

Bollinger Delivers First of Three FRCs for Homeport in Guam



The fast-response U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Myrtle Hazard, delivered May 28 to the Coast Guard in Key West, Florida. The cutter, the 39th FRC, will be homeported in Guam. Bollinger Shipyards

LOCKPORT, La. – Bollinger Shipyards has delivered the fast-response cutter (FRC) Myrtle Hazard to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida, the company announced on May 28.

The Myrtle Hazard is the 162nd vessel that Bollinger has delivered to the Coast Guard in 35 years and the 39th FRC delivered under the current program.

The cutter is the first of three FRCs to be homeported in Apra Harbor, Guam, increasing the presence for the Coast Guard in the Indo-Pacific. Later this year, Bollinger will deliver the first of six FRCs to be homeported in Manama, Bahrain, replacing Island-class patrol boats supporting the Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, the Coast Guard's largest unit outside the United States.

“Our latest delivery of the ... Myrtle Hazard is an important milestone in the FRC program as it is the first of several vessels that will expand and support the Coast Guard's operational presence and enhance the U.S.'s mission in the Indo-Pacific region – a focal point emphasized by both President Trump and [Coast Guard Commandant] Adm. [Karl L.] Shultz,” said Ben Bordelon, Bollinger's president and CEO. “Building ships for the U.S. Coast Guard provides critical assets to bolster our national security interests, both domestic and abroad. We are proud and humbled to be partners in the FRC program.”

The homeporting of three FRCs in Guam is part of the Coast Guard's "doubling down on Oceania," allowing more frequent and longer patrols in an area where the sea service has increased its presence over the past 18 months, aligning with priorities set in the 2018 National Defense Strategy to counter competitors such as China and Russia.

Schultz stressed the strategic importance of the service's presence in the region saying, "We're on a trajectory where the geostrategic importance of the Oceania region has not been higher here in decades, and it's a place that the Coast Guard's looking to be part of the whole-of-government solution set."

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished himself or herself in the line of duty. A young mother in 1918, Myrtle Hazard answered a help-wanted ad for a qualified radio operator after graduating from a radio and telegraphy class at the Baltimore YMCA.

Skilled in telegraphy and Morse code, the Coast Guard enlisted Hazard in January 1918, and she became the sea service's first female electrician. Hazard worked at Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C., as an electrician's mate third class and was promoted to electrician first class before being demobilized after the war ended.

Coast Guard Recovers 11 Bales of Adrift Cocaine



A Coast Guard Cutter Paul Clark crew member moves bales of

interdicted cocaine from the small boat to the cutter 10 miles south of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico, on May 22. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutters Paul Clark and Joseph Tezanos crews recovered 11 bales of cocaine about 10 miles southwest of Desecheo Island on May 22, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a May 27 release.

A Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew located a debris field about 10 miles southwest of Desecho Island. The cutter Paul Clark crew arrived on scene and recovered 10 bales of cocaine weighing about 1,000 pounds from the debris field. The cutter Joseph Tezanos crew recovered an additional bale of cocaine in the vicinity weighing about 100 pounds the following day.

All 11 bales of cocaine were transferred to the Coast Guard Investigative Service and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force personnel.

“The recovery of the 11 bales of cocaine offshore from Puerto Rico highlights the excellent work of the cutter Paul Clark, deployed to Puerto Rico from Miami and the MH-60 crew as well as the Puerto Rico based cutter Joseph Tezanos,” said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Coast Guard Sector San Juan chief of response.

“The Coast Guard could not complete the interdiction cycle of success were it not for the outstanding interagency coordination of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force who supported the drug offload on a holiday weekend.”

Coast Guard Seizes 3,100 Pounds of Cocaine from Smuggling Vessel



The Coast Guard Cutter James interdicts a low-profile go-fast vessel in mid-May in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Central America. U.S. Coast Guard

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard seized more than 3,100 pounds of cocaine in mid-May with an estimated value of \$53.5 million from a low-profile go-fast vessel in international waters of the Pacific Ocean off Central America, the Coast Guard 11th District said in a release.

A maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected smuggling vessel and diverted the crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter James to the vessel's position.

Once on scene, the James crew boarded the vessel to find four suspected smugglers and initially discovered a small amount of cocaine aboard the vessel.

The boarding team members later discovered an area of the ship that had been closed off, where they discovered the majority of the 3,100 pounds of cocaine.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives.

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement along

with allied and international partner agencies play a role in counter-drug operations.

Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba Returns Home after \$60 Million Drug Bust



A helicopter interdiction tactical squadron with the Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba pursues a drug-smuggling vessel in the Caribbean Sea in April. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Trees

BOSTON – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba returned home to Boston on May 23 following a 62-day patrol in support of Operation Martillo in the western Caribbean, the Coast Guard 1st District said in a release.

Escanaba's crew seized nearly 2,000 kilograms of cocaine, valued at \$60 million, while working with an armed helicopter interdiction tactical squadron onboard and local Panamanian law enforcement.

Escanaba's crew also located a disabled boat 100 miles north of Colombia in 14-foot seas and 35 mph winds. The crew launched its small boat team and rescued the four crew members stranded aboard the boat. Escanaba's crew transferred the survivors to the Colombian navy.

"I am extremely proud of the crew for their extraordinary dedication and professionalism throughout this patrol during an unprecedented time," said Cmdr. Mike Nalli, commanding officer of the Escanaba. "We overcame numerous challenges to

focus on mission execution and achieve excellent results in support of [U.S. Southern Command's] national objectives.”

Operation Martillo is a multinational detection, monitoring and interdiction operation that consists of 20 participating nations working together to counter transnational organized crime networks and illicit trafficking in the waters along Central America.

Escanaba is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter with a crew complement of 100. They conduct maritime enforcement and homeland security missions in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

USS Pinckney Takes Down Drug Vessel, Seizes Over \$28 Million of Cocaine



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Pinckney (DDG 91) with embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) team conducts enhanced counter narcotics operations May 14. U.S. COAST GUARD

EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN (NNS) – The Arleigh Burke-Class Destroyer USS Pinckney (DDG 91) with embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) team seized more than 3,000 pounds of cocaine May 14, the U.S. 4th Fleet/U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command said in a May 21 release.

A U.S. Navy maritime patrol aircraft assigned to the “Tridents” of Patrol Squadron 26 first spotted the low-profile vessel (LPV). Pinckney, with its embarked helicopters assigned

to the "Wolf Pack" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 75 and the embarked LEDET, moved into position to intercept the LPV.

Pinckney and the embarked LEDET recovered a total of 70 bales of cocaine totaling an estimated 1,400 kilograms, worth over \$28 million wholesale value.

"This was truly a team effort," said Cmdr. Andrew Roy, USS Pinckney commanding officer. "The air support we received was first class. We were able to safely and successfully conduct this operation due to the outstanding professionalism of the Navy – Coast Guard team."

USS Pinckney is deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations conducting U.S. Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South's enhanced counter drug operations missions in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.

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Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

Cutter Active Offloads \$37 Million Worth of Cocaine



Members of the Coast Guard Cutter Active crew offload more than 2,000 pounds of cocaine, worth about \$37 million, seized in international waters of the eastern Pacific Ocean in May. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Active offloaded more than 2,000 pounds of cocaine worth about \$37 million on May 20 that was seized in early May from known drug-transit zones of the eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard's 11th District said in a release.

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The fight against drug cartels in the eastern Pacific requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. attorneys in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

“This patrol, and this interdiction in particular, highlights the resilience and professionalism of Active’s crew,” said Cmdr. James O’Mara, commanding officer of Active. “We cancelled a port visit, stretched logistics and diverted 500 miles to get on target and do our job. No captain could ask or expect more from a crew, especially given all the adversity overcome during this patrol. Though I know if more were required, this crew would rally and answer the call, the way they always do.”

Active is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter commissioned in 1966 and homeported in Port Angeles, Washington.

Coast Guard Academy Holds Virtual Graduation Ceremony for Class of 2020



Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz delivers remarks during the Coast Guard Academy virtual graduation ceremony. NEW LONDON, Conn. – The U.S. Coast Guard Academy’s Class of 2020 is the largest and most inclusive graduating class and includes the largest number of female graduates in the institution’s history, the academy said in a May 21 release. They also became the first class to hold a virtual commencement ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commencement day activities began at 1 p.m. with recorded congratulatory messages from a host of flag officers, elected officials and celebrities, including TV weatherman and producer of the Coast Guard TV series Al Roker, as well as actors Gary Sinise and Kevin Costner, who referenced his

portrayal of a Coast Guard swimmer in the film “The Guardian.”

The five international students from the class were also sent congratulatory messages from officials representing their respective home countries of Haiti, Mexico, the Philippines and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The official ceremony consisted of a combination of live streamed footage from the official party on Cadet Memorial Field at the Academy, along with a mix of pre-recorded videos that closely followed the traditional run of past events. The event ended with recorded messages from the graduates to the rest of their classmates.

As the distinguished honor graduate of the Class of 2020, Ensign Alaric Stone gave an address that touched on the successes of his classmates despite the unprecedented circumstances they found themselves in and the bonds that hold them together.

“It is a testament to our resilience in the face of adversity and our ability to take failure in our stride,” Stone said. “With 2020 vision we’ve been able to look beyond hardship and see what is truly important. Each other. Through trials and tribulations both big and small we have always remained a team. A family.”

In his remarks, Rear Adm. Bill Kelly, the Coast Guard Academy’s superintendent, reminded the audience of the inclusive nature of the class.

“With 2020 vision we’ve been able to look beyond hardship and see what is truly important. Each other. Through trials and tribulations both big and small we have always remained a team. A family.”

Rear Adm. Bill Kelly, Coast Guard Academy superintendent

“This year, we graduate the largest number of African-Americans, Native-Americans and Alaska natives and we continue to graduate more Hispanic officers than ever before,” Kelly said.

“The hard work to be more representative of the nation we serve is paying dividends, and while the demographic profile of this class is the most diverse ever, it’s the perspective, the skills and abilities each and every graduate brings to the service that makes them uniquely qualified to serve and lead during these unprecedented times.”

Standing on the stage alongside the official party at Cadet Memorial Field, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz made brief remarks before introducing a prerecorded message from U.S. Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Milley told the graduates that, as leaders, they would be counted on during difficult circumstances.

“Honor, respect and devotion to duty,” Milley said. “These words can’t be abstract to you. In our profession, you must develop a bond of trust like no other occupation in the world. You have to trust each other. You have to trust the chain of command. You have to trust the petty officers and the seamen, and they must trust you.”

In his recorded remarks, Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolfe welcomed the graduates into the U.S. Department of Homeland Security team and reminded them what it takes to serve in the current environment.

“As frustrating as it may be, the unorthodox situation in which we find ourselves today is emblematic of what you will all find when you are on the front lines defending this country, and that is the need to be prepared for the unexpected,” Wolfe said.

“Put simply, life is going to look a lot different out there than it did inside your classrooms at the academy, and that is why I expect you to always keep learning. It is the best way to prepare yourself for the challenges that lie ahead.”

Coast Guard Cutter Diligence Will Change Homeport to Pensacola



The Coast Guard Cutter Diligence, moored in downtown Wilmington, North Carolina. U.S. Coast Guard
ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence will shift homeport from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Pensacola, Florida, on May 25, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

“Diligence is scheduled to depart the city of Wilmington on [May 25] to conduct a patrol in support of the 7th Coast Guard District, and will return to the cutter’s new homeport, Pensacola, Florida,” the release said. “Diligence has been assigned to Wilmington since its recommissioning in 1994, but the namesake has a long history with the state of North Carolina and the city of Wilmington dating back to 1792.”

“The past and present crew of Diligence have truly appreciated the support of the Wilmington community over the years,” said Cdr. Luke Slivinski, commanding officer of the Diligence. “Our close and welcoming relationship has been special, and we’ll miss calling the Coast Guard City of Wilmington our home, but we’re eager to embark on the adventure of establishing a new home port following this patrol.”

Eastern Shipbuilding Group Performs Keel-Laying for Offshore Patrol Cutter



An artist's rendering of the offshore patrol cutter. Eastern Shipbuilding Group

PANAMA CITY, Fla. – Eastern Shipbuilding Group held a keel-laying ceremony for the U.S. Coast Guard's first-of-class offshore patrol cutter (OPC), the Argus, the company said in a release.

The April 28 ceremony, at Eastern Shipbuilding's Nelson Street facility in Panama City, was performed and recorded without an audience to comply with U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines for combatting the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The keel-laying represents the ceremonial start of a ship's life by commemorating the assembly of the initial modular construction units. Historically, to attest that the keel was properly laid and of excellent quality, the shipbuilder would carve their initials into it. This practice is commemorated by welding the initials of the ship's sponsor into the keel authentication plate.

The ship's sponsor is retired Coast Guard Capt. Beverly Kelley, who was the first woman to command a U.S. military vessel. She commanded the 95-foot patrol boat, the cutter Cape Newagen, in 1979. Throughout her distinguished career, she became the first woman to command both a medium-endurance cutter and a high-endurance cutter in cutters Northland and Boutwell, respectively.

“Eastern Shipbuilding Group is humbled and proud to have been chosen to build this next-generation ship for the world’s best Coast Guard, and we think today represents a milestone that all those involved in the program can be proud of,” said Eastern’s president, Joey D’Isernia.

“The steel joined here today is unlike any you or I have seen before. This steel has been ravaged by 162 mph winds, generated by the third most powerful hurricane to make landfall in this country’s history. This steel has borne witness to a pandemic that has caused fear and shaken our core. But through all this, it remains sturdy, it remains resilient, and today it will join with other steel to become stronger, more defined and more resolute. Today is representative of how we build, and of unwavering resolve in the face of adversity for a Coast Guard and a nation that deserves nothing less.”



Adm. Charles W. Ray, vice commandant of the Coast Guard, tours the construction of the first offshore patrol cutter, the Argus, in 2019 at the Eastern Shipbuilding Group shipyard in Panama City, Florida. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 2nd Class Loumania Stewart

D’Isernia was accompanied on the podium by Capt. Andrew Meverden, representing the Coast Guard, and Bradley Remick, the welder charged with fashioning the sponsor’s initials onto the ceremonial keel authentication plate.

The OPC will provide a capability bridge between the national security cutter, which patrols the demanding open ocean, and the fast-response cutter, which serves closer to shore. The OPC design includes the capability of carrying an MH-60 or MH-65 helicopter and three operational over-the-horizon small boats. The vessel also is equipped with a highly sophisticated combat system and C4ISR suite.

U.S. Coast Guard, Australia to Begin Officer Exchange Program



Rear Adm. Kevin Lunday, commander, Coast Guard 14th District, and Kingsley Woodford-Smith, the assistant commissioner, Australian Border Force, virtually sign a memorandum of agreement creating a system of mutual officer exchange. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew West
HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard and the Australian Department of Home Affairs on April 27 signed an agreement for a system of mutual officer exchange from their offices in Hawaii and Canberra, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a release.

Rear Adm. Kevin Lunday, commander of the 14th District, and Kingsley Woodford-Smith, assistant commissioner of Australian Border Force, signed the memorandum of agreement.

“The memorandum of agreement solidifies an already incredible relationship with our Australian partners in the Blue Pacific region,” said Cmdr. Jason Brand, chief of enforcement with the 14th District.

“The agreement enhances the interoperability between the U.S. Coast Guard and Australian Department of Home Affairs by creating a personnel exchange system designed to share experience, professional knowledge and doctrine between the partners. This exchange is another tool for our work to promote and further a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

The memorandum establishes a seagoing officer exchange program allowing one Australian Border Force marine unit officer to serve a four- to six-week assignment among the units in Honolulu. A U.S. Coast Guard officer will deploy with the Australian Border Force fleet.

Upon signing the agreement, Rear Adm. Lunday commented, “The U.S. and Australian alliance is built on over a century of mateship. This agreement reflects the importance of our combined operations to maritime governance and security across Oceania, especially as the U.S. Coast Guard is expanding its permanent presence and operations in the Pacific.”

In attendance was Ambassador Jane Hardy, the Australian consul-general in Honolulu, who said of the agreement “this significant bilateral initiative will develop further our mutual efforts to maintain and enhance regional security. The skill and bravery of our U.S. Coast Guard ‘mates’ and Australian Border Force exemplify the heart of the Australia-US Alliance.”

Australian and Coast Guard personnel often find themselves

working alongside one another during joint missions throughout the Pacific from search and rescue cases to the prevention of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU).

Examples of such efforts include the work of Royal Australian navy HMAS Toowoomba and a Coast Guard Station Honolulu 45-foot response boat-medium crews to respond to a de-masted sailboat off Hawaii in 2018 and joint exercises between the HMAS Choules and the Coast Guard Cutter Walnut in the South Pacific during Operation Aiga 2019.

Both countries annually contribute resources to operations of the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and Pacific Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group (P-QUAD) such as the recent FFA Operation Rai Balang.

Under Op Rai Balang, crews from Coast Guard Cutter Sequoia, an Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules aircrew, and the crew of the Australian navy's HMAS Maryborough all contributed to the surveillance operation to disrupt IUU fishing in March. The joint efforts protect the organization's member states' exclusive economic zones and ensure Pacific fish stocks remain sustainable.

Scheduled later this year, the partners will reach a new milestone when the Coast Guard sends a surface asset for the first time to serve alongside Australia's during P-QUAD's Operation Nasse.

"We plan to send crews aboard Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 256) and an Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules airplane to support the P-QUAD operation for the first time," Brand said.

"The U.S. and Australia have been standing side-by-side for more than 100 years. This is more than a partnership, it is mateship. As we increase operations with our Australian counterparts, this new personnel exchange allows us to take

the next step to integrate further for more fruitful outcomes maximizing the value of the experience and resources of our nations.”