

# Coast Guard Crews Interdict 4 Smugglers, Seize \$12M in Cocaine



Station San Juan boat crews offloaded approximately 400 kilograms in seized cocaine and transferred custody of four suspected smugglers to federal agents Nov. 24, following the interdiction of a go-fast vessel near Dorado, Puerto Rico. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ricardo Castrodad*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – A Station San Juan boat crew offloaded approximately 400 kilograms in seized cocaine and transferred custody of four suspected smugglers to federal agents Nov. 24, following the interdiction of a go-fast vessel near Dorado, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7<sup>th</sup> District said in a release.

The apprehended smugglers are Dominican Republic nationals who

are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico on drug smuggling criminal charges of Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance Aboard a Vessel Subject to the Jurisdiction of the United States. The charges carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. The Transnational Organized Crime Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jordan Martin from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case. The seized cocaine has an estimated wholesale value of approximately \$12 million.

During a routine patrol of Puerto Rico's northern coast, the aircrew of a Customs and Border Protection multirole enforcement aircraft detected a suspicious go-fast vessel, approximately 24 nautical miles north of Dorado, Puerto Rico.

Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan directed the launch of a Station San Juan 33-foot Special Purpose Craft—Law Enforcement to interdict the suspect vessel. Once on scene and while in pursuit, the Coast Guard crew compelled the go-fast vessel to stop. Following the interdiction, the Coast Guard crew seized 16 bales of cocaine and apprehended the four suspected smugglers.

"This successful interdiction is a result of the professionalism, close coordination and swift response displayed by the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection surface, air, and watchstander crews involved in this case," said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Sector San Juan chief of response. "These professionals respond and work daily to maximize our interagency capabilities and resources to stop drug smuggling vessels at sea. Together, along with the rest of our local and federal law enforcement partners, we seek to safeguard the nation's maritime border and protect the people of Puerto Rico from this threat."

---

# Icebreaker Returns Home following Northwest Passage Transit, Arctic Research Missions, Circumnavigation of North America



Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) transits Elliott Bay off Seattle Nov. 20 as it returns to its homeport after a 133-day deployment in which the crew circumnavigated North America via the Northwest Passage. The deployment involved both military and scientific operations. *JAMES BRADY*

SEATTLE – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) returned to their Seattle homeport Saturday following a 22,000-mile, 133-day deployment circumnavigating North

America, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said Nov. 20.

The crew aboard Healy, a 420-foot medium icebreaker, provided U.S. surface presence in the Arctic, supported high-latitude oceanographic research missions, participated in an international search-and-rescue exercise and engaged in passing exercises with surface vessels from the U.S. Navy, Canadian navy and Mexican navy.

Healy's crew hosted members of the international science community and institutions from the U.S., Canada, Norway and Denmark who conducted oceanographic research throughout the Arctic, including the Northwest Passage and within Baffin Bay, to monitor environmental change.

Healy crewmembers also facilitated 430 over-the-side casts of various scientific instruments including a conductivity, temperature and depth array that requires the cutter to station keep as wire lowers and recovers the instrument from below the surface. Additionally, Healy mapped over 20,000-square kilometers of the seafloor, including 12,000-square kilometers of previously unmapped regions, throughout the patrol.

Healy transited north of Canada via the Northwest Passage, where the crew rendezvoused with members of the Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Rangers for a search-and-rescue exercise. The crew transited south of Mexico via the Panama Canal on their way home. Healy's deployment supported the Coast Guard's Arctic strategy while providing critical training opportunities for future icebreaker sailors.

"Healy's crew demonstrated their tremendous dedication to duty while carrying out the Coast Guard's Arctic mission, operating in some of the harshest regions in the world," said Coast Guard Cutter Healy's Commanding Officer Capt. Kenneth Boda. "They assisted teams of scientists in gathering invaluable

data and information throughout the deployment. This research will be shared with laboratories, universities and institutions around the world to support research focused on the changing Arctic environment.”

While transiting down the east coast of the United States and back up the west coast of Mexico, Healy engaged in multiple outreach events including passing exercises, professional exchanges and embarking distinguished visitors to bolster relations with other nations.

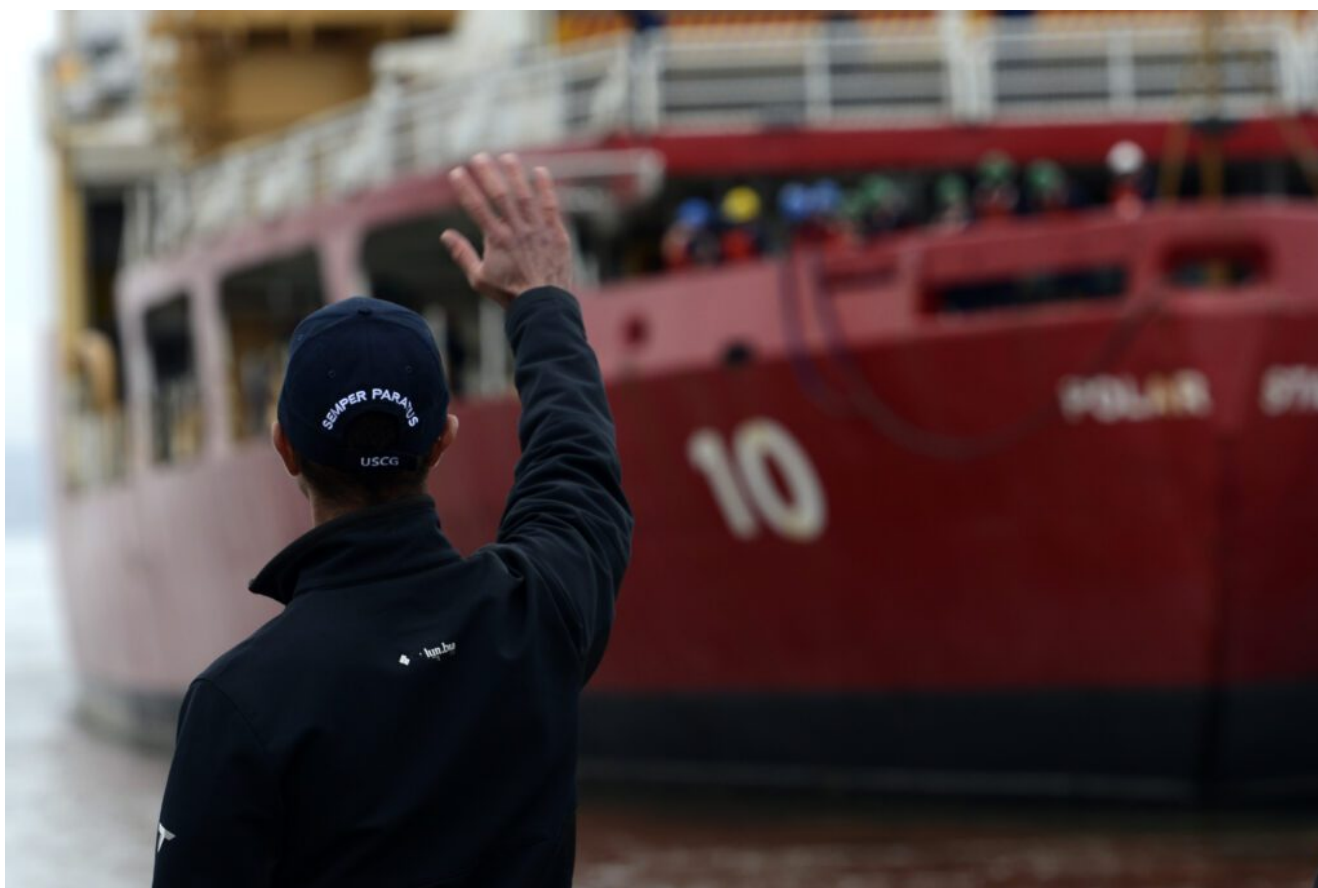
Healy deploys annually to the Arctic in support of oceanographic research and Operation Arctic Shield, the Service’s annual operation to execute U.S. Coast Guard missions, enhance maritime domain awareness, strengthen partnerships, and build preparedness, prevention, and response capabilities across the Arctic domain.

Commissioned in 2000, Healy is one of two active polar icebreakers in the Coast Guard’s fleet. Healy is capable of breaking four feet of ice continuously and up to eight feet of ice while backing and ramming.

The U.S. Coast Guard is recapitalizing its polar icebreaker fleet to ensure continued access to the Polar Regions and protect the country’s economic, commercial, environmental, and national security interests. The Coast Guard and U.S. Navy, through an integrated program office, on April 23, 2019, awarded VT Halter Marine Inc., of Pascagoula, Mississippi, a fixed-price incentive contract for the detail, design and construction of the lead Polar security cutter with contract delivery planned for 2025.

---

# Coast Guard Icebreaker Polar Star Begins 25th Antarctic Voyage



A family member of a Coast Guardsman aboard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB-10) waves as the cutter departs Seattle Saturday, Nov. 13. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Clark*  
SEATTLE – The United States’ only heavy icebreaker departed its homeport in Seattle Nov. 13 with a crew of 159 U.S. Coast Guard men and women and is heading toward Antarctica, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

This year marks Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star’s 25th journey to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze, an annual joint military mission to resupply the United States Antarctic

stations in support of the National Science Foundation, the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program.

Each year, the Polar Star crew breaks a navigable channel through ice, sometimes as much as 21 feet thick to allow fuel and supply ships to reach McMurdo Station, which is the largest Antarctic station and the logistics hub of the U.S. Antarctic Program.

“Maintaining and operating a 45-year-old ship in the harshest environment on the planet makes for arduous duty, but the women and men aboard Polar Star are committed to our important mission,” said Capt. William Woityra, Polar Star’s commanding officer. “The team is excited for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit a part of the world that most will never get to see.”

The U.S. Coast Guard is recapitalizing its polar icebreaker fleet to ensure continued access to the Polar regions, project U.S. sovereignty, and to protect the country’s economic, environmental, and national security interests.

“It’s vitally important that the U.S. maintains its leadership role in Antarctica,” said Vice Adm. Michael F. McAllister, commander Coast Guard Pacific Area. “The Coast Guard has an enduring commitment to the U.S. Antarctic Program through the Deep Freeze mission to provide uninhibited access to the region. We are proud to support a 60-year legacy of peaceful international cooperation for science and preservation of the pristine Antarctic environment and we will continue to ensure adherence to rules-based order into the future.”

Through Operation Deep Freeze, the U.S. Coast Guard provides direct logistical support to the National Science Foundation and maintains a regional presence that preserves Antarctica as a scientific refuge.

---

# Coast Guard, Partners Rescue 17 Mariners in 2 Days



The Coast Guard rescued four people from a raft in the water November 10, 2021, approximately 13 nautical miles west of Cape Ommaney, Alaska. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Alexandria Preston*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – Over the course of two days, Nov. 11-12, Coast Guard crews, partner agencies and volunteers responding to three maritime emergencies rescued a total of 17 boaters in dire straits off the Alaska, California and Micronesia coasts, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said Nov. 12.

All three cases highlight the importance of mariners properly equipping and training for survival at sea, as well as the

value of government and industry partnerships.

Off the coast of Federated States of Micronesia, six people survived at sea and were found Thursday on a 24-foot skiff located 40 miles southeast of the Mortlock Islands after an eight-day search involving the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy, Federated States of Micronesia first responders, Caroline Islands first responders and local good Samaritans.

The crew of a good Samaritan vessel, Nord Rubicon, rescued seven fishermen in a life raft 350 miles off the coast of Monterey, California, Wednesday after their 85-foot commercial fishing boat caught fire and became engulfed in flames. Multiple emergency position indicating radio beacon and personal locator beacon alerts immediately notified U.S. Coast Guard crews the vessel was in peril. Coast Guard watchstanders used the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System to request help from nearby ships. The Nord Rubicon crew, located just 80 miles away, diverted from their course, retrieved the fishermen and took them safely to shore. Video is available [here](#).

Wednesday, Coast Guard aircrews in Alaska rescued four fishermen after they abandoned their 53-foot fishing boat sinking 13 miles west of Cape Ommaney, Alaska. The Coast Guard Sector Juneau command duty officer for the rescue, Nicholas Meyer, credits their survival to their proper use of an EPIRB, VHF radio, survival suits, life raft and training.

“The safeguarding of lives at sea, particularly along our coastal waters and in support of our closest international partners, continues to be our highest priority,” said Vice Adm. Michael F. McAllister, commander Coast Guard Pacific Area. “This week’s impressive rescues demonstrate our resolve to be Semper Paratus – always ready. Thanks to the valuable relationships we’ve built with partner agencies, the valuable contributions of good Samaritans, and the focus these mariners had on ensuring they were ready for emergencies at sea, 17

people are alive today who may not otherwise be. This was a fitting tribute on Veteran's Day yesterday, knowing the Coast Guard veterans who came before us laid the foundation for the incredible work our men and women do today."

---

## Cutter Spencer Returns to Portsmouth After Patrolling the Eastern U.S. Coast



Gunner's mates aboard Coast Guard Cutter Spencer shoot messenger lines to a disabled fishing vessel 100 miles off the coast of New York to bring the vessel in tow. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Katharine Ingham*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Spencer returned home to Portsmouth after a 33-day patrol Nov. 10, the

Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

During the patrol, the crew conducted operations south of Key West, Florida, in support of efforts to deter illegal immigration and conduct safety of life at sea operations. Shifting gears halfway through the patrol, Spencer's crew exercised their multi-mission capability in the Northeast to enforce federal commercial fishing regulations in an effort to deter over-fishing and illegal fishing. The crew also assisted in multiple search and rescue cases off the coast of New England, towing one vessel over 100 miles to safety.

Spencer also completed a routine aviation evaluation that enables the cutter to perform landings and conduct operations with a variety of military aircraft. The training exercise occurred in Miami, supported by an MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, Florida.

"Overall, this was a short patrol but we accomplished a lot for the Coast Guard and for our unit," said Cmdr. Corey Kerns, commanding officer of the Spencer. "This deployment included an excursion south of the Keys to support the fleet of Fast Response Cutters. Our mission then shifted to domestic fisheries, enforcing regulations that promote the longevity of this multi-billion-dollar industry that our nation depends on. In between, we were able to support three search and rescue operations, conduct a lot of training, and get home before Thanksgiving."

The Spencer is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter with a 100-person crew.

---

# Coast Guard, Partners Complete Cooperative Pacific Surveillance Operation



The Coast Guard Cutter William Hart participates in the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's Operation Kurukuru off American Samoa, Oct. 29, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU – The Coast Guard and its partners successfully completed the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's (FFA) Operation Kurukuru in the Pacific, Nov. 5, the Coast Guard 14th District said Nov. 9.

Operation Kurukuru is an annual coordinated maritime surveillance operation with the goal of combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This year the crews of the Coast Guard Cutter William Hart, Coast Guard Cutter

Myrtle Hazard and an Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules participated in the joint endeavor.

“The operation included 15 Guardian Class and Pacific Patrol Boats from Pacific nations operating alongside five Australian Navy, French Navy and United States Coast Guard vessels,” said Allan Rahari, the FFA Director Fisheries Operations. “Seven aircraft from the FFA, quadrilateral and regional partners provided air surveillance, as well as satellite surveillance and use of other emerging technologies.”

This year’s Operation Kurukuru was conducted over the course of 12 days, involving 15 Pacific FFA member nations and Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group (Australia, France, New Zealand, and U.S.) partners while covering over 8,9 million square miles.

During the operation, 300 vessels were remotely sensed by satellites or sighted by ships and aircraft while 78 vessels were boarded either at sea or in port. Of those 300 sightings, the Coast Guard contributed 63.

While the operation was ongoing, the Air Station Barbers Point Hercules aircrew also diverted to Starbuck Island in Kiribati to assist with an ongoing missing persons case.

Kurukuru is a Japanese term meaning round and round relating to the highly migratory nature of targeted species such as tuna which annually travel throughout the Pacific providing an important renewable resource for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICT).

IUU undermines PICT efforts to conserve and manage fish stocks, presenting a dire threat to protecting these vital resources for generations to come.

“Combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing really

is a team effort out here in the Pacific,” said Lt. j.g. Tyler Peterson, an operations planner at the Coast Guard 14th District. “Because of fish migratory habits, they frequently travel between different countries’ exclusive economic zones, so no one country can protect the fish stocks on their own. This is why joint efforts like Operation Kurukuru are so important. We are able to work with our partners towards our mutual goal of preserving this vital resource.”

Along with participating in large scale operations like Operation Kurukuru, the Coast Guard also works individually with nations to counter IUU through the use of bilateral law enforcement agreements.

Bilateral law enforcement agreements allow partner PICTs to embark their law enforcement officers aboard Coast Guard vessels to enforce laws within their exclusive economic zone. The Coast Guard maintains 11 bilateral ship rider agreements throughout the Pacific, combating not only IUU but also promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific.

---

**Coast Guard Offloads \$3.5  
million in Seized Cocaine,  
Transfers 3 Suspected  
Smugglers**



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez offloaded \$3.5 million in seized cocaine and transferred custody of three suspected smugglers in San Juan, Puerto Rico Oct. 29. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez offloaded \$3.5 million in cocaine Friday and transferred custody of three smugglers to federal agents in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said Nov. 1.

The USS Sioux City, operating with a Coast Guard LEDET 102 onboard, apprehended three men and seized 115 kilograms of cocaine after interdicting of a drug smuggling go-fast vessel Oct. 26 in the Caribbean Sea, approximately 100 nautical miles south of Isla Saona, Dominican Republic.

The apprehended smugglers, two Dominican Republic nationals and one Colombian, are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico on criminal charges of Conspiracy to Possess with Intent

to Distribute a Controlled Substance Aboard a Vessel Subject to the Jurisdiction of the United States and Possession of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Drug Trafficking Crime. The charges carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. Transnational Organized Crime Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jordan Martin from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area programs, and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Following the interdiction, the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez embarked the three-suspected smugglers and seized contraband for transport to San Juan.

Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while the USS Sioux City is a littoral combat ship homeported at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida.

---

## **Cutter Bertholf Returns to**

# Homeport following North Pacific Patrol



A Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) crewmember embraces his daughter after Bertholf returned home following a nearly three-month patrol, Nov. 1, 2021. The crew patrolled more than 27,000 miles alongside partner agencies to support international cooperation for Operation North Pacific Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard's annual Northern Pacific illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing patrol. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Matt Masaschi*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) returned to homeport in Alameda Monday, following a 105-day deployment throughout the North Pacific, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said Nov. 1.

The crew patrolled more than 27,000 miles for approximately three months alongside partner agencies to support international cooperation for Operation North Pacific Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard's annual Northern Pacific illegal,

unreported, and unregulated fishing patrol.

An integrated international law enforcement boarding team inspected 28 fishing vessels in the North Pacific Ocean and identified 42 violations of conservation and management measures under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and North Pacific Fisheries Commission. The team discovered a total of 702 shark fins and 20 salmon during the inspections.

The detection of violations within both regional fisheries management organizations trigger processes to hold countries accountable for ensuring their fishing fleets comply with conservation and management measures designed to conserve important fish stocks. Coast Guard boardings and inspections are critically important as the only at-sea enforcement presence across vast ocean areas, helping to ensure the sustainable harvest of fisheries resources.

Operation North Pacific Guard is an annual multi-mission effort between the Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Pacific Rim countries and three regional fisheries management organizations to include the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission, and the North Pacific Anadromous Fishing Commission. Operation North Pacific Guard 2021 was jointly planned and executed with support from Canada, Republic of Korea, and Japan. Each nation provides surface and air patrols and shares information that guides patrol assets to detect and intercept the most likely illicit fishing activity.

“The crew of the Bertholf displayed remarkable perseverance throughout the duration of the patrol,” said Capt. Timothy Brown, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf. “Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a major global maritime security threat, and I’m incredibly proud of the Bertholf crew for their roles in confronting predatory and

irresponsible actions in international fisheries.”

---

## **U.S. Coast Guard, Haitian Coast Guard Interdict Suspected Drug Smugglers**



A Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle (WPC-1133) small boat crew and cutter crewmembers conduct a contraband transfer following an interdiction near Gonave Island, Haiti, Oct. 27, 2021. The suspected smugglers and contraband were transferred to the Haitian coast guard. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle’s crew transferred 1,485 pounds of marijuana and three suspected drug smugglers to Haitian Coast Guard crewmembers on Wednesday, following an interdiction off the coast of Haiti.

The small boat crew transferred 27 bales of marijuana and the suspected smugglers aboard.

The Doyle’s crew spotted a vessel with visible bales of contraband on board, during a routine patrol, Oct. 26, at 2:50 p.m, approximately 9 miles northwest of Gonave Island, Haiti. Doyle’s crew coordinated a pursuit with Haitian Coast Guard crewmembers and deployed a small boat crew to interdict the vessel.

“Continued coordination and collaboration between the U.S. and Haitian coast guard enabled this successful interdiction and prosecution,” said Lt. David Steele, Coast Guard Liaison Officer, U.S. Embassy Haiti. “The U.S. Coast Guard will continue to partner with the Haitian coast guard to build

capacity, reduce the destabilizing effects of transnational organized crime and secure Haiti's maritime borders."

The suspected smugglers and contraband were later transferred to the Haitian coast guard. No injuries were reported.

---

## Cutter Kimball Returns to Homeport after Patrol in Bering Sea and Arctic



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) underway in the Pacific, April 4, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

JUNEAU, Alaska – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Kimball returned to homeport in Honolulu, Hawaii Oct. 27 following a 66-day patrol in the Bering and Chukchi Seas, the Coast Guard 14<sup>th</sup> District said in a release.

The crew traveled nearly 13,000 nautical miles since departing Honolulu Aug. 21, including through the Bering Strait and into the Arctic Ocean. With Arctic sea ice melting, these distant travels are important in helping the U.S. Coast Guard conduct a range of operations in the high latitudes as fish stocks and maritime traffic moves north.

The Kimball crew conducted 18 targeted living marine resources boardings; the most a national security cutter has completed during a single patrol in the 17th District area of responsibility.

"These law enforcement boardings maximized our presence in the Bering Sea," said Petty Officer 1st Class Samuel Cintron,

Kimball lead law enforcement petty officer. "Each boarding team member was instrumental to the success of the operation and reinforced the Coast Guard's position on protecting national security and domestic fisheries."

More than 65 percent of fish caught in the United States is harvested from Alaskan waters, generating more than \$13.9 billion annually.

The Kimball crew conducted at-sea drills with key maritime partners including the Royal Canadian Naval Ship Harry DeWolf and Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force training vessel Kashima. In each instance, the ships operated alongside one another and exchanged visual communications, followed by honors. This display of maritime cooperation and mutual respect emphasizes the United States', Canada's, and Japan's continued commitment to one another and to partnership at sea.

During the deployment, Kimball crew observed four ships from the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) operating as close as 46 miles off the Aleutian Island coast. While the PLAN ships were within the U.S. exclusive economic zone, they followed international laws and norms and at no point entered U.S. territorial waters. All interactions between the Kimball and PLAN were in accordance with international standards set forth in the Western Pacific Naval Symposium's Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea and Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

The Kimball crew conducted astern refueling at sea with Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry, a fast response cutter also homeported in Honolulu. This capability significantly extends the operational range of FRCs.

Commissioned in 2019, Kimball is the Coast Guard's seventh national security cutter. These assets are 418 feet long, 54 feet wide and have a displacement of 4,600 long tons. With a

range of 13,000 nautical miles, the advanced technologies of this class are designed to support the national objective to maintain the security of America's maritime boundaries and provide long range search and rescue capabilities.