

Coast Guard Awards Contract for Waterfront Homeport Improvements in Sitka, Alaska



Photo from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Denman Facebook Page

[Release From U.S. Coast Guard Arctic District](#)

JUNEAU, Alaska –The U.S. Coast Guard’s Facilities Design and Construction Center awarded a contract Aug. 14, 2025, to the Whiting-Turner Contracting Company to design and construct new homeport facilities in Sitka, Alaska.

The award, with a total potential value of \$50.475 million, will construct waterfront facilities to support the arrival of one fast response cutter (FRC), Coast Guard Cutter Douglas

Denman (WPC-1149), and improve waterfront facilities for one 225-foot seagoing buoy tender, Coast Guard Cutter Kukui (WLB-203), that is already homeported in Sitka.

This work represents a significant investment in mission support infrastructure supporting Coast Guard operations throughout Sector Southeast Alaska and the greater Arctic District. By modernizing and expanding waterfront facilities, this initiative underscores the Coast Guard's commitment to ensuring readiness and resilience in the region.

Construction of homeport facilities is expected to begin in 2026 and be completed in 2028.

The FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, as well as over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment, enhancing the Coast Guard's operations to control, secure, and defend the U.S. border and maritime approaches.

The Kukui's primary mission is the servicing of aids-to-navigation (ATON) buoys within an area of responsibility extending across the inland and coastal waters of southeastern Alaska. Other missions include maritime law enforcement, ports and waterways security, marine environmental response, and search and rescue.

Coast Guard Achieves Historic Milestone with Offload Over

76,140 lbs.



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton offloads more than 76,140 lbs of illicit narcotics at Port Everglades, Florida, on August 25, 2025. This is the largest cocaine offload to date in Coast Guard history, with the assistance of partner agencies, during counterdrug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

[Release From Coast Guard Southeast](#)

MIAMI – The U.S. Coast Guard achieved a historic milestone with the offload of 76,140 pounds of illicit narcotics, valued at \$473 million, marking the largest quantity of drugs offloaded in Coast Guard history, in Port Everglades, Monday [Aug. 25].

Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton's crew offloaded approximately 61,740 pounds of cocaine and approximately 14,400 pounds of marijuana.

This combined illegal narcotics offload prevented the maritime flow of approximately 23 million potential lethal doses from reaching the United States.

“The U.S. Coast Guard in partnership with our federal, DoD, and international partners are offloading 61,740 pounds of cocaine, and this represents a significant victory in the fight against transnational criminal organizations, highlighting our unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation from illicit trafficking and its devastating impacts,” said Rear Adm. Adam Chamie, Coast Guard Southeast District commander. “To put this into perspective, the potential 23 million lethal doses of cocaine seized by the U.S. Coast Guard and our partners, are enough to fatally overdose the entire population of the state of Florida, underscoring the immense threat posed by transnational drug trafficking to our nation.”

The seized contraband was the result of 19 interdictions in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea.

On June 26, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted two suspicious go-fast vessels approximately 115 miles southeast of the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. Hamilton’s embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics resulting in Hamilton’s boarding team interdicting both vessels, seizing more than 8,800 pounds of cocaine.

On June 27, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 125 miles southeast of the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. Hamilton’s embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics allowing Hamilton’s boarding team to interdict the vessel, seizing more than 4,330 pounds of cocaine.

On June 30, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious

go-fast vessel approximately 87 miles north of Bonaire. A Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 408 crew deployed on USS Cole interdicted the vessel, seizing approximately 2,425 pounds of cocaine.

On July 3, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 15 miles north of Aragua, Venezuela. A LEDET 404 crew deployed on the Royal Netherlands Navy ship HNLMS Friesland interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 5,450 pounds of cocaine.

On July 11, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 17 miles northeast of Silva, Venezuela. Friesland's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and an embarked LEDET 404 boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing 9,088 pounds of marijuana.

On July 21, Hamilton's embarked unmanned aircraft system crew spotted suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 600 miles south of Acapulco, Mexico. Hamilton's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and Hamilton's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 3,395 pounds of cocaine.

On July 23, Hamilton's crew detected and boarded a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 88 miles southeast of Socorro Island, Mexico. Hamilton's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and Hamilton's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 9,160 pounds of cocaine.

On July 25, a maritime patrol aircraft notified Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant's crew of a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 180 miles south of the Dominican Republic. Vigilant's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 1,410 pounds of cocaine and 80 pounds of marijuana.

On Aug. 2, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious go-

fast vessel approximately 52 miles north of Carabobo, Venezuela. Friesland's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and an embarked LEDET 404 boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing 2,615 pounds of marijuana.

On Aug. 2, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 640 miles south of Acapulco, Mexico. Hamilton's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and Hamilton's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 4,110 pounds of cocaine.

On Aug. 5, Hamilton's embarked UAS crew detected a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 543 miles southeast of Clipperton Island. Hamilton's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and Hamilton's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 4,210 pounds of cocaine.

On Aug. 6, Hamilton's embarked UAS crew detected a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 625 miles southeast of Clipperton Island. Hamilton's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and Hamilton's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 4,375 pounds of cocaine.

On Aug. 7, Coast Guard Cutter Diligence's crew detected and boarded a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 136 miles southwest of Negril, Jamaica. Diligence's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing 1,500 pounds of marijuana.

On Aug 7, Hamilton's embarked UAS crew detected a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 750 miles south of Acapulco, Mexico. Hamilton's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics, and Hamilton's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 20 pounds of cocaine.

On Aug 7, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 100 miles north of Aruba. A LEDET 108 crew deployed on USS Minneapolis Saint-Paul interdicted the vessel, seizing approximately 2,700 pounds of cocaine.

On Aug 8, Hamilton's embarked UAS crew detected a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 750 miles south of Acapulco, Mexico. Hamilton's embarked HITRON air crew employed airborne use of force tactics, and Hamilton's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 4,145 pounds of cocaine.

On Aug 15, a maritime patrol aircraft notified Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant's crew of a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 35 miles southwest of Haiti. Vigilant's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 1,615 pounds of marijuana.

On Aug 18, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 130 miles south of Jamaica. USS Minneapolis Saint-Paul's boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing approximately 6,425 pounds of cocaine.

On Aug 18, HNLMS Friesland's crew detected a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 20 miles west of Curacao. Friesland's boarding team seized approximately 700 pounds of cocaine.

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdiction operations:

- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton](#)

- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant](#)

- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence](#)

- U.S. Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) Jacksonville

- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team-Pacific

(PAC-TACLET)

- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team-South (TACLET-South)

- [USS Minneapolis Saint-Paul](#)

- [USS Cole](#)

- [The Royal Netherlands Navy ship HNLMS Friesland](#)

- [Joint Interagency Task Force-South \(JIATF-S\)](#)

- [U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations \(CBP-AMO\) aircrews](#)

- [Southeast Coast Guard District watchstanders](#)

- [Southwest Coast Guard District watchstanders](#)

“Team Hamilton with our partners, worked incredibly hard the last several months to safeguard the American public from the dangers of illicit narcotics entering the United States,” said Capt. John B. McWhite, commanding officer, Hamilton. “This outstanding group of professionals achieved unparalleled results in our nation’s fight against transnational criminal drug organizations. The crew interdicted 11 go-fast vessels, detained 34 suspected drug traffickers, and seized a record 47,000 pounds of cocaine. The commitment and sacrifice of our deployed service members and their families, who forego time

together for the protection of our Nation, are to be celebrated.”

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination because 80% of drugs are interdicted on the high seas. U.S. Southern Command’s Joint Interagency Task Force – South based in Key West conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard’s Southwest District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

To protect the Homeland from ongoing trafficking of illicit narcotics from South America to the United States, the Coast Guard is accelerating our counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of [Operation Pacific Viper](#).

The Coast Guard continues increased operations to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs by sea. These drugs fuel and enable cartels and transnational criminal organizations to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl, threatening the United States.

These interdictions deny criminal organizations more than half a billion dollars in illicit revenue. They provide critical testimonial and drug evidence as well as key intelligence for their total elimination. These interdictions relate to Panama Express Strike Force investigations in support of Operation Take Back America. PANEX identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach.

Hamilton is one of four 418-foot Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Charleston, South Carolina under [U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command](#).

For more information, follow U.S. Coast Guard Southeast on [“X” \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and find U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Southwest on [“X” \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Visit [GoCoastGuard.com](#) to learn about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities in the U.S. Coast Guard. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

For breaking news, find press releases and contact information for our regional public affairs offices here: [U.S. Coast Guard News by Region](#).

**Coast Guard, partners
conclude Operation Ika Moana
in Samoa**



Boats crews comprising Samoan Police Maritime Wing officers, U.S. Coast Guard Mobile Training Team members, and Operation Ika Moana participants conduct training offshore Apia, Samoa, Aug. 12, 2025. During Operation Ika Moana, patrol boat crews from six Pacific Island nations participated in underway training focused on boarding team and search and rescue techniques. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From Coast Guard Oceania District External Affairs, Aug. 22, 2025

HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard concluded participation in Operation Ika Moana, a maritime surveillance initiative hosted by the [Samoan Police Maritime Wing](#) in conjunction with the [Pacific Maritime Security Program](#) in Apia, Samoa, Aug. 8-14.

The exercise included representatives from Tuvalu, Kiribati, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Cook Islands. Partners from Timor-Leste, Palau, Nauru, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Papua

New Guinea, and Solomon Islands also observed the operation.

Operation Ika Moana is a collaborative maritime surveillance initiative intended to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and transnational crimes across Oceania, such as drug and human trafficking.

The operation brought together national and regional partners to conduct coordinated patrols, surveillance, joint exercises and crew exchanges.

“Ika Moana provided the U.S. Coast Guard a unique opportunity to work with maritime security professionals from many Pacific Island coast guards, navies and marine police units,” said James Duval, maritime security cooperation director, Coast Guard Office of International Affairs. “We have several common missions, challenges and objectives and have benefitted from the opportunity to discuss, share and contrast our individual techniques. This interaction will help us all continue to refine our skills to best serve the people of our nations.”

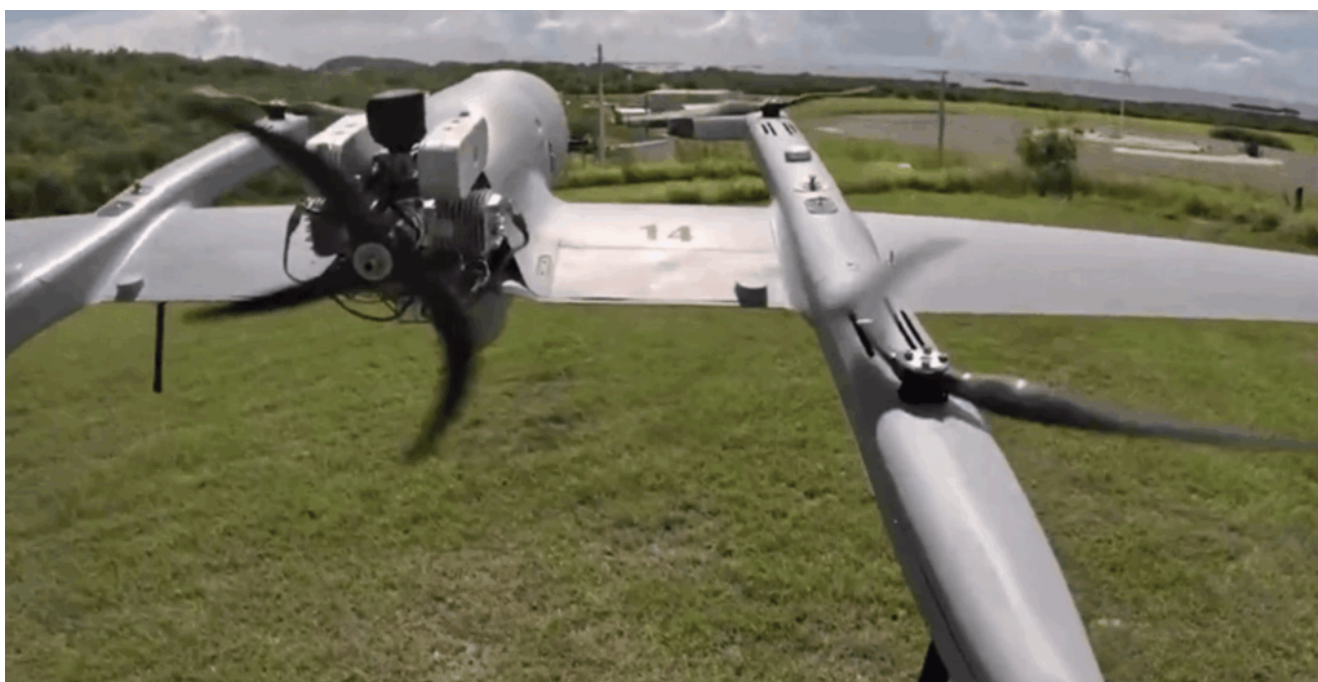
The Coast Guard Mobile Training Team delivered classroom and underway training for participating patrol boats focusing on boarding team and search and rescue techniques.

“By partnering with regional maritime law enforcement agencies, the Coast Guard seeks to strengthen global maritime governance to preserve sovereignty,” Lt. Cmdr. James Bruce with the [International Mobile Training Branch](#) at Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown. “We value partnership opportunities focused on our shared objective of rooting out illicit activities and eradicating threats to our collective prosperity.”

The Pacific Maritime Security Program and the Coast Guard share a formal collaborative partnership to coordinate bilateral and joint training with Pacific Island Country partners.

The Coast Guard Mobile Training Team is a deployable unit that fosters international cooperation and strengthens maritime partnerships by exporting formal U.S. Coast Guard training and providing technical assistance to partner nations around the globe. Every year, they train over 2,400 international partners in more than 40 countries.

Coast Guard Establishes New PEO Dedicated to Robotics and Autonomous Systems



[Release From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters](#)

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard announced Tuesday the Initial Operating Capability of the Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Program Executive Office (PEO).

This PEO is a key component of the Service's Force Design 2028 (FD 2028) plan, aimed at integrating capabilities and is

poised to be the most transformational enhancement to capability since the inception of aviation.

The RAS PEO is dedicated to the rapid operationalization of the Unmanned Systems Strategic Plan. Robotics and autonomous systems are anticipated to revolutionize Coast Guard operations, leading to significant impacts to securing our border, facilitating commerce, and responding to contingencies. The establishment of a separate PEO is the most efficient mechanism to translate the evolving technology landscape into fielded capabilities – including Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) – and allows for dedicated advocacy for resources. As an organizational innovation under FD 2028, this initiative will leverage this technological revolution and deliver RAS capabilities that are better, faster, safer and cheaper across all mission sets.

The core mission of the RAS PEO is to accelerate the development, acquisition, fielding and sustainment of RAS capabilities across the Coast Guard to enhance mission effectiveness and operational readiness. Key goals include achieving RAS Full Operating Capability (FOC), ensuring seamless integration with ongoing RAS initiatives, developing a robust and adaptable acquisition process tailored to technological advancement, fostering innovation through collaboration with industry, academia, and other government agencies and ensuring the long-term sustainability of deployed RAS capabilities through comprehensive sustainment planning. A central element of this effort will be advancing the Coast Guard's C-UAS Strategy. The RAS PEO will facilitate the Coast Guard's efforts to forge the C-UAS doctrine, partnerships, and capabilities necessary to defend the U.S. Marine Transportation System and safeguard National Special Security Events.

The PEO's responsibilities span the full capability lifecycle, including requirements definition and prioritization, managing acquisition and contracting, overseeing system development and

integration, managing fielding and deployment, developing sustainment plans and collaborating with stakeholders. A temporary implementation team comprised of subject matter experts and supporting personnel has been created to focus on achieving FOC, integrating ongoing RAS efforts and launching pilot projects.

Force Design 2028 is an accelerated effort to establish a blueprint for change and transform the Coast Guard to ensure the Service is ready for the future. Focused on four campaigns—people, organization, contracting and acquisition, and technology—FD 2028 is a once-in-a-generation initiative to transform the Coast Guard's ability to adapt to its current and future operating environment.

U.S. Coast Guard, Navy Seize Nearly 1,300 Pounds of Cocaine in Eastern Pacific



U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 105 embarked aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Sampson (DDG 102), prepare to offload interdicted contraband from a rigid-hull inflatable boat while conducting maritime interdiction operations in the Eastern Pacific, Aug. 11, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sheryssa Dodard)

From MC1 Brandon Roberson, Aug. 18, 2025

U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 105 embarked aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Sampson (DDG 102), prepare to offload interdicted contraband from a rigid-hull inflatable boat while conducting maritime interdiction operations in the Eastern Pacific, Aug. 11, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sheryssa Dodard)

PACIFIC OCEAN – A U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), embarked aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Sampson (DDG 102), interdicted a suspected drug smuggling vessel and seized approximately 1,296 pounds of cocaine in international waters Aug. 11.

The Sampson, operating in a known drug trafficking corridor, identified a suspicious vessel exhibiting telltale indicators of smuggling, including excessive fuel barrels and packaged cargo visible on deck. Upon receiving authorization, the ship launched a U.S. Navy MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 49, as well as a rigid-hull inflatable boat (RHIB) to intercept.

The suspect vessel attempted to flee and began jettisoning packages overboard. After warning shots failed to compel compliance, the helicopter crew, under Coast Guard direction, employed disabling fire, successfully halting the vessel without injury.

Two boarding teams, including members from LEDET 105, conducted a non-compliant boarding and recovered 12 bales of suspected narcotics. Field tests confirmed the presence of cocaine, and two individuals were taken into custody.

Due to deteriorating seaworthiness and heavy seas, the vessel began taking on water and was deemed unsafe to tow. The suspects were transferred to Sampson, and the vessel was left to sink to mitigate navigational hazards.

The interdiction was conducted under international law and a bilateral agreement with Ecuador. Upon mission completion, tactical control of the Sampson returned to U.S. 3rd Fleet.

This operation reflects ongoing cooperation between the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and interagency partners to disrupt transnational criminal networks operating in the maritime domain.

The Sampson is employed under U.S. Northern Command's maritime homeland defense authorities with a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment embarked to enable maritime interdiction missions to prevent the flow of illegal drugs and other illegal activity. U.S. Northern Command is working

together with the Department of Homeland Security to provide additional military forces and capabilities at the southern border.

Coast Guard Continues Response to Chinese Research Vessel Activity in U.S. Arctic



A C-130J Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak responds to a Chinese research vessel operating in the U.S. Arctic as part of Operation Frontier Sentinel Aug. 13, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

[Release From U.S. Coast Guard Arctic District](#)

JUNEAU, Alaska – The Coast Guard is continuing its response to

five Chinese research vessels operating in the U.S. Arctic.

The Coast Guard Arctic District has been [monitoring activity](#) and deployed a C-130J Hercules fixed wing aircraft from Air Station Kodiak Wednesday to query the vessels. The U.S. Coast Guard, in conjunction with U.S. Northern Command and Alaskan Command, constantly monitor the activity of foreign vessels operating in and near U.S. waters in support of U.S. homeland defense and security efforts.

The Arctic is a growing zone of strategic global competition. The Coast Guard is the only U.S. surface presence in the Arctic and recently, in Alaska, commissioned U.S. Coast Guard Cutter [Storis \(WAGB 21\)](#), the service's newest polar icebreaker, and U.S. Coast Guard Cutter [Earl Cunningham \(WPC 1159\)](#), the newest Sentinel-class fast response cutter.

“Commissioning the *Storis* and *Earl Cunningham* increases our ability to control, secure, and defend Alaska’s U.S. border and maritime approaches,” said Rear Adm. Bob Little, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Arctic District. “As we continue to grow our surface fleet, we utilize our aviation resources which play a vital role in countering foreign malign influence.”

The five Chinese Research Vessels are: *Xue Long 2*, China flagged; *Shen Hai Yi Hao*, China flagged; *Zhong Shan Da Xue Ji Di*, Liberia flagged; *Ji Di*, China flagged; and *Tan Suo San Hao*, China flagged.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter

Bertholf Returns Home from Deployment in Support of Southern Border Operations



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) rendezvoused with U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Eagle (WIX 327) for a passenger exchange and formation steaming in the Pacific Ocean, August 6, 2025. Eagle is underway for her West Coast summer cadet tour, and Bertholf was nearing the completion of her Deployment in support of Operation Border Trident. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign Holli Welcker)

From U.S. Coast Guard Southwest District, Aug. 13. 2025

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) crew returned to their home port on Coast Guard Base Alameda, California, Sunday, following a 70-day patrol operating along the Southwest maritime boundary line (MBL) near San Diego.

Bertholf deployed in support of Operation Border Trident, Coast Guard District Southwest's (CGD-SW) standing operation to counter-illicit maritime activity along the Southwest MBL.

Operation Border Trident is a Coast Guard-led interagency approach to detection, monitoring, interdiction, and apprehension operations to combat transnational criminal organizations and illegal alien activity in the California Coastal Region. Bertholf increased Coast Guard operational presence in the area, maintaining border control and territorial integrity of the United States.

While at sea executing Operation Border Trident, Bertholf conducted 86 security boardings and queries in the vicinity of San Diego, checking more than 250 IDs and inspecting closed cabin vessels to thwart illegal activity. This included more than 250-crew hours deployed in Bertholf's cutter response boats, providing law enforcement presence and deterrence on the Southwest MBL.

Departing Alameda on June 2, Bertholf [conducted a change of command](#) followed by an annual readiness assessment and training in San Diego prior to deploying to their assigned operating area. On June 9, 2025, Capt. Andrew Pate relieved Capt. Billy Mees as Bertholf's 10th commanding officer.

Beginning on June 10, under the guidance of Afloat Training Organization San Diego, Bertholf conducted the first full Basic Cutter Operations assessment for the Legend-Class national security cutter fleet which included two weeks of drills, evaluations, and training reviews. The crew was tested against simulated shipboard fires and flooding in both the in port and underway environments, as well as shipboard emergencies in various tactical scenarios. Bertholf displayed high proficiency in several complex ship evolutions, including mooring, unmooring, and anchoring. Scoring a 95% average across all training areas, Bertholf earned certifications in

naval warfare, damage control, seamanship, navigation, medical, and engineering proficiency.

Bertholf was twice diverted to respond to search and rescue tasking, a core responsibility that remains a sacred trust between the U.S. Coast Guard and the maritime public. The first case involved the search for a downed aircraft about 460 miles off San Diego. Bertholf conducted search patterns, including flying its embarked small, unmanned aircraft system (sUAS) and used one of its cutter response boats as part of a multi-service search effort.

Later in the deployment, Bertholf received tasking from Coast Guard Sector San Diego to respond to a person in the water 36 miles west of San Diego reported to be experiencing medical distress. Once on scene, Bertholf response boat crewmembers safely recovered the person in distress and brought them aboard Bertholf for initial medical care. Onboard health services technicians provided medical evaluations and care to stabilize the survivor until they were transferred to Emergency Medical Personnel for further care in San Diego.

“Bertholf’s crew displayed exceptional proficiency and professionalism recovering the survivor, stabilizing their condition, and conducting a smooth transfer via cutter boat to waiting EMS at Sector San Diego for further transfer to higher level care,” said Capt. Andrew Pate, commanding officer of Bertholf.

To maintain the cutter’s shipboard helicopter operation proficiency, Bertholf conducted 180 helicopter deck landings with U.S. Coast Guard Air Stations (AIRSTA) San Diego and Ventura aircrews. Bertholf also completed 24 fast rope exercises with AIRSTA Ventura and U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team West. Coordination of flight operations provided critical training and proficiency opportunities for helicopter crews and Bertholf’s crew, supporting their ability to respond to emergencies requiring shipboard helicopter

operations both during the day and at night.

Routinely operating independently, far from other U.S. Coast Guard cutters, Bertholf capitalized on several unexpected opportunities to rendezvous at sea with multiple cutters deployed from other districts.

Teaming with the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) early in the deployment, the cutters ran several small boat exercises to certify Bertholf's boarding teams for law enforcement operations.

Later, while transiting south to evade a hurricane in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Bertholf rendezvoused with the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis (WAGB 21), the first polar icebreaker acquired by the U.S. Coast Guard in over 25 years. Storis was partway through its maiden voyage and briefly conducted formation steaming with Bertholf.

Finally, Bertholf capitalized on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Eagle's (WIX 327) visit to the west coast, coordinating a passenger exchange for 36 crew members and formation steaming. Eagle is a 295-foot, three-masted barque used exclusively as a training vessel for future officers of the United States Coast Guard. Bertholf and Eagle were briefly joined by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Florence Finch (WPC 1157), one of the Coast Guard's newest 154-foot Fast Response Cutters.

During this deployment, Bertholf had several opportunities to interact with Department of Defense and international partners. While on a port visit in San Diego, Bertholf's crew hosted the 89th Military Police Brigade and the 716th Military Police Battalion, strengthening relationships between the land and maritime services and enhanced their understanding of domain awareness capabilities in support of Operation Border Trident.

"I couldn't be prouder of the Bertholf crew," said Pate. "Their proficiency, professionalism, and pride throughout this

deployment reflect a selfless commitment to defeating adversaries and providing security for the American people we serve.”

Bertholf is named for Commodore Ellsworth Price Bertholf, the Coast Guard’s first Commandant. Commodore Bertholf’s most notable service was his role in the famous Alaska Overland Expedition in 1897. When over 265 American whalers became trapped in ice at Point Barrow, Bertholf led the relief party 1,600 miles via dogsled. Along with Lt. David Jarvis and Dr. Samuel Call, Bertholf herded almost 400 reindeer through a frozen Alaska winter to feed the starving whalers, an act that would later earn him the Congressional Gold Medal.

Homeported in Alameda, Bertholf was commissioned on August 4, 2008, as the Coast Guard’s first Legend-class national-security cutter. National security cutters are 418-feet long, 54-feet wide, and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, and can hold a crew of up to 170. Bertholf routinely conducts operations throughout the Pacific, where the cutter’s combination of range, speed, and ability to operate in extreme-weather conditions provides the mission flexibility necessary to conduct vital strategic missions. The ship’s motto is “Legends Begin Here.”

Coast Guard Awards \$32M for Runway Reconstruction at Base Elizabeth City, NC



From U.S. Coast Guard East District, Aug. 12, 2025

NORFOLK, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard’s Facilities Design and Construction Center in Norfolk, Virginia, has awarded RQ Construction a \$32 million design-build contract for the reconstruction of crosswind Runway 1-19 and the restoration of taxiways Kilo and Golf at Base Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

The project involves a complete reconstruction of Runway 1-19, which measures 4,518 feet in length and 150 feet in width. The scope of work also includes upgrading the runway lighting

system, encompassing runway end identifier lights, edge lights, guidance signs, associated electrical infrastructure and taxiway lighting. A new end-of-runway turnaround apron will be constructed at the Runway 1-19 approach end.

“This significant infrastructure investment will greatly improve air traffic operations and enhance air traffic safety at Base Elizabeth City,” said Capt. Neal Armstrong, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Facilities Design and Construction Center. “Importantly, the project will be constructed without requiring the closure of the primary Runway 10-28, minimizing disruption to ongoing operations.”

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2026 and is expected to be completed by fall 2027.

Base Elizabeth City is a key Coast Guard installation that coordinates and provides regional mission support, including critical search and rescue missions, within the U.S. Coast Guard East District. Air Station Elizabeth City operates HC-130J Hercules aircraft and MH-60T Jayhawk helicopters. Base Elizabeth City is also home to the Coast Guard Aviation Logistics Center, which provides depot-level maintenance for all fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft (HC-27J, HC-144, HC-130J/H, MH-60T and MH-65D), and the Elizabeth City Regional Airport, which hosts a variety of general aviation and light commercial aircraft.

**Coast Guard Commissions USCGC
Earl Cunningham in Kodiak,**

Alaska



The Coast Guard commissioned its newest cutter, Coast Guard Cutter Earl Cunningham (WPC 1159), for official entry into its service fleet during a ceremony held in Kodiak, Alaska, Aug. 11, 2025. The ceremony was presided over by Adm. Kevin Lunday, acting commandant of the Coast Guard, and members of the Cunningham family were also in attendance, including the cutter's sponsor, Penney Helmer, who is also the granddaughter of Earl Cunningham. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by PA3 Carmen Caver)

From Coast Guard Arctic District Public Affairs, Aug. 11, 2025

KODIAK, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard commissioned its newest cutter, Coast Guard Cutter Earl Cunningham (WPC 1159), for official entry into its service fleet during a ceremony held in Kodiak, Monday.

The ceremony was presided over by Adm. Kevin Lunday, acting commandant of the Coast Guard. Members of the Cunningham

family were also in attendance, including the cutter's sponsor, Penney Helmer, granddaughter of Earl Cunningham.

"Commissioning the USCGC Earl Cunningham strengthens our ability to control, secure, and defend Alaska's U.S. border and maritime approaches, protect resources vital to our economic prosperity, and respond to crises throughout the Aleutian Islands," said Adm. Lunday. "This crew will honor the heroic legacy and selfless devotion to duty exemplified by Petty Officer Cunningham in the years ahead."

The Earl Cunningham is the 59th Fast Response Cutter (FRC) in the service and the second of three FRCs scheduled to be homeported at Coast Guard Base Kodiak. The crew of the Cunningham primarily serves in and around the Aleutian Islands, Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska, and North Pacific Ocean. The cutter is designed for missions such as search and rescue; fishery patrols; drug and migrant interdiction; national defense; and ports, waterways, and coastal security.

The namesake for the cutter, Petty Officer 2nd Class Earl Cunningham, enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1928 and was appointed as a surfman. On February 8, 1936, Cunningham volunteered to rescue two ice fishermen that were trapped in the water on Lake Michigan. Cunningham was able to reach them on his skiff and pulled them out of the water. However, adverse weather conditions prevented them from returning to shore.

Three days later, one of the fishermen walked 9 miles across the ice onto shore to safety. The other died trying to make it across the ice with him. Cunningham had died and was found on February 12, frozen in place, still manning the oars of the rescue skiff.

For his ultimate sacrifice, Cunningham was awarded the Gold Life Saving Metal posthumously. He was survived by his wife Helen and three sons.

Cunningham had also previously served in the Army and fought in the trenches of France during World War I, leaving the service as a corporal to eventually join the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard has ordered a series of new FRCs to replace the 1980s-era Island-class 110-foot patrol boats. Supported by historic investments made possible through President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act, the legislation provides nearly \$25 billion – the largest single funding commitment in Coast Guard history – including \$1 billion dollars for additional FRCs.

The FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, and over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment, enhancing the Coast Guard's operations to control, secure, and defend the U.S. border and maritime approaches. These new assets and capabilities continue the Coast Guard's modernization through Force Design 2028, an initiative introduced by Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem to transform the Coast Guard into a more agile, capable and responsive fighting force.

The commissioning ceremony is a traditional milestone in the life of a cutter that marks its entry into active service and represents the cutter's readiness to conduct Coast Guard operations.

Fairbanks Morse Defense to Supply Valves, Actuators for

U.S. Coast Guard WCC Program



BELOIT, Wis. – August 12, 2025 – [Fairbanks Morse Defense](#) (FMD) has secured a contract from Birdon America to supply key fluid control components for the U.S. Coast Guard’s [Waterways Commerce Cutter](#) (WCC) program. The company will deliver [motor-operated valves](#) for the first two vessels.

“Safeguarding maritime commerce extends beyond the open ocean. We must also ensure the security and reliability of our inland waterways,” said Michael Johnston, President of Components at Fairbanks Morse Defense. “This contract underscores Fairbanks

Morse Defense's enduring commitment to maritime readiness across all critical corridors that drive the nation's economy."

The WCC program is a major modernization effort to replace the Coast Guard's decades-old fleet of inland buoy and construction tenders, which is approaching obsolescence. These vessels are responsible for maintaining more than 28,000 aids to navigation across 12,000 miles of inland waterways, which are critical routes for the transport of over 630 million tons of cargo annually. Beyond navigation, the cutters also support search and rescue, environmental protection, [marine safety](#), and [port security](#).

The new fleet will have up to 30 vessels consisting of three designs: [River Buoy Tenders](#), [Inland Construction Tenders](#), and [Inland Buoy Tenders](#). The first of these new vessels, which will be constructed at Birdon's recently acquired Bayou La Batre shipyard in Alabama, includes sixteen River Buoy Tenders and eleven Inland Construction Tenders.

Initial deliveries are expected to be operational in 2027.

Acquired by Fairbanks Morse Defense in 2021, [Hunt Valve](#), together with its divisions, Hunt Valve Actuator, Montreal Bronze, and Pima Valve, LLC, is a trusted provider of advanced fluid power engineering solutions for U.S. and Canadian maritime defense forces. The company brings decades of expertise in delivering high-performance, [severe-duty valves](#) and [engineered system solutions](#) that meet the rigorous standards of the Navy and Coast Guard and are built to endure the world's most demanding naval environments.