

Schultz: FRCs Expanding Coast Guard Reach in Pacific; Six Set for Persian Gulf



The newly commissioned fast-response cutter Angela McShan gets underway near Miami on Sept. 20. Adm. Karl L. Schultz said Dec. 10 to an audience at the Navy League's "Special Topic Breakfast" that FRCs are greatly increasing the Coast Guard's reach and capabilities. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon Murray

ARLINGTON, Va. – As the U.S. Coast Guard commissions more Sentinel-class fast-response cutters (FRCs) it can expand its presence in the Pacific and will increase its capabilities in the Persian Gulf.

"We commissioned the 35th [FRC] in October," Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl L. Schultz said Dec. 10 to an audience at the Navy League's "Special Topic Breakfast" here, noting that the FRC program is greatly increasing the Coast Guard's reach and capabilities.

The Coast Guard plans to procure a total of 58 FRCs built by Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana. He said the last dozen or so were delivered with zero discrepancies. About four FRCs are delivered each year.

Schultz said the Coast Guard will station three FRCs in Guam and four in Bahrain. Two are slated to join the service's Patrol Force Southwest Asia in Bahrain in early 2021 and the other two will follow later. He said he plans to add two more for a total of six. They will replace six Island-class patrol boats in the Persian Gulf.

FRCs recently were added to Hawaii. One of them made a 2,700-nautical-mile voyage to American Samoa on its own fuel,

accompanied by a buoy tender as a support ship for refueling at its destination, demonstrating the reach and seakeeping qualities of FRCs.

Schultz noted that the reach of the FRCs in Guam will enable to Coast Guard to counter the growing Chinese economic presence – including illegal fishing – in the Pacific island nations in Micronesia, many of which depend of fishing as a major economic benefit.

“We can help them with fisheries,” Schultz said. “With these island nations, it’s a big part of their existence.”