

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

CGC BERTHOLF (WMSL 750)

CAPT WILLIAM MEES, USCG – COMMANDING OFFICER

BERTHOLF set the standard for international maritime enforcement action, defense operations, and counter-IUUF expertise. BERTHOLF executed over 27% of all D17 enforcement action, and closed out four separate fisheries goals for FY23, a feat never before recorded.

BERTHOLF conducted the first overt transit by a CG vessel of the Western Bering Strait IMO route, upholding international norms and challenging excessive Russian maritime claims in the high latitudes. BERTHOLF was the Service's first WMSL to execute ARCTIC EDGE exercises, hosting Seal Team 7 and leaders from SOCNORTH, NORTHCOM, and ALCOM.

While operating in the Eastern Pacific (EPAC), BERTHOLF had multiple successful interdictions valued at tens of millions of dollars. BERTHOLF also intelligently leveraged our total Intel, DSF, HITRON, and sUAS force packages to create five successful sea and air interdictions for our maritime partners, strengthening regional partnerships and governance. BERTHOLF twice assumed "Composite Warfare Commander" responsibilities for the entire JIATF-S Joint Operating Area, expertly directing all joint and international surface, air, and partner assets throughout the EPAC and Caribbean.



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MEDIUM CUTTER

CGC ALEX HALEY (WMEC 39)

CDR STEVEN BALDOVSKY, USCG – COMMANDING OFFICER

In 2023, USCGC ALEX HALEY supported strategic objectives for D17, U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), and U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) across the entire Bering Sea and into the Arctic Ocean. ALEX HALEY partnered with the USN and Special Operations Command North (SOCNORTH) to protect the US EEZ and national interests while expertly executing Op FRONTIER SENTINEL.

During the high-visibility transit of a Russian/PRC surface action group across the Aleutians, ALEX HALEY was the sole Coast Guard unit coordinating with USN assets to provide security for the U.S. fishing fleet; and helped provide subject matter expertise to Navy destroyers operating for the first time in the Bering.

At the tactical level, ALEX HALEY LE teams closed out multiple FY23 D17 fisheries goals, completed a rare D17 fishing vessel termination, and identified multiple LMR violations for NOAA, including uncovering a negative bycatch retention trend across the fishing fleet. Additionally, ALEX HALEY and its embarked AVDET assisted saving three lives during a marathon long distance SAR transport and an offshore hoist.



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SMALL CUTTER

CGC FREDERICK HATCH (WPC 1143)

LT PATRICK DREISS, USCG – COMMANDING OFFICER

USCGC FREDERICK HATCH conducted the first Expeditionary Patrol in Micronesia after regional COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. The cutter enacted bilateral law enforcement agreements with 4 Pacific Island partner nations, conducting 19 bilateral shiprider boardings within their country's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), reinvigorating regional illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU-F) enforcement efforts after a three year hiatus. Their deployments included the first-ever boardings supporting the groundbreaking Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Enhanced Shiprider Agreement, allowing cutters to conduct maritime law enforcement activities on behalf of the host nation within their EEZ without a shiprider physically present. The cutter's success exercising the broad authority of the agreement directly led to interest in similar agreements from other nations. Palau signed a new shiprider agreement in August 2023.

FREDERICK HATCH also responded to a research vessel in distress with a fast-approaching tropical storm on the horizon, towing the vessel over 200 nm in 8 ft seas to safety in Saipan, saving five lives.

Additionally, while conducting an IUU-F boarding, one of the fishermen sustained a significant injury from a 12-foot fall onto his head, losing all movement in his extremities. Cutter personnel quickly responded, stabilized the patient, transferred him to the cutter, and transited nine hours at full speed to Pohnpei, FSM, to conduct a challenging restricted waters transit at midnight to safely deliver the patient ashore with crewmember escorts. The crewmembers then stayed at the hospital to assist the shorthanded staff and helped save the fisherman's life.

