

Coast Guard Cutter Bear Returns Home After 58-Day Operation Vigilant Sentry Patrol



A Coast Guard Cutter Bear (WMEC 901) small boat crew interdicts an overloaded vessel unlawfully bound for the United States by sea with over 100 migrants on board, Sept. 15, 2024, while underway north of Haiti. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Jeremy Wilbanks)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Oct. 22, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Bear (WPC 901) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Oct. 7, following a 58-day homeland security and counter-drug patrol in the Windward Passage.

Bear's crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task

Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, where crew members conducted maritime safety and security missions.

While on patrol, Bear crew members successfully deterred over 200 migrants aboard an overloaded vessel from reaching the United States unlawfully by sea, safely ensuring their return to Haiti. Bear's crew also intercepted 107 migrants in a joint operation with Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore (WPC 1109). And during two separate events, Bear's crew repatriated 169 migrants to Haiti.

Additionally, Bear's crew effectively disrupted a drug-smuggling venture by sea, preventing the suspected trafficker's illegal narcotics from reaching the United States.

Bear conducted these missions alongside interagency and international partners including the U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations and the Haitian Coast Guard.

"This patrol was demanding and incredibly busy, and I couldn't be prouder of how the crew supported each other during such challenging operations," said Cmdr. Jorell Webb, commanding officer of Bear. "For many, this was their first experience with migrant interdiction operations. From the start to the end of the patrol, it was clear how the crew developed into a cohesive team."

The Coast Guard, along with its HSTF-SE partners, maintains a continual presence with air, land, and sea assets in the Florida Straits, the Windward Passage, the Mona Passage, and the Caribbean Sea in support of OVS. The HSTF-SE combined, multi-layered approach is designed to protect the safety of life at sea while preventing unlawful maritime entry to the United States and its territories.

Bear is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. Bear's primary missions are migrant interdiction and counter-narcotics operations, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of the U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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

Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley Crew Returns From 75-day Arctic Ocean Patrol



From U.S. Coast Guard District 17 Public Affairs, Oct. 8, 2024

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley (WMEC 39) returned to their home port in Kodiak, Oct. 4, following a 75-day patrol in the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean.

The crew intercepted a Russian Federation naval vessel transiting the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, conducted domestic fisheries along the Aleutian Islands, and provided search and rescue coverage to the Bering Sea.

Their law enforcement team boarded 22 vessels, issued 27 safety and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration fishery violations, and terminated the voyage of two vessels for hazardous and unsafe conditions.

The Alex Haley crew also completed a successful gunnery exercise, as well as flight operations with MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crews from Air Station Kodiak.

Over the course of their patrol, the crew operated as far as 72 degrees north to the summer ice edge in the Arctic Ocean and 172 degrees east to Attu, the most westerly island of the Aleutian Islands chain, with visits to Adak and Nome.

The crew earned the Arctic Service Medal for providing 21 days of presence and search and rescue coverage above the Arctic Circle.

The Alex Haley, nicknamed “The Bulldog of the Bering,” is a 282-foot medium endurance cutter that performs search and rescue, fisheries law enforcement, and maritime security across Alaska. The cutter has been homeported in Kodiak since 1999 and was the recipient of the 2023 Captain Hopley Yeaton Cutter of the Year Award (Medium) and a 2024 International Maritime Organization Honour for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.

Ships Arrive for San Francisco Fleet Week 2024



From Brian O'Rourke, 07 October 2024

SAN FRANCISCO – The America-class amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LHA 7); San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25) and the Unmanned Surface Vessel Ranger (OUSV 3) arrived in San Francisco in support of San Francisco Fleet Week 2024.

Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen from several ships, squadrons and military units will be in San Francisco for the annual San Francisco Fleet Week, Oct. 7-14.

Participating ships and units also include the Coast Guard

Legend-class maritime security cutter USCG Bertholf (WMSL 750); the Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Regina (FFH 334); the unmanned surface vessel Ranger (OUSV 3); Naval Beach Group One; U.S. Marine Corps Task Force San Francisco (Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit 2; Combat Logistics Battalion 13; Combat Logistics Battalion 15; and Battalion Landing Team 1/5); the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels; the Navy parachute team, the Leap Frogs; Navy Band Southwest; 1st Marine Division Band; 12th Marine Corps District, Recruiting Station San Francisco; Navy Talent Acquisition Group Golden Gate; Assault Craft Unit 1; Beachmaster Unit 1; Amphibious Construction Battalion 1; Amphibious Squadron 7; Combat Logistics Regiment 17; U.S. 3rd Fleet; Expeditionary Strike Group 3; and Navy Region Southwest.

Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard forces and assets also participate in a robust disaster response exercise, an annual event joint training event that adds a serious, practical objective to San Francisco Fleet Week. The exercise is designed to train military forces and local, county, state and federal government agencies to work together to respond to natural and man-made disasters, such as earthquakes, wildfires and industrial accidents.

Service members will have an opportunity to interact with the local community while participating in a number of community relations projects and entertainment events throughout the week.

Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force bands will perform a series of free neighborhood concerts throughout San Francisco. For a full list of concerts, visit the San Francisco Fleet Week website: Neighborhood Concert Series – San Francisco Fleet Week (fleetweeksf.org)

San Francisco Fleet Week also offers the public an opportunity to take a tour of the ships and interact with service members

as they showcase their ships', units', and services' capabilities. It also gives the public a chance to gain a better understanding of how the sea services support the national defense of the United States and protect freedom of the seas.

The schedule for ship tours is as follows and is subject to change:

Wednesday, October 9

Pier 27

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Thursday, October 10

Pier 27, Pier 35

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Friday, October 11

No tours, however, the ships can be seen in the San Francisco Fleet Week Parade of Ships 11am-12p.m. from along the San Francisco waterfront.

Saturday, October 12

Piers 27, 30/32, 35

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Pier 15/17

10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 13

Piers 27, 30/32, 35

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Pier 15/17

10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Monday, October 14

Pier 27, Pier 30/32

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

The public is encouraged to attend tours and interact with service members.

Prohibited items aboard include the following:

- Food or drinks, including ice chests and coolers
- Camera tripods
- Skateboards, bicycles, hover boards
- Gang-related clothing
- Unmanned aerial systems
- Weapons, including knives, firearms and club weapons
- Defensive chemicals or sprays, including mace and pepper spray
- Spray cans of any type, fireworks, flammable liquids or other explosives
- Illegal drugs and drugs considered illegal at the federal level, including marijuana, and/or drug-related paraphernalia
- Electronic cigarettes
- Large bags, including backpacks and large camera bags (small camera bags and small handbags may be permitted, but will be subject to search)
- Strollers
- Drinks, other than water, to facilitate security
- Smoking, dipping, or chewing gum while onboard USN Ships or within 100FT of watch-standers
- Pets are also prohibited, with the exception of service dogs for the disabled
- Open-toe shoes are not recommended. High heels are not permitted
- Ship tours may not be appropriate for those with disabilities and access and functional needs or certain medical conditions. There are steep ladders (stairways) to climb and uneven surfaces to traverse on board the ship. An alternative experience will be provided on the pier for those who wish to learn more about the ships in port.

You're also invited to visit Fleet Fest, a free family-friendly festival celebration at Pier 30/32, Saturday, 10 a.m.

- 9 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Military bands and

local entertainers will perform throughout the weekend.

For more information, please visit the San Francisco Fleet Week web site at www.fleetweeksf.org.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy departs Seattle for fall 2024 Arctic deployment



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) transits with assist tugs through Elliott Bay near Seattle following its departure from Base Seattle, Oct. 1, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Steve Strohmaier)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Oct. 2, 2024

SEATTLE – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) departed Seattle Tuesday, beginning their months-long Arctic deployment. Healy's earlier science mission was cut short due to an onboard electrical fire. The Healy [returned to Seattle](#) for a thorough inspection and repairs.

The crew will support scientists conducting three distinct science missions during Healy's fall 2024 Arctic deployment. Other science of opportunity across a broad spectrum of disciplines will also be supported as time and weather allow.

The first mission supports the Arctic Port Access Route Study (PARS). During this mission, the cutter will perform bathymetric mapping in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas. The Coast Guard has initiated an Arctic PARS to analyze current vessel patterns, predict future vessel needs, and balance the needs of all waterway users by developing and recommending vessel routing measures for the Arctic. The Arctic PARS may lead to future rulemaking or international agreements that consider coastal communities, fishing, commercial traffic, military needs, resource development, wildlife presence and habit, tribal activities, and recreational uses.

For the second mission, Healy will embark 20 early career polar scientists and their mentors on an Arctic Chief Scientists Training Cruise sponsored by the National Science Foundation and University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System. These early career scientists will conduct multidisciplinary research, including mapping to fill critical bathymetric gaps and scientific sampling across various disciplines, in addition to developing skills in shipboard leadership, coordination, and execution.

The final mission of the deployment will support other science of opportunity to include sea floor mapping for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Coast Survey.

“We are thrilled to support numerous diverse research objectives in the northern polar region this fall. In an era of increasing vessel traffic, our work will contribute to navigation safety in a region where existing soundings are sparse,” said Capt. Michele Schallip, Healy’s commanding officer. “We are elated to have been able to reschedule our opportunity to help inspire future principal investigators in the Early Career Scientist mission. Healy’s crew, port engineering staff, and General Electric Verona worked diligently during our inport to ensure the cutter is ready to safely operate in the remote, unforgiving Arctic environment.”

Healy is the United States’ largest polar icebreaker and the Coast Guard’s only icebreaker explicitly designed to support Arctic research. The platform is ideally specialized for scientific missions, providing access to the most remote reaches of the Arctic Ocean. Healy is designed to break 4.5 feet of ice continuously at three knots and can operate in temperatures as low as -50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Coast Guard Offloads \$4.3 M in Seized Cocaine, Transfers Smugglers to DEA Custody



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos interdicted a drug smuggling vessel in which the crew seized 176 kilograms of cocaine and apprehended two suspected smugglers off the coast of Rincon, Puerto Rico, Sept. 28, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Oct. 2, 2024

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos offloaded 388 pounds (176 kgs) of seized cocaine and transferred custody of two smugglers to DEA Special Agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Sunday.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts in support of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force, while the

seized cocaine is estimated to have a wholesale value of \$4.8 million dollars. The seized cocaine is estimated to have a wholesale value of \$4.3 million dollars.

The apprehended smugglers are U.S. citizens, who face federal prosecution in Puerto Rico on criminal charges including conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance aboard a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. The charges carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Helena B. Daniel and Max Pérez-Bouret, Chief of the Transnational Organized Crime Section are prosecuting the case.

During the morning of September 28, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft detected a suspicious 22-foot sport-craft vessel in international waters navigating towards Rincón, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Joseph Tezanos that arrived on scene and stopped the suspect vessel. Once alongside the suspect vessel, the Coast Guard crew located 142 brick-sized packages of suspected contraband inside the vessel, which tested positive for cocaine. The two persons onboard the vessel were arrested.

“I am extremely proud of my crew for their response and professionalism in disrupting organized crime within U.S. waters,” said Lt. Kali B. Carmine, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos, commanding officer. “This successful interdiction and seizure underscore the collaboration and commitment of our federal, local, and regional partners in countering the flow of narcotics within the Caribbean, specifically the Mona Passage.”

“I congratulate the United States Coast Guard personnel for this successful interdiction of an international drug smuggling venture,” said United States Attorney W. Stephen Muldrow. “We greatly appreciate the U.S. Coast Guard’s

unwavering support and dedication to keeping Puerto Rico and our nation safe.”

“This operation underscores the incredible power of collaboration between agencies like the DEA, Coast Guard, and our federal and local partners. It is through this unified effort that we can effectively combat transnational criminal organizations and disrupt their illegal activities. The teamwork demonstrated in this case is a shining example of how, when we come together with a shared mission, we strengthen our ability to protect the citizens of Puerto Rico the U.S. mainland and abroad from the scourge of drug trafficking. These partnerships are not just critical—they are the cornerstone of our success in keeping our communities safe,” said Denise Foster, Special Agent in Charge, DEA Caribbean Division.

This interdiction, seizure and prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations. The specific mission of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF) is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations. The CCSF is comprised of agents and officers from the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, United States Coast Guard Investigative Service, and United States Marshals Service, and prosecution is being led by the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos is 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

USCGC Oliver Berry Returns Home Following 46-day Operation Blue Pacific Patrol in Oceania



A U.S. Coast Guard boat crew and boarding team from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry (WPC 1124) approaches a foreign fishing vessel to conduct a joint boarding inspection with members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission on the high seas in Oceania, Sept. 22, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard)

From Coast Guard District 14 External Affairs, Oct. 1, 2024

HONOLULU – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry (WPC 1124) returned to Honolulu Friday after completing a 46-day patrol in Oceania.

The Oliver Berry crew departed Coast Guard Base Honolulu in August and traveled more than 7,600 nautical miles from the Hawaiian Islands to the west coast of Fiji. The crew conducted the patrol in support of Operation Blue Pacific, Coast Guard District 14's overarching, multi-mission endeavor promoting security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania.

The crew's efforts included enhancing maritime domain awareness, combatting illegal fishing activities across Oceania, and strengthening relationships with partners in the region. During Oliver Berry's patrol, the cutter's crew enacted two bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements with Fiji and Samoa.

While in Fiji, the crew exercised the shiprider provision of the bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement by hosting local law enforcement officers from the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, Ministry of Fisheries, and the Navy, who conducted boardings in Fiji's archipelagic waters. The shipriders patrolled both the east and northwestern side of Fiji near the Yasawa Island chain group. While aboard the Oliver Berry, the shipriders conducted 35 boardings on recreational vessels, sailing vessels, and commercial fishing vessels, allowing Fiji to monitor and protect their archipelagic waters from potential illicit maritime activity.

Following operations in Fiji, the cutter patrolled in the vicinity of Samoa, exercising an enhanced bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement for the first time to detect and monitor vessels actively engaged in fishing in their Exclusive Economic Zone.

Additionally, the Oliver Berry crew conducted two Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission boardings in the Convention Area to identify and counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activity.

During their patrol, the cutter's crew moored in Pago Pago, American Samoa, Nadi, Fiji, and Apia, Samoa. In Apia, the crew participated in multiple community relations events, including subject matter exchanges with the First Canoe Club and the Paddling Club. During a [Partnership in Education](#) event at a local school, the Oliver Berry crew held a first aid and CPR demonstration, demonstrating basic life-saving techniques. The crew also hosted the entire Samoa School of Maritime Training to show the students life on the Oliver Berry and convey the cutter's capabilities.

"The crew of the Oliver Berry was grateful for the opportunity to operate with our counterparts in Oceania," said Lt. Jasen Kingsley, commanding officer of the Oliver Berry. "We look forward to strengthening our partnerships in the future, as these relationships are essential to maintaining maritime safety, security and stewardship. This patrol would not have been possible without the outstanding preparations, efforts, time and dedication of all the crew, as well as the support from their families."

Commissioned in 2017, the Oliver Berry is one of six Fast Response Cutters stationed across the Coast Guard's Fourteenth District. The crew provides year-round search and rescue and maritime law enforcement coverage across a 15-million square mile area of responsibility, demonstrating the U.S. Coast Guard's enduring commitment to our partner nations across Oceania.

U.S. Coast Guard Encounters Joint Chinese Coast Guard, Russian Border Guard Patrol in Bering Sea



An HC-130J Super Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak observes two Russian Border Guard ships and two Chinese Coast Guard ships approximately 440 miles southwest of St. Lawrence Island Sept. 28, 2024. This marked the northernmost location where Chinese Coast Guard vessels have been observed by the U.S. Coast Guard. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard 17th District, Oct. 1, 2024

JUNEAU, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard located four vessels from the Russian Border Guard and Chinese Coast Guard conducting a joint patrol in the Bering Sea, Saturday.

While patrolling the maritime boundary between the United States and Russia on routine patrol in the Bering Sea, a HC-130J Super Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak observed two Russian Border Guard ships and two Chinese Coast Guard ships approximately 440 miles southwest of St. Lawrence Island.

The vessels were transiting in formation in a northeast direction, remaining approximately five miles inside the Russian Exclusive Economic Zone. This marked the northernmost location where Chinese Coast Guard vessels have been observed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

“This recent activity demonstrates the increased interest in the Arctic by our strategic competitors,” said Rear Adm. Megan Dean, commander of the 17th Coast Guard District. “The demand for Coast Guard services across the region continues to grow, requiring continuous investment in our capabilities to meet our strategic competitors’ presence and fulfill our statutory missions across an expanding operational area.”

The HC-130 aircrew operated under Operation Frontier Sentinel, an operation designed to meet presence with presence when strategic competitors operate in and around U.S. waters. The Coast Guard’s presence strengthens the international rules-based order and promotes the conduct of operations in a manner that follows international law and norms.

USCGC Northland Returns Home After 67-day Patrol to Support Operation Nanook



Coast Guard Cutter Northland (WMEC 904) crew members and an Air Station Cape Cod MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew conduct a medevac of an injured fisherman, Sept. 18, 2024, while underway in the Atlantic Ocean. The Coast Guard transported the fisherman to a higher level of care. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Anthony Randisi)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Oct. 1, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Northland (WMEC 904) returned to their homeport of Portsmouth, Saturday, following a 67-day deployment in the North Atlantic Ocean and Arctic region.

Northland's patrol of the high northern latitudes directly supported the U.S. Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy and strengthened international relations with allies during Operation Nanook Tuugaalik 2024, a Canadian-led military exercise committed to furthering safety and sustainability of the Arctic region.

"This deployment has been an incredible experience for the crew of Northland," said Cmdr. Brian Gismervik, commanding officer of Northland. "Our participation alongside Arctic region partners has emphasized the importance of these operations and showcased the powerful capabilities a combined force can bring to address the evolving challenges and opportunities in the rapidly changing high-latitude environment."

While deployed, Northland's crew conducted training operations with the Royal Canadian Navy, Danish Royal Navy, and U.S. Navy to include live-fire gunnery exercises, towing and formation steaming, medical facility open houses, and cross-deck trainings in maritime law enforcement, engineering, and deck operations.

Northland's crew also conducted Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) living marine resources (LMR) inspections alongside fisheries officers from the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as U.S. Coast Guard District 1 LMR boardings, combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU-F) firsthand, culminating in over 50 hours and four violations.

The Northland's crew sailed more than 8,500 nautical miles while strengthening ties with partner nations through a series of port calls. Northland's crew visited Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, transiting alongside the Canadian Royal Navy HMCS Margaret Brooke (AOPV 431), Royal Danish Navy HDMS Lauge Koch (P572), and U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) toward high-northern

latitudes, where the Northland and Delbert D. Black traveled through the Nuup Kangerlua Fjord, near Nuuk, Greenland. Afterward, the Northland steamed to St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, before returning to the United States.

On Sept. 18, Northland launched a small boat crew in response to a report of a commercial fisherman who suffered broken ribs. Coordinating with the fishing vessel, Coast Guard First District watch standers and a Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod aircrew, the boat crew embarked the man aboard, transited with him back to the Northland and conducted a medevac aboard an Air Station Cape Cod MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter to a higher level of care facility.

Northland is the fourth Famous-class medium endurance cutter in the Coast Guard fleet, homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The medium endurance cutters execute many missions to include search and rescue, law enforcement, drug and migrant interdiction, homeland security, and defense operations. Northland is under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Based in Portsmouth, Virginia, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf.

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

AUSTAL

USA

Continues

Expansion of Mobile Shipyard to Support Submarine Industrial Base



NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (May 15, 2024) The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Toledo (SSN 769) is seen at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, May 15, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Shelby West)

From Austal USA, Sept. 23, 2024

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA has been awarded a \$450 million contract by General Dynamics Electric Boat for the expansion of production capacity in support of the U.S. Navy submarine industrial base (SIB). This award will enable Austal USA to expand infrastructure in its Mobile, Ala. shipyard to support the U.S. Navy goal of delivering one Columbia-class and two Virginia-class submarines annually.

The award provides funding for Austal USA to design, build,

and outfit a new module fabrication and outfitting facility in its Mobile shipyard. Construction of the new building will start this fall and be complete in 2026. When fully operational, the building will support approximately 1,000 new jobs at Austal USA and provide capability to fabricate, outfit, and transport submarine components.

This award follows the July 2024 groundbreaking for a 192,000 square-foot final new assembly bay designed to support construction of large steel ships for the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard. Together, these projects represent over \$700 million in facility expansion in the Mobile shipyard. When both projects are operational they will bring 2,000 new jobs to the region.

“This contract award further solidifies Austal USA’s strong industrial partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat to increase capacity in the submarine industrial base,” stated Austal USA President Michelle Kruger. “I’m proud of how the Austal USA team has responded to the call to accelerate production of Columbia and Virginia-class submarines, which is critical to our Nation’s defense.”

The construction of these two buildings continues Austal USA’s transformation into a shipyard with a diverse and sustainable portfolio. The projects increase capacity and capability enabling Austal USA to support a wider range of customer requirements.

“This award represents another significant milestone in the transformation of our Mobile facility to meet the diverse needs of our Navy and Coast Guard customers,” commented Larry Ryder, Austal USA Vice President of Business Development and External Affairs. “Since we broke ground for our steel panel line in 2021 we have continuously worked to grow the capacity and capability of our Mobile shipyard leveraging our highly skilled workforce.”

The new submarine manufacturing building will provide 369,600 square feet of production capacity on eight and a half acres, significantly expanding the current submarine module manufacturing capacity in the Mobile facility. The building will be designed and built to leverage Industry 4.0 technologies, including extended reality, cloud computing, horizontal and vertical integration, big data analysis, autonomous robots, and simulation with a digital twin. The project will include a material storage area, machine shop, and assembly area and waterfront improvements to support the transport of complete modules by barge.

“This announcement further solidifies Austal USA’s commitment to the Mobile region and underscores their confidence in our highly skilled workforce,” said Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson. “This expansion will bring 1,000 jobs to the area and take advanced manufacturing opportunities to the next level for our citizens and the City of Mobile. We are excited to see Austal USA’s future success and their continued support of U.S. naval defense.”

News of this award follows several recent announcements regarding major milestone achievements at Austal USA. In August the company celebrated start of construction on the Coast Guard’s Heritage-class Offshore Patrol Cutter, USCG Pickering (OPC 919), and, a couple of weeks ago, the laying of the keel for the final Navy Expeditionary Fast Transport vessel, Lansing (EPF 16), being built by Austal USA. These milestone achievements, coupled with the successful startup of Austal USA’s new steel panel line in mid-2022, are all signs of a bright future for the maritime industry along the Alabama Gulf Coast.

USCG Strengthens Partnership with Palau to Combat Illicit Maritime Activity



In a recent joint operation, which occurred Sept. 6-8, 2024, a U.S. Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules and aircrew embarked Palauan enforcement officials and Coast Guard specialists to patrol over 6,000 miles, identifying numerous illegal fish aggregation devices (FADs) and sighting vessels in and around Palau's EEZ. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam, Sept. 17, 2024

KOROR, Republic of Palau – At the request of the Republic of

Palau and in response to their concerns of potential illicit maritime activity occurring in Palau's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam (FMSG) and U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point dispatched personnel and equipment to enact the agreement between the U.S. and Palau Concerning Operational Cooperation to Suppress Illicit Transnational Maritime Activity (U.S. – Palau Bilateral Agreement), and in doing so enhanced Palau's maritime domain awareness.

In the recent joint operation, which occurred Sept. 6-8, 2024, a U.S. Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules and aircrew embarked Palauan enforcement officials and U.S. Coast Guard specialists to patrol over 6,000 miles, identifying numerous illegal fish aggregation devices (FADs) and sighting vessels in and around Palau's EEZ.

Exercising provisions of the U.S.–Palau bilateral agreement, the operation employed a Palauan air rider, Palau's Joint Operations Center (JOC), and U.S. Coast Guard liaisons to maximize technologies and maritime domain awareness tools to monitor and patrol Palau's waters and domestic fishing zones.

"Our collaboration with the Palauan air rider and Palau's Division of Marine Law Enforcement was instrumental in swiftly identifying illicit activities within Palau's waters. This mission demonstrates the power of partnership and shared commitment to protecting maritime resources and maintaining sovereignty," said Lt. Cmdr. Derek Wallin, the U.S. Coast Guard Compact of Free Association maritime advisor.

U.S. Coast Guard liaison officers collaborated with the Division of Marine Law Enforcement and the Joint Operations Center in Koror to enhance maritime domain awareness alongside a U.S. Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules aircrew deployed to Palau by the U.S. Coast Guard 14th District. The U.S. Embassy in Koror coordinated the request from the government of Palau.

“It was fantastic to have members of the Republic of Palau’s maritime law enforcement team aboard the aircraft, who’ve previously sailed with us on our Fast Response Cutters and participated in Operation Irensia in Guam earlier this year,” said Wallin. “The participation underscores the deep and enduring ties between our teams, demonstrating the strength of our partnership and our shared commitment to protecting Palau’s waters and the wider Blue Pacific.”

Operational Highlights

– U.S. Coast Guard Assets and Personnel Involved:

- 03 U.S. Coast Guard liaison officers and specialists
- Aircraft and aircrew from U.S. Coast Guard Hercules from Oahu, Hawai’i

– Enacted Agreement:

- Exercising the U.S. and Palau agreement to suppress illicit transnational maritime activity in and around Palau’s EEZ and territorial waters.

– Results:

- Approximately 50 hours of JOC watchstanding to coordinate and analyze maritime domain awareness efforts.
- Hercules aircrew patrolled approximately 2,000 miles daily.
- Hercules aircrew patrolled nearby high seas and verified 12 vessels and additional radar signatures of FADs along the Palau EEZ.

One of the Palauan air riders described the operation as an unforgettable experience, praising the smooth flight, the professionalism of the aircrew, and the lasting memories made during the mission. The reports gathered during these operations will guide future efforts by Palauan and U.S. Coast Guard surface asset crews to locate, dismantle, and deter illegal fishing operations. This collaborative mission

emphasizes the importance of aerial surveillance and the enduring U.S.-Palau partnership in safeguarding sovereignty and promoting good governance across the Blue Pacific.

“The U.S. Coast Guard is proud to work alongside the Republic of Palau in this vital effort. The value of aerial support cannot be overstated, and together, we are strengthening maritime governance to ensure a secure and prosperous future for the Pacific. Our enduring partnership reflects our mutual dedication to protecting these vital waters from exploitation,”

said Capt. Robert Kistner, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia.

The U.S. Coast Guard remains dedicated to supporting Palau’s maritime security through continued aerial, surface, and information-sharing operations, fostering a secure maritime environment for all who rely on the region’s resources.