

Coast Guard holds special status ceremony for Cutter Bayberry



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PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard held a special status ceremony at Station Oak Island, N.C. Wednesday morning to signify the beginning of it being decommissioned after 69 years of active Coast Guard service.

The Bayberry was built by Reliable Welding Works in Olympia, WA, and spent its first 17 years in the San Francisco area, with a three year stay in Rio Vista CA, before returning to Seattle in 1971. When it returned to Washington, it was retrofitted with a 60-foot barge for operations and was the only one of its kind. The cutter also became a primary deployer of the Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System, an oil spill recovery system. The Bayberry's operations in Seattle spanned from 1971 until 2009 when it was relocated to Oak Island.

The Bayberry's recent accomplishments include post-hurricane Dorian operations, where the crew led a waterways reconstitution mission, completed a complex voyage correcting 40 aids to navigation discrepancies, enabling the rapid resumption of ferry service, and facilitating the delivery of emergency supplies to 700 residents stranded on Ocracoke Island. In 2021, when extensive shoaling suddenly compromised Oregon Inlet Channel and no other capable asset was available to respond, the cutter led a 400-mile mission to the Outer

Banks to retrieve and relocate five buoys that dangerously misled mariners, significantly enhancing the safety of this busy waterway, preserving search and rescue capabilities, and sustaining the local economy.