

Oral History of MCPOCG Charles “Skip” Bowen

By Kristen N. Bowen



Before Assuming the Watch

MCPOCG (ret) Charles “Skip” Bowen spent his earliest years in the small fishing town of Fortescue, New Jersey right on the Delaware Bay. During the mid-1960s his father opted to move the family to Florida, following the kingfish that were to become the family’s livelihood. The move took them to Fort Pierce, Florida where Bowen spent his formative years.

At the age of fourteen, Bowen picked up a copy of a 1973 issue of National Geographic. The magazine had several articles devoted to the United States Coast Guard including a story on the USCGC MIDGETT, named after the famed Midgett family of Coast Guardsmen, and another focused on legendary Coast Guard Master Chief Thomas McAdams. For Bowen, it wasn’t a hard sell. He made what would become a life-altering decision. After high school, he would join their ranks and become a United States Coast Guardsman.

True to his decision, a few years later and fresh from high school, Bowen made his way to the Coast Guard recruiting office. At that time there was a year long waiting list to enter the Coast Guard. Bowen persevered and joined the ranks of Recruit Company Uniform 100 on May 22,

1978 at Training Center Cape May, New Jersey. Then, as now, each recruit company is designated with a letter from the international maritime signal flags. When Bowen entered the forming company classroom the words on the chalkboard stated, "You are standing into danger." Unknown to Bowen, the signal flag for Uniform stands for the warning "you are standing into danger." An ominous feeling settled over him when he walked into his first classroom at the training center to find such a note of welcome written on the chalkboard. That uplifting message certainly did not bode well as far as he was concerned.

Despite any last minute second thoughts, recruit training was in fact survivable for the young recruits who were learning what it meant to be Coast Guardsmen. They not only learned how to function as a team, but also developed many practical skills required in the maritime environment.

After completing basic training, Seaman Bowen set off to his first duty station, the USCGC POINT SWIFT. Homeported in Clearwater Florida, the SWIFT was an 82 foot cutter with a nine man crew. In 1978 the POINT SWIFT was commanded by Master Chief Harry Turpin, and Bowen was exposed early on to the incredibly high level of seamanship that can only stem from a lifetime of experience. Many years later, Bowen related that he had never encountered anyone else who could handle an 82 foot patrol boat like Harry Turpin did. On one occasion during a search and rescue case in high seas near the Dry Tortugas, Master Chief Turpin rescued his own crewmembers, including Bowen, from a sinking shrimp boat. "The sea state had picked up and it was too rough to launch the small boat, so Master Chief Turpin brought the patrol boat's bow to the shrimp boat's stern in 12 foot seas and took us off one at a time. I don't remember why, but I was the last to be picked up. When the bow of the 82 footer came within reach of the stern I jumped. A fellow crewman on the bow of the SWIFT grabbed my arm and hauled me aboard as the bow plunged down narrowly missing the stern of the sinking shrimper," Bowen recounted. Watching Master Chief Turpin taught Bowen a great deal about boat handling that served him well throughout his career.

From Clearwater, Bowen was transferred to Station Marathon in the Florida Keys just in time for the historic Mariel boat-lift from Cuba to the United States. Because of internal turmoil in Cuba due to a failing economic structure, the Cuban government announced that anyone who wished

to leave Cuba could do so by way of the port of Mariel. Drove of immigrants began seeking refuge wherever they could find it, including the nearby coast of Florida. An estimated 125,000 Cubans made the journey across the Florida Straits to American soil. Bowen worked on the front lines of this overwhelming influx of immigrants. In addition to this experience, the late 1970s and the early 1980s brought massive amounts of marijuana through the Florida Keys. Miles of isolated drop off spots and its proximity to the Bahamas made the Keys a natural smuggling artery. Bowen recalls that during his last month at Station Marathon in 1980, he was the boarding officer on five major drug seizures.

After Marathon, Bowen was transferred to another station in Fort Pierce, Florida. The Commanding Officer at Station Fort Pierce was a Chief Warrant Officer named John Webb. From CWO Webb, Bowen learned leadership. He learned that every person and every situation was different, and while it might be easy to just apply stock answers found in regulations to a given situation, if the human element was not accounted for, morale, safety and operations could suffer. He later said, "If CWO Webb ever raised his voice you knew the world must be ending so you better listen closely. He was incredibly patient. I once described him as a part time parent to a bunch of us part time kids. From him I also learned that if you wanted something, to aggressively go for it and not let anything stop you. He became my leadership role model and later whenever I had a particularly challenging problem to deal with I would ask myself the question, what would CWO Webb do?"

After completing his tour at Station Fort Pierce, Bowen was transferred to a series of Coast Guard cutters until he was advanced to Chief Petty Officer in 1990 and was assigned as the Officer in Charge of Coast Guard Station New Haven in Connecticut. Beyond a successful tour, two things happened at Station New Haven that would later change the course of Bowen's career.

First he met and was befriended by then Senior Chief Vince Patton at the Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer's Academy. Patton had a vision and an obvious passion for what effective senior enlisted leadership could accomplish for the Coast Guard. He incited an aspiration to the role of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, something that Bowen had not previously

considered. Patton himself later became the Eighth Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard.

Second, Bowen's Group Commander at Group/Captain of the Port Long Island Sound was a Captain named Thad Allen. Allen was an inspiring leader who motivated and empowered everyone in his leadership team. Bowen later recounted that in addition to visionary leadership, Thad Allen possessed the ability to effectively communicate and provide clear direction to execute his vision beyond anyone he had ever served with. Bowen was so impressed with then Captain Allen that during his outbrief from Station New Haven in 1994 he told the Captain, "When you become the Commandant of the Coast Guard, I would like to be your Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard." Many years later retired Admiral Allen still used this story while mentoring young Coast Guardsmen as an example of the importance of aspirations and goal setting.



Conducting an All-Hands Meeting with Commandant of the Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen

For Bowen, multiple command billets afloat and ashore followed, as well as the Army Sergeants Major Academy and District/Headquarters level Command Master Chief positions. Then in 2004 it was back to the field to Station Marathon for the second time where in 2006 Master Chief Bowen was selected by prospective Commandant Admiral Thad Allen to be the Tenth Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard.

The Watch

A little known fact is that Bowen is the only person in Coast Guard history to actually serve as the Master Chief of the Coast Guard twice. After graduating from the Army Sergeants Major Academy, Bowen was selected to become the Command Master Chief (CMC) at Coast Guard Headquarters Units in Washington DC working for the Coast Guard Chief of Staff. During his time as the CMC of Coast Guard Headquarters there was an issue with the selection process between the eighth and ninth Master Chiefs of the Coast Guard. Bowen was asked to fill the void while this was worked out and he served as the interim Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard from July to October of 2002.

The time period 2006-2010 was a time of great change in the Coast Guard. True to his vision for a streamlined organization Admiral Allen reorganized almost all major business processes having to do with command and control, force standardization, sustainment, and logistics support. In his role as principal advisor to the Commandant, Bowen assisted in key policy development and communications throughout the Coast Guard. Using every form of mass communication available Bowen was a trailblazer in the use of social media and mass messaging to assist in inspiring positive change. Bowen later said, "Admiral Allen empowered everyone around him to help execute his vision. He allowed me wide latitude to use my influence to make the service better and I took full advantage of it."

During his time Bowen represented the Coast Guard in meetings with the President of the United States, Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Homeland Security. He served alongside the five most senior officers in the Coast Guard on the Coast Guard Leadership Council, which was a group responsible for broad direction and guidance for the entire service. He testified multiple times before Congressional Committees regarding quality of life issues, military family concerns, and personnel matters. He maintained a strong relationship with service organizations, governmental entities, and companies that supported military personnel issues so that measurable progress was made toward improving Coast Guard owned housing and other infrastructure important to the work force. He, along with a very dedicated office staff and the Command Chief support network, helped solve thousands of personnel issues for members and units.

Bowen recounted that he felt that some of his most significant accomplishments included the creation of the Maritime Enforcement Specialist rating, the modernization of the recruit training curriculum at Cape May, NJ, and the naming of the Fast Response Cutter class of vessels after enlisted heroes. He felt that far into the future the Coast Guard would continue to reap the benefits of these changes.

Since his early years in the Coast Guard, Bowen felt that the Service should do a better job of supporting and sustaining expertise in the maritime law enforcement and security mission area. He felt that training programs devoted to the mission set needed to be improved and professionalized. He also believed that once trained, Coast Guard members who had developed proficiency in the increasingly complex law enforcement mission set should be able to stay in that field. Professional career paths needed to be developed and fostered.

Not everyone shared his concern, but Bowen thought that the issue was too important to ignore. He felt that since the Coast Guard manages the bulk of individual member's technical competencies through various ratings that a rating specific to security and law enforcement was the only answer. As an example, during a 2006 visit to a unit whose sole mission was focused on security and law enforcement, Bowen found that the Coast Guard's own personnel system of moving individuals in and out of the mission set had caused the unit to be so degraded operationally in regards to expertise and certifications that if called upon the unit may not have been able to respond effectively. To help fix this issue Bowen spearheaded the creation of a new mission focused rating to help sustain competency in the fields of law enforcement, security, and tactical operations.

In late 2008, after two and a half years and the dedicated efforts of hundreds of members on study and implementation teams, the initiative resulted in a one thousand plus member rating dedicated to the law enforcement/security mission. This rating forever changed how the Coast Guard conducted law enforcement operations. It allowed the Coast Guard to better retain competency in units specializing in this mission area as well as to raise law enforcement competency levels across the organization.



With Recruit Company Commanders at Training Center Cape May

Another accomplishment Bowen played a major role in is the modernization of the Recruit Training curriculum. Bowen felt that through the years recruit training had lost focus on the basic building blocks of its core mission which was to take brand new recruits fresh out of the civilian world and turn them into physically fit, entry level Coast Guardsmen who understood the history, culture, and ethos of the organization and were ready to function as part of a team. Bowen stated that previous to his tour as the Master Chief of the Coast Guard new members would report to his units directly from recruit training unable to pass the Boat Crew physical fitness test. He felt that over time the recruit training curriculum had been filled with classes that in other contexts may have been important, such as how to use a Coast Guard workstation and how to manage personal finances, but were not appropriate for the very short time members were in basic training. It was clear that Cape May's Company Commanders were doing a great job with the limited time that they had with recruits, but that their hands were tied regarding the control of how the majority of each training day was spent, including the time spent in the classroom. It was his opinion that new recruits were being endlessly power pointed to death in classrooms regarding subjects that were not focused on the basic building blocks that an entry level Coast Guardsman needed for a firm foundation.

Initially there was quite a bit of resistance to major curriculum changes without long studies, but Bowen was able to convince senior decision makers that change was necessary by using lessons learned from the basic training of the Coast Guard's sister services, particularly the Marines, whose recruit training program that focused on physical fitness, ethos, and teamwork was the gold standard for the world's military services. As a result of Bowen's efforts, the Cape May recruit curriculum was completely refocused.

New additions to the training program included a confidence "obstacle" course modeled on the Marine course at Parris Island, pugil stick training, and a new focus on Coast Guard military history and ethos that permeated everything the recruits did. A physically intensive, teamwork oriented, culminating event called the Guardian Challenge completed the new 8 week recruit training experience. The ethos that was created for the revamped recruit curriculum eventually became known and used service-wide as the Guardian/Coast Guardsman's Ethos. Bowen felt that by shoring up the majority of Coast Guard men and women's foundation (recruit training), he could have a career long impact on generations of Coast Guardsmen.

During the spring of 2009 a Coast Guard hero named Bernie Webber crossed the bar. Almost 60 years before on February 18th, 1952 off Chatham, Massachusetts, Bernie had been the coxswain of a 36 foot motor lifeboat that rescued 32 people off the stern section of a tanker that had broken in half in monstrous seas up to 60 feet high. Along with Admiral Allen, Bowen attended Bernie Webber's memorial service on Cape Cod. While at the service Bowen thought it was a missed opportunity that the Coast Guard was naming its new class of Fast Response Cutters using variations of the words Sentinel and Guardian, and not naming the vessels after heroes like Bernie Webber.

On the flight home he spoke to the Commandant about changing the already approved set of names to "enlisted" heroes. Bowen felt that if the vessels were named after heroes who started out in the enlisted ranks it would ensure that lesser known, but very important Coast Guardsmen would be remembered and honored. Previously most cutters named for individuals were named after senior government or high ranking Coast Guard officials. Admiral Allen readily agreed but surprisingly, even with the Commandant's support there was a great deal of

resistance to the name change. The Coast Guard Headquarters naming board actually voted against the change.

Undaunted, Bowen persevered and in February 2010 spoke to the Vice Commandant, Vice Admiral David Pekoske and asked him to intervene directly. The Vice Commandant looked into the situation, decided that the objections that were coming from various programs in Headquarters were not well founded and ordered that the initiative move forward, paving the way for the entire fleet of 58 Fast Response Cutters to be named after enlisted heroes. Bowen later stated, "long after I am gone from the Coast Guard new members will report aboard the USCGC BERNARD C. WEBBER or the USCGC CHARLES DAVID Jr., or any of the rest, and remember who these Coast Guard men and women were, and know the value these great heroes brought to the nation and the Coast Guard."



Co-Hosting the Commander in Chief Inaugural Ball with President Obama and the other 4 Military Service Senior Enlisted Advisors

Bowen's wife Janet served as the Coast Guard's Ombudsman at Large during Master Chief Bowen's term as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard. As a military spouse Mrs. Bowen fully understood the multitude of challenges facing military families. Using her new role as a "bully pulpit" she soon found ways to make a positive difference. She was the driving force behind the publication "Sea Legs", a practical guide for new Coast Guard spouses to facilitate

their transition to the military lifestyle. "Sea Legs" was distributed to all new spouses, I.D. card issuing facilities, and field ombudsmen.

Mrs. Bowen represented Coast Guard families in many different forums including meetings with the First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, to discuss military family issues. She was a staunch champion for family support initiatives and improvements to military housing. Her efforts contributed to a measurable and positive impact on the Coast Guard's family services budget including 14 million dollars for new family housing and legislation that would enhance family housing authorities.

Mrs. Bowen's efforts directly contributed to the introduction of the Coast Guard Service Member Benefits Improvement Act - legislation that worked toward improving parity with Department of Defense family services.

Mrs. Bowen was also a driving force to create a full time Ombudsman Coordinator position at Coast Guard Headquarters. She also helped create a new Coast Guard "Ombudsman of the Year" award program which recognizes the outstanding efforts of volunteer unit ombudsmen. She helped implement and sustain the "Guardian Spouses", a volunteer spouse program that became a vital part of Coast Guard Training Center Cape May's "New Spouse, Family Member" initiative. Concerning his wife, Master Chief Bowen said, "Janet was very passionate about Coast Guard families. Early on she decided to focus her efforts on helping young spouses understand the Coast Guard, find ways to improve Coast Guard owned housing, and look for ways to improve support for families across the service. In spite of budget issues and legislative hurdles she was able to accomplish a tremendous amount for our Coast Guard families. I am extremely proud of her achievements."



Mrs. Janet Bowen at Training Center Cape May with the “Guardian Spouses.”

On May 21, 2010, Master Chief Bowen had his Change of Watch ceremony where his career had begun 32 years before, at Training Center Cape May, New Jersey. Surprisingly, he did not give the typical retirement speech discussing his career history, highlights, or achievements. Instead he talked about the meaning of the words to the Coast Guard's song, Semper Paratus. He broke down each line of the chorus and applied it to events, missions, and people serving or who had served in the Coast Guard. He included remarks on Douglas Monroe, Bernie Webber, Nate Bruckenthal, Ron Gill, the crews of CG6505 and CG1705, and many others. His stirring speech ended with an emotional reading of the names of those Coast Guardsmen that had given their lives serving their country in the United States Coast Guard during his four years serving as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard.

Military Awards

During his Coast Guard career Bowen earned the Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal, Four Meritorious Service Medals with "O" device, Four Coast Guard Commendation Medals with "O" device, and Three Coast Guard Achievement Medals with "O" device. He also holds a permanent Cutterman's pin, Boat Forces pin, Coxswain pin, and Command Devices Afloat and

Ashore. He holds a Master of Business Administration (summa cum laude) from Touro University International, and a Bachelor of Science Degree (magna cum laude) from Excelsior University. He also holds a Project Manager Professional certification from the Project Management Institute.



With Station Atlantic City crew during unit visit.

Post Coast Guard Career

Skip Bowen and his wife Janet are staying active in their post Coast Guard career in Lockport, Louisiana where Bowen is a Vice President at Bollinger Shipyards. Over the last 30 years Bollinger Shipyards has built every patrol boat, patrol craft-sized vessel in the Coast Guard Fleet. As a longtime operator of such vessels Bowen saw employment at Bollinger Shipyards as a way to continue to contribute to the service he loves and stay connected to the Coast Guard. In addition, Bowen is a member of many military service groups and serves on the Boards or Advisory Councils for several organizations including First Command Financial, Mission Readiness, Broward Navy Days, the Armed Forces Retirement Home and the Commandant of the Coast Guard National Retiree Council.

The Bowens' have four children, Mason, Joshua, Joseph, and Kristen. Mason is currently an active duty member of the Coast Guard.



Conducting a re-enlistment on board the USCGC ALEX HALEY in Alaska

Some of the other major accomplishments during Bowen's tenure as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard:

- Completed and enacted a complete revision of the Command Master Chief instruction, including placing the Rating Force Master Chief (RFMC) structure as a program underneath the Master Chief of the Coast Guard leadership umbrella.
- Worked very closely with the Service Senior Enlisted Advisors from the DOD. He championed initiatives such as an "instructor" swap between the U.S. Navy's Senior Enlisted Course and the Coast Guard Chief's Academy. Along with the Master Chief of the Navy, he co-hosted a large international senior enlisted leadership symposium in Honolulu, Hawaii. The event was attended by over 100 senior enlisted personnel from 40 nations.
- During the mid-2000's housing/mortgage crisis Bowen worked directly with his counterparts in the DOD services and senior officials including the Secretary of Defense. Their efforts directly resulted in an "off-cycle" change to PCS mileage allowance, and changes to Joint Federal Travel Regulations that allowed government to pay for a move from a rental if the owner of the rental was foreclosed upon. Their initiative eventually helped result in an expansion of the Army Corps of Engineers Housing Assistance Program.



In Baghdad, with Multi-National Force Commander General David Petraeus

- Bowen worked with security officials to help initiate change to security clearance policies that would allow members to retain their security clearance even if they experienced a foreclosure as long as the member was fiscally responsible in all other ways.
- Bowen and his staff worked hundreds of issues on behalf of individual members and commands. The Issues ran the gamut across the personnel system from assignment, to pay and benefits, and single parent concerns to many other issues affecting Coast Guard men and women.
- Worked with DOD/CG officials to ensure Coast Guard parity with a DOD initiative lifting the 1% E9 cap to 1.25%. This resulted in a positive impact on the Coast Guard's ability to provide, manage, and sustain a high quality senior enlisted force. The change provided relief in 3 Ways: (1) Managing the workforce too close to the cap had resulted in slow advancements and significant workforce management issues. (2) The move created room to grow a little, which in turn provided room to add E9s to units that clearly had a justified need. It also allowed Bowen and the Rating Force Master Chiefs to make successful arguments for converting or creating a few billets to make some of the individual ratings healthier at the senior level. (3) It relieved the pressure to exactly align billets to bodies within the Personnel system. Previous attempts to align mismatches had caused quite a few unpopular assignment decisions.

- Bowen worked to raise visibility and find resources to improve multiple Unaccompanied Personnel Housing units. In just one case his efforts to spotlight the problem with Coast Guard leadership led to a multi-million dollar rehab of a large substandard UPH.
- Bowen championed the Coast Guard's participation in the Armed Forces Retirement Home system. He worked to socialize the pending Armed Forces Retirement Home legislation with the workforce. He hosted a trip and series of briefs for Coast Guard service organizations such as the Chief Petty Officer's Association, the Chief Warrant Officers Association and the Enlisted Association at the Washington D.C. retirement home. The actual legislation was passed in 2011.
- During his travels Bowen found many problems with the condition of Coast Guard owned housing. Bowen raised awareness in every possible forum and through every means available including Coast Guard, DHS, OMB, Congress and the Administration. He worked with legal personnel, housing staff, and program reviewers to find and implement solutions. His efforts ultimately resulted in legislation that allowed the Coast Guard to sell unneeded property and use the proceeds to build new housing where it was critically needed.
- Bowen successfully supported the project to build a new 13.3 million dollar Aquatic Training (Rescue Swimmer) Facility. The project was meant to recapitalize the substandard swimmer training facility existing at the Aviation Technical Training Center in Elizabeth City, NC. The project included an egress trainer (dunker) which Bowen considered very important to the safety of air and boat crews. When the funding for the project was threatened Bowen fought for and helped obtain funding through senior leadership and congressional engagement. He also worked with Boat Forces to ensure that an inter-program partnership was in place to ensure maximum use of the facility (once built) with boat forces trainees from Yorktown. The facility was actually completed in late 2012.
- During his tenure Bowen assisted in efforts to raise Basic Allowance for Housing rates in multiple problem areas around the Coast Guard. He worked with housing/pay personnel/unit reps to raise awareness of specific area issues. His efforts helped to achieve positive results as expressed by one commanding officer in an email "It appears that BAH for this area will be increasing between 25-33% for paygrades E-5 & E-6. That is great news. Thank you for listening and your support."
- Bowen worked with Human Resources leadership and programs to spotlight an issue regarding new legislation affecting retirees. The new law allowed the concurrent receipt of both

retirement pay and disability pay. The main challenge was an insufficient workforce to process the number of members eligible. Bowen directly supported the human resource directorate as they grappled with this issue by bringing the lack of resources problem to the attention of resource decision makers, and helping to communicate progress through the his communications network.

- Bowen championed legacy cutter infrastructure/quality of life issues. As he travelled he found major issues with the legacy cutter fleet in regards to substandard condition of living spaces (mold, insulation problems, condensation, inadequate racks, lockers, poor maintenance, etc). He put together documents/emails detailing conditions that resulted in millions of dollars in funding being diverted to legacy cutter habitability issues. He held meetings regarding the problem with multiple layers of government including testimony before Congress. Here is an excerpt from one member detailing conditions, "As I write this email it is 50 degrees outside and the water continues to drip, so imagine when it is 100 degrees outside the skin of the ship. The carpet is horrible condition and the mold, though hard to see, is terrible. Last group of deckies nicknamed 20 Man berthing "The Swamp or The Projects."

- Bowen worked with leadership to ensure policies enacted by Coast Guard Headquarters did not have an adverse effect (either on operations or individuals) on the deckplate level. One example is tactical boat training/pursuit coxswain training policy. In the Florida Keys tactical boat training was certified by local trainers through the District Seven Tactical Law Enforcement Team. A new policy threatened that practice which would have resulted in degradation of mission effectiveness for units. Bowen worked with the responsible Headquarters staff to find a resolution that would work for all affected.

- Bowen championed improvements in the Coast Guard child care system. For instance in the case of the TRACEN Petaluma CDC, Bowen's efforts helped result in a million dollar plus up in funding to enhance the Petaluma CDC. Other childcare efforts included working with Work Life programs on childcare subsidy rules and overall funding for the program. Bowen also supported the program in its goal to standardize CDC enrollment/payment practices across Coast Guard.

- Bowen worked to obtain funding for leadership libraries for remote and O'Conus commands and large cutters.

- Bowen was a driving force behind the development and implementation of the "untucked" Operational Duty Uniform, and the standard CG Physical Fitness uniform.

- Bowen helped behind the scenes with the Commandant's efforts to obtain a Fisher House on Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage Alaska.
- Bowen championed military benefits parity with multiple layers of government including Administration officials, Secretary of Defense, Congress, and Coast Guard leadership. His efforts resulted in legislation regarding general benefit parity between the armed services.
- Bowen sought and was successful adding two additional training billets so that four senior enlisted members each year could attend the nine month U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.
- Bowen and the Command Master Chief network sought and was successful bringing major change to General Military Training requirements. Efforts resulted in a more streamlined application of the training for the total force. Improvements included restrictions on what entities could "inflict" GMT on the field, advances in on-line courses, test "challenge" options, and restrictions on the length of time it takes to complete any individual training requirement.
- Bowen wrote a number of "Standing Orders" for Coast Guard Chiefs and the enlisted force at large. He completely revised and updated the Chiefs Call to Indoctrination guidelines creating a more professional CCTI process with the goal to better develop new Chief Petty Officers focusing on responsibilities, teamwork, leadership and heritage. He and his staff created a website to share CCTI "best practices."
- Established an All-CG Chief Petty Officers email distribution list used for critical messages concerning safety, standards and important changes to policy. This list created an ability to reach out and communicate with all mid-level leadership simultaneously.
- Bowen worked extensively to communicate through every medium available including traditional media such as newspapers and magazines (Navy Times, Fleet Reserve Association, Coast Guard magazine, Reserve magazine, Annual Report, Proceedings, etc). He published many articles and interviews on subjects such as weight standards, changes to advancement policies, modernization and housing issues.
- He recreated a newsletter concept used by the first MCPOCG, Master Chief [Charles] Calhoun. A frequently asked question was what does the MCPOCG actually do? This widely distributed newsletter answered that question and much more. It was used as a source to advertise upcoming events and showcase service-wide initiatives such as modernization.
- Bowen established an extremely popular blog called "Coast Guard All Hands." The blog was used for two way communications regarding a number of very important changes to policy and

other significant service wide issues as well as to highlight units and individual Coast Guard men and women. The blog was also used to explain difficult to understand changes to policy and was frequently referred to by ALCOASTS as a source of official information.

- Enacted a major change to the enlisted advancement system in regards to Sea/Surf/Award points. The former policy had resulted in a situation that sea points often became the single most important factor in determining who was advanced or not. Bowen successfully presented evidence that this was creating a system wherein the “best” qualified were often not the members advanced. Efforts resulted in a “cap” on Sea/Surf/Award points and a “zeroing” out process each time a member advanced which focused the policy back to the reasons for which it was originally enacted, to encourage members to voluntarily apply for sea duty

- Bowen completely revised the MCPOCG website making the site much more intuitive and useful for Coast Guard personnel. Also created Spouse/Family page linked to uscg.mil homepage. This website created an official one-stop shop for all information related to military family support and benefits.



At the White House for Women in the Military leadership event with Admiral Thad Allen and First Lady Michelle Obama.

Master Chief Bowen actively served on the following boards:

Coast Guard Leadership Council

Coast Guard Executive Management Council

Coast Guard Investment Review Board

Board of Trustees, Coast Guard Academy, New London, CT

Board of Control, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance

Senior Enlisted Leadership Council, Department of Defense

Armed Forces Retirement Home Board of Advisors

Coast Guard Awards Board

Board of Control-Non-Appropriated Funds



With Clyde Allen (Admiral Allen's father—a WWII veteran and retired Coast Guard Chief Damage Controlman) presenting the Coast Guard ensign to Admiral Thad Allen at the Commandant's Change of Command in 2010.

