

Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry Conducts Bilateral Shiprider Boardings with Samoa



Crew members from the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry board a foreign flagged fishing vessel. *U.S. COAST GUARD HONOLULU* – The Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry (WPC 1124), a 154-foot Fast Response Cutter homeported in Honolulu, patrolled the Independent State of Samoa’s exclusive economic zone while partnering with Samoan Maritime Police and Fisheries Officers, where they executed four safety and living marine resources boardings on Samoan and foreign flagged fishing vessels in Samoan waters, identifying six violations, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a Nov. 4 release.

During their expeditionary patrol across Oceania, Oliver

Berry's crew is collaborating with partner governments like Samoa to conduct bilateral shiprider boardings to strengthen maritime domain awareness and resource security within their EEZs; an EEZ is the area of coastal water within a certain distance of a nation's coastline to which the country claims exclusive rights for drilling, fishing and other economic ventures.

The U.S. Coast Guard employs 11 bilateral law enforcement agreements with Pacific Island Forum nations, including Samoa, to help ensure the nations' maritime resource security and sovereignty. These programs highlight the shared commitment to ensuring security and freedom of navigation in the Pacific.

"Collaborating with our partners throughout Oceania is essential in ensuring a free and open Blue Pacific," said Lt. Cmdr. Micah Howell, commanding officer of the Oliver Berry. "It is a privilege, and we are proud to support Samoa through dedicated partnership in the effort to maintain maritime governance and security."

Oliver Berry's crew also enjoyed a multitude of community engagements during their time in Samoa. These engagements included crew visits to the National University of Samoa Maritime School and Samoa's Victim Support Camp, and a beach cleanup with staff from the U.S. Embassy, Peace Corps and Samoa Tourism Authority.

The crew also provided tours of Oliver Berry for the Maritime Division of the Ministry of Police, Prisons and Corrections Services, the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, members of the media and students from the National University of Samoa Maritime School and St. Mary's College.

Oliver Berry's crew will continue patrolling the Blue Pacific across the high seas in support of Samoa, Tonga and Kiribati to combat illegal, unregulated fishing, demonstrating the

United States Coast Guard's enduring commitment to our partner nations throughout Oceania.

Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Returns Home from Western Pacific Deployment



Petty Officer 1st Class Kyle Buell stands with his wife after U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) returned to homeport in Honolulu, Hawaii, Oct. 31, 2022. The crew was deployed for nearly three months in the Western Pacific theatre. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer Steve Strohmaier*
HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) and crew returned to its homeport, Monday, following an 83-day, 16,000 nautical-mile deployment to the [Western Pacific](#), the

Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Nov. 1 release.

The Midgett and crew departed Honolulu in August to the Western Pacific to operate under the tactical control of U.S. Navy 7th Fleet to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

“The Coast Guard strives to be a trusted partner, and we play a vital role in ensuring safety, security and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific,” said Vice Adm. Andrew J. Tiongson, commander Pacific Area. “As the region faces challenges like climate change and Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing, we will join with our Pacific partners to face these common threats and challenges together.”

Midgett’s crew executed numerous cooperative engagements, professional exchanges and capacity building efforts with naval allies and partners, who included the Philippine Coast Guard, [Singapore Maritime Security Response Flotilla](#), the Information Fusion Center, Police Coast Guard, [Indian Coast Guard](#) and [Maldives National Defense Force](#).

“I am extremely proud of this crew and all they have accomplished over this deployment,” said Capt. Willie Carmichael, commanding officer of Midgett. “They engaged in meaningful and collaborative engagements with our partners that increased our interoperability to address shared maritime threats and challenges. This Western Pacific deployment highlights the critical role the Coast Guard plays in strengthening maritime governance around the world and how much our partners value our presence. Midgett’s ability and dedication to sail across two oceans and participate in purposeful engagements with our partners is a testament to the United States’ commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

The U.S. Coast Guard has a 150-year enduring role in the Indo-Pacific. The service’s ongoing deployment of resources to the region directly supports U.S. foreign policy. As both a

federal law enforcement agency and a branch of the armed forces, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to conduct security cooperation in support of combatant commanders on all seven continents. The service routinely provides forces in joint military operations worldwide, including the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft and deployable specialized forces.

Since 2019, Coast Guard Cutters Bertholf (WMSL 750), Stratton (WMSL 752), Waesche (WMSL 751) and Munro (WMSL 755) have deployed to the Western Pacific.

Commissioned in 2019, Midgett is one of two Coast Guard legend-class national security cutters homeported in Honolulu. National security cutters are 418 feet long, 54 feet wide and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, endurance of up to 90 days and can hold a crew of up to 170.

Midgett is the second cutter named after the Midgett family, many of whom served in the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Life Saving Service and other predecessor life-saving services. Seven members of the Midgett family have been awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal, including John Allen Midgett Jr. and Rasmus Midgett.

National security cutters feature advanced command and control capabilities, aviation support facilities, stern cutter boat launch and increased endurance for long-range patrols to disrupt threats to national security further offshore.

Coast Guard Cutter Returns Home after Encounter with Chinese, Russian Naval Ships



Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Nichols observes the sunset aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756), in the Bering Sea, during its patrol. The Kimball, homeported in Hawaii, completed a 19,000 mile deployment in the Chukchi and Bering Seas, operating as part of Operation Frontier Sentinel.

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HONOLULU – The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756), which encountered a formation of Russian and Chinese naval ships near Alaska in September, returned to its Honolulu homeport, Oct. 28, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 29 release.

The Kimball and its crew covered more than 22,000 miles in

over 100 days, conducting search and rescue and fisheries enforcement patrols in the Bering and Chukchi Seas, earning the ship's first Coast Guard Arctic Service Medal.

While on routine patrol, the vessel encountered a group of [Russian and Chinese naval ships in the Bering Sea](#). The formation, which was transiting through the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, did not enter U.S. territorial waters. The Kimball came within about a mile of the naval ships, established and maintained radio contact and ultimately ensured their presence was in accordance with international rules and norms.

"As Arctic sea ice melts, Coast Guard presence in the region is vital to ensuring the safety of increased maritime traffic, protecting critical resources such as fish stocks, and upholding U.S. sovereign interests and international law," said Capt. Thomas D'Arcy, Kimball's commanding officer. "It was an honor to lead Kimball's crew during this patrol, and we're proud to contribute to a long legacy of essential Coast Guard presence in the Bering Sea and the Arctic."

Kimball's crew also monitored fishing vessel safety standards and preserved living marine resources within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone by enforcing applicable laws and regulations. Kimball's crew patrolled both sides of the U.S. – Russia Maritime Boundary Line and conducted multiple boardings inspecting U.S. commercial fishing vessels, including one fishing vessel that has operated for 109 years.

Additionally, Kimball's crew [supported a long-range helicopter medical evacuation](#) of an injured crewmember aboard a bulk carrier ship, and supported a proof-of-concept trial that involved operating larger helicopters on national security cutters. Air Station Kodiak aircrews coordinated efforts with Kimball's crew, resulting in the first overnight deployment of a Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter on a national security cutter in the Arctic.

The Kimball's ship and aircrews made multiple visits to remote island and coastal communities, where crew members performed community service and outreach events, reinforcing the Coast Guard's commitment to the communities it serves.

"It was an extremely rewarding experience to serve aboard Kimball for this unique arctic patrol," said Ens. Emma Simms, a Kimball junior officer. "I was able to participate in a variety of Coast Guard missions in a single patrol, ranging from conducting fisheries boardings to search and rescue to defending sovereign interests."

Commissioned in 2019, Kimball is the Coast Guard's seventh national security cutter. National security cutters are 418-feet-long, 54-feet-wide and have a displacement of 4,600 long-tons. With a range of 13,000 nautical miles, the advanced technologies of this class are designed to support the national objective to maintain the security of America's maritime boundaries and provide long-range search and rescue capabilities.

HMS Medway, U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Seize Cocaine in Caribbean



HMS MEDWAY and her embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment team interdicted a vessel carrying over 400kg of cocaine in the Caribbean Sea, Sep. 29, 2022. *U.K. ROYAL NAVY LONDON* – A Royal Navy ship and U.S. Coast Guard boarding team seized more than 400 kilograms of cocaine worth around £24m on Britain's streets from a boat in the Caribbean, the U.K. Ministry Of Defence said in an Oct. 28 release.

Caribbean-based patrol ship HMS Medway and her embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment spotted the vessel near the Dominican Republic with help from a patrol aircraft.

Following a tense chase, the vessel was boarded and the drugs discovered with three crew members detained.

"To secure an interdiction on our first day dedicated to this type of operation in this period has been tremendous," said Comdr. Chris Hollingworth, commanding officer of Medway. "Everyone involved demonstrated their professionalism during a challenging pursuit. It might be the first, but we're going to make sure that it won't be the last, and I speak on behalf of everyone here in saying this has galvanised our determination to succeed."

The boat contained several large packages which were quickly confirmed as being cocaine prior to being seized and brought aboard the warship.

It is believed the boat had come from South America, a common route taken by smugglers at this time of year.

After an overnight operation to secure the contraband – estimated by the National Crime Agency to be worth around £24m, had those drugs reached the streets of the United Kingdom – and detain the crew, the vessel was sunk by Medway's gunnery team.

The destruction of the drugs smuggling vessel, which is normal for this type of operation, ensures it is no longer used for illegal activity while also providing valuable gunnery training.

"Although we talk of these boats being commonplace in the Caribbean, that doesn't in any way diminish the achievement of landing a bust like this," said a member of the boarding team, U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 404, who wishes to remain anonymous.

"Together with our partners on board Medway and up in the skies above us, we're able to smash a hole in the supply chain and disrupt the movement of these harmful drugs before they have the chance to harm people at home and abroad."

Medway recently helped the people of the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos in their recovery efforts following Hurricanes Ian and Fiona.

"It's a perfect example of Medway's versatility and demonstrates my team's ability to shift from Disaster Relief Operations to Counter Illicit Trafficking Operations without missing a beat," Hollingworth said.

"I'm exceptionally proud of the collective effort of my ship's

company and our colleagues from the U.S. Coast Guard for their proactive attitude and total commitment to the task.”

Coast Guard Establishes New Base in Oregon



Cmdr. Todd Wimmer, the commanding officer of Base Astoria, shakes hands with Rear Adm. Jon Hickey, the Director of Operational Logistics, during an establishment ceremony in Warrenton, Oregon, to formally establish Coast Guard Base Astoria Oct. 26, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 1st Class Travis Magee*

ASTORIA, Ore. — The U.S. Coast Guard held an establishment ceremony Oct. 26 in Warrenton, Oregon, to formally establish Coast Guard Base Astoria.

During the ceremony, Cmdr. Todd Wimmer assumed command of the new unit.

Rear Adm. Jon Hickey, the director of Operational Logistics, presided over the ceremony.

Wimmer previously served as chief of facilities at Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, California, from 2019-2022.

Base Astoria is located in Warrenton and will provide operational logistics support for Coast Guard units across the Thirteenth Coast Guard District's Oregon and southern Washington regions.

Coast Guard Delivers Upgraded MH-65 Helicopters to Air Station Atlantic City



Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City received its first

upgraded MH-65E Dolphin helicopter Oct. 25. *U.S. COAST GUARD ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.* – Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City received its first upgraded MH-65E Dolphin helicopter Oct. 25 to replace the legacy MH-65D helicopters that serve out of the Coast Guard's largest MH-65 helicopter unit.

The avionics upgrade to the Echo or "E" configuration will provide enhanced search and rescue capabilities including modern "glass cockpit" technology that increases pilot and aircrew situational awareness.

The Dolphin upgrades also include reliability and capability improvements for the automatic flight control system, enhanced digital weather and surface radar and multifunctional displays with more accurate fuel calculations.

The upgrades comply with the Federal Aviation Administration's Next Generation Airspace Transportation System requirements, and extends the aircraft service life to the late 2030s.

The transition of Air Station Atlantic City's 12 MH-65D helicopters to the upgraded "E" configuration is expected to take approximately 10 months.

During the upgrade period, the unit's 62 pilots and 104 aircrew members will undergo a three-week transition course at the Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Alabama. Aircrew and mechanics will undergo formal training specific to their roles and duties during this course.

"The upgrades and advanced training will enhance the situational awareness of our aircrews and improve mission planning capabilities aboard the Coast Guard's most prolific rotary-wing asset," said Cmdr. Christian Polyak, engineering officer at Air Station Atlantic City. "The replacement and inspection of key aircraft components as a part of the upgrade are also expected to extend the aircraft's service-life and enable us to continue safeguarding and securing our coasts for years to come."

Air Station Atlantic City Dolphin helicopter crews perform search and rescue, provide aids to navigation support and maritime law enforcement and marine environmental protection to the mid-Atlantic region from Long Island, New York, to the Maryland and Virginia border.

Air Station Atlantic City helicopters and aircrews also provide continuous support for the North American Aerospace Defense Command's airspace security mission in Washington, D.C., and throughout the country as necessary.

Additionally, the upgrades also include advanced navigation capabilities that will allow pilots to safely maneuver through highly congested, complex air traffic that can be encountered in situations such as disaster response.

The Coast Guard plans to convert all 98 of its Dolphin helicopters to the MH-65E configuration by the end of 2024.

DHS S&T and NOAA Transition Harmonized Waterway Database to Coast Guard

WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [Science and Technology Directorate](#) (S&T) is delivering a harmonized geospatial dataset of national waterways to all federal agencies that comprise the U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS), the directorate said in an Oct. 25 release.

The “Harmonized Waterway” project and the delivered dataset will enable enhanced delivery of critical Marine Safety

Information (MSI) to mariners in U.S. waters, as well as improve inter-agency coordination to advance federal waterways management. The [Coast Guard](#) will host and maintain this geospatial dataset and make this information available online, at no cost to the public. In addition, waterways managers and planners, industry leaders and researchers will have a new tool to help study and monitor our national waterways.

“The Harmonized Waterway dataset will make it possible for anyone using U.S. waterways – from ships engaged in international trade and commercial fishermen, to recreational boaters – to go online to find the navigational information they need to sail in U.S. waters,” said Dr. Dimitri Kusnezov, DHS undersecretary for Science and Technology.

With the delivery of the database, the Coast Guard will now transition its delivery of MSI from referencing the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) paper chart identification name and number to the harmonized waterway name.

“The transition away from paper charts and manual application of MSI to electronic charts allows the Coast Guard to improve our delivery of critical safety information to the mariner and represents a major milestone in our efforts to implement the CMTS Strategic Implementation of e-Navigation,” said Mike Emerson, the Coast Guard’s director of Marine Transportation Systems.

“The Harmonized Waterway project will help immensely as we transition away from traditional paper charts and focus on electronic charts as the primary product for navigation,” said NOAA Adm. Benjamin Evans, director of NOAA Office of Coast Survey. “Working in concert with other agencies helps us do this in an efficient, unified manner.”

“The Harmonized Waterway program is a major leap forward for the U.S. Marine Transportation System and its ability to

provide mariners with the best information for navigating our waterways. The success of this project also highlights the importance of our interagency collaboration and partnerships, and the CMTS has been a proud supporter of this project since its inception,” said Helen Brohl, executive director, CMTS.

Another benefit the Harmonized Waterway data affords the maritime community is to deconflict and synchronize names and abbreviations for rivers, bays and landmarks, which can differ between local, state and federal agencies.

“The database is much more agile and can be updated and made available to mariners electronically much more quickly than paper charts,” said David Paquette, S&T [Maritime Safety and Security](#) program manager.

The Coast Guard is coordinating the release of its revised Local Notice to Mariner reports with NOAA and anticipates the transition will begin in 2023.

For more information about S&T’s innovation programs and tools, visit <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/business-opportunities>.

Port of Guam Receives Port Security Grant, Working with U.S. Coast Guard Toward

Increased Resiliency



The Port of Guam as seen from the air in June 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SANTA RITA, Guam – The Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port also known as the Port of Guam is among several Western Pacific entities receiving federal grant money through the 2022 Port Security Grant Program (PSGP) to ensure supply chain resiliency within Guam and the Mariana Islands, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Marianas said in a release.

Guam will receive \$564,218 from the PSGP. The PSGP is one of four grant programs under the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency that focuses on strengthening the nation's critical transportation security infrastructure.

The purpose of the PSGP is to provide the necessary funds for not only state partners but local, territorial and private sector partners to enhance security measures and resilience to

critical maritime infrastructure and build threat readiness.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration also awarded Guam \$5.7 million in grants under the America's Marine Highway Program in early October. The Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port is Guam's only deep-water port and receives about 90% of the island's imports. It offers facilities and services to ships of all registries and is striving to develop into the world-class container terminal port of the Western Pacific Region.

"We're excited for our partners at the Port of Guam, and these awards are very timely. The region we operate in is referred to as the Blue Pacific Continent, highlighting that the ocean connects hundreds of diverse communities," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia and the Captain of the Port. "The eyes of the world are focused on this region, and it has never been more obvious how vital our ports are to our way of life – our economic security and prosperity."

The PSGP is vital to maintaining a modernized and secure port supporting the uninterrupted flow of commerce. Regional health, safety, and prosperity inextricably link to the maritime-enabled flow of goods and services, especially realized within the Pacific Islands. This program is one of the ways the U.S. Coast Guard works with private and public sector partners to secure the regional maritime transportation system from disruption, cyber-enabled or otherwise.

"October is cyber security awareness month which can sound vague but requires our attention. We must safeguard our critical infrastructure from all threats, including those in the digital domain. We are adding capacity here in the Sector, including a cyber security expert, capacity crucial to better supporting our regional partners," said Simmons.

At the end of September, members from U.S. Coast Guard Forces

Micronesia/Sector Guam, the Government of Guam and industry partners conducted a successful annual full-scale maritime security training exercise at the port of Guam. This exercise prepares federal, territorial and industry Area Maritime Security Committee partners to respond to security threats affecting Guam's marine transportation system and surrounding critical infrastructure. The scenarios included:

- Simultaneous cyber incidents at several port facilities.
- Coordination of response efforts during an island-wide loss of communications.
- Simulated response to suspected terrorist activity.
- Changes to the maritime security level.
- Establishment of a Unified Command to manage the various response efforts.

"Recently, the Port invited us over to help celebrate their 47th anniversary," said Simmons. "The main event was a coed team tractor-trailer pull for time. There were seven teams, and the Port Police took the first prize. What heartened me the most was to see our Coast Guard members step in to make a difference when a few teams needed another person. It reflects what we know is true out here, this thing only works if we come together as a team to pull it across the finish line."

Cutter Alert Returns to Astoria Following 68-Day Drug Interdiction Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) conducts an engagement coincidental to operations with members of the Guatemalan Navy August 23, 2022, five miles south of Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ASTORIA, Ore. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) crew returned to their homeport Saturday Oct. 8, following a 68-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 19 release.

The crew steamed over 13,700 nautical miles ranging from Oregon to Columbia and conducted counter-drug missions, search-and-rescue operations and international law enforcement training engagements.

While in theater, Alert's crew boarded three Costa Rican fishing vessels and successfully removed 1,440 pounds of marijuana valued at \$1.4 million. Furthermore, during the boarding of the fishing vessel *Mujer Gitana*, Alert's crew detected and articulated numerous factors of reasonable suspicion allowing Costa Rica to issue a return to port order.

Costa Rican Law Enforcement officials searched the vessel and located a hidden compartment under a reversible steel hydraulic door system, a smuggling technique that reportedly has never been seen before on a Costa Rican vessel. The search resulted in the seizure of 729 kilograms of cocaine worth \$21.1 million, and the apprehension of seven detainees by one of our top-priority partner nations.

Additionally, the Alert crew led a multinational training engagement with the Guatemalan Navy, conducted three joint boardings with the Costa Rican Coast Guard, and responded to one search and rescue case involving an American fisherman off the coast of Baja California.

The embarked helicopter aircrew flew more than 50 hours over 16 days and searched thousands of miles over the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

The ship also freed two sea turtles that were found entangled in fishing nets left drifting upon the ocean.

"I'm extremely proud of the crew's dedication, hard work, and sustained high levels of performance over the last two months," said Cmdr. Matthew R. Kolodica, Alert's commanding officer. "The Alert and crew truly epitomize the Coast Guard's motto 'Semper Paratus' – 'Always Ready' and had a direct positive impact on stemming the flow of illicit narcotics to America, and we helped counter its destabilizing effects in Central and South America. As each day passes, the crew continues to inspire me; I'm truly honored to lead such an outstanding crew."

Commissioned in 1969, Alert is one of three 210-foot medium-endurance cutters stationed on the West Coast. With a crew of 75, they regularly perform counter-drug, migrant interdiction, search and rescue and fisheries law enforcement missions throughout the Northern and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Coast Guard Cutter Willow Completes Aids-to-Navigation Mission in Puerto Rico



Petty Officer 3rd Class Vincent Wassylenko, Coast Guard Cutter Willow buoy deck supervisor (wearing yellow safety hardhat in photo), prepares to set a relief hull in Mayaguez Bay, Puerto Rico Oct. 9, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Willow completed its scheduled aids to navigation service mission around Puerto Rico port and navigable waterways Oct. 17, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

During the eight-day mission, cutter Willow crewmembers serviced 23 aids to navigation and performed eight buoy hull reliefs around island ports and navigable waters in Arecibo,

Culebra, Guanica, Guayanilla, Ponce, San Juan, Tallaboa and Vieques.

After the Coast Guard reopened all the ports in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Fiona, the cutter Willow moved up its itinerary to provide scheduled maintenance around the island and further inspect the status of the aids to navigation in the most affected areas from the hurricane.

“The crew and I were happy to be back in Puerto Rico, our second homeport, servicing aids to navigation to facilitate the movement of commerce into Puerto Rico and supporting safe navigation around the island,” said Cmdr. Erin H. Chlum, cutter Willow commanding officer. “We were especially grateful for the opportunity to work in areas affected by Hurricane Fiona to ensure necessary resources, fuel and supplies can reach the island and people in need.”

Cutter Willow is responsible for the maintenance of 246 aids to navigation throughout the Coast Guard’s 7th District, ranging from South Carolina to the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as well as Guantanamo Bay and Haiti.

Coast Guard Cutter Willow is a 225-foot sea-going buoy tender homeported in Charleston, South Carolina.