

CAPTAIN HOPLEY YEATON

CUTTER EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Cutter Excellence Award annually recognizes the crew of a large cutter, the crew of a mid-sized cutter, and the crew of a small cutter. Cutter crews recognized for this award will have demonstrated exceptional performance in areas such as operations and mission accomplishment; commitment to crew and families; cutter training and readiness; and engineering.

LARGE CUTTER

USCGC POLAR STAR (WAGB 10)

CAPT JEFFERY RASNAKE, USCG – COMMANDING OFFICER



POLAR STAR set an outstanding example for the cutter fleet through their support of international relations, personnel safety, and operational success. POLAR STAR, as part of their 307 days away from homeport, successfully executed Operation DEEP FREEZE in support of the U.S. National Science Foundation. During this patrol, they demonstrated excellent creative engineering, allowing them to navigate over 27,000 nautical miles and establish a navigable channel through 38 nautical miles of multi-year fasted ice as the Nation's sole heavy icebreaker. They also conducted two close quarters ship escorts supporting stations in the Antarctic. Operation DEEP FREEZE also reaffirmed long-standing relationships with New Zealand, Japan, and key Antarctic Nations. Additionally, POLAR STAR conducted six personnel medevacs in support of McMurdo Station, highlighting the proficiency of the cutter's organic ice rescue team and sharing their expertise with the National Science Foundation. While executing a busy, yet successful, dry-dock and patrol, the crew of POLAR STAR demonstrated high levels of integration and morale, supporting all throughout the year and their annual deployment over the winter holidays.

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MEDIUM CUTTER

USCGC ALEX HALEY (WMEC 39)

CDR STEVEN BALDOVSKY, USCG – COMMANDING OFFICER

In 2024, USCGC ALEX HALEY served as the Arctic embodiment of superior cutter excellence. ALEX HALEY had great success with an International Maritime Organization recognized SAR response, towing a disabled fishing vessel for 32-hours in gale force winds and periodic blizzard conditions. ALEX HALEY saved eight lives and prevented an environmental disaster along the Aleutian Islands with this rescue. They conducted 60% of the Bering Sea boardings and 100% of the Aleutian Island boardings, conducting 43 boardings throughout the year. ALEX HALEY completed two rare D17 vessel terminations for unsafe conditions and conducted the first foreign tramper boarding in years in support of the Sector Western Alaska and U.S. Arctic COTP. ALEX HALEY achieved over 450 qualifications in their drive for crew cross qualification and earned the Overall Operational Readiness Excellence Award. They saved over \$200 thousand in contractor costs within house technical repairs and undoubtedly prevented Safe-to-Sail issues with their proactive engineer department. Earning the Dining Facility of the Year in the large afloat category, ALEX HALEY supported the crew and the community with their 900+ attendance at “Haunted Haley” and earned recognition with the D17 Ombudsman of the Year. ALEX HALEY demonstrated superior dedication to the mission, providing outstanding subject matter expertise to U.S. Naval vessels operating in the Bering Sea, and continued operational success.



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SMALL CUTTER

USCGC GLEN HARRIS (WPC 1144)

LT ANDREW BICHLMEIER, USCG – COMMANDING OFFICER

The USCGC GLEN HARRIS demonstrated exceptional operational excellence and commitment to regional stability and maritime security. The cutter made history as the first US vessel to visit Kuwait in 13 years, leading a pivotal tri-lateral exercise with Iraq and Kuwait. The GLEN HARRIS seized over 3,700 kilograms of illicit drugs, disrupted \$95 million in funding to violent extremist organizations, and provided layered defense to coalition assets in the Strait of Hormuz, safeguarding \$1.5 billion in daily commerce. The cutter's crew exhibited immense technical prowess, completing a perfect inspection and operating for a record 2,956 hours without any mission-impacting casualties. The GLEN HARRIS redefined FRC adaptability by operating hundreds of miles from homeport for four months with limited access to engineering assistance, consumables, and medical care. The cutter's accomplishments have had a significant impact on regional stability and maritime security, earning it a reputation as a top-performing cutter in the US Coast Guard. The GLEN HARRIS's exceptional performance and commitment to excellence earned this recognition, and its crew's dedication to their mission and each other is a testament to the Coast Guard's core values.

