U.S. Coast Guard Cutters Return Home After Successful Central American Deployment



U.S. Coast Guard 11 District, June 10, 2024

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – U.S. Coast Guard cutters Forrest Rednour and Blackfin have returned to their homeports after a 49-day deployment in Central America, where they played a crucial role in multiple operations.

During this period, both cutters demonstrated outstanding readiness and operational capability, significantly contributing to international cooperation, search and rescue missions, and efforts to combat criminal activities. This deployment was part of a broader strategy to enhance regional

security and strengthen partnerships. Throughout the mission, Forrest Rednour covered over 8,200 miles and logged 800 operational hours, while Blackfin covered over 8,300 miles and also logged 800 operational hours.

“The amount of effort and commitment from both crews during this 49-day deployment was remarkable,” said Rear Adm. Andrew Sugimoto, commander, Coast Guard District 11. “Their readiness and professional exchanges provided an invaluable experience to our partner nations and crews. The enthusiasm to lead multiple engagements with several international maritime organizations helped strengthen ties and fortify continued collaboration between all.”

Key Achievements:

Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX):

- Manzanillo, Mexico: Blackfin led a successful SAR operation, including helicopter rescue exercises with the Mexican Navy.

- Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala: Hosted tours and conducted SAR exercises with the Guatemalan Navy, building stronger maritime partnerships.

- La Union, El Salvador: Rednour led a SAR exercise and joint operations with the Salvadoran Navy, marking the first U.S. vessel visit to this port in two years.

Partnership and Training:

- Amapala, Honduras: Engaged in discussions and training on maritime law enforcement and security with the Honduran Navy and Merchant Marine.

- Golfito, Costa Rica: Shared knowledge on maritime governance with the Costa Rican Coast Guard, enhancing mutual understanding.

- Rodman, Panama: Provided damage control and medical evacuation training to Panamanian forces, marking the first U.S.-Panama Coast Guard engagement in over two years.

- PASSEX with ARM PALENQUE: Forrest Rednour and Blackfin conducted a passage exercise (PASSEX) with the Mexican Navy's ARM PALENQUE. This included formation steaming, code exercises, and a crew exchange to enhance mutual operational understanding and cooperation.

"This patrol was truly an amazing experience and a testament to the incredible devotion to duty that the crews of the Forrest Rednour and Blackfin have," said Lt. Kevin Ng, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Forrest Rednour. "Both crews adapted and overcame several challenges leading up to and during the patrol, but never took their eyes off the main objective. As a result, the Coast Guard was able to strengthen the valuable relationships that the United States has with our international partners throughout Central America and unify our efforts to address critical maritime security initiatives in the Eastern Pacific. Thank you to crews on a job well done, District 11 and Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach for the coordination, and the families and friends of the crew for all of the support; the success of this historic patrol could not have been accomplished without them all."

"I could not be prouder of both crews for the incredible amount of hard work they have dedicated to making this historic patrol possible. The success of this Surface Action Group is a testament to the Coast Guard's ability to overcome

dynamic challenges in the completion of unprecedented mission sets. It also signifies the Coast Guard's steadfast commitment to advancing our vital maritime partnerships in the Eastern Pacific. The international relationships formed and strengthened during this deployment have set the groundwork for future engagements which I look forward to watching," said Lt. j.g. James Morrison, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Blackfin.

Commissioned in 2018, the Coast Guard Cutter Forrest Rednour is one of the Coast Guard's Sentinel-class fast response cutters homeported in San Pedro, California. Sentinel-class cutters are 154 feet long and 25 feet wide and have a 353 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots and a range of 2,500 nautical miles. They can hold a crew of up to 24. The namesake of the Forrest Rednour is Petty Officer 2nd Class Forrest O. Rednour, who heroically rescued survivors from the torpedoed USAT Dorchester during World War II and was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal.

Commissioned in 2000, the USCGC Blackfin is one of the Coast Guard's Marine Protector-class patrol boats homeported in Santa Barbara, California. Marine Protector-class patrol boats are 87 feet long and 19.5 feet wide and have a 100 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed of 25 knots and a range of 900 nautical miles. They can hold a crew of up to 10. The Blackfin is equipped with advanced electronics and navigation systems for multi-mission operations, including search and rescue, law enforcement, and homeland security. The Blackfin shares the name of the USS Blackfin (SS-322), a submarine that participated in World War II and the Korean War.