

Coast Guard Commissions 47th Sentinel-Class Fast Response Cutter



The commissioning crew of the USCGC Clarence Sutphin Jr. (WPC 1147), Patrol Forces Southwest Asia's sixth 154-foot Sentinel-class cutter, stand at attention as the ship is placed into service at a ceremony held at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York City, April 21. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Schultz*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard commissioned the USCGC Clarence Sutphin Jr. (WPC 1147), Patrol Forces Southwest Asia's sixth 154-foot Sentinel-class cutter, into service at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York City on April 21, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area commander, presided over the ceremony.

The cutter's namesake is Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Clarence Sutphin Jr., a New York native who served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1941 to 1945. During this time, Sutphin served as landing craft coxswain on board the attack transport USS Leonard Wood (APA 12), a landing craft supporting our troops in North Africa and Sicily.

In November 1941, just weeks before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 18-year-old Sutphin enlisted in the United States Coast Guard. After enlisting, Sutphin attended boot camp at the Coast Guard Yard near Baltimore. He then received orders to the North Carolina coast to train in amphibious operations and landing craft, also known as Higgins Boats, landing troops in North Africa and Sicily.

When that operation was complete, the boat transited to the Pacific theater. During the Battle of Saipan in 1944, Sutphin helped oversee boat operations, including landing, loading, and salvaging landing craft as the USS Leonard Wood endured the heavy fire. During the conflict, he repeatedly risked his life to save others. He swam a towline to a landing craft stranded on a reef, saved another boat stuck on the beach under enemy fire, and came to the aid of eight Marines who a mortar round had struck. He provided first aid to the survivors and evacuated them to the nearest aid station.

Sutphin stayed aboard the Leonard Wood through May 1945 and participated in its eight primary amphibious operations. Sutphin was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his "exceptional bravery under fire" during the Battle of Saipan.

The Clarence Sutphin Jr. was officially delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard on Jan. 6 in Key West, Florida. It is the 47th Sentinel-class fast response cutter. While the ship is commissioning in New York City, it will be homeport in Manama, Bahrain, part of U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia.