



Chief Warrant Officer John Edwards/U.S. COAST GUARD PHOTO

Star-studded graduation

Singer, actor and songwriter Kris Kristofferson hands Jesse Kristofferson, his son, a certificate during the graduation ceremony of Alpha-190 on Aug. 15 at U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Cape May. Kristofferson's son was one of 78 graduates to enter the Coast Guard enlisted work force, through which they will be stationed all over the country performing duties ranging from maritime law enforcement to search and rescue missions. Jesse Kristofferson will be stationed at Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, Calif., for Operation Specialist training.

Shallow harbor threatens economy

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Cape May's pier three. An increasingly shallow Cape May Harbor also contributed to the departure of the two cutters, according to Cape May Mayor Edward Mahaney. He said that during the past few years, the cutters could sail into the Coast Guard base only under certain tidal conditions. "They would have to arrange

their itinerary to stay out an extra 12 or 24 hours to make certain they could come in," Mahaney said. Dredging the harbor historically has never been within the purview of the city government, but it has become involved at the request of the commercial fishing industry, condominiums with boat slips and by marinas, the mayor said. He said federal funding is available to dredge the channel for the Coast Guard base. Federal and state funding also is available for dredging to aid commercial fishing. "However, a major problem for us has been the private marinas and condos and developments that have their own boat slips, so consequently in a new initiative, the state has kept the permitting with DEP (Department of Environmental

Vigorous

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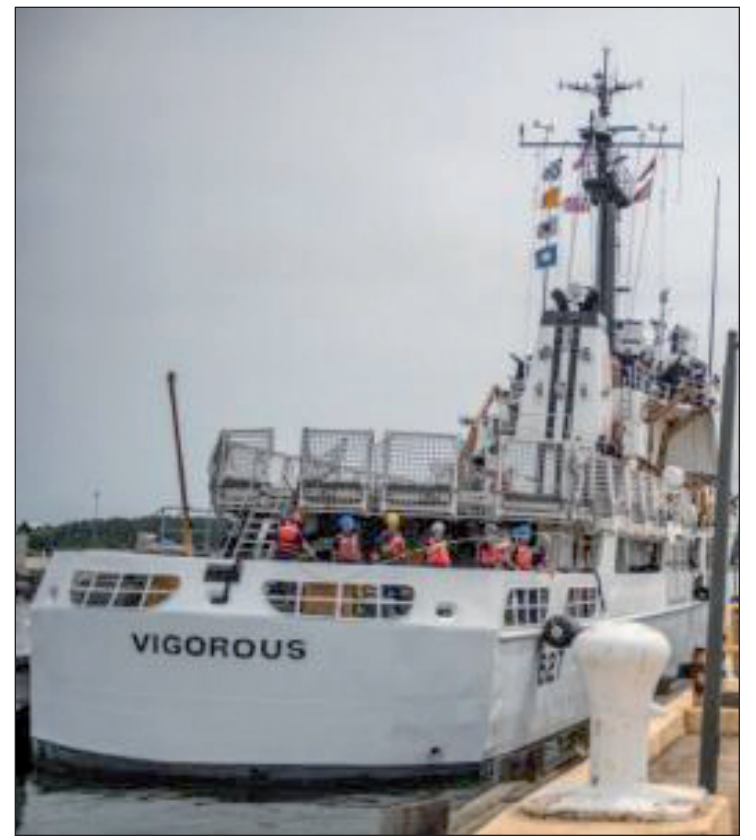
"Our 76-member crew looks forward to our new homeport of Little Creek and the opportunities it will present."

The addition of two Medium Endurance Cutters will significantly increase the Coast Guard's operational presence in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The decision to relocate Vigorous was prompted by the deteriorating pier conditions at Cape May's pier three.

Over the course of three years, the new Fast Response Cutters will bring approximately 97 new personnel to the Cape May community that will result in construction contracts for infrastructure upgrades over the next five years, including shore-side support facilities and pier construction.

The Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter is a new Coast Guard patrol boat that is capable of deploying independently to conduct missions that include port, waterways and coastal security. Coast Guard cutters are sentinels of global trade by supporting the nation's economic success, ensuring waterways and the maritime environment are safe, secure and reliable.



COAST GUARD PHOTO

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous marked its official arrival at its new homeport in Virginia Beach on Aug. 8. It is the first of two Medium Endurance Cutters from Cape May to be relocated.

Protection) but assigned the task of doing the dredging to the administrative agency, New Jersey Department of Transportation," Mahaney said. "This is the first time this is being done and they have to work together."

He said the DEP has to issue permits to individual property owners and housing units, with DOT arranging for the dredging contractor to work on creeks and the harbor.

Mahaney said the dredging company can contract with marinas and condominiums that have valid permits from the DEP. When land parcels along the creeks and harbor were developed, water rights were included, so the property owners are responsible for their own dredging, he said.

This fall, the DOT is planning to dredge Spicer's Creek and Schellenger's Creek and

three other waterways, some of which are located in Lower Township, he said.

"In the city of Cape May, we're concerned about Spicer's Creek, Schellenger's Creek and Devil's Reach," Mahaney said.

He said dredging would happen near South Jersey Marina, and that the city was working to assist private property owners, marinas and condo associations to ensure they have proper permitting.

The situation is similar to beach replenishment on the oceanfront in that mobilizing the dredge boat is at least 50 percent of the total cost.

He said a major hurdle in dredging in the back bay usually is having an approved spoils site, but that it's not a problem for this undertaking.

"The contractor hired by DOT will be able to use the Army Corps of Engineers dredge spoil-disposition site on the canal by the West Cape May bridge," Mahaney said, adding that dredging should begin sometime between Labor Day and the end of September.

"We are hoping we would be able to do this on an annual basis if possible, but definitely on a much improved periodic basis than has been happening," he said.

There is no cost to the city for the dredging. He said silt has built up at Harbor Cove to the point that some docks are unus-

able. In Devil's Reach, docks are severely compromised by silt, he said.

Mahaney said unusable docks diminish the value of property and limit marina capacity.

"This harbor needs to be given some major comprehension attention by federal and state agencies to ensure that it's going to be navigable, especially in light of the military base, which is affiliated with Homeland Security," he said.

The harbor serves the commercial fishing industry, which is the second-greatest-tonnage port on the East Coast and a major employer, Mahaney said.

He said keeping the harbor dredged would require a longterm solution in terms of a comprehensive plan with sustainable large-scale funding.

According to Kevin Maloney, president of the Cape May Maritime Museum, a law was enacted by Congress in 1907 appropriating \$311,000 to improve Cold Spring Inlet and create Cape May Harbor.

Cape May Real Estate Co., which owned the harbor, was to contribute \$100,000 so the harbor would be maintained at a depth of 25 feet at low tide.

Cape May Real Estate Co. is long gone. According to Maloney, the opening of the Cape May Canal exacerbated the low water depth, and is now less than 3 feet at mean low water.

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