



Morris, 1927

WSC / WMEC-147

The Coast Guard cutter *Morris* was named for Robert Morris, who was born in Liverpool, England, 20 January 1734. He emigrated to Maryland in 1747. The next year he moved to Philadelphia where, after brief schooling, he entered the service of the Willings, shipping merchants. Rising to partnership in 1754, Morris rapidly attained great power and influence in the commercial and political life of America. Appointed to the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety in June 1775, he was extremely active, arming both Pennsylvanian and Continental forces. Joining the Continental Congress in November 1776, he was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Morris' key role in the financial affairs of the new nation led to his appointment as Superintendent of Finance in May 1781 and Agent of Marine that September. His extraordinary skill in both offices greatly contributed to American success in the Revolution. A delegate to the Constitutional Convention, Morris served in the U.S. Senate 1789-1795, but declined to stand for reelection. He continued his leadership in business and banking until impoverished when values of his extensive land holdings collapsed. Morris died in Philadelphia 5 May 1806.

CLASS: Active Class Patrol Boat

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

COMMISSIONED: 19 April 1927

LAUNCHED: 4 April 1927

DECOMMISSIONED: 7 August 1970 and transferred to BSA

DISPLACEMENT: 232 tons

PROPULSION: 2 x 6-cylinder, 300 hp 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.

CUTTER HISTORY

Morris (WSC-147) was built in 1927 by American Brown Boveri Electrical Corp., Camden, New Jersey, and was commissioned in the Coast Guard 19 April 1927. She operated first out of New London, Connecticut, as a patrol craft of the 125-foot active class until 22 November 1928. She then assumed her permanent station at Oakland, California, on 13 January 1929. Five months later she was assigned patrol operations out of San Pedro, California. Until 1934 *Morris* operated intermittently against rumrunners. She transferred to Seward, Alaska, in 1935 where she remained until 1937. She then transferred to Alameda, California in 1940 and was based out of Marshfield, Oregon from 1941 through her transfer to Navy control under Executive Order 8929 of 1 November 1941 that transferred the entire Coast Guard to the Navy. *Morris* was assigned to patrol and rescue operations out of San Diego. She returned to the Treasury Department 1 January 1946 pursuant to Executive Order 9666 dated 28 January 1945.

She assumed postwar patrol duties out of San Pedro, which was her permanent station into 1969. She was placed in storage in Kennydale, Washington, from 1947 through 1949 and then was transferred back to San Pedro, which remained her home port through the rest of her Coast Guard career.

In 1966 she was redesignated WMEC-147. She was decommissioned on 7 August 1970 and was then transferred to BSA. She was acquired by and is now active with the Sea Scout program.

Photographs:

<p style="text-align: center;">Photographs: (Click thumb-nail to see full-size image)</p>	<p>Original photo caption; description; date; photo number & photographer (if known). Unless otherwise noted all photos are official U.S. Coast Guard photographs.</p>
	<p>No caption/date/photo number, photographer unknown.</p> <p>The USCGC <i>Morris</i>, probably in the early 1960s.</p>

SOURCES:

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

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982.

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

