

Welcome Aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Dallas*

The *USCGC Dallas* was originally commissioned in 1967 at Avondale Shipyards in New Orleans, LA. The ship is the sixth cutter to bear the name of Alexander J. Dallas, the Secretary of the Treasury under President James Madison (1814 - 1816). *Dallas* has been homeported at Governor's Island, New York since her commissioning.

Dallas is the second ship of the *Hamilton* class of High Endurance Cutters. At 378 feet, *Dallas* is second in size only to the two Polar class ice breakers (399 ft). *Dallas* is propelled by a Combination Diesel or Gas Turbine (CODOGT) system in which the ship could be propelled by fuel efficient, long range diesel engines or at high speed by marine gas turbines. The *Hamilton* class were the first class of naval vessels to be propelled by gas turbines which are basically aircraft jet engines modified for marine use. *Dallas* has two shafts equipped with controllable pitch propellers. This allows the shaft to turn in the same direction while forward/reverse thrust is produced by changing the pitch of the blades. To assist with handling alongside a pier, there is an electric driven bow propeller which is lowered through the hull just forward of the plothouse. It can be trained through 360 degrees and can move the ship at about 3 knots. Another innovative feature is that propeller pitch, engine speed and the bow propeller can all be remotely controlled from the plothouse or either bridge wing.

When *Dallas* is on patrol, she normally embarks an HH-65A *Dolphin* helicopter. A normal Aviation Detachment (AVDET) included the pilot, copilot, and several crew/maintenance personnel. Additionally they will be accompanied by a Helicopter Support Kit (HSK), which provides a capability to perform routine and preventative maintenance while the helicopter is attached. The helo extends *Dallas*' surveillance and monitoring capabilities to a range of over 150 miles. Additionally, a top speed of over 150 miles per hour enables the helo to deliver emergency equipment or MEDEVAC injured personnel hundreds of miles out at sea using *Dallas* as a refueling point. An added margin of safety comes from the installation of a TALON grid in the center of the flight deck which allows the helicopter to hook onto the flight deck with a special probe. This eliminates the need for crewmembers to run under the spinning blades to tie the helo to the deck.

The *Dallas* is, of course, only as good as the men and women of her crew. Normal peacetime complement is 22 officers and 168 enlisted. Habitability improvements include three crew lounges each with a TV, VCR, and stereo. There are a total of eight color TV's onboard which are tied together enabling the entire ship to view training films, feature films, or a network TV station from our new satellite television system. The helo hanger houses one of the largest floating gyms in the Coast Guard.

In her early years, *Dallas* collected valuable meteorological and oceanographic data as part of the GATE project and assisted commercial aircraft crossing the Atlantic. During seven combat patrols in Vietnam, *Dallas* compiled a very impressive list of accomplishments including 161 Naval Gunfire Support missions involving 7,665 rounds of 5" ammunition. This resulted in numerous enemy casualties, 58 sampans destroyed and 29 supply routes, base camps, or rest areas damaged or destroyed. For this performance *Dallas* received the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation.

In 1980 *Dallas* was the command ship for the unprecedented Mariel Boat Lift in which 125,000 Cubans set sail for the shores of Florida in dangerously unseaworthy vessels. In 1983, *Dallas* earned a Coast Guard Unit Commendation for both the seizure of seven vessels smuggling over 103,000 pounds of marijuana and the interdiction of 90 Haitian migrants. In 1986, following the explosion of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, *Dallas* was designated On Scene Commander for what was at the time the largest search and rescue operation ever undertaken.

Between 1986 and 1989, *Dallas* was decommissioned while she underwent Fleet Renovation and Modernization (FRAM) at the Bath Ironworks in Maine. During this time, the interior of the ship was redesigned and the electronics were upgraded. Some technological improvements included the installation of fleet satellite communications, Chaff for decoying missiles, upgraded air search radar and a new fire control radar. In the spring of 1991, *Dallas* became the first cutter to receive the Shipboard Command and Control System (SCCS) which consists of various integrated sensor systems and command/control/computer technology. This multi-million dollar improvement makes *Dallas* the most capable operations center - afloat or ashore - in the Coast Guard. In the fall of 1992, *Dallas* received the Phalanx CIWS (Close In Weapons System) as a last ditch defense against anti-ship missiles. INMARSAT was added in the winter of 1993 and provides the ship with a global, commercial satellite telephone link capable of sending voice, facsimile and computer data from ship to shore.

During the Haitian Crisis of 1991 - 1992, *Dallas* was again in command of the largest flotilla of Coast Guard cutters ever assembled. Intercepting almost 35,000 migrants, the Coast Guard transported these migrants to the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where their claims for asylum were evaluated by Immigration and Naturalization officials. In the summer of 1992, *Dallas* earned the Battle "E" and Operational "O" at Refresher Training in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for outstanding performance in all areas of evaluation. During the spring of 1993 patrol, *Dallas* was Flagship for Operation Able Manner which consisted of 22 Coast Guard and Navy ships and 17 aircraft. Able Manner was designed to deter Haitian Migrants from attempting a treacherous voyage to the United States. Also during that patrol, *Dallas* seized the *M/V Gladiator* and her six man crew for smuggling over 5,500 pounds of cocaine. On the way back to New York, *Dallas* was on scene with the 144 foot *M/V Mermaid No. 1* which was intercepted with 237 Chinese Migrants on board. For her actions since 1990, *Dallas* received the Coast Guard Humanitarian Service Medal, the Joint Meritorious Unit Commendation, two Coast Guard Unit Commendations, two Meritorious Unit Commendations, and numerous Special Operations Service Ribbons.

As *Dallas* enters her 26th year of service to the nation, she remains Semper Paratus, "Always Ready", to perform countless humanitarian, law enforcement, military and environmental missions with unparalleled success. The leadership of her officers and the efforts of her crew have earned *Dallas* a proud reputation that offers a challenge to every new crewmember. It is in this proud history of tremendous accomplishment that *Dallas* will continue to live up to her motto, Semper Nostra Optima, "Always Our Best!"