

Breeches Buoy Saves Seven As Gloucester Vessel Founders

By Helen Davis

In the pre-dawn darkness Tuesday morning, the Cape End was again the scene of courage and action as Race Point Coast Guardsmen, using the breeches buoy, rescued all hands from aboard the Margaret Rose, a Gloucester dragger, which ran aground on a sandbar off the New Beach, about a mile west of Wood End.

Traveling with a companion vessel, the Antonino, the Margaret Rose, with 10,000 pounds of had-dock aboard, struck a shoal at 3:50 a.m. The draggers were moving close to shore, under conditions of poor visibility, in an attempt to escape the full impact of gale force winds which had been raging earlier in the open seas where they had been fishing on the northern edge of the Georges Banks. At the time the vessel went aground, northwest winds were blowing at 40 miles an hour. The Antonino radioed the Coast Guard for assistance for its stricken companion vessel. The radio on the Margaret Rose was out of order.

While a menacingly massive surf pounded against the dragger as she lay on her side, the Coast Guard arrived on the scene shortly after 4 a.m., quickly setting up life-saving equipment in an urgent effort to remove the fishermen to safety before the relentless breakers might smash the ship's hull and wash the crew into the turbulent sea.

Other Stations Help

Master Chief Boatswain's Mate Robert H. Marr of Race Point Coast Guard Station coordinated rescue efforts, which included Coast Guard helicopters from Salem which dropped flares around the area; and a DUKW from Chatham; as well as Race Point's two DUKW's which were under the command of Engineman First Class George Gaspa and Boatswain's Mate Third Class, Gerald MacConnell; and Race Point's 36-foot motor lifeboat in command of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Robert Oliver; and jeeps and trucks.

It was decided to use the breeches buoy lifesaving technique after an attempt to effect a rescue by the amphibious DUKW's failed because of the heavy surf.

At his first shot, Chief Boatswain's Mate Bernard Webber of the Chatham Coast Guard Station was successful in landing the

breeches buoy line upon the disabled boat.

Coast Guard Seaman Vincent Thompson of Brooklyn, now stationed at Race Point, courageously plunged from the shore into the angry winter surf, carrying a line attached to a cable for a distance of 75 to 100 yards out to the vessel, in preparation for attaching the breeches buoy. He came ashore on the breeches buoy.

The first of the seven fishermen to come ashore was Joseph Pas-

sanisi, 26, of 24 Gilman Street, Somerville, who had attempted to swing himself along the cable, hand-over-hand, but had slipped off into the violent surf. Coast Guardsmen who dauntlessly battled the pounding breakers to go after Mr. Passanisi to assist him ashore, were: Seaman Daniel H. Davidson of the Chatham Station, and Seaman Roger T. Davis and Engineman William H. Wolf, both of Race Point Station.

Nicolo Sanfilipo, 30, of 47 Nicholas Street, Everett, in attempting the same feat, also lost his hold on the cable and slipped into deep water. The heavy waves tossed him back on deck, causing cuts and bruises. He came ashore by breeches buoy.

The captain and crewmen brought ashore by breeches buoy were: Captain Peter Petrosino, 54, of 917 Winthrop Avenue, Revere; Joseph Balaud, 59, of 37

