

USCGC Minnetonka

The United States Coast Guard Cutter MINNETONKA, named after a lake in Minnesota, is one of twelve, two-hundred fifty-five foot High Endurance Cutters in the Coast Guard. She was built in San Pedro, California, having her keel laid on December 26, 1944, and was launched on November 21, 1945. She was commissioned in the Nation's oldest continuous seagoing service on September 20, 1946. Since then she has been as far West as Thailand, as far South as Central America, and as far North as Alaska.

The MINNETONKA is 43 feet wide, 16 feet from the main deck to the waterline, and 102 feet from the top of her forward mast to her waterline. She displaces 2,000 tons and has a draft of 16½ feet when fully loaded. Engineers would classify her as a single screw turbo-electric driven ship, which means she has two boilers which supply steam to turn a turbine. The turbine turns a generator which supplies electricity to turn the main motor which turns the single propeller. With 4,000 shaft horsepower, she can cruise 5,300 nautical miles at a maximum speed of 18.4 knots, and 13,600 nautical miles at a cruising speed of 11 knots.

The MINNETONKA's armament consists of one 5"/38 cal. mount, two 81mm mortars, eight .50 cal. machine guns, two .30 cal. machine guns, six torpedo tubes, one hedgehog mount, and various small arms. Her 164 man crew consists of 16 Commissioned Officers, 16 Chief Petty Officers, and 132 Enlisted Men. On extended patrols, one of her commissioned officers is a doctor in the U. S. Public Health Service.

Her main duty is normally as an Ocean Station Vessel. She stands Ocean Station November, between Hawaii and the coast of California, and Ocean Station Victor, between Midway Island and Japan. While on station, it is her job to observe and report the weather, provide a radio beacon, and to act as a navigational aid to trans-oceanic aircraft. While on station she is also readily available to aid any ship or plane in distress in the vicinity. Her other duties include search and rescue, boarding, patrolling regattas, and reserve training. While in port, she also participates in the motorboating safety program.

Since in time of war, national emergencies, or when the President shall so direct, the Coast Guard leaves the Department of Transportation and becomes a part of the Navy, it is also part of the MINNETONKA's mission to remain prepared to assume her place in the Navy. To accomplish this, a constant program of training is in effect, culminated every year in a month of Navy Refresher Training at San Diego, California.

In December, 1967, the MINNETONKA was assigned to Coast Guard Squadron Three, under operational control of the U. S. Seventh Fleet. Here she operated along the coast of Viet Nam in Market Time Operations, reducing the flow of contraband goods entering the country. In October, 1968, the MINNETONKA returned to her homeport, Long Beach, California.