

Coast Guard to Commission New FRC in New London, Connecticut



NEW LONDON, Connecticut – The Coast Guard Cutter Melvin Bell (WPC-1155) is scheduled to be commissioned during a ceremony March 28 at 10 a.m. at the Coast Guard Academy in New London.

The Coast Guard's newest cutter was accepted by the Coast Guard on November 16, 2023, and will be the sixth and final fast response cutter homeported in Boston.

The Sentinel-class fast response cutter (FRC) is designed for multiple missions, including drug and migrant interdiction; ports, waterways and coastal security; fishery patrols; search and rescue; and national defense. The Coast Guard has ordered a total of 65 FRCs to replace the 1980s-era Island-class 110-foot patrol boats. The FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment to reach vessels of interest; and improved habitability and seakeeping.

All Coast Guard fast response cutters are named after an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Melvin Kealoha Bell was a master chief electronics technician and served in the Coast Guard from November 1938 to December 1958. ETCM Melvin Bell distinguished himself during World War II by transmitting the first warning messages to military installations in Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked. He continued to prove instrumental throughout the war as he helped break enemy codes leading to numerous victories, including the Battle of Midway and in an operation to break up

a Nazi espionage network in New York City. ETCM Bell became the first Pacific Islander to achieve the rank of chief petty officer, the first master chief electronics technician and the first master chief petty officer of color.