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## Coast Guard Gets Swifter 45' Boat for Inshore and Inland Waters

By **Peter Marsh**

Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment is now testing and operating the second boat launched by Kvichak Marine Industries of Seattle in the Coast Guard's newest boat-building program—the Response Boat - Medium (RB-M). This is a multi-mission boat that will operate in coastal zones, which include inshore and inland waterways and open ocean out to 50-nautical-miles.

In the next few years, approximately 180 boats will be built, half of them at Kvichak's new plant in Kent, Wash.—the rest by Marinette Marine Corporation of Green Bay,

Wisconsin, the lead contractor. The RB-M is a self-righting, 45-foot all-aluminum boat with twin diesel engines and the first water jet propelled craft in the Coast Guard's fleet. It is capable of speeds in excess of 40 knots with significantly improved maneuverability and costs about \$2 million.

The RB-M will replace the aging 41-foot response boats, built between 1973 and 1982, which have been the workhorse of most Coast Guard boat stations for more than a quarter of a century. It is a more general purpose boat than the Coast Guard's existing 47' motor lifeboat that was introduced in the early 1990s and is used on the Columbia Bar. (The 47 is designed as a first responder in high seas, surf & heavy weather environments, built to withstand the most severe conditions at sea.)

The RB-M is lighter in weight and faster, designed ability to operate in "moderate seas," and for use in the majority of CG operations on rivers bays and harbors.

It combines features like the built-in fendering system seen on the Coast Guard's 26' response boat and self-righting and side recovery wells, found on the 47 footers. Although it is a very sturdy craft, it is not designed for dangerous surf conditions like the. including Search and Rescue; Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security; Environmental Protection, etc. The advanced radio system is capable of communicating with other federal, state and local agencies.

As I found when I went onboard at Cape Disappointment recently, it is very well equipped with a full cabin providing protection from the elements, a Furuno radar/chart plotter display navigation system, heating and air conditioning, four Stidd shock-mitigating seats, joysticks for steering and throttle control, a full range of life-saving equipment including a Flir thermal-imaging camera and a VHF direction finder.

The new boat is powered by two MTU Detroit Diesel Series 60 Engines of 825HP each. Controlled by the DDEC IV computer management system. They turn Kamewa FF-Series waterjets via Twin Disc 5114SC marine reduction gears. Great attention has been paid to reducing noise in the cabin, but there is also a digital intercom system allowing the helmsman to communicate with crew on deck.

This was a tough contract to win against two other well-connected bidders, and much of the success was due to the design by CAMARC. This is the British design office that is responsible for both the Columbia Bar Pilots new high-speed 72' boats. These were the first CAMARC boats to be built in the US (also by Kvichak) and these type of boats are now going into service with pilots groups all over North America.



**The second RB-M off the production line undergoing trials in Puget Sound before delivery to the Columbia River. It is now in service at Cape Disappointment CG station.**

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