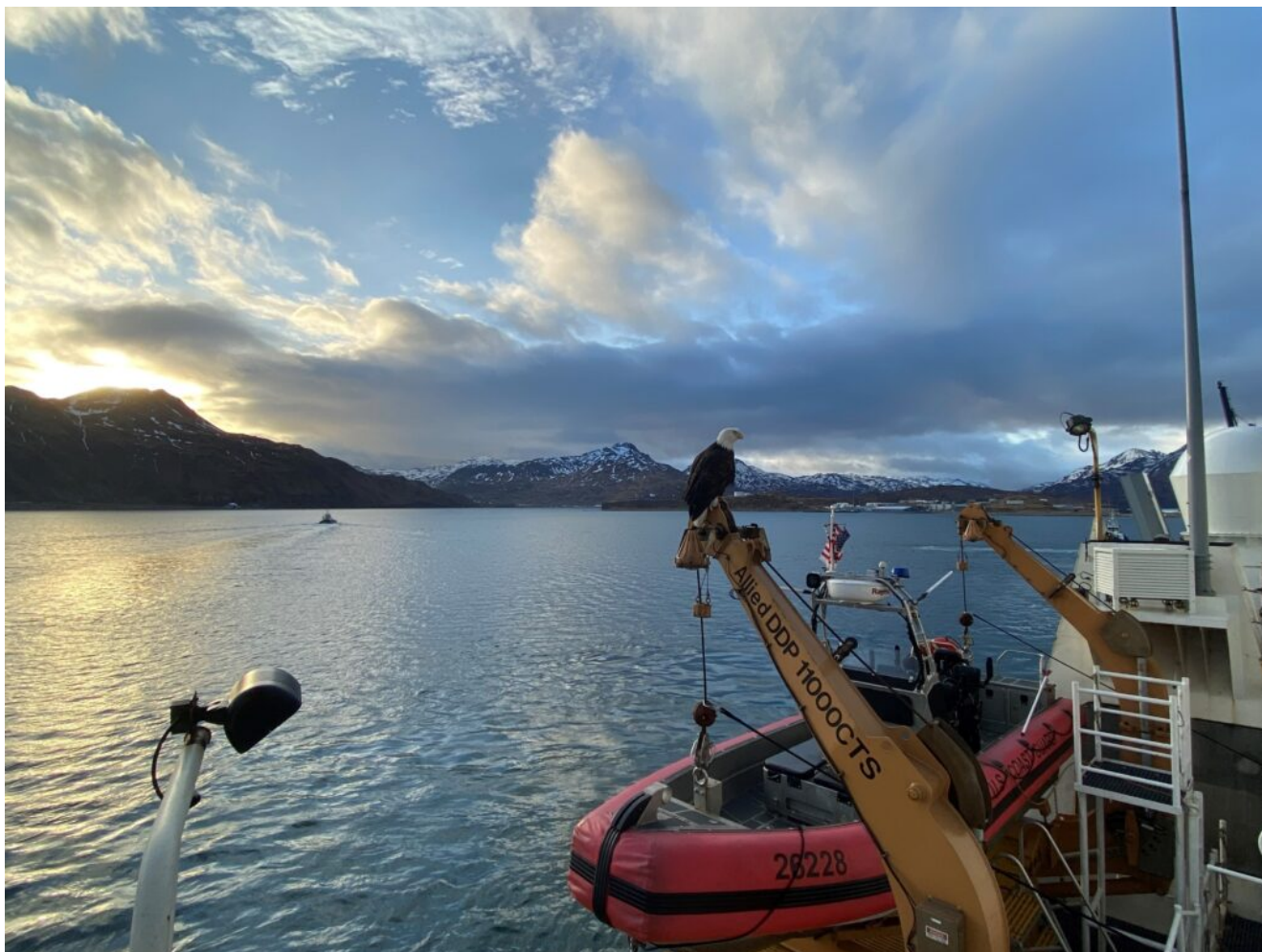


Coast Guard Cutter Waesche Completes Bering Sea Patrol



During a brief stop for logistics in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, a bald eagle made Coast Guard Cutter Waesche's dual point davit its home for the afternoon. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Waesche returned to homeport in Alameda Jan. 29 following a 77-day Bering Sea patrol, during which the cutter and crew served as the ready asset for homeland defense and search and rescue, supporting the \$5.9 billion commercial fishing industry.

This was the Waesche's first deployment since a major machinery space fire left the cutter at the pier for 10 months for dockside repairs and planned system upgrades.

The Waesche provided presence amongst Bering Sea fishing

fleets and enforced compliance with applicable fisheries regulations, monitored the U.S.-Russian Maritime Boundary Line, and conducted rigorous training exercises. Augmenting the cutter's own capabilities were an embarked MH-65 helicopter and aviation detachment from Air Station Kodiak, as well as a ScanEagle drone. The helicopter supported two medical evacuations from a remote town in the Aleutian Islands.

The cutter and crew traveled more than 12,000 miles since departing Alameda Nov. 13, spanning the U.S. West Coast, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska. Members honed essential competencies through extensive damage control drills, helicopter operations, major and minor caliber gunnery exercises, and small boat operations.

The drills culminated in the Tailored Ship's Training Availability in San Diego. There, crewmembers demonstrated their knowledge and abilities while being evaluated by the Coast Guard's Afloat Training Organization. For many members of the crew, their skills are not only rooted in the significant training conducted aboard over the course of the deployment, but also from experience gained while combatting actual damage sustained during the Waesche's machinery space fire.

Supplementing the Waesche's extensive suite of military communications was a prototype underway Wi-Fi network added prior to this patrol and championed by the Sea Duty Readiness Council and the Office of Cutter Forces.

"The addition of Wi-Fi underway has been a game changer for family connectivity, where crew members are able to easily text or call home and participate in major life events such as buying a home or being there on video Christmas morning as kids open presents," said Commanding Officer Capt. Jason Ryan.

Members of Coast Guard Port Security Unit Return Home After Nine-Month Deployment



Family and friends greet members of PSU 313 on their return from extended deployment, Jan. 27. PSU 313 operations focused on seaward security and provided 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. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Tippets*

Everett, Wash. – Members from Coast Guard Port Security Unit 313 returned to Everett, Washington, Jan. 27 following a nine-month deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

During the deployment, unit operations focused on seaward

security, providing more than 42,000 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.

PSU 313's operations also consisted of escorting marine traffic in and out of port as well as enforcing the naval defense sea area security zone around the base. Unit personnel worked closely with service members from Joint Task Force, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Harbor Patrol Unit, Marine Corps Security Forces Company, and Air Force and Army personnel conducting interagency operations and training at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and along adjoining waters.

"The success of this unit in its deployment, in the midst of a global pandemic, is testament to the resilience of the crew and the priority each places on shipmate support and mission excellence," said Cmdr. James W. Fitzgerald, PSU 313's commanding officer. "Our members excelled in this joint operating environment, expanding inter-service operability and capabilities, and exceeded every established metric for accomplishing our assigned tasking. Their devotion to duty and the support from their families at home during this deployment have been inspiring. With the mission now complete, we look forward to our members reintegrating with their families."

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 the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft, and deployable specialized forces.

Commissioned in 1998, PSU 313 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. PSUs are capable of providing the Coast Guard, Department of

Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and interagency operational and tactical commanders with equipped, trained, and organized expeditionary forces who are ready to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice to execute anti-terrorism and force protection operations within ports, harbors, littoral waters, or in the point defense of high value assets.

PSU 313's previous overseas deployments include Korea (2000, 2007, 2013); Kuwait (2003, 2010); Haiti (2010); and Guantanamo Bay (2007, 2015). The unit also defended Naval Magazine Indian Island, Washington, in the months after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Coast Guard Intercepts 191 Haitians near Bahamas



Coast Guard Kathleen Moore's crew located a green and blue sail freighter with 191 people aboard during a routine patrol about 40 miles southwest of Great Inagua, Bahamas, Jan 25. The crew provided life jackets and brought the Haitians aboard the Coast Guard Cutters Reliance and Kathleen Moore due to safety of life at sea concerns. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – The Coast Guard intercepted 191 Haitians aboard an overloaded sail freighter Jan. 25, about 40 miles southwest of Great Inagua, Bahamas.

Coast Guard Kathleen Moore's crew located a green and blue sail freighter with 191 people aboard during a routine patrol at approximately 1 a.m. The crew provided life jackets and brought the people aboard Coast Guard Cutters Reliance and Kathleen Moore due to safety of life at sea concerns.

"The Coast Guard maintains a persistent presence patrolling the waters around Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas, to help prevent loss of life on the high seas," said Lt. David Steele, Coast Guard liaison officer,

U.S. Embassy Haiti. “These grossly overloaded vessels operate without proper safety equipment and are not built for these hazardous voyages.”

Since Oct. 1, 2021, Coast Guard crews have rescued 802 Haitians compared with:

- 1,527 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2021
- 418 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2020
- 932 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2019
- 609 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2018
- 419 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2017

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all persons receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crew members were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.

USCGC Thetis Returns Home from 68-day Counter-Narcotic Deployment



USCGC Thetis (WMEC 910) crew members conduct rescue hoist training with the crew of an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Miami on Jan. 12. The flight crew consisted of members from U.S. Coast Guard Air Stations Miami and Houston and Aviation Training Center Mobile, Alabama. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class John Hightower*

KEY WEST, Fla. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis's crew (WMEC 910) returned to homeport in Key West on Jan. 26 after a 68-day transit escorting the Coast Guard Cutters Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) and Glen Harris (WPC 1144) across the North Atlantic en route to their new homeport in Manama, Bahrain.

Thetis' crew worked alongside NATO Allies and interagency partners in the region while transiting in the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

During the patrol, Thetis's crew received a report from Spain's Las Palmas Rescue Coordination Center of two overloaded migrant rafts taking on water. Thetis, Glen Harris and Emlen Tunnell crews worked together to rescue 103 migrants from overloaded and unseaworthy vessels and recovered two

deceased migrants. The rescued individuals were provided food and medical care prior to being transferred to a Royal Moroccan Navy frigate.

“While escorting two new cutters across the Atlantic, we responded to a distress call and quickly transitioned to our service’s core mission of search and rescue,” said Cmdr. Justin Nadolny, the commanding officer of Thetis. “Working alongside a Moroccan ship, we were able to rapidly respond to those in distress. The case reinforced the importance of joint operations and reaffirmed the U.S. Coast Guard’s presence in the region to ensure the safety of life at sea. I am exceedingly proud of our professional and highly capable team. The crew of all three ships showed remarkable vigilance and adaptability. This case highlighted the Coast Guard’s ability to operate worldwide to protect and save those in distress on the ocean, along with our ability to work seamlessly with international partners to accomplish a shared mission.”

Thetis’ crew strengthened international partnerships in various ports, hosting military and Coast Guard leaders in Fortaleza, Brazil and Mindelo, Cape Verde. Thetis’s crew also embarked a Cape Verdean Coast Guard officer aboard for two weeks. The professional exchange was mutually beneficial, providing U.S. Coast Guard members with a deeper understanding of maritime activity in the region while passing on valuable lessons to our foreign allies.

Prior to departing Cape Verde, U.S. Ambassador Jeff Daigle visited Thetis. The ambassador’s visit showcased the importance of the maritime partnership between the U.S. and Cape Verde while demonstrating the commitment to the shared goal of global maritime security and stability on the African continent.

Thetis deployed with a MH-65 helicopter and aircrews from Air Station Miami and Houston to increase their capabilities. The aviation detachment and cutter crew worked together to conduct

day and night flight operations and practice rescue hoists.

Thetis is the first 270-foot medium-endurance cutter to escort fast response cutters across the Atlantic in support of the Coast Guard's Patrol Forces Southwest Asia mission. These cutters are the third and fourth to be deployed to the region, with the final two scheduled to be delivered to Bahrain in the spring of 2022.

Coast Guard Cutters Begin Operation Aiga in Oceania



The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Gerczak (WPC 1126), shown here on patrol off the coast of Waikiki, July 4, 2018. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew West*
HONOLULU – The crews of the Coast Guard Cutter Juniper (WLB

201) and Joseph Gerczak (WPC 1126) will aim to extend the Coast Guard's at-sea enforcement presence in the region through a 40-day patrol, the Coast Guard 14th District said Jan. 19.

"Aiga," the Samoan word for family, is designed to integrate Coast Guard capabilities and operations with Pacific Island Country partners to protect shared national interests, combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and strengthen maritime governance in Oceania.

"Responsible fisheries management is vital to the Pacific's well-being, prosperity, and security," said Lt. Cmdr. Jessica Conway, the 14th District's current operations officer. "The Coast Guard is an adaptable, responsive military force of maritime professionals whose broad legal authorities, capable assets, and expansive partnerships provide a persistent presence throughout our exclusive economic zones and on the high seas."

IUU fishing operates outside the rules adopted at the national and international level. It threatens the ocean's ecosystem, food security, and economic growth around the world by undercutting law-abiding fishermen and communities that depend on fish and fish products.

"An essential protein source for more than 40% of the world's population, fish stocks are critical to maritime sovereignty and resource security of many nations," said Cmdr. Christopher Jasnoch, the Juniper's commanding officer.

As part of Operation Blue Pacific 2022, the crews of the Juniper and Joseph Gerczak will conduct information sharing activities to advance the U.S.'s bilateral and cultural relationships with Melanesia and Polynesia.

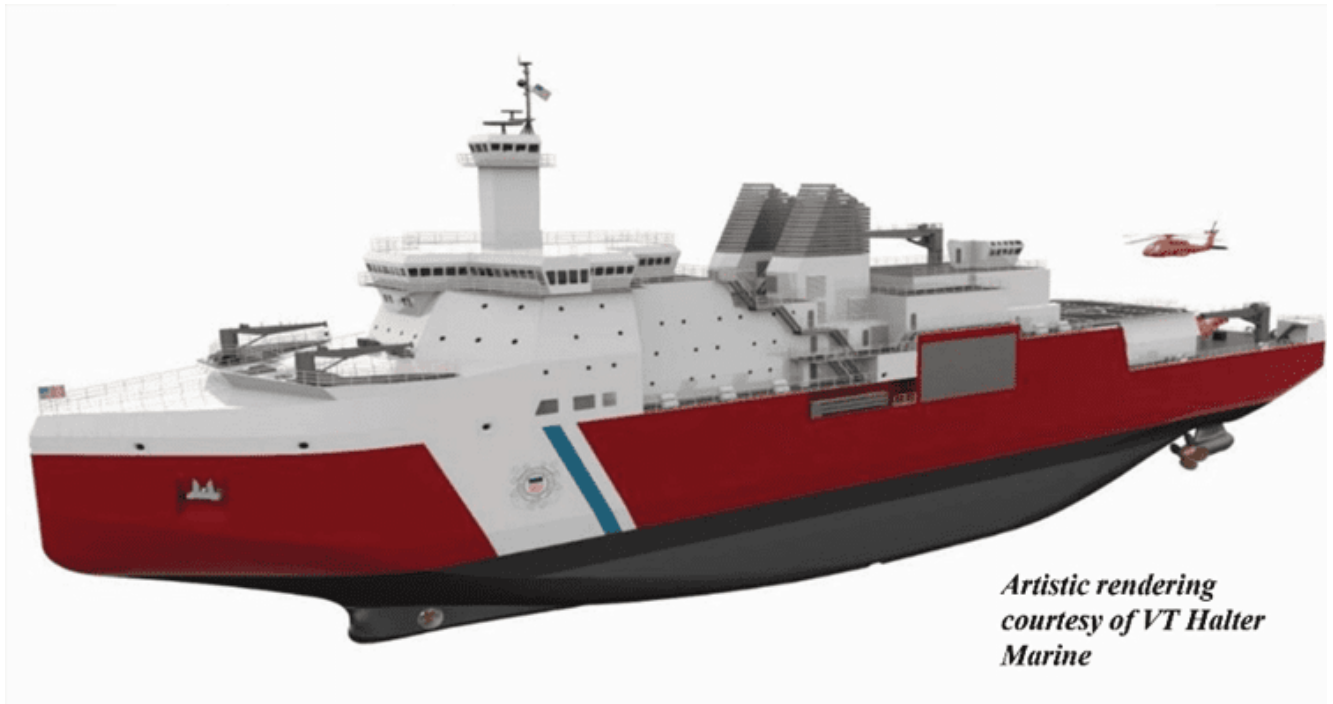
The Coast Guard regularly exercises bilateral shiprider agreements with partner nations. These agreements help to host foreign law enforcement personnel to better exercise their

authority, close any global maritime law enforcement gaps, and improve cooperation, coordination, and interoperability.

Operation Blue Pacific is an overarching multi-mission Coast Guard endeavor seeking to promote maritime security, safety, sovereignty and economic prosperity in Oceania while also strengthening relationships with our partners in the region.

“To ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific, the U.S. remains committed to strengthening regional alliances and enhancing emerging partnerships,” said Lt. Joseph Blinsky, Joseph Gerczak’s commanding officer. “Leading global deterrence efforts, the Coast Guard likewise remains committed to combating IUU fishing and our crews look forward to collaborating with PICs to better address this growing national security concern.”

USCG Commandant: COVID, Design Complexity Added Construction Delays to Polar Security Cutter



*Artistic rendering
courtesy of VT Halter
Marine*

A rendering of the U.S. Coast Guard's forthcoming Polar Security Cutter. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The coronavirus pandemic and the complexity of building the first U.S. heavy ice breaker in nearly 40 years were among the reasons for another year's delay in the expected delivery of the Polar Security Cutter, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz said Jan. 12.

"We have publicly stated that the delivery date for Polar Security Cutter number one is going to be May 2025, so it slipped about a year," Schultz told an audience at the Surface Navy Association's annual symposium in Arlington. Originally, officials thought the PSC program of record for three heavy ice breakers, with two already fully funded, would begin rolling vessels starting in 2023.

"It's just a complex thing. COVID really layered in some challenges there," Schultz said, adding that the United States hasn't built a heavy ice breaker "in the better part of four-plus decades." He noted the new vessel requires "complex steel work that shipyards don't necessarily do every day." There also were some issues with international partnerships.

The operational U.S. polar icebreaking fleet currently

consists of one heavy polar icebreaker, Polar Star, built in 1976, and one medium polar icebreaker, Healy, which is also used for polar research.

“It’s tough to be an Arctic nation when you have one heavy [ice] breaker that’s almost 50 years old and one medium breaker that’s really science,” Schultz said.

Since the 2013 U.S. [National Strategy for the Arctic Region](#) described the United States as “an Arctic Nation with broad and fundamental interests,” the Coast Guard, Navy and other armed services have developed strategies for operating in the northern polar region. Melting sea ice has turned the top of the world into a potential economic, diplomatic and military flash point as sea lanes have opened up increased commercial sea lanes in summer to large cargo ships, fishing fleets, oil and gas exploration and tourism.

“I think the goal right now would be to continue to work with the Navy Integrated Project Office, continue to work with the shipbuilder, finish up the complex, detailed design and start cutting steel here in 2022,” Schultz said, adding “I think if we stay at that track line, I am guardedly optimistic we’ll take delivery of that ship in 2025 and be off to the races.”

In the meantime, Schultz said the Coast Guard has been sending its larger cutters into the high latitudes to participate in exercises with partners like France, Canada, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

“It’s one of those places where very few of the Arctic nations, outside of Russia have a whole lot of capacity, Schultz said, noting that Russia currently holds the chairmanship of both the Arctic Council and the Arctic Coast Guard organization.

Fairbanks Morse to Provide Engine Parts for Coast Guard Icebreaking Tugboats



The Coast Guard Cutter Katmai Bay (WTGB 101) was the first of nine 140-foot Bay Class tugs built for the Coast Guard's domestic icebreaking mission. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

BELOIT, Wis. – Fairbanks Morse Defense, a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management, has been awarded a five-year indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity requirements contract by the U.S. Coast Guard Surface Forces Logistic Center, the company announced Jan. 10.

The agreement, worth up to \$13 million, makes FMD the required source of supply for all opposed piston engine parts listed in

the contract's schedule of supplies. These parts primarily support OP engines on nine 140-foot Bay Class Icebreaking Tugboats (WTGBs).

Since 1977, WTGBs have been used as critical icebreakers on many Northeast and Midwestern U.S. rivers and the Great Lakes, ensuring waterways remain open year-round. More than 15 million tons of cargo such as food and petroleum products, as well as 90% of the nation's home heating oil, are transported annually in January and February along Northeast waterways, making it essential that these channels are kept open to avoid supply chain disruptions.

The contract also includes provisions for engine parts onboard the U.S. Coast Guard's decommissioned high endurance cutters (WHECs) that have been transferred or are in the process of being transferred to foreign navies.

"Fairbanks Morse Defense delivers an advantage to the U.S. Coast Guard by offering best-in-class marine technologies, OEM [original equipment manufacturer] parts, and turnkey services," said FMD CEO George Whittier. "As a trusted partner to the Coast Guard, we live our ironclad commitment to the fleet and crew every day, on every job. Manufactured in the U.S. and serviced worldwide, our proven marine technology is engineered for excellence to ensure reliable operation and minimal downtime."

USCGC Stone Returns to Homeport after 61-Day Patrol



The crews of U.S. Coast Guard Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Stone (WMSL 758) and the Colombian navy OPV-80 offshore patrol vessel ARC Victoria (PZE-48) conduct passing exercises in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Dec. 4, 2021. *U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 2nd Class Shannon Kearney*

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – USCGC Stone (WMSL 758) returned to its homeport in Charleston following a 61-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of the U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, the Coast Guard’s Joint Interagency Task Force South and the Coast Guard 11th District, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said Jan. 7.

Stone’s crew successfully interdicted two suspected drug smuggling vessels, recovering approximately 2,246 pounds of cocaine and 4,870 pounds of marijuana with an estimated combined street value of \$57.1 million. The cutter’s crew subsequently transferred 20 suspected narcotics smugglers to the 7th Coast Guard District and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration personnel, signaling the culmination of a successful joint interagency effort in the Eastern Pacific.

The Stone embarked observers from Panama, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to perform joint operations to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and conduct counter-drug operations off the coast of South America.

An embarked MH-65 helicopter aircrew from the U.S. Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron was integral in counter-drug operations. Interagency partners provided additional aerial surveillance and reconnaissance support throughout the patrol.

During the cutter's port call in Manta, Ecuador, Stone's commanding officer, Capt. Clinton Carlson, attended an international IUUF symposium with Arthur Young, the embarked National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration enforcement officer, to share experiences and increase awareness of the regional issue. The crew of the Stone also participated in a friendly soccer match with Cuerpo de Guardacostas de la Armada personnel from the local coast guard station while in Manta.

"This is our crew's first patrol outside of their initial shakedown cruise, and I am extremely proud of the dedication and pride they have shown toward getting qualified to conduct the missions expected of a national security cutter crew," said Carlson. "Throughout these past months, everyone aboard displayed enthusiasm during the drills we've run every week and have proven that through teamwork and a shared understanding of the mission, we can accomplish even the most difficult tasks. I am honored to lead this impressive crew of Coast Guard women and men."

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 for these interdictions by U.S. attorney's offices from the Middle District of Florida, the Southern District of Florida and the Southern District of California.

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

The Stone is the ninth Legend-class national security cutter in the Coast Guard fleet and currently is homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. The national security cutters can execute the most challenging national security missions, including support to U.S. combatant commanders.

The Charleston-based Legend-class cutters fall under the command of the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Based in Portsmouth, Virginia, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, they also allocate ships to work with partner commands and deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

Bollinger Delivers to Coast Guard Sixth FRC for Basing in Bahrain



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Clarence Sutphin, now delivered to the service in Key West, Florida, and bound for Bahrain. *BOLLINGER SHIPYARDS LLC*

LOCKPORT, La. – Bollinger Shipyards LLC has delivered the USCGC Clarence Sutphin to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida, the company said Jan. 6. This is the 170th vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 47th Fast Response Cutter delivered under the current program.

The Clarence Sutphin is the final of six FRCs to be homeported in Manama, Bahrain, which will replace the aging 110-foot Island-class patrol boats, built by Bollinger Shipyards 30 years ago, supporting the Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, the U.S. Coast Guard's largest overseas presence outside the United States.

“Ensuring that the brave men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard have the most state-of-the-art, advanced vessels as they work

to build and maintain the necessary regional alliances to ensure maritime security in the region is a top priority," said Bollinger President and CEO Ben Bordelon. "Bollinger is proud to continue enhancing and supporting the U.S. Coast Guard's operational presence in the Middle East and ensuring it remains the preferred partner around the world."

Earlier this year at the commissioning ceremony of the USCGC Charles Moulthrop, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz lauded the "enhanced seakeeping" capabilities of the PATFORSWA-bound FRCs, saying "these ships are truly going to be game changing in their new theater of operations" and "offer increased opportunities for integrated joint operations with our Navy and Marine Corps colleagues" as the Coast Guard seeks to be part of the whole-of-government solution set in the region.

PATFORSWA is composed of six cutters, shoreside support personnel, and the Maritime Engagement Team. The unit's mission is to train, organize, equip, support and deploy combat-ready Coast Guard Forces in support of U.S. Central Command and national security objectives. PATFORSWA works with Naval Forces Central Command in furthering their goals to conduct persistent maritime operations to forward U.S. interests, deter and counter disruptive countries, defeat violent extremism and strengthen partner nations' maritime capabilities in order to promote a secure maritime environment.

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Clarence Sutphin, Boatswain Mate First Class, USCG, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his courageous actions during the invasion of Saipan Island in 1944. His citation reads: "For heroic achievement in action against enemy Japanese forces during the invasion of Saipan, Marianas Islands, on June 15 and 16, 1944. Swimming with a line through heavy surf to a tank lighter stranded on a reef, SUTPHIN remained aboard under

mortar and artillery fire until the boat was salvaged. Returning to the beach, he aided in salvaging another tank lighter under enemy fire and, when a mortar shell struck a group of eight Marines, promptly treated the wounded and moved them to a first aid station. His courage and grave concern for the safety of others reflects the highest credit upon SUTPHIN and the United States naval service.”

USCGC Mohawk Returns from Eastern Pacific Patrol, Conducts International Collaboration



The USCGC Mohawk (WMEC 913) hosts senior officials from the coast guard, navy, and marines of Ecuador for a professional exchange on Nov. 28, 2021, at sea off Ecuador. The Famous-class medium endurance cutter returned to homeport in Key West Sunday after completing a groundbreaking 45-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

KEY WEST, Florida – The Famous-class medium endurance cutter USCGC Mohawk (WMEC 913) returned to homeport in Key West Dec. 19 after completing a groundbreaking 45-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area said Dec. 20.

While on patrol, the Mohawk crew disrupted illegal narcotics smuggling, interdicting more than 3,200 pounds of cocaine. The team conducted joint training missions with crews from Panama and Ecuador to strengthen regional partnerships in the Western Hemisphere.

Patrolling in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South, the Mohawk team interdicted a low-profile drug smuggling vessel with approximately 3,200 pounds of cocaine aboard and apprehended three suspected narcotics smugglers. These low-profile vessels are purpose-built to evade detection and transport illicit contraband across thousand-mile stretches of ocean. The drugs, worth more than \$60 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coast of Ecuador. While in theater, Mohawk aided in stopping 17 suspected drug smugglers, contributing directly to U.S. Southern Command objectives to combat transnational criminal organizations.

During the Mohawk's deployment, the crew took multiple opportunities to strengthen ties with partner nations in the region, including conducting joint rescue and assistance drills, exchanging law enforcement and boarding techniques, and practicing towing with Panamanian Servicio Nacional Aeronaval vessels. Mohawk's crew also completed a passing exercise with the Armada del Ecuador offshore patrol vessel

LAE Isla San Cristobal (LG 30) and conducted a two-day joint counter-narcotics patrol through Ecuador's exclusive economic zone in the Galápagos Islands.

"International partnerships are critical to detecting and deterring illicit narcotics smuggling; engagements such as these with foreign partners enhance interoperability and interdiction capabilities," said Cmdr. Andrew Pate, commanding officer of the Mohawk.

Mohawk made history during its deployment as the first U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit and anchor in the Galápagos Islands. The islands are a province of Ecuador and a UNESCO World Heritage site, made famous for species diversity and unique terrain. While at anchor in San Cristobal, Galápagos, Mohawk conducted a professional exchange with senior ranking officials from Armada del Ecuador, held joint law enforcement training, enjoyed a cultural exchange ashore, and took part in a friendly U.S. versus Ecuador game of soccer.

"The U.S. Coast Guard's ability to forge strong and lasting international partnerships that further the national interest is what makes us such a unique instrument of national security. I am very proud of the Mohawk crew for their work as envoys of the U.S. Coast Guard. The opportunity to work alongside the maritime professionals of Ecuador and Panama during this deployment, as well as our interdiction success sends a strong signal to transnational criminal organizations that the United States values enduring commitments in the region," Pate said. "Our interactions with the Armada del Ecuador in Galápagos left a profound impression on my crew. Choosing to go to sea and serve on a U.S. Coast Guard cutter opens the door to experiences and camaraderie that you don't get in a normal nine to five job."

While underway, the cutter's crew completed aviation, damage control, engineering, seamanship, navigation, and combat systems training to maintain operational readiness and prepare

for future multi-mission deployments.

Commissioned in March of 1991, Mohawk is the 13th and final of the 270-foot Famous-class cutters built. The medium endurance cutters fall under the command of the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Based in Portsmouth, Virginia, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, they also allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.