTIMATED FUNDING SOURCES FOR TOTAL PROJECT

Given the iconic and historic appeal of the CG36500, it is anticipated that several funding sources would be interested in supporting the project. We have had some preliminary discussions and have done considerable research regarding these funding sources and believe the following rough outline is realistic.



\*The US Government includes funding from the US Department of Agriculture and the Dept of Interior's Saving America's Treasurers Gant Program.

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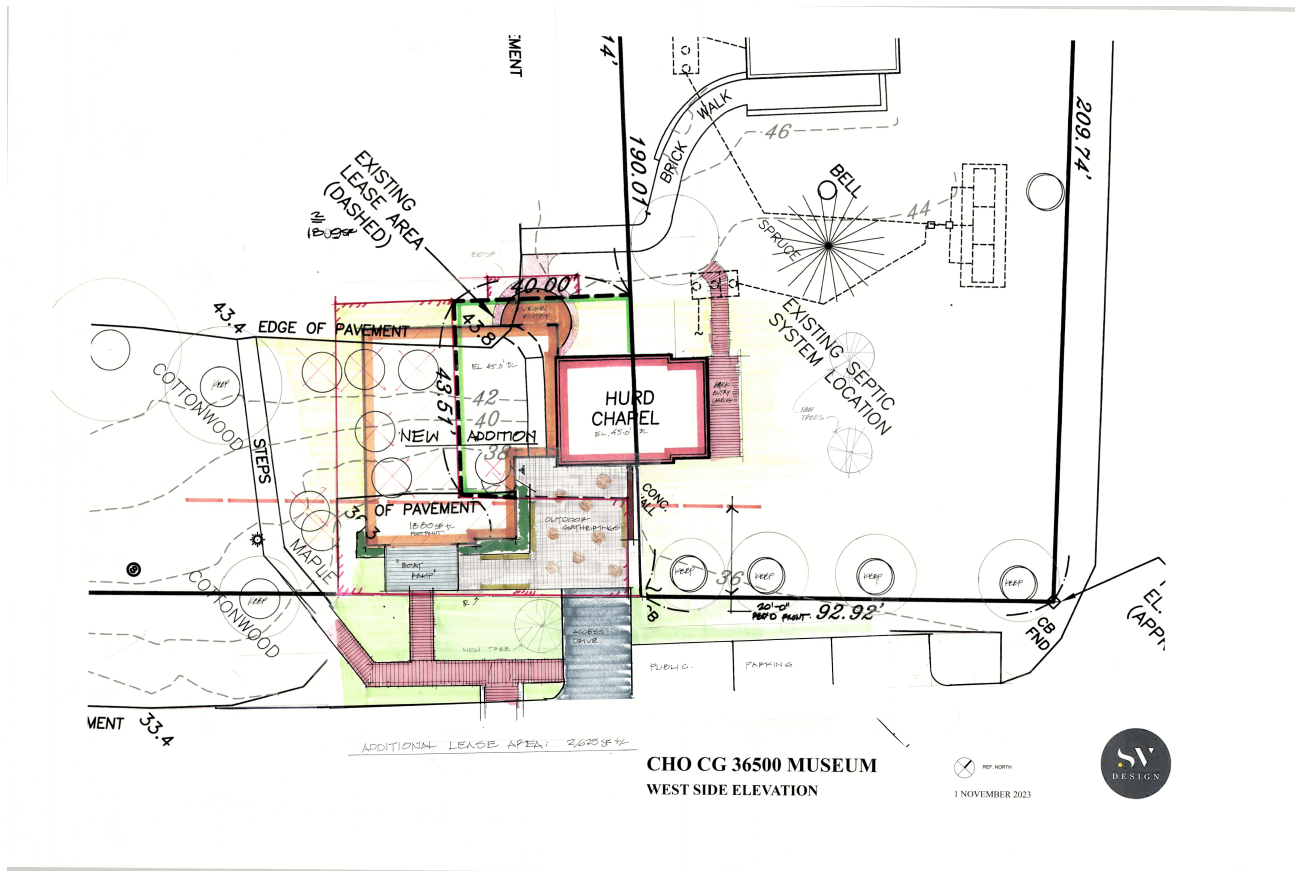
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## D. DETAILS OF CG36500 BOAT HOUSE PROJECT

- PROPOSED SITE
- BOAT HOUSE DESIGN

### PROPOSED SITE

The proposed site for the CHO Maritime Center is directly behind the Hurd Chapel between the existing parking lot and School Road. This site is a small portion of the 139 Main Street property owned by the Town of Orleans. Discussions regarding the necessary land for the building and setbacks are underway, and the project is dependent upon approval of a long-term lease for the site by the Town.



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### BOAT HOUSE DESIGN – BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The CG36500 building as currently proposed is in the shape of a reversed capital “L” with the bottom line forming a connection to the back wall of the Hurd Chapel. This connector, with a glass exterior, includes a main entrance on the parking lot side, a reception area and museum store, plus a wheelchair lift on the School Road side. The larger part of the “L” houses the boat and museum space (the latter not funded by CPA dollars).

The exterior of this structure will be cedar shingles with traditional-style windows, typical of other historical buildings on the CHO campus and throughout town. Large glass door(s) and windows on the School Road end will allow views of the back-lit boat from outside. The roofline, cedar shingle patterns and watchtower on the School Road end will be reminiscent of the old Lifesaving Service “Red House” station that stood on Nauset Beach from the 1870s to 1930s. Between the front of the building and School Road will be a small mini-park with trees/shrubs and some seating to serve as a gathering space for visitors or others using the building.

Inside, after they are greeted, visitors will see displays about the history of lifesaving providing context for the boat that is visible over a balcony rail that follows the shape of the hull below. Descending stairs to a platform at deck level, they can peer into the boat’s interior as a huge mural of the side of the *Pendleton* with a Jacob’s ladder towers over them on the wall. Going down another short flight of steps, visitors find themselves at the waterline next to the boat where much of the rescue history and artifacts will be displayed. Another short flight of steps takes people to the keel level of the boat where they can see the rudder, propeller, one-ton bronze keel and the Monel plating that protected the hull during icebreaking missions.

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While these building designs are still being finalized, the primary requests made by town staff and others have been met:

1. **Minimize traffic, parking on School Road** (main entrance is from the parking lot)
2. **Keep footprint small** (less than 2,000 sq ft and part of footprint already on leased land with Hurd connection)
3. **Stay to Hurd side of existing town path/stairs** (enabled by connection to Hurd)
4. **Have boat visible from exterior, especially at night** (large doors/windows)
5. **Retain old-growth trees, replace others** (large cottonwoods unaffected, green space in front)
6. **Have green space in front of building** (recent request addressed)
7. **Reflect “Red House” history in new structure** (in School Road gable end facing Town Hall)

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## Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Parking Lot Elevation (Front Entrance)

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CHO CG 36500 MUSEUM  
NORTH SIDE ELEVATION



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## Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – School Road Elevation



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## Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – River Road Elevation



**CHO CG 36500 MUSEUM**  
EAST SIDE ELEVATION



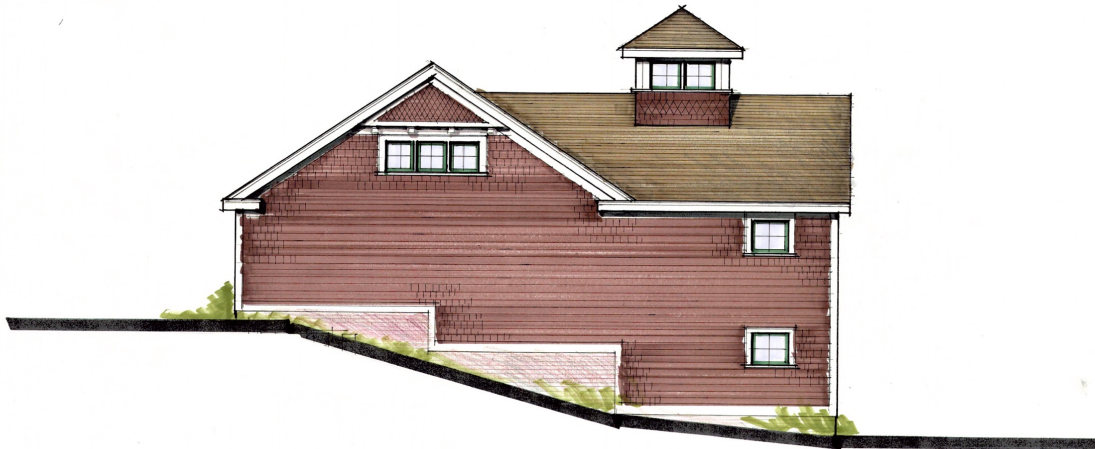
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## Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – West Side Elevation



CHO CG 36500 MUSEUM  
WEST SIDE ELEVATION



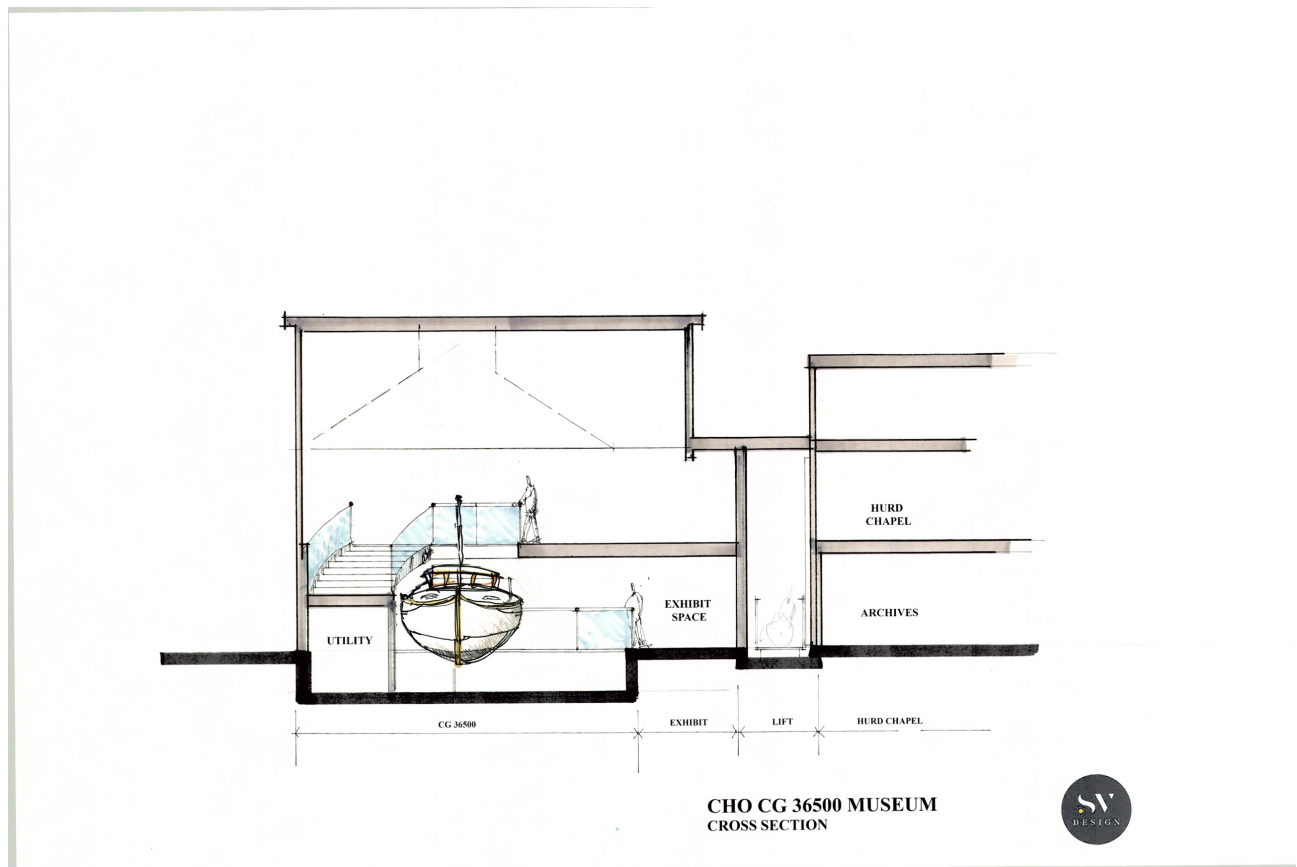
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## Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Cross Section

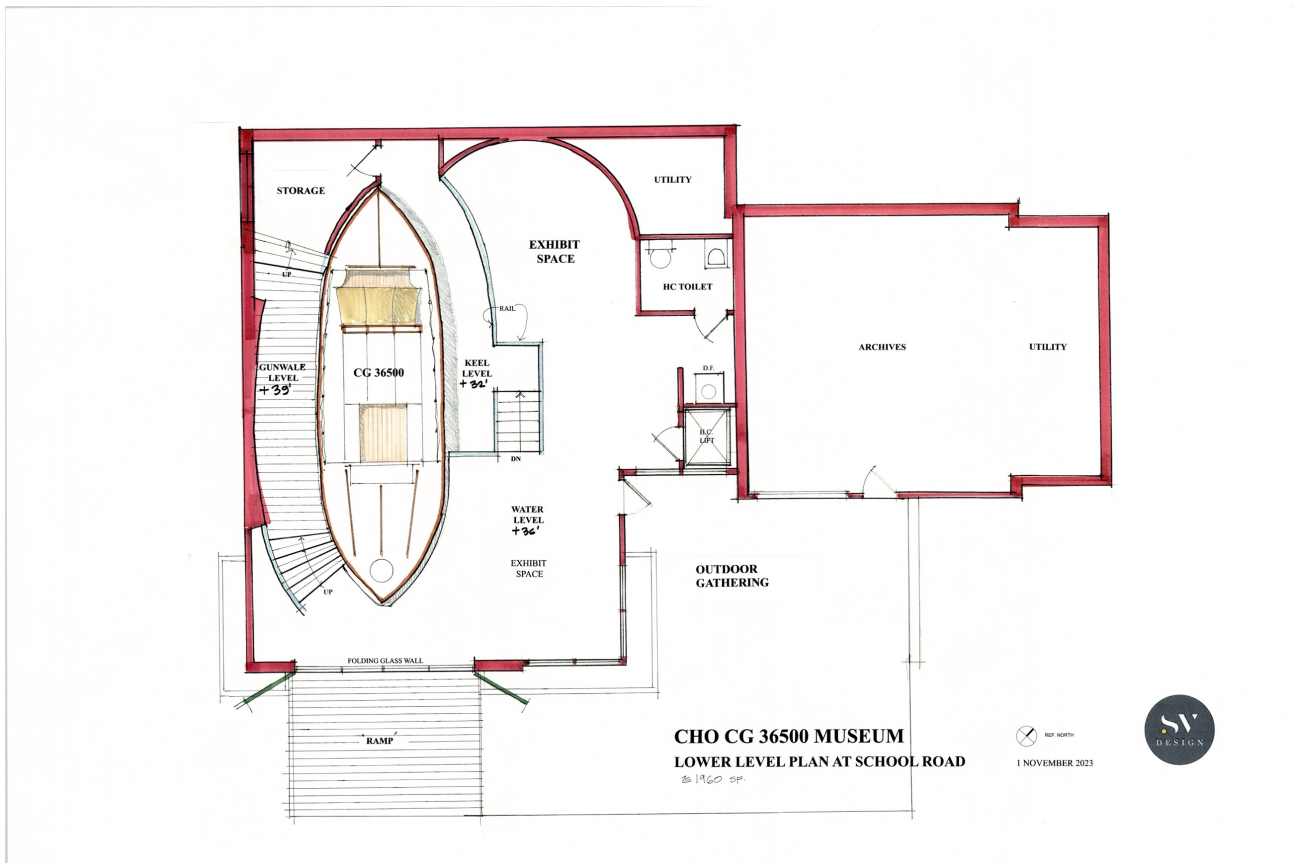


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## Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Lower Level Plan at School Road

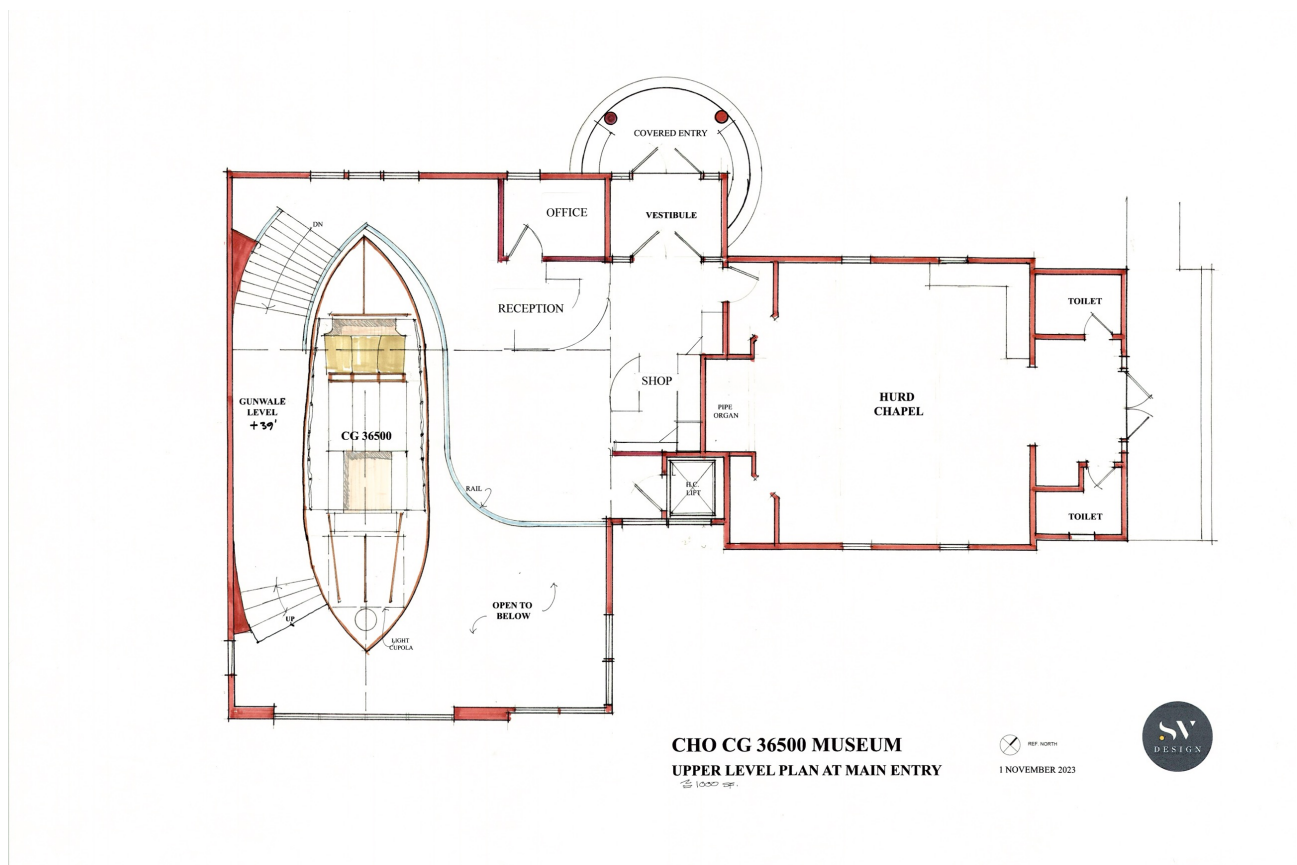


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## Thad Siemasko, SV Design, Inc. – Upper Level Plan at Main Entry



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### Attachments

1. CG36500 Background
2. Rescue
3. Restoration

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### Attachment 1

## CG 36500 GOLD MEDAL BOAT Background

The Disney film *The Finest Hours*, directed by Craig Gillespie and written by Eric Johnson and Paul Tamasy, based on the 2009 book of the same name by Casey Sherman and Michael J. Tougias was featured on CBS on January 30, 2016. The actual CG36500 motor lifeboat involved in the rescue, fully restored and operational, is owned by the Orleans Historical Society and still plies its home waters of Cape Cod.

On the night of February 18, 1952, during a raging 70-knot nor'easter snowstorm, four Coast Guardsmen (coxswain Bernard C. "Bernie" Webber, Andrew Fitzgerald, Ervin Maske and Richard Livesey) set out on the 36500 to rescue crewmen on the tanker *Pendleton* that had broken apart in a storm. Incredibly, they returned to the Chatham Live-Saving Station with 32 survivors—on a boat designed to carry half that number safely. All the "Coasties" received the Gold Life-Saving Medal for their bravery under these almost impossible conditions.

The fate of the CG36500 is a rescue story in itself. After more than two decades of Coast Guard service, the 36-foot wooden lifeboat was retired in 1968 and sat neglected and nearly forgotten for years. The Orleans Historical Society acquired the boat in 1981, and it has been carefully rebuilt and maintained by many dedicated volunteers with support of generous grants and individual donations.

Today the CG36500 is the only operating survivor of its class on the East Coast, and one of only a handful that still exists anywhere in the country. This Gold Medal boat is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and can be viewed by the public nearly year-round at its berths in Orleans (see directions on this page under "visit the boat"). Special onboard Talks and Tours are scheduled on summer weekends at Rock Harbor. Visit the Orleans Historical Society Museum to view memorabilia and read the story of an incredible night on the high seas off Chatham back in 1952.

Motor Lifeboat CG36500 was built in 1946 at Curtis Bay, Maryland Coast Guard Yard, as all 36 footers were, and stationed at the Chatham, Massachusetts Coast Guard Lifeboat Station. Like most 36's, it had an active and glorious career with many rescues. It was taken out of service in 1968 after being re-engined from a Sterling gas engine to diesel. It was replaced by the new and improved 44-foot twin diesel, all steel Motor Lifeboat. It, like the other 36's, had outlived its usefulness. There isn't much fanfare when this occurs, even

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though to many Coasties, it is a sad day. Most were destroyed, but some were saved for display at museums and historical societies.

Decommissioned in 1968, the boat was donated to the Cape Cod National Seashore for a display at their Coast Guard exhibit in Eastham. This move was never completed because of a shortage of funds for restoration. CG36500 was left to deteriorate until Bill Quinn and the Orleans Historical Society intervened, acquired ownership, and executed a comprehensive restoration. The vessel was eventually restored by OHS volunteers to her present mission; a floating museum dedicated to the memory of the Life Savers of Cape Cod. The Lifeboat now once again travels the waters on Cape Cod and beyond.

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### Attachment 2

## CG 36500 THE RESCUE

Bernard Webber, Boatswain's mate, and a crew of three made the run, their rescue craft, the motor lifeboat without a name. Old 36500 she was called. The crew: Irving Maske, Andrew Fitzgerald, and Richard P. Livesey. Four men and a motor lifeboat, not expecting to get to the Pendleton, not expecting to rescue anyone if they did, not expecting to make it back over the perilous bar ... not expecting to live.

They managed; in spite of every adversity the sea could produce. Going over the bar, the little boat was pounded by a huge wave and much of its rescue equipment was lost. The compass was dislodged ... the one piece of equipment that would help them find the drifting section of the tanker with the crew members still aboard; the one piece of equipment that would let them find their way back.

Simple, sensible seamanship would have dictated a prompt return to the station. A tiny craft, no compass, and the vast and rampaging sea. Ridiculous. But "rescue" is the word that scrubs common sense, abolishes reason, wipes out calculation and leaves nothing but courage and a refusal to quit. The rescue was made, and even that was incredible.

Of 33 men, 32 were picked off the tossing stern, down a Jacob's ladder over the tilted hull, the 36500 timing the rise and fall of the waves, one at a time, off the metal monster to avoid disaster, then back for one more rescue ... off to maneuver, back for just one more ... until they had all but the one who slipped and went under. Four Coast Guardsmen and 32 temporarily safe tanker crewmen on a valiant 36-foot motor lifeboat, and no compass to lead them home.

Bernie Webber says today that the Lord had a hand on the tiller that night. Hoping to reach the beach somewhere, he found the entrance to the harbor itself, made it over the bar, made it safe to the fish pier. Not only was the rescue incredible, even the survival of the 36500 was a miracle in its own right. The rescue made international headlines. The four stubborn Coast Guardsmen eventually got the Gold Medal for valor the service rarely awards.

Reprinted courtesy of the *Cape Codder*, Orleans.

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## NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES

*The Boston Daily Globe – Tuesday February 19, 1952*

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**The Boston Daily Globe**

NOT FOR LONG  
TUESDAY—Fair, colder.  
WEDNESDAY—Cloudy,  
late snow.  
(Full Report, Page 22)

GUIDE TO FEATURES  
Burgess . . . 16 Dr. Chan . . . 16 Social . . . 17  
Comics . . . 16 Editorials . . . 16 Society . . . 17  
Cross Words . . . 16 Fiction . . . 16 Sports . . . 18  
Calendars . . . 16 Obituaries . . . 16 Theaters . . . 18  
Deaths . . . 16 Post . . . 16 Twisting in 16  
Box . . . 17 Radio-TV . . . 16 Women . . . 17

BOSTON, TUESDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 19, 1952

22 PAGES—FIVE CENTS

# 32 SAVED OFF TANKERS

## Coast Guard in Heroic Rescue Off Chatham Broken Bow of One Ship Sinks With 8 Men

*Standard Times, New Bedford – Wednesday, February 20, 1952*

THE STANDARD-TIMES, NEW BEDFORD, MASS., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1952

## Battered Ships, Weary Survivors Mark New Epic of Sea



Bow section of the tanker Pendleton wallows in boiling seas 500 yards off Pollock Rip lightship. —Standard-Times Air Photo

Another view of the Pendleton shows her bow jutting from stern-tossed waters off the Cape. —Standard-Times Air Photo

*The Boston Daily Globe – Thursday, February 21, 1952*

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VOL. CLXXI No. 32     
 By THE GLOBE PUBLISHING CO.     
 BOSTON, THURSDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 21, 1952     
 28 PAGES—FIVE CENTS

# CREW MADE CAPTAIN JUMP



## Men on Bow of Mercer Insisted He Leave

### Cutter Brings Four Survivors Into Portland

By HARRY CADIGAN


PORTLAND, Me., Feb. 20 — The skipper of the broken tanker Fort Mercer, who insisted on being the last of the four men off the bow section, was forced to jump into the ocean by three crew members who were afraid he wouldn't make it to the rescue ship if he waited.

The dramatic story of the nine men trapped on the split bow in the raging sea, was learned for the first time tonight when the four survivors were landed here by the Coast Guard cutter Yakutat.

Capt. Frederick C. Paetzel, 44, of Houston, Tex., ill with pneumonia and with first degree frost bites of both hands and feet, was rushed to the hospital, so weakened he was only able to mumble his thanks to the Coast Guardsmen.

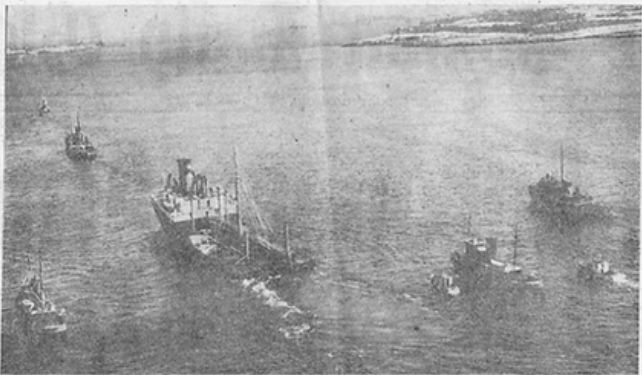
## The Boston Daily Globe – Saturday, February 23, 1952

Two      THE BOSTON DAILY GLOBE—SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1952




**HAPPY CREWMEN**—Samuel Barboza (left) of New Bedford and Lionel Dupuis of Fall River show their joy after coming safely into Newport on stern of broken tanker Fort Mercer.

(AP Wirephotos)



**COMING INTO NEWPORT**—Aerial view of stern portion of tanker Ft. Mercer as she was towed into the calm waters of Narragansett Bay opposite the Naval Base at Newport.

(United Press-Boston Globe Photos)



**TANKER CAPTAIN IN PORTLAND HOSPITAL**—F. C. C. Paetzel of Houston, Tex., who was rescued from bow of Ft. Mercer, shown in United States Marine Hospital is Mrs. Karl T. Bye.

(AP Photos)

**JOBLESS**  
Continued from the First Page  
output of consumer goods. Under it the Federal Government would supplement state jobless

## The Boston Daily Globe – Sunday, February 24, 1952

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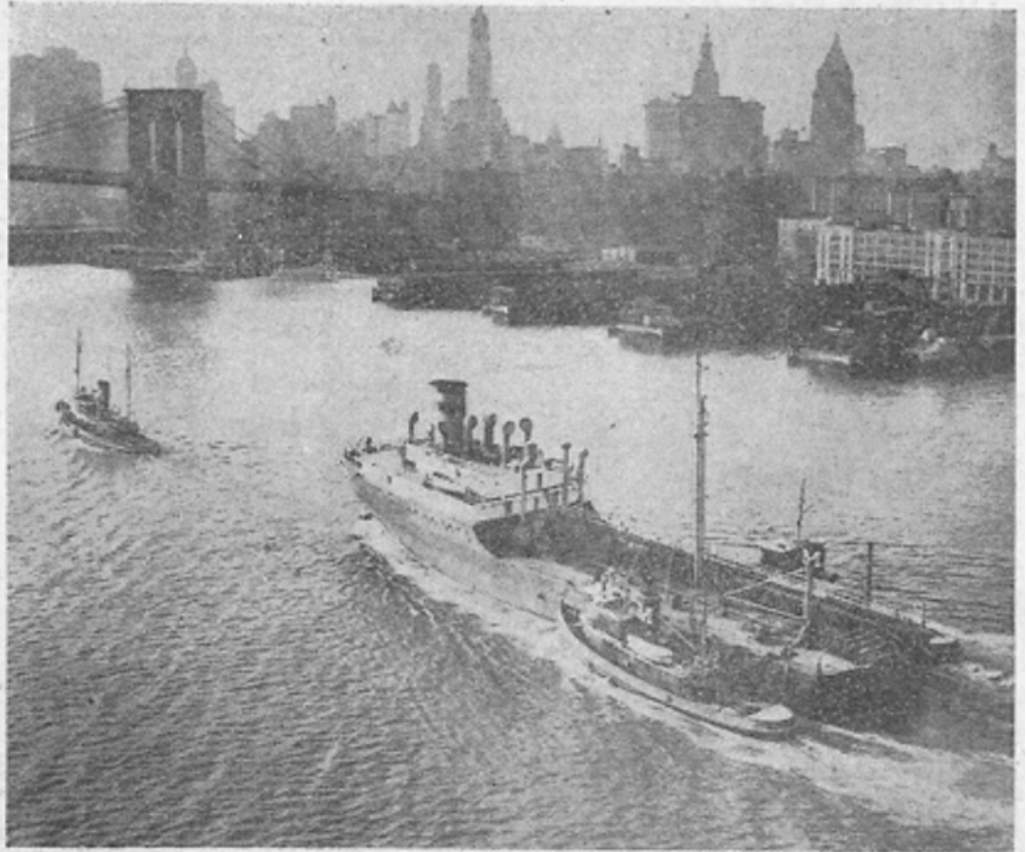
### Frozen Body Found in Bow of Pendleton Off Cape Cod

Search Continues  
for Others Dead  
in Tanker Tragedy

CHATHAM, Feb. 24—Searchers today found the frozen body of a seaman on the bow of the Pendleton, the tanker which broke in two off Chatham with the loss of nine lives last Monday.

He was identified by fingerprints as Herman G. Getlin, 26, of Europa, Miss. His body was in a locker room, with the legs wrapped in sawdust bags as though Getlin was trying to warm himself.

Dr. Carroll H. Keene said the



(United Press-Boston Globe Telephoto)  
FORT MERCER IN NEW YORK—Stern section of gale-torn tanker nears Brooklyn Bridge under tow.

### *The Pendleton Rescue*

by Capt. W. Russell Webster, USCG

The detailed story of the unparalleled heroism by a Coast Guard small boat crew and rescue of 32 men from aboard the sinking Pendleton.

It has been 50 years since BM1 Bernard Webber and his rag-tag crew of three volunteers ventured out over the Chatham, Massachusetts bar in a 36-foot wooden motorized lifeboat in 60-foot seas and 70 knot winds and rescued 32 crewmen from the stricken tank vessel Pendleton. Despite the passage of a half-century, memories of the rescue especially the horrific death of a thirty-third crewman during the rescue, are still vivid in the mind of the 73-year-old small boat coxswain.

Pendleton's voyage. The 503-foot, 10,448 gross ton tank vessel Pendleton (T2-SE-A1 or "T2") was built by the Kaiser Company in 1944 and departed Baton Rouge, LA on February 12, 1952. It was laden with a full cargo of 122,000 barrels of Kerosene and heating oil. The ship carried a crew of

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41, including the master, Captain John Fitzgerald. Late on the evening of 17 February, Pendleton arrived off Boston. The weather was foul with extremely limited visibility. The captain opted to stand off and headed his vessel east-northeast at slow speed into Massachusetts Bay into the prevailing sea conditions. The wind and sea conditions worsened throughout the night, building into a full-scale 'Nor'easter' gale with snow and high seas.

By 4:00 a.m. on February 18, Pendleton began shipping seas over her stern, but the vessel appeared to be riding well. Sometime after 4 a.m., the vessel rounded the tip of Cape Cod off Provincetown, MA and assumed a more southerly course. At about 5:50 a.m. on 18 February, after a series of explosive cracking noises, the Pendleton took a heavy lurch and broke in two. At the time of the break, the vessel's circuit breakers tripped, leaving the bow section without power. The stern section continued to operate normally, including all machinery and lighting.

The Coast Guard's Board of Investigation concluded that the low temperatures on 2/18/52 tended to increase the notch sensitivity of the Pendleton's steel resulting in brittle fractures. Pendleton's condition of loading and ballasting with excessive buoyance in the bow and stern and heavy weight amidship created a sagging effect, which was aggravated by the extremely heavy seas. The board concluded the fracture of the hull was caused by failure of material under stress due to low temperature on a tension set up by the condition of loading and the situation of the vessel in an extremely rough sea.

Gone with the darkened bow section were the Captain and seven other crewmen, all destined to perish. In the stern, the Chief Engineer, Raymond Sybert, immediately took charge and mustered his 32 survivors and assigned them duties. Alone, adrift, in mountainous seas, the stern section and its human cargo drifted south with a slight port list about six miles off Cape Cod. The bow section also drifted south, but at a further distance offshore. No S.O.S. had been issued.

The Rescue. February 18, 1952, saw the Coast Guard rescue a total of 70 men from two T2 tank vessels, the Fort Mercer and the Pendleton. Both tankers split in half off Cape Cod. The T/V Mercer about 40 miles offshore, the T/V Pendleton about 10 miles. By noon on 18 February, there were four separate hulks adrift off Cape Cod. By mid-morning on February 18, the men at the Chatham Lifeboat Station (today known as Chatham Coast Guard Station) received word about the T/V Fort Mercer's predicament. Orders were received for the station to launch a motorized lifeboat (MLB) to assist the Fort Mercer.

At noon, the station Officer in Charge, Bos'n Cluff, ordered BMC Donald Bangs to select his crew and man the CG36383 MLB at Stage Harbor and proceed to assist the T/V Fort Mercer now 25 miles off Chatham. At the time, BM1 Webber, chosen to remain behind for other duties, thought "My God, do they really think a lifeboat and its crew could actually make it that far out to sea in this storm and find the broken ship amid the blinding snow and raging seas with only a compass to guide them?" If the crew of the lifeboat didn't freeze to death first, how would they be able to get the men off the storm-tossed sections of the broken tanker? He would soon find out.

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Shortly after Chief Bangs and his crew left to assist the Fort Mercer, BM1 Webber was ordered to the Chatham Old Harbor area where he and his crew would spend the next several hours helping local fishermen re-moor their fishing vessels which had been moved by the ongoing Nor'easter.

Back on the stern section of the Pendleton, Engineer Sybert's crew sighted the beach at about two p.m. At 2:55 p.m., the Chatham Lifeboat Station's (CLS) radar picked up two blips about five and a half miles distant. At 3:00 p.m., Bos'n Cluff visually sighted the bow section of the Pendleton. Cluff's report to the Boston regional Coast Guard headquarters caused Coast Guard PBY aircraft No. 1242 to be diverted from ongoing rescue operations further offshore involving the Fort Mercer. Shortly after 4 p.m., the PBY made the first positive identification of both sections of the Pendleton. The Coast Guard now knew for the first time it had two stricken T2 tankers and four different possible rescue situations.

Bos'n Cluff's initial reaction was to dispatch his remaining crew, including BM1 Webber, to the North Beach area (between Orleans and Chatham) in hopes they could render assistance to Pendleton's crew if either section of the vessel came ashore. It soon became apparent that neither section would come ashore there, and the crew returned to the station to prepare to use the CG36500 MLB to render aid. The Pendleton's stern section and its crew of 33 drifted close to shore. Close enough that local residents could occasionally hear the ship's whistle and see the vessel as it galloped along up and down huge waves, frothing each time it rose or settled back into the sea."

Bos'n Cluff then ordered, "Webber, pick yourself a crew. Ya-all got to take the 36500 out over the bar and assist that thar ship, ya-heah?" With great trepidation having seen the conditions offshore and knowing his likely fate, but understanding his duty, he replied, "Yes sir, Mr. Cluff, I'll get ready." It was time to choose his crew. Only three men were available, none of whom Webber had in mind. All three quickly volunteered. BM1 Webber's volunteers included the station's junior engineer, Engineman Andrew Fitzgerald, Seaman Richard Livesey, and a crewman from the nearby Stonehorse Light Ship, Seaman Irving Maske, who had been waiting for transportation back to his lightship.

At about 5:30 p.m., as BM1 Webber and his crew readied their dory to row out to the CG36500 MLB, local fisherman and neighbor, John Stello, yelled out over the din: "You guys better get lost before you get too far out." Webber knew all too well what his friend was suggesting. Go out and probably die or get lost and live other days to talk about it. Webber asked Stello to call his wife Miriam, who had been alone and sick at home for two days and let her know about the rescue attempt.

At 5:55 p.m., Webber and his last-minute-crew left the pier in their wooden 36-foot-long motorized lifeboat driven along by its single 90 horsepower gas engine. As coxswain Webber turned his lifeboat into the channel, he could see the station's lights and hoped for a hasty recall. Hearing nothing, he radioed the station and received the curt response "Proceed as directed." Back on the Pendleton's stern, Engineer Sybert saw the stern section headed for grounding on Chatham's bar and certain disaster. Sybert used the tanker's engines to keep the tanker off the bar, but this only

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increased the vessel's list and trim dangerously. When some of Sybert's crew heard that a motor lifeboat from Chatham was on the way on their personal radios, efforts to maneuver the stern were stopped.

As the CG36500 approached Chatham's bar, Webber and his crew began to sing Rock of Ages and Harbor Lights. Their voices were soon muffled by the thunderous roar of the ocean as it collided with the sand bar. As the CG36500 crossed the bar, the boat was smashed by a mountain of a wave and thrown high in the air. The boat landed on its side between waves. The self-righting boat recovered quickly and was smote again, this time tons of seawater crashed over the boat breaking its windshield and flattening coxswain Webber. Quickly scampering to his feet, Webber noticed the boat's compass had been knocked off its mount. The cold, near hurricane force winds howled through the boat's cockpit as Webber struggled to regain control and steer into the towering waves.

The Pendleton's engineer and his crew sensed their demise as the stern hulk hobby-horsed southward smashing bottom with each new series of waves. Although there were several Coast Guard cutters and the CG36383 nearby, the fortunes of fate would only allow CG36500 and her crew alone one attempt to save engineer Sybert's men. Coxswain Webber finally brought CG36500 across the bar and knew the water was deeper because the spacing between the waves had increased and so had the wave heights. Weather observations from nearby cutters involved in the Fort Mercer and Pendleton rescues indicated sea heights between 40 to 60 feet.

Occasionally, the lifeboat's engine would die out when the waves would roll the vessel so far over that the gasoline engine would lose its prime. Each time, engineer Fitzgerald would crawl into the cramped compartment to restart the main engine --- his efforts were rewarded with severe burns, bruises, the steady chug-chugging of the engine and the collective sighs of appreciation from his shipmates. The boat proceeded roller coaster fashion as it slowly labored up one side of a huge wave and surfed down the backside, accelerating towards the trough. Coxswain Webber knew too much speed was not good and unchecked, would cause the boat's bow to bury in the next wave and swamp the small vessel.

The boat's motion was so swift, coxswain Webber had to reverse the engine on the backside of each wave in order to slow it down. His first navigational waypoint was the nearby Pollock Rip Lightship, where Webber hoped to re-orient himself and give his crew a breather in the lee of the larger vessel. The weather and visibility worsened in freezing horizontal snow that lashed the coxswain's face through the broken windshield. He wore no life jacket in order to give himself the best chance to react and guide the vessel. After about an hour of struggling and fearing he had missed the lightship, coxswain Webber slowed the CG36500 to a near standstill as he sensed, rather than saw, something ahead. He sent a crewman forward to energize the boat's small searchlight. Within seconds, the light was on, and a large wave lifted this crewman up and over the coxswain flat and carried him aft where he landed onboard, miraculously unhurt, but with a thud.

Creeping the boat forward, the searchlight soon revealed a pitch-black mass of twisted metal, which heaved high in the air upon the massive waves and then settled back down in a "frothing mass of foam." Each movement of the giant hulk produced a cacophony of eerie groans as the broken ship

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twisted and strained in the 60-foot seas. No lights were apparent as coxswain Webber maneuvered the small boat aft along the port side of the Pendleton's stern section. Rounding the stern, CG36500's searchlight illuminated the word PENDELTON and moments later, the larger vessel's own deck lights became apparent! And, then a small figure above began frantically waving his arms! He soon disappeared. Coxswain Webber then saw a mass of people begin to line Pendleton's starboard stern area, many shouting muffled instructions, which were unintelligible over the wind and crashing seas. He looked upon their position as "inviting" relative to his own and thought of strategies for he and his crew to join them above.

Without notice, a Jacob's ladder was tossed over the side, and unbelievably, men began to start down the ladder like a procession of ants! The first man at the bottom was dunked in the water like a tea bag and then lifted 50 feet in the air as the Pendleton rolled and heaved. Webber sent his crew forward to assist. Coxswain Webber skillfully maneuvered the CG36500 along the Pendleton's starboard quarter and, one by one, the Pendleton survivors either jumped and crashed hard on the tiny boat's bow or fell into the sea, where Webber's crew assisted them onboard at great personal risk. Some Pendleton crewmen were sling-shotted out from the ship on the Jacob's ladder by the whipping and rolling motion of the waves. As soon as they had reached their zenith of flight, the ship would snap roll them back violently and slam them against the side of the Pendleton.

After multiple approaches and 20 survivors safely recovered, the CG36500 began to handle sluggishly. The human parade continued to descend unabated. There was no turning back as coxswain Webber arrived at yet another defining moment and made the decision that they would all live or they all would die. And, so it went as Webber, and his crew literally stuffed their human cargo aboard and risked life and limb again and again. Finally, with 32 survivors onboard the CG36500 there only remained the 300-pound giant of a man George (Tiny) Myers, the inspiration of the Pendleton crew for his personal heroics, suspended at the bottom of the ladder. Myers jumped too soon and was swallowed up by the sea. Moments later, he was again visible underneath the stern of the vessel, clinging to one of Pendleton's 11-foot-long propeller blades.

Easing ahead cautiously, Webber felt the stern of the small boat rise as a monstrous wave overtook CG36500. The boat was driven ahead faster and faster towards Myers. Coxswain Webber backed his small craft's engine hard, but the boat smashed into Pendleton and Tiny Myers. The CG36500 was ejected from underneath the Pendleton by another large wave just as the hulk was lifted one last time and rolled over and sank. All was again dark as the CG36500's searchlight was extinguished. Coxswain Webber was sick at the thought of losing Tiny Myers, but knew the fate of the 36 men on his small boat rested exclusively in his hands. Lost with no compass to steer by and in zero visibility conditions, there were just two choices. Head east into the seas and hope to survive 10-12 more hours until a new day's light brought the slim chance of transferring passengers yet again to a larger rescue ship. Or, put the wind and seas on the small boat's stern and let them force the vessel ashore somewhere where help might be nearby.

Coxswain Webber then tried his radio again and received an immediate acknowledgement. Once he briefed his superior that he had 32 Pendleton survivors aboard, there ensued a squabble between the nearby CG cutter MCCULLOCH and the Chatham Lifeboat Station about various options. These

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included a suggestion of an at-sea rendezvous with McCulloch and a second transfer of survivors! The radio was quickly turned off and Webber devised a plan to beach the CG36500 at first opportunity. The small vessel would be held on the beach as long as possible with the engine while the survivors clambered ashore. On cue, the Pendleton crew gave a cheer of approval and support and on they went. Very soon, a red flashing light appeared! And the boat's searchlight incredibly revealed the buoy that marked the turn to the entrance to Old Harbor, Chatham and safe water!

A quick call to the station was met with excitement and elation for now everyone knew that the rescued were now survivors! Soon, another stream of over-direction and gibberish caused coxswain Webber to secure the radio after requesting assistance with the survivors at the Fish pier. A crowd of Chatham men, women and children met the CG36500 at the pier, securing lines and helping the shocked, excited and in some cases, sobbing survivors and rescuers ashore. Coxswain Webber saw his friend and fisherman John Stello once again and inquired about what the sick Miriam Webber had said when she learned of the CG36500's return? Stello replied that she had said: "Tell Bernie to get his butt home just as soon as possible!"

BM1 Bernard C. Webber, USCG, of Chatham, Massachusetts, and his three crew members all received the Treasury Department's coveted Gold Lifesaving Medal for "extreme and heroic daring" during the Pendleton rescue. \*\*

*\*\* In all, 24 Coast Guardsmen were honored for their efforts during the Fort Mercer-Pendleton rescues. Seventy of the possible 84 crewmen were eventually saved from the broken vessels. Five Gold Lifesaving Medals, four Silver Lifesaving Medals and 15 Coast Guard Commendation Ribbons were awarded to the rescuers. On average, five Gold Lifesaving Medals and 10-12 Silver Lifesaving Medals are awarded each year for acts of heroism on the water.*

Notes:

1. O'Neil, VADM, USCG Commandant's remarks at a Department of Treasury Awards Ceremony, 14 May 1952.
2. U.S. Coast Guard Commandant, Merchant Vessel Inspection Division, Marine Board of Investigation. structural failure of tanker Pendleton off Cape Cod on 18 February 1952, with loss of life, 25 September 1952.
3. Ibid.
4. Webber, Bernard C., Chatham, The Lifeboat Men, Lower Cape Publishing Co., 1985.
5. Hathaway, G., CAPT, USCG, From Highland to Hammerhead, 2000.

Reprinted courtesy of the *US Naval Institute Proceedings* magazine.

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### Attachment 3

#### **CG 36500 RESTORATION**



**After restoration**

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**Before restoration**

The recently released Disney film *The Finest Hours*, directed by Craig Gillespie and written by Eric Johnson and Paul Tamasy, based on the 2009 novel of the same name by Casey Sherman and Michael J. Tougas was [featured on CBS on January 30, 2016](#). The actual CG36500 motor lifeboat involved in the rescue, fully restored and operational, is owned by the Orleans Historical Society and still plies its home waters of Cape Cod.

On the night of **February 18, 1952**, during a raging 70-knot nor'easter snowstorm, four Coast Guardsmen (coxswain Bernard C. "Bernie" Webber, Andrew Fitzgerald, Ervin Maske and Richard Livesey) set out on the 36500 to rescue crewmen on the tanker Pendleton that had broken apart in a storm. Incredibly, they returned to the Chatham Live-Saving Station with 32 survivors—on a boat designed to carry half that number safely. All the "Coasties" received the Gold Life-Saving Medal for their bravery under these almost impossible conditions.

The fate of the CG36500 is a rescue story in itself. After more than two decades of Coast Guard service, the 36-foot wooden lifeboat was retired in 1968 and sat neglected and nearly forgotten for years. The Orleans Historical Society acquired the boat in 1981, and it has been carefully rebuilt and maintained by many dedicated volunteers with support of generous grants and individual donations.

Today the CG36500 is the only operating survivor of its class on the East Coast, and one of only a handful that still exists anywhere in the country. This Gold Medal boat is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and can be viewed by the public nearly year-round at its berths in

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Orleans (directions below). Special onboard Talks and Tours are scheduled on summer weekends at Rock Harbor. Visit the Orleans Historical Society Museum to view memorabilia and read the story of an incredible night on the high seas off Chatham back in 1952.



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Bernard Webber (deceased), Andrew Fitzgerald, Richard Livesey (deceased) and Irving Maske (deceased)



The Finest Hours 1952 Crewmen

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**Motor Lifeboat CG36500** was built in 1946 at Curtis Bay, Maryland Coast Guard Yard, as all 36 footers were, and stationed at the Chatham, Massachusetts Coast Guard Lifeboat Station. Like most 36's, it had an active and glorious career with many rescues. It was taken out of service in 1968 after being re-engined from a Sterling gas engine to diesel. It was replaced by the new and improved 44-foot twin diesel, all steel Motor Lifeboat. It, like the other 36's, had outlived its usefulness. There isn't much fanfare when this occurs, even though to many Coasties, it is a sad day. Most were destroyed, but some were saved for display at museums and historical societies.

Decommissioned in 1968, the boat was donated to the Cape Cod National Seashore for a display at their Coast Guard exhibit in Eastham. This move was never completed because of a shortage of funds for restoration. CG36500 was left to deteriorate until Bill Quinn and the Orleans Historical Society intervened, acquired ownership, and executed a comprehensive restoration. The vessel was eventually restored by OHS volunteers to her present mission; a floating museum dedicated to the memory of the Life Savers of Cape Cod. The Lifeboat now once again travels the waters on Cape Cod and beyond.

**Restoration history:**

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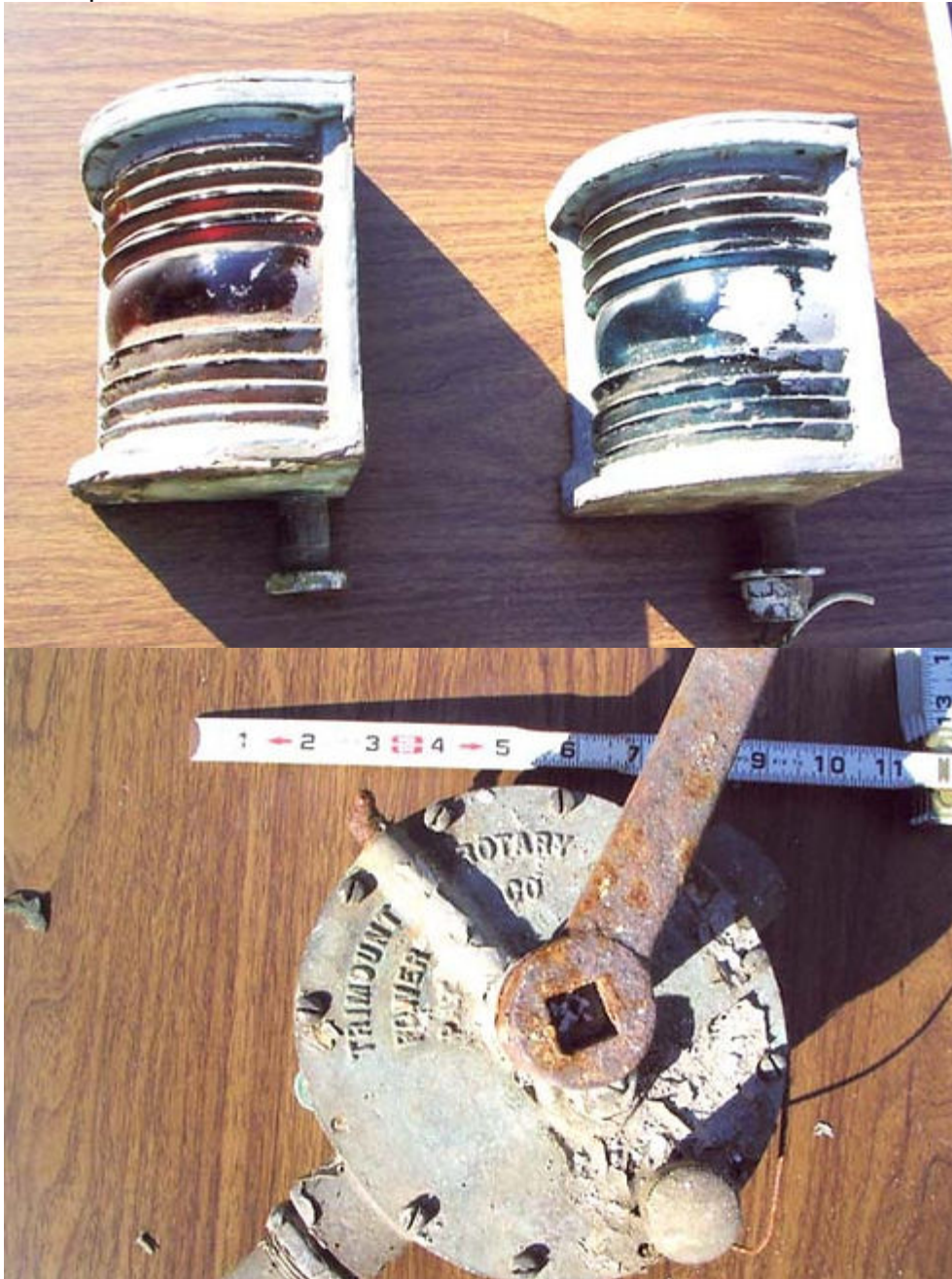
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### 2006 Maintenance

In addition to the normal sanding, priming and painting, the following major projects were accomplished:



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- Needle gunning of the entire Monel sheathed bottom and the bronze keel and rudder to remove layers of built-up bottom paint. Needle gunning uses an air driven "gun" with 19 steel needles that attack the paint and loosen it. This method is good for uneven surfaces like the Monel plating.
- Removal of the original Monel propeller shaft. The 1 1/2" shaft was very worn at the cutless bearing and vibration underway had been apparent. A replacement shaft from another boat was obtained and cut down to the proper length. A new flange was procured and fit to the shaft by Enterprise Machine Co. of Chatham.
- Repacking of the internal stuffing box. This required the replacement of six pieces of flax packing, each one carefully rotated 90 degrees from the one before it. This job and the shaft work had to be done under difficult circumstances, as the person doing it has to lie on his side.
- Repair of the foredeck area. The section aft of the scuttle coaming had been wet for many years and some evidence of rot was apparent from below in the survivor's compartment. The fiberglass covering was carefully cut away, revealing two layers of riveted 3/8" cedar on top of the deck frames. The affected frames were treated with thin epoxy, then built up flush. Two layers of 3/8 " marine plywood were shaped and glued in with 3M 4200 sealant. The underside of the fiberglass was ground down and the pieces were cemented down with 4200.
- Replacement of two oil filter assemblies with new spin on units. These will make oil filter replacements easier in the future. The fuel filter was changed at this time as well.
- The compass was removed and serviced by Jeff Kauffman of Cape Compass in Falmouth. The lubber lines were repainted, and the fluid replaced.
- A 12-volt outlet was added where the bilge pump switches are housed. This feature will allow us to recharge cell phones, plug in an inexpensive spotlight, or anything else 12 volt that can connect with a cigarette lighter adapter.

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- A second VHF radio has been installed on the boat.

The all-volunteer crew of the CG36500 is extremely grateful to the J.W. Dubis Company of Chatham for providing a suitable workplace for us to accomplish these tasks.

In excess of 330-man hours were expended on these tasks between March 31 st and May 17th, 2006.

Funding for this maintenance project came from fundraising efforts, private donations, the Orleans Historical Society and valuable volunteer service.

### 2007 Maintenance

Ongoing annual maintenance work was performed by volunteers from the Orleans community and the U.S. Coast Guard Station Chatham. PCPO's (Potential Chief Petty Officers) and members of the Cape Cod Consolidated Mess donated a day of labor preparing the 36500 for relaunch in Spring 2007.

Some of the local volunteers were Bob Bolin, Al Danielson, Howard Kucks, Bud Bemont, Dick Besciak



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1/9

Funding for this restoration project came from fundraising efforts, private donations, the Orleans Historical Society and valuable volunteer service.

### 2008 Maintenance

In 2008, [Pleasant Bay Boat and Spar](#) undertook an extensive restoration project for the Orleans Historical Society. The 1946 motorized lifeboat, CG36500 was managed by Pete Kennedy and his

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crew of volunteers for OHS and maintained through donor contributions and a lot of volunteer labor.



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Restoration-The-Finest-Hours-11

1/9

The last professionally managed restoration work was in 1996 at Pease Boat Works in Chatham. That phase included structural work from the keel up to the rails. Now it was time to tackle the turtle backs (cabins) cockpit soles and side decks.

The 36500 arrived at the shop in November 2008. The crew of volunteers began dismantling the bulkheads, floors, turtleback sheathing and side decks down to the frames, pulling out thousands of copper rivets and carefully preserving the integrity of the sub structure.

By the New Year, the crew of Pleasant Bay Boat and Spar were ready to take over. Frames were patched and plugged, then sealed with penetrating epoxy. New fir side decks were installed. The bulkheads were replaced with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " Okoume plywood. The cockpit sole needed to be reframed, and then replanked with new VG Doulas fir.

The turtlebacks proved to be the most interesting. The original cabins were double planked with two layers of cedar, riveted together, then sheathed in canvas. We replaced the first layer with Atlantic white cedar planks; we opted to cold mold the next layer with two layers of cross diagonal  $\frac{1}{8}$ " veneers of Spanish cedar set in West System epoxy. This method saved further undo stress on the already fragile frames, and in fact completely reinforced the entire super structure. They were sheathed with Dynel and West System epoxy, making a lasting nonskid, watertight surface. In May 2009, the CG36500 returned to her home waters at Rock Harbor, Orleans, but not for long. In June Pete Kennedy motored the CG36500 from Rock Harbor through the Cape Cod Canal towards Mystic, CT, where she was proudly on exhibit at the Wooden Boat Show.

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**The restoration won two prizes at the show:**

*Concours d'Elegance 1st Place Owner Restored (Orleans Historical Society)  
Concours d'Elegance Judges Choice*

Pleasant Bay Boat & Spar's Restoration of CG 36500 featured on the cover of Wooden Boat magazine. In January 2010, the story of the rescue and the restoration was the cover article in Wooden Boat Magazine.

Funding for this restoration project came from an Orleans Community Preservation Act grant, the Fred J. Brotherton Charitable Foundation and the Orleans Historical Society. Coxswain, Peter B. Kennedy oversaw the project administration and contributed valuable volunteer service.

### **2009 Restoration**

[Pleasant Bay Boat and Spar's](#) extensive restoration project for the Orleans Historical Society continued into 2009. The 1946 motorized lifeboat, CG36500 was managed by Pete Kennedy and his crew of volunteers for OHS. Financial support was received from The Fred J. Brotherton Charitable Foundation, the Orleans Community Preservation Act, and individual donors. The last professionally managed restoration work was in 1996 at Pease Boat Works in Chatham. That phase included structural work from the keel up to the rails. Now it was time to tackle the turtle backs (cabins) cockpit soles and side decks.

The 36500 arrived at the shop in November 2008. The crew of volunteers began dismantling the bulkheads, floors, turtleback sheathing and side decks down to the frames, pulling out thousands of copper rivets and carefully preserving the integrity of the sub structure.

By the New Year, the crew of Pleasant Bay Boat and Spar were ready to take over. Frames were patched and plugged, then sealed with penetrating epoxy. New fir side decks were installed. The

## Town of Orleans Community Preservation Act Application 2025

The Centers for Culture and History in Orleans (CHO) request \$250,000 to construct a Boat House for the **preservation of the CG36500 vessel** which is wholly owned by the CHO and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Submitted by The Centers for Culture and History in Orleans a.k.a. The Orleans Historical Society.*

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bulkheads were replaced with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " Okoume plywood. The cockpit sole needed to be reframed, and then replanked with new VG Douglas fir.

The turtlebacks proved to be the most interesting. The original cabins were double planked with two layers of cedar, riveted together, then sheathed in canvas. We replaced the first layer with Atlantic white cedar planks; we opted to cold mold the next layer with two layers of cross diagonal 1/8" veneers of Spanish cedar set in West System epoxy. This method saved further undo stress on the already fragile frames, and in fact completely reinforced the entire super structure. They were sheathed with Dynel and West System epoxy, making a lasting nonskid, watertight surface. In May 2009, the CG36500 returned to her home waters at Rock Harbor, Orleans, but not for long. In June Pete Kennedy motored the CG36500 from Rock Harbor through the Cape Cod Canal towards Mystic, CT, where she was proudly on exhibit at the Wooden Boat Show.

The restoration won two prizes at the show:

*Concours d'Elegance 1st Place Owner Restored (Orleans Historical Society)*

*Concours d'Elegance Judges Choice*

Pleasant Bay Boat & Spar's Restoration of CG 36500 featured on the cover of Wooden Boat magazine. In January 2010, the story of the rescue and the restoration was the cover article in Wooden Boat Magazine.

Funding for this restoration project came from an Orleans Community Preservation Act grant, the Fred J. Brotherton Charitable Foundation and the Orleans Historical Society. Coxswain, Peter B. Kennedy oversaw the project administration and contributed valuable volunteer service.

Questions regarding the history of the vessel, current location, ongoing exhibits and more: contact the Orleans Historical Society at [admin@orleanshs.org](mailto:admin@orleanshs.org)