



The Cutter Campbell

Rich histories to accompany U.S. Coast Guard Cutters Campbell, Tahoma

By JENNIFER L. SAUNDERS

Democrat Staff Writer

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KITTERY, Maine — The Seacoast is gearing up to welcome two Coast Guard cutters, their officers, crews and families, to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in what has been hailed as win-win for security and cost savings.

The Coast Guard Cutters Campbell and Tahoma, which are scheduled to officially move to the shipyard during a formal homeport change ceremony in late September, together bring 30 years of Coast Guard service to the Seacoast.

The Tahoma and the Campbell are 270-foot Famous-class cutters built by the Middletown, R.I., company Robert E. Derektor Shipbuilders and commissioned within four months of each other in 1988.

The cutters are two of 13 such medium endurance cutters with primary missions of

homeland security and search and rescue as well as drug and fisheries patrols.

Both cutters currently share the homeport of New Bedford, Mass., but are typically at sea for more than six months out of every year, according to information provided by Coast Guard

Assistant Historian Scott Price.

Cutters in the Famous class have the "ability to launch, recover and service the



The Cutter Campbell. Photos courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard

Coast Guard HH-65 helicopter... (and) serve the vital role of search and rescue in almost

any storm or location," according to the Coast Guard.

And while their primary mission is protecting safety and property at sea, both the Tahoma and Campbell have joined their fellow cutters in taking that mission to the next level: national defense.

In the days and months following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the cutters served in what was described on the Coast Guard's Web site as the largest port security operation in the its more than 200 years of existence.

"Relocation to the secure naval shipyard facility in Kittery will significantly enhance the force protection and security for these highly visible military units. In addition, the U.S. Navy is waiving costs for cutter berthing and support services, resulting in \$1 million in savings in total lifecycle costs," the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard said in a joint statement when the decision to move the cutters to the shipyard was announced.

Cutters in the "Famous" class are named for historically significant Coast Guard cutters. The current Tahoma is the third vessel to bear the name, which has its origins with the American Indian tribes of the Northwest Pacific Coast.

"Tahoma" refers to what is now known as Mt. Rainier, "the principal and most beautiful peak of the Cascade Mountain range. Also called, 'Mountain that was God,' the Indians worshipped this snow-capped peak because of both its majestic presence and the fact that the melting snows

from the mountain top watered all the surrounding valleys throughout the summer months and made the fertile," according to Coast Guard historical information.

The Campbell is the sixth cutter to bear the name of George Washington Campbell, secretary of the U.S. Treasury in 1814.

The Campbell's motto is, "Tradition, Pride and Readiness," and particularly honors its direct predecessor, the fifth USS Campbell, which earned the nickname "Queen of the Seas" in service for 46 years and in World War II, Korea and Vietnam prior to its decommissioning in 1982.

The Tahoma and the Campbell have about 100 officers and crew members each, and their families are in the process of moving to the Seacoast area and enrolling in local schools in advance of the official homeport change, tentatively scheduled for Sept. 27, Lt. Dean Jones, Coast Guard public affairs officer, explained in a prior interview.

The Tahoma and Campbell will join the Coast Guard Cutter Reliance, currently homeported at the shipyard — and from the moment the move was announced, it has been hailed as good news by shipyard officials.

"The Navy and the Coast Guard have traditionally worked very well together, but especially since 9/11. We have received tremendous support from the Coast Guard. It's been a very mutually beneficial relationship," said Shipyard Commander Capt. Kevin McCoy.