

**By [Tom Vogt](#), Columbian science, military & history reporter**

Published: June 1, 2015, 6:00 AM

A dozen vessels, including two with local connections, will be part of this year's Portland Rose Festival Fleet.

The U.S. Coast Guard's Bluebell has been a familiar sight to local boaters for decades, maintaining navigation aids on the Columbia, Willamette and Snake rivers.

Commissioned on April 4, 1945, the Bluebell is the oldest Coast Guard ship west of the Mississippi River, and the second-oldest overall. Until 1973, the Bluebell's home port was Vancouver.

A World War II-era torpedo boat, PT-658, has been restored by a nonprofit group that includes several veterans and boat enthusiasts from Clark County. It remains part of the U.S. Navy, and is its last operational PT boat.

The dozen vessels are scheduled to be open for free public tours on a first-come, first-served basis at the north end of Portland's Tom McCall Waterfront Park. Tour hours typically are from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., though public access days will vary.

The Coast Guard said historical vessels will arrive earlier and will be open for tours Wednesday through Sunday. The three U.S. Navy vessels are scheduled to host tours Friday through Sunday.

The Royal Canadian navy has not announced a tour schedule, but might follow the U.S. Navy's timetable.

The 2015 Portland Rose Festival Fleet:

- U.S. Navy: Guided-missile cruisers USS Chosin (CG 65) and USS Cape St. George (CG 71); and mine countermeasure ship USS Champion (MCM 4.)
- U.S. Coast Guard: National security cutter USCGC Waesche (WMSL 751); coastal patrol boat USCGC Wahoo (WPB 87345); and buoy tender USCGC Bluebell (WLI 313).
- Royal Canadian navy: Patrol frigate HMCS Calgary (FFH 335); coastal defence vessels HMCS Whitehorse (MM 705) and HMCS Saskatoon (MM 709); and sail training vessel HMCS Oriole (KC 480), built in 1921, the oldest ship in the navy.
- Historic: "Gamewardens" Vietnam War-era river patrol boat; and World War II-era PT-658.

Visitors may be subject to personal search, according to a Portland Rose Festival news release; no bags, strollers or wheelchairs will be allowed onboard. There will not be any "holding area" for personal items and visitors must be able to maneuver on board the ships, including climbing narrow ladders.

Visitors to U.S. Navy ships will be required to present a government-issued photo identification and pass through an airport-style security checkpoint prior to boarding, the Navy says.

# Bluebell, PT boat in Rose Festival Fleet

Vessels with local ties will be part of festival, open for public tours this week

