

Coast Guard Cutter Kimball Returns Home Following Bering Sea Deployment



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) conducts a passing exercise with the Royal Canadian Navy ship HMCS Regina while Kimball patrols the Bering Sea, July 18, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign James Bongard.)

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HONOLULU – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) returned to their home port at Base Honolulu, Thursday, after completing a 122-day patrol in the Northern Pacific, Bering Sea, and American Arctic.

Kimball's crew patrolled in support of Operation Alaskan Groundfish Enforcer, Alaskan Sentinel and Bering Shield, promoting maritime governance by enforcing domestic fishery

regulations while countering illicit maritime activity from foreign fleets along the maritime boundary line.

Kimball's crew detected four Chinese surface combatants operating in vicinity of the Amchitka and Amukta Passage within the U.S. exclusive economic zone in early July. Under Operation Frontier Sentinel, Kimball monitored the Chinese vessels, meeting presence with presence to ensure there were no disruptions to U.S. interests in the maritime environment around Alaska.

Kimball's crew interacted with strategic partners in Victoria, Canada, strengthening relationships by focusing on shared interests in the Bering Sea and the expanding Arctic region. Kimball's command cadre met with senior leadership from the Royal Canadian Navy at the Canadian Maritime Forces Pacific and Joint Task Force Pacific headquarters, participating in geopolitical analysis briefs and roundtable discussions on enhancing joint maritime domain awareness in the Arctic. The visit included tours of the HMCS Ottawa, HMCS Corner Brook and culminated later in the patrol with a passing exercise with HMCS Regina, promoting interoperability with the Royal Canadian Navy and simultaneously advancing the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy through U.S. sea-service engagements.

Showcasing law enforcement expertise, Kimball's crew ensured fishing vessels in the Bering Sea were within compliance of all federal fishery conservation laws and safety requirements through the completion of twenty living marine resources boardings. Kimball's boarding team identified one vessel operating in violation of U.S. fisheries regulations, resulting in a \$4,500 violation from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) office of law enforcement.

Kimball's crew protected U.S. economic interests monitoring foreign fishing vessels along the maritime boundary line, preventing U.S. economic exclusion zone incursions. Kimball's

law enforcement teams conducted a joint boarding with Customs and Border Protection and NOAA of a foreign flagged reefer vessel to inspect fish bait being imported into the United States strengthening federal partnerships in the region.

While operating in the Bering Sea, the crew demonstrated the multi-mission agility of the national security cutter's advanced command-and-control capabilities by coordinating Alaskan based Coast Guard air and surface assets, forming dynamic force packages that dramatically enhanced the nation's offshore search and rescue (SAR) abilities. Kimball operated with a forward deployed MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and aircrew in Cold Bay, Alaska, and the District Seventeen command center to execute complex SAR exercises for improving, coordination, response times, and range of rotary Coast Guard assets to assist mariners in distress.

Additionally, Kimball's crew was instrumental in conducting a proof of concept fueling at sea with the Coast Guard Cutter Bailey Barco (WPC-1122), a fast response cutter (FRC) homeported in Ketchikan, Alaska. This successful evolution extended the endurance of the Bailey Barco and resulted in Bailey Barco's crew conducting over 10 vessel boardings in Bristol Bay, Alaska, an area not routinely accessed by FRCs due to logistical constraints.

During port visits in Alaska, Kimball's crew engaged with local communities. In Nome, crewmembers engaged with the tribal leadership and conducted two community outreach events, including public training and engagements for "Kids Don't Float," a statewide initiative to prevent youth drowning incidents. Kimball crewmembers demonstrated the importance of proper life jacket use and cold immersion survival. While in Dutch Harbor, crewmembers volunteered for community events including staging tents and site facilities for summer cultural camps.

"This crew excelled at operating in one of the harshest

maritime environments, rising to the challenge of meeting presence with presence when encountering strategic competitors, ensuring the safety and security of U.S. fishermen, engaging with local communities, and providing overarching SAR coverage throughout the Bering Sea” said Capt. Robert Kinsey, Kimball’s commanding officer. “The Coast Guard is a key domestic and international Arctic security leader, shaping the region to promote rule of law and prevent foreign malign influence. I couldn’t be more proud of the crew’s professionalism, dedication, and ability to work together with our partners, foreign and federal, to deliver mission excellence for the American people.”

Commissioned in 2019, Kimball is one of ten commissioned Coast Guard legend-class national security cutters and one of two homeported in Honolulu. National security cutters are 418-feet long, 54-feet wide, and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed more than 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, and can hold a crew of up to 170. National security cutters routinely conduct operations throughout the Pacific and Atlantic, where their combination of range, speed, and ability to operate in extreme weather provides the mission flexibility necessary to conduct vital strategic missions.

The namesake of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kimball is Sumner Increase Kimball, who was organizer of the United States Life-Saving Service and the General Superintendent of the Life-Saving Service from 1878–1915. The ship’s motto is “Wield the Paddles Together: Work Together.”

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