

Coast Guard Establishing an Officer Recruiting Corps



The U.S. Coast Guard is establishing an Officer Recruiting Corps as part of its plan to commission 500 officers over the next five years. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Connie Terrell

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard is establishing an Officer Recruiting Corps, the service said in a Dec. 15 internal message released by Coast Guard headquarters.

The Coast Guard expects to commission approximately 500 officers over the next five years, including the graduates of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Slightly more than half of the new officers will be accessed from sources other than the Academy.

“To better access the richness of American society to recruit a world-class workforce, the Coast Guard is establishing a dedicated Officer Recruiting Corps,” said the message, released by Rear Adm. J. M. Nunan, assistant commandant for Human Resources. “This team will focus on the sustained outreach necessary to attract the best of America’s diverse population that reflects the people we serve. As noted in the Coast Guard’s Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and in alignment with the Coast Guard Strategic Plan, having the world’s most diverse and inclusive Coast Guard is critical to our ability to succeed in an increasingly complex maritime environment.”

The message said that being prepared for a more complex future “requires us to establish a culture that supports accelerated innovation and inclusion. The full-time Officer Recruiting Corps will be well-suited to share unique perspectives on officer careers and forge the personal connections critical to attracting potential applicants. This team is an initial step

towards developing a comprehensive outreach strategy to recruit a more diverse workforce per the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and establishes a persistent and dedicated presence focused on officer recruiting.”

The new corps will recruit for all non-Academy officer accession officer programs including Officer Candidate School and Direct Commission Officer Programs, “with a special emphasis on supporting the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative at minority-serving institutions.”

The Officer Recruiting Corps initially will be staffed by one commander and four lieutenants.

Cutter Legare Returns Home after Interdicting over 7,000 Pounds of Drugs



The Coast Guard Cutter Legare (WMEC 912) crew transferred 19 suspected smugglers to federal agents at Port Everglades, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, Dec. 7, 2020. The Legare crew patrolled the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of an enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives. U.S. Coast Guard / Chief Petty Officer Charly Tautfest

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Legare returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, after an eight-week counter narcotic patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Dec. 11, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

The Legare interdicted over 7,000 pounds of contraband, with an estimated street value in excess of \$20 million and patrolled over 10,000 nautical miles throughout the Eastern Pacific, working in conjunction with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Navy, and other partner assets to combat transnational smuggling organizations operating in the maritime environment.

The Legare embarked an aircrew from Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, homeported in Jacksonville, Florida, which specializes in airborne interdiction tactics. Additionally, the crew sailed with a law enforcement detachment specializing in maritime law enforcement and surface use of force tactics.

Along with 4th Fleet assets, the Legare participated in an international naval and amphibious exercises off the coast of Manta, Ecuador. *Unitas*, or "Unity" in Latin, is the longest running annual international military exercise. The Legare crew demonstrated the Coast Guard's multi-faceted capabilities during maritime interdiction, search and rescue, and live fire gunnery exercise events in addition to participating in atypical Coast Guard events such as anti-submarine and surface warfare operations.

"Similar to our previous patrol, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to challenge our methodology and tactics, despite this, the crew always rises to the challenge ensuring protective equipment and decontamination procedures are strictly followed allowing the Legare to complete and excel in all missions," said Cmdr. Malcolm Belt, commanding officer of the Legare. "Despite all of the restrictions COVID-19 has brought upon us, the men and women of the Legare prepared for and performed magnificently during the *Unitas* exercise, an opportunity for the United States to strengthen alliances with other nations and enhance our capabilities across international borders. I am continually amazed by the families and friends shore side who support the crew serving onboard the Legare, their resolve, strength, and compassion allow the

crew to focus on the mission while deployed; we would not be where we are today without their constant and unwavering support.”

The Legare is a multi-mission 270-foot medium-endurance cutter. Missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security, and national defense operations.

Coast Guard Cutter Tampa Returns Home Following 57-day Caribbean Patrol



Fireman Lukas Kuehne, a crewmember aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Tampa, helps move drugs during a contraband transfer aboard the cutter. The cutter crew conducted a 57-day counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations patrol. U.S. Coast Guard

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Tampa returned to their homeport in Portsmouth on Dec. 12, after a 57-day counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations patrol, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

Patrolling known drug trafficking areas throughout the Caribbean and working with partner agencies and maritime patrol aircraft, the Tampa crew interdicted a vessel carrying approximately 170 pounds of cocaine worth \$1.95 million.

Additionally, in a joint operation with various law enforcement agency partners, the Tampa assisted the Coast Guard Cutter Richard Dixon, homeported in San Juan, Puerto

Rico, with the interdiction of two fishing vessels, with 26 alleged smugglers, suspected of engaging in drug trafficking.

The Tampa's efforts to combat drug smuggling in the Caribbean was part of Operation Unified Resolve, a larger effort to increase regional stability and undermine the influence of transnational criminal organizations who routinely attempt to smuggle drugs throughout the region.

"I am exceptionally proud of everything our crew accomplished during this challenging patrol," said Capt. Michael Cilenti, commanding officer of the Tampa. "Through my entire Coast Guard career, this has been one of the most dynamic patrols I have experienced, and I appreciate the resiliency and adaptability of our crew immensely. Additionally, Tampa's exceptional commitment to readiness and individual accountability allowed us to sail healthy, on time, and ready to execute our assigned missions. Of course, Tampa's operational success would not have been possible without the continuous support and encouragement from our friends and families. Their constant support allowed us to operate through the holiday season, focus on mission excellence and continue to serve our country. We could not be more grateful."

The Tampa crew also conducted migrant interdiction operations mission off the coast of Haiti as part of Operation Southeast Watch. The Tampa frequently patrolled Haitian waters, providing a law enforcement presence and deterrent to potential migrants and embarked an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, which was used as an additional asset to patrol Haitian waters for potential migrant vessels.

Coast Guard Lights LED Upgrade to Oak Island Lighthouse, N.C.



The Coast Guard lit a first-of-its-kind, LED-based rotating beacon at Oak Island Lighthouse on Caswell Beach, N.C., Dec. 7, 2020. The upgrade will provide a permanent, cost-effective, and energy-efficient solution for the lighthouse. U.S. Coast Guard

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard lit a first-of-its-kind, LED-based rotating beacon at Oak Island Lighthouse on Caswell Beach, N.C., Dec. 7, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a Dec. 8 release.

This upgrade is the Coast Guard’s first LED-based rotating beacon for an active aid to navigation and will provide a permanent, cost-effective, and energy-efficient solution for the lighthouse. Necessary renovations of the lighthouse to prepare for the new beacon began in October.

“Lighthouses have navigational and historic significance here in North Carolina,” said Lt. Brittany Akers, chief of waterways management at Coast Guard Sector North Carolina. “The Oak Island Lighthouse is especially notable as it marks the entrance to the Cape Fear River. The modernization of the light will ensure its continued reliable service to the mariner in a cost-effective way that respects the historical significance of the lighthouse.”

The Oak Island Lighthouse was completed in 1958 on property that has been in use as a Coast Guard station since the 1930s. In 2004, the lighthouse was deeded to the Town of Caswell Beach, which maintains the property. However, the Coast Guard continues upkeep of lighthouse since serves as an active aid to navigation for the Frying Pan Shoal area.

The lighthouse is currently not open for public tours due to COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Coast Guard Repatriates 12 Dominican Migrants from Illegal Voyage



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier repatriates 12 interdicted migrants and transfers two men, rescued in a separate case, to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel Dec. 7, 2020 near Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. U.S. Coast Guard SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier repatriated 12 migrants from an interdicted illegal voyage and transferred two men, who were rescued in a separate case, to a Dominican Republic navy vessel Monday near Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Dec. 7 release.

The migrant interdiction is the result of ongoing multiagency efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“I commend the performance of the Joseph Napier crew in both of these cases,” said Lt. Matthew Miller, cutter Joseph Napier commanding officer. “Their swift and assertive actions ensured the safe transfer of two rescued boaters and 12 migrants to Dominican Republic navy authorities.”

The migrant interdiction occurred Dec. 6, when the crew of a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit stopped a 35-foot makeshift boat, approximately three and half

nautical miles west of Aguadilla. Coast Guard watchstanders diverted the cutter Joseph Napier to assist.

Once on scene, the crew of the cutter Joseph Napier safely embarked 10 men and two women from the grossly overloaded boat. The crew of the Joseph Napier provided the migrants with lifejackets before embarking the Coast Guard cutter, and once they were safely aboard, they received food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

Later Sunday afternoon, Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan received a communication from a Good Samaritan aboard the motor vessel Statia Glory, who reported being on scene with a disabled vessel with two people aboard, approximately eight nautical miles south of Mona Island, Puerto Rico. The cutter Joseph Napier diverted and once on scene embarked the two men from the disabled vessel that was taking on water from incoming swells. The men, who claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals, had no life jackets, marine radio or cell phone communications onboard.

Cutter Joseph Napier is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Coast Guard Cutter to Deploy to U.S. 5th Fleet; Escort New FRCs to Bahrain



A U.S. Navy MH-60R Sea Hawk, from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 37, transfers suspected contraband to U.S.

Coast Guard National Security Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750), July 20, 2020. One of the Bertholf class of cutters will be deployed to the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of responsibility. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Andrew Langholf ARLINGTON, Va. – The Coast Guard plans to deploy one of its Bertholf-class national security cutters (NSCs) to the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of responsibility to escort some new fast response cutters for basing in the Persian Gulf, the Coast Guard Commandant said.

Speaking Dec. 3 in a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast webinar, Adm. Karl Schultz, commandant of the Coast Guard, said the NSC will deploy in 2021 through the Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea to the Persian Gulf while escorting two new Sentinel-class fast response cutters (FRCs) for duty in the Gulf.

The FRCs will be the first of six to be forward deployed to the Coast Guard's Patrol Force Southwest Asia, where they will participate in maritime security operations under the auspices of the Navy's U.S. Fifth Fleet. The 154-foot-long FRCs will replace six 110-foot-long Island-class patrol boats in the Gulf.

Schultz praised the capabilities of the service's FRCs, 41 of which have been delivered by Bollinger Shipyards. The FRCs already have been extending the Coast Guard's reach into the South Pacific from Hawaii and now Guam, with two of three FRCs for Guam already in place.

The Coast Guard has made three deployments to the Western Pacific with NSC. Bertholf and Stratton deployed there in 2019 and performed such missions as enforcing sanctions against North Korea and engaging with allied and partner nations. While the Navy destroyers USS John McCain and USS Fitzgerald were going through repairs from collisions, the two NSCs were able to assume missions and free up destroyers and cruisers for the ballistic-missile defense role in the Sea of Japan.

The Waesche deployed to the Western Pacific in 2020 but suffered a fire and is in Japan for repair. In addition, the Kimball deployed to the South Pacific for fisheries patrols near Fiji. The Bertholf was diverted from a counter-drug patrol in 2020 and sent to the Galapagos Archipelago where it used its ScanEagle unmanned aerial vehicles to observe possible Chinese fishing fleet violations of the Ecuadorian Exclusive Economic Zone.

Schultz also said the service's newest NSC, the Stone, would be deployed on its shakedown cruise in 2021 off the Atlantic coast of South America to, among several missions, counter illegal and unreported fishing violations.

Guam's Second Fast Response Cutter Arrives in Apra Harbor



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) arrives at the cutter's new homeport in Santa Rita, Guam, Nov. 30, 2020. The Oliver Henry is the second of three scheduled Fast Response Cutters (FRC) to be stationed in Guam. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Katherine Hays
SANTA RITA, Guam – The Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) arrived at its new homeport in Santa Rita, Guam on Monday, following a 10,620 nautical mile journey from Florida, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a Nov. 30 release.

During the voyage to its new homeport the crew of the Oliver Henry participated in drug interdiction operations in the Eastern Pacific while also assisting in a search for an overdue fishing vessel off Saipan.

"I am extremely proud of the crew, who did an exceptional job preparing and sailing the cutter nearly 11,000 nautical miles from Key West, Florida, to Santa Rita, Guam, during the global COVID-19 pandemic," said Lt. John Hamel, the Oliver Henry's commanding officer. "Not only did we deliver the highly capable Fast Response Cutter to our new operational area in the Western Pacific but we also conducted operations while transiting the Eastern Pacific, seizing a cocaine shipment worth \$26.7 million in support of the United States Southern Command's Operation Martillo."

The Oliver Henry is the second of three scheduled fast response cutters (FRCs) to be stationed in Guam. The FRCs are replacing the 30-year old 110-foot Island Class Patrol Boats and are equipped with advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and boast greater range and endurance.

Like the Island-class patrol boats before them the FRC's are designed as multi-mission platforms ranging from maritime law enforcement to search and rescue. The new cutters represent the Coast Guard's commitment to modernizing service assets to address the increasingly complex global Maritime Transportation System.

"Oliver Henry will significantly increase the capabilities of the Coast Guard throughout the region," said Capt. Christopher Chase, commander, Coast Guard Sector Guam. "I am excited to welcome the crew of the Oliver Henry home and look forward to them conducting operations with our partners in the near future."

The cutter is named after Oliver T. Henry Jr., an African American Coast Guardsman who enlisted in 1940 and was the first to break the color barrier of a then-segregated Service. During World War II, Henry served under Lt. Cmdr. Carlton Skinner, who later became the first civilian governor of Guam

and played a critical role in developing the Organic Act in 1950. Henry blazed a trail for minorities in the U.S. military as he climbed from enlisted ranks while serving on 10 different Coast Guard cutters, finally retiring as a chief warrant officer in 1966.

Each FRC has a standard 24-person crew. This will bring over 70 new Coast Guard members to Guam, along with a projected 100 family members. In addition to the crews of the three ships additional Coast Guard support members and their families will also be in Guam.

USCGC Seneca Returns to Homeport after Conducting Joint Maritime Operations



Coast Guard Cutter Seneca, shown here in a 2007 photo, has returned to its Portsmouth homeport after a 57-day counter-drug and humanitarian assistance patrol. U.S. Coast Guard PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Seneca returned to its homeport in Portsmouth, Virginia, after a 57-day patrol conducting counter-drug and humanitarian assistance operations in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, Nov. 20, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a Nov. 30 release.

The Seneca crew deployed with an embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron in Jacksonville, Florida. The embarked helicopter provided the cutter with aerial use of force capabilities to supplement onboard law enforcement teams.

Upon their arrival in the Pacific, Seneca crewmembers conducted joint maritime operations with the Colombian Naval vessel A.R.C. Punta Arditá. The joint operation focused on interoperability, communications, and counter-narcotics efforts.

Surface and air crews seized more than 2,750 kilograms of cocaine and 1,235 pounds of marijuana, for an estimated street value of over \$124 million. Three vessels were interdicted and a fourth disrupted through joint efforts with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Navy. These efforts resulted in the detainment of nine suspected narcotics traffickers.

“I continue to be impressed with what the crew of Seneca can accomplish,” said Cmdr. Matthew Rooney, commanding officer of the Seneca. “Operating in a pandemic environment is a challenge and the crew rose to it. We accomplished a lot in a short time. Counter-narcotics interdictions, international cooperation, hurricane assistance, and refueling at sea. This patrol encompassed many of our core missions and improved our proficiency. The crew can return home with their head held high with pride.”

Additionally, Seneca crewmembers completed three underway replenishments with the Chilean Navy Oiler Almirante Montt. The process brings two ships in close proximity to each other while at sea to transfer fuel and supplies. The Almirante Montt crew provided logistical services in a COVID-19 free and contactless environment, extending Seneca’s time on patrol.

After transiting from the Eastern Pacific to the Caribbean, the Seneca crew was tasked to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Eta on the Mosquito Coast of Honduras. The embarked helicopter crew also assisted in conducting multiple missions, which included medical evacuation, critical infrastructure reconnaissance, and identifying stranded populations and individuals in need.

The Seneca is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth and routinely deploys in support of counter-drug, migrant interdiction, fisheries, search and rescue, and homeland security missions.

Coast Guard Completes 30-Day Test of Unmanned Surface Vehicles off Hawaii



A Coast Guard prototype unmanned surface vehicle performs a test off Oahu, Hawaii, Oct. 7, 2020. The focus of the test was to explore how current and emerging technologies might be used to enhance maritime domain awareness in remote regions. U.S. Coast Guard / Coast Guard Research and Development Center
HONOLULU – The Coast Guard completed a 30-day demonstration and evaluation of unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) off Oahu, early November, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a Nov. 25 release

The focus of the test was to explore how current and emerging technologies might be used to enhance maritime domain awareness in remote regions. The test also showed ways USVs with assorted sensor capabilities might support the Coast Guard's many missions around the globe ranging from search and rescue, to law enforcement.

“It's clear that autonomous technology is a growing industry, and has great potential to enhance Coast Guard operations,” said Cmdr. Blair Sweigart, the demonstration's director from the Coast Guard Research and Development Center. “Combined

with artificial intelligence algorithms, unmanned systems could be a game changer.”

During the test the Coast Guard examined USVs from Saildrone and Spatial Integrated Systems to understand their capabilities and effectiveness. The USVs participated in a variety of operational simulations to detect and alert the Coast Guard to both legitimate and nefarious behavior.

As outlined in the Coast Guard’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022, one of the service’s main goals is to “evaluate emerging technologies, such as unmanned platforms, artificial intelligence, machine learning, network protocols, information storage, and human-machine collaboration for possible use in mission execution.”

These tests represent a commitment to those goals, allowing the Coast Guard to identify how USVs could be used to support search and rescue operations, improve Marine Environmental response, enhance Port Security, aid in the fight against illegal maritime smuggling, and identify vessels engaged in illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

“The demonstration helped us understand what these technologies currently are, and are not, capable of,” said Sweigart. “These vessels proved to be very effective across a variety of mission areas. The results of this study will help shape how the Coast Guard, and our partners, incorporate USVs into our future operations.”

With their long endurance, USVs can provide persistent domain awareness in remote regions of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. By conducting the demonstrations off Hawaii, the teams gained a firsthand understanding of how these assets could help protect the islands, and the critical resources and habitats throughout Oceania.

Many of the Coast Guard's missions require close coordination with federal, state, local, and international partners and during the tests the Coast Guard worked closely with NOAA, DHS partners, the Navy, and agencies from several partner nations who face similar issues to protect the global maritime and fishing industries.

Coast Guard Intercepts 2 Illegal Voyages off Puerto Rico Coast



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos crew destroys a 20-foot vessel as a possible danger to navigation, Nov 22, 2020, approximately 1 mile northwest of Punta Borinquen, Puerto Rico. The vessel had 13 migrants aboard, nine Dominican Republic and four Brazilian migrants including 12 adult males and one adult female. U.S. Coast Guard

MIAMI – The Coast Guard intercepted two illegal voyages Nov. 22 off the coast of Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Nov. 24 release.

Puerto Rican Border Patrol (FURA) detected a 20-foot vessel with 12 migrants aboard, 11 Dominican Republic and one Guatemalan migrant – including 11 adult males and one adult female – approximately four miles west of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier (WPC-1115) crew embarked the migrants and safely transferred them to the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos (WPC-1118) crew.

FURA detected a second 20-foot vessel with 13 migrants aboard,

nine Dominican Republic and four Brazilian migrants, including 12 adult males and one adult female, approximately 1 mile northwest of Punta Borinquen, Puerto Rico. The Joseph Tezanos crew arrived on scene and embarked the migrants who were later transferred to the Dominican Republic Navy.

“The close collaboration and efficient coordination between the Puerto Rico Border Patrol and fellow Caribbean Border Interagency group partner agencies resulted in two successful interdictions and the safe removal of all 25 migrants,” said Lt. Anthony Orr, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos. “With the consistent danger these smuggling ventures present, our crews remain vigilant to protect lives and enforce U.S. law.”

The Coast Guard has interdicted approximately 101 Dominican migrants so far this fiscal year, which began Oct. 1, 2020. In fiscal year 2020, the Coast Guard crews interdicted 1,117 Dominican migrants who attempted to illegally migrate via maritime means. These numbers represent the total number of at-sea interdictions, landings and disruptions in the Florida Straits, the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean.

All migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention once aboard a Coast Guard cutter. Throughout the interdiction Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.