

Guam's Second Fast Response Cutter Arrives in Apra Harbor



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) arrives at the cutter's new homeport in Santa Rita, Guam, Nov. 30, 2020. The Oliver Henry is the second of three scheduled Fast Response Cutters (FRC) to be stationed in Guam. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Katherine Hays

SANTA RITA, Guam – The Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) arrived at its new homeport in Santa Rita, Guam on Monday, following a 10,620 nautical mile journey from Florida, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a Nov. 30 release.

During the voyage to its new homeport the crew of the Oliver Henry participated in drug interdiction operations in the Eastern Pacific while also assisting in a search for an overdue fishing vessel off Saipan.

"I am extremely proud of the crew, who did an exceptional job preparing and sailing the cutter nearly 11,000 nautical miles from Key West, Florida, to Santa Rita, Guam, during the global COVID-19 pandemic," said Lt. John Hamel, the Oliver Henry's commanding officer. "Not only did we deliver the highly capable Fast Response Cutter to our new operational area in the Western Pacific but we also conducted operations while transiting the Eastern Pacific, seizing a cocaine shipment worth \$26.7 million in support of the United States Southern Command's Operation Martillo."

The Oliver Henry is the second of three scheduled fast response cutters (FRCs) to be stationed in Guam. The FRCs are replacing the 30-year old 110-foot Island Class Patrol Boats and are equipped with advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and boast greater range and endurance.

Like the Island-class patrol boats before them the FRC's are designed as multi-mission platforms ranging from maritime law enforcement to search and rescue. The new cutters represent the Coast Guard's commitment to modernizing service assets to address the increasingly complex global Maritime Transportation System.

"Oliver Henry will significantly increase the capabilities of the Coast Guard throughout the region," said Capt. Christopher Chase, commander, Coast Guard Sector Guam. "I am excited to welcome the crew of the Oliver Henry home and look forward to them conducting operations with our partners in the near future."

The cutter is named after Oliver T. Henry Jr., an African American Coast Guardsman who enlisted in 1940 and was the first to break the color barrier of a then-segregated Service. During World War II, Henry served under Lt. Cmdr. Carlton Skinner, who later became the first civilian governor of Guam and played a critical role in developing the Organic Act in 1950. Henry blazed a trail for minorities in the U.S. military as he climbed from enlisted ranks while serving on 10 different Coast Guard cutters, finally retiring as a chief warrant officer in 1966.

Each FRC has a standard 24-person crew. This will bring over 70 new Coast Guard members to Guam, along with a projected 100 family members. In addition to the crews of the three ships additional Coast Guard support members and their families will also be in Guam.