



Nemesis, 1934

WPC-111

The cutter *Nemesis* was named for the Greek goddess of retributive justice; an avenger.

TYPE: 165-Foot (B) Patrol Craft

BUILDER: Marietta Manufacturing Co., Point Pleasant, WV

COST: \$258,000

COMMISSIONED: 10 October 1934

DECOMMISSIONED: 20 November 1964; Sold 9 February 1966.

DISPLACEMENT: 337 tons

PROPULSION: 2 Winton, 6 cylinder, Model 158 diesels; 1,340 bhp

PERFORMANCE: 16.0 knots maximum; 11 knots, 3,000 mile radius cruising;

LENGTH: 165 feet

BEAM: 25 feet, 3 inches

DRAFT: 7 feet, 8 inches

COMPLEMENT: 5 officers, 39 men (1938); 7 officers, 68 men (1945)

ARMAMENT:

1932-1938: One 3"/23; Two 1-pounders

1941: 1 3"/23; 1 "Y" gun depth charge projector; 2 depth charge tracks

1945: Two 3"/50; Two 20mm/80 (single); 2 depth charge tracks; 2 "Y" gun depth charge projectors; 2 mousetraps (1945)

SONAR: QCN-1

Class History:

The 165-foot "B" Class cutters, sometimes referred to as the *Thetis*-Class, were a follow on to the 125-foot cutters. Both types of cutters were designed for the enforcement of Prohibition, but the 165-footers primary mission was to trail the mother ships that dispensed alcohol to smaller, faster vessels well beyond the territorial waters of the U.S. Hence these cutters had to have excellent sea-keeping qualities, good accommodations for the crew, and long range. Although Prohibition ended soon after most entered service, their design nevertheless proved to be adaptable to the many other missions of the Coast Guard.

An article written soon after they entered service noted that: "the new cutters are low and rakish, without excessive superstructure or freeboard. A raking stem, well flared bow and cruiser stern give the appearance of speed as well as contribute to the seaworthiness of the vessels, a quality which has been demonstrated in actual service. . .The new ships are twin-screw driven by two 670 horse power Diesel engines, furnished by the Winton Engine Co. of Cleveland, Ohio. The shafting and propellers are arranged and supported in a novel manner. The ship is equipped with two overhanging rudders on a line with and just aft of the propellers. The rudders are supported by a streamline rudder post at the forward end which is bossed out for a bearing to take a stub shaft which extends through the propeller. This method of arranging the rudders has proved remarkably successful. At full speed, the ships turn a complete circle in two minutes and eighteen seconds, and can be docked with ease under the most difficult conditions. On trial runs, the *Atalanta* averaged 16.48 knots at 468 RPM with practically no vibration and the engine under no evident strain. Due to the arduous service for which these vessels were built, only the finest materials available were used. . .It is interesting to note that genuine wrought iron pipe was used for practically all the services where resistance to corrosion, vibration, and strain was required. The fuel oil, lubricating oil, and water service to the main engines and auxiliaries; the fire and bilge system; and the steam heating system were all installed with genuine wrought iron pipe. At the Lake Union plant this pipe was furnished by the Reading Iron Company through the Crane Company's Seattle office and Bowles Company of Seattle. The new ships are a distinct contribution to modern shipbuilding and should be of great value to the Coast Guard."*

They certainly did prove to be of great value to the Coast Guard. Most saw service as coastal convoy escorts during World War II and two, the *Icarus* and the *Thetis*, each sank a U-boat. Many saw service well into the 1960s and some still service as tour boats in New York City with the Circle Tour Line, testament to their sturdy and well-thought out design.

HISTORY:

Nemesis, built for the Coast Guard by Marietta Manufacturing Co., Point Pleasant, W. Va., was launched 7 July 1934. She commissioned as a large cruising cutter and assumed permanent station at St. Petersburg, Fla., where she commenced patrol and rescue operations in the fall of 1934.

With the outbreak of hostilities, Executive Order 8929 of 1 November 1941 transferred the Coast Guard to the Navy. In the early months of the war, before an effective coastal "dim-out" was inaugurated, Nazi U-boats lay offshore and sank clearly-silhouetted coastal shipping targets. The Gulf Sea Frontier, which included the Florida and Gulf coasts and parts of the Bahamas and Cuba, was defended in only rudimentary fashion during the early months of the war. Initial defenses consisted of the three Coast Guard cutters *Nemesis*, *Nike*, and *Vigilant*, together with nineteen unarmed Coast Guard aircraft and fourteen lightly armed Army aircraft.

In late February 1942 four ships were torpedoed in four days, and in May forty-one vessels were sent to the bottom by hostile submarine action off the Florida coast and in the Gulf. As sinkings mounted alarmingly in the Gulf Sea Frontier waters, American defensive strength in the area began to increase rapidly and overwhelmingly.

Nemesis remained operational in the Gulf Sea Frontier throughout the war. Between February and August 1942 she launched attacks on submarine contacts on at least five different occasions. She rescued twenty-eight survivors from the torpedoed Mexican tanker *Faja de Oro* 21 May and 7 June she rescued twenty-seven from the torpedoed *Suwied*. From February 1943 through June of 1945 she served on escort duty between New York and Key West, FL. On 11 January 1945 she rammed the SS Felipe de Neve off Point Judith Light and received considerable damage. After repairs she was assigned, in June 1945, to Air-Sea Rescue duty in the First District.

By Executive Order 0666, the Coast Guard officially returned to the Treasury Department 1 January 1946. With the return of peace, *Nemesis* resumed patrol duties out of her permanent station of St. Petersburg, Florida. She remained in an active status until 20 November 1964, when she decommissioned and was sold to Auto Marine Engineering, Inc., of Miami. She received the Navy Expeditionary Medal for services from 03 January 1961 to 23 October 1962 during the "Cuban operation".

Nemesis received one battle star for World War II service.

Sources:

Cutter files, USCG Historian's Office.

Canney, Donald L. *U.S. Coast Guard and Revenue Cutters, 1790-1935*. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995).

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships.

*Nickum, W. C. "New 'Sisters' of the Coast Guard Patrol Go Into Service." *The Reading Puddle Ball* 3, No. 11 (February 1935), pp. 6-7.

Scheina, Robert L. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters and Craft in World War II*. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982).

U.S. Coast Guard. Public Information Division. Historical Section. *The Coast Guard at War: Transports and Escorts*. (Vol. V, No. I). (Washington, DC: Public Information Division, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 1949).

