

Unified Command, Joint Information Center Established for Key Bridge Response 2024



BALTIMORE – A Unified Command and Joint Information Center have been established in Baltimore Wednesday to coordinate response and disseminate information for the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse on Tuesday morning.

The Key Bridge Response 2024 Unified Command includes the:

- U.S. Coast Guard
- Maryland Department of the Environment
- Maryland Transportation Authority
- Maryland State Police
- Synergy Marine

A website with incident response information can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.keybridgeresponse2024.com>

The media is requested to call the Joint Information Center at 410-631-8939 for interview response inquiries and interviews.

The Unified Command's operational priorities are ensuring the safety of the public and first responders, accountability of missing persons, protecting the environment, incident stabilization, safely restoring transportation infrastructure and commerce, and supporting the investigation.

Coast Guard Cutter Sustains Damage During Transit Into St. Marys River

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District Public Affairs Detachment Jacksonville

March 26, 2024

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Sea Dog (WPB 87373) sustained damage during the crew's inbound transit from sea to the St. Marys River, Monday.

The cutter Sea Dog safely moored in Fernandina Beach, Florida, with assistance from additional Coast Guard assets and a commercial towing vessel.

There were no injuries to personnel, no damage to other

vessels in the area, no impediments to the navigable waterway, and no reported environmental impacts as a result of the incident.

The incident is under investigation.

The Sea Dog is an 87-foot marine protector-class cutter assigned to Coast Guard Maritime Force Protection Unit Kings Bay in the Coast Guard's Seventh District.

US Coast Guard Cutter Venturous Returns Home to Florida Following Multi- Mission Deployment



U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, March 26, 2024

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC 625) crew returned to their homeport in St. Petersburg, Friday, after a 60-day Caribbean patrol supporting Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast's Operation Vigilant Sentry and Joint Interagency Task Force – South's counterdrug missions.

While on patrol, the crew of Venturous repatriated 65 migrants. The migrants were safely transferred to Venturous from Coast Guard cutters Dauntless, Forward and Vigilant. Aboard Venturous, the migrants were given food, water, and basic medical care before being repatriated to the Haitian coast guard in Cap-Haïtien, Haiti.

Venturous patrolled the South Florida Straits and Windward Passage within the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of responsibility to conduct maritime safety and security missions while working to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and unlawful migrant ventures bound for the United States.

The Venturous also hosted the commandant and chief of naval operations of the Dominican navy during their port call in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, to discuss capabilities, training, and partnerships in the region.

“Our highest priority is to prevent the tragic loss of life at sea,” said Cmdr. Karen L. Kutkiewicz, commanding officer of Venturous. “Often, interdicting migrants attempting to illegally enter the southeast maritime border turns into urgent rescue when homemade, overloaded, and dangerously unsafe vessels attempt passage. This mission is challenging both mentally and physically on our crew. I am proud of the crew’s care and professionalism displayed in this humanitarian mission.”

OVS was first established in 2004 as the operational plan to prevent, deter, prepare for, respond to, and recover from maritime migration events in the Caribbean.

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

For more information about OVS and the cases mentioned in this release, please click [here](#).

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

Coast Guard, Multiple Partners Responding to Bridge Collapse in Baltimore

U.S. Coast Guard 5th District, March 26, 2024

BALTIMORE – The U.S. Coast Guard is coordinating with local, state, and federal agencies in response to the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore Tuesday morning.

Coast Guard watchstanders received a report into the Coast Guard Sector Maryland – National Capital Region command center at 1:27 a.m. reporting a 948-foot Singapore-flagged containership collided with the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

Additionally, it was reported that the bridge collapsed and there were reports of persons in the water.

Response boat crews from Coast Guard Stations Curtis Bay and Annapolis have crews deployed to the incident for active search and rescue.

A Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew and Coast Guard investigators and pollution responders are also en-route to the incident.

An Urgent Marine Information Broadcast is issued regarding the incident and there has been a 2000-yard safety zone issued for the surrounding waters. Mariners are urged to avoid the area.

Coast Guard to Commission New FRC in New London, Connecticut



NEW LONDON, Connecticut – The Coast Guard Cutter Melvin Bell (WPC-1155) is scheduled to be commissioned during a ceremony March 28 at 10 a.m. at the Coast Guard Academy in New London.

The Coast Guard's newest cutter was accepted by the Coast Guard on November 16, 2023, and will be the sixth and final fast response cutter homeported in Boston.

The Sentinel-class fast response cutter (FRC) is designed for multiple missions, including drug and migrant interdiction; ports, waterways and coastal security; fishery patrols; search and rescue; and national defense. The Coast Guard has ordered a total of 65 FRCs to replace the 1980s-era Island-class 110-foot patrol boats. The FRCs feature advanced command, control,

communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment to reach vessels of interest; and improved habitability and seakeeping.

All Coast Guard fast response cutters are named after an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Melvin Kealoha Bell was a master chief electronics technician and served in the Coast Guard from November 1938 to December 1958. ETCM Melvin Bell distinguished himself during World War II by transmitting the first warning messages to military installations in Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked. He continued to prove instrumental throughout the war as he helped break enemy codes leading to numerous victories, including the Battle of Midway and in an operation to break up a Nazi espionage network in New York City. ETCM Bell became the first Pacific Islander to achieve the rank of chief petty officer, the first master chief electronics technician and the first master chief petty officer of color.

**U.S., Seychelles Conduct
Bilateral Maritime Security
engagements**



March 24, 2024

[By U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa Public Affairs and U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Public Affairs](#)

NAPLES, Italy –

Over the course of 7 days from March 14-21, 2024, United States Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) personnel worked alongside their counterparts in the Seychelles Coast Guard during multiple bilateral maritime security engagements in Seychelles' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

These events included identifying vessels suspected in engaging in illicit activity or illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in Seychelles' EEZ, which extends into significant portions of East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean. After identification, the U.S. and Seychelles teamed up to intercept vessels of interest to conduct compliant boardings of Seychelles-flagged vessels, ensuring

adherence to Seychelles Maritime law.

“Our cooperation on maritime security is a visible sign of our mutual goal of a more secure and prosperous Indian Ocean Region,” said U.S. Embassy Seychelles Chargé d’Affaires, Adham Loutfi. “It gives me enormous satisfaction to know that Seychelles and the United States continue to work side by side—demonstrating great dedication, courage, and sacrifice—to ensure the safety and security of our maritime spaces.”

These bilateral engagements come immediately after the East African maritime exercise Cutlass Express 2024, which was hosted by Djibouti, Kenya and the Seychelles. Cutlass Express focused on a variety of maritime security and stability issues, providing invaluable training and realistic scenarios for partners and Allies that they can then apply in real world operations, as is the case here.

“The 2024 enactment of the U.S.-Seychelles Bilateral agreement is the second major operation performed with our key Indian Ocean partner, Seychelles Coast Guard, since the agreement was signed in 2021,” said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Chief of law enforcement operations at U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. “Seychelles is a distinctly maritime nation, committed to meeting obligations to counter Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing as well as deterring illicit maritime activity. The U.S. Coast Guard is committed to performing combined operations with our highly capable counterparts in the Seychelles Coast Guard to stem such global problems. Training on law enforcement tactics, practicing information exchange, and then working together in operational law enforcement patrols, bolsters maritime security in a perfect demonstration of the U.S. and Seychelles’ commitment to keeping the international rules-based order in this region.”

Seychelles Special Forces, agents from Seychelles Maritime Safety Authority, the Seychelles Fishery Authority, and the U.S. Coast Guard kicked off the bilateral engagement on March

14. From day one, the team completed joint small boat sorties and maritime operations center communication rehearsals as part of a harmonization period to bring the team together. Once underway aboard the Seychelles Coast Guard ship SAYA DE MALHA, their meticulous planning and pre-underway coordination was evident as their efforts led to eight vessel boardings and over 700 nautical miles steamed throughout the West Indian Ocean.

This also continues a history of maritime cooperation between the United States and the Seychelles, as both nations are committed to preserving peace and stability, upholding freedom of the seas in a manner consistent with international law, maintaining the unimpeded flow of commerce, and opposing any attempt to use coercion or force to settle disputes. In addition to Coast Guard operations and the Cutlass Express series of exercises, the Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary sea base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) conducted a port visit in Victoria in July 2022, and U.S. Navy Divers have collaborated with Seychellois Divers to conduct survey and salvage missions in the Seychelles as recently as January 2023, demonstrating the diversity of cooperation between the two nations in the maritime domain.

The Coast Guard Atlantic Area located in Portsmouth, Virginia, is responsible for overseeing all Coast Guard operations from the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf.

For over 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with Allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. Naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval

operations.

USCGC Legare Returns Home Following Living Marine Resources Patrol, Engagements With French Navy



Crews from the Coast Guard Cutter Legare (WMEC 912) and the French naval ship Premier-Maître L'Her (F792) take a group photo aboard Legare, off the coast of Long Island, New York, on March 16, 2024. Legare worked with Premier-Maître L'Her for a series of engagements and exercises designed to demonstrate interoperability with a critical NATO partner. *U.S. Coast Guard*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Legare (WMEC 912) returned home to Portsmouth, Thursday, after a seven-week patrol in the Coast Guard's First District area of

operations.

In support of Operation Atlantic Venture, Legare steamed more than 6,300 nautical miles, patrolling the coast of New England, New York, and near the Gulf of Maine, to conduct maritime safety missions, while bolstering the safety and sustainability of the marine ecosystem through enforcement of living marine resources regulations.

Legare's crew completed 41 commercial fishing vessel boardings and two recreational vessel boardings, resulting in seven violations of safety or regulatory standards.

During the patrol, the Legare crew completed joint training evolutions with U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Maurice Jester (WPC 1152), Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod, and the French naval ship Premier-Maître L'Her (F792). Legare worked with Premier-Maître L'Her for a series of engagements and exercises designed to demonstrate interoperability with a critical NATO partner.

"The officers and crew of Legare performed up to the high standards of the United States Coast Guard for this deployment," said Cmdr. Jeremy Greenwood, Legare's commanding officer. "The success in this deployment was measured not just in the sheer number of boardings we conducted, but also by our ability to maintain defense readiness, serve the American public, as well as protect the environment we live in."

Legare also collaborated with the Coast Guard Recruiting Office Providence, Rhode Island, to host a recruiting event at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Legare gave tours to more than 300 cadets, 150 Junior Reserve Officer Training Course cadets, and 50 civilian visitors.

The Legare is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of 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, reserve, officer, and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

Coast Guard Commandant Delivers Annual State of the Coast Guard Address



Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, March 21, 2024

WASHINGTON – Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Linda L. Fagan, delivered the annual State of the Coast Guard Address at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, DC Wednesday.

Fagan expressed pride in recent Coast Guard operations and the increasing global impact the service has in protecting our economic prosperity and national security, alongside the Department of Homeland Security, federal, interagency and international partners.

“Last year, the United States Coast Guard saved nearly five thousand lives and ensured the safety of thousands more through our operations to prevent maritime accidents before they happen,” said Fagan. “This is the Coast Guard people see every day protecting our economic prosperity and national security. This is the Coast Guard that is respected and admired around the world.”

She also highlighted the rapidly evolving threats the service is facing which impact the workforce, mission readiness, and recruiting. As the Coast Guard faces significant personnel, shoreside infrastructure and asset maintenance shortfalls, she called for consistent and reliable funding to meet readiness requirements.

“The quality of our facilities and ships not only impact mission readiness; it is an important factor potential recruits think about when they consider Coast Guard service,” said Fagan. “And recruiting is critical to operational readiness.”

Focusing on the importance of the Coast Guard’s core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty, Adm. Fagan highlighted new policies and training the service has implemented to prevent and stop harmful behavior, as well as a long-term initiative to strengthen service culture.

“Strengthening our culture demands consistent work and long-

term commitment, and our values must always be reflected in our daily actions and traditions,” said Fagan. “This effort is as critical to our workforce and mission readiness as building new ships or infrastructure. A culture intolerant of harmful behaviors is the standard the American people expect. It is the standard I set for the service.”

View the full remarks and the recorded address at [USCG Commandant's Home Page](#) and on [U.S. Coast Guard – YouTube](#).

**USCGC David Duren is the
First of Three FRCs to be
Homeported in Astoria,
Oregon**



LOCKPORT, Louisiana – Bollinger Shipyards recently delivered the USCGC David Duren to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida. This is the 182nd vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 56th Fast Response Cutter (FRC) delivered under the current program.

“We’re incredibly proud to deliver the USCGC David Duren, the first of three Fast Response Cutters to be homeported in Astoria, Oregon,” said Bollinger President & CEO Ben Bordelon. “We’re confident that pound for pound, the quality and capabilities of the FRC platform are unmatched and that this vessel will outperform its mission requirements and expectations in the challenging conditions where it will operate in the Pacific Northwest. Our unique experience building for the Coast Guard is unparalleled and has shown time and time again that we successfully deliver the highest quality vessels on a reliable, aggressive production schedule. We look forward to continuing our historic partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard.”

The USCGC David Duren will be the first of three FRCs to be homeported in Sector Columbia River, which is known as “The Protectors of the Pacific Northwest.” The sector is responsible for coastal safety, security, and environmental protection, as well as protecting and securing vital infrastructure, rescuing mariners in peril at sea, enforcing federal law, maintaining navigable waterways, and responding to all hazards impacting the maritime transportation system along the Oregon coast.

As the U.S. Congress continues to debate Fiscal Year 2024 government funding, the future of the Fast Response Cutter Program remains uncertain. While the House Homeland Security Appropriations Bill included funding for four new FRCs, the Senate bill did not include funding for any new vessels. The prospect for a year-long Continuing Resolution (CR) at last year’s funding level introduces a critical level of uncertainty, as funding levels continue to lag behind the meteoric rise in raw material and input costs.

The Coast Guard’s Fiscal Year 2025 Budget to Congress includes procuring two more FRCs to provide increased Coast Guard presence and engagement with allied and partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Last year, Adm. Linda Fagan, the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, said, “The Indo-Pacific is clearly a consequential region for America’s future. The United States Indo-Pacific Strategy identifies an expanded role for the U.S. Coast Guard as a top Administration priority as we seek to ensure a region that is free and open. The U.S. Coast Guard will continue its long history of operational presence in the region with additional cutter patrols and deployable specialized forces.”

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Boatswain’s Mate Master Chief David N. Duren was one of the most iconic figures in the history of Coast Guard surfmen. Considered perhaps the finest boat driver in the history of the modern Coast Guard,

he is remembered by his shipmates and mentees not only for his expertise in seamanship, but also for his leadership and character. Between 1979 and 1983, Duren deployed on search and rescue cases more frequently than any other officer-in-charge and, in one year, executed over 250 cases. During this tour, Duren received two Coast Guard Medals for exceptional heroism, and the Douglas A. Munro Inspirational Leadership Award. Perhaps more remarkable was the fact that the personnel under his watch at Depoe Bay earned a total of 24 medals and awards.

ABOUT THE FAST RESPONSE CUTTER PLATFORM

The FRC is an operational “game changer,” according to senior Coast Guard officials. FRCs are consistently being deployed in support of the full range of missions within the United States Coast Guard and other branches of our Armed Services due to its exceptional performance, expanded operational reach and capabilities, and ability to transform and adapt to the mission. FRCs have conducted operations as far as the Marshall Islands – a 4,400 nautical mile trip from their homeport. Measuring in at 154 feet, FRCs have a flank speed of 28 knots, state of the art C4ISR suite (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance), and stern launch and recovery ramp for a 26-foot, over-the-horizon interceptor cutter boat.

USCGC Frederick Hatch
Supports Partners in

Micronesia, Republic of Palau Under Operation Rematau



U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, March 14, 2024

SANTA RITA, Guam – The crew of the USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) completed a significant operational patrol under Operation Rematau from Feb. 15 to March 4, 2024, reinforcing the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment to maritime safety, security, and environmental stewardship in the Pacific region.

“Frederick Hatch marked an important milestone in the U.S. Coast Guard's relationship with our friends in Palau by pioneering the use of the recently signed enhanced bilateral agreement, and we look forward to deepening our ties with

Palau's Marine Law division going forward. The cutter's first-ever visit to Tinian and participation in Yap Day were both very enjoyable ways to learn about the cultures of our neighboring islands while reflecting our commitment to communities across the Pacific," said Lt. Patrick Dreiss, commanding officer of USCGC Frederick Hatch.

The Frederick Hatch crew proudly represented the U.S. Coast Guard at the annual Pika Fest Celebration on Tinian, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and Yap Day in Colonia, Yap State, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Supporting local needs, they transported 1,500 lbs. of non-perishable food, 1,200 lbs. of water, and essential supplies, including fishing gear and tools, to Ulithi Atoll, FSM, during a state-declared emergency drought. The crew renewed the meaningful connection with the local community, engaging in direct support and sharing in the generosity and warmth of the island's residents.

"The opportunity to contribute to the enduring partnership between the Ulithi community and the U.S. Coast Guard, rooted in World War II and grown throughout decades of collaboration, was a special experience for myself and the crew. Thank you to the local non-profit organizations we worked alongside, as the experience of supporting and visiting the people of Ulithi is one of the highlights of my career," said Dreiss.

Further showcasing the spirit of cooperation and support, the Hatch's crew organized a donation drive prior to sailing, collecting 40 bags of school supplies and clothing from the U.S. Coast Guard community in Guam and collaborated with the Ayuda Foundation and the Ulithi-based One People One Reef research foundation to facilitate these critical donations to the island.

“Today exemplifies the spirit of teamwork and camaraderie that we hold dear here in Ulithi. It warms our hearts to hear that your short visit to our island was enjoyable, and we’re delighted that you appreciated the coconuts, bananas, and flowers. Knowing that the bananas are adorning your ship’s canopy, and the flowers are being proudly worn by your crew fills us with immense joy,” said Ulithi Mayor John Rulmal.

Yap Day, observed annually on March 1, is a significant cultural and legal holiday in Yap State, one of the four states of the FSM. Established in 1968 and renamed in 1979, it celebrates Yapese culture, highlighting traditional skills and competitions, such as tattooing, fresh produce contests, and traditional games. The U.S. Coast Guard regularly attends, and the 2024 celebration was particularly special as Petty Officer 2nd Class Eugene Haliushli, a native of Yap currently stationed in Guam, returned home aboard Frederick Hatch for the first time in years to participate, further symbolizing the deep connections between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Pacific communities served.

“Returning to Yap, I’m reminded of the values instilled in me: respect, humility, and the identity of being an islander. Coming from a family of navigators, we believe in the power of knowing your waypoints, a principle that guides us to success. Inspired by my brother Ken Raigelu, who is also serving and driven by our service’s unique opportunities and missions, this journey not only contributes to our collective mission but also my personal growth and family legacy,” said Haliushli.

The Frederick Hatch crew responded to a request from the government of Yap State for a U.S. Coast Guard presence near Ngulu Atoll to deter illegal sea cucumber poaching, demonstrating a commitment to protecting the region’s marine resources and aiding partners. This patrol also marked the first-ever boarding under the Palau enhanced bilateral

agreement, signed in August 2023, authorizing U.S. Coast Guard boarding officers to conduct boardings in Palau's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) on the country's behalf without a Palauan officer present. While the crew found everything compliant with international and Palauan requirements, the action set a precedent for further regional maritime law enforcement cooperation. It reinforces the trust and confidence of partners in the U.S. Coast Guard's role to ensure compliance with fishing regulations within partner EEZs.

The patrol also emphasized the need for continued vigilance in the Western Pacific. Not for the first time, the Frederick Hatch crew identified areas of concern for illegal fishing activities and non-compliance with maritime regulations wherein fishing vessels were observed not transmitting on AIS or VMS near the Palau EEZ border with the high seas.

"These efforts not only affirm our dedication to preserving the region's marine biodiversity but also reinforce the strong and enduring partnerships we have, particularly in support of our Compact of Free Association partners addressing shared security challenges and advancing mutual interests in the Blue Pacific," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "Our partnership with local non-profits and the community in Guam exemplifies a holistic approach to strengthening the fabric of trust and mutual respect we've built over decades with Pacific Island communities and beyond as we face future challenges and opportunities together."

About Operation Rematau

Operation Rematau is how U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam supports the overarching Coast Guard endeavor Operation Blue Pacific to promote security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania. Rematau means people of the deep sea. It reinforces the U.S. commitment to working together to advance Pacific regionalism based on the

Blue Pacific narrative. This action supports U.S. national security objectives, bolstering regional maritime good governance and security.

About USCGC Frederick Hatch

The Frederick Hatch is the 43rd 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter named for a surfman and lighthouse keeper who was a two-time Gold Life Saving Medal recipient. Designed for many missions, including search and rescue, national defense, and maritime law enforcement, the Frederick Hatch crew plays a significant role in safeguarding national interests and preserving good maritime governance.