

## **THE SABEBOAT PROGRAM AT WHITTIER**

### **A SUMMARY**

The first Safeboat was 256611. It was commissioned on 16 June 2001 at a ceremony in Whittier. Under the Safeboat program, the Coast Guard provided the Boat, its repair and maintenance, Training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the Auxiliary provided the crew to operate the vessel. Safeboats that followed 256611 were 256610, 276612, 255006, 25446 and 25774.

The Coast Guard's Operations Training Officers (OTOs) conducted the training. An Auxiliarist had to be certified as an Auxiliary Coxswain or Crew before receiving the additional training and orientation to become Safeboat Certified. 19 Whittier Flotilla members became qualified as Safeboat Coxswains and an equal number qualified as Safeboat Crew. One member was selected (volunteered) to serve as the Leader in Charge (LinC). His duties included coordination with the OTO, crew scheduling and operational aspects of the boat.

From 2002 through 2012 the Auxiliary conducted 559 Patrols and 77 Search and Rescue Missions. The total Crew Underway time amounted to 7,254 hours. This includes Coxswain, Crew and Trainee time. The statistics for 2001 – the first year of operation – are not in AuxData and can only be estimated at this time. Auxiliarists from other Flotillas account for some of these totals but most of the effort and hours were by Whittier Flotilla members.

The Program operated for 12 years. It was terminated by the Coast Guard in the spring of 2013 due to budgetary constraints and the difficulties and logistics of maintaining a boat distant from the Coast Guard Station's services and personnel. There were Safeboats home-ported in Homer, Seward and Petersburg, as well as Whittier, when the Program ended.

