

POINT BAKER, 1963

WPB-82342

Class history—The 82-foot patrol boats were developed to fill the need for a fast, sturdy, and highly maneuverable boat capable of operating in heavy seas to replace the aging 83-foot wooden cutters built during World War II. They were constructed with mild steel hulls and aluminum superstructures. Longitudinally framed construction was used to save weight.

These boats were completed with a variety of power plants. 82301 through 82313, 82315 through 82317, and 82319 through 82331 were powered by two Cummins 600-hp diesels. Boats 82318 and 82332 through 82379 received two Cummins 800-hp diesels. The 82314 was fitted with two 1,000-hp gas turbines and controllable-pitch propellers. The purpose of this installation was to permit the service to evaluate the propulsion equipment. All units were eventually fitted with the 800-hp diesels. Units remaining in 1990 were re-equipped with Caterpillar diesels.

WPB 82301 through 82344 were commissioned without names; at that time the Coast Guard did not name patrol craft shorter than 100 feet. In January 1964 they were assigned names.

Builder: Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, MD

Commissioned: 30 October 1963

Decommissioned: 06 February 2002

Disposition: Transferred to the government of the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

Length: 82'10" oa, 78' bp

Navigation Draft: 5'11" max (1960)

Beam: 17'7" max

Displacement: 69 fl; 60 light (1960)

Main Engines: 2 Cummins diesel (see class history)

BHP: 1,600

Performance, Maximum Sustained: 18.0 kts, 542-mi radius (1,600 hp, 1963)
Performance, Economic: 9.4 kts, 1,500-mi radius (1,600 hp, 1963)

Maximum Speed: 22.9 kts (1963)

Fuel Capacity: 1,840 gal

Complement: 8 men (1960), 2 officers, 8 men (1965) ; 1 officer, 9 men (1990)

Electronics:

Radar: SPN-11, CR-103 (1960), or SPS-64

Armament: 1 x 20mm (1960), 5 x .50 cal mg, 1 x 81 mm mortar (Vietnam service)

Ship's history:

The *Point Baker* was built at the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay, Maryland. She was named for a point of land along the coast of Alaska. She was commissioned on 30 October 1963 and her first homeport was Port Isabel, Texas, where she served from 1963 to 1966. She was used for law enforcement and search and rescue operations. On 27 December 1966, she towed the disabled F/V *Sherry Ann* to Port Aransas, Texas.

From 1967 to 1991, she was stationed at Port Aransas. On 15 June 1967, she towed F/V *Old Man* from miles east-southeast of Freeport, Texas, to Aransas Pass, Texas, following a medevac of its master by a Coast Guard aircraft. On 10 December 1967, she towed the disabled F/V *Baroness* 90 east-northeast of Port Aransas to that port. On 8 September 1968, she towed the disabled F/V *Gulf Star* to Port Aransas.

While patrolling within the 12-mile limit in August of 1975, the *Point Baker* located, boarded and seized the Cuban fishing vessel *E-82* for illegal fishing. There was no resistance and the cutter towed the Cuban vessel to Corpus Christi, Texas where it was impounded and the crew turned over to Justice Department representatives. In January 1981, she made the largest seizure of illegal drugs off the coast of Texas when she seized over 15 tons of marijuana from the hold of a fishing vessel.

In 1991 she changed homeports to Sabine Pass, Texas where she remained in service until 2002. During the mass exodus of Haitian and Cuban migrants in 1994, *Point Baker* played a major role in the rescue of many of these migrants. In August, 1994, along with another cutter, rescued over 200 Cubans from the deck of a sinking vessel. Additionally, she was involved in numerous towing

operations, search and rescue cases, and law enforcement boardings as she had throughout her long career with the Coast Guard.

She was decommissioned on 06 February 2002 and was transferred to the government of Georgia. At that time she was the last 82-foot patrol boat actively serving in the Coast Guard. Her crew at the time of her decommissioning were:

LTJG Matt Bournonville; CO
BM1 Jeremy Snyder; XPO
MKC Mark Beasley; EPO
FS2 Pete Drayer; FSO
BM2 Wesley Stech; 1 LT
SN Blas Herrera
SN Travis Stark
MK2 Darren Mathews; AEPO
MK3 Randy Eason
FA Leo Hinojosa
FA Chris Weik

The *Point Baker* earned three Unit Commendations and two Meritorious Unit Commendations.

Photographs (click on description to view image):

[*Point Baker*, tied to the pier at the Port Aransas CG Station, late-1960s; no photo number; photographer unknown.](#)

[*Point Baker*, decommissioning ceremony, 6 February 2002; no photo number; photographer unknown.](#)

Sources:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

"The 82-Foot Class Patrol Boat." *U.S. Coast Guard Engineer's Digest* No. 133 (Mar-Apr 1962), pp. 2-5.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft, 1946-1990*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990
