



Saranac, 1930

Later-HMS *Banff*, Y-43
Later-*Sebec*; later-*Tampa*
WPG-164



The cutter *Saranac* was named for Saranac Lake in New York.

Builder: General Engineering and Drydock Company, Oakland, CA

Builder's Number: CG-51

Launched: 12 April 1930

Commissioned: 2 October 1930

Decommissioned: Transferred to Great Britain on 30 April 1941

Disposition: Returned on 27 February 1946; renamed Tampa and commissioned on 27 May 1947; decommissioned on 10 August 1954; sold on 16 February 1959.

Displacement: 2,075 tons

Dimensions: 250' oa (236' bp) x 42' x 12' 11" draft (mean)

Machinery: 1 turbine-driven electric motor (General Electric), 2 boilers, 3,350 shp, 14.8 knots (cruising), 17.5 knots max

Propellers: single, 4 blades

Complement: 97 (1940)

Armament: 1 x 5"/51; 1 x 3"/50; 2 x 6-pdrs (1929)

Cost: \$900,000 each (hull & machinery)

"Lake"-Class Design:

The 250-foot class cutters were designed by the Coast Guard and were, in many respects, modernized 240-footers. Captain Q.B. Newman, USCG, designed its innovative turbine-electric-drive power plant, which developed an amazing 3,350 shp. These were the first to have alternating current, and a synchronous motor for propulsion. The whole ship ran off the main turbine. The auxiliary generators were tied into the main generator electrically, after sufficient speed was attained. At that point, no steam was required to drive the turbines on the auxiliary generators. The propulsion plant achieved remarkable efficiency. The counter stern and plumb bow of the older class had given way to the flared stem and cruiser stern. These features were an attempt to improve sea qualities over the 240-foot class, particularly to eliminate the heavy shocks common in the North Atlantic Ice Patrol.

Initially this class was made up of ten cutters, all of which were transferred to Great Britain under Lend-Lease in 1941. They were to be replaced in the USCG inventory by the 255-foot Owasco-class vessels, laid down in 1943. Three vessels were lost while in British service, one was not returned, and the

remainder turned back to the Coast Guard in 1946. Initially, the Coast Guard planned to renovate the *Champlain*, *Itasca*, *Mocoma*, and *Tampa* and return them to service. The remaining two vessels, the *Chelan* and *Tahoe*, were stripped of parts for use in the restoration of the other four ships. Due to economic constraints following the war, however, only the *Mocoma* and *Tampa* were placed in commission.

Types of Work Done by the *Lake-Class* Cutters:

Prior to their transfer to Great Britain, most of the cutters performed an equal amount of boarding work, with the exception of *Tahoe*, whose record of 809 vessels boarded was over twice the group average for the period, and of *Itasca*, whose 528 boardings were 50 percent above the average. *Shoshone* reported two and a half times the average number of vessels reported by the group for infractions of navigation laws, and *Tahoe* twice the average.

Sebago led in derelicts destroyed, and *Chelan* in regattas patrolled. *Cayuga* and *Mendota* did the greatest amount of anti-smuggling patrol work, while *Itasca* and *Mendota* led in time devoted to assistance work. *Mendota* and *Pontchartrain* spent over twice the average number of hours in winter cruising, while *Shoshone*, *Itasca*, and *Chelan* did all of the Bering Sea Patrol work done by the group. *Champlain* and *Chelan* led in the International Ice Patrol activity, and *Cayuga* devoted more time than any of the rest to USCG Academy cadet practice cruises. *Tahoe* gave the greatest amount of time of any in the group to icebreaking.

Cutter History:

The new Coast Guard cutter *Saranac* was built by General Engineering & Drydock Company of Oakland, California. She was launched on 12 April 1930 and was commissioned on 2 October 1930. She was initially assigned to Galveston, Texas. In addition to her regular patrol duties she sailed on a cadet cruise in 1932 and again in 1940.

In the summer of 1940 *Saranac* and *Sebago* departed New London, Connecticut on 25 May 1940 with *Saranac* carrying 53 cadets and *Sebago* carrying 54. They returned to New London on 10 August 1940, having visited Norfolk, Virginia; Havana, Cuba; Cristobal, Canal Zone; Acapulco, Mexico; San Francisco, California; San Pedro, California; Balboa, Canal Zone; Norfolk again; and Lynnhaven Roads, Virginia, spending 45 days at sea and 33 days in port.

From 1 January 1936 until 31 March 1941, she spent 9,632 hours underway while cruising for over 105,000 nautical miles. During that time her crew stopped and boarded 374 vessels, destroyed one derelict and carried out 668 cases of "assistance." She rescued 44 persons and assisted 317 others.

Saranac was transferred to Great Britain under Lend-Lease on 30 April 1941. The Royal Navy renamed her HMS *Banff* and she was given the signal number of Y-43. She was returned to the U.S. at Boston on 27 February 1946 under the new name *Sebec*, designation and hull number WPG-164. After being refitted at the Coast Guard Yard, she was renamed *Tampa* and placed in commission 27 May 1947. She was assigned to Mobile, Alabama. For the next few years she performed search and rescue and law enforcement patrol duty in and around the Gulf of Mexico.

During February, 1950, she visited Port Au Prince, Haiti for a few days. On 5 May 1950 she arrived at Argentia, Newfoundland for duty with the International Ice Patrol. On 8 August of that same year she patrolled the Fishing Rodeo at Mobile Bay Entrance, and on the 18th she patrolled the Tarpon Rodeo in the Southwest Passage. On 8 November 1952 she departed Mobile for Veracruz, Mexico, on a special mission, returning on the 22nd. On 9 June 1954 she departed Mobile for the Coast Guard Yard and after arriving there was placed out of commission on 10 August 1954 and prepared for long-term storage.

She remained in storage until it was determined that she would no longer be needed by the service. She was then sold for scrap to Boston Metals Company of Baltimore, Maryland on 16 February 1959.

Photographs:



The launching of USS Saranac, CG



USS Saranac, CG



HMS *Fishguard*

Sources:

Cutter files, USCG Historian's Office.

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