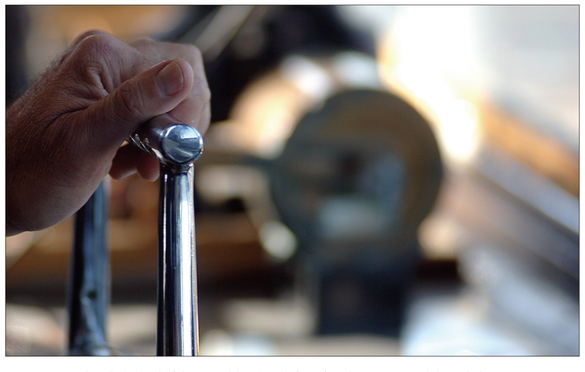
"THE CADILLAC OF THE CONSTRUCTION TENDER."

~ CWO3 Richard Birch, CO, CGC Kennebec

Clean Up *- Checking that the hook is securely fastened, SN Paul Germano, 21, finishes securing the deck of the Kennebec.*

Finishing what the Navy Could Not *- DC2 Dave Hargrave of Poquoson, Va., uses a torch to cut through the final inches of a 12-inch pile. Local Navy divers had worked to cut the pile while it was underwater, though poor visibility had slowed the process.*



Power up *- With a slight bend of the wrist (above), 160-feet of steel is maneuvered through the water.*

Raising the Aid *- SA Chris Messenger, 20, of Bellmawr, N.J. (right), hangs over the edge as he attaches the crane's hook to a sling wrapped around one of four piles underwater.*

Photos by U.S. Coast Guard PA1 Krystyna A. Hannum

Coast Guard Cutter Kennebec (WLIC-802) is the third in a series of four of the Coast Guard's most modern inland construction tender. The primary purpose of the Kennebec and her sister ships is to build, or rebuild if destroyed, those fixed aids to navigation used by mariners to safely navigate the inland waters of the United States.

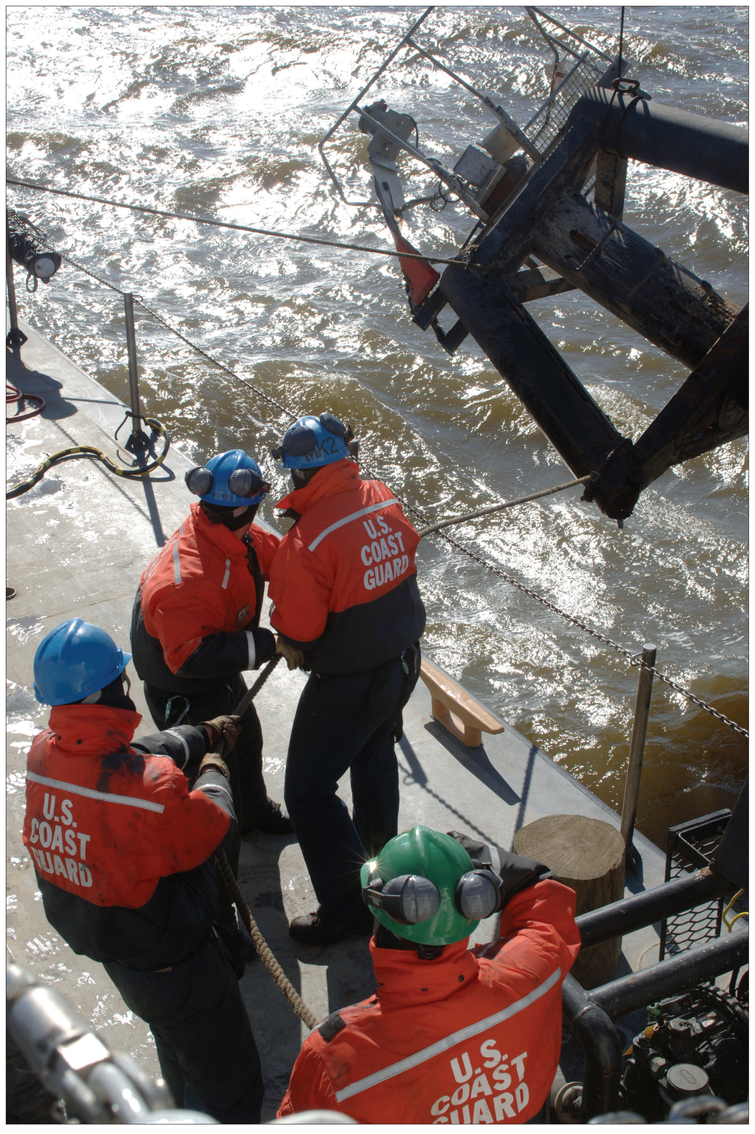
The Kennebec was built at the Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, Baltimore, Md., in 1976. The cutter is named after the Kennebec River in Maine. The Kennebec has a length of 160 feet and a beam of 32 feet. Her top speed is 10 knots.

The ship has a total crew of 15 personnel with a Chief Warrant Officer serving as the cutter's commanding officer.

The Kennebec is homeported in Portsmouth, Va. The normal operating area is from Washington, D.C., through the southern half of the Chesapeake Bay including the Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway south to Roanoke Island, N.C. The crew is also responsible for constructing aids in the Virginia Inside Passage. Kennebec frequently venture out of "home waters" to assist other construction tenders with various projects or if disaster strikes (i.e.: ice or hurricane damage to fixed aids to navigation). This makes Kennebec responsible for over 1,400 fixed aids to navigation.

The most unusual feature of Kennebec and her sister construction tenders are their "spuds". The spuds, four upright square steel piles, can be raised or lowered at will. When lowered into the sea bottom they prevent movement of the vessel, which provides a stable platform for the crane and pile driver. When underway, the spuds are raised. The real workhorse of Kennebec is the CG 300 crane with its 70-foot boom. The crane is capable of lifting loads up to 10 tons.

The Kennebec was designed with crew comfort in mind. Two and four person berthing areas are equipped with individual air conditioning and heating units. The galley is large and equipped with modern type appliances.



Holding Steady *- Crewmembers guide the jig, the portion of a navigational aid that sits above the waterline and holds the light and board, as the crane maneuvers it over the deck.*

Eyes to the Horizon *- Taking a moment's break, DC2 Dave Hargrave, 26, looks across the waters to a slowly sinking sun.*

A Pile of Crusty Rust *- With the sun's rays touching the metal after years of being underwater (above), the first of four piles is brought up under the watchful eyes of BMC Bryan Curlett, 30 (white helmet), BM3 Jason Sleeper, 24 (yellow helmet), and SA John Mielec, 20 (green helmet).*

Underway *- The Kennebec (left) spent about two weeks working #18 navigational aid in the James River after an unknown vessel knocked it over. The aid had to be located, removed, and rebuilt, a project that took about two weeks.*

Waking Up *- A required staple aboard, coffee, was used heavily by the crew while the Kennebec was underway at the end of January. The first part of the project ended the same day the coffee ran out.*

At the Controls *- Using levers, skills, and some additional assistance from eyes on deck, MK2 Jeff Williams, 31, controls the movements of the crane and its 70-foot boom.*