




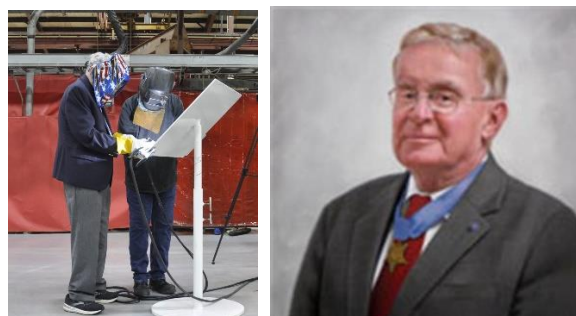
Fall 2024

## The Ship's Whistle

An occasional e-mail bulletin of newsworthy information for Members of the **Massachusetts Bay Council**, Navy League of the United States and other friends of the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S.-flag Merchant Marine. The Navy League is a civilian organization dedicated to the education of our citizens, including elected officials and the support of the men and women of the sea services and their families.

### Calendar

- Oct Navy Birthday event planned (TBD)
- Nov 16 USS Nantucket (LCS 27) Commissioning
- Dec  Toys for Tots Drive
- 2025 USS Massachusetts (SSN 798) Commissioning (TBD)
- 202? USS Thomas G. Kelley (DDG 140) Commissioning (?)



### USS Thomas G. Kelley (DDG 140)

The Navy celebrated the keel plate signing for the future Arleigh Burke-class Flight III destroyer, USS Thomas G. Kelley (DDG 140), at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works (BIW) on Aug. 30.

The ceremony was held in honor of Capt. Thomas G. Kelley, a Medal of Honor recipient for his heroism during the Vietnam War and the namesake of the future ship. During the ceremony, Marc Cote, a senior welder from General Dynamics BIW, welded Capt. Kelley's signature onto the keel plate which will be used in the construction which could take about three years.

**Capt Kelley received the Medal of Honor for actions during the Vietnam War.**

**On 15 June 1969 then-Lt. Kelley was in command of eight river assault craft that were extracting a company of U.S. Army infantry troops in Kien Hoa Province when the Army's troop transport malfunctioned and the boats came under fire from North Vietnamese forces. "After issuing orders for the crippled troop carrier to raise its ramp manually, and for the remaining boats to form a protective cordon around the disabled craft, [Kelley], realizing the extreme danger to his column and its inability to clear the ambush site until the crippled unit was repaired, boldly maneuvered the monitor in which he was embarked to the exposed side of the protective cordon in direct line with the enemy's fire, and ordered the monitor to commence firing," reads the citation. During the fighting, Kelley suffered severe head injuries from shrapnel from an enemy rocket but was able to direct the column to safety.**

**Capt Kelley served as the Secretary of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services from 2003 to 2011. He is a Member of the Massachusetts Bay Council.**



### USS NANTUCKET (LCS 27)

#### Commissioning 16 NOV in Charlestown

As announced to our Members early August and later to the general public, requests for tickets had to be made to the Navy. Due to limited space for seating on the pier, regrettably, all requests are unable to be fulfilled. Arrangements are being made for a website link to watch the event livestream online.



#### —Mass Maritime Academy Award

A Navy sword was presented to Ensign Josef P. Homola on 21 June, Past Nat'l President of the Navy League Bill Kelley doing the honors. ENS Homola graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.S. in Maritime Transportation and was ordered to NAS Pensacola for Naval Aviation Training.

## USS New Jersey (SSN 796) Commissioned



**USS New Jersey**

(SSN 796) is the first Navy submarine designed and built for a mixed-gender crew. A submarine designed and built for both genders has been a long time coming. The New Jersey is entering the fleet roughly 14 years after then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates ended the ban on women serving on subs in 2010. Female officers did not join the submarine force until 2011, and such roles only opened up to enlisted sailors in 2015. Crew includes a female XO and female Chief-of-the-Boat.

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**USS Massachusetts (SSN-798)**, the 25th submarine of the class, with mixed-gender crew, is planned for Commissioning in Boston in October 2025. For further information go to: <https://www.ussmassachusetts.org/>



**WW posters**

She can now join and even enter Special Ops, SEALs, etc., but needs to pass regular requirements.



The Holiday Season will come upon us sooner than we realize and we will soon have The Massachusetts Bay Council's **53rd year** of collecting toys and donations. You can start purchasing toys and/or planning your contribution. Details to be announced.

The Ship's Whistle is published by The Massachusetts Bay Council, Navy League of the U.S., 25 Dorchester Ave., P.O. Box 51662, Boston, MA 02205. To be removed from this mailing list, contact: Editor: Ivan Samuels at [go2navy@verizon.net](mailto:go2navy@verizon.net).



**Graves Lighthouse**

Graves Lighthouse stands exposed and alone atop the bleak jutting rocks of Graves Ledges. Even its name conjures unpleasant visions. However, the ledges were not named for shipwreck victims who met their end there but rather for Rear Admiral Thomas Graves who noticed the danger posed by the ledges in 1634.

Last Summer, a Coast Guard rescue helicopter carried two 1,100-pound pieces of cast iron that would form part of the pedestal for Graves Light's new beacon. "That was probably the most nail-biting part," says Dave Waller, one of the 119-year-old light station's owners. Who has spent nine years reuniting the lighthouse with a Fresnel lens, a type of lens that uses cast-glass prisms to focus and direct light, creating a strong beam. The light station illuminated Boston Harbor with one when it opened in 1905 but the Coast Guard removed the original lens when it automated the lighthouse in 1975, donating the lens to the Smithsonian. After Waller and his wife, Lynn, purchased Graves Light in 2013, they restored most of the structure but they were still disappointed by its "pathetic, modern light" and decided to replace it with a Fresnel lens similar to the original. "(Graves) was the brightest light north of Cape Cod when it was built," he says. "And it had a magnificent lens built in France."

He found an Australian lighthouse engineer who helped source the antique pieces of the replacement lens and the couple's two teenage sons helped build a frame. The pieces that were missing had to be made from scratch out of brass," Installation of the lens is mostly complete, and once turned on, the light will be powered by solar panels. The Coast Guard has updated its navigational charts to reflect the lens's distinct flash pattern, staying true to its original function doing its duty that it was built for."

(Credit: Edited from Lauren Vespoli in PRESERVATION magazine Summer 2024)