Coast Guard Cutter Juniper returns to homeport after completing a 43-day Operation Blue Pacific patrol

SEAPOWER
The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

Release from Coast Guard 14th District

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HONOLULU – The Coast Guard Cutter Juniper (WLB 201) returns to homeport in Honolulu after a mission in the Pacific to deter illegal fishing and support partner nation's sovereignty as part of Operation Blue Pacific.

The crew of the Juniper departed Honolulu mid-January and covered approximately 8,200 nautical miles in the effort to assist Pacific Island partners in protecting maritime governance and a rules-based international order to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"Combining efforts to deter illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing throughout Oceania is more important than ever," said Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Bonner, the Juniper's commanding officer. "It was an honor for the Juniper crew to have the opportunity to work with our Fijian partners in assisting them in patrolling their exclusive economic zone."

The Juniper embarked four Fijian shipriders representing Fiji's Police Force, Ministry of Fisheries, Revenue and Customs, and the Republic of Fiji Navy who spent multiple days

underway with the crew.

With support from members of the Juniper, USCG TACLET Pacific, and a Mandarin linguist from the U.S. Marine Corps, the Fijian Shipriders were able to utilize cutter resources to patrol Fijian waters and conduct a fishery boarding in the effort to deter IUU fishing within their EEZ.

While in Suva, Fiji, the Juniper crew hosted U.S. Ambassador Marie Damour and conducted tours for multiple agencies including Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries, Revenue and Customs, and Maritime Safety Authority. Multiple Juniper crewmembers visited the William Cross College with representatives from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Embassy, and Republic of Fiji Navy to speak with senior-grade students and hold group discussions about the topic of overcoming gender bias. An interagency rugby match with the Republic of Fiji Navy took place that very same day at the historic Albert's Park in Suva.

After departing Fiji, the Juniper crew transited to American Samoa where they serviced multiple aids to navigation (ATON) in Pago Pago Harbor and on Ta'u Island.

"It is our pleasure to support American Samoa's maritime transportation system by utilizing our crew's multi-mission capabilities," said Lt. j.g. Pryor Miller, the Juniper's operations officer. "Servicing ATON in the Pacific is essential to providing the needed infrastructure to maintain a maritime transportation system that promotes economic prosperity and an uninterrupted flow of maritime commerce."

Throughout the entirety of the patrol, Juniper boarding teams conducted multiple boardings and observation reports of fishing vessels under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), which strives to protect the region's fish stocks on the high seas. The WCPFC has 26 member nations and 7 participating territories, 18 of which have enforcing authority, including the United States.

Operation Blue Pacific is an overarching multi-mission Coast Guard endeavor, promoting security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania while strengthening relationships between partner nations in the Pacific.

The Juniper is a 225-foot seagoing buoy tender home-ported in Honolulu and is responsible for maintaining aids to navigation, performing maritime law enforcement, port and coastal security, search and rescue and environmental protection.