

# Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf returns home after 120-day Bering Sea patrol



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ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) and crew returned to homeport, Thursday, to Coast Guard Island after a 120-day Bering Sea patrol in support of United States national security, U.S. fishing fleet safety and prosperity, and the protection of U.S. living marine resources.

While patrolling the Bering Sea, Bertholf's crew members conducted 15 boardings of commercial fishing vessels, ensuring compliance with federal fisheries laws, and preserving the highly valuable U.S. living marine resources. These boardings also ensure that the U.S. fishing fleet have sufficient safety equipment to survive in the event of an at-sea emergency.

In a demonstration of the strong trusted partnership between Japan and the United States, Bertholf conducted major at-sea and shore side engagements with the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) training ships Kashima and Hatakaze. During the at-sea engagement, Bertholf, Kashima and Hatakaze executed multiple formations, and during a farewell pass, the JMSDF personnel displayed a highly impressive drumline performance on their flight deck.

Afterward, the three ships moored up together in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, and continued to build relationships and shape partnerships. These engagements included reciprocal ship

tours, a baseball game, a fun run up local mountain Ballyhoo, and a Dutch Harbor beach bonfire.

The next day, the Japanese and U.S. crews came together with the Unalaska community and officials from the Qawalangin Tribe during the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the World War II Battle of Dutch Harbor ceremony to commemorate the lives lost, the community impacts, and to recognize the healing and partnership that has been built in the decades that followed. Rear Adm. Konno, JMSDF Training Squadron Commander, Rear Adm. Moore, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Seventeenth District, and Mayor Tutiakoff presided over the ceremony and exchanged official gifts.

Additionally, Bertholf crew guarded the boundary line between the U.S. and Russian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), ensuring that the fish in U.S. waters were protected from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing from foreign nations.

Later in the patrol, Bertholf and crew anchored in Kotzebue Sound and engaged in several events with the community members of Kotzebue, Alaska, including a color run and a softball game. In addition, Bertholf's law enforcement operators engaged with local fishermen and fish processors to establish positive relationships and ensure awareness of boater safety regulations and salmon skiff exemptions in the region.

"Our accomplishments during this patrol would not have been possible without the amazing crew that we have aboard," said Capt. Billy Mees, Bertholf commanding officer. "The entirety of the crew and their families have my utmost respect for the sacrifices they make for their country."

The Bertholf returned home on the eve of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its commissioning date; August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008, which also coincides with the Coast Guard's 233rd birthday. Since then, Bertholf has truly lived up to the storied past of her namesake, Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf, the first

Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, and its motto, *Legends Begin Here.*