

'Lone Ranger' still kicking

CGC Unimak to celebrate 40th anniversary

By Ens. D.W. Harper, USCGC Unimak

The Coast Guard Cutter Unimak, homeported in New Bedford, Mass., is celebrating a very special birthday this year in a very special way. Unimak spent the first part of the year in the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay, Baltimore, Md., where the ship received lots of tender loving care.

Unimak was commissioned 40 years ago, Dec. 31, 1943. The old lady of the sea is known by many as the "Lone Ranger" since it is the last of the WWII vintage AVP seaplane tenders. It started its career as the USS Unimak when it was commissioned at Harbor Island, Seattle, Wash. During and after WWII, Unimak served in both the

Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

On Dec. 14, 1948, Unimak joined the Coast Guard along with 16 of its sister ships. Unimak served as an ocean weather patrol cutter homeported in Boston until 1956 when it left for Cape May, N.J., and a new job as the East Coast training vessel for new recruits.

Taken out of mothballs

In May 1975, Unimak was decommissioned and placed in storage until 1977 when it was once again called into service by the Coast Guard and assigned to New Bedford.

Since its recommissioning, Unimak

has been assigned to a wide range of missions. It patrols fishing grounds, hunts for smugglers, enforces international laws and treaties, protects continental shelf resources, participates in the training of officer candidates and Coast Guard Academy cadets and stands ready to help those in distress on the sea.

While at the Coast Guard Yard, Unimak received many improvements including replacement of its aging generators, new propellers, updated electronic gear, improved living conditions and incredible amounts of inside and outside maintenance accomplished to get it running well and looking smart.

