U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector/Guam's Fast Response Cutters bolster Pacific Partnership Strategy and strengthen Pacific Island Country relations

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SANTA RITA, Guam – In a robust display of maritime commitment, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam's Fast Response Cutters conducted four patrols over 44 days, enhancing safety and prosperity in the Pacific Islands region while combatting illicit maritime activity, including illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing and the illegal and unsafe transport of passengers.

The crews of USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143), USCGC Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139), and USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140):

– Conducted seven boardings and five observation reports.
– Completed over 20 training evolutions.
– Qualified 18 new shipboard members.
– Supported the investigation into the transport of 11 people aboard an overloaded vessel transiting to Guam from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on an illegal charter following their rescue by DoD partners.
– Supported operations such as Operation Blue Pacific,

Operation Rematau, Operation Nasse, and Operation Koa Moana.

“Our Fast Response Cutter crews exhibit both efficacy and presence as a consistent and trusted partner in the region. Our Pacific Island Country partners’ warmth and regard for the Coast Guard is a testament to the strong connections we have nurtured over the years. It is our commitment to the people of the Pacific Island Countries to protect Oceania and its resources for them from undue strategic competition that would undermine those relationships and destabilize the region,” said Cmdr. Greg Sickels, deputy sector commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam.

Operational Achievements and Highlights

– USCGC Frederick Hatch (June 21 – July 2 and July 18 – Aug. 3): Enhanced international relations, streamlined boarding processes, qualified new personnel, and improved communication with FSM Maritime Police.

– USCGC Myrtle Hazard (July 3 – 16): Strengthened connection with CNMI, ensured maritime law enforcement presence in less patrolled areas, and enhanced collaboration with customs and public safety departments.

– USCGC Oliver Henry (July 18 – 23): Increased U.S. presence, enforced fishing regulations, and fostered crew readiness with weapons proficiency and collaboration.

These accomplishments underscore the U.S. Coast Guard’s pivotal role in promoting maritime governance, ensuring good relations, and fostering strategic competition in the Pacific Islands region. The U.S. Coast Guard remains a consistent and reliable partner, working collaboratively with Pacific Island Countries to achieve shared objectives and bolster regional security.

Operation Rematau, an integral part of Operation Blue Pacific, is spearheaded by the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. This initiative fosters security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity throughout Oceania. Rematau translates to “people of the deep sea” and embodies the Coast Guard’s unwavering commitment to safeguarding the people of this region.

The U.S. Coast Guard actively exercises 12 bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements with Pacific Island Countries, reinforcing maritime law enforcement operations and domain awareness in the region. In October 2022, the Service, on behalf of the U.S., signed the first enhanced bilateral agreement with the Federated States of Micronesia. This landmark agreement builds on the existing shiprider arrangement, allowing the U.S. Coast Guard to conduct boardings in the FSM’s exclusive economic zone with prior approval working with the FSM National Police, but without an FSM officer physically present. This expansion significantly amplifies the FSM’s capacity to protect its sovereignty and resources across an area spanning 1 million square miles and more than 600 islands. Boardings have already been conducted under this enhanced shiprider agreement, attracting interest in similar arrangements from other nations in the area.

In May 2023, the U.S. signed a new bilateral agreement with Papua New Guinea, richly endowed with natural resources like gold, copper, oil, and natural gas. While its formal sector focuses on exports of these commodities, most of its people rely on subsistence agriculture. As of 2020, agriculture, forestry, and fishing reportedly account for nearly 19 percent of PNG’s GDP. The agreement aligns with the PNG government’s efforts to safeguard their islands and 1.2 million square miles of EEZ, which are vital to their economic well-being. Recently ratified by their parliament, this partnership, at the request of the Papua New Guinea government, further extends the reach and impact of maritime law enforcement

efforts. In line with this initiative, a U.S. Coast Guard cutter from Guam will be collaborating with Papua New Guinea to enact their new agreement shortly, continuing to foster security and collaboration across the Pacific.

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam comprises more than 300 members based in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands spread across shoreside and afloat units committed to maritime safety, security, and stewardship in Oceania.

For more information on the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector/Guam’s operations and achievements, please visit the official DVIDS account at https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USCG-FMSG.