

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Rescues Family Missing for 7 Days in Micronesia



U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Stephanie Jocis, operations officer aboard Legend-class cutter USCGC Midgett (WMSL 757), observes a 23-foot single-outboard skiff vessel, carrying three members of a missing family in the waters of Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia, in Midgett's search light during the early hours of April 6, 2026. The crew of Midgett rescued the family after the vessel went missing on March 30 in the waters of Chuuk State. U.S. Coast Guard missions in the Indo-Pacific focus on issues directly supporting and advancing our regional partners' efforts to protect fish stocks and ensure the safety of life at sea, ensuring a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Seaman Lauren Taber)

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SANTA RITA, Guam – A family of three was returned to Chuuk State, part of the Federated States of Micronesia, following

search and rescue operations conducted by the Legend-class cutter USCGC Midgett (WMSL 757) crew on April 6, 2026.

The Midgett crew located the missing family after receiving a report on Easter Sunday from authorities in the Federated States of Micronesia and the U.S. Embassy that the vessel was overdue.

“Our U.S. Coast Guard colleagues’ swift and courageous actions in this successful search and rescue mission not only reflect the highest standards of professionalism and humanity but also reinforce the deep and enduring partnership between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia,” said Jennifer Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia. “This mission exemplifies the spirit of cooperation and mutual support at the heart of the Compact of Free Association, underscoring how our close relations translate into real, life-saving outcomes for our people.”

At night, the crew of Midgett visually located the 23-foot single-outboard skiff carrying the missing family, two men and one woman, in the waters off the coast of Chuuk State. The family departed Fananu Island on March 30 for the short passage to Murillo Island, but never arrived due to a failure of their single outboard engine. At the height of search planning, the predicted search area exceeded 14,000 square nautical miles in rough seas with waves reaching 10 feet.

All three survivors were rescued and uninjured. They were then safely delivered to Weno in Chuuk State for further transport to Fananu Island.

“National Security Cutter crews spend most of their time executing maritime law enforcement missions, often with our international partners,” said Capt. Brian Whisler, commanding officer of Midgett. “SAR cases like this one are not routine for our platform. Our bridge watchstanders spotted the small skiff in rough seas just after midnight, and that kind of

situational awareness does not happen by accident. It is what this crew trains for, and I could not be prouder of how they performed.”

During the SAR operation, watchstanders from the U.S. Coast Guard Joint Rescue Sub-Center Guam at U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam developed the search patterns and coordinated with U.S. Coast Guard District Oceania and Air Station Barbers Point personnel to launch an HC-130 Hercules airplane and crew from Hawai'i to support the search and directed the launch of the USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) crew from Guam. The Midgett crew, already conducting a Western Pacific patrol, diverted following a bilateral maritime law enforcement boarding with two embarked officers from the FSM in their exclusive economic zone, approximately 200 nautical miles south of Fananu Island.

“This rescue reflects the strategic value of maintaining a capable surface presence across the region’s vast maritime expanse,” said Lt. Cmdr. Derek Wallin, the U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue mission coordinator. “Without the Midgett’s proximity, coordinating a search across more than 14,000 square nautical miles of open ocean would have required significantly more time and resources. Time the three missing people may not have had.”

Throughout its current Indo-Pacific region patrol, Midgett’s crew is scheduled to engage with regional partners and participate in joint operations to enhance maritime safety and security. While deployed to the region, Midgett is assigned to Destroyer Squadron 15, the Navy’s largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet’s principal surface force. DESRON 15 regularly assumes tactical control of surface units operating in the area.

U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific.