

# SECDEF Orders Renaming of USNS Harvey Milk



The John Lewis-class replenishment oiler USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO-206) conducts a replenishment at sea with the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), December 13, 2024. Photo credit: *U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Maxwell Orlosky*

According to numerous reports, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has ordered the renaming of USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO-206), a John Lewis-class oiler named after the Navy veteran and gay rights activist.

First reported by Military Times, a memorandum has ordered the changing of the name and the timing of the action, right at the beginning of Pride month, was on purpose, part of the Department of Defense objective of re-establishing a "warrior culture."

Fox News reported that further name changes may be coming

pending internal reviews.

Milk served four years in the Navy in the early 1950s, serving aboard the submarine rescue ship USS Kittiwake as a diving officer and later as a diving instructor at Naval Station San Diego. He resigned at the rank of lieutenant junior grade, leaving service rather than face a court martial for being gay, according to Wikipedia.

Later, he became the first openly gay man to be elected to public office in California as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. In late 1978, Milk and San Francisco Mayor George Moscone were shot to death by a disgruntled member of the board of supervisors, according to Wikipedia. Milk was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.

The USNS Harvey Milk, the second in the John Lewis class of oilers, was officially named in 2016 and launched in 2021. The ship is operated by Military Sealift Command.

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## **Navy Selects Mobile, Ala., Company to Scrap World's First Nuclear-Powered Aircraft Carrier**



The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier ex-USS Enterprise is shown being moved to Newport News Shipbuilding in 2013 following its decommissioning in 2012. (NHHC)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has selected NorthStar Maritime Dismantlement Services LLC, a company with facilities in Mobile, Alabama, to scrap the former USS Enterprise (CVN 65), the Navy’s – and the world’s – first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

The Defense Department said in a May 30 contract announcement that NorthStar, headquartered in Vernon, Vermont, was being awarded a \$536.7 million firm-fixed-price contract from the Naval Sea Systems Command for “the dismantling, recycling, and disposal of Ex-Enterprise (CVN 65).

“Under this contract CVN 65 will be dismantled in its entirety, and all resulting materials will be properly recycled or disposed of. Specifically, hazardous materials, including low-level radioactive waste, will be packaged and safely transported for disposal at authorized licensed sites,”

the announcement said. "Work will be performed in Mobile, Alabama, and is expected to be completed by November 2029."

The Ex-Enterprise, commissioned in 1961, served the nation in numerous crises and conflicts, including the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam War, and Operations Frequent Wind, Earnest Will, Desert Fox, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.

The carrier was deactivated in December 2012 and, when its nuclear reactors were defueled, it was decommissioned in February 2017. The hull remained at Newport News Shipbuilding at Newport News, Virginia, awaiting the Navy's plans for disposal.

"NorthStar is partnered with Modern American Recycling and Radiological Services, LLC (MARRS) in Mobile, Alabama, where the dismantlement work will take place," the Naval Sea Systems Command said in a June 2 release posted on linkedin.com. "Waste Control Specialists LLC, of Andrews, Texas, will serve as the licensed facility for disposal of low-level radiological and mixed hazardous waste. Non-hazardous materials will be recycled or disposed of in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations."

The Navy's selection of a commercial company to dismantle nuclear-powered ship is a change from its normal practice of scrapping nuclear-powered ships, which heretofore included nuclear-powered submarines and cruisers. In recent years, the Navy's Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington, has been the facility that has handled the tasks.

"By leveraging private-sector expertise in commercial nuclear power plant decommissioning, the Navy is achieving an estimated \$1 billion in cost savings compared to conducting the effort in public shipyards, the Navy release said. "This approach enables the Navy to prioritize public yard resources toward fleet readiness and modernization – while upholding its

longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship and nuclear safety.”

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# **BAE Systems Launches \$250M State-of-the-Art Shiplift and Land Level Facility in Jacksonville**



From BAE Systems, June 2, 2025

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – June 2, 2025 – BAE Systems unveiled its new shiplift and land-level repair complex during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the company’s Jacksonville, Florida shipyard. This marks a significant milestone in the \$250 million investment to transform its ship repair capabilities and solidify its role as a key partner to the U.S. Navy and

commercial maritime industry.

The ceremony brought together approximately 500 attendees, including BAE Systems employees, subcontractors, Navy personnel, shipyard neighbors, local community members, and other distinguished guests, including Acting Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jim Kilby and BAE Systems, Inc. President and CEO Tom Arseneault.

“Today marks an important milestone as we celebrate the completion of a world-class ship repair facility upgrade here in Florida. The introduction of our new shiplift and land level repair facility represents more than just progress for BAE Systems Ship Repair—it reflects a shared commitment to innovation, growth and collaboration,” Arseneault said. “Together with the United States Navy, and other key industry partners that depend on this port, we are building a stronger foundation for the future, to help maintain our maritime superiority.”

The shiplift and land level repair complex will support the maintenance and repair of Mayport-based Navy vessels and commercial ships sailing into the Port of Jacksonville. With the capacity to lift ships displacing up to 25,000 tons and accommodate multiple vessels for maintenance simultaneously ashore, the new complex expands the shipyard’s capabilities threefold.

BAE Systems’ new facility will significantly enhance production efficiency, strengthen regional maritime capabilities, and advance environmental stewardship. Its completion represents the company’s long-term initiative to bolster support for the U.S. Navy while also accommodating a broader range of commercial vessels at competitive scales.

“From my vantage point, this shiplift and land level facility is contributing to the national movement that is making America safer and more secure,” said Admiral Kilby. “It’s a

necessary element to forging a defense industrial base able to support, sustain and generate our fleet.”

The project, together with Pearlson Shiplift Corporation, Foth Engineering, and Kiewit Infrastructure South Co., replaces an 80-year-old drydock that had reached the end of its lifecycle. The state-of-the-art shiplift system’s platform spans 492 feet by 110 feet, offering a more cost-effective and efficient alternative to traditional drydocks. It will be one of the ten largest shiplift systems in the world and the largest in the Americas.

The first vessel lift in the facility is anticipated later this month.

BAE Systems is a leading provider of ship repair, maintenance, and modernization services to the U.S. Navy’s fleet of combatant ships in their homeports; refit and hauling services for commercial and privately held vessels; and fabrication services for the submarine industrial base. The company operates three full-service shipyards in California, Florida, and Virginia, and offers a highly skilled, experienced workforce; a large team of suppliers and subcontractors; seven dry docks and railways; and significant pier space and ship support services.

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**SEAL Nominated for 4th Star,  
Commander of U.S. Special  
Operations Command**



ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced June 3 that the president has nominated Navy Vice Adm. Frank M. Bradley for appointment to the grade of admiral, with assignment as commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

If confirmed by the Senate, Bradley would succeed Army General Bryan P. Fenton.

Bradley currently serves as commander, Joint Special Operations Command/commander, Joint Special Operations Command Forward, U.S. Special Operations Command, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Below is Bradley's official biography from the Navy's website:

“Vice Adm. Frank M. Bradley is a U.S. Navy SEAL Officer and a

native of Eldorado, Texas. Bradley is a 1991 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, where he studied physics and was a varsity gymnast. He began his career as a SEAL after completing Basic Underwater Demolition school (BUDs/SEAL) Class 179 in 1992. Bradley earned a Master's in Physics from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, where he received a provisional patent for his research in 2006.

“He has commanded at all levels of special operations, including Special Operations Command Central, leading joint special operations throughout the Middle East and South Asia. He commanded Naval Special Warfare Development Group, has multiple tours in command of joint task forces, and was among the first to deploy to Afghanistan following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Additionally, he has served with SEAL Team FOUR, SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team TWO, and the Italian Incursori (Italian SEALs) as an international exchange officer.

“His staff duty has included service as assistant commander, Joint Special Operations Command, JSOC's J-3 Technical Operations Division Chief and Deputy J-3, vice deputy director for Global Operations for the Joint Staff J-3; executive officer for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., and deputy director for CT Strategy for the Joint Staff J-5.”

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**RTX's Raytheon Awarded \$536 million US Navy Contract for**

# SPY-6 Family of Radars



*Contract provides continued integration and test support for the U.S. Navy's most advanced maritime radar*

From RTX, June 3, 2025

ANDOVER, Mass. (June 3, 2025) – Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, has been awarded a \$536 million contract from the U.S. Navy for the [SPY-6 family of radars](#). The contract is a follow-on to the previously awarded [Integration and Production Support contract](#) and includes upgrading Flight IIA destroyers with the SPY-6(V)4 variant.

Under the sole source award, Raytheon will provide continued support for the SPY-6 family of radars through training, engineering services, ship installation, integration and testing, as well as software upgrades to enhance radar capabilities.

“SPY-6 is the most advanced radar in the U.S. naval fleet, providing ships a new level of defense against evolving threats,” said Barbara Borgonovi, president of Naval Power at

Raytheon. “This contract highlights the essential role of this technology in supporting the U.S. Navy’s technology roadmap for several decades to come.”

SPY-6 is now installed on two new U.S. Navy ships, with three additional ships slated for installation and undergoing various stages of testing in 2025. Over the next decade, SPY-6 is expected to be deployed on more than 60 U.S. Navy ships, enhancing defense against air, surface, and ballistic threats.

Work on this contract is expected to be completed by May 2026.

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## **SECNAV PheLAN Makes Inaugural Visit to NPS**



Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan speaks with students about their research projects during a visit to the Naval Postgraduate School, May 29. *Photo credit: U.S. Marine Corps | Cpl. Chloe N. McAfee*

The Honorable John Phelan, 79th Secretary of the Navy, visited the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, California, May 29.

“We were very pleased to host Secretary Phelan and show him all that NPS has to offer in support of his priorities,” said retired U.S. Navy Vice Admiral Ann Rondeau, NPS president. “A more lethal and ready naval force includes cognitive readiness, and NPS graduates effective, innovative, technologically competent leaders necessary to ensure U.S. seapower.”

Phelan met with NPS senior leaders and faculty, and toured the campus engaging with the school’s mid-career military students to hear about their studies and applied research whose recent operational experience informs their work.

“The Naval Postgraduate School is one of the world’s preeminent institutions of military education.” said Phelan. “I want our best warfighters coming to NPS to develop their intellectual edge and turn their insights into real-world solutions for our Navy and Marine Corps.”

Several NPS students had an opportunity to present their research to Phelan showcasing their innovative work in ship systems engineering, acquisition reform, artificial intelligence, ocean sensing, autonomy, space and additive manufacturing.

“I am looking for ways to adapt and adopt industry innovation at greater speeds to modernize our Navy,” Phelan said to the students. “We need to equip our leaders with the knowledge and skills to help evolve technology solutions at the pace of modern combat, and I see this happening now at NPS.”

Modernization was another key theme of Phelan’s visit, and from information technology to labs, the NPS modernization plan aims to completely overhaul aging buildings and outfit them with technology upgrades. Phelan also toured the recently completed Bullard Hall, home to NPS’ System Engineering and Space Systems programs.

Reflecting on his visit, Phelan said, “It was a real pleasure meeting NPS students and faculty yesterday and seeing how they’re working with industry to bring innovation, capability and cost control to our warfighting domains. We need to do things faster, smarter and cheaper, and NPS has the ability to play a major role in that mission.”

Established in 1909, NPS provides defense-focused graduate education, including classified studies and interdisciplinary research, to advance the operational effectiveness, technological leadership and warfighting advantage of the Naval service. Located in Monterey, California, NPS offers master’s and doctoral programs for U.S. military and

civilians, federal agencies, allied militaries and partner nations.

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## **Trump's MARAD Pick Signals Commercial Maritime Focus**



ARLINGTON, Va. – President Donald Trump's decision to nominate former Maersk executive Stephen Carmel to lead the Maritime Administration, replacing retired Navy submarine commander Brent Sadler as the nominee, signals a strategic pivot toward commercial maritime expertise as the administration pursues its ambitious shipbuilding revival agenda.

The nominee switch reflects the administration's belief that rebuilding America's maritime industrial base requires deep industry experience rather than purely military credentials. Carmel's four decades in commercial shipping – from tanker captain to corporate executive – align with Trump's emphasis

on taking a business approach to maritime challenges.

### **From Bridge to Boardroom**

Carmel brings a rare combination of operational and executive experience to MARAD. A 1979 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, he achieved his first command – a 40,000-ton clean product tanker – at age 26, according to his biography at the academy where he now serves on the Board of Visitors.

“Steve began his career sailing as a deck officer and Master primarily on tankers for Maritime Overseas Corporation and Military Sealift Command,” his USMMA biography states, before transitioning to corporate roles at Maersk Line Limited, where he served as senior vice president for maritime services.

Currently president of U.S. Marine Management LLC, Carmel was a Ph.D. candidate at Old Dominion University.

The Trump Administration’s April executive order establishing a Maritime Action Plan emphasized commercial competitiveness over traditional military-centered thinking. A fact sheet on the White House website claims that 0.2% of the world’s ships are built by the United States, compared to 74% built by China.

Carmel’s experience with Maersk Line Limited – a major participant in the Maritime Security Program – provides some insight into the public-private partnerships the administration seeks to expand. His corporate background appears to be seen as a plug as the administration focuses on expanding the U.S.-flag fleet for both international and domestic trade, and as MARAD implements new initiatives including the Maritime Security Trust Fund and Maritime Prosperity Zones.

“Steve knows maritime, he knows the American Flag, and he sailed commercially in the U.S. Merchant Marine,” said Dredging Contractors of America CEO William Doyle in

supporting the nomination.

Carmel's selection follows the administration's pattern of choosing industry veterans for key maritime positions, including the creation of a new Office of Maritime and Industrial Capacity at the National Security Council. This approach contrasts with previous administrations' emphasis on military appointees for these types of roles.

If confirmed, Carmel would become the first MARAD administrator since 2005 to hold a Master's Unlimited license, underscoring the administration's preference for hands-on maritime experience.

His advisory experience on the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel and Naval Studies Board provides some additional government experience, potentially easing coordination between defense and transportation maritime programs.

### **Implementation Challenges Ahead**

The nominee inherits a MARAD facing significant personnel challenges, with approximately 12% of authorized positions vacant, according to recent reports. If confirmed, he will be a key figure in Trump's ambitious maritime agenda, including expanded shipbuilding incentives and Arctic strategy development.

Carmel has corporate experience managing profit-and-loss responsibility for complex vessel operations, which may be helpful as MARAD balances expanded responsibilities with constrained resources.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology will consider Carmel's nomination as the administration pushes to implement its Maritime Action Plan. With Trump promising to "resurrect the American shipbuilding industry," Carmel's confirmation could signal a new commercial-first era in the

U.S. maritime industry.

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# USS Harry S. Truman Strike Group Returns from 8-Month Deployment



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (May 19, 2025) The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman, right, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), center, and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64) sail in the Mediterranean Sea. USS Harry S. Truman, the flagship of the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (HSTCSG), is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations supporting U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa to defend U.S., allied and partner interests. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mike Shen)

[by Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs](#), June 2, 2025

NORFOLK, Va. – The flagship of the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group returned to its homeport of Norfolk, Virginia on June 1, following an eight-month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operations.

The strike group, which departed for deployment in September 2024, consisted of USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64), Arleigh Burke-class destroyers USS Stout (DDG 55) and USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109) of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 28, and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 1 with nine embarked squadrons.

While sailing across Europe and the Middle East, the strike group conducted a wide range of missions, including exercises with NATO Allies and combat operations in the Red Sea.

“The performance of every Sailor and asset in our strike group has been nothing short of exceptional,” said Rear Adm. Sean Bailey, commander of HSTCSG. “I am immensely proud of my team. They have repeatedly proven time and again that they are warfighters who stand ready for anything. As we return home, it is truly gratifying to reunite our Sailors with their families and friends who have supported them throughout this journey.”

The strike group operated in the North Sea during NATO’s Neptune Strike 24-2 and supported maritime and air presence operations with ships from Portugal, Norway, and Italy. Italian frigate ITS Carabiniere (F 593) also deployed alongside the strike group during operations in Europe.

Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group made port calls to Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Spain, France, Croatia and Greece while deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations, promoting peace through strength.

On Feb. 1, while operating in support of U.S. Africa Command

from the Red Sea, the strike group supported a large-scale airstrike and delivered 124,000 pounds of ordnance against ISIS-Somalia operatives.

“Throughout this deployment, our aviators showed immense proficiency and professionalism while striking Houthi targets across Yemen and defending the strike group and merchant vessels from threats,” said Capt. Leslie Mintz, commander of CVW-1. “I could not be prouder of the dedication and hard work of all the maintainers, ordnance handlers, administrative, and logistics support for their work keeping our aircraft flying, aviators safe, and ordnance ready to drop around the clock.”

In March, the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group led initial strikes against Iran-backed Houthi targets in Yemen during U.S. Central Command’s Operation Rough Rider. The strike group launched Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles and precision airstrikes for more than 50 days, conducting continuous operations to degrade Houthi capabilities and disrupt threats to commercial shipping.

“These warrior Sailors demonstrated superb grit for more than eight months,” said Capt. Chris Hill, commanding officer of USS Harry S. Truman. “Even in the face of significant challenges, they persevered, never giving up when their nation needed them. It’s been an honor to serve alongside such dedicated professionals and to take them home to their families.”

During the deployment, the Harry S. Truman strike group completed more than 13,000 sorties and 25,000 flight hours, and the ships sailed over 240,000 nautical miles combined.

The strike group’s mission is to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea and maintain a forward presence through sea control and power projection capabilities.

For more information, visit DVIDS at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/CVN75>.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime ready forces to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

For more U.S. 2nd Fleet news and photos, visit [facebook.com/US2ndFleet](https://www.facebook.com/US2ndFleet), X – [@US2ndFleet](https://twitter.com/US2ndFleet), and <https://www.linkedin.com/company/commander-u-s-2nd-fleet>.

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## **Coast Guard Cutter Diligence Returns Home After 61-day Counter-Drug and Fisheries Patrol**



Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616) crew members seize approximately 40 pounds of cocaine from a disabled sailing vessel in the Caribbean Sea, April 24, 2025. Diligence's crew conducted a 61-day counter-drug and fisheries patrol in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of America. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)  
From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, June 2, 2025

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616) returned to their home port in Pensacola, May 21, following a 61-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of America, where crew members conducted counter-drug operations and fisheries boardings to enforce U.S. federal law at sea and protect America's maritime boundary.

Diligence deployed in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South (JIATF-S) while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard

District's area of responsibility. Crew members worked closely with international and interagency partners to disrupt drug trafficking ventures in the Caribbean Sea.

While at sea, the crew interdicted two separate drug-smuggling vessels suspected of drug trafficking and provided logistical support to partners for several additional interdictions.

On April 12, Diligence interdicted a vessel suspected of drug smuggling. After a pursuit and use of disabling fire, crew members gained control of the go-fast style vessel. After retrieving 28 bales of jettisoned marijuana, the crew of Diligence seized approximately 1,660 pounds of marijuana in total and apprehended the three suspected smugglers on board.

On April 23, a military patrol aircraft located a disabled sailing vessel approximately 170 miles off Colombia. [Coast Guard Cutter Diligence](#)'s crew boarded the vessel and seized approximately 40 pounds of cocaine.

During patrol, Diligence worked with the Royal Netherlands navy offshore patrol vessel HNLMS Groningen (P 843), U.S. Navy assets, Tactical Law Enforcement Team – Pacific (PACTACLET), and Coast Guard Cutters Campbell (WMEC 909), Venturous (WMEC 625) and John Patterson (WPC 1153). The collective interoperability of these units highlights the importance of multi-national and interagency cooperation in support of maritime counter-drug operations.

While underway in the Eighth Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, the crew conducted fisheries enforcement missions while underway in the Gulf of America. While patrolling near the maritime boundary line near Mexico, Diligence's law enforcement teams conducted five boardings of U.S. commercial fishing vessels. These inspections ensured compliance with federal safety standards and fishery management regulations, supporting the Coast Guard's mission to promote safe and sustainable fishing practices.

While moored in Galveston, Texas, Diligence was opened to the public and the crew provided over 100 tours, sharing information about the ship and the Coast Guard's missions.

"Our success during this recent patrol is tied to a much broader effort that includes regional and interagency partners, said Cmdr. Nolan Cain, commanding officer of Diligence. "The crew continues to work incredibly hard to secure the maritime border and bring narcotics traffickers to justice. A special thanks to the City of Galveston for hosting us during two port calls."

Based in San Diego, California, PACTACLET personnel provide counter-narcotic law enforcement capabilities and support the interdiction, apprehension and processing of suspected drug smugglers. PACTACLET members are skilled in law enforcement boarding procedures at sea and are critical for mission execution.

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. JIATF-S, in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard for the interdiction and apprehension phases. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Seventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami.

Diligence is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. Its primary missions include counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard,

visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go.uscg.mil/GoCoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer, and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

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## Coast Guard Cutter William Hart Returns Home



A crew member of Coast Guard Cutter William Hart (WPC 1134) embraces his family on the pier at Coast Guard Base Honolulu, May 31, 2025. The crew of the William Hart traveled more than 7,000 nautical miles during their 46-day patrol of Oceania. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Avery Tibbets)

Coast Guard 14th District External Affairs, May 31, 2025

HONOLULU – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter William Hart (WPC

1134) returned to Honolulu Saturday following a 46-day patrol in support of Coast Guard District Fourteen's Operation Blue Pacific in Oceania.

The William Hart crew departed Coast Guard Base Honolulu in April and traveled more than 7,000 nautical miles spanning from the Hawaiian Islands to the Kingdom of Tonga. Patrolling in support of Operation Blue Pacific, the cutter's crew worked alongside Pacific Island Countries to enhance maritime domain awareness, combat illegal fishing activities and reinforce a shared commitment to maritime governance and regional stability.

Reinforcing U.S. border security and territorial integrity, the William Hart crew also patrolled U.S. and neighboring Exclusive Economic Zones, including those in American Samoa. These operations advanced the United States' commitment to securing our borders and maritime approaches to detect, deter, and interdict illegal activities and threats to the homeland.

Leveraging existing bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements, the William Hart crew conducted seven vessel boardings and seven observation reports alongside Pacific Island law enforcement partners within the respective exclusive economic zones. The cutter's crew also conducted two fishery boardings on the high seas in concert with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing within the region.

During William Hart's patrol, the crew made port calls in American Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. The crew hosted tours for members of the Fijian Navy, U.S. Embassy Nuku'alofa, and the Tongan Royal Navy. The crew also engaged with the next generation of maritime professionals, providing tours for students from the National University of Samoa Maritime School and the Ministry of Police Maritime Division. A sporting event hosted by the Tongan Royal Navy, alongside personnel from an

Australian naval vessel, further solidified regional camaraderie. In Samoa, a dinner hosted by the Australian Embassy served to strengthen diplomatic and maritime partnerships.

“This patrol emphasizes the Coast Guard’s vital role in promoting maritime security and regional stability throughout Oceania, while safeguarding U.S. interests” said Lt. Cmdr. Stephen A. Hills, commanding officer of the William Hart. “Our crew worked alongside our Pacific partners to strengthen maritime governance, counter illegal fishing and narcotics trafficking and build lasting relationships that enhance safety and sovereignty across the region.”

The William Hart is the third 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter homeported in Honolulu. The cutter’s primary missions are maritime law enforcement, search and rescue and national defense.