



Tugboats guide the National Security Cutter James to its berthing area. Photo courtesy of Huntington Ingalls Industries.

Acquisition Update: Fifth National Security Cutter Launched

May 7, 2014

Coast Guard Cutter James, the fifth of eight planned Legend-class National Security Cutters, was launched at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., May 3, 2014. The ship will be christened Aug. 16, 2014, and delivered in fiscal year 2015.

Once commissioned, the James will conduct critical homeland security, law enforcement and national defense missions. The 418-foot NSCs have a top speed of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles and endurance to perform 60-to 90-day patrols.

Three NSCs, Bertholf, Waesche and Stratton, are fully operational and a fourth cutter, Hamilton, will be delivered later this year and homeported in Charleston, S.C.

The cutter's namesake is Joshua James. James was born in Hull, Mass., Nov. 22, 1826. He conducted his first rescue in 1841, at age 15, when he joined volunteers from the Massachusetts Humane Society, then a maritime rescue organization, providing aid to a ship in distress off the coast of Hingham, Mass. By 1886, he had been involved in countless rescue operations and was estimated to have saved over 100 lives.

In 1889, at age 62, James was appointed keeper of the U.S. Lifesaving Service's newly established Point Allerton Lifesaving Station in Hull, Mass. Despite being 17 years beyond retirement age, his record of lives saved was so impressive that Congress granted him a special dispensation to serve as keeper. He and his crews saved 540 lives during his 13-year tenure at the station. James passed away in 1902, suffering a heart attack following a training exercise at the station.