

U.S. Coast Guard accepts delivery of 63rd Fast Response Cutter named for 9/11 hero



Lt. Hayden Carter (second from left), commanding officer of USCGC Jeffrey Palazzo (WPC 1163), shakes hands with Allen Harker (left), contracting officer for the Fast Response Cutter Project, during an acceptance ceremony in Key West, Florida, on June 11, 2026. The cutter is named for Jeffrey Palazzo, a New York City firefighter and U.S. Coast Guard reservist who made the ultimate sacrifice on Sept. 11, 2001, while responding to the attacks on the World Trade Center. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign Carly Logan)

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KEY WEST – The U.S. Coast Guard accepted delivery of the 63rd Fast Response Cutter, Jeffrey Palazzo (WPC 1163), on Thursday

in Key West.

Jeffrey Palazzo is the fifth FRC to be homeported in Guam, joining the recently commissioned Vincent Danz (WPC 1162).

The Sentinel-class FRCs replaced the 1980s Island-class 110-foot patrol boats and possess 21st-century command, control, communications, computers, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment, with improved habitability and seakeeping. The U.S. Coast Guard ordered a total of 77 FRCs to date to perform a range of missions, including countering illicit maritime activities, search and rescue, bilateral and multilateral international operations, and the national defense of ports, waterways, and coastal areas.

Each FRC is named after an enlisted U.S. Coast Guard hero who performed extraordinary service in the line of duty. Jeffrey Palazzo was a New York City firefighter and U.S. Coast Guard reservist who made the ultimate sacrifice on Sept. 11, 2001, while responding to the attacks on the World Trade Center. Palazzo served in the Coast Guard Reserves as a Machinery Technician 1st Class aboard the cutter Cape Horn out of Station Rockaway, responding to many high-profile incidents and large-scale emergencies.

In 1993, he was on the first Coast Guard boat to discover the Golden Venture, a cargo ship that ran aground carrying more than 200 Chinese immigrants and was credited with saving dozens of people from the water. After eight years of active duty in the Coast Guard, Palazzo joined the New York City Fire Department in 1996 while continuing to serve in the Reserves. In the spring of 2001, he joined Staten Island's elite Rescue Squad 5. On Sept. 11, Palazzo responded to the World Trade Center as part of the massive emergency response. He and 10 members of Rescue Squad 5 served their last shift that day. His actions that day embodied the Coast Guard's core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty.

FRCs homeported in the U.S. territory of Guam extend the U.S. Coast Guard and Oceania District's operational reach across the Pacific, conducting maritime security operations, combating illegal fishing, supporting search and rescue missions, and strengthening partnerships with Pacific Island nations and Allies. These cutter crews are essential to maintaining a safe, secure, and prosperous Pacific in one of the world's most expansive maritime regions. The Jeffrey Palazzo will join the Vincent Danz, commissioned in May 2026, the Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139), Oliver Henry (WPC 1140), and Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143), all commissioned in Guam.

Since their 2021 commissioning, Guam's FRC crews have distinguished themselves across the region, most recently responding to the impacts of Super Typhoon Sinlaku on communities in the Marianas and conducting regional patrols. USCGC Myrtle Hazard's crew became the first to operationalize the bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement with Papua New Guinea, conducting joint patrols and boardings in 2023. USCGC Oliver Henry's crew saved around a dozen mariners in the Federated States of Micronesia, delivered humanitarian assistance during the Yap drought, and towed the 500-ton yacht Black Pearl to the Republic of Palau, rescuing 11 people in 2024. USCGC Frederick Hatch became the first FRC to visit several Pacific ports, including Tacloban, Philippines, for the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and the crew operationalized the enhanced bilateral agreement with Palau in 2024.

Sixty-two FRCs are in service: 13 in Florida; seven in Puerto Rico; six each in Bahrain and Massachusetts; five in Alaska; four in California and Guam; three each in Hawaii, Texas, New Jersey, and Mississippi; and two each in North Carolina and Oregon.