

Coast Guard Decommissions Bahrain-based Cutters Aquidneck, Adak



Coast Guardsmen present pennants from the USCGC Adak (WPB 1333) and USCGC Aquidneck (WPB 1309) during the decommissioning ceremony for Adak and Aquidneck onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, June 15. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dawson Roth*

MANAMA, Bahrain – After more than 30 years of active service, U.S. Coast Guard Island-class patrol boats USCGC Aquidneck (WPB 1309) and USCGC Adak (WPB 1333) were decommissioned in a ceremony aboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, June 15, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area announced.

Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, was in attendance to honor the years of service Aquidneck, Adak, and their crews, provided to the Coast Guard.

“Thank you to every single crew member who has ever served aboard Aquidneck and Adak, from the plank owners to the final crew and all the crews in between,” said Poulin. “You selflessly volunteered to deploy from your family, friends, and home, accepting the inherent risks and adversities to serve your country. You built a legacy for these two cutters that will not soon be forgotten.”

As part of the Coast Guard’s Fast Response Cutter program, the service is acquiring 64 fast response cutters total, with six of those assigned to U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. Aquidneck and Adak were replaced by the Sentinel-class FRCs USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) and USCGC Robert Goldman (WPC 1142), which arrived at NSA Bahrain on May 25.

Aquidneck's namesake comes from Aquidneck Island in Rhode Island. It was originally homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, and later shifted to Fort Macon, North Carolina. It was employed in search and rescue, counter-drug, and other law enforcement operations domestically for more than 16 years.

Adak's namesake comes from Adak Island in Alaska. It was originally stationed in Sandy Hook, New Jersey, in 1991 and laid claim to the third-largest cocaine bust in Coast Guard history when the crew stopped a fishing vessel off the coast of New York. In August 1994, it took part in Operation Able Vigil, which rescued over 29,000 Cuban migrants from unsafe rafts and makeshift craft attempting to reach American shores. The operation consisted of over 50 Coast Guard cutters and U.S. Navy ships, making it the largest Coast Guard-led naval operation since World War II.

In late 2002, Aquidneck and Adak received orders to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Within one week of their arrival in Bahrain, they were underway conducting maritime interdiction operations in the North Arabian Gulf.

For the next 18 years, the two cutters remained forward deployed out of Bahrain under U.S. Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, attached to Commander, Task Force 55, conducting operations to ensure the free flow of commerce throughout the region's critical waterways.

Patrol Force Southwest Asia is composed of six patrol vessels, shoreside mission support personnel, and the Maritime Engagement Team. They play a crucial role in maritime security, maritime infrastructure protection, and theater security cooperation in the region. The unit also supports other U.S. Coast Guard deployable specialized forces operating throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

Commander, Task Force 55 operates in the U.S. 5th Fleet area

of operations, supporting naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and Pacific through the Western Indian Ocean and three critical chokepoints to the free flow of global commerce.