Coast Guard Cutter Liberty, Final Island-Class Cutter, Decommissioned After Over 35 Years of Service

From U.S. Coast Guard 17th District, April 30, 2025

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Coast Guard decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter Liberty (WPB 1334) during a ceremony in Valdez, Tuesday.

“This decommissioning marks the end of an era for the Coast Guard,” said Cmdr. Jordan Bogosian, a former Commanding Officer of Liberty and the ceremony’s presiding official. “I am proud of Coast Guard Cutter Liberty and her faithful service to our nation for more than three decades.”

Commissioned on December 19, 1989, Liberty was the 34th Island-Class cutter to join the fleet and the final Island-Class cutter to be decommissioned from Coast Guard service.

Liberty is a 110-foot, Island-Class patrol boat, a multi-mission platform that conducted operations to support search and rescue response, marine environmental protection, and national defense.

The Coast Guard is replacing the aging Island-Class patrol boats with Sentinel-Class Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) which feature enhanced capability to meet service needs. There are currently four FRC's homeported in Alaska, with two more scheduled for delivery in the near future.

"It has been a profound honor to serve as the final commanding officer of USCGC Liberty," said Lt. D. Toler Alexander, Commanding Officer of Liberty. "I am incredibly proud of this crew and all they have accomplished. LIBERTY leaves behind a legacy of over 35 years of exceptional service to the people of the United States and the great state of Alaska. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the communities of Valdez – and Auke Bay before it – for their unwavering support and for being such welcoming homeports to the cutter and her crew."

Virtual Tools Help Real-World Suicide Prevention Efforts

A Sailor assigned to Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center tests the Oculus headset utilized for sexual assault prevention and suicide prevention virtual reality training onboard Naval Station Norfolk, November 14, 2024. *Photo credit: U.S. Navy | Harrison Cox*

Veterans, service members and military family members have significantly higher rates of suicide than the general population. The demands of military life can cause anxiety, depression, interpersonal conflicts and emotional distress. Exposure to combat and traumatic experiences can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues; chronic pain and disability from service-related injuries can worsen these challenges. Access to and familiarity with weapons increases the risk.

Reducing the risk of suicide among service members and their families is the chief mission of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, a division of the U.S. Department of Defense. It works with military branches, veterans' organizations and mental health professionals to enhance

suicide prevention resources. As part of its mission, it is constantly exploring new technology to support or expand existing programs.

Emerging technologies show great promise in the mission to reduce suicides among active-duty forces and veterans. Artificial intelligence, machine learning and advanced algorithms can help identify high-risk individuals and connect them with early intervention resources. Virtual reality technology is enhancing suicide prevention training, while VR-based therapy and online gaming provide veterans with tools to cope with PTSD and foster community engagement.

Early intervention aims to identify service members and veterans who are experiencing an elevated risk of suicide and proactively connect them with prevention resources. AI-powered algorithms can help improve early intervention efforts. These programs can analyze an individual's speech patterns, social media activity and biometric data to detect warning signs of suicidal thoughts.

One example is the Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health – Veterans Enhanced Treatment, or REACH VET, program used by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It uses predictive analytics to identify at-risk veterans and offer early intervention before a crisis occurs.

REACH VET uses sophisticated AI and machine learning techniques to review and assess a veteran's medical history, psychiatric records and prescriptions. It also considers nontraditional indicators such as chronic pain diagnoses, sleep disorders and major life stressors. The system then runs complex statistical models, evaluating each individual's data and flagging those whose health patterns resemble others who have attempted or died by suicide.

If the system identifies an individual as high-risk, a VA healthcare provider contacts them for a wellness check and

assessment. To mitigate risk, the provider offers personalized care plans, therapy sessions, medication adjustments and peer support programs. Studies show veterans enrolled in REACH VET experience lower hospitalization rates and improved mental health engagement, a point in favor of proactive, data-driven intervention.

Programs like REACH VET may see additional improvement by integrating data from wearable devices like smartwatches and fitness trackers. These devices monitor sleep patterns, heart rate variability and stress levels. Incorporating this data could offer another layer of early detection and support, alerting caregivers or medical professionals if a veteran's vitals indicate distress or elevated risk.

Real actors portray Sailors in realistic environments to allow trainees to have significant conversations. *Image credit: Moth + Flame*

VR Tech and Suicide Prevention Training

Traditional suicide prevention training is derisively and ironically referred to as "death by PowerPoint." These boring presentations convey information about available resources but do little to help service members learn what to actually do to

help a friend, comrade or family member in crisis.

New York City-based Moth+Flame, a leading developer of immersive VR training solutions, partners with the U.S. Navy and other military branches to provide state-of-the-art training programs. Although it offers many types of interactive simulations, one area of focus is suicide prevention. It provides customized training modules for each branch of service, addressing their specific environmental stressors.

Its VR training encompasses many suicide prevention strategies, including leadership development, crisis response and mental resilience. Officers can improve their ability to foster a better atmosphere for everyone's mental well-being as well as learn how to support individuals in crisis.

Unlike traditional classroom-based training, VR immerses service members in lifelike conversations where they must recognize distress signals, respond to struggling comrades and practice de-escalation techniques. Participants engage with AI-driven, emotionally responsive avatars in realistic, high-pressure scenarios. The avatars are based on real actors, which the Navy helps select to make sure they look, sound and interact as authentically and realistically as possible.

These scenarios simulate interactions with colleagues, subordinates and family members. Using VR technology, participants can rehearse difficult conversations, building their empathy and confidence in handling real-life crisis situations. As the participant responds, the program provides real-time feedback and suggestions. It also provides post-session feedback and analysis.

"So, in this goggle is a character that is a peer in crisis that the shipmate has to talk to using his or her own voice. … They will have a practical application that they guide hopefully to a successful outcome," said Matt Frost, an

account executive for Moth+Flame, speaking at the Surface Navy Association meeting in January. “We’re not making a video game. This is a real actor in a real environment.”

The biggest users of the technology in the Navy are OPNAV N-17, the Navy Culture and Force Resilience Office; Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Naval Surface Force Atlantic; and Naval Special Warfare Command, Frost said.

Studies show that VR-based training improves knowledge retention and engagement compared to PowerPoint-based instruction. Trainees must actively interact with avatars, ensuring a hands-on learning experience. Early reports suggest that VR enhances readiness and significantly boosts confidence in suicide prevention efforts among active-duty service members.

Improving Mental, Physical Wellness

Virtual reality therapy is also transforming mental health care for service members and veterans. It is especially beneficial because it offers a customizable, controlled environment to help process PTSD, anxiety and depression.

A leading program is Bravemind, which was developed in collaboration with the VA Innovation Center and the SoldierStrong charitable organization. It uses VR to facilitate prolonged exposure therapy, a treatment that helps individuals confront and reprocess traumatic memories in a safe setting.

Bravemind creates virtual environments based on real-world combat settings, allowing therapists to guide individuals through difficult memories while helping them develop coping mechanisms. Though exposure therapy is challenging, it has been proven effective in reducing PTSD symptoms and improving emotional resilience.

In addition to structured therapeutic uses, VR can help

service members manage stress during long deployments or offshore missions. VR relaxation programs can transport users to peaceful, calming environments, such as beaches, forests or familiar cities to help manage anxiety and promote well-being. Providing these tools to active-duty service members can help improve their overall health and wellness, another building block in fostering readiness and reducing psychological distress.

Legalman1st Class Alejandra Lozada, assigned to Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic, dons virtual reality equipment to complete training at SURFLANT, Aug. 6, 2024. *U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Sophie A. Pinkham*

Gaming the (Mental Health) System

First-person shooter video games can be unexpectedly helpful for individuals coping with PTSD. Hyperrealistic games like Call of Duty, Battlefield and Escape from Tarkov allow combat

veterans to experience combat-like scenarios in a safe, controlled manner, which can help them process trauma and manage stress.

These games can help players regain a sense of control and desensitization to triggers. They can also induce an adrenaline rush similar to real-life combat, allowing players to practice self-regulation in high-stress situations without real-world consequences.

However, there is another surprising benefit to FPS games, one that has nothing to do with their technological wizardry but is likely far more powerful. Service members and veterans often struggle with isolation and loneliness, feelings that sharply increase suicide risk. They may be reluctant to seek therapy or discuss their issues with their command, family members or real-world friends. Online gaming communities can provide crucial support in ways traditional resources can’t, reaching individuals who slip through the cracks of conventional support systems.

Multiplayer gaming fosters teamwork, communication and camaraderie, mirroring the bond of military units. Organizations like MilitaryGamers.com, Stack Up and Warfighter Engaged provide gaming communities centered around service members and veterans. Twitch streamer GrndPa Gamer, a veteran himself, has built a supportive online community where service members and fellow veterans can share experiences, find camaraderie and use gaming as a mental health tool.

As technology advances, VR therapy, AI-powered analytics and other developments will continue to change the landscape of suicide prevention efforts. The integration of biometric tracking, real-time clinical feedback and AI-driven therapy solutions has the potential to make suicide prevention efforts even more effective. By combining cutting-edge technology with compassionate care and community involvement, the military and veteran support organizations can provide life-saving

resources and a path toward better mental health.

Jamie L. Pfeiffer was a lawyer in Illinois, Oregon and Washington states before retiring. She is currently based in Chicago. This story first appeared in the May issue of Seapower *magazine.*

Navy Awards Contract Modification for Two Additional Virginia-Class Submarines

A Virginia-class submarine. *Photo credit: U.S. Navy*

WASHINGTON – Naval Sea Systems Command has awarded a two-ship contract modification on the existing Virginia-class submarine Block V contract to General Dynamics Electric Boat for the construction of two fiscal year 2024 Virginia-class submarines.

The award signals the Navy's commitment to maintaining its warfighting advantage in the undersea domain and continues the Virginia-class's teaming arrangement between prime contractor General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, and the major subcontractor Huntington Ingalls Shipbuilding, Newport News (HII-NNS) in Newport News, Virginia. To date, the Navy has taken delivery of 24 Virginia-class submarines, with an additional 16 now under contract.

"We recently renegotiated the planned contract to deliver this

critical capability, and appropriately share risk between the Navy and industry," said Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan. "We will be looking at all future contracts with a similar lens to ensure the appropriate level of risk sharing and value to the American taxpayer."

Contract modifications were also awarded to both Electric Boat and HII-NNS to increase workforce support and investment across nuclear shipbuilding programs.

"By investing in the nuclear shipbuilding workforce – which is a national strategic asset – we are working with our industry partners to deliver on this most critical future requirement," said Dr. Brett Seidle, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development & Acquisition.

"The contract award is the result of a highly coordinated contracting effort across the nuclear shipbuilding enterprise, to promote stability at critical suppliers as the submarine industrial base ramps up to meet a historic increase in demand for submarine production," said Program Executive Officer, Attack Submarines, Rear Adm. Jon Rucker. "We are continuing to work closely with the shipbuilders to improve construction schedules to support the Navy's need for a larger more lethal force."

"We appreciate the teamwork that resulted in these critical national security assets being put under contract," said Jason Ward, NNS vice president of submarine construction. "We understand the advantage Virginia-class submarines bring to the sailors who operate them, and our shipbuilders are working with diligence to deliver them to the fleet."

Airbus, Shield AI Partner to Integrate Autonomy on Unmanned Aerial Logistics Connector

From Airbus U.S. Space & Defense and Shield AI

WASHINGTON (April 30, 2025) – Airbus U.S. Space & Defense and Shield AI announced a teaming agreement to integrate Shield

AI’s Hivemind autonomy software on the Airbus MQ-72C Logistics Connector, an unmanned variant of the UH-72 Lakota. The collaboration will expand the platform’s mission capabilities through autonomy-enabled operations across a wide range of logistics and operational scenarios—including those under the U.S. Marine Corps’ Aerial Logistics Connector (ALC) program.

Under the agreement, Airbus U.S. Space & Defense and Shield AI will test Hivemind autonomy in collaboration with Airbus’ Helionix, advancing the future autonomous mission capabilities of the Marine Corps. The level of autonomy will be scaled during future test activities and demonstrations, ultimately leading to unmanned operations in contested logistics environments.

“The Lakota is a proven multi-mission platform that is ready to support unmanned operations in austere environments,” said Robert Geckle, Chairman and CEO of Airbus U.S. Space & Defense. “Pairing our aircraft with next-generation autonomy software opens new mission possibilities for the warfighter and allied forces worldwide.”

The effort will continue to evolve missionization over the next several years, ultimately enabling more advanced levels of autonomous flight across the Marine Corps and broader Joint Force.

“Airbus is a world-class partner with a strong track record of delivering reliable systems for the warfighter,” said Ryan Tseng, CEO of Shield AI. “The Lakota has been a mainstay of military aviation for years—a widely-fielded, trusted platform used across a range of missions. Integrating Hivemind onto this aircraft shows how autonomy can rapidly enhance proven systems to meet the demands of today’s missions, and it’s a key step toward fully autonomous, uncrewed logistics operations that are scalable, resilient, and built for the future fight.”

The Airbus U.S. team is entering the second year of the Aerial Logistics Connector Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) Rapid Prototyping Program, which aims to provide the service with aircraft prototypes to demonstrate capabilities to the warfighter through a series of operational demonstrations and experiments.

The Aerial Logistics Connector effort is one of several efforts across the Department of Defense to deliver logistical support in distributed environments during peer or near peer conflicts.

NDIA, Navy TPP Team to Grow Next-Gen Shipyard Talent

From the National Defense Industrial Association, April 29, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – The National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) is expanding its partnership with the U.S. Navy's Talent Pipeline Program (TPP) to enhance talent acquisition, training, and retention across the U.S. Navy defense industrial base (DIB). According to NDIA's *Vital Signs 2025* report, critical components of the U.S. DIB, particularly skilled trade positions, have significantly declined over recent decades. The TPP is actively reversing this trend by training, coaching, encouraging, and recognizing small and medium-sized companies to improve their Talent Acquisition and Retention systems of recruiting, training, and retaining productive and engaged workers crucial to maintaining naval supremacy.

Following a successful pilot collaboration with NDIA's

Delaware Valley Chapter, NDIA and TPP aim to broaden their engagement with Chapters across the country. The Chapters will play a critical role in expanding the reach and impact of the program.

“This partnership is vital to rebuilding our defense industrial base,” said NDIA President and CEO David Norquist. “By connecting our member companies with the Navy’s Talent Pipeline Program, we’re helping secure the skilled workforce needed for shipbuilding and strengthening both our industry and national security.”

Inspired by the shared mission, Joe Barto, program leader of the U.S. Navy Talent Pipeline Program, said he’s honored to have NDIA on the TPP team, adding: “Partnerships with national facilitators like NDIA are vital to the Talent Pipeline Program’s national rollout. Their support validates the Navy’s investment in small and medium-sized manufacturers—the backbone of American industry and the majority of NDIA’s membership. By joining the movement alongside more than 450 employers, NDIA is helping ensure companies have the talent they need to build high-performing teams.”

The Talent Pipeline Program directly addresses the U.S. Navy’s growing manufacturing production requirements by ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled talent to deliver and sustain Columbia and Virginia-class submarines, aircraft carriers, surface combatants, and vessels currently in service. This expanded initiative will reinforce U.S. naval capabilities and fortify national security in an increasingly complex global environment.

Learn more about the Talent Pipeline Program at https://dibtalentpipeline.com/ and take the TPP Realistic Program Preview at https://youtu.be/qH6Cuffyo2o

Read NDIA’s “Vital Signs 2025” here: https://www.ndia.org/policy/publications/vital-signs

Acting CNO Strengthens Relations With Industrial Base at Manufacturing Summit

Acting Chief of Naval Operations Adm. James Kilby tours training centers during the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) Summit at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), Danville, Virginia, April 29, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Vanessa White)

From the Navy Office of Information, April 30, 2025

Acting Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby attended the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) Summit at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) in Danville, Virginia, April 29.

The visit demonstrates the Navy's commitment to strengthen integration with the industrial base to maintain and modernize shipbuilding and develop and field new capabilities.

Kilby delivered the keynote address at the summit and stressed the importance of partnering with industry and harnessing innovation in the maritime industrial base to deliver and support a lethal naval force.

"I can assure you that ATDM is contributing to a national movement that is making America stronger, safer, and more secure," said Kilby. "The work you're doing matters to our military, our economy, and the future of this country."

Kilby discussed key shipbuilding and maintenance initiatives, including fielding new capabilities such as additive manufacturing.

"In our shipyards, in our manufacturing plants, and in our support organizations, we are reducing maintenance delays, and we are moving faster," said Kilby. "Every time we 3D-print a part that would otherwise take 40 weeks to procure, we are putting more capability back into the field. That is real, measurable readiness."

While at the institute, Kilby also met with industry leaders from Austal USA and toured the National Training Center and the Center for Manufacturing Advancement to review initiatives that include industrial automation, robotics, artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

ATDM was established under the direction of the Navy's Maritime Industrial Base Program to train the future workforce and operationalize an innovation hub for advanced manufacturing.

Hanwha Philly Shipyard CEO Praises Introduction of SHIPS for America Act

From Hanwha Philly Shipyard

WASHINGTON, April 30, 2025 – Today, U.S. Sens. Mark Kelly (D-Arizona) and Todd Young (R-Indiana) alongside U.S. Reps. Trent Kelly (R-Mississippi) and John Garamendi (D-California) reintroduced the SHIPS for America Act, bipartisan legislation aimed at strengthening the U.S. maritime industry in response to urgent shipbuilding needs.

As part of today's announcement, Hanwha Philly Shipyard Chief Executive Officer David Kim issued the following statement:

"Hanwha recognizes and commends U.S. Senators Mark Kelly and Todd Young and Congressmen Trent Kelly and John Garamendi for their maritime policy leadership in reintroducing the bipartisan SHIPS for America Act. This bill offers tangible incentives to the domestic maritime industry with the goal of expanding the U.S.-flagged ocean-going fleet. It supports a major recapitalization of the shipbuilding infrastructure in the U.S., provides substantial incentives for the purchase of U.S.-built commercial vessels, and supports the national security and naval shipbuilding goals of the U.S. Hanwha sees tremendous value in this legislation and believes it would have a long-term positive impact on Hanwha Philly Shipyard, other shipbuilders in the U.S. and Hanwha's investments in America's shipping industry and maritime industrial base."

HII Launching “Build It: In America, For America” Ads Celebrating U.S.-Based Manufacturing Work

From HII

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., April 30, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII), America’s largest military shipbuilder, is launching a series of 15-second television advertisements as part of its nationwide “Build It” campaign.

The video advertisements, along with the broader “Build It” campaign, celebrate the crucial manufacturing work performed in the U.S. to build and deliver platforms and technologies in support of the national defense. These include American-built U.S. Navy ships and submarines, as well as uncrewed underwater

vehicles, technologies, and networks built and integrated by HII to connect and enable today's all-domain joint force.

"'Build It' is a call to action to support the important work of building, in support of our national security," HII President and CEO Chris Kastner said. "It's hard work and deserves respect. Ultimately it helps to protect us and our families. This campaign recognizes the ongoing value and contributions of those who build careers out of building our national defense."

The ads feature actual shipbuilders, engineers and technologists who've worked for HII and who provide commentary in their own words. HII is the largest industrial employer in the commonwealth of Virginia, and in the state of Mississippi.

The "Build It" campaign supports revitalizing American manufacturing and strengthening the defense industrial base to meet the urgent, increased demand for ships and technologies by the U.S. Navy and the nation.

A playlist of the video advertisements can be found at: http://hii.com/news/hii-launching-new-build-it-in-america-for-america-ads-celebrating-u-s-based-manufacturing-work-and-workforce/.

In addition to recruiting motived talent to shipbuilding, HII is actively developing the next generation of skilled professionals through its apprenticeship programs offered in each of its three divisions. These programs offer a rigorous multi-year curriculum that combines hands-on training, academic coursework and real-world experience.

The HII apprentice schools give students a direct path to skilled careers and long-term growth in the shipbuilding industry. By blending tradition with advanced technology, HII is not just filling jobs – it's developing leaders and investing in the future of the American workforce.

This “Build It” campaign can be found across HII digital outreach and social media and through educational partnerships to bring the message directly to the next generation of American builders.

HII is hiring at all experience levels, offering paid training, competitive wages, long-term careers, and a strong sense of purpose. Jobs are available across three divisions:

- **Newport News Shipbuilding** in Virginia, builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines for the U.S. Navy.

- **Ingalls Shipbuilding** in Mississippi, builder of amphibious ships and destroyers for the U.S. Navy.

- **Mission Technologies** in Virginia, provider of digital defense and national security solutions, and the largest producer of unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs).

GA-ASI Delivers MQ-9A Block 5 Extended-Range UAS To USMC

New UAS Delivered to VMX-1

From General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

SAN DIEGO – 29 April 2025 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. (GA-ASI) delivered an MQ-9A Reaper® Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC). The new MQ-9A Block 5 Extended Range (ER) UAS was delivered on April 22, 2025, and will be operated by Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron 1 (VMX-1), a USMC operational test squadron based at Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Arizona.

The new MQ-9A UAS will be used by the USMC to perform operational tests and evaluations, as well as create Marine Aviation tactics, techniques, and procedures through experimentation as the Marines fully implement MQ-9A as a critical part of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF).

“The Marine Corps is building out its ISR capabilities with this new aircraft,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “We are excited to see what VMX-1 does in terms of operational test in preparation for pushing new capabilities into the field.”

The MQ-9A ER is designed with field-retrofittable capabilities, such as wing-borne fuel pods and reinforced landing gear, that extend the aircraft’s endurance to more than 30 hours while further increasing its operational flexibility. It provides long-endurance, persistent surveillance capabilities, with Full-Motion Video and Synthetic Aperture Radar/Moving Target Indicator/Maritime Mode Radar. An extremely reliable aircraft, MQ-9A ER is equipped with a fault-tolerant flight control system and a triple-redundant avionics system architecture. It is engineered to meet and exceed manned aircraft reliability standards.

To date, GA-ASI has delivered 18 MQ-9A UAS to USMC. The USMC awaits delivery of two additional aircraft by the end of this year.

Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun Seizes Over $74M in Cocaine Interdicted in Atlantic Ocean

A Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759) boarding team interdicts approximately 10,000 pounds of cocaine being smuggled aboard a vessel in the Atlantic Ocean, April 13, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, April 28, 2025

ATLANTIC OCEAN — The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759) seized approximately 10,000 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated $74 million in the Atlantic Ocean, April 12-13, 2025.

The seized contraband was the result of an interdiction in international waters in the Atlantic Ocean, and five suspected smugglers remain in U.S. custody pending prosecutorial disposition.

On April 12, the Calhoun, under tactical control of Coast Guard Atlantic Area, detected a suspicious fishing vessel in international waters exhibiting behavior consistent with

narcotic trafficking approximately 1,265 miles west of Las Palmas, Canary Islands. Calhoun’s crew launched a cutter small boat and interdicted the suspicious vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 10,000 pounds of cocaine.

“This interdiction demonstrates the Coast Guard’s unwavering commitment to combating transnational criminal organizations (TCOs),” said Vice Adm. Nathan Moore, commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area. “Our dedicated crews, in close coordination with interagency and international partners, continue to disrupt the flow of illicit narcotics, which serves as a critical strategic action that disrupts the financial networks of TCOs, undermining their ability to fund further illicit activities that threaten our communities.”

The Coast Guard is the United States’ lead federal maritime law enforcement agency with authority to enforce national and international laws on the high seas and waters within U.S. jurisdiction. The Coast Guard continues increased operations to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs by sea. These drugs fuel and enable cartels and TCOs to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl, threatening the United States.

Calhoun, which commissioned in 2024, is the newest of four, 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutters homeported in North Charleston, South Carolina. The cutter’s primary missions are counter-drug operations and defense readiness.

Calhoun falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is 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.