

Coast Guard, Navy Competition for Ship Availabilities to Increase: USCG Official



The Coast Guard Yard at Curtiss Bay, Maryland, is the service's main cutter maintenance facility. *U.S. COAST GUARD* ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard will be in “closer competition than we ever have before” with the U.S. Navy for dry dock and dockside availabilities for their ships, a Coast Guard official said during a panel on maintenance at the [Surface Navy Association Annual Symposium](#) on Jan. 12.

Bob Thomas, U.S. Coast Guard deputy assistant commandant for engineering and logistics (CG-4D), said that the Coast Guard is competing for resources with both the industry and the Navy as [retention and recruiting struggles](#). persist throughout the military. Along with maintenance areas that the Coast Guard hasn't historically dealt with, such as cyber, that creates an intensely competitive environment, he said.

The Coast Guard has seen many of the same recruiting and

retention challenges as the other services, Thomas noted.

“The workforce has almost become a migrant workforce,” he said. “They’ll shift to where the work is, [or] who’s paying the most. [...] That drives the cost way up when people are competing for limited resources. You get to pay more for the same thing, or sometimes it’s not available.”

Collaborating to Retain Workforce Numbers

However, he added that the Coast Guard is working closely with the Navy to help mitigate some of these issues, mentioning a number of collaborative efforts that he thinks are “going to pay off huge for the Coast Guard.”

Navy Rear Adm. Scott Brown, deputy commander for logistics, maintenance, and industrial operations, also said that 2022 was “not a great year” in terms of staffing at the public shipyards, stating that they were short by 1,200 personnel, with 37,000 total working in those shipyards.

“A big focus of our efforts is to improve the recruiting and incentives for folks that come into the shipyards,” he said.

Brown said he believes that, in addition to the economy, the state of the shipyards and changing demographics are the primary reasons why the Navy continues to struggle with recruiting and retention.

To offset some of those challenges, the Navy is looking not only to boost pay, but to also offer career development opportunities to sailors. For example, the Navy has introduced a program to help mechanical expert tradespeople, a promotion that keeps them “turning wrenches” while still providing advancement opportunities.

USCGC Hamilton Returns Home after Historic Sixth Fleet Deployment



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL 753) moors to the pier in North Charleston, South Carolina, Dec. 21. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard*

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL 753) returned to their homeport Dec. 21 in North Charleston following a 94-day deployment in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe – Africa area of operations, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

Hamilton's crew operated in support of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and was tasked to defend U.S., allied and partner interests.

Hamilton began its deployment with a transatlantic voyage to Rota, Spain and met with operational commanders from U.S. Sixth Fleet. After Spain, the cutter transited through the English Channel and Danish Straits, two vitally significant waterways that provide safe passage for 15% of the world's shipping.

Immediately upon entering the Baltic Sea region, Hamilton conducted at-sea exchanges with naval, coast guard and border guard forces of multiple Baltic Sea allies and partners, including Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Each engagement was oriented to support either traditional Coast Guard missions or in combination with defense readiness exercises used to enhance interoperability between the U.S. and NATO partners.

As the first U.S. military vessel to visit Turku, Finland in over a decade, Hamilton hosted public tours of the cutter and held a reception for U.S. and Finnish government and military leaders. Guests included the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, the deputy chief of the Finnish Border Guard, the state secretary of the Ministry of Interior and the mayor of Turku. The visit also served to reinforce the long-standing partnership between the Finnish Border Guard and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Additionally, Hamilton is the first U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit Riga, Latvia in more than 20 years. The crew met with the U.S. ambassador to Latvia and hosted a reception on board Hamilton for members of Latvia's navy and coast guard to include the Latvian navy's chief of staff and the commander of the Latvian coast guard. Hamilton also served as a backdrop to Latvia's 104th Freedom Day celebration alongside NATO forces.

"It was an honor to grow the relationship between the United States and our Baltic Sea allies and partners during engagements both at sea and in port," said Capt. Matthew

Brown, commanding officer of Hamilton. “By working side by side with our current and future NATO allies, we learned just how much we have in common, and we were left with a stronger appreciation for our shared values. I could not be more proud of this crew’s hard work and sacrifice while serving as the United States’ representatives in the Baltic.”

Hamilton’s deployment demonstrated the strategic value of conducting meaningful at-sea engagements, subject matter exchanges and port visits with allies and partners in the high northern latitudes and Baltic Sea region. The U.S. maritime services regularly operate with partner nations to cultivate a cohesive force to maintain freedom of the seas, ensure free economic exchange and maintain maritime security.

“The U.S. Coast Guard is a proud and capable partner of the U.S. Joint Forces serving in the Europe and Africa areas of operations,” said Vice Adm. Kevin E. Lunday, commander of Coast Guard Atlantic Area. “We will continue to build maritime domain awareness and share best practices with our partner nations’ navies and coast guards.”

Hamilton is a 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutter with a crew of 160. With its robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, the NSC is the most technologically advanced ship in the Coast Guard’s fleet. NSCs are a worldwide deployable asset that supports the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense and national objectives to include drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, national defense, search and rescue, fisheries enforcement and national intelligence collection.

USCGC Vigorous Returns Home after a 48-day Multi-Mission Patrol



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous moored at home port in Virginia Beach, Virginia Dec. 21, 2022. Vigorous is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 74. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Kate Kilroy* VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous (WMEC 627) returned to their homeport in Virginia Beach Dec. 21, following a 48-day patrol in the Northern Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

In support of the Coast Guard's Seventh District, Vigorous' crew conducted maritime safety and security missions as they responded to the historically high migration activity and remained prepared to interdict and disrupt the flow of illegal narcotics in the South Florida Straits and Windward Pass.

During the patrol, Vigorous traveled more than 8,000 miles and

contributed to the safe transfer of more than 500 Cuban nationals. Vigorous worked with numerous Coast Guard assets, U.S. Customs and Border Protection boats and good Samaritan vessels to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal ventures bound for the United States.

“The Vigorous crew’s remarkable professionalism, competence and determination were on full display as we met the diverse challenges of operations at sea,” said Cmdr. Ryan Waters, commanding officer of Vigorous. “Whether executing days of small boat operations late into the night or rendering assistance to mariners on a disabled vessel, the Vigorous crew exceeded expectations at every turn. After a successful patrol, we look forward to returning home to our family and friends on shore.”

Vigorous is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance with a crew of 74. The cutter’s primary missions are counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

USCGC Forward Offloads \$176 Million Worth of Cocaine in Port Everglades



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Forward pose with approximately 13,375 pounds of cocaine in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 15, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Rodriguez*

PORT EVERGLADES, Fla. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Forward (WMEC 911) offloaded approximately 13,375 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$176 million in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 15, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Dec. 19 release.

The drugs were interdicted in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea by crews from Forward, Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron and Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 408 on the HNLMS Holland (P840).

Throughout the patrol, Forward held approximately 18,500 pounds of cocaine on deck worth an estimated \$244 million. Earlier this month, Forward transferred approximately 4,365 pounds of cocaine to USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909) and 1,654 pounds of cocaine to the United States Drug Enforcement

Administration. Forward also intercepted three suspected narcotics smugglers and held 12 others.

“Working with the Dutch to support multi-national interests in the Caribbean is greatly rewarding,” said Cmdr. Staci K. Rutsch, Forward’s commanding officer. “Coupled with our ship’s organic law enforcement capabilities, this patrol led to a significant removal of illicit narcotics from the maritime domain. Opposing transnational criminal organizations is important in maintaining our partnerships and keeping our partners in the central Caribbean safe. I could not be more proud of the crew’s hard work in supporting this mission.”

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea and the transnational criminal organizations they are associated with requires a unity of effort in all phases; from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, and on to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in districts across the nation.

Forward is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, with a crew of 97. The cutter’s primary missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, protection of living marine resources, homeland security and defense operations, international training and humanitarian operations throughout the Western hemisphere.

Sea Machines and Coast Guard Partner to Bring Computer

Vision Domain Awareness to Critical Missions

BOSTON – Sea Machines Robotics Inc. has installed its new [AI-ris computer vision](#) product onboard a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter ahead of the vessel's upcoming deployment. AI-ris uses artificial intelligence to identify and track visual targets of interest.

This installation was made possible under an ongoing Cooperative Research and Development Agreement between Sea Machines Robotics and the USCG Research and Development Center in an effort to evaluate how computer vision systems can be utilized for autonomous navigation, collision avoidance and target detection. The deployment of AI-ris provides the USCG a new tool for maritime domain awareness and allows Sea Machines to refine its computer vision technology with feedback from the USCG across diverse environmental conditions and operational scenarios.

The collaboration between Sea Machines and the U.S. Coast Guard began in 2020 following the USCG Research and Development Center selecting the Sea Machines' SM300 remote command and autonomy product for their 29-foot research vessel.

Sea Machines CEO Michael G. Johnson stated, "The close collaboration between Sea Machines and the United States Coast Guard Research and Development Center extends deeply into their mission-oriented service. The USCG is a branch of the armed forces, a law enforcement agency, a regulator, a member of the U.S. Intelligence community, and a first responder. Sea Machines' goal is to lead with new technologies that advance on-water operations and support the Coast Guard in the many missions they serve."

USCGC Campbell Returns to Homeport Following 60-day Eastern Pacific Patrol



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) transits toward its homeport, on Nov. 30, 2022. Campbell completed a 60-day counterdrug patrol in the eastern Pacific Ocean to support Joint Interagency Task Force – South. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ensign Olivia Anthony*

NEWPORT, R.I. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) returned to their homeport in Newport, Rhode Island, Dec. 9, after a 60-day counterdrug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean to support Joint Interagency Task Force – South.

With the assistance of an embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron detachment based out of Jacksonville,

Florida, Campbell was tasked with the disruption and interdiction of illicit narcotics originating in Central and South America.

Throughout October and November, Campbell's crew boarded five different vessels, resulting in the successful detention of 12 suspected drug smugglers and the interdiction of over 9,700 pounds of marijuana worth approximately \$9.7 million.

Campbell's actions directly contributed to the United States' ongoing efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations.

During the deployment, the crew took multiple opportunities to strengthen ties with partner nations across the region. Campbell embarked two members of the Panamanian National Aeronaval Service for the duration of the deployment to the Eastern Pacific. Campbell also conducted joint training with members of the Costa Rican and Ecuadorian maritime forces, strengthening regional partnerships in the Western Hemisphere.

While transiting home in December, crew members from Campbell rescued nine migrants who were stranded on an uninhabited Bahamian island.

In early December, Campbell completed a drug offload in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, transferring over 14,500 pounds of cocaine and marijuana worth an estimated \$320 million. The contraband was the result of interagency and international collaboration, and included busts from Campbell, USCGC Forward (WMEC 911) and HNLMS Holland (P 840) of the Royal Netherlands Navy.

Campbell is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium-endurance cutter with a crew of 100. Its primary missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.

Task Force 59 Launches Aerial Drone from Coast Guard Ship in Middle East



An Aerovel Flexrotor unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) takes off from U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell transiting the Arabian Gulf, Dec. 7. *U.S. NAVY*

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Navy unmanned task force in the Middle East launched an aerial drone from a U.S. Coast Guard vessel operating the Arabian Gulf, Dec. 7, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command / U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

U.S. 5th Fleet's Task Force 59 launched an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145), marking a first for the task force with a U.S. Coast

Guard vessel since the task force's establishment in September 2021.

The launch also demonstrated close collaboration between the U.S. Coast Guard and Task Force 59 as U.S. 5th Fleet rapidly integrates unmanned systems and artificial intelligence to enhance monitoring of regional waters.

Task Force 59 is conducting Digital Horizon, a three-week event focused on integrating new unmanned and artificial intelligence platforms, including 10 that are in the region for the first time.

"Each day during Digital Horizon we have pushed to discover new capabilities, fast," said Capt. Michael Brasseur, commodore of Task Force 59. "I am so proud of the team for their steadfast commitment to not only imagine new possibilities, but to deliver them."

An Aerovel Flexrotor successfully took off and landed vertically aboard Emlen Tunnell, showcasing close collaboration between Navy, Coast Guard and industry partners to advance technology integration.

"We are so excited to be part of Digital Horizon and play a critical role by helping integrate new technologies into the fleet," said Lt. Patrick Kelly, Emlen Tunnell's commanding officer. "I am so proud of the crew for their dedication, commitment and professionalism, which made today's success possible."

The Flexrotor can support intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions day and night using a daylight or infrared camera to provide a real-time video feed.

In addition to providing ISR capability, UAVs like the Flexrotor enable Task Force 59 to enhance a resilient

communications network used by unmanned systems to relay video footage, pictures and other data to command centers ashore and at sea.

U.S. 5th Fleet established Task Force 59 more than 14 months ago. Since its launch, the task force has deployed a suite of new unmanned systems while integrating artificial intelligence at operational hubs in Jordan and Bahrain.

Emlen Tunnell is one of the Coast Guard's newest Sentinel-class fast response cutters forward-deployed to Bahrain where U.S. 5th Fleet is headquartered. The ship helps ensure maritime security and stability across the Middle East.

USCGC Bertholf Returns Home following 77-day Counter-Narcotic Patrol, \$14M Worth of Cocaine Seized



Crew from the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) inspect a low-profile vessel while conducting law enforcement operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Oct. 18, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Oliver Fernander*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) and crew returned to Alameda, Dec. 3, after traveling over 18,000 nautical miles during a 77-day counter-narcotic patrol throughout the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Bertholf's crew conducted multiple boardings of suspected drug-smuggling vessels while patrolling international waters off the coasts of Central and South America supporting Joint Interagency Task Force-South. The boardings led to the detainment of multiple suspected drug smugglers and the interdiction of more than 1,050 pounds of cocaine.

The Bertholf crew offloaded the seized cocaine and more than

4,000 pounds of marijuana that was interdicted by the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909), worth a combined total of more than \$18 million in San Diego.

A Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Squadron (HITRON) MH-65E Dolphin helicopter and aircrew from Jacksonville, Florida, augmented Bertholf's crew during the patrol. HITRON crews deploy aboard cutters to interdict vessels suspected of illicit smuggling throughout drug transit zones across the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean.

The largest interdiction during the patrol was a joint effort between the Bertholf and the El Salvadorian Coast Guard. The crews worked together to interdict a 60-foot low-profile vessel.

During the patrol, the Bertholf's crew also worked with Costa Rican counterparts to interdict a vessel that was suspected of being a supply vessel for go-fasts carrying excess fuel and parts.

In addition to law enforcement operations, Bertholf's crew hosted the U.S. ambassador to Ecuador and multiple high-ranking Ecuadorian officials during a port call in Manta, Ecuador.

"It was a great honor to host Ambassador Fitzpatrick and important partners from Ecuador, including the head of their National Police, vice minister of Fisheries, and several other high-ranking elected and military officials," said Capt. Timothy Brown, Bertholf's commanding officer. "While we were there, their country was rocked by a series of deadly attacks perpetrated by drug trafficking organizations, highlighting in an all too real way the importance of our international partnerships focused on fighting crime and violence across the Western Hemisphere. The meeting was an opportunity for Bertholf and the U.S. Coast Guard to highlight the importance

of the drug-interdiction mission and the role our international partners have in maritime safety and security.”

Bertholf’s crew conducted multiple training exercises throughout the patrol. They supported two Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team-West (MSRT-W) personnel fast-roping exercises with Coast Guard and Navy helicopter aircrews off the coast of San Diego. The training allowed the MSRT-W members to earn their fast-roping qualifications and increase their proficiency. It was also an opportunity for the Bertholf crew to qualify multiple landing signal officers, helicopter control officers and tie-down members.

For the first time in two years, Bertholf’s crew conducted a fueling at sea (FAS) off the coast of San Diego with the U.S. Navy. A fueling at sea involves two ships sailing side-by-side with less than 200 feet of space in between while maintaining speed and course with precise coordination between deck and navigation departments. Thousands of gallons of fuel can be transferred between an oiler and a ship during an FAS allowing the crew to remain underway and in theatre for extended periods.

“I am highly impressed by the dedication and hard work displayed by the Bertholf crew throughout this patrol,” said Brown. “Our friends and family at home should all take great pride in the service and sacrifice of your loved ones as they work to make the world a safer place.”

During at-sea interdictions, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by JIATF-S based in Key West, Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Bertholf is one of four 418-foot Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda capable of extended, worldwide deployment. National security cutters like Bertholf routinely deploy on multi-month patrols to support counter-narcotics operations, humanitarian missions, national security, domestic fisheries enforcement and international efforts to counter illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

USCGC Thetis Returns to Homeport following 56-day Patrol



A USCGC Thetis (WMEC 910) boat crew approaches an overcrowded Cuban vessel at sea, Nov. 13, 2022. Thetis completed a 56-day patrol to conduct migrant interdiction operations in support of the Coast Guard's Seventh District. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Bethany Squires*

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC 910) returned to their homeport in Key West, Saturday following a 56-day Caribbean Sea deployment, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Dec. 3 release.

While underway in the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of operations and in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South, Thetis conducted migrant interdiction operations.

Thetis patrolled the southern Florida Straits and Windward Passage, collaborating with numerous Coast Guard assets to detect, deter and intercept vessels engaged in illegal maritime migration. In total, Thetis interdicted, cared for and repatriated 198 Cuban and Haitian migrants in support of the Coast Guard's Seventh District.

While transiting to the Windward Passage, Thetis received a report of a small, overcrowded vessel taking on water. Thetis' crewmembers launched a small boat rescuing everyone onboard the vessel.

"This case highlights the humanitarian aspect of this mission and emphasizes the importance of the Coast Guard's presence to ensure safety of life at sea," said Cmdr. Gavin Garcia, commanding officer of Thetis. "I am extremely proud of our professional and compassionate team."

Prior to patrol, Thetis successfully completed the Coast Guard's biennial shipboard training assessment, known as the tailored ships training accountability, at Naval Station Mayport. For three weeks, a team of evaluators assessed the crew's operational readiness through a series of drills to include weapons testing, command and control, damage control, engineering, navigation and seamanship skills. Thetis' crew

achieved a 98% average combined drill score.

Following the assessment, Thetis embarked an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew from the Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron in Jacksonville. The HITRON aircrew performed a series of 40 day and night landings aboard Thetis to enhance proficiency among both assets' crews.

Thetis is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 104. The cutter's primary missions are counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Coast Guard Cutter Stratton Returns Home Following 97-Day Arctic Deployment



Crew from the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) patrol the U.S.-Russian Maritime Boundary Line near the Diomed Islands, Oct. 9, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Melissa Mckenzie*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) and crew returned to Alameda, Nov. 23, following a 97-day, multi-mission deployment to the Arctic Ocean and Bering Sea, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

In August, the cutter and crew departed Alameda to project U.S. sovereignty throughout U.S. Arctic waters, provide search and rescue capabilities in the region, and meet with Alaskan communities.

Stratton repeatedly operated along the length of the U.S.-Russian maritime boundary line (MBL) from the Diomed Islands to well above the Arctic Circle, while they patrolled within the U.S. Arctic zone. Stratton also patrolled the U.S.-Canadian MBL in the Beaufort Sea, demonstrating a presence in the distant regions of the Arctic.

On Sept. 26, the Stratton and the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) became the first national security cutters to

jointly patrol the U.S.-Russian MBL above the Arctic Circle. The operational intent was the protection of the sovereign rights of the U.S. and the promotion of international maritime norms through Coast Guard presence and influence in this increasingly strategic and competitive region.

Stratton's crew supported multiple search and rescue cases during their patrol, including [rescuing two fishermen from a disabled vessel](#) 180 miles off the Oregon coast while Stratton was transiting to the Arctic. The crew towed a 66-foot disabled fishing vessel toward shore and then transferred the vessel and survivors to a Coast Guard Station Coos Bay 47-foot Motor Lifeboat crew, approximately 45 miles offshore Coos Bay, Oregon.

Stratton's crew also coordinated with Air Station Kodiak aircrews and the Alaska State Troopers to help locate a family stranded on the remote shores of Kotzebue Bay, Alaska, after their boat capsized.

The Stratton and the Canadian Coast Guard Ship Sir Wilfrid Laurier crews conducted an [Arctic search-and-rescue exercise](#) near Point Hope, Alaska. The crews exercised bilateral coordination to locate a simulated vessel in distress using Stratton's Scan Eagle unmanned aerial system and operations specialists aboard Stratton, who directed the Canadian small boat crew toward the distressed vessel while watching a live feed from the overhead drone. The Canadian small boat located, recovered and returned the distressed vessel to the Stratton.

While operating near and above the Arctic Circle, Stratton's crew [conducted multiple outreach events](#) with community members and key leaders in Kaktovik and Utqiagvik on Alaska's North Slope. The crew also [visited the village of Savoonga](#) on Saint Lawrence Island, Alaska.

"I'm extremely proud of this crew and all they have accomplished," said Capt. Stephen Adler, Stratton's commanding

officer. "The U.S. Coast Guard provides the nation's most active and visible maritime presence in the high latitudes, and coordinates with our international partners through joint exercises and professional exchanges to maintain a safe and prosperous Arctic region. The Coast Guard remains 'Always Ready' to preserve and protect our northern shores and waters. As more ships and people move into the Arctic, the Coast Guard will be there to ensure safety of navigation and preserve our national sovereignty, as it always has. The crew has truly lived up to our ship's motto of 'We Can't Afford Not To' throughout our patrol."

Stratton is a 418-foot national security cutter (NSC) capable of extended, worldwide deployment in support of homeland security and defense missions. NSCs routinely conduct operations from South America to the Arctic, where their combination of range, speed and ability to operate in extreme weather provides the mission flexibility necessary to conduct vital strategic missions.