

U.S. Coast Guard to Commission 45th Sentinel-Class Cutter



PORTSMOUTH, Va. — The U.S. Coast Guard will commission the USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145), Patrol Forces Southwest Asia's fourth Sentinel-class cutter, into service at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia at 10 a.m. ET, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in an Oct. 7 release.

Due to COVID mitigation, in-person attendance is limited, and the event is not open to the public.

Adm. Karl Schultz, commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, will preside over the ceremony. Yvonne Gilmore Jordan, the eldest first cousin to Tunnell, is the ship's sponsor.

The cutter's namesake is Steward's Mate 1st Class Emlen Tunnell, a native of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, who served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1943 to 1946. During this time, he rescued two shipmates. The first was aboard the USS Etamin at anchor in Papua New Guinea in 1944. When a crewman became engulfed in flame following a Japanese torpedo attack, he beat out the fire, sustaining burns, and carried him to safety. The second rescue came aboard the USCGC Tampa in 1946 when a shipmate fell overboard off Newfoundland. Tunnell risked the 32-degree Fahrenheit water suffering shock and exposure to save him. The U.S. Coast Guard awarded the Silver Lifesaving Medal to Tunnell posthumously for his heroism.

Tunnell was also a lauded athlete beginning in high school and then college before he joined the service. While in the Coast Guard, he played football and basketball, and upon his departure, he resumed college. Tunnell went on to play professional football for the New York Giants and the Green

Bay Packers. He also served as an assistant coach for the Giants. Notably, Tunnell is the first African American to play for the NY Giants, African American talent scout, and African American full-time assistant coach. He is also the first African American inducted into the Pro-Football Hall of Fame.

The Emlen Tunnell was officially delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard on July 1 in Key West, Florida. It is the 45th Sentinel-class fast response cutter. Each of these cutters carries the name of a U.S. Coast Guard enlisted hero. While the ship is commissioning in Philadelphia, it will homeport in Manama, Bahrain, part of U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA).

Established in 2002 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, PATFORSWA played a crucial role in maritime security and maritime infrastructure protection operations. PATFORSWA is a maritime humanitarian presence on the seas, providing U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet with combat-ready assets. Utilizing the U.S. Coast Guard's unique access to foreign territorial seas and ports, our crews formulate strong and independent relationships throughout the Arabian Gulf and leverage the full spectrum of flexible vessel boarding capabilities at sea and maritime country engagements onshore.