



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Travis, 1927

WPC-153

The cutter was named for Revenue Marine Captain Samuel Travis. On the night of 12 June 1813 in the mouth of the York River, Captain Samuel Travis, USRCS--commanding officer of revenue cutter *Surveyor*--prepared his ship to light off an expected attack by British forces. When the enemy party boarded their ship, Travis and crew ignored the overwhelming numerical superiority of their attackers and defended *Surveyor* with fierce and fearless valor until overwhelmed. The commander of the British boarding party so admired Travis' intrepid effort that he returned his sword.

TYPE/RIG/CLASS: Active Class Patrol Boat

BUILDER: American Brown Boveri Electric Corp., Camden, NJ

COMMISSIONED: 29 April 1927

LAUNCHED: 18 April 1927

DECOMMISSIONED: 5 June 1962 and sold 15 November 1962.

DISPLACEMENT: 232 tons

PROPULSION: Two 6-cylinder, 300 Horse Power engines

LENGTH: 125 feet

BEAM: 23 feet, 6 inches

DRAFT: 7 feet, 6 inches

COMPLEMENT: 3 officers, 17 men

ARMAMENT: 1 3"/27 (1927); in WWII two dc racks were added

Class History:

This class of vessels was one of the most useful and long- lasting in Coast Guard service with 16 cutters still in use in the 1960's. The last to be decommissioned from active service was the *Morris* in 1970; the last in actual service was the *Cuyahoga*, which sank after an accidental collision in 1978. They were designed for trailing the "mother ships" along the outer line of patrol during Prohibition. They were constructed at a cost of \$63,173 each. They gained a reputation for durability that was only enhanced by their re-engining in the late 1930's; their original 6-cylinder diesels were replaced by significantly more powerful 8-cylinder units that used the original engine beds and gave the vessels 3 additional knots. All served in World War II, but two, the *Jackson* and *Bedloe*, were lost in a storm in 1944. Ten were refitted as buoy tenders during the war and reverted to patrol work afterward.

History:

USCGC *Travis*--a steel-hulled, twin-screw, diesel-powered Coast Guard cutter built in 1927 at Camden, N.J., by the American Brown Boveri Corp.--was commissioned in mid- or late 1927, with Boatswain's Mate J. S. Turner in charge. Built to combat the rum-running trade, *Travis* operated out of Stapleton, N.Y., Morehead City, N.C., and Rockland, Maine, successively, through the 1930's. The latter port served as her home base from 1937 to the summer of 1941, when the Coast Guard was placed under naval control for the duration of the national emergency brought on by the war in Europe.

Apparently shifted to Argentia, Newfoundland, in either late 1941 or early 1942 to support the Atlantic Fleet in the Battle of the Atlantic, *Travis*--designated WPC--153--picked up a sound contact at 1100 on 8 February 1942 while patrolling off Placentia Bay. She dropped a depth charge which temporarily disabled her sound gear. Once the cutter regained the contact, she dropped another pair of charges. While the Coast Guardsmen noted an oil slick, there was no definite confirmation of a "kill."

Travis apparently remained in these northern climes into the winter of 1942. On 20 December, she came across the disabled freighter *Maltran* which was in danger of running aground on a poorly charted rocky shore. The cutter attempted to tow off the ship, but the hawser parted. Meanwhile, *Mohawk* (WPG--78) happened by and, at the request of *Travis*, rendered assistance. The second cutter relieved the first in the towing operation and succeeded in taking *Maltran* in tow at 0315 on 21 December, while *Travis* operated as an antisubmarine screen. Eventually, the little group successfully navigated the dangerous uncharted waters and emerged to make passage to the swept channel at Argentia.

Subsequent records are sparse, but the ship undoubtedly remained on active service through the end of the war and into the 1950s. Eventually, her home port became Port Everglades, Florida, by 1960, and she remained in service there until decommissioned in 1963. She earned the Navy Expeditionary Medal for service from 04 January 1961 to 14 June 1961 when she conducted a total of seven patrols in support of the "Cuban operation."

Travis was decommissioned and sold soon thereafter.

Sources

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