

# Coast Guard Reports Fewest Boating Fatalities in More Than 50 Years



[From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters](#), July 1, 2025

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard released its 2024 Recreational Boating Statistics Report Tuesday.

The report records the fewest boating fatalities since the Service began collecting statistics more than 50 years ago.

Fatalities fell 1.4% to 556 from 564 in 2023, while overall incidents increased by 1.1% from 3,844 to 3,887. Nonfatal injuries increased 2.1% from 2,126 to 2,170. Alcohol continued to be the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents in 2024, accounting for 92 deaths, or 20% of total fatalities.

The fatality rate was 4.8 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels, a 2% decrease from last year's rate of

4.9 deaths per 100,000. In 1971, when the Safe Boating Act was first passed, the rate was 20.6 deaths per 100,000. Property damage totaled \$88 million, and operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, machinery failure and navigation rules ranked as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.

“Boating under the influence is not only illegal but it is also dangerous,” said Capt. Robert Compher, inspections and compliance director. “The effects of alcohol can be magnified when boating in the sun and on a moving vessel. Staying sober protects you and those around you.”

Deaths occurred predominantly on vessels operated by individuals who had not received boating safety instruction, accounting for roughly 70% of fatalities. Open motorboats, personal watercraft and cabin motorboats were the vessel types most involved in reported incidents.

There was an increase in deaths on standup paddleboards. Drowning accounted for three-quarters of deaths, with 87% of victims not wearing life jackets. The Coast Guard reminds boaters to wear serviceable, properly sized and correctly fastened life jackets, and encourages boaters to check the weather and water conditions before getting underway.

The data in the report is based on incidents that resulted in at least one of the following: death, disappearance, injury that required medical treatment beyond first aid, damage to the vessel(s), or other property equal to or greater than \$2,000 or a loss of vessel.

“We thank our federal, state and nonprofit partners who strive to make the nation’s waterways safer. We also thank recreational boaters who follow safe boating,” said Compher.

In addition to wearing a life jacket and taking a boating safety course, the Coast Guard recommends all boaters attach

the engine cutoff switch, get a free vessel safety check and boat sober.

The full 2024 Recreational Boating Statistics Report is available at [USCGBoating.org](https://www.uscgboating.org).

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## USCGC Stratton Concludes Joint Operations with Japan, Philippine Coast Guards



The Legend-class U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) steams alongside the Japan Coast Guard Patrol Vessel Asanagi (PLH-43) and the Philippine Coast Guard vessel BRP Teresa Magbanua (MRRV-9701) during a trilateral search and rescue

exercise in Kagoshima, Japan, June 20, 2025.

From U.S. Coast Guard 14th District, June 26, 2025

KAGOSHIMA, Japan – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) departed Kagoshima June 20, following in-port and at-sea engagements with Japan Coast Guard (JCG), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and Japan government officials.

This event marks a significant milestone as the first time the trilateral search and rescue exercise with the Philippine Coast Guard, occurred in a region outside the Philippine territorial seas, emphasizing the growing cooperation among the three nations.

While in-port, Stratton leadership met with the Japan Coast Guard commander of the 10th Regional Headquarters, chief of Kagoshima Coast Guard Office, mayor of Kagoshima City, and governor of Kagoshima Prefecture. Stratton crewmembers attended facility tours of Nanatsujima Japan Coast Guard Base, hosted reciprocal cutter tours for PCG and JCG members, and participated in dinner receptions hosted by the participating countries.

Following the in-port engagements, Stratton, JCG vessel Asanagi, and PCG vessel BRP Teresa Magbanua conducted a trilateral search-and-rescue exercise (SAREX) in Kagoshima Bay. The SAREX focused on maximizing the capabilities of each vessel to enhance interoperability, strengthen the relationships among the three Coast Guards, and promote joint operational readiness.

During the exercise, crewmembers participated in crew exchanges to observe operations aboard other cutters. The SAREX consisted of a simulated man overboard, employing Stratton's ScanEagle unmanned aerial system for search and detection. Additionally, a JCG helicopter deployed a rescue swimmer to recover a live person in the water as part of the

exercise.

“This joint operation reinforces the close partnership between the United States, Japan, and Philippines,” said Stratton Commanding Officer Capt. Brian Krautler. “By operating together, we strengthen our collective forces, ensuring readiness against threats to maritime safety and security. We are honored to have participated in these joint operations to promote the safety and security of the Indo-Pacific region.”

The exercise culminated in a joint firefighting exercise, where all vessels worked together to extinguish a simulated fire on a JCG patrol vessel. The conclusion of the successful SAREX demonstrated the ability of the three Coast Guards to collectively respond and effectively operate together in complex maritime emergencies.

Stratton’s crew is scheduled to engage with regional partners and participate in joint operations to support and enhance maritime governance, safety and security throughout their Western Pacific patrol.

Stratton is assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy’s largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet’s principal surface force. DESRON 15 regularly assumes tactical control of the surface units operating in the area.

Commissioned in 2012, Stratton is one of 10 legend-class National Security Cutters and one of four homeported in Alameda, California. 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 sail with a crew of up to 170. National Security Cutters routinely conduct operations throughout the Pacific, where their unmatched combination of range, speed, and ability to operate in extreme weather provides the mission flexibility necessary to conduct vital strategic missions.

The namesake of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton is Capt. Dorothy Stratton, the first female commissioned officer in the Coast Guard. Captain Stratton led the service's all-female reserve force during World War II, commanding more than 10,000 personnel. The ship's motto is "We Can't Afford Not To."

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## **U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy Departs Seattle for Months- Long Arctic Deployment**



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) transits the Puget Sound en route to the Arctic region, June 19, 2025. The Healy will conduct high latitude science and research missions in the Arctic. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class

Briana Carter)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, June 25, 2025

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) departed Seattle Thursday, beginning its annual Arctic deployment.

The crew aboard Healy, a 420-foot icebreaker, will support two distinct high-latitude missions to study the formation and movement of sea ice and the pathways followed by Atlantic and Pacific waters in the Arctic, and ocean circulation patterns in the East Siberian and Laptev seas.

The first mission will be a collaboration with the Office of Naval Research (ONR) to deploy and service instruments for its Arctic Mobile Observing System (AMOS). The system advances autonomous, mobile observing methodologies to enable studies of sea ice dynamics and improve understanding of the circulation of water masses in the Arctic. AMOS focuses on developing technologies and approaches for creating a scalable observing system for sustained, persistent presence in the ice-covered Arctic.

In partnership with the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), Healy's second mission will include recovering, servicing, and deploying long-term subsurface mooring arrays and conducting multidisciplinary surveys in support of the Nansen and Amundsen Basins Observational System (NABOS).

Healy last supported [AMOS](#) and the [NABOS](#) missions in 2023.

“We are eager to return to the Arctic,” said Healy's Commanding Officer, Capt. Kristen Serumgard. “Healy is uniquely positioned to advance scientific understanding of the Arctic environment, directly supporting security and defense of the nation's northernmost borders and maritime approaches.”

Serumgard [assumed command of Healy](#) earlier this month, having previously served as chief of operational forces at the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area Command.

Healy is the United States' largest icebreaker and the Coast Guard's only icebreaker designed and equipped with scientific instruments to support high-latitude Arctic research. The research enhances domain awareness of how the physical, operational and strategic environments will evolve, informing national strategic foresight on the Arctic and future Coast Guard operations.

In addition to facilitating science and technology operations, Healy conducts a range of Coast Guard missions, such as search and rescue, ship escorts, environmental protection and enforcement of laws and treaties.

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## **U.S. Coast Guard, USS Sampson Conduct Drug Interdiction In Eastern Pacific**



PACIFIC OCEAN – Members of a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment and U.S. Navy Sailors assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Sampson (DDG 102) seized approximately 7,850 pounds of contraband during a visit, board, search and seizure operation, June 22, 2025 (Official U.S. Navy photo).

From U.S. Fleet Forces Command, June 26, 2025

PACIFIC OCEAN – U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy interdicted three suspected drug smugglers and more than 7,850 pounds of cocaine, with an assessed wholesale value of approximately \$58.1 million, in the Eastern Pacific on Sunday morning.

At 5:34 p.m., a Navy helicopter aircrew from the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Sampson (DDG 102) observed a vessel displaying suspicious behavior. A small boat was launched from the Sampson with a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 105 crew members aboard.

LEDET 105 crew members discovered three suspected drug smugglers aboard the vessel, all claiming non-U.S. nationality. The packages aboard the vessel tested positive for cocaine. All three individuals aboard were taken into

custody aboard the Sampson.

The vessel, determined to be without nationality, was later sunk as a hazard to navigation.

U.S. Northern Command is working together with the Department of Homeland Security to provide military forces and capabilities at the southern border. 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.

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## **Coast Guard Cutter Campbell Returns Home After 62-Day Patrol in the Windward Passage**



Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) is underway during a patrol in the Windward Passage, June 5, 2025. Campbell's crew conducted a two-month patrol to protect the safety of life at sea and deter illegal alien migration in the region. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Chief Petty Officer Robert Zergman)  
From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, June 23, 2025

NEWPORT, R.I. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) returned to their home port in Newport, Friday, following a 62-day patrol in the Windward Passage.

Campbell deployed in support of Operation Vigilant Sentry to advance the primary missions of safety of life at sea and deterrence of illegal alien ventures in known transit zones. Campbell's crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while protecting America's maritime borders from unlawful entry.

While operating in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of

responsibility, Campbell's crew worked alongside the Coast Guard Cutters Diligence (WMEC 616), Vigorous (WMEC 627) and Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Gravelly (DDG 107) with an embarked Coast Guard law enforcement detachment (LEDET) to support maritime counter-drug operations by maintaining custody of 14 suspected smugglers apprehended in the Caribbean Sea.

Campbell also successfully completed a three-day Aviation Standardization inspection in Miami, Florida which evaluated the crew's equipment, training and proficiency for conducting shipboard-helicopter operations at sea. These inspections reinforce Coast Guard readiness for interdiction operations, long-range patrols, and search and rescue. Additionally, Campbell partnered with Coast Guard Station Miami and Vigorous for advanced boat tactics training.

"The Campbell and our Department of Homeland Security and Defense partners stood the watch day and night to deter irregular migration while helping the U.S. Coast Guard maintain full operational control of our southeastern maritime border," said Cmdr. Jonathan Harris, commanding officer of Campbell. "I am very proud of this crew's teamwork, ingenuity and professionalism throughout this patrol."

HSTF-SE serves as the Department of Homeland Security lead for operational and tactical planning, command and control, and acts as a standing organization to interdict unlawful maritime migration attempts with federal, state and local partners. HSTF-SE continues to enhance enforcement efforts in support of OVS, which is the 2004 DHS plan to respond to mass maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits.

Campbell is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug and alien interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard

operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. The cutter falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia.

For more information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go.uscg.mil) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

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## USCGC Stratton Arrives in Kagoshima, Leads Joint Operations with Partner Coast Guards



Japan Coast Guard members wave U.S. and Japanese flags to welcome the arrival of the Legend-class U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) to Kagoshima, Japan, June 16, 2025 during a trilateral exercise with U.S. and Philippine Coast Guards. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Senior Chief Petty Officer Matthew S. Masaschi)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, June 20 2025

KAGOSHIMA, Japan – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) arrived in Kagoshima, Japan, June 16 to conduct the first-ever trilateral operations between the U.S. Coast Guard, Japan Coast Guard (JCG) and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) within Japan's territorial waters. This engagement builds on Operation SAPPHIRE, the U.S.-Japan Coast Guard bilateral effort aimed at strengthening interoperability to support maritime governance, peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Stratton led and participated in crew exchanges and ship familiarization tours. The ships held reciprocal tours, highlighting capabilities and assets to improve interoperability and generate combined effects at sea.

“These shoreside engagements in Kagoshima are opportunities to build on the already close working relationship we have with the Japan and Philippine Coast Guards,” said Capt. Brian Krautler, commanding officer of Stratton. “Stratton is scheduled to conduct several trilateral engagements with the JCG and PCG, both during this port call and at sea, to increase interoperability and cooperation with our partners who share our deeply rooted values and respect for the rule of law. Our coast guard services stand shoulder-to-shoulder in strengthening maritime safety and security in the region and serving as the unique instruments bridging national safety and security, and law enforcement.”

At sea, Stratton will conduct joint search and rescue training and exercises with JCG and PCG assets, including the deployment of vessels, boats, helicopter and unmanned system.

During the current Western Pacific patrol, Stratton is scheduled to engage with regional partners and participate in joint operations to support and enhance maritime governance, safety and security.

Commissioned in 2012, Stratton is one of ten legend-class National Security Cutters (NSC) and one of four homeported in Alameda, California. NSCs 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 sail with a crew of up to 170. NSCs routinely conduct operations throughout the Pacific, where their unmatched combination of range, speed, and ability to operate in extreme weather provides the mission flexibility necessary to conduct vital strategic missions.

The namesake of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton is Capt. Dorothy Stratton, the first female commissioned officer in the Coast Guard. Captain Stratton led the service's all-female reserve force during World War II, commanding more than 10,000 personnel. The ship's motto is "We Can't Afford Not To."

7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

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## **Coast Guard Cutter Valiant Exits Active Duty After 57 Years of Service**



Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) is moored to the pier at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida, June 17, 2024. The cutter was honored after more than 57 years of service during a heritage recognition ceremony held in front of Coast Guard and cutter leadership, the assembled crew and former crew members, family and friends. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, June 17, 2025

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – The Coast Guard held a heritage recognition ceremony, Tuesday, in Jacksonville to honor the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) and recognize its more than 57 years of exemplary service.

The ceremony was presided over by Rear Adm. Adam Chamie, assistant commandant for operations integration and response policy, Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and served to celebrate Valiant's contributions to the Coast Guard and nation in the presence of cutter leadership, current and former crew members, families and friends.

In addition to Chamie, a former commanding officer of Valiant, 2014-2016, the official party included: Cmdr. Matthew Press, commanding officer of Valiant, retired Capt. Timothy Cronin, former commanding officer of Valiant, 2016-2018, Senior Chief Petty Officer Clark Lauer, command senior enlisted leader of Valiant, Lt. Cmdr. Merrill Gutowski, executive officer of Valiant and master of ceremonies, and Chaplain Duke Leon Ann'El, Fraternal Order of Police, former Valiant crew member, 2006-2007.

The event also marked the ship's exit from active-duty service for an indeterminate time, placing it in commission, special status. The 210-foot Valiant operated as a Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command asset, based in Portsmouth, Virginia, and was most recently homeported in Mayport.

Valiant, a multi-mission cutter, was built in Lorain, Ohio by the American Shipbuilding Company and was commissioned, Nov. 3, 1967. The cutter is the 7th of 16 vessels built in the Reliance-class of medium endurance cutters that have operated in the Coast Guard's fleet. These cutters were designed for search and rescue, law enforcement missions such as counter-drug and alien interdiction, as well as national defense and international engagement.

Valiant was named after the inspirational trait, which means to act with courage and determination. It is the first Coast Guard cutter to bear its name.

The cutter has been helmed by several notable commanding officers to include, Adm. James Loy, former commandant of the Coast Guard, 1998-2002, and Capt. John G. Witherspoon, the first African American officer to command a medium endurance cutter and for whom the annual John G. Witherspoon Inspirational Leadership Award, which recognizes the Coast Guard officer, active duty and reserve, who best exemplifies the Coast Guard's Core Values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty, is named.

Valiant spent its first 24 years in the Coast Guard Eighth District area of responsibility while being homeported in Galveston, Texas. While there, it earned its nickname, "Guardian of the Gulf," after crews assisted in several high-profile search and rescue cases.

In 1971, Valiant provided assistance after two Venezuelan freighters collided.

In 1972, the crew of Valiant supported the International Ice Patrol and identified icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada, locating hazards to navigation in the North Atlantic Ocean.

Later in the decade, the cutter responded to a collision between a tanker and a freighter in 1979.

Valiant played a crucial role in the mass Cuban exodus of 1980 known as the Mariel Boatlift, while working alongside numerous Coast Guard cutters, small boats, aircraft, and U.S. Navy vessels.

In June of 1990, Valiant and other Coast Guard cutters responded to the 853-foot Norwegian tanker Mega Borg after a deadly explosion in the engine room led to the release of oil approximately 60 miles off the coast of Texas. Valiant's crew persevered through complex logistical problems, mounting an effective firefighting, salvage and pollution cleanup campaign.

Between 1991 and 1994, the cutter was decommissioned for the purpose of undergoing a major maintenance availability at the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, Maryland, extending its service operational life through modifications and modernizations.

After Valiant was recommissioned in January of 1994, it was transferred to the Seventh Coast Guard District area of

responsibility and relocated to its second home port of Miami Beach for the next 18 years.

During Operations Able Manner and Able Vigil in 1994, the crew of Valiant interdicted over 500 Haitian and Cuban migrants. And the cutter repatriated over 1,900 Haitian migrants from Guantánamo Bay, Cuba to Port-au-Prince, Haiti over the course of 11 passages during this time.

Valiant served as patrol commander during the 1996 Summer Olympics sailing events in Savannah, Georgia, where the cutter directed over 29 Coast Guard assets to help ensure security for 800 athletes representing 98 different countries.

In 1997, the cutter's crew helped train over 500 Caribbean Coast Guard members during Operation Tradewinds. Valiant taught personnel from 12 countries in fields such as damage control, engineering and seamanship fundamentals.

In January 1999, a Valiant and Coast Guard law enforcement detachment (LEDET) 406 boarding team interdicted over 10,000 pounds of cocaine from the merchant ship Cannes.

On Nov. 7, 1999, the crew of Valiant discovered a person in the water and another on the sinking hull of a partially submerged vessel. The two were enroute to Antigua and spent over 30 hours before they were rescued.

A few days later, Valiant's crew rendezvoused with the HMS Northumberland and an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET aboard the British naval vessel to intercept over 2.5 tons of cocaine aboard the the motor vessel Adriatik. After three days of lifting 110-pound bags of sugar, the crew of Valiant uncovered the illicit narcotics.

Later in the same month, Valiant served as on-scene commander while attempting to locate two missing sailing vessels near Saba Island, Netherlands Antilles in the wake of Hurricane

Lenny. Their efforts located several capsized vessels adrift in the region, but unfortunately only one survivor was found.

In 2003, the first official Department of Homeland Security secretary's speech was given by Secretary Thomas Ridge aboard Valiant at the Port of Miami.

In 2004, Valiant conducted alien migration interdiction operations during the Haiti rebellion, repatriating 531 Haitians intercepted on boats as they fled growing violence and turmoil fueled by rebel forces.

While deployed in 2006 to the Caribbean Basin and Florida Straits, Valiant's crew interdicted 270 aliens attempting to enter the U.S. illegally and assisted the government of the Bahamas, seizing a Dominican Republic-flagged vessel illegally fishing in Bahamian territorial seas. The 65 crew members aboard the fishing vessel Barlovento were later transferred to Bahamain officials. During the same patrol, the crew made a port of call in Miami to host a presidential visit by President George W. Bush.

The cutter interdicted nearly five tons of cocaine from four separate smuggling vessels during a 2009 patrol. The narcotics, worth over \$125 million, were seized as a result of coordinated efforts between Valiant's crew, other Coast Guard assets and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol aircraft.

The crew of Valiant responded to the Haiti Earthquake of 2010, both supporting relief efforts while countering mass migration at sea. Valiant crew members assisted the Haitian Coast Guard to repair their damaged assets and coordinated with the Haitian government and the United Nations to open Cap-Haitien as a resupply and repatriation port during the earthquake's aftermath.

On Aug. 8, 2012, Valiant transferred to its current home port of Mayport.

In 2017, Valiant conducted a counter-drug patrol in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South. While deployed to the coast of Central and South America, the crew seized \$47 million worth of cocaine and rescued several seas turtles entangled in garbage.

In October 2019, during an Eastern Pacific patrol, the cutter interdicted a self-propelled semi-submersible, a fishing vessel and a go-fast vessel. These actions resulted in Valiant seizing 16,000 pounds of cocaine worth over \$218 million.

In September 2023, Valiant's crew encountered a man in a giant hamster wheel, known as a hydro-pod, well off the Georgia coast. The man was warned about the approaching hurricanes and urged to abandon his unsafe vessel. Despite threats of self-harm and violence, the case was eventually handed over to another Coast Guard vessel, and after three days, he was arrested.

Most recently, Valiant completed a 33-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea earlier this year where the crew conducted counter-drug operations and seized 10,000 pounds of cocaine. The crew was transferred additional contraband from interdictions made by foreign naval partners with embarked Coast Guard law enforcement detachments on board. On June 6, the crew offloaded a combined total of 17,450 pounds of cocaine and 2,585 pounds of marijuana worth \$132 million at Port Everglades.

The Valiant now transitions into an inactive shipyard status as part of the Coast Guard's efforts to modernize its cutter fleet to combat the evolving security threats in the maritime domain. Force Design 2028 is an accelerated effort to transform the Coast Guard into a more agile, capable, and responsive fighting force. By optimizing resources, enhancing workforce readiness and integrating advanced technology to ensure mission readiness, Force Design 2028 provides a bold

blueprint to renew the service to be better prepared to meet the mission readiness demanded by the American public.

Once back at the Coast Guard Yard, Valiant's current crew will transition to different units both ashore and afloat, a step taken to help ensure the Coast Guard's ability to prioritize lifesaving missions, national security, and protection of the Maritime Transportation System with no degradation to these critical services.

"I am grateful and thankful for our team. The crew makes the cutter, and I am honored to be part of this extraordinary team," said Cmdr. Matthew Press, commanding officer of Valiant. "I am honored to be part of Valiant's prestigious legacy."

Valiant is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 64 and 12 officers. Since commissioning in 1967, Valiant has conducted search and rescue missions, counter-drug and alien interdiction operations, supported national defense, marine environmental protection and homeland security missions and participated in the International Ice Patrol.

***To view b-roll of the ceremony, click [here](#).***

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go CoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities.

Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

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# Airspace around Coast Guard Cutters Now Restricted for Drones

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Federal Aviation Administration has declared the airspace in the vicinity of U.S. Coast Guard cutters to be restricted airspace to unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

In a June 16 directive from Coast Guard Headquarters, the commandant of the Coast Guard announced the new policy that “explicit approval is required to fly UAS in the immediate vicinity of a Cutter.”

All UAS are prohibited from flying “within a stand-off distance of 3,000 feet laterally and 1,000 feet above all Cutters operating, transiting, or at port within U.S. territorial waters,” the directive said.

The directive applies to all Coast Guard cutters greater or equal to 65 feet in length, which is the length that distinguishes a cutter from a boat.

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## USCGC Harriet Lane Conducts Law Enforcement Operations

# with Cook Islands Partners



Crew members from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903) and Fishery Officers from the Cook Island Ministry of Marine Resources converse with crew members of a fishing vessel during an fishery inspection of the vessel June 7, 2025, in the Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Austin Wiley)

From Coast Guard 14th District External Affairs, June 16, 2025

RAROTONGA, Cook Islands – The U.S. Coast Guard concluded bilateral maritime law enforcement operations alongside Cook Islands law enforcement partners offshore Rarotonga Friday.

The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903) worked alongside the Cook Islands' Ministry of Marine Resources to conduct fisheries law enforcement patrols. These mutually beneficial patrols focused on detecting and deterring illegal fishing activities while ensuring the sustainable management

of marine resources within the Cook Islands' exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which borders the EEZ of American Samoa.

"Working with the Cook Islands' Ministry of Marine Resources has been an incredible opportunity," said Cmdr. Nicole Tesoniero, commanding officer of the Harriet Lane. "Seeing firsthand our combined dedication to protecting marine resources and upholding laws and regulations reinforces the importance of these partnerships. We're proud to support their efforts in ensuring a sustainable future for their waters and the wider Pacific."

During this nine-day operation, the Harriet Lane crew and two Ministry of Marine Resources officers conducted six boardings of fishing vessels operating within the Cook Islands' EEZ, resulting in one suspected violation. These boardings focused on verifying compliance with Cook Island fisheries regulations, including proper licensing, gear restrictions and reporting requirements. The increased presence of law enforcement activity serves as a deterrent to potential illegal fishing activities. Additionally, the Harriet Lane crew's presence deters increasing trends of drug smuggling in the Pacific.

"As a small island and developing state like the Cook Islands, our biggest advantage and our strength is through cooperation with our partners in the Pacific when conducting fisheries boardings," said Sai Sarau, a Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources Fisheries officer. "Together, we will weave a stronger Pacific community ready to face future challenges."

These bilateral operations are conducted under the existing maritime law enforcement agreement between the U.S. and Cook Islands. These agreements allow U.S. Coast Guard personnel to work with partner nations to enforce their sovereign laws and protect shared maritime interests, contributing to a joint objective in countering malign and illegal behaviors in the

Oceania region.

“This operation is an example of the enduring partnership between the United States and the Cook Islands,” said Cmdr. Nicholas Gilmore, U.S. Coast Guard Attaché to U.S. Embassy Wellington, New Zealand. “We are committed to working alongside our Cook Islands partners to promote maritime security, protect valuable marine ecosystems, and ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for the region.”

### **About the U.S. Coast Guard in the Pacific:**

Based in Honolulu, the U.S. Coast Guard Fourteenth District continues to foster enduring partnerships with regional allies through Operation Blue Pacific, an overarching multi-mission endeavor promoting security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania. The U.S. Coast Guard remains committed to maritime security, safety and stewardship, solidifying its longstanding reputation in the Pacific as a trusted partner.

### **About U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane:**

Commissioned in 1984, Harriet Lane is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to support Coast Guard missions in the Pacific region. The service’s medium endurance cutter fleet supports a variety of Coast Guard missions including search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime defense, and protection of the marine environment.

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**USS Cole Assists Royal**

# Canadian Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Transfer Intercepted Contraband



Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG-67) moors off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina, April 15, 2025, during Exercise Southern Lightning. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Farnsworth) [Stock Photo]

13 June 2025

From U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command  
Public Affairs

CARIBBEAN SEA – The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67), supporting maritime southern border operations, conducted a hold-and-transfer of 245 kilograms of contraband recovered by the Royal Canadian Navy Harry DeWolf-class offshore patrol vessel HMCS William Hall

(AOPV 433) in the Caribbean Sea June 9. The Reliance-class U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Cutter Vigorous (WMEC 627) accepted the contraband from the Cole's embarked USCG Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) June 11 during a rendezvous at sea in the Caribbean.

The Cole, with the embarked LEDET, provides a combination of U.S. Navy endurance, range, and capability with USCG law enforcement authorities, increasing protection to the U.S. southern border's maritime approach.

The contraband's transit was detected by Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South, which collaborates with partner nations and leverages all-domain capabilities to detect and monitor illicit drug trafficking in the region.

The contraband and surrounding circumstances are considered under investigation and are subject to review and disposition through the U.S. Department of Justice.

The U.S. Coast Guard LEDET has unique legal authority to conduct U.S. law enforcement operations in support of border security missions under U.S. Northern Command. Utilizing the Coast Guard's jurisdiction, the Cole will employ LEDET personnel to perform vessel boardings, searches, and seizures in U.S. and international waters, targeting drug trafficking, illegal immigration, and transnational crime with a nexus to the U.S. southern border. With LEDET's tactical expertise guiding interdiction efforts, the Cole will harness its advanced surveillance systems and mobility to locate and intercept suspect vessels, effectively extending Coast Guard authority through naval power to enhance maritime security operations. This collaboration ensures a robust, legally empowered response to maritime threats, strengthening U.S. border protection efforts.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet serves as a

trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South American maritime forces and promotes unity, security, and stability in the region.

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