USCGC Storis returns to Seattle after 133-day Arctic deployment

SEATTLE – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis (WAGB 21) returned to its temporary home port of Seattle on Saturday after completing a 133-day deployment to the Arctic Ocean and Alaska theater of operations.

During the deployment, Storis traveled more than 17,000 nautical miles while serving as the sole U.S. surface asset in the High Arctic, conducting maritime safety, security, border control and sovereignty missions.

As part of Operation Frontier Sentinel, Storis spent more than 300 hours monitoring foreign-flagged research vessels across the Arctic. The cutter monitored four Chinese-flagged research vessels operating over the U.S. extended continental shelf.

The patrol marked the first designated law enforcement mission by a polar icebreaker in more than 20 years. Storis completed multiple fishing vessel inspections in the Bering Sea, including a joint boarding and fisheries plant inspection with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement.

The crew completed the first live-fire gunnery exercise by a Coast Guard surface vessel operating in ice-covered Arctic waters in decades. The exercise familiarized the crew with weapons employment in extreme conditions and produced data expected to inform how future Coast Guard surface assets train, maintain and conduct weapons exercises and national defense missions in the high north.

Storis also conducted a simulated replenishment-at-sea

exercise with Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) near Unalaska, Alaska. Using the cutter's dynamic positioning system and shipboard sensors, the crews demonstrated close-quarters maneuvering capabilities needed to support refueling and replenishment operations in austere regions.

During the patrol, Storis operated alongside Coast Guard Cutters Munro (WMSL 755) and Fir (WLB 213), as well as the Royal Canadian Navy's HMCS Max Bernays (AOPV 432), during Operation Tundra Merlin. The coordinated operation strengthened maritime partnerships and enhanced joint interoperability in Arctic waters.

The cutter also responded to the grounded fishing vessel Aleutian Dream, providing initial assistance and escorting the vessel back to Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

"We are serving in a moment of great change in our service, nation and world," said Capt. Corey Kerns, commanding officer of Storis. "The crew's hard work exceeded expectations in turning Storis into an actionable, multi-mission military vessel. Through their steadfast dedication and operational expertise, Storis has set the definitive precedent for the Coast Guard's future operations in the Arctic region and Alaska theater of operations."

While in the Bering Sea, Storis partnered with the Coast Guard Research and Development Center and the Defense Innovation Unit to evaluate unmanned aircraft systems in extreme-cold conditions. Research teams conducted five sorties totaling nine flight hours to assess aircraft performance in high-latitude environments. The tests supported the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort, a trilateral partnership among the United States, Canada and Finland aimed at rapidly fielding unmanned aircraft systems capable of supporting critical polar missions.

Storis additionally assisted scientific research efforts with

the International Arctic Buoy Program, the U.S. National Ice Center and Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory.

Storis is a 360-foot medium icebreaker with a displacement of nearly 15,000 tons. Powered by four diesel engines producing 22,500 horsepower, the cutter is capable of navigating through three feet of ice at five knots. Alongside Coast Guard Cutters Healy (WAGB 20) and Polar Star (WAGB 10), Storis supports Coast Guard operations in high-latitude regions and is equipped to conduct logistics, search and rescue, ship escort, environmental protection, and law and treaty enforcement missions.

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