



Delivering the Goods

News from the U.S. Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate

November 2010

Fast Response Cutters: The Heroes of the Coast Guard Fleet

By Michael Valliant

WASHINGTON—The Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) are named after U.S. Coast Guard enlisted heroes—men and women whose deeds and lives exemplify the service’s values. These heroes selflessly served their country and carried out their mission, putting the lives of others before their own. The naming of the Sentinel class is fitting as the FRCs may be the heroes of the recapitalized Coast Guard fleet.

The first-in-class FRC, Bernard C. Webber, is due to be in the water this December after a ceremonial keel laying that took place last April. For the Coast Guard, the Sentinel class can’t get here quick enough.

“We have a significantly aging fleet,” said Ian Grunther, deputy project manager for the FRC and Coastal Patrol Boats. “Even before the FRC program started, we had a significant gap in available patrol boat operational hours. So that’s why there’s a need to get these boats as rapidly as possible for the organization.”

The Sentinel Class To Date

On September 14, the Coast Guard awarded a \$166.1 million contract option to Bollinger Shipyards of Lockport, La., to begin production of four more FRCs. This option award brings the number of FRCs under contract with Bollinger to eight, with a current contract value of \$410.7 million. The current FRC contract contains options for up to 34 cutters and is worth up to \$1.5 billion if all options are exercised.



The 154-foot Sentinel-class FRCs offer a far wider range of capabilities and increased endurance over the 110-foot Island-class cutters they are replacing. The Bernard C. Webber (pictured) is due to be in the water in December 2010 and its prospective commanding officer and pre-commissioning crew are assembled and in training. U.S. Coast Guard photo courtesy of the Project Resident Office Lockport

In September 2008, the Coast Guard awarded Bollinger an \$88 million production contract for the lead FRC, Webber. The Webber is approximately 80 percent complete and expected to be delivered to the Coast Guard in the third quarter of fiscal year 2011.

The first contract option, for construction of three FRCs after Webber, was awarded to Bollinger in December 2009. Those ships are currently under construction at Bollinger’s shipbuilding facility in Lockport. The second FRC is approximately 57 percent complete; FRCs three, four, and five are 42 percent, 17 percent and 1 percent complete, respectively.

The new Sentinel-class patrol boats will be 154-feet long and patrol 95,000 miles of U.S. coastline. The cutters’ missions include port, waterways and coastal security, fishery patrols, search and rescue, and various national defense missions. The FRCs offer a far wider range of capabilities and increased

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endurance over the 110-foot Island-class cutters they are replacing.

The Webber will be homeported in Miami, Fla., supporting critical law enforcement and national security missions throughout the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. Along with its homeport, the Webber has a prospective commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Herb Eggert. Eggert served as the sponsor's representative and is a former commanding officer of both 110-foot and 123-foot patrol boats. The pre-commissioning crew is largely assembled in Miami and has been attending factory training in Germany for the engine, engine control, machinery control system and the reduction gear. Shore-side support personnel have begun training as well.

'Team Coast Guard'

The Coast Guard is taking an organization-wide approach to getting the FRCs produced to meet the service's needs on time and on budget. From the Acquisition Directorate through the Coast Guard's technical authority, it's a team effort to getting the asset to the front lines.

"We are really leveraging the experience of the team from the Coastal Patrol Boat, so the lessons learned are carrying over from that program," Grunther said. "That's one of the reasons things are going as smoothly as they are going in this program, because you have a lot of past acquisition experience."

The FRC project is also leveraging the experience of the Coast Guard's technical authority and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

"That the program is on schedule, on budget and on performance has everything to do with the Team Coast Guard approach and the technical authorities and DHS

support and participation in the program," Grunther said. "Everyone has been involved and participating in the design reviews and in the planning and execution, but it's beyond that. Everybody really understands the need for these patrol boats and has been very dedicated and very motivated to contribute to making the program a success. So it's not just acquisition guys, this is Team Coast Guard."

And it's working. When the Webber received its letter of evaluation from the U.S. Navy's Weapon System Explosives Safety Review Board, the cutter received a record low number of findings from the board. A finding is an issue that needs to be addressed before receiving board concurrence to fire the weapons.

Coast Guard Heroes

On October 27, the Coast Guard released the names of the first 14 Coast Guard enlisted heroes for whom the Sentinel-class FRCs will be named. The heroes are Bernard C. Webber, Richard Etheridge, William Flores, Robert Yered, Margaret Norvell, Paul Clark, Charles David, Charles Sexton, Kathleen Moore, Joseph Napier, William Trump, Isaac Mayo, Richard Dixon and Heriberto Hernandez.

The Coast Guard ran feature posts on each of the 14 heroes in October and November on its official blog, the Coast Guard Compass. Those honored include lighthouse keepers, life-saving station keepers, machinery technicians and engineers. Collectively, they have earned a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Gold Lifesaving Medal, Silver Star, Navy Cross and Marine Corps Medal, each going above and beyond the call of duty.

In announcing the list, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Michael P. Leavitt said, "There is no better embodiment of the



The first FRC is under construction at Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, La. Shown here is the stern ramp that can launch a small boat to be used as a transport for law enforcement boarding or rescue and assistance teams. U.S. Coast Guard photo courtesy of the Project Resident Office Lockport

Commandant's vision of the Coast Guard being defined by its missions, people and heritage than the naming of the new FRCs after Coast Guard heroes. We honor these heroes who have given so much and inspire future Coast Guard men and women."

Setting the Bar High

In an interview with Homeland Security Today magazine, Adm. Robert Papp, Commandant of the Coast Guard, was asked about the overall mix of the recapitalized fleet. The concern was that the service was replacing its current High- and Medium-Endurance Cutters with fewer new cutters.

"That's true, but I think this Fast Response Cutter will make up for that gap because of the capabilities it will bring to the fight," offered Papp.

While the FRCs are not being talked about as much as the Coast Guard's larger cutters, there are expectations. The bar is set high. The Sentinel-class looks to live up to their namesakes. ■

For more information about the Sentinel-class patrol boat, please visit www.uscg.mil/acquisition/sentinel.

Coast Guard Publishes Fifth Edition of Acquisition Strategic Plan

With the Oct. 20 publication of the *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement, Version 5.0*, the Coast Guard has begun a new era in its acquisition enterprise. The strategic plan's fifth edition will help to establish basic performance measurements in the key areas of acquisition and contracting business processes, human capital management, knowledge and information stewardship, and program resourcing and execution.

"This plan purposefully sets the bar high, urging the Coast Guard's acquisition organization to achieve even better performance and even better service to stakeholders, especially the men and women in the field who depend on the assets the directorate delivers," Rear Admiral Ronald J. Rábago, the Coast Guard's chief acquisition officer, said in a statement accompanying the publication.

In addition to outlining the business strategy of the Coast Guard's acquisition enterprise, the *Blueprint* also includes an action plan that is tied to the strategy's six goals, 15 objectives and 27 performance measures. The action plan sets 81 specific tasks for the Acquisition Directorate to accomplish during the next 24 months.

The result of completing these tasks will be a report of quantifiable measurements that demonstrates how effective the directorate's various offices are at carrying out the core mission of the Coast Guard's acquisition enterprise: "to acquire and deliver more-capable, interoperable assets and systems, and high quality, timely services that support Coast Guard forces in executing missions effectively and efficiently."

Each performance measure and task in the plan is assigned to a "measure manager," the office responsible for assembling an Integrated Project Team (IPT). The manager and IPT are responsible for planning how to execute the various tasks and for tracking progress toward achieving the assigned measure. The measure managers and their IPTs will report their progress quarterly to the directorate's leadership.

Previous editions of the *Blueprint* guided the Coast Guard in its annual efforts to reform and improve the service's acquisition function, as recommended and overseen by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General and Congress. The new edition of the plan sets a course for a two-year revision cycle, with the next edition of the *Blueprint* to be published in March 2012.

The *Blueprint* continues to be a "living document," as stakeholders from throughout the organization work collaboratively to develop the objectives, measures and action plan milestones that will



Front cover of the recently published Acquisition Directorate Strategic Plan, V5.0

meet the goals set by Coast Guard leadership. Lessons learned from carrying out the fifth edition's tasks will influence the development of goals, objectives and measures in subsequent editions of the plan. ■

The *Blueprint, V5.0*, is available online at:
<http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/aboutus/blueprintv5.pdf>.

Acquisition News Brief: Coast Guard Station New London Accepts New Response Boat-Medium

The U.S. Coast Guard held an acceptance and demonstration ceremony on Oct. 28 to commemorate the arrival of the first new Response Boat-Medium (RB-M) at Station New London, Conn., which is expected to receive two more RB-Ms in February. Shown here, a boat crew from Station New London takes ceremony attendees for a tour onboard its new 45-foot RB-M, which provides significant improvements in performance, crew efficiency and operational availability over the aging 41-foot utility boats.



With a 250-mile range at 30 knots, the RB-M's increased speed and endurance will improve the response time for all Coast Guard missions. For more information about the RB-M, please visit www.uscg.mil/acquisition/rbm.

Rear Adm. Daniel Neptun (far right), Commander of the First Coast Guard District, and Capt. Joseph Vojvodich, Commander of Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound, talked about how the RB-M will enhance mission execution along the coast of Connecticut. Capt. Joel Dolbeck, the RB-M project manager, spoke about the Coast Guard's success in acquiring about 40 boats to date out of the 180 planned. U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, who serves on the House of Representatives' Armed Services Committee and represents Connecticut's Second Congressional District, served as the event's keynote speaker.



U.S. Coast Guard photos by Petty Officer 3rd Class Seth Johnson

Combined December/January Newsletter:

The next issue of *Delivering the Goods*, the CG-9 external newsletter, will be published in January 2011 as a combined December/January issue.