

Coast Guard's Viet role raised

High Endurance Cutters Arrive in Viet

WASHINGTON—The first three of the five Coast Guard high endurance cutters assigned to duty in Vietnam have arrived there, adding some 500 officers and men to the more than 500 Coast Guardsmen already involved in the war. The ships, making up Squadron 3, will patrol off the coast to prevent infiltration of enemy supplies and men from North Vietnam to the Viet Cong.

The Barataria, Bering Strait and Gresham will be joined soon by Half Moon and Yakutat.

The ships are former Navy seaplane tenders built during World War II and transferred to the Coast Guard after the war. They are 311 feet long, have a 41-foot beam and a 14-foot draft. Diesel-powered, they have a maximum speed of about 19 knots. Before the new assignment, the five cutters were ocean station patrol ships.

Their ocean station duties — collecting weather and oceanographic data, acting as aircraft ocean check points and conducting

search and rescue missions on distressed ships and planes — will be assumed by the other ocean station ships. Although the schedules have not been published, they will apparently add 14 to 20 days a year more on station for them. This will curtail reserve training.

Squadron 3 is commanded by Capt. John E. Day. It is the second squadron formed for Vietnam duty. Squadron 1 is made up of the twenty-six 82' and 85' patrol boats the first of which reported for duty in July 1965.

Yakutat In Rescue Of Airman

Special To The Standard Times

BOSTON — The Coast Guard cutter Yakutat, formerly of New Bedford, rescued one of the survivors of a July 7 collision of two B52 bombers off Vietnam. It was announced today.

Six persons died in the crash including Maj. Gen. William J. Crumm, commander of Strategic Air Command's 3d Air Division. Thirteen men were rescued.

According to 1st Coast Guard District Headquarters, the Yakutat at rescued Air Force Capt. William R. Gabel from the South China Sea after he was spotted by search planes. Gabel, who had been in a life raft for about six hours, showed "little apparent ill effects," the Coast Guard said.

After picking up Gabel, the 11-foot Yakutat continued its search as onscene commander of the search vessels involved or the next 55 hours. Numerous pieces of crash debris were picked up, the Coast Guard said and no more survivors were found.



5 More CGA Cutters Set for Vietnam Duty

By ERNEST SANDISON

WASHINGTON—The number of Coast Guardsmen committed to the Vietnam War will double with the deployment of five 311-foot high endurance cutters to areas off the coast.

Three of the ships are from East Coast homeports: Barataria, Portland, Maine; Half Moon, Staten Island, N.Y.; and Yakutat, New Bedford, Mass. The two are from the West Coast—the Bering Strait and the Gresham.

The war zone deployments, forecast in the April 19 Navy Times, leave cutter operating schedules up in the air. What ships will replace the WHEC's on ocean station assignments is still not clear, but it looks like tours for the remaining high endurance cutters will be lengthened or repeated more frequently.

As explained by CNO Adm. David L. McDonald to Congress, the cutters are needed because of the increased shore bombardment role for destroyers. Deployment of the

cutters will allow the shift of DER's from Market Time to duties now handled by destroyers, thus freeing the destroyers for gunfire support missions.

Coast Guard earlier sent twenty-six 82- and 85-foot cutters to Vietnam to bolster inshore patrols. It also has port security and loran transmitter units in Vietnam.

Yakutat Shells Viet Cong Base

Special To The Standard Times

SAIGON — The New Bedford, Mass.-based Coast Guard cutter Yakutat fired 5-inch shells into a Viet Cong base camp 50 miles east of here last week as part of a pre-planned naval gunfire support mission.

Spotter aircraft reported that the cutter's fire completely destroyed the camp. Three secondary fires and a secondary explosion were observed.

Craft From Area in Fight

Yakutat, Point Banks Shell Vietnam Shore

Special To The Standard Times

SAIGON — Two Coast Guard craft formerly based in South-eastern Massachusetts lent the weight of their guns to shore operations in Vietnam Friday.

The cutter Yakutat, on Operation Market Time patrol 60 miles southeast of Saigon, destroyed 13 enemy emplacements during a preplanned coastal bombardment mission.

Mortar and machine fire from the cutter Point Banks, supporting the amphibious landing of 7th Army of Vietnam troops, touched off 17 secondary explosions about midnight, 190 miles southwest of Saigon.

The coastal bombardment by the Yakutat, formerly based in New Bedford, caused a secondary explosion that spewed 125-foot high streamer like clouds of white smoke. The 311-foot ship received no enemy resistance during the mission.

The Point Banks, formerly of Woods Hole, was requested by Vietnamese officers to hit enemy targets near the coast.

The 82-foot cutter lobbed 4 rounds of 81-mm. mortar an directed more than 600 rounds of 50-caliber automatic weapons into the area.

The Vietnamese described the target coverage as "excellent" and assessed the 17 secondary explosions as follows: 15 touched off by 50 caliber were ammunition storage; two set off by 120 caliber were grenades or boob traps; and two ignited by 120 millimeter were assessed as large ammunition caches.

One of the large blasts was described as "bright, white and red spewing heavy damage to enemy sampans in the area."

Part of the Operation Market Time coast surveillance force Point Banks is a unit of Coast Guard Division 11 based at A Thoi.