

USCGC Joseph Gerczak returns home following Blue Pacific patrol



HONOLULU – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Gerczak (WPC-1126) returned to Honolulu, Tuesday following a 52-day patrol in support of Coast Guard Oceania District's Operation Blue Pacific.

The Joseph Gerczak crew departed Coast Guard Base Honolulu in July and traveled more than 7,500 nautical miles, making port calls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji and American Samoa. Patrolling in support of Operation Blue Pacific, the cutter's crew worked alongside Pacific Island partners to bolster maritime security and sovereignty, counter illicit maritime activities and protect vital marine resources.

The Joseph Gerczak crew exercised partnerships with the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Fiji through bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements. In total, the Joseph Gerczak crew and their Pacific partners conducted 29 bilateral maritime law enforcement boardings and eight high-seas boardings in support of Operation Island Chief, a coordinated effort to detect and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Pacific.

While in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Joseph Gerczak crew participated in sports with local youth and students from the College of the Marshall Islands in Majuro. In American Samoa, the crew led a seamanship showcase with community leaders and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration officers.

"My crew and I are very proud of this patrol," said Lt. Andrew

Loeffler, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Gerczak. "The crew's dedication to fostering these important partnerships is vital in building a more secure and prosperous Pacific. I'm extremely proud of the crew's continued professionalism, proficiency and unrelenting courage during this patrol."

Operation Blue Pacific is an overarching multi-mission Coast Guard endeavor to promote security, safety, sovereignty and economic prosperity in Oceania. Coast Guard cutters, aircrew and personnel deploy throughout Oceania to maintain unrestricted, lawful access to the maritime domain for all nations, improve regional stability, and solidify the Coast Guard as a reliable partner for maritime safety, security and stewardship in the Pacific.

The Joseph Gerczak is a 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter homeported in Honolulu. The cutter's primary missions are maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and national defense.

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