



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Dallas, 1967

(WHEC-716)

Motto: *Semper Nostra Optima* (“Always Our Best”)

Nicknames: “Big D”; “Roadrunner” (all 378-foot high-endurance cutters were nicknamed for Warner Brothers characters prior to the FRAM program); “Battleship Dallas” (from her service in Vietnam); “Dullest”; “The Mighty Warship Dallas”; “The CGC Tilt” (After a patrol in which *Dallas* scraped the pier prompting the VSF to dub the boat “The CGC Tilt,” because of an obvious list to port).

Namesake: Alexander Dallas (1759-1817) served as Secretary of the Treasury under President James Madison beginning in 1814. Dallas succeeded in his efforts to establish the Second Bank of the United States, which was chartered by Congress in 1816. He retired the year after the new bank had been organized.

Awards: The cutter’s awards included two Joint Meritorious Unit Awards, three Coast Guard Unit Commendations, a Navy Unit Commendation (as part of U.S. Sixth Fleet, Task Force 60 in Operation Iraqi Freedom), two Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendations, a Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, three Humanitarian Service Medals, numerous Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbons, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, the Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Unit Citation, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Characteristics:

Builder: Avondale Shipyards, Inc. (Northrop Grumman), New Orleans, La.

Keel laid: February 7, 1966

Launched: October 1, 1966

Commissioned: October 26, 1967

Cost: \$11,541,573

Decommissioned: March 30, 2012

Disposition: Transferred to the Philippine Navy and re-commissioned as the frigate BRP *Ramon Alcaraz* (PF-16).

Length: 378' overall, 350' waterline

Beam: 42'

Draft: 13' 6" (design)

Displacement: 2,716 tons (approx.)

Hull: V-shaped bow design, aluminum with welded steel, two compartment floodable length and anti-rolling tank

Speed: cruising, 20 knots; maximum sustained, 29 knots; highest clocked 32 knots.

Endurance: 2,000 miles at 29 knots; 9,600 miles @ 20 knots

Range at 20 knots: 12,000 nautical miles

Power: 36,000 shaft horsepower

Fuel capacity: 732 tons diesel, 18 tons JP-5 aviation fuel

Fresh water capacity: 16,000 gallons; 7,500 gallons/day evaporation

Auxiliary power: three 500 KW generators

Main propulsion: two controllable pitch propellers; diesel engines, 3,500 horsepower per shaft, or gas turbine engines, 18,000 horsepower per shaft.

Control: bridge; engine-room control booth; or localized

Armament: Original – one 5-inch/38 caliber dual-purpose gun forward; two Mk-67 20mm cannons. After Fleet Retention and Maintenance (FRAM) – one Otobreda 76 mm (3-inch) cannon on an elevated platform, two 25 mm Mk-38 anti-aircraft cannons. Later addition -- one stern-mounted Mk-15 20 mm Phalanx Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) radar guided anti-ship-missile gatling gun.

Crew capacity: 15 officers, 149 enlisted; later increased to around 170 personnel.

Class History: High-endurance cutters of the *Hamilton*-Class succeeded older cruising cutters for ocean service. The basic criterion for a high-endurance cutter (designated WHEC) is the ability to operate continuously at sea for 30 days or more, so that they can maintain established ocean and weather stations as well as perform coastal missions. At the time the WHECs were designed, the Coast Guard had been relying on surplus World War II-era U.S. Navy vessels for its largest cutters.

The *Hamilton*-Class of twelve WHEC cutters met added design criteria for inter-operability with U.S. Navy warships, including speed and weapons systems. They achieved the speed by using combination diesel or gas turbine (CODOGT) technology a technology that permitted them to cruise at economic speeds under diesel power or pursuit speeds using gasoline-fueled aircraft turbines for power. When they were built, only one class of warship in the world used a similar propulsion system, a West German frigate design. This technology has since become standard for high-performance vessels.

In addition to the main propulsion system, the ships in this class had a retractable and fully rotatable General Electric bow thruster that boosted their maneuverability and permitted them to operate at up to five knots without using the main propulsion system.

Other design features included large and more comfortable living spaces to permit longer times at sea; a hull design that drew on the British-favored “V” cross section rather than the “U” cross-section then favored for U.S. Navy vessels; and wet and dry labs to support oceanographic and meteorological research while on station. The longer sea-time capability enhanced the value of cutters as ocean navigational aids and weather stations and overseas missions. The new hull design was the result of extensive tank testing of four 20-foot wooden hull models, which led to a hull design expected to survive and stay afloat longer after suffering damage. The original design also included an 80-foot landing pad that could accommodate the large boat-hulled amphibious helicopters then used by the Coast Guard for air-sea rescues. The new design was also equipped with a weather balloon shelter that served as a “nose shelter” for the large helicopters.

In order to maintain their inter-operability with U.S. Navy warships, the entire class underwent Fleet Retention and Maintenance (FRAM) renovation after two decades, which increased their Coast Guard service life to 44 years and added new aviation, electronic and gunnery capabilities. One aviation modification visible in profile was the expandable hangar, which rolled out onto the landing pad to permit smaller helicopters to be completely sheltered from heavy weather and to be maintained at sea, shortening the usable length of the landing pad. Another visible change was the enclosure of the sixth bay of the open walkways that originally stretched from just aft of the bridge to the afterdeck, changing the original sleek lines of the class. Other visible changes in profile included the elevation of the forward gun platform, as well as the addition of an electronics dome atop the bridge and forward of the mast. Later, a Phalanx Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) 20mm anti-aircraft/anti-missile gatling gun was mounted on the stern rail.

Cutter History: WHEC-716 was the sixth cutter named *Dallas* and the second of twelve 378-foot *Hamilton*-class cutters constructed for the Coast Guard. *Dallas*

was stationed at Governor's Island, New York, from 1967 until September 1996, when the cutter transferred its homeport to Charleston, South Carolina.

Ocean Station duty, 1967-1973: Beginning in 1967, *Dallas* performed Ocean Station duty, requiring the cutter to remain at a specific location for an average of thirty-two days. While on station in the North Atlantic, the cutter would make weather observations, provide information to commercial air traffic, support regional search and rescue operations and aid any aircraft forced to make a water landing. For example, in 1968 *Dallas* served twice on the North Atlantic's Ocean Station Delta, once on Ocean Station Echo and once on Ocean Station Charlie. *Dallas* continued supporting Ocean Station missions, including assignments to Ocean Station Bravo, and Ocean Station Hotel as well as Charlie, Delta and Echo. In the winter, the North Atlantic is a cruel test of any ship's seaworthiness and *Dallas* generally came through in good shape although the cutter sustained some minor topside damage during a very rough patrol in early 1969. *Dallas* would continue Ocean Station duty until 1973, when advances in aviation and meteorology made the Ocean Station program obsolete.

Vietnam, 1969-1973: During the Vietnam War, *Dallas* served in seven combat patrols. The cutter's primary mission was to cut-off coastal supply routes from North Vietnam to enemy forces in South Vietnam. *Dallas* compiled an impressive list of accomplishments in Vietnam. During 161 naval gunfire support missions, 7,665 rounds of ammunition were fired accounting for numerous enemy casualties, 58 destroyed sampans and 29 destroyed or damaged supply routes, base camps and rest areas. One of the cutter's notable actions took place in April of 1970, when *Dallas* supported a South Vietnamese Army sweep. *Dallas* was called in to provide close gunfire support after 300 South Vietnamese troops were pinned down and nearly overrun by enemy forces. The cutter fired nearly every projectile in the ammunition locker, breaking the back of the enemy attack. During the action, friendly casualties were brought on board for medical treatment and the evacuation helicopter serviced by the cutter's aircrew. *Dallas's* crew also provided substantial support for the local civilians by rendering medical aid to over 1,500 South Vietnamese citizens; building a dispensary, a playground and school benches for 300 children; and painting a school building. *Dallas's* participation in the Vietnam War earned the cutter the Navy's Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Search and Rescue: In late-September 1968, during *Dallas's* first full year of operation, the cutter became involved in its first major SAR case. The cutter came upon the Dutch tanker *Johannes Franz* drifting helplessly with her engine room flooding in heavy seas 250 miles northeast of Bermuda. *Dallas* remained on scene providing pumps and other material to keep the disabled ship afloat. After drifting for three days, two commercial tugs arrived to tow the stricken ship to Bermuda for repairs. In 1973, *Dallas* served as On-Scene Commander in the search for survivors of the cargo ship *Norse Variant*, which broke apart 250 miles off the New Jersey coast. Only one survivor was saved. In 1978, *Dallas*

participated in the search for the fishing vessel *Capt. Cosmo* out of Gloucester, Massachusetts. During the search, *Dallas* encountered seas as high as the cutter's bridge wings, whose decks sit nearly 40 above the waterline. During that search effort, *Dallas* encountered the passenger liner *Queen Elizabeth II*, whose bridge windows were nearly breeched by a rogue wave that came over the bow. *Capt Cosmo* was never found and all hands were lost. In early 1993, *Dallas* assisted the Haitian ferry *Neptune* when she capsized with over 800 people on board and medevaced a critically ill man from the Ukrainian cruise ship *Karelya* using the Coast Guard's first ship-deployed HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter. In addition, *Dallas* conducted numerous search and rescue cases as part of the cutter's migrant interdiction operations described below.

Drug Interdiction: In June 1979, *Dallas* investigated the suspicious fishing vessel *Foxy Lady*. The *Dallas* boarding party discovered 15 tons of marijuana and took the drug runner to San Juan, Puerto Rico. In June 1982, *Dallas* seized *Yvette* carrying 5.5 tons of marijuana and, in October 1982, *Dallas* seized *Libra* carrying 3.5 tons of marijuana. *Dallas* received the Coast Guard Unit Commendation Medal for the cutter's fall 1983 Caribbean patrol during which *Dallas* made seven drug seizures, arrested 51 persons and confiscated 50 tons of marijuana. *Dallas's* seizures included *Saint Nicholas* on October 25 and, in November, *Dallas* seized *Wammer Jammer*, *Narwal*, *Miss Debbie*, *Nistanova*, *W and V* and *El Vira III*. In June 1985, *Dallas* seized drug smuggling vessels M/V *Stecarika* and the sailboat *Esperance*. In February 1985, *Dallas* seized *Star Trek* carrying 15 tons of marijuana. In 1993, *Dallas* seized the M/V *Gladiator* and arrested her six-man crew for smuggling over 5,500 pounds of cocaine. On August 11, 1996, *Dallas* intercepted and seized the Columbian registered M/V *Colopan*, carrying 3,850 pounds of marijuana and ten days later *Dallas* seized the Haitian M/V *Express* carrying 348 kilograms of cocaine. After the turn of the century, *Dallas* continued to lead counter-drug operations. In October 17, 2006, *Dallas* intercepted four bales of cocaine weighing 380 pounds from a foiled airdrop to a smuggling boat. In 2010, *Dallas* conducted high-value drug interdictions, including seizure of smuggling boats and a self-propelled semi-submersible. The 2010 patrol yielded 5.5 metric tons of cocaine. During *Dallas's* final Caribbean patrol in 2012, the cutter seized 5,000 pounds of smuggled cocaine and 1,000 pounds of marijuana. The high-endurance cutter even achieved a top speed of 32 knots chasing a "go-fast" smuggling boat. In addition, *Dallas* conducted numerous drug interdiction cases as part of its migrant interdiction operations described below.

Marinel Boatlift, April to October 1980: On April 15, 1980, a mass emigration of Cubans began from Mariel, Cuba. Over the next seven months, 125,000 Cuban migrants crossed the Florida Strait heading for Florida in dangerously unseaworthy watercraft. What became known as the Mariel Boatlift was the largest humanitarian response effort in Coast Guard history up to that time. The *Dallas* served as On-Scene Commander, overseeing this historic response effort. At times, *Dallas* had as many as 500 refugees on board and aided over 300

boats. During the six-week response effort, *Dallas* supervised a dozen larger cutters and numerous smaller cutters and patrol boats as well as units of the Navy and Marine Corps.

Alien Migration Interdiction Operations: In 1983, *Dallas* interdicted 90 Haitian migrants during a Caribbean patrol. During the return trip from the cutter's 1993 deployment to Operation Able Manner, *Dallas* intercepted the 144-foot M/V *Mermaid No. 1*, which carried 237 Chinese migrants. In September 2006, *Dallas* intercepted the *Desperado*, a 60-foot sport fishing vessel carrying 78 Cuban migrants, including 12 children. A law enforcement team from *Dallas* arrested the crew of four smugglers and brought them aboard the cutter to provide them with food, water and medical treatment. *Dallas* then received eight more Cuban migrants rescued earlier in the day by USNS *Cobb*. *Dallas* transferred the migrants and detainees to another cutter for processing.

Space Shuttle *Challenger* Disaster, 1986: In late January 1986, *Dallas* responded to the Space Shuttle *Challenger* Disaster and served as the On-Scene Commander for what was, at that time, the largest search and rescue operation in Coast Guard history. *Dallas* received the Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation for her key role in that response effort.

Maintenance and Modernization, 1986-1995: *Dallas* was decommissioned in 1986 to be modernized under the Fleet Retention and Maintenance (FRAM) Program at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine. The modernization included a telescoping helicopter hangar as well as communications equipment and other electronic upgrades and defensive equipment. These upgrades included fleet satellite communications, chaff anti-missile system, anti-submarine warfare electronics, air-search radar capability and replacement of the cutter's gun mount and fire control system with a new cannon and Mk-92 gunfire control system,. The FRAM overhaul was begun in 1986 and completed in 1989. Between 1991 and 1993, *Dallas* received further upgrades, including shipboard command and control systems (SCCS), the Phalanx (CIWS) system for anti-ship missile defense and INMARSAT global commercial satellite telephone link for advanced ship-to-shore telecommunications capability. In the last few months of 1995, *Dallas* received the most extensive dry dock in Coast Guard history. Renovation included removal of the sonar dome; installation of a new evaporator; overhaul of all electronic antennas, transducers, steering gear and bow prop; upgrading the AN-SPS 40 radar; and conversion of two fuel oil tanks to JP-5 aviation fuel tanks for helicopters and the cutter's gas turbine engines. In addition, *Dallas* was sandblasted and painted. The 1995 dry-docking cost 2.2 million dollars.

Haitian Crisis, 1991-1992: During the Haitian Crisis, *Dallas* served as On-Scene Commander overseeing a flotilla of 27 Coast Guard cutters on station. It was the largest flotilla of cutters ever assembled. As flagship for Task Unit 44.7.4, *Dallas* established a task force operational organization that still serves as a model for multi-unit operations in the modern Coast Guard. Nearly 35,000 migrants were

rescued from hundreds of over-crowded, unseaworthy vessels. Coast Guard cutters transported these migrants to the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where their claims for asylum were evaluated by Immigration and Naturalization officials. For its monumental effort in overseeing of the Haitian Crisis response effort, *Dallas* received the Humanitarian Service Medal and the Meritorious Unit Commendation with operational distinguishing device.

OpSail 92: This tall ship gathering took place in New York Harbor during the 1992 July 4th holiday. The event commemorated the 500th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America was the largest such event in the world up to that time. *Dallas* acted as command and control platform for all Coast Guard assets as they enforced security along the Hudson River for the parade of ships.

Operation Able Manner, 1993-1994: With the threat of renewed mass exodus from Haiti, Operation Able Manner was begun in January 1993. Employing large numbers of Coast Guard and Navy ships and aircraft, Able Manner was instituted to deter Haitian migrants from attempting a treacherous voyage to the United States. Able Manner began with 22 Coast Guard and Navy ships and 17 aircraft able to respond to any Haitian migrant exodus. It was the largest peacetime operation in Coast Guard history up to that date. *Dallas* assumed command of these forces as commander Task Unit 44.7.4 on three separate patrols from 1993 into 1994 (February-April, July-September and December-January 1994), earning *Dallas* a Coast Guard Unit Commendation.

Joint Service Exercise Agile Provider, 1994: In April and May of 1994, *Dallas* acted as the tactical control unit for three 110-foot USCG patrol boats as Coast Guard units joined Navy units to conduct an amphibious assault exercise off the beaches near Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. *Dallas* assumed the role of Anti-Surface Warfare Commander within the amphibious task force for much of the exercise and was recognized by Navy leadership for outstanding search and rescue coordination and aggressive combat readiness.

50th Anniversary of D-day Invasion, 1994: From May through July of 1994, *Dallas* conducted a European patrol as part of a tour to represent the U.S. Coast Guard at the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion at Normandy. The patrol included port calls at 5 cities in Ireland, United Kingdom and France, and participation in the invasion re-enactment fleet. After the commemoration, *Dallas* carried out goodwill missions in Morocco and the Cape Verde Islands.

Operation Able Vigil, 1994: Soon after the cutter's D-Day cruise, *Dallas* returned to Caribbean waters to serve as flagship of Operation Able Vigil, a 27-cutter flotilla responding to another mass migration from Cuba. This operation was the largest Coast Guard-controlled action since World War II. At the close of the 1994 patrol, *Dallas* coordinated repatriation of Haitian migrants from Guantanamo Bay to Haiti. *Dallas* received the Coast Guard Unit Commendation for this operation.

Operations Deny Flight and Sharp Guard, 1995: In the summer of 1995, *Dallas* deployed to the Mediterranean-based U.S. Sixth Fleet as a member of the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) Battle Group. *Dallas* supported Operations Deny Flight and Sharp Guard helping safeguard U.S. Navy assets enforcing Deny Flight and supporting the blockade of war material to warring factions of the former Yugoslavia. This was the first time a Coast Guard cutter had operated with the Sixth Fleet. During this deployment, *Dallas* also participated in Operation Sharp Guard and conducted training and professional exchanges in countries along the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Black seas. *Dallas* also worked with navies, coast guards and maritime agencies in Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Tunisia, Albania and Italy. During these operations, *Dallas* became the first Coast Guard vessel to operate in the Black Sea and earned the Armed Forces Medal for its support of these important operations.

Operation Monitor II, 1996: In the late summer of 1996, *Dallas* served as the flagship for a task unit carrying out Operation Monitor II. Consisting of *Dallas* and three 110-foot cutters, the task unit, kept a close watch on a flotilla of Cuban-American vessels protesting the sinking of a Cuban tugboat. The operation was a success with the Cuban-American flotilla remaining outside Cuban waters while the Cuban Navy did not intervene.

Operations Frontier Shield and Frontier Lance, 1997-1998: Beginning in 1997, *Dallas* served as the flagship for Operation Frontier Shield designed to deter drug smuggling with a combination of enhanced surface and airborne radar, infrared surveillance, covert tracking and rapid response aircraft, boats and task forces. In 1998, Operation Frontier Lance built on the success of Operation Frontier Shield. This interagency and international counter-drug operation in the Caribbean was the largest of its kind up to that time. Frontier Lance utilized C-130 aircraft, shipboard HH-65 helicopters and rigid-hull inflatable boats. In addition, for the first time armed MH-90 helicopters took part. This led to the establishment of the Helicopter Interdiction Squadron (HITRON) equipped with MH-68A Stingray armed helicopters. These Caribbean operations proved to very effective with interagency cooperation and vastly improved intelligence provided to operational units.

Operation Allied Force, 1999: In the summer of 1999, during the Balkan Conflict the *Dallas* was assigned to the Navy's Sixth Fleet yet again, to support Operation Allied Force. The conflict was resolved during *Dallas's* transit to the theater of operations; however, the cutter remained in the region. While there, *Dallas* helped train the Ukrainian and Georgian navies, the Turkish Coast Guard and the armed forces of Malta.

Operation Noble Eagle, 2001: After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, *Dallas* participated in Operation Noble Eagle. Stationed off the southeastern U.S., *Dallas* monitored, boarded, investigated and checked papers of vessels

entering American waterways. This operation marked a change in Coast Guard operations as mission focus changed from drug and migrant interdiction to homeland security.

Operation New Frontier, 2002: In the summer of 2002, *Dallas* deployed with sister-ship *Gallatin* (WHEC-721) to take part in Operation New Frontier. Together with *Gallatin*, *Dallas* supported Coast Guard armed helicopters from the newly established Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) to stop small high-speed (“go-fast”) boats en route from suppliers to their destinations.

Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003: In 2003, *Dallas* deployed to the Mediterranean to serve once again with the U.S. Sixth Fleet, this time in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Dallas* served as part of a Coast Guard flotilla including four USCG 110-foot patrol boats referred to as Patrol Forces Mediterranean (PATFORMED). Initially, *Dallas* provided force protection and armed escort for Coalition vessels passing through the Strait of Gibraltar and boarded vessels leaving the Suez Canal in search of escaping leaders of the Iraqi regime. *Dallas* made port calls in various Mediterranean countries before returning to the U.S. with the fleet of PATFORMED’s 110-foot cutters.

West Africa and Black Sea Deployment, 2008: In the spring of 2008, *Dallas* deployed to West Africa as part of the Africa Partnership Station (APS), in which the cutter strengthened international relationships and hosted law enforcement personnel from Cape Verde. While there, *Dallas* became the first U.S. vessel to assist a foreign country with enforcing its laws within its own territorial waters. In late summer 2008, *Dallas* joined the Mediterranean-based U.S Sixth Fleet yet again to participate in Operation Assured Delivery. During this operation, the cutter provided humanitarian supplies to the people of the Republic of Georgia, who were suffering through the South Ossetia War with Russia.

Haiti Earthquake, 2010: After the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010, *Dallas* deployed to Port-au-Prince to help oversee integrated air and maritime operations and serve as part of the joint military and international force that responded to this large-scale disaster.

Sources:

Cutter File, Coast Guard Historian’s Office.

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

