



## Nettle, 1947

WAK-169; ex-FS-397

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A plant of the genus *Urtica*, having toothed leaves covered with hairs that secrete a stinging fluid that affects the skin on contact.

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Builder: Ingalls Shipbuilding Company, Decatur, Alabama

Length: 176' 1"

Beam: 32'

Draft: 10'

Displacement: 935 tons

Cost: \$805,494

Commissioned: 1945 (U. S. Army); 1 October 1947 (USCG)

Decommissioned: 18 January 1946 (Army); 9 January 1968

Disposition: Transferred to the Philippines

Machinery: 2 General Motors diesel engines; 1,000 SHP; twin propellers

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 13.7 knots; 4,000-mile range

Cruising:

Deck Gear: 15-ton capacity boom

Cargo Capacity: 300 tons

Complement: 30

Armament: 1 x 40mm/60 (1945)

Electronics: SO-8 detection radar

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### **Tender History:**

The *Nettle*, an FS-type freighter built for the U.S. Army, was constructed and launched at the Ingalls Shipyard at Decatur, Alabama in 1945. She was given the designation FS-396. Coast Guard crews manned many of the FS ships, including FS-396. Her "first" Coast Guard crew served aboard the Army vessel from 18 January 1945 until 18 January 1946. She was then transferred to the Coast Guard in 1947 and was commissioned as a Coast Guard cutter on 1 October of that same year. She was christened *Nettle* and given the designation and hull number WAK-169.

Her first home port was Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands from 1946 until 1952. From 1952 until 1953 she called Guam home. At both locations she engaged in logistics support of Coast Guard LORAN transmitting stations at Ulithi, Saipan, Cocos, Kwajalein and Kwadak Islands. Additionally she performed aids-to-navigation work at Tinian and Rota Islands in the Marianas Group and assisted in site surveys for proposed LORAN stations in the Philippines.

In August, 1953, she was transferred to Sangley Point, Cavite, Republic of the Philippines, where she served out of until her decommissioning in 1967. Her primary mission while based here was the logistical support of the five LORAN stations in the Philippines: Batan Island, Batanes; Naulo Point, Zambales; Talumpunan Island, Busuanga; Tarumpitao Point, Palawan and Panay Island, Catanduanes. A secondary duty was readiness for search and rescue cases, when needed. For example, while underway from Batan on 1 September 1958 *Nettle* spotted and assisted the capsized junk *Low Kow Wong How*. As *Nettle* came alongside, crewmembers found that the captain and mate of the junk were alive. *Nettle's* crew righted the junk, pumped it out, and steamed off to Naulo Point.

During heightened tensions in the Pacific during the confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu islands by China and Taiwan, *Nettle* was painted in Navy gray to distinguish her as a U.S. naval vessel. Previously she had been painted in standard Coast Guard tender colors of black, white, and buff.

Crewmen found time to pen poetry as well. New Year 1962 was ushered in with a poem written by *Nettle* crewman BOSN R. I. Gorman:

Moored starboard side to at Sangley Point  
The boys are in Canite whooping it up in a joint  
Number two generator furnishing power for this baby  
Water and telephone, compliments of the Navy

Our status to start out the New Year  
Is Bravo Twelve, it's been made clear  
Liberty expired for non-residents  
All come back looking like a De Mille presence.

Colors have been made, small arms have been checked  
Ammunitions all here in the magazine rack  
Liberty expired for section two  
They all go back looking not so new.

Much work lies ahead this New Year  
We'll deliver the supplies and plenty of beer  
We have Talamp, Naulo, Tarupm and Bat  
And let's not forget old typhoon-wrecked Cat.

She conducted another SAR case in 1962. On 2 August of that year she got underway out of Canacao Bay to search for a Navy P5M with 13 persons on board. Crewmembers searched the vicinity of Caballo Island for 29 hours without success. Convinced that there was no chance of locating the downed seaplane, she left the search area, making for Catanduanes, Talampulan, Tarumpitao, and back to Talampulan with cargo to deliver. She then returned to Sangley Point.

Another New Years' poem was penned, this time by crewman CHBOSN Rex W. Coulson:

Here she sits in Sangley's brine  
With No. 2 generator on the line  
Starboard side to the crumbling quay  
PHILSEC's the boss, but he's away  
There's no SOS or Pro and go  
In Bravo-12 we're pretty slow  
Telephone and fresh water come from the dock  
While all those ashore are watching the clock  
0300 - The liberty party returned, most hale and hearty  
What a hell of a time to leave a good party  
0800 - Colors went off with bugle and bell  
With some still in bed not feeling so well  
The New Year is here and it is my belief  
That although he's hung over, here comes my relief.

The *Nettle* was decommissioned on 9 January 1968 and turned over to the government of the Philippines, along with five U.S. Navy vessels, on 23 January 1968.

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**Sources:**

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

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

