

# Coast Guard Holds Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for New Station in Fort Myers



The Coast Guard held a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the official opening of the new Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Beach facility, March 13, 2024, in Fort Myers. Station Fort Myers Beach and Coast Guard Cutter Crocodile crews will utilize the new three-story building. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Santiago Gomez)

From Public Affairs Detachment Tampa Bay, March 13, 2024

CLEARWATER, Fla. – The Coast Guard held a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Wednesday, marking the official opening of the new Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Beach facility.

Rear Adm. Amy Grable, assistant commandant, Engineering and Logistics, presided over the ceremony.

Station Fort Myers Beach and Coast Guard Cutter Crocodile crews will utilize the new three-story building.

The building was set to be completed one year prior, but was delayed due to hurricane damage in 2021 and consists of berthing rooms, a galley, training rooms and a fitness room.

Station Fort Myers Beach is a multi-mission station capable of conducting search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime security, environmental protection operations and migrant operations from Boca Grande Pass to Rabbit Key.

The station has a crew size of about 60 members and their assets include two 45-foot Response Boat–Medium and two 29-foot Response Boat–Smalls.

The cutter Crocodile's missions include combating drug smuggling, illegal immigration, ports, waterways and coastal security, marine fisheries enforcement and search and rescue support.

"It is an honor and a privilege to accept this new multi-mission facility on behalf of Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Beach and Coast Guard Cutter Crocodile," said Chief Warrant Officer Christopher C. Cone, commanding officer, Station Fort Myers Beach. "This new facility will allow Coast Guard crews to continue mission support and operational excellence throughout the Southwest Florida coastline."

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## **USCG Cutter Diligence Returns Home Following Gulf of Mexico**

# Fisheries Patrol and Response to Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse



U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, May 6, 2024

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616) returned to their home port in Pensacola April 27 after a two-month deployment spent conducting a living marine resources patrol in the Gulf of Mexico, undergoing a maintenance availability at the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, and later responding to the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse.

Diligence's crew patrolled within the U.S. Coast Guard Eighth District area of responsibility, based in New Orleans, and supported Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi's efforts to counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing in

U.S. territorial waters.

At sea, Diligence's law enforcement teams conducted boardings of U.S. fishing vessels to enforce federal laws and safety regulations. While operating along the International Maritime Boundary in the Gulf of Mexico, Diligence conducted a joint patrol with Mexican navy ship ARM Chichen Itza (PC 340), as well as a crew exchange.

Diligence later proceeded to the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore for a mission-essential maintenance availability to undergo repairs and preventative maintenance projects.

During the transit to Baltimore, crew members spotted a boater in distress who had run out of fuel off the southern coast of Florida. Diligence provided initial rescue and assistance to the vessel. The boater was later towed safely back to land by a 45-foot Response Boat-Medium crew from Coast Guard Station Miami Beach.

While undergoing repairs in the Coast Guard Yard, Diligence was one of the first Coast Guard units to respond to the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse. In the first hours, Diligence's small boat crews conducted search and rescue operations for missing persons and later provided a persistent presence to enforce a safety zone during salvage efforts.

"The crew truly embodied the Coast Guard's motto of 'Always Ready' this patrol by carrying out a variety of different missions," said Cmdr. Nolan Cain, commanding officer of Diligence. "They responded quickly and decisively to a mariner in distress and supported response efforts in the wake of the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse."

Diligence is a 210-foot, medium endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola with 78 crewmembers. The cutter's primary missions are counterdrug 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.uscg.mil/GoCoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

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## **USCGC Active Returns from Eastern Pacific Patrol; One Life Saved, \$50.8M of Cocaine Interdicted**



U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, May 3, 2024

PORT ANGELES, Wash. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) and crew returned home to Port Angeles Friday after completing a 54-day multi-mission patrol in support of a Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

During the patrol, Active's crew interdicted 3,858 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$50.8 million in a coordinated effort involving both airborne and surface units, resulting in a safe and successful interdiction.

In addition to the cocaine interdiction, Active's crew disrupted two other smuggling events while serving as the sole U.S. surface asset operating in the region for 28 days in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South's counter-narcotics campaign. Throughout the deployment, the cutter patrolled over 12,000 nautical miles, a distance roughly equivalent to five spans of the continental U.S.

"Any interdiction at sea is challenging, with a variety of factors at every step, and no two are ever the same," said Cmdr. Adam Disque, Active's commanding officer. "The cases we encountered on this patrol were particularly difficult, and the crew fought through obstacles at every turn, working extremely hard to accomplish this mission. I could not be more proud of the team as they fully embodied our cutter's nickname, 'The Li'l Tough Guy'."

On April 12, Active received notification of a single-handed sailor in distress more than 300 nautical miles northeast of the Galapagos Islands. The sailor's boat was disabled, and he was adrift at sea after reporting a pod of whales damaged his sailboat.

Active diverted over 200 nautical miles at high speed to

conduct a search and rescue operation. Upon arrival, the crew safely embarked the mariner and brought him back to shore.

“This sailor was very fortunate that we happened to be in the area; he was far from normal shipping lanes and well out of range for any coastal rescue system,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Gordon Smith, an Active crewmember who participated in the search planning. “It was fortunate that we were able to find him relatively quickly and get him on board before the weather or situation deteriorated.”

Active’s two pursuit boats were supplemented by an MH-65E helicopter and aircrew from the Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) to respond in a multi-mission environment on the high seas. HITRON, based in Jacksonville, Florida, conducts airborne use of force to stop vessels suspected of breaking U.S. and international laws on the high seas.

During this patrol, specialized law enforcement members from the Coast Guard’s Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team and the Maritime Security and Response Team – West deployed aboard to support their mission and augment Active’s crew.

Active regularly patrols international waters off southern Mexico and Central America to combat transnational organized crime in the Western Hemisphere, specifically the smuggling of narcotics.

Active, a 57-year-old medium endurance cutter, is homeported in Port Angeles. The multi-mission cutter falls under the operational command of the Coast Guard Pacific Area Commander. Patrolling from the northernmost part of the contiguous United States to the equator, Active is critical in conducting search and rescue, counter-narcotics law enforcement, living marine resource protection, and homeland defense operations.

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# U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Anacapa Decommissioned after 34 Years of Service



From U.S. Coast Guard 13<sup>th</sup> District, April 29, 2024

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard decommissioned the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Anacapa (WPB 1335) during a ceremony, Friday, in Port Angeles, Washington.

Rear Adm. Charles Fosse, commander, Coast Guard 13<sup>th</sup> District, presided over the ceremony honoring the 34 years of service the Anacapa and its crews provided to the nation.

Commissioned in 1990, Anacapa was one of 49 Island-class cutters built in Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana and was originally homeported in Petersburg, Alaska for more than three decades.

“The cutter Anacapa has been a reliable and highly effective presence in our nation’s coastal waters for more than 30 years, conducting life-saving missions, ensuring preservation of precious natural resources and contributing to national security,” said Fosse. “I want to thank the crew serving today, and all who served aboard Anacapa over these many years, for their dedication and service to our country.”

While homeported in Port Angeles, the Anacapa successfully conducted numerous missions. Notably, in August 2022, the Anacapa rescued three people from a disabled sailboat and conducted an overnight tow of the vessel. Additionally, in April 2023, the Anacapa responded and assisted in the safe evacuation of 600 passengers when the Walla Walla ferry grounded in Rich Passage.

“Even though the Anacapa had a short stay in her Port Angeles home port after cutter Cuttyhunk was decommissioned, she filled the remainder of Coast Guard coverage needed in the Pacific Northwest,” said Chief Warrant Officer Holly Campbell, Anacapa’s commanding officer. “The crews of the Anacapa have held the highest standard of excellence in serving our area of responsibility with pride, professionalism and resiliency throughout their tours of duty. The Anacapa has stood the watch for 34 years of honorable service to our nation. Fair winds and following seas during your last voyage, Anacapa. Thank you for your service.”

Following the decommissioning ceremony, the Anacapa will transit to the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, Maryland, and

will be placed in the Cutter Transition Division.

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# Coast Guard Cutter Orcas Decommissioned After 35 Years of Service in Coos Bay, Oregon



[U.S. Coast Guard 13<sup>th</sup> District, April 23, 2024](#)

COOS BAY, Ore. – The Coast Guard decommissioned the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Orcas (WPB1327) during a ceremony, Tuesday.

Rear Adm. Charles Fosse, the commander of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District, presided over the ceremony honoring the 35 years of service Orcas and its crews provided to the nation.

Commissioned on April 14, 1989, Orcas was the twenty-seventh Island-Class cutter to join the fleet.

Orcas has been stationed in Coos Bay, Oregon, since 1989 and is the sixth Coast Guard cutter to be stationed in Coos Bay since 1935.

The Orcas was a multi-mission platform that conducted operations to support search and rescue response, marine environmental protection, and national defense.

“From training allied nation maritime forces, conducting the largest-ever cocaine seizure in the history of the Pacific Northwest, and saving countless lives and hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of property on the Pacific Ocean – Orcas has done it all,” said Lt. Brendan O’Farrell, the commanding officer of the Orcas. “This ship, one of the last of its kind, is an old American-made workhorse built to endure the harsh Pacific waves. I’m extremely proud and blessed to have served with the finest crew in the fleet.”

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## **Coast Guard Station Kodiak Retires its MH-65 Dolphin Helicopters After 36 Years of Service in Alaska**



[U.S. Coast Guard 17th District Public Affairs, April 24, 2024](#)

KODIAK, Alaska – The Coast Guard retired the Air Station Kodiak MH-65 Dolphin helicopter fleet during a ceremony, Tuesday.

Capt. Timothy Williams, commanding officer of Air Station Kodiak, presided over the ceremony honoring the 36 years of service the MH-65 Dolphin airframe and its crews provided to the Arctic region.

Air Station Kodiak currently has a rotary-wing fleet of six MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters. The unit will shift to a rotary-wing ship-and-shore based fleet of nine MH-60 Jayhawks in 2025.

Air Station Kodiak will be the fourth Coast Guard Air Station to transition to a single rotary wing fleet of MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters. Air Stations Borinquen, Traverse City, and New Orleans all recently completed similar transitions.

“For decades, the cutter and helicopter team were the core of the ALPAT mission,” said Cmdr. James Kenshalo, MH-65 Dolphin

pilot. “Together they projected force and protection to the most extreme remote regions of our nation’s territories, operating beyond where help could reach. Countless lives have been saved because of these dedicated crews.”

Commissioned in January of 1988, the Alaksa Patrol (ALPAT) mission executed solely by MH-65 Dolphin aircrews provided Coast Guard Cutters with a reliable airborne asset during Alaska Patrols.

To read more about the Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin and MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters click the following links:

[SRR – MH-65 \(uscg.mil\)](#)

[MH-60T Service Life Extension Program \(uscg.mil\)](#)

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# **US Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless returns home after 61-day Operation Vigilant Sentry patrol**



[U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, April 24, 2024](#)

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless (WMEC 624) returned to their home port in Pensacola, Wednesday, following a 61-day patrol in the Windward Passage and Florida Straits. While underway, crew members conducted maritime safety and security missions to protect life at sea and deter illegal migrant voyages bound for the United States.

Dauntless deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while patrolling in the Coast Guard Seventh District’s area of responsibility. While underway, Dauntless worked alongside other Coast Guard assets and units to dissuade unsafe maritime migration and enforce U.S. law on the high seas.

During the patrol, a good Samaritan on a sailboat reported a disabled vessel using VHF-FM channel 16. Dauntless’ crew received notification and conducted a search and rescue mission over several hours on a moonless night while searching

for the unlit boat. Eventually, the crew located the overloaded and disabled sail freighter with 65 Haitian migrants aboard, including several children. All 65 migrants were safely evacuated and transferred aboard Dauntless, where they received food, water and basic medical care. Dauntless worked with multiple surface and air assets to successfully carryout the search, rescue and repatriation of the migrants.

Migrants attempting to reach the United States through nonlegal channels, or who land on U.S. shores without authorization, are subject to removal and repatriation to their country of origin or departure. Consistent with U.S. policy, those who bypass or attempt to circumvent lawful immigration pathways face consequences including the potential of being barred from future lawful entry in addition to risking their lives unnecessarily.

“This case was a prime example of the humanitarian lifesaving mission we remain always ready for,” said Cmdr. Aaron Kowalczyk, commanding officer of Dauntless. “The crew’s ability to find the vessel and then safely complete the rescue in the dark of night is just another example of the utmost professionalism and skill they show every day and is indicative of 56 years of exemplary service by cutter Dauntless and her crews.”

Established in 2003, HSTF-SE is the Department of Homeland Security-led interagency task force charged with directing operational and tactical planning, command and control, and functions as a standing organization to deter, mitigate, and respond to maritime mass migration in the Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits.

OVS is the 2004 DHS plan that provides the structure for deploying joint air and surface assets and personnel to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean corridor of the United States. Its primary objectives are to protect life at sea while deterring and dissuading mass

maritime migration alongside our federal, state, and local partners.

Dauntless is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter originally built in 1967 and commissioned in 1968. The cutter's primary missions are counter narcotics operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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## **Coast Guard Interdiction Leads to the Apprehension of 3 Wanted U.S. Citizens**



SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser interdicted an unlawful migration voyage in the Mona Passage, Friday.

Following the interdiction, Dominican Republic Navy authorities detained three U.S. citizens, who reportedly are affiliated with a criminal gang and wanted in connection with a July 2020 shooting at a residential community in Puerto Rico in which four people were killed.

The suspects are currently under the custody of the Dominican Republic 'Dirección Nacional de Control de Drogas (DNCD) (United States Marshals Service Dominican Republic Foreign Field Office Fugitive Investigative Unit). United States Marshals Service Puerto Rico Fugitive Task Force for

the District of Puerto Rico are coordinating the deportation of the three suspects.

Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan received notification Friday morning from the aircrew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations multi-role enforcement aircraft, reporting the sighting of a suspected migrant vessel, approximately 55 nautical miles northwest of Puerto Rico. Watchstanders diverted the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser to interdict the suspect vessel. Once on scene, cutter Winslow Griesser's crew deployed their over-the-horizon small boat and stopped the 20-foot go-fast vessel that was carrying eight people and multiple cockfighting roosters. The migrants claimed to have departed from Dominican Republic on a voyage to Puerto Rico, however, they experienced engine malfunctions which forced them to return to Dominican Republic before being interdicted.

Working in coordination with the Dominican Republic Navy, cutter Winslow Griesser's crew took the migrant vessel in tow and rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic Navy vessel, who embarked and received custody of the migrants.

Further investigation efforts by Dominican Republic Navy and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) revealed three of the alleged migrants were U.S. citizens with active U.S. warrants.

"Our strong partnerships and daily collaboration between all federal partner agencies involved in this case as well as Dominican Republic Navy and Dominican law enforcement authorities resulted in the safe repatriation of five migrants and the apprehension of three wanted U.S. citizens," said Lt. Vincente Garcia, Coast Guard liaison to the Dominican Republic. "These efforts are instrumental to achieving regional stability and safeguarding our nation's southernmost maritime border from dangers and threats associated with unlawful migration and other prevalent illicit maritime

activity.”

Migrants who are interdicted at sea or apprehended ashore will not be allowed to stay in the United States or a U.S. territory. Furthermore, anyone who arrives unlawfully may be declared ineligible for legal immigration parole options and be repatriated to their country of origin or returned to the country from where the voyage departed from.

The Coast Guard, along with its [Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast](#) 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. 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.

Since Oct. 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024, the Coast Guard has carried out 28 unlawful irregular migration voyage interdictions in the Mona Passage and waters near Puerto Rico. Interdicted during this period, are 932 non-U.S. citizens including 890 Dominicans, and 41 Haitians and one Venezuelan.

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**USCG Commissions Newest  
National Security Cutter  
Named for first Master Chief  
Petty Officer of the Coast**

# Guard



U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, April 20, 2024

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Coast Guard welcomed its newest cutter into the fleet, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759), Saturday, during a commissioning ceremony at Coast Guard Base Charleston, presided over by Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan.

Calhoun is the 10th Legend-class national security cutter (NSC) to join the Coast Guard and is the fourth NSC to be homeported in North Charleston alongside Coast Guard Cutters Hamilton (WMSL 753), James (WMSL 754) and Stone (WMSL 758).

Calhoun's namesake comes from the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Charles L. Calhoun. Calhoun led a distinguished career, serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II prior to enlisting in the Coast Guard in 1946. Calhoun's Coast Guard career was marked by over 170 months of

sea service, including service in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Calhoun became the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard on Aug. 27, 1969, and was a champion for the service's enlisted personnel and is responsible for bridging the gap between the command and enlisted workforce. The commissioning ceremony's date of April 20 is in honor of Calhoun's birthday.

"I'm honored to share the job title, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, with Charles Calhoun," said Heath Jones, 14th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard. "His efforts as a voice for the enlisted workforce created significant, lasting culture change within the Coast Guard. His dedication to people, the most precious resource we have, and the challenges he faced paved the way for the talent transformation work we're doing today."

Construction of Calhoun began in 2019 and the cutter was officially delivered to the Coast Guard in October 2023 from Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi. After deploying in support of oil spill response and counter migration, Calhoun arrived at its homeport in North Charleston on Dec. 3, 2023. The commissioning of Calhoun officially places the cutter in service for the Coast Guard and marks the most significant milestone of the cutter's life to date.

"What a monumental day for this crew, our service, and the legacy of Master Chief Calhoun," said Capt. Timothy Sommella, commanding officer of Calhoun. "Now that Calhoun has entered active service, we are ready to serve alongside our fellow cutters and interagency partners in protecting the American people from threats here at home and abroad. The crew has worked tirelessly to see this day and is very proud."

The 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutters are equipped with state-of-the-art command and control equipment, the ability to launch and house multiple small boats and aircraft, and an advanced engineering plant capable of

reaching speeds of roughly 30 mph, making them the most versatile cutters in the Coast Guard fleet. The cutter's primary missions will include counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources and defense readiness in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the world.

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# **U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton Returns Home Following 111-day Alaskan Deployment**



U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, April 22, 2024

ALAMEDA, Calif. – U.S. Coast Guard Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) and crew returned to home port in Alameda, Monday, following a 111-day deployment to the Bering Sea in support of search and rescue capabilities and protecting the United States' northern-most borders.

Stratton and crew departed Alameda January 2, and while deployed, Coast Guard's Seventeenth District maintained operational control. Congress mandates a continuous presence for search and rescue capabilities in the Bering Sea, and Stratton and crew operated in the harsh environment for 72 days. Stratton was at the forefront of maritime safety and security. The cutter's presence in the region ensured rapid response to emergencies, safeguarding the lives of Alaskan fishermen.

While deployed in the Alaskan region, Stratton regularly worked with Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak's MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters and aircrews. Stratton completed 363 helicopter landings with Jayhawk crews to conduct training and to enhance the organization's collective search and rescue capabilities. Helicopter training included shipboard landings, on-deck fueling, and in-flight refueling, in which the cutter passes a fuel hose to the helicopter while it remains airborne.

One of Stratton's primary missions this patrol was fisheries law enforcement in the Bering Sea. Stratton's law enforcement teams conducted 18 boardings, in key fishing spots such as Slime Bank, Dutch Harbor, and St. Paul Island. Stratton queried 98 fishing vessels, obtaining critical information to ensure commercial vessels were legally operating in the region. Additionally, Stratton's boarding team detained an individual aboard a fishing vessel, who was wanted for an active arrest warrant. The individual was transported to local authorities in Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

Stratton's law enforcement efforts played a vital role in ensuring the safe operation of Alaskan fishing vessels by

enforcing safety regulations and NOAA fisheries regulations. NOAA oversees the management of commercial and recreational fisheries within U.S. waters, aiming to safeguard and promote sustainable fish populations. Alaska's fisheries are some of the nation's largest providers of seafood and are a critical component of the U.S. economy. Alaska's seafood industry averages \$5.6 billion in total annual economic activity. The Coast Guard's efforts in ensuring safe fishing practices are essential to support this vital industry.

"I'm extremely proud of this crew and all they have accomplished. Their expertise and commitment enabled our successful operations" said Capt. Brian Krautler, commanding officer of Stratton. "The Bering Sea is notorious for its harsh conditions, and our presence ensures rapid response to emergencies, safeguarding lives at sea."

Commissioned in 2012, Stratton is one of four Coast Guard legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda, California. National Security Cutters are 418-feet long, 54-feet wide, and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, and can hold a crew of up to 170. National Security Cutters routinely conduct operations throughout the Pacific, where their unmatched combination of range, speed, and ability to operate in extreme weather provides the mission flexibility necessary to conduct vital strategic missions.

The namesake of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton is Capt. Dorothy Stratton, who led the service's all-female reserve force during World War II. Stratton was the first female commissioned officer in the Coast Guard and commanded more than 10,000 personnel. The ship's motto is "We can't afford not to."