

U.S. Coast Guard Patrols EEZ in Partnership With Samoa



Crews from the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Juniper (WLB 201) and USCGC Joseph Gerczak (WPC 1126) conducted security patrol operations in Samoa's exclusive economic zone throughout February 2022, to protect fisheries and other natural

resources. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU – Working with the government of Samoa, crews from the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Juniper (WLB 201) and USCGC Joseph Gerczak (WPC 1126) conducted security patrol operations in Samoa's exclusive economic zone throughout February 2022, to protect fisheries and other natural resources, the Coast Guard 14th District said Feb. 28.

The Juniper and Joseph Gerczak crews helped fill the operational presence needed to deter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing while Samoa's Nafanua II patrol boat is down.

"We always look forward to assisting our partners in the region," said Cmdr. Jeff Bryant, the 14th District's chief of enforcement. "The United States offered to assist the government of Samoa by providing security and sovereignty operations in Samoan waters due to the absence of their patrol boat."

The cutters have been underway in Oceania supporting Operation Aiga, designed to integrate Coast Guard capabilities and operations with the United States' Pacific Island Country partners to effectively and efficiently protect shared national interests, combat IUU fishing and strengthen maritime governance on the high seas.

As a trusted partner in the Pacific, the Coast Guard employs 11 bilateral shiprider agreements with Pacific Island Forum nations, like Samoa, to support resource security and fisheries enforcement. These agreements enabled the Coast Guard to aid host-nation sovereignty while patrolling Samoa's EEZ.

The United States Coast Guard and the government of Samoa have a history of partnership. In 2019, the Coast Guard cutters Walnut and Joseph Gerczak visited Apia Harbor and conducted

patrol operations with officials from Samoa's Ministry of Police and Ministry of Fisheries on board. In 2021, the crew of the Oliver Berry conducted similar patrols while Samoa's patrol boat underwent repairs.

"Operation Aiga is named that for a reason. Aiga means family in Samoan and that's how we view our Pacific neighbors," says U.S. Ambassador to Samoa Tom Udall. "This is real partnership. Together we can stop those who seek to steal valuable resources that simply don't belong to them."

With a population of approximately 40 million people covering an area of 3.3 million square miles, Oceania is regularly patrolled by the Coast Guard and its international partners to protect and support those who call it home.

Coast Guard Creates Cyber Mission Specialist Rating



Coast Guard Capt. Samson Stevens shows an aerial view of the Port of Virginia during the Cyber Component Commanders' Conference aboard Coast Guard Base Portsmouth, Virginia, March 6, 2020. The service has now created a cyber mission specialist rating. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Seaman Katlin Kilroy* ARLINGTON, Va. – The Coast Guard commandant has announced the creation of a cyber mission specialist rating and corresponding chief warrant officer specialty to increase the focus and professionalism of the service's cyber capabilities.

Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz made the announcement during his Feb. 24 annual "State of the Coast Guard Address" before an audience at Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, Florida.

In a Feb. 25 message to the Coast Guard, Shultz further amplified the announcement, saying, "Cyberspace is an operational domain continuously evolving while growing in importance and complexity. Operations in cyberspace require a professional and skilled workforce [military and civilian]. Competition to recruit, retain, and grow cyber talent is constant. A dedicated CMS enlisted rating with accessions beginning at the E-5 paygrade, as is done with the diver

rating and an accompanying CYBR [cyber] specialty, will best provide a trained, proficient, and professional workforce to enable and conduct cyberspace operations.

“Members of the CMS rating and CYBR specialty will have the opportunity to serve in a broad range of missions,” he said. “The Coast Guard’s cyber program plays a critical role operating a secure cyberspace for the Service, protecting the Marine Transportation System against malicious actors seeking to identify new ways to exploit cyberspace, and countering adversaries’ intent on disrupting Coast Guard operations or negatively impacting national interests. Members of the CMS rating and CYBR specialty will continue to serve in critical positions within [Coast Guard] Cyber Command, U.S. Cyber Command, DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency areas, districts and sectors and elsewhere as required.

Commandant Names Future Polar Security Cutter ‘Polar Sentinel’



The Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) transits in the Chukchi Sea, Dec. 19, 2020. The first future polar security cutter will be named Polar Sentinel. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Lt. Jared Payne*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The commandant of the Coast Guard used the occasion of his annual “State of the Coast Guard” address to announce the name of the first future polar security cutter.

“Today, I am excited to name the first polar security cutter; that name will be Polar Sentinel,” said Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz, speaking Feb. 24 before an audience at Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater in Florida.

The name is in keeping with the Coast Guard’s earlier class of polar icebreakers, one of which – the Polar Star – is the only operational heavy icebreaker in the U.S. military services and is badly in need of replacement. The first PSC is expected to be delivered by Halter Marine in 2025. Halter Marine also is under contract for a second PSC.

“Detailed work remains underway in preparation for construction of our first polar security cutter,” Schultz said. “That will be a state-of-the-art ship requiring exacting designs, complex steel work and systems integration. ... When

our fleet of polar security cutters becomes operational, the work of these uniquely capable assets will be essential to protecting our economic, our environmental and our national security interests in what we call the high latitude regions.”

The commandant said the Our Coast Guard “is amidst [its] largest shipbuilding effort since the Second World War as we build the fleet that will serve the nation for decades to come.”

He said the the 10th national security cutter to be named for the first master chief petty officer of the Coast Guard, the Charles Calhoun, will be christened in June.

He also noted the first offshore patrol cutter, the Argus, is more than 60% complete and the second OPC, the Chase, is “well on its way.”

Shultz said the Coast Guard anticipates “awarding the largest acquisition contract in the history of our service for the next 11 offshore patrol cutter hulls” this spring.

The newly competed OPC contract award follows the earlier OPC contract award to Eastern Shipbuilding Group for the first nine OPCs. The Coast Guard plans to procure a total of 25 OPCs, which will replace 28 medium-endurance cutters, some of which are more than 50 years old.

“That legacy fleet [of medium-endurance cutters] loses nearly 500 patrol days on an annual basis due to unplanned maintenance and repairs,” the admiral said, noting that if all those days were lost from counter-narcotics patrols, it would result in 44,000 pounds of illegal drugs that could have been interdicted from reaching the United States.

Shultz also said the service is making progress on the acquisition of 30 waterways commerce cutters, noting that “these new tenders will have greater endurance, speed and

deck-load capacity to efficiently maintain 28,000 aids to navigation, marking over 12,000 miles of navigable inland waterways. These aids to navigation are a critical component of our marine transportation system, upon which cargoes and commodities comprising 25% of our nation's gross domestic product move annually.

"For the first time in history, our inland fleet will be able to accommodate mixed-gender crews, providing all enlisted members of our service these unique afloat experiences," he said.

Coast Guard Commissions 46th Sentinel-Class Fast Response Cutter



The Coast Guard Cutter John Scheuerman's crew stand at attention during the vessel's commissioning ceremony in Tampa, Florida, Feb. 23. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 1st Class Travis Magee*

TAMPA, Fla. – The U.S. Coast Guard commissioned the USCGC John Scheuerman (WPC 1146), Patrol Forces Southwest Asia's fifth 154-foot Sentinel-class cutter, into service at the Port of Tampa in Tampa, Florida, Feb. 23, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

Adm. Karl Schultz, commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, presided over the ceremony. Nancy Vannoy, John Scheuerman's niece, is the ship's sponsor.

The cutter's namesake is Seaman 1st Class John Scheuerman, a native of Toledo, Ohio, who served in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves from Oct. 16, 1942, to Sept. 9, 1943. While serving aboard the U.S.S. LCI (L) 319 during the amphibious allied invasion of Italy, Scheuerman exhibited conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action. Observing an enemy fighter plane diving for a strafing attack as his vessel approached the

assault beaches in the Gulf of Salerno, Scheuerman manned his battle station at an exposed antiaircraft gun and, with courage and aggressive determination, exerted every effort to direct accurate gunfire against the hostile aircraft. Although mortally wounded before he could deliver effective fire, he remained steadfast at his post in the face of imminent death, thereby contributing materially to the protection of his ship against further attack. The U.S. Coast Guard awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart Medals to Scheuerman posthumously for his heroism.

“This is an exciting time for each member of the crew,” said Lt. Trent Moon. “We’re honored to be a part of this historical day and look forward to our upcoming transit to Bahrain and continuing the legacy of the ship’s namesake.”

The John Scheuerman was officially delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard on Oct. 21, 2021, in Key West, Florida. It is the 46th Sentinel-class fast response cutter and the fifth of six Fast response cutters to be homeported in Manama, Bahrain, which will replace the aging 110-foot Island-class patrol boats, built by Bollinger Shipyards 30 years ago. Each of these cutters carries the name of a U.S. Coast Guard enlisted hero.

USCGC Reliance Returns to Homeport Following 52-day Patrol



A response boat crew member steers toward the Coast Guard Cutter Reliance during a 52-day patrol in the Atlantic Ocean.
U.S. COAST GUARD

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Reliance (WMEC-615) returned to homeport in Pensacola, Florida, Feb. 18, following a 52-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea in support of the Coast Guard 7th District.

The Reliance crew supported the U.S. Coast Guard 7th District throughout their patrol, aiding in missions to interdict and disrupt the flow of illegal drugs and migrant trafficking while supporting national security and strengthening relationships with regional partners throughout the Caribbean.

During the patrol, the crew traveled over approximately 8,631 miles, assisted in the transference of more than 12,564 pounds of narcotics with an estimated combined street value of \$250 million and intercepted 157 undocumented migrants. The cutter's crew also transferred eight suspected narcotics smugglers from other U.S. Coast Guard cutters operating in the

region.

Working jointly with the crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore (WPC-1109), the Reliance's crew also rescued 191 Haitian nationals from an unseaworthy vessel off the coast of Cuba.

The patrol was critical in enhancing operational readiness through shipboard training and qualifications, resulting in the successful completion of a five day major shipboard inspection and exercise, which tested the crew's readiness in all aspects of aviation training, equipment and capabilities.

The Reliance is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola with a crew of 74 personnel. The cutter's primary missions include counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

**Coast Guard Cutter James
offloads More than \$1.06
Billion in Illegal
Narcotics**



The Coast Guard Cutter James' (WMSL 754) crew offloaded approximately 54,500 pounds of cocaine and 15,800 pounds of marijuana, worth approximately \$1.06 billion, Feb. 17, in Port Everglades, Florida. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Jose Hernandez*

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter James' crew offloaded approximately 54,500 pounds of cocaine and 15,800 pounds of marijuana worth approximately \$1.06 billion on Feb. 17 at Port Everglades, Florida, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The ship's crew set new records during their 90-day patrol for the largest single cocaine interdiction at 10,915 pounds, worth \$206.4 million, and the largest single marijuana interdiction at 3,962 pounds, worth \$3.59 million, the greatest amount of contraband interdicted during an Eastern Pacific patrol.

The Coast Guard's strong international relationships, specialized capabilities and unmatched authorities, allowed for a unity of effort to disrupt transnational criminal organizations.

The drugs were interdicted in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea by crews from:

- Coast Guard Station San Juan
- Coast Guard Cutter James
- His Netherlands Majesty's Ship Holland
- Coast Guard Cutter Stone
- Coast Guard Cutter Griesser
- USS Milwaukee
- Coast Guard Cutter Northland
- Coast Guard Cutter Diligence
- Coast Guard Cutter Margaret Norvell

"The best part of my job is being able to stand here at the end of a patrol and provide visibility on the incredible efforts from crewmembers who have volunteered for the challenging and dangerous duties to keep our shores safe," said Capt. Todd Vance, the commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter James. "Each interdiction is a complex evolution and no two interdictions are the same. In fact, the James' crew conducted simultaneous interdictions of two go-fast vessels 55 miles apart this patrol, showcasing their dedication and professional execution of the counter-drug mission."

Numerous U.S. agencies from the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement

phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District, headquartered in Alameda, California, and the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 7th District, headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Cutter James is a 418-foot national security cutter homeported in Charleston, South Carolina.

Cutter Stratton Visits Fiji during Operation Blue Pacific Patrol



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton conducts patrols in Fiji's exclusive economic zone with Fijian law enforcement personnel in February. The Coast Guard's mission to combat IUU fishing is essential in protecting maritime governance and a rules-based international order to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SUVA, Fiji – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton visited Fiji in February after being underway for 50-days in the Pacific combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the Coast Guard 14th District said Feb. 15.

During the visit, Capt. Stephen Adler, the Stratton's commanding officer, met with members of the Fijian media to discuss the Coast Guard's partnership with Fiji and their combined effort to protect fisheries resources.

"Our relationships with our partner nations are more important than ever in combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing," said Adler. "We are pleased to work with our Fijian

partners to maintain maritime sovereignty and security throughout the region.”

While in the country, the Stratton’s crew welcomed aboard three Fijian ship riders who, with the assistance of Stratton’s law enforcement boarding teams, will ensure compliance with applicable Fijian fishing laws within Fiji’s exclusive economic zone.

The Coast Guard’s mission to combat IUU fishing is essential in protecting maritime governance and a rules-based international order to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The fisheries industry is a significant source of food and income throughout the Pacific. Protecting this renewable resource is a priority for the United States and Pacific Island Countries as IUU fishing in the Pacific has global impacts and effects.

Recently IUU fishing has replaced piracy as the leading global maritime security threat and has the potential to have a global effect if unchecked.

Prior to visiting Fiji, the Stratton’s crew had been working with British, Australian, New Zealand, and French allied naval forces as well as the U.S. Navy in support of the Tongan government following the volcanic eruption on Jan 15.

The crew also conducted a number of drills and exercises with allied partners including helicopter operations with the Armed Forces in French Polynesia, fueling at sea with the Royal New Zealand Navy Ship Aotearoa, and multiple maneuvering exercises with the Royal Navy HMS Spey.

The Stratton is a 418-foot national security cutter capable of extended, worldwide deployment in support of homeland security and defense missions. NSCs routinely conduct operations

throughout the Pacific and Atlantic oceans; their unmatched combination of range, speed, and ability to operate in extreme weather provides the mission flexibility necessary to conduct vital strategic missions.

Operation Blue Pacific is an overarching multi-mission Coast Guard endeavor, promoting security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania while strengthening relationships between partner nations in the Pacific.

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant Returns Home after 30-day Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) crew transfers migrants to Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle (WPC 1133) crew in the Caribbean Sea during a 30-day patrol on Feb. 11. The Valiant crew repatriated over 200 migrants interdicted in the high seas. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) and crew returned to Naval Station Mayport on Feb. 11 after completing a 30-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The Valiant's crew patrolled over 6,300 miles in the Caribbean Sea, conducting a variety of operations in support of Coast Guard District 7.

The crew partnered with both foreign and domestic military agencies in the detection, interdiction and repatriation of over 200 migrants interdicted in the high seas.

During their patrol, they received word that a suspected migrant vessel had suddenly and unexpectedly sank, leaving 39 people in the water. The Valiant crew assumed on-scene command of the situation upon arrival and coordinated with Fuerzas Unidas de Rapida Acción assets operating out of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, to ensure the safe rescue and care of all persons in the water.

The crew conducted two joint operations with forces from the Dominican navy involving the transfer and repatriation of migrants interdicted by Valiant crew and other U.S. Coast Guard assets. Combined, the evolutions conducted between the Valiant crew and the Dominican Republic navy vessel Aldebarán ensured the safe and efficient return of over 120 migrants to their home country. Such operations continue to showcase the value of partner nation operations and joint efforts to combat human trafficking.

“Combating illegal immigration and protecting the safety of life at sea are extremely challenging missions that require the utmost flexibility and dedication,” said Cmdr. Jeff Payne,

Valiant's commanding officer. "I could not be more proud of the crew executing the missions flawlessly, saving over 200 lives and working with multiple government agencies to keep our nation safe."

The Valiant is a multi-mission 210-foot medium-endurance cutter. Missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.

Icebreaker Polar Star Arrives in Antarctica



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star sits hove-to on a cloudy day in Antarctica, Jan. 17. Polar Star is in its 25th year participating in Operation Deep Freeze, one of many operations

in the Indo-Pacific region in which the U.S. military promotes security and stability across the region. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Diolanda Caballero*

MCMURDO STATION, Antarctica – The 157 crewmembers of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) arrived at McMurdo Station in Antarctica Feb. 7 following an 86-day transit from the United States and the cutter's departure from its Seattle homeport Nov. 13, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

This deployment marks the Polar Star's 25th journey to Antarctica supporting Operation Deep Freeze, an annual joint military service mission to resupply the United States Antarctic stations in support of the National Science Foundation, lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program.

Each year, the crew pilots the 399-foot, 13,000-ton cutter to break a navigable channel through miles of ice, sometimes as much as 21 feet thick, to allow fuel and supply ships to reach McMurdo Station, the U.S. Antarctic Program's logistics hub and largest station.

Polar Star reached the Ross Sea, Antarctica, Jan. 3, and commenced breaking the 37 miles of ice that extended from the ice pier in Winter Quarters Bay at McMurdo Station out to open water. Polar Star spent four weeks breaking ice and grooming the shipping channel. The crew's efforts were aided by favorable winds and currents and by month's end had created an open and ice-free approach for the supply vessels.

The cleared channel to McMurdo Station will enable two supply vessels, Maersk Peary and Ocean Giant, to safely offload over eight million gallons of fuel and 1,000 cargo containers. Together these two ships carry enough fuel, food, and critical supplies to sustain USAP operations throughout the year until the next sealift opportunity in the austral summer of 2023.

The cutter made international stops in Wellington and

Lyttelton, New Zealand on the way to Antarctica. While in New Zealand, the crew engaged with the Royal New Zealand Navy, United States Embassy and volunteered in Christchurch at the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Polar Star will also partner with the Royal New Zealand Navy's largest ship, Her Royal Majesty's New Zealand Ship Aotearoa, in support of resupplying Scott Base, New Zealand's year-round Antarctic research facility.

"It is a tremendous honor to lead the men and women of Polar Star on this important mission," said Capt. William Woityra, commanding officer of Polar Star. "This team brought renewed energy and passion to this 46-year-old ship, and overcame significant challenges to deliver exceptional results."

Assigned to Operation Deep Freeze each year, the icebreaker spends January and February breaking ice in Antarctica. Polar Star returns to the United States after completing the mission.

This year also marks the Polar Star's return to Antarctica following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2020-2021 season, Polar Star conducted a winter Arctic deployment, during which the cutter trekked to the Arctic Circle to project constructive presence in the northern high latitudes under winter conditions and train the next generation of polar sailors. Their efforts resulted in setting a record for the furthest north any American surface vessel has been in the winter months.

Cutter Active Returns Home to Port Angeles Following Counterdrug Patrol



An aircrew and a HH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Port Angeles prepares to land on the Coast Guard Cutter Active's flight deck during a counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Sept. 17, 2018. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua Wood*

PORT ANGELES, Wash. – The Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 619) and crew returned to their homeport in Port Angeles Feb. 2 after a 10,572-mile, 55-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 13th District said Feb. 4.

The crew—deployed off the coast of Central America in support of counterdrug operations.

Shortly after getting underway, Active participated in helicopter proficiency operations off the coast of Southern

California. Pilots from multiple Coast Guard air stations and crews from a number of West Coast-based cutters converged on Active to perform necessary training and proficiency evolutions.

During a 48-hour period, Active's crew participated in 72 takeoffs and landings from the flight deck in addition to performing a helicopter in-flight refueling and a vertical replenishment. In total, Active directly assisted in the qualification and certification of eight pilots across two helicopter platforms in addition to certifying eighteen shipboard aviation support crewmembers.

While moored in San Diego, Active embarked a joint aircrew and helicopter from HITRON [Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron] and Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco. HITRON is a Jacksonville, Florida-based specialized law enforcement unit. HITRON crews are trained to use airborne use of force for non-compliant vessels suspected of violating U.S. and international laws to comply with lawful orders.

"The Active crew performed superbly in every assigned mission during this patrol," said Cmdr. Brian Tesson, Active's commanding officer. "Presented with myriad challenges, from engineering casualties to Omicron safety protocols, this crew made a bold statement by stepping out with a positive, can-do attitude in the face of adversity, defining what it means to work aboard the 'Li'l Tough Guy.' Bringing their best selves to the job daily, the crew patrolled the Eastern Pacific Ocean to deter and suppress transnational crime and narcotics smuggling while training and qualifying crewmembers as they honed new personal and professional skills. I watched this team overcome each consecutive obstacle with ingenuity, fortitude and professionalism. I could not be more proud to be a part of it."

Active's crew departed in mid-December and were unable to spend time with family and loved ones during the holiday

season. However, as is typical for the Active and Coast Guard cutter crews in general, they came together as a family to create a number of great memories during the patrol. The Active's crew found ways to keep spirits high while patrolling the high seas through conducting drills and training or gathered during one of our onboard holiday meals cooked by the Chiefs' Mess, or over a sparkling apple cider New Year's Eve toast.

Nicknamed the Li'l Tough Guy, the 55-year-old medium-endurance cutter routinely operates from the Straits of Juan de Fuca to Central America conducting search and rescue, domestic fisheries enforcement, counter-narcotics law enforcement, and other statutory Coast Guard missions.