

Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast Returns Home after 55-Day Counter-Drug Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) is moored while the cutter made a port call to Huatulco Mexico, Aug. 29, 2022. Steadfast returned to their Astoria homeport Oct. 3, 2022, following a 55-day counter narcotics patrol. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ASTORIA, Ore. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) returned to their Astoria homeport Monday following a 55-day counter-narcotics patrol, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 9 release.

The crew aboard the 210-foot medium-endurance cutter steamed more than 11,000 miles conducting training, law enforcement, search and rescue, and helicopter operations in international waters ranging from Oregon to Central America.

The Steadfast deployed with additional crew members from Maintenance Augmentation Team Seattle, Electronic Support Detachment Petaluma, and the soon-to-be-commissioned U.S.

Coast Guard Cutter Argus (WMSM 915).

While en route to the cutter's patrol area in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Steadfast's crew hosted a helicopter operations proficiency event for multiple aircrews from Coast Guard Air Stations San Francisco, Barbers Point, Humboldt Bay, and North Bend. For three days, the crews conducted numerous flight operations including over 100 landings and various other operations. The resulting aviator qualifications across the four aviation units included one initial pilot qualification, and one upgrade to instructor pilot.

While in theater, Steadfast's crew identified and located a high-speed, panga-style vessel suspected of smuggling contraband. After initially pursuing the vessel with the cutter's over-the-horizon small boat, they handed off the case to a partner nation for intercept as the vessel neared partner nation territorial seas.

During the transit back to Astoria, Steadfast's crew conducted flight operations with Air Station Humboldt Bay. Steadfast and the aircrew completed six night landings for pilot training and qualification. Flight operations were cut short when the aircrew was diverted for a search-and-rescue case involving a hiker stranded and in distress. Steadfast's crew quickly adapted, refueled the helicopter on deck, and allowed the MH-65 to respond within minutes of receiving the call, demonstrating the versatility and adaptability of the cutter and crew to respond to any of the Coast Guard's missions.

This was the first patrol aboard Steadfast for the new commanding officer, Cmdr. Brock S. Eckel, who assumed command in July.

"This was a wildly productive deployment with noteworthy enhancements to crew qualifications and proficiency following a significant personnel turnover," said Eckel. "I am

overwhelmed by the camaraderie of the Steadfast crew and honored to join them for adventure on the high seas.”

Steadfast is a 54-year-old Reliance-class cutter that has been homeported in Astoria since 1994. Previously, Steadfast was homeported in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she earned the nickname “El Tiburon Blanco” (‘the White Shark’), from drug smugglers for her notoriety in counter-narcotics operations in the Florida Straits and the Caribbean Sea.

Coast Guard Interdicts 87 Lanchas off Texas Coast in Fiscal 2022



Coast Guardsmen from Station South Padre Island, Texas, catch and detain Mexican nationals aboard a lancha after crews in Coast Guard aircraft spotted them fishing illegally in U.S. territorial waters Friday, May 1, 2015. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 1st Class Andrew Kendrick*

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – Coast Guard law enforcement crews interdicted 87 lanchas, seized 15,809 pounds of catch and detained 373 fishermen off the Texas coast during fiscal year 2022, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release.

Since the first recorded lancha interdiction in the late 1980s, the Coast Guard has seen a significant uptick in the detection of the vessels, recording an 11.5 percent increase in interdicted lanchas from fiscal year 2021.

[A noteworthy case](#) from this year occurred on Aug. 30, when Coast Guard crews interdicted three lanchas with a total of 14 Mexican fishermen, 2,425 pounds of red snapper and 440 pounds of shark aboard.

To counter [illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing](#), the Coast Guard utilizes a layered approach for operations through aircraft, small boats and cutters.

Up to 27 million tons of fish are caught illegally each year throughout the world. IUU fishing accounts for 20 to 30 percent of global annual catch. Global losses from IUU fishing are estimated to be as much as \$23.5 billion per year.

“We view the lancha issue as an immediate threat to our living marine resources, border security, and U.S. sovereignty,” said Lt. Cmdr. Brendan Dunn, assistant chief of enforcement, Coast Guard District Eight. “In recent years, the illegal trade of red snapper, grouper, shark and other reef fish species has become extremely lucrative for the transnational criminal organizations operating in Mexico. With the continual increase of at-sea lancha interdictions, we would like to recognize the tremendous efforts of our field units at Coast Guard Sector and Air Station Corpus Christi, Station South Padre Island,

our fast response cutters and patrol boats. We also thank our regional, state and federal partners for their tenacious commitment, professionalism, and teamwork to support this mission.”

A lancha is a fishing boat used by Mexican fishermen that is approximately 20-30 feet long with a slender profile. They typically have one outboard motor and are capable of traveling at speeds exceeding 30 mph. Lanchas pose a major threat, usually entering the United States Exclusive Economic Zone near the U.S.-Mexico border in the Gulf of Mexico with the intent to smuggle people, drugs or poach the United States' natural resources.

Coast Guard Offloads \$6.5 million in Seized Cocaine, Transfers 4 Smugglers



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser and Caribbean Corridor Strike Force agents offloaded 721 pounds (327kgs) of cocaine Oct. 5, 2022 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, following the interdiction of a smuggling vessel in the Mona Passage Sept. 26, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ricardo Castrodad* SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser and Caribbean Corridor Strike Force agents offloaded 721pounds (327kgs) of cocaine Oct. 5 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, following the interdiction of a smuggling vessel in the Mona Passage, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The four men apprehended in this case claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals who are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance Aboard a Vessel Subject to the Jurisdiction of the United States. This charge carries carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. An additional charge includes Assaulting Federal Officers with a Deadly

Weapon, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment.

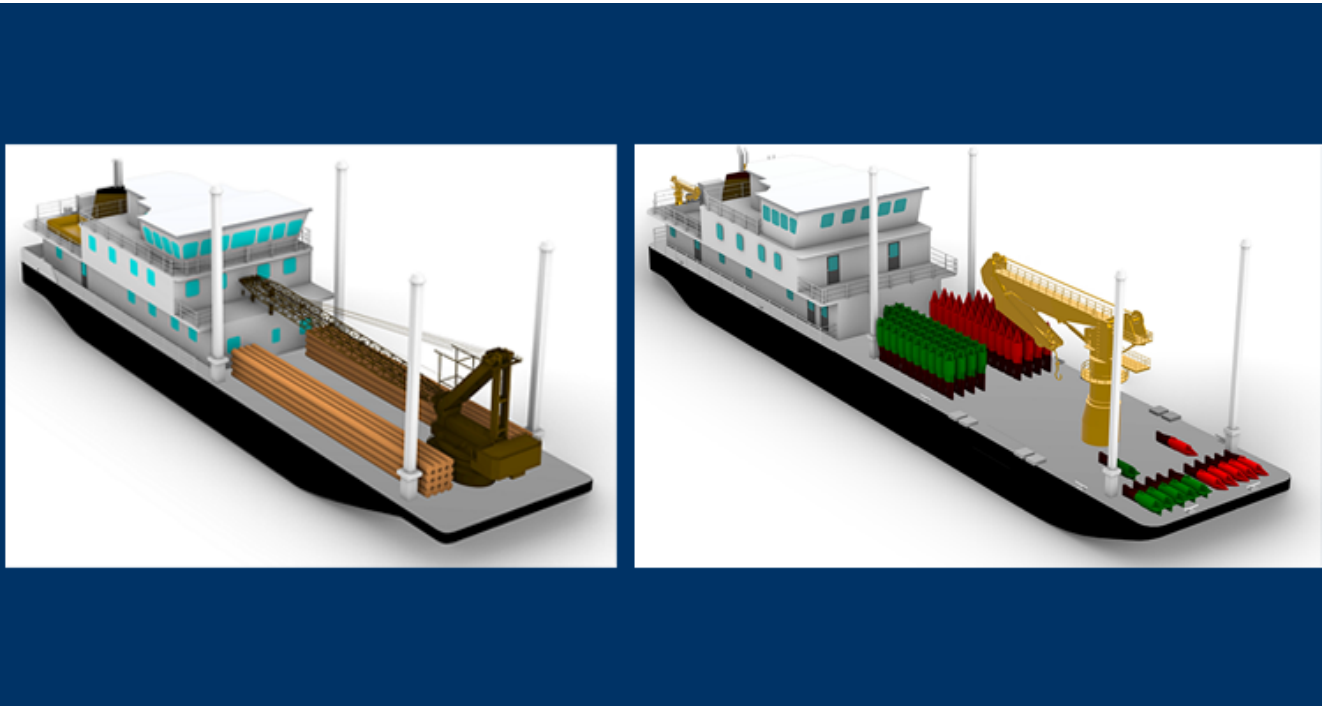
The Transnational Organized Crime Assistant U.S. Attorney Jorge Matos from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case, while Special Agents supporting the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force are leading the investigation.

During the late-night hours of Sept. 26, 2022, the aircrew of a Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine multi-role enforcement aircraft detected a suspect go-fast vessel in waters northwest of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico. With Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser in pursuit, the smugglers jettisoned multiple bales of suspected contraband into the water. The Winslow Griesser crew stopped the suspect vessel, apprehended the four men and recovered 12 bales of the jettisoned contraband, which later tested positive for cocaine.

"I cannot be prouder of the Winslow Griesser crew, especially our small boat crew, whose skill and professionalism were instrumental in stopping this drug smuggling go-fast vessel," said Lt. Cmdr. Mark Tatara, cutter Winslow Griesser commanding officer. "We appreciate our Customs and Border Protection and our Coast Guard watchstanders who worked seamlessly to ensure a successful outcome in this case that helped keep these drugs from reaching the shores of Puerto Rico and bring those responsible to justice."

Cutter Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast response cutter that is homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Coast Guard Awards Birdon America Inc. to Design, Build River Buoy, Inland Construction Tenders



Artist's rendering of the Inland Construction Tender (left) and River Buoy Tender. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

WASHINGTON – On Oct. 5, 2022, the Coast Guard Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) Program awarded Birdon America, Inc. of Denver, Colorado, an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity firm fixed price contract with economic price adjustments for the detail design and construction of its river buoy and inland construction tenders.

The initial award is worth \$28.49 million. The contract includes options for the construction of a total of 16 river buoy tenders and 11 inland construction tenders.

If all contract line items are exercised, the total contract value is estimated at \$1.19 billion.

River buoy tenders service short-range aids to navigation (ATON) on the western rivers. They set, relocate and recover buoys to mark the navigable channel in the rivers as the water level changes and also establish and maintain fixed aids, lights and day beacons.

Inland construction tenders construct, repair and maintain fixed ATON within inland waterways along the Eastern Seaboard and Gulf of Mexico. They are the only Coast Guard platform with the capability to drive and remove piles, erect towers and effect major structural changes.

The Coast Guard has a statutory mission to develop, establish and maintain maritime ATON. WCCs will perform a critical part of this mission on the inland waterways and western rivers. The WCCs will replace the legacy inland tender fleet, which has an average vessel age of over 57 years and includes ships still in service at 78 years old. This contract award ensures the Coast Guard will continue to meet its vital missions throughout the Marine Transportation System.

“This contract award is an important milestone for the new inland fleet that will improve our operational capability on the Western Rivers, and Inland Waterways” said Adm. Linda Fagan, commandant, U.S. Coast Guard.

The new WCCs will have greater endurance, speed and deck load capacity than their predecessors. The ships will also feature improved habitability and will accommodate mixed-gender crews.

Stage 2 of the Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Cutter Moves Forward



Artist's rendition of a Stage 1 Offshore Patrol Cutter.
LEONARDO DRS

WASHINGTON – The Coast Guard today issued a notice to Austal USA, the offshore patrol cutter (OPC) Stage 2 contractor, to proceed on detail design work to support future production of OPCs, Coast Guard Headquarters said in a release. The Coast Guard issued the notice following the withdrawal of an award protest filed in July with the Government Accountability Office by an unsuccessful Stage 2 offeror.

The Coast Guard on June 30, 2022, awarded a fixed-price incentive (firm target) contract through a full and open competition to Austal USA to produce up to 11 offshore patrol cutters. The initial award is valued at \$208.26 million and supports detail design and long lead-time material for the fifth OPC, with options for production of up to 11 OPCs in total. The contract has a potential value of up to \$3.33

billion if all options are exercised.

The Coast Guard's requirements for OPC Stage 2 detail design and production were developed to maintain commonality with earlier OPCs in critical areas such as the hull and propulsion systems, but provide flexibility to propose and implement new design elements that benefit lifecycle cost, production and operational efficiency and performance.

The 25-ship OPC program of record complements the capabilities of the service's national security cutters, fast response cutters and polar security cutters as an essential element of the Department of Homeland Security's layered maritime security strategy. The OPC will meet the service's long-term need for cutters capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups and is essential to stopping smugglers at sea, interdicting undocumented non-citizens, rescuing mariners, enforcing fisheries laws, responding to disasters and protecting ports.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy Reaches the North Pole



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) cuts a channel through the multi-year pack ice and snow as Healy transits the Arctic Ocean to the North Pole, Sept. 27, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Deborah Heldt Cordone, Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1*

NORTH POLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) reached the North Pole Friday after traversing the frozen Arctic Ocean, marking only the second time a U.S. ship has reached the location unaccompanied, the first being Healy in 2015, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 4 release.

Healy, a medium icebreaker, and crew departed Dutch Harbor, Alaska, Sept. 4, beginning its journey to reach latitude 90 degrees north. The cutter and crew supported oceanographic research in collaboration with National Science Foundation-funded scientists throughout their transit to the North Pole.

This is the third time Healy's traveled to the North Pole since its commissioning in 1999.

"The crew of Healy is proud to reach the North Pole," said Capt. Kenneth Boda, commanding officer of the Healy. "This rare opportunity is a highlight of our Coast Guard careers. We

are honored to demonstrate Arctic operational capability and facilitate the study of this strategically important and rapidly changing region.”

Healy is currently on a months-long, multi-mission deployment to conduct oceanographic research at the furthest reaches of the northern latitudes. The 420-foot icebreaker is the largest ship in the Coast Guard and is capable of breaking through four-and-half feet of ice at a continuous speed of three knots.

Healy, which departed its Seattle homeport on July 11, currently has thirty-four scientists and technicians from multiple universities and institutions aboard, and nearly 100 active duty crew members.

During the cutter’s first Arctic leg of the patrol throughout July and August, Healy traveled into the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, going as far north as 78 degrees. As a part of the Office of Naval Research’s Arctic Mobile Observing System program, Healy deployed underwater sensors, sea gliders and acoustic buoys to study Arctic hydrodynamics in the marginal and pack ice zones.

In addition to enabling Arctic science, Healy also supported U.S. national security objectives for the Arctic region by projecting a persistent ice-capable U.S. presence in U.S. Arctic waters, and patrolling our maritime border with Russia.

On its second Arctic mission of the summer, while transiting to the North Pole, Healy embarked a team of researchers as a part of the Synoptic Arctic Survey (SAS). SAS is an international collaborative research program focused on using specially equipped research vessels from around the world to gather data throughout the Arctic across multiple scientific disciplines. Dr. Carin Ashjian, from the Woods Hole

Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts, is currently serving alongside Dr. Jackie Grebmeier as co-chief Scientists onboard Healy with support from the National Science Foundation.

Coast Guard PSU Returning Home Following 9-Month Deployment



Coast Guardsmen from Port Security Unit 307 conduct seaward security for Department of Defense assets and personnel at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, April 25. During the nine-month deployment, unit operations focused on maritime defense, providing more than 30,000 hours of around-the-clock waterside and shore side anti-terrorism and force protection. *U.S. COAST*

GUARD / Lt. Cmdr. Glenn Sanchez

CLEARWATER, Fla. – Members from Coast Guard Port Security Unit (PSU) 307 returned home to Clearwater Oct. 3 following a nine-month deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

During the deployment, unit operations focused on seaward security, providing more than 30,000 hours of around-the-clock waterside and shore side anti-terrorism and force protection defense security to Department of Defense assets and personnel at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

“I could not be more proud of the crew of Port Security Unit 307 for their highly successful deployment, where they flawlessly executed their mission with skill and precision,” said Cmdr. Gregory S. Rogers, PSU 307’s commanding officer. “Our members excelled in every task that was assigned and proved their ability to execute complex operations and training in a joint operating environment.”

PSU 307 also escorted marine traffic in and out of port and enforced the naval defense sea area security zone around the base. Unit personnel worked closely with service members from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Security Forces, Marine Corps Security Forces Company, and Air Force and Army personnel conducting interagency operations and training at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

“Our personnel lived up to the Coast Guard’s core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty and truly set the example. It is my privilege to have served with this outstanding crew,” said Rogers. “I want to thank our families, because without their support this deployment have been impossible. We have now completed our mission and it is now time spend valuable time with our families.”

Commissioned in 1999, PSU 307 is one of eight U.S. Coast Guard port security units located across the United States. PSUs are

Coast Guard Reserve-staffed units and deployable specialized forces assigned to the commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area in Alameda, California. PSUs support our nation with well-equipped, trained, and organized expeditionary forces who can rapidly deploy worldwide for anti-terrorism and force protection operations or point defense of high value assets.

PSU 307 has an extensive operational history. They have deployed to the Middle East four times since 2001 in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, PSU 307 secured Boston Harbor and protected U.S. naval vessels in Providence, Rhode Island. The unit also conducts humanitarian service missions, including deployments to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Haiti following the earthquake in 2010, Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria in 2017, and New Orleans following Hurricane Ida in 2021.

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

Coast Guard District 14 Commander Participates in Pacific Island Leaders Panel



Leaders from 14 countries representing the Pacific Islands met in Honolulu, Hawaii to convene Pu'uhonua: The Pacific Way Forward, Sept 12. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Shannon Smith*

HONOLULU – Leaders from 14 countries representing the Pacific Islands met in Honolulu, Hawaii to convene Pu'uhonua: The Pacific Way Forward, the 12th Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, Sept. 12, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a release.

The Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders is a multi-day leadership conference that strengthens and promotes interagency and multi-national cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region. This conference is a key opportunity for Pacific Island leaders to partner together and address pressing challenges, including economic and environmental resilience, water and food security, health security, maritime domain awareness, and strengthening democratic institutions and good governance.

Leaders representing the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam,

Tonga, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, French Polynesia, Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands, Fiji and the United States, gathered together to corroborate ongoing engagements in the Pacific Islands and build vital connections within and beyond the Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. Coast Guard District 14 Rear Adm. Michael Day provided key insight on the vital relationships the Coast Guard holds with partner nations and the crucial role the Coast Guard provides its Indo-Pacific allies. This cooperation promotes the 11 bilateral ship-rider agreements with Pacific Island Countries in addition to the Coast Guard's more traditional missions such as maritime law enforcement, safeguarding navigation, life, and property, and humanitarian aid. These ship-rider agreements ensure resource security and maritime sovereignty within the Indo-Pacific.

"Listening to the leaders at this conference reminded me of the important role the Coast Guard can play in supporting a rules based order in the Pacific," said Day. "When done the pacific way, governance in this region will continue to dissuade malign actors and encourage a care for our shared resources."

U.S. Coast Guard District 14 Operation Blue Pacific is one example of the U.S. commitment to advancing a peaceful and sovereign Indo-Pacific. Through Operation Blue Pacific, the Coast Guard has strengthened its relationships with Pacific Island Countries by supporting governments that may be threatened or weakened by powers that challenge rules-based international order through inter-state aggression, economic coercion, maritime hybrid warfare, gray zone activities, and overreaching territorial claims.

The Coast Guard collaborates with its Indo-Pacific partners with patrols that enforce their laws to protect fisheries and other natural resources within their EEZs, combat illegal

fishing and other maritime threats to the Pacific, and perform search and rescue and humanitarian assistance.

FRC Seizes \$85 Million in Heroin in NAVCENT Region



A U.S. Coast Guard interdiction team seizes bags of illegal narcotics from a fishing vessel interdicted by fast response cutter USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) in the Gulf of Oman, Sept. 27. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter seized an estimated \$85 million worth of heroin from a fishing vessel while patrolling the Gulf of Oman, Sept. 27,

representing the largest illegal drug interdiction in the Middle East by international naval forces this year, Naval Forces U.S. Central Command Public Affairs said in a release.

While operating in support of Combined Task Force 150, USCGC Charles Moulthrope (WPC 1141) seized 2,410 kilograms of heroin as the fishing vessel transited international waters. CTF 150 is one of four task forces under the Combined Maritime Forces, the world's largest multinational naval partnership.

The Royal Saudi Navy assumed command of CTF 150 in July during a ceremony in Manama, Bahrain, where the task force is headquartered.

"This sizable seizure demonstrates a profound commitment among our international partners to disrupting and deterring destabilizing activity in the region," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and CMF. "I am proud of the flawless efforts by CMF, the Saudi-led CTF 150 team and the Charles Moulthrope crew."

Charles Moulthrope began operating in the Middle East in May 2021. Its crew of nearly 30 Coast Guardsmen includes the ship's 24 plank owners who were the original crewmembers when the ship commissioned in January 2021.

CMF consists of 34 member-nations whose forces operate in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Northern Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

Coast Guard Decommissions

Bahrain-based Patrol Boat Baranof



U.S. Coast Guardsmen conduct a decommissioning ceremony for USCGC Baranof (WPB 1318) in Manama, Bahrain, Sept. 26. Baranof decommissioned after 34 years of service. *U.S. ARMY / Spc. Noah Martin*

MANAMA, Bahrain – The USCGC Baranof (WPB 1318) was decommissioned during a ceremony aboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, Sept. 26., the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release,

Vice Adm. Kevin Lunday, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, presided over the ceremony.

“USCGC Baranof’s exemplary service to our nation is a testament to both the Island-class platform and the crews that have manned Baranof over the past 34 years,” said Lunday. “Whether it was conducting law enforcement and search and rescue in the Caribbean, or deploying to the present-day homeport of Bahrain to support U.S. Central Command, those

that have manned Baranof have continually met the needs of America.”

Baranof was commissioned into service on May 20, 1988 at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach in Miami. The 18th of 49 Island-class patrol boats, Baranof received orders to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2002. Shortly after their arrival in Bahrain, Baranof’s crew was underway conducting maritime interdiction operations in the North Arabian Gulf.

Baranof was replaced by the USCGC Clarence Sutphin Jr. (WPC 1147), which arrived at NSA Bahrain on Aug. 23, 2022. As part of the Coast Guard’s fast response cutter program, the service is acquiring 65 Sentinel-class fast response cutters, with six of those assigned to U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA).

PATFORSWA, the Coast Guard’s largest unit outside of the United States, oversees the cutters in Bahrain. The ships are forward deployed to U.S. 5th Fleet to help ensure maritime security and stability across the Middle East. The 154-foot-long vessels feature advanced communications systems, and improved surveillance and reconnaissance equipment.

PATFORSWA, which is operationally attached to 5th Fleet’s Commander Task Force 55, is composed of six FRCs, shoreside mission support personnel and a maritime engagement team. The unit plays a crucial role in maritime security, maritime infrastructure protection, and regional theater security cooperation. The unit also supports other U.S. Coast Guard deployable specialized forces operating throughout the Middle Eastern region.