

Cutter Returns Home Following Fisheries Enforcement Patrol



Members from Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Munro stand in formation on the back of the cutter, July 24, 2020. The cutter's hull day, July 24, correlates with its hull number, 724. U.S. Coast Guard

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew aboard Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Munro (WHEC 724) returned to homeport following a two-month-long Operation North Pacific Guard (NPG) patrol, focused on enforcing international fishery regulations, Monday, Sept. 14, 2020, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a Sept. 15 release.

NPG is an annual high seas U.S. fisheries international law enforcement operation designed to detect and deter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity, including large-scale high seas pelagic drift-net fishing. The NPG includes multilateral and bilateral international agreements with the United States to advance the conservation and management of high seas fisheries resources.

Douglas Munro's crew began their patrol just south of the Aleutian Islands and spent 59 days enforcing fisheries regulations while traveling 12,500 miles throughout the Pacific Ocean. During this time, to ensure compliance with Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and North Pacific Fisheries Commission regulations, the Munro crew conducted inspections aboard 11 fishing vessels of various nationalities.

To better enable both aerial reconnaissance and search and rescue missions, the Munro crew embarked an aviation detachment and an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco, California.

“This has been an extremely exciting and rewarding patrol,” said U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Riley Gatewood, commanding officer, Douglas Munro. “It was like watching a home-run derby; the crew absolutely crushed each ball into the bleacher seats. The 11 at-sea boardings bolstered U.S. presence that promoted a strong deterrent value, relevancy, and directly contributed to the economic stability and food security for the region. Their outstanding results, positive attitude and exceptional work ethic set the standard for future U.S. Coast Guard engagements.”

Thanks to a partnership with the Kodiak Area Native Association, the Munro crew conducted pre-deployment COVID-19 testing, followed by a 14-day monitoring period in order to ensure the safety of the crew during the current global pandemic. Throughout their patrol, the crew maintained strict health precautionary measures and minimized interactions with others to ensure sustained mission readiness.

While patrolling in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands, the Douglas Munro crew rendezvoused with Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755). Commissioned in 2017, the Munro is the sixth 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutter in the Coast Guard. The Munro is one of the four national security cutters homeported in Alameda, Calif., and is bearing the same namesake of Douglas Munro, the Coast Guard’s only World War II Medal of Honor recipient.

Commissioned in 1971, Douglas Munro is the Coast Guard’s only remaining 378-foot High Endurance Cutter from a fleet that was once twelve strong. High Endurance Cutters have a crew of 160 and have long served as the capital ships of the Coast Guard cutter fleet. Douglas Munro has earned the title of the America’s Bering Sea Cutter, for her extensive resume of arduous patrols in perilous Aleutian waters. Even after nearly 49 years of service, Douglas Munro remains versatile and can operate globally in the most demanding open ocean environments, from the North Pacific’s hazardous fishing

grounds to the wind-swept isles of the Aleutians.