



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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The Transportation Department's Coast Guard launched a new icebreaker at Seattle today to open a new era of transportation for the frozen regions of the North.

The new vessel, the Polar Star, is capable of ramming through ice 21-feet thick and can move at a continuous speed of 3 knots through six feet of ice. With its new design and its vastly increased power, the Polar Star will help fulfill the age-long dream of opening the Northwest passage to commerce.

Mrs. Claude S. Brinegar, wife of the Secretary of Transportation and sponsor of the Polar Star, christened the \$52 million vessel.

Serving as maids of honor were the daughters of Secretary and Mrs. Brinegar, namely Misses Claudia and Meredith Brinegar.

Secretary Brinegar, in the principal address at the ceremony, said the launching of the modern icebreaker is given added significance by the current energy crisis and the opening of the vast oil deposits on Alaska's North Slope.

Admiral Chester R. Bender, Commandant of the Coast Guard, also stressed the role the Polar Star and other Coast Guard icebreakers will play in opening up the Alaskan fields. He said their operations will be critical to the movement of necessary supplies and equipment through ice-choked Arctic waters.

The other two icebreakers still in service are the Northwind and Westwind.

In addition to icebreaking duties, the Polar Star will perform scientific work. The vessel can accommodate 10 scientists and technicians to operate a computer system designed solely for handling scientific data plus equipment for basic "wet" and "dry" marine and ecological studies.

The Polar Star is equipped with either 6 diesel-electric engines or, three gas turbine engines, capable of generating 60,000 and 18,000-plus shaft-horsepower, respectively. It's normal cruising speed of 13 knots can take her 28,000 miles without refueling.

The vessel has accommodations for a crew of 155 men.