USCG Commissions Newest National Security Cutter Named for first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard



U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, April 20, 2024

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Coast Guard welcomed its newest cutter into the fleet, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759), Saturday, during a commissioning ceremony at Coast Guard Base Charleston, presided over by Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan.

Calhoun is the 10th Legend-class national security cutter (NSC) to join the Coast Guard and is the fourth NSC to be

homeported in North Charleston alongside Coast Guard Cutters Hamilton (WMSL 753), James (WMSL 754) and Stone (WMSL 758).

Calhoun's namesake comes from the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Charles L. Calhoun. Calhoun led a distinguished career, serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II prior to enlisting in the Coast Guard in 1946. Calhoun's Coast Guard career was marked by over 170 months of sea service, including service in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Calhoun became the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard on Aug. 27, 1969, and was a champion for the service's enlisted personnel and is responsible for bridging the gap between the command and enlisted workforce. The commissioning ceremony's date of April 20 is in honor of Calhoun's birthday.

"I'm honored to share the job title, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, with Charles Calhoun," said Heath Jones, 14th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard. "His efforts as a voice for the enlisted workforce created significant, lasting culture change within the Coast Guard. His dedication to people, the most precious resource we have, and the challenges he faced paved the way for the talent transformation work we're doing today."

Construction of Calhoun began in 2019 and the cutter was officially delivered to the Coast Guard in October 2023 from Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi. After deploying in support of oil spill response and counter migration, Calhoun arrived at its homeport in North Charleston on Dec. 3, 2023. The commissioning of Calhoun officially places the cutter in service for the Coast Guard and marks the most significant milestone of the cutter's life to date.

"What a monumental day for this crew, our service, and the legacy of Master Chief Calhoun," said Capt. Timothy Sommella, commanding officer of Calhoun. "Now that Calhoun has entered active service, we are ready to serve alongside our fellow

cutters and interagency partners in protecting the American people from threats here at home and abroad. The crew has worked tirelessly to see this day and is very proud.”

The 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutters are equipped with state-of-the-art command and control equipment, the ability to launch and house multiple small boats and aircraft, and an advanced engineering plant capable of reaching speeds of roughly 30 mph, making them the most versatile cutters in the Coast Guard fleet. The cutter’s primary missions will include counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources and defense readiness in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the world.