



Salute

to the U.S. Coast Guard

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Country Media, Inc. and our advertising partners are proud to honor and salute the U.S. Coast Guard with our annual special publication.

The U.S. Coast Guard is the oldest continuous seagoing service in the United States. Coast Guard Day is celebrated on Aug. 4 because that is when the service was established back in 1790, more than 230 years ago!

The U.S. Coast Guard, as it is known today, wasn't created until 1915 when the Revenue Cutter Service and the U.S. Lifesaving Service merged. Today, the Coast Guard is one America's six armed forces, and is the only military branch in the Department of Homeland Security.

The Coast Guard is both a federal law enforcement agency and a military force. It enforces the nation's laws at sea, protects the marine environment, guards the nation's coastline and ports, and performs life-saving missions as a faithful protector of the United States in peacetime and war.

We honor the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard, both past and present, for their dedication to duty and for serving our nation while keeping our coasts and waterways safe and secure.

Thank you for your service and enjoy reading this special publication.



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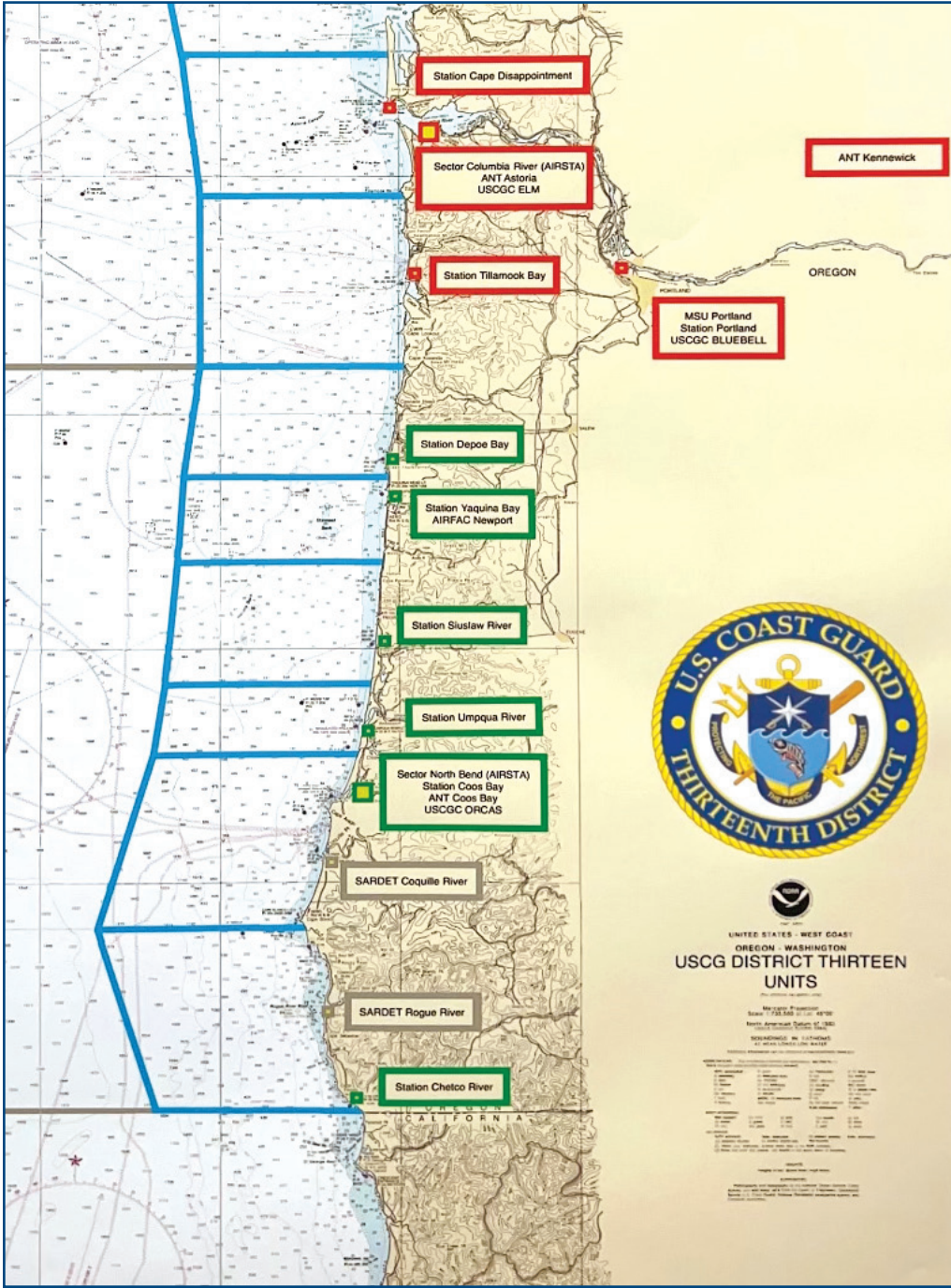
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Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay

WILL CHAPPEL
Country Media, Inc.

Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay in Garibaldi is home to 65 personnel, two motor lifeboats and a skiff that are responsible for patrolling the waters from Tillamook Head south to Cape Kiwanda.

The station was founded in 1908, and according to Chief Petty Officer Sherman Baldwin, the Executive Petty Officer at the station, rapidly changing, rough conditions in the north Pacific lead the station to devote most of its energies to search and rescue operations.

“The dynamic and rapid onset of rough conditions in the maritime environment demands search and rescue remain the core of our mis-

sion set here at the Station,” Baldwin said.

The station’s 39 active-duty personnel and 26 reservists primarily focus their training activities on supporting the commercial fishing fleet operating in their waters, even though recreational craft represent most traffic. In addition to search and rescue operations, the station also conducts law enforcement activities and works to prevent pollution in the marine environment. It is also the duty of the station commander to serve as the Captain of the Port, monitoring harbor access conditions and restricting traffic as necessary.

“But our simpler mindset is to ensure our crewmembers have the training, resources, and ability to assist

the community,” Baldwin said, “whether that is recovering a surfer in distress or regulating the marine fisheries to prevent overuse and ensure longevity of the species.”



The dynamic and rapid onset of rough conditions in the maritime environment demands search and rescue remain the core of our mission set here at the Station.
~ Chief Petty Officer Sherman Baldwin



The two 47-foot motor lifeboats are the main vessels

used by the Guard members at the station in search and rescue operations. They can operate in 20-foot breaking waves and 30-foot seas and have been used in hundreds of rescues off the Oregon and Washington coasts.

Baldwin said that Coast Guard members enjoy the lifestyle in Garibaldi and appreciate the support shown by locals. He said that events

like the recent Garibaldi Days Coast Guard versus fire crews waterball tournament offer unique experiences to service members, who are often living hundreds of miles from family and friends.

According to Baldwin, there was a strong sense of connection formed between the guard and community by a mutual knowledge of the dangers faced by Guard

members and local fishers alike. During high seas this bond comes to the fore, as members of the local community gather at the bar to watch the fleet’s maneuvers.

“It’s during these times that the community comes together to watch, worry and celebrate the successful

See **TILLAMOOK** Page 6



Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay on the water.

Courtesy from the U.S. Coast Guard

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TILLAMOOK

From Page 5

crossing of the fleet over one of the most challenging entrances in the Pacific Northwest,” Baldwin said.

Promoting awareness of the potential dangers and measures that can be taken to mitigate them is also a priority for the Coast Guard. Baldwin specifically highlighted the danger of “sneaker waves” caused by king tides during the fall and winter months that cause

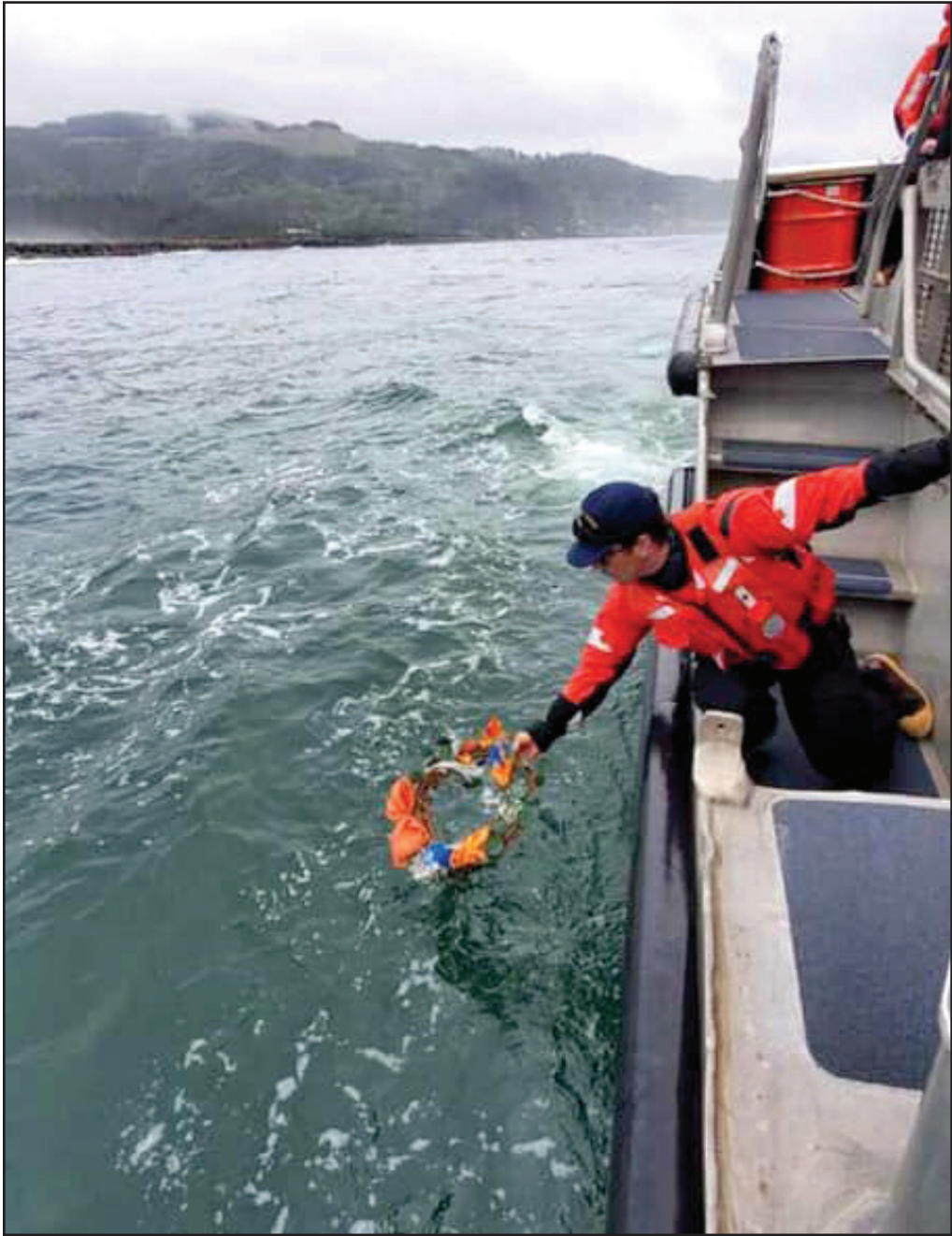
fast moving water surges over beaches. These types of waves cause the drowning deaths of children in many years and Baldwin said that life jackets give children the best chance to survive one of these surges.

The Coast Guard members at Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay are a well-trained group that are committed to working with boaters to keep their waters safe.

“As members of the Coast Guard and the community we want to ensure every vessel is given the best pos-

sible chance to return after a fishing trip,” Baldwin said. “Our hope is to ensure everyone knows that items like life jackets, survival suits, EPIRBs, and radios are crucial in ensuring we can help when disaster strikes.”

If you are interested or know someone who is interested in joining the Coast Guard or Coast Guard Reserve, contact the Coast Guard Recruiting Office in Portland, OR, at 207-761-4307 or visit GoCoastGuard.com.



Coast Guard Tillamook County conducting routine training.

Courtesy from the U.S. Coast Guard



The Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay is located in Garibaldi.

Courtesy from the U.S. Coast Guard



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Coast Guard in the Columbia River Sector

WILL LOHRE

Country Media, Inc.

The Coast Guard is a vital force in protecting the waterways and coast of the United States, and in the Columbia River Sector, the missions it strives to carry out relate to maritime security, safety, and national defense.

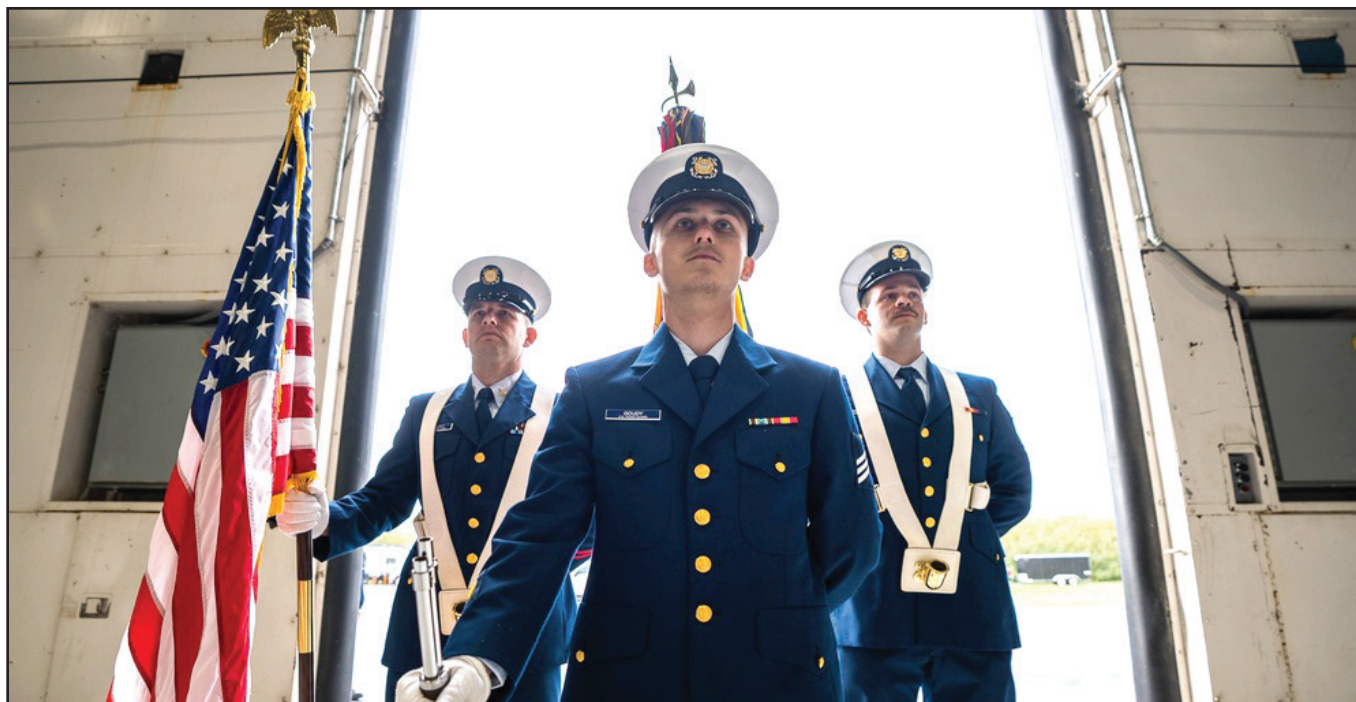
The 13th Coast Guard District covers the Columbia River Sector (CRS). The Coast Guard 13th District (D13) comprises the Pacific Northwest and is the gateway to the North Pacific and Alaska. D13's Area of Responsibility encompasses four states and the entire Pacific Northwest coast. It also shares a border with Canada to the north and California to the south.

D13's headquarters is located in Seattle, with three Sector offices managing operations in their respective areas - Puget Sound, Columbia River, and North Bend, according to the United States Coast Guard's website.

D13 is made up of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. Over 3,000 active duty and reserve members, civilian employees, and Coast Guard Auxiliarists are stationed in the Pacific Northwest, according to the Coast Guard's Website. D13's operational assets include 21 Cutters, 132 Boats, and 11 Aircraft.

"The Coast Guard has multiple units situated near the Columbia River, which work to ensure maritime safety, security, and stewardship on the region's waterways," Public Affairs Specialist for D13 Travis Magee said. "Coast Guard units in this area conduct a wide array of operations, including search and rescue, law enforcement, pollution response, and aids to navigation maintenance and replacement."

One of the newer additions to the Coast Guard's



A color guard team stands during an establishment ceremony in Warrenton, Oregon, to formally establish Coast Guard Base Astoria Oct. 26, 2022.

Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard

network in Warrenton, OR, is Base Astoria, established Oct. 26, 2022. There is also the Air Station in Astoria that was established Aug. 14, 1964, at Tongue Point Naval Station, Astoria, OR.

"Base Astoria provides operational logistics support for Coast Guard units across the Thirteenth Coast Guard District's Oregon and southern Washington regions," Magee said. "Air Station Astoria operates three MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters, and aircrews are able to conduct rescue missions approximately 300 miles from the air station. In addition to search and rescue response at sea, the aircrews are trained and capable of conducting inland and vertical-surface search and rescue operations."

Additionally, Astoria is the homeport of two 210-foot Reliance Class cutters, the USCGC Alert and USCGC Steadfast. Both cutters returned to homeport recently after patrols in the Eastern Pacific, according to Magee.

During their most recent

patrol, the Steadfast crew disrupted the flow of illegal narcotics on three separate occasions, preventing a combined total of more than 11,550 pounds of cocaine from reaching the U.S.

The Alert law enforcement boarding team interdicted a suspected go-fast vessel and suspected drug smugglers, discovering more than 2,600 kilograms of cocaine with an approximate value of \$75 million.

At the mouth of the Columbia River

In addition to its operations in Astoria and Warrenton, the Coast Guard also maintains a base at Station Cape Disappointment in Ilwaco, WA.

Billeted for 53 active duty and 12 reserve Coast Guard members, it's the largest Coast Guard search and rescue station on the Northwest Coast and is the site of the oldest search and rescue station within the Thirteenth Coast Guard District, Magee

said.

Magee said that the crew operates three 47-foot Motor Lifeboats and two Response Boat-Small IIs and provides search and rescue response to commercial and recreational mariners and maritime law enforcement.

"Some of the station's common cases are responding to disabled commercial and recreational vessels, vessels taking on water, and people in the water," Magee said. "This area is regarded as one of the most treacherous river bars in the world. Because of the large number of shipwrecks near the river entrance, it is often referred to as 'The Graveyard of the Pacific.'"

While this reputation makes it a hazard for vessels passing through, the "dynamic conditions" also make it an excellent training ground for Coast Guard students attending the Coast Guard's National Motor Lifeboat School in Ilwaco. Magee said students from around the nation come to the school to learn how to care for and operate the 47-

foot Motor Lifeboat.

The area is also a great place for Coast Guard Aviators to train at the Advanced Helicopter Rescue School (AHRS) during the fall and spring seasons. While the AHRS is based out of Mobile, AL, the dynamic conditions at Station Cape Disappointment expose aircrews to high-risk training environments, Magee said.

"It's a week-long course for all pilots, flight mechanics, and rescue swimmers. Currently, there are ten total student weeks a year," Magee said.

Being in such a high-activity area, students will get opportunities for real emergency responses. Magee said that AHRS, Station Cape Disappointment, and the National Motor Lifeboat School were all involved in the rescue of a mariner in distress about 6 miles west of the mouth of the Columbia River after the disabled 35-foot vessel Sandpiper was capsized by a breaking wave on Feb. 3, 2023.

Other duties

Across the Columbia River, in Tongue Point, OR, you will find two aids to navigation units: Coast Guard Cutter Elm and Aids to Navigation Team Astoria.

Aids to navigation include buoys, day beacons, lights, lightships, radio beacons, fog signals, marks, and other devices used to provide "street" signs on the water.

Coast Guard Cutter Elm is a sea-going buoy tender, and its crew's primary mission is to service and maintain 131 aids to navigation along the Pacific coasts of Oregon and Washington, as well as in the Columbia River. The cutter also has Law Enforcement capabilities.

Aids to Navigation Team Astoria is responsible for servicing four lighthouses, 325 primary aids to navigation, and 315 secondary aids. The team's personnel travel north to Ocean Shores, WA, inland to Aberdeen, WA, south to Cape Mears, OR, and inland along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers to Oregon City, OR.

"A unique thing the team does is establish and disestablish seasonal sound signals in Grays Harbor and Tillamook Bay that operate during the summer months and are transported to the jetties via a Coast Guard helicopter," Magee said.

"Coast Guard units in the Columbia River area conduct a wide range of missions to protect the region's waterways," Magee said. "In order to maintain proficiency for these operations, our crews are constantly training to ensure their readiness to respond."

Learn more at <https://www.pacificarea.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/District-13>.

Highlighting Heritage: Petty Officer 3rd Class Cassandra Castillo

Petty Officer 3rd Class
CASSANDRA CASTILLO

Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Cassandra Castillo’s dream to work in the medical field began when she was a little girl. Growing up, she was passionate about helping others but did not know how to find opportunities to begin a career where she could serve others.

Growing up in Fort Worth, Texas, Castillo’s family focused on ensuring Castillo and her siblings assimilated to American culture, school, and keeping a safe home to sleep in at night. When Castillo was young, planning for her future was not a priority as she focused on adjusting to life and fitting in at school as a fourth-generation Mexican-American.

Castillo said school was often a struggle, despite having teachers who worked to help Castillo build a bright future.

“My school was extremely underfunded and had limited electives,” she said. “Our teachers tried to the best of their ability to do what they could to help give

us opportunities and encourage us not to give up on what we wanted for our futures.”

As high school neared an end, Castillo began looking at her career options. She knew her family could not afford college and saw the military as a path to a better future. Castillo found the Coast Guard attractive because of how small the service is and how closely the service’s humanitarian-based missions align with her personal desire to help others.

“I joined the Coast Guard to gain independence and because I am passionate about helping people,” said Castillo. “I like that serving in the Coast Guard gives me all the tools I need to fulfill my purpose, and gives me a brighter future while helping others.”

Today, as a health services technician at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River, Castillo cares for the health and readiness of the Coast Guard’s first responders in the Pacific Northwest. She said it’s the best job, since she serves people on a one-to-one level and is paving herself a path even farther into medicine.

Castillo joined the Coast Guard in 2017 and said she has always felt welcome at her Coast Guard units, but admits she struggles with the lack of diversity in her current duty station’s community.

“My biggest challenge is not being around more people who can relate to my background and heritage,” she said. “Texas is incredibly diverse. It’s challenging not being around people who look or sound like me, but my shipmates always do their best to make me feel like I’m at home.”

Castillo credits the Coast Guard in helping advance her confidence and professional skills. She said she is proud of where she came from and how far she’s come in developing her communication skills.

“What I have the most pride in is knowing I am making my parents proud,” said Castillo. “I do everything for them. I’m really happy I was able to pave my way to a better future and am thankful for the opportunities serving in the Coast Guard has provided me.”




Courtesy photo from Petty Officer 3rd Class Diolanda Caballero
Petty Officer 3rd Class Cassandra Castillo, a health services technician at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River’s medical clinic in Warrenton, stands in the lobby in the sector’s medical building. Castillo’s daily duties involve taking patients vitals, checking and updating medical records, and laboratory testing to keep Coast Guard flight crews and sector personnel mission ready.



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Breaking Waves

*Courtesy photo from
Petty Officer 1st Class
Cynthia Oldham*

Petty Officer 1st Class Victoria Hansen (right), Surfman #484 and an instructor at the National Motor Life Boat School in Ilwaco, Washington, operates a 47-foot Motor Life Boat in 2019 while training at Benson Beach near Cape Disappointment. Hansen is qualified to operate the rescue boats in seas up to 30-feet and in more than 50-mph winds.



Salute to the U.S. Coast Guard

*We at Country Media Inc.
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U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert returns home

After 61-day counternarcotics patrol in Eastern Pacific



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard
Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) gains positive control of a suspected drug smuggling vessel in the Eastern Pacific Ocean May 26, 2023. A boarding team interdicted more than 2,600 kilograms of cocaine.

The Port of Columbia County celebrates and honors the service of the U.S. Coast Guard



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STAFF REPORT

Country Media, Inc.

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) and crew returned to homeport Friday, June 16, after a 61-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific.

On May 26, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Marine Patrol Aircraft crew notified the Alert crew of a suspected “go-fast” vessel. The Alert crew launched the deployed Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and aircrew along with the cutter’s small boat and law enforcement boarding team.

The Alert’s law enforcement boarding team interdicted the suspected go-fast vessel and suspected drug smugglers, discovering more than 2,600 kilograms of cocaine with an approximate value of \$75 million.

“I couldn’t be prouder of the Alert’s crew. They fought through significant adversity to complete an outstanding patrol, one that each crewmember can look back at and know that we fully embodied our motto, ‘Semper Paratus,’” said Commander Matthew Kolodica. “As I look back over my years in command, this tour was both challenging and very rewarding, I will miss the Alert and crew as I transfer to the Coast Guard Academy. That said, I know with the arrival of Cmdr. Lee Crusius this summer that the cutter and crew will be in good hands well into the future.”

Kolodica will depart the Alert and be the director of Professional Maritime Studies at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Con-



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard
The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) and crew returned to their homeport in Astoria, Oregon, after a 61-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific, June 16, 2023.

necticut.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases, from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, Calif. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Alert, commissioned in 1969, is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter stationed on the West Coast, and performs a variety of missions to protect Americans and American interests in the Northern and Eastern Pacific Ocean.



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast returns

After 70-day counternarcotics patrol in Eastern Pacific

Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard

The crew of USCGC Steadfast return to the cutter's homeport in Astoria, Oregon, following a patrol July 21, 2023. Steadfast is a 210-foot reliance class cutter.

STAFF REPORT

Country Media, Inc.

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) and crew returned to homeport Friday, July 21, after a 70-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific.

Steadfast's crew disrupted the flow of illegal narcotics on three separate occasions during their patrol, preventing a combined total of more than 11,550 pounds of cocaine from reaching the U.S.

The crew steamed more than 16,000 nautical miles conducting training, law enforcement missions, providing search-and-rescue coverage, and conducting helicopter operations while patrolling the waters between their Astoria homeport and the international waters off the coasts of Central and South America.

While patrolling in the Eastern Pacific June 9, Steadfast's cutter boat crew detected a suspected narcotics-smuggling panga-style vessel. Coast Guard personnel conducted a boarding on the vessel, resulting in the interdiction of 2,200 pounds of cocaine.

On June 18, Steadfast was notified by a Customs

and Border Protection Maritime Patrol Aircraft and crew (MPA) of another suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel. Steadfast personnel launched the helicopter, which was able to visually detect the target. Steadfast's boarding team interdicted the 50-foot low profile vessel (LPV), a type of vessel specifically designed for avoiding radar detection, which make them difficult to detect. Steadfast personnel were able to interdict and seize 6,864 pounds of cocaine from the vessel.

During routine operations on July 9, Steadfast personnel were notified by the MPA crew of a suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel transiting international waters. Steadfast launched a cutter boat with a boarding team and HITRON helicopter and aircrew to interdict the vessel. The target vessel attempted to evade the pursuit crew and began jettisoning suspected packaged narcotics overboard. The gunner aboard the HITRON helicopter used disabling fire to stop the engines of the smuggling vessel, ending the pursuit. Steadfast personnel recovered the jettisoned contraband, resulting in the seizure of another 2,464

pounds of cocaine.

The seized contraband was offloaded in San Diego during Steadfast's transit home.

The ongoing battle against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific theater demands united efforts on all fronts. Between initial detection, gathering intelligence, interdiction, and case prosecution, the Coast Guard works closely with partner nations and other U.S. agencies to interrupt the flow of illegal narcotics and chip away at the influence of cartels.

"This patrol marked another epic adventure for the crew of Steadfast," said Commander Brock Eckel, Steadfast's commanding officer. "The crew's teamwork and dedication were key to our operational success and their camaraderie made memories of a lifetime at sea and in exotic foreign ports. In keeping with the traditions of the sea services, I am also proud to have inducted 55 pollywogs into the glorious realm of Neptunus Rex's Kingdom as Honorable Shellbacks."

Notably, Steadfast became the second known U.S. military vessel to cross the equator on the 4th of July, earning 55 crew members the title of "Star-Spangled Shellbacks."



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard

Families greet the crew of USCGC Steadfast as they return to the cutter's homeport in Astoria, Oregon, following a patrol July 21, 2023.

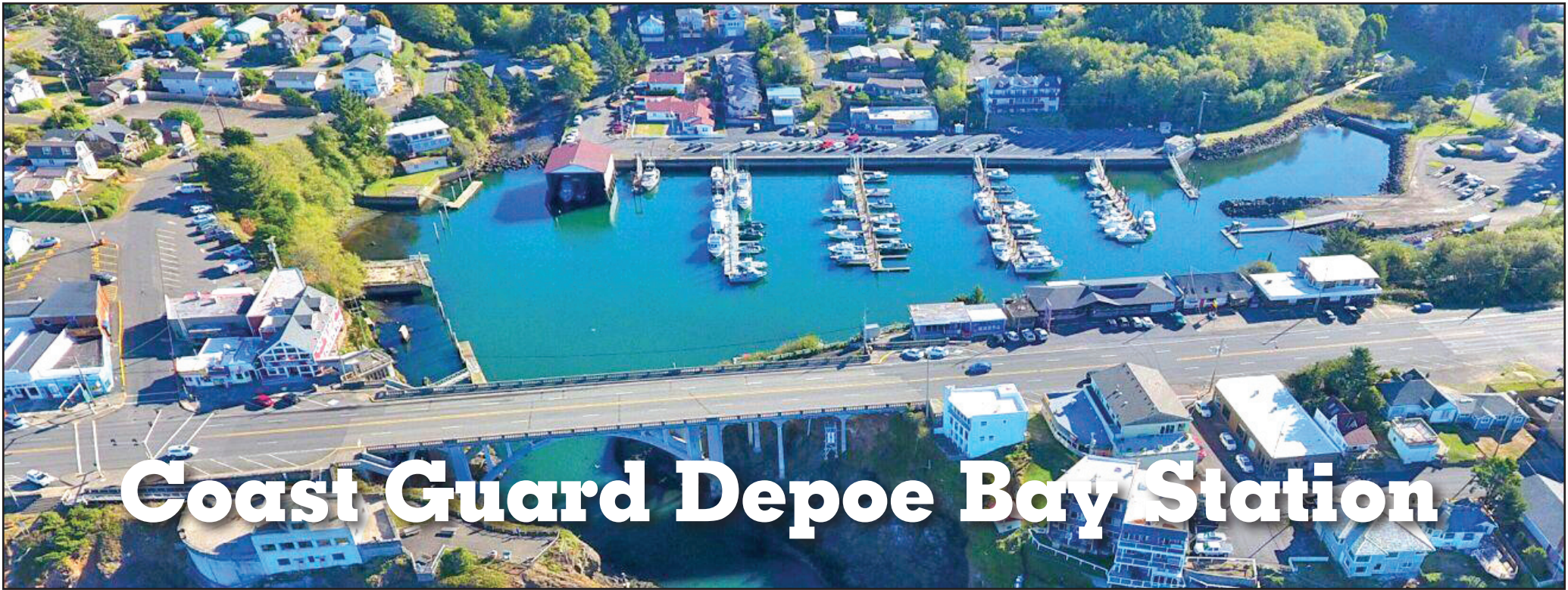
Steadfast's crew was able to participate in a line crossing ceremony that solidified crew camaraderie and upheld the long-practiced traditions of seagoing services.

In addition to the ship's successes in the counternarcotics arena, Steadfast and crew enjoyed several new and exciting experiences in other areas. During their port call in

Panama City, Steadfast crew members spent time bolstering relationships with the Panamanian Navy, participating in a volleyball tournament and a barbeque. One of the ship's small boat crews also rescued a sea turtle that had been entangled in fishing gear, cutting it free and releasing it back to the sea.

Commissioned in 1968,

Steadfast is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported on the Oregon coast. The cutter and crew deploy along the western seaboard from North America to South America, conducting missions such as living marine resource law enforcement, counter-narcotics and migrant smuggling, and search-and-rescue operations.



The Coast Guard Depoe Bay Station is located at the east end of Depoe Bay.

Courtesy photo

JEREMY C. RUARK
Country Media, Inc.

In the following interview, we gain insight into the Coast Guard Depoe Bay Station from Senior Chief Petty Officer BMCS Ryan Clendenen.

When was Station Depoe Bay first established and why?

Senior Chief Petty Officer BMCS Ryan Clendenen: Station Depoe Bay was established in 1940 as a Search and Rescue motor lifeboat station. There was a great need as Depoe Bay was a high traffic boating area with both commercial and recreational vessels, although its small size (smallest harbor in the world). The bar (or hole as we call it) is also one of the most treacherous to cross during heavy weather ocean conditions with little to no room for error as it is only 50 feet wide with rocks on each side and two dog-leg turns that have to be made before safely in the harbor. The need for



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard
A Depoe Bay Station Coast Guard motorboat in action.

highly trained boat operators to conduct the many rescues through this inlet is what has made this Station a permanent fixture in this community.

How many personnel are currently at Station Depoe Bay?

Clendenen: Currently, the Station has 29 billets for personnel to fill. Although we currently have a complement of 20.

What are the primary

missions of Station Depoe Bay and what is the range of daily missions executed?

Clendenen: Station Depoe Bays primary role is Search and Rescue with an emphasis in surf and heavy weather operations. As one of only 19 surf stations in the Coast Guard, we train and operate in seas up to 30 feet, surf up to 20 feet and sustained winds up to 50 knots. This requires an extensive and robust training plan in order to certify members to operate in these conditions



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard
The official sign in from of the Depoe Bay station.

and remain proficient.

We also carry out the enforcement of federal laws and regulations by conducting vessel boardings to ensure boaters meet all safety and navigation requirements where we have an opportunity to interact and educate the community we serve. We also have a duty to respond to environmental hazards and accidents.

On a daily basis we will conduct maintenance and repairs of our attached Motor Lifeboats, complete underway training missions, re-

spond to calls for assistance, perform law enforcement training and tactics, maintain the hundreds of pieces of personal protective equipment we wear and use, and a myriad of administrative functions necessary to maintain finance, supply and personnel.

What types of boats and other crafts are used at Station Depoe Bay?

Clendenen: Station Depoe currently has a complement of three 47' Motor Life

Boats (MLB's). They are the only boats in the Coast Guard approved for operations in heavy weather and surf conditions. We also have unit attached vehicles that are used for landside response to put feet on the ground and eyes on the scene when SAR cases arise on beaches and cliffs nearby in order to relay critical information to all assets responding to the rescue.

Give us the sense of Station Depoe Bay's territory. What areas are covered?

Clendenen: Our AOR (are of responsibility) starts North at Haystack Rock near Pacific City and south to Spencer Creek, just North of the Yaquina Head lighthouse, and out 50 NM to sea. Depoe Bay is an extremely unique and challenging inlet to operate on, but the members who serve here are true professionals and have great pride in the job we are tasked with performing.

To reach Coast Guard Station Depoe Bay, call 541-765-2124.

Local seaman gaining skills at Depoe Bay Sector

JEREMY C. RUARK

Country Media, Inc.

Seaman Aurora Falk is one of the newest members at Sector Depoe Bay.

"I am really enjoying it. Everything has been wonderful, so far," she said.

Falk, 19, is originally from Wisconsin and was reassigned to Depoe Bay shortly after entering the Coast Guard with two primary jobs as a seaman.

One is being a Watchstander, "she said. "Who listens to all the radios for any vessels that may be in distress and watching the hold, as we call it/ We have a very narrow entry to our harbor, so here at the station we

monitor that to make sure there are no collisions."

Falk is also responsible as a boat crew member during rescues and training missions.

“

I am really enjoying it. Everything has been wonderful, so far.

~ Coast Guard Seaman Aurora Falk

”

"It's basically being a deck hand," she said.

According to Falk, there are challenges.

"The most challenge is

being qualified is becoming a crew member on the boat," she said. "It requires a lot of knowledge and a lot of skills in working the lines that we have and knowing how to do all the operations that we do. We have to know a lot about the boat, so if something goes wrong with the boat, we need to know what to do to fix it."

Another needed skill for the Coast Guard crew is basic first aid.

"So that we can help people that we go to rescue, so we as a crewman, administer first aid," she said.

The crew also needs to know what restrictions there are for the Coast Guard vessels.

"Such as high winds and 30-foot seas," Falk said. "We have to decide if the conditions are too much for the boat. We have the responsibility of changing course and alerting others vessel."

While Falk said she enjoys her career in the Coast Guard, it's difficult to be away from her family.

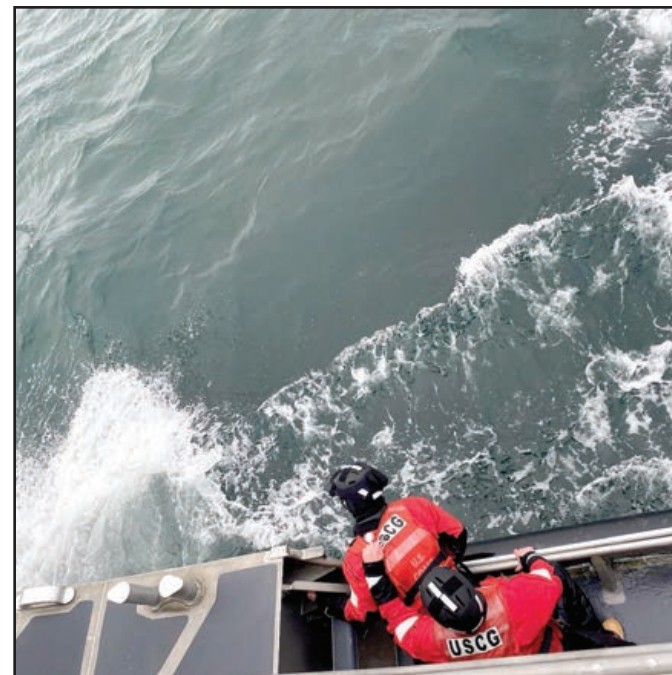
"I arrived at Sector Depoe Bay in September and that led into the major holidays, and I had to spend Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day alone," she said. "But of course, I have my family here at the station. We are all one big family here, but being away from the family that I grew up with has been difficult."

Falk is engaged to be married. She has most recently received orders to be transferred to Virginia on the East Coast and will be leaving Depoe Bay in September.

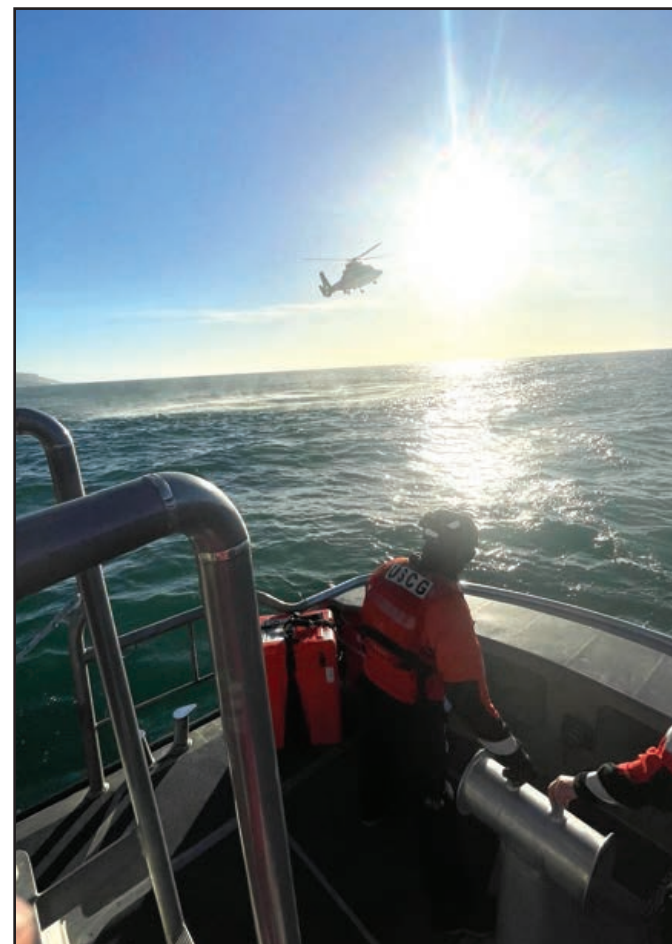
"Transitioning from Station to Station is something everyone from the Coast Guard knows that will happen at least three times," she said. So, it is just something we prepare for and we see it all the time at this Station. It is definitely hard seeing people go, but you know that it is for the best and you or they might be furthering their career. It's part of what we do here."

Falk plans for schooling to become a Marine Science Technician.

"The do inspections on commercial vessels in large ports to make sure all of the sea and environmental standards are being met as well as being involved in disaster responses," she said.



Courtesy photo from Aurora Falk
A crew member holds onto Seaman Aurora Falk during a training exercise in the Pacific Ocean.



Courtesy photo from Aurora Falk
Seaman Aurora Falk looks overhead at a helicopter during a recent training session off Depoe Bay.

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The Coast Guardsman's Creed

This article was first published in 2022.

Years ago, a visitor from Central Oregon stood on the Depoe Bay Bridge, which runs along the Pacific Coast Highway, otherwise known as State Highway 101. She looked out to see a silver boat zipping around in the ocean and thought to herself ‘that looks fun and I want to drive that boat.’

“I had no prior knowledge of the Coast Guard, but at that time in my life I was looking for a purpose,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Kelsi Dozier (surfman #561), from Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay in Newport, Oregon. “After that family vacation to Depoe Bay and a little video research on YouTube, I reached out to a Coast Guard recruiter.”

The Coast Guard has certified 10 surfman during the past eight months. In order to earn the surfman qualification a Coast Guard coxswain requires a lot of hours at the helm while operating in the surf. These weather and sea conditions are most often found between the months of October and April.

“It requires a lot of extra time outside of normal duty hours,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Adam Preiser (surfman # 535), Station Chetco River in Brookings, Oregon. “I had to break-in at two different units and came in on baby leave to scout conditions and push for training opportunities. Surfman training conditions hold a very tight window and you have to get out there when the window is open.”

Preiser’s baby leave wasn’t any normal baby leave either, because his newborn needed to get life-saving heart surgery. Station Chetco River is a 7-hour drive from where the heart surgery was taking place at



Courtesy photo from Bruce Beck Photography
Petty Officer 1st Class Adam Preiser operates a 47-foot motor lifeboat in the surf near Brookings, Oregon, Dec. 13, 2019.

Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Oregon. While visiting with his wife and newborn, he saw a weather system forming and knew it would bring the surf needed to train, and so he raced home.

Resiliency is a key factor for both member, family member, and mentor. Coast Guard service members need spouses and support systems to be strong and in place, so when they are on duty, their whole body and mind are on the job.

“Mentors put in a ton of hours to push you toward the qualification,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Enrique Lemos (surfman #559), Station Umpqua River. “They put in the same time as me.”

Surfman mentors consistently preach patience, determination, and humility, because earning the surfman qualification isn’t an easy or quick process.

“The most important thing I learned from my mentor was to continue to learn and develop,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Aaron Hadden (surfman #560), Station Umpqua River. “Making surfman is not the end result. I have to continue to act like I

haven’t made it yet.”

Mentors share mistakes and successes. They offer learning experiences and offer a 360-degree perspective. There is an awful lot of tough love as coxswains work toward the surfman qualification, but that ends up creating a very close bond.

A member’s resiliency is needed most when stick time is at a premium.

“It’s really hard to share stick time,” said Preiser. “It’s like a double-edged sword. On one side it’s healthy competition, and on the other, you want to be greedy because weather changes and boat casualties occur, and you don’t want to miss out.”

The healthy competition spoken of by Preiser was especially present while Hadden and Lemos were trying to qualify at the same time. They ended up earning the qualification on the same day and receiving their pin on the same day. Petty Officer 1st Class Raymond Aguilar (surfman # 557) and Dozier also had to share stick time at Station Yaquina Bay.

“You share a different bond with somebody who is operating at the same level as you are,” said Aguilar.

“Time is divided up fairly in my opinion,” said Hadden. “It’s a friendly competition. You just have to be always there pursuing sign-offs and asking to go out.”

This brotherhood turns into a community composed of past, current, and future surfman and they all live by a creed:

I will, to the best of my ability, pursue each mission with the commitment, compassion, and courage inherent in the title of Surfman.

I will endeavor to reinforce the worldwide reputation of our forefathers in the Lifeboat Community.

I will maintain a guardian’s eye on my crew at all times, and keep a cool, yet deliberate, hand on the throttle.

I will give of myself, and my knowledge as those who gave to me; so as the line of Coast Guard Surfman will live forever.

I will ensure that my supervisors rest easy with the knowledge that I am at the helm, no matter what the conditions.

I will never unnecessarily jeopardize myself, my boat, or my crew; But will do so

freely to rescue those in peril.

I will strive with dedication and determination to bring credit upon Coast Guard Surfman, past and future.

“Taking care of people and taking care of the crew are key factors in every successful mission,” said Lemos. “You have to invest in that philosophy.”

This is a once-in-a-lifetime process,” said Aguilar. “I will pay it forward on the positive side and will avoid paying it forward with the bad experiences.”

“I want to save people as well as their property,” said Dozier. “I also look forward to being able to pass the knowledge that I have gained to the next watchstander, crewman, and coxswain. Part of my job is to teach others the energy and movement of the waves and how to look at the weather. A surfman has to look at everything and recognize how it will come together and affect the mission.”

For Preiser, The ‘surfman community’ is strong and it goes outside of the Coast Guard. He has known a fellow surfman since he was five years old and another surfman was in his wedding.

“The brotherhood begins while training because regulations state we can’t go out in the surf without another boat out there,” said Preiser. “That boat and that crew is our lifeline if something goes wrong.”

Regardless of the different backgrounds, these five surfmen have all come together to protect mariners in the Pacific Northwest.

Preiser hails from The Outer Banks of North Carolina, the birthplace of the original Coast Guard surfmen, the Midgett family. But he didn’t realize or know the significance of his hometown before joining the Coast Guard.

Aguilar joined the Coast Guard out of Santa Clarita, California, and spent time at two different units, Coast Guard Cutter Boutwell and Station Seattle, before deciding to pursue the surfman qualification at Station Yaquina Bay.

“Research showed the challenge of becoming a master at boat driving skills,” said Aguilar. “But the original draw to the Coast Guard was the humanitarian efforts as first responders.”

Hadden began his military career in the Army, where he worked with explosives. He was deployed in Afghanistan for a year before joining the Coast Guard.

Lemos from central California, learned of the surfman career path at boot camp where his company commander, a surfman, told stories of his career at surf stations. His first unit was aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Pamlico, and then he attended Boatswain’s Mate A-school before arriving at Station Umpqua River.

Dozier’s journey began shortly after that trip to Depoe Bay. Her first unit out of boot camp was Station Chetco River in Brookings, Oregon. This was also her first up-close experience with the 47-foot Motor Lifeboat, the silver boat that she saw during her trip to Depoe Bay. She started her career in the engineering department before going to Boatswain’s Mate A-School. She then earned coxswain and heavy-weather coxswain qualification at Station Jonesport, Maine.

“As you begin to understand the surfman community, that is part of what keeps you in it,” said Dozier. “Most public knowledge of what surfman are comes from imagery of boats crashing through waves, but a surf-

CREED

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man's knowledge of history, areas of responsibility, ability to read the ocean, understanding the dynamics and know where the dangers come from, is what sets a surfman apart. It isn't all about boat driving, there's also the other side of it that is based around knowledge, experience, and understanding."

Most cases don't occur in the surf, but surfman and the crews of the motor lifeboats are the people who can get through any conditions to help the disabled mariners offshore, who would otherwise be drifting helplessly.

Last summer Dozier sat at the helm of a 47-foot MLB and watched the ocean swells approach the Depoe Bay entrance, known as the Hole in the Wall. As a now experienced boat operator, she intently watched the ocean to understand the dangers of entering this particular port. Although intently studying she remembers thinking, "This is pretty wild — a few years ago I was up on the bridge thinking they were nuts for trying to go in there. It looked too small and shallow."

Dozier loves the history of the surfman and lifeboat community, which in turn heightens her appreciation toward the elite community she is now a member of.

"I enjoy hearing the history of the surfman that came before me like Master Chief McAdams," said Dozier. "History shows why we are here and why we do what we do. One thing I have learned about being a surfman is it's not one person or a number, it is a representation of the entire crew."

Dozier may just be a self-proclaimed country girl, but with her inherent amount of compassion and drive to help others, she carries on the legacy of the creed as one of the Coast Guard's newest surfman.

History of the U.S. Coast Guard



Courtesy photo

This mural depicting a 36-foot motor lifeboat graced the former Coast Guard building in Bandon. It was painted by K.L. Jones in 1971.

STAFF REPORT

Country Media, Inc.

The U.S. Coast Guard is the oldest continuous sea-going service in the United States.

Coast Guard Day is held every August 4 to commemorate the founding of the United States Coast Guard as the Revenue Marine on August 4, 1790, by then-Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, according to Wikipedia. On that date, U.S. Congress, guided by Hamilton, authorized the building of a fleet of the first ten Revenue Service cutters, whose respon-

sibility would be enforcement of the first tariff laws enacted by the U.S. Congress under the U.S. Constitution.

The laws authorized the construction of 10 revenue cutters and the personnel to man them.

"The whole point was the fledgling nation needed an influx of money, so the revenue cutters were there to prevent smuggling and other illegal activities to make sure the country was getting what it was owed," according to a published interview in 2022 with Commander Michael Baird of Sector North Bend.

The U.S. Coast Guard,

as it is known today, wasn't created until 1915 when the Revenue Cutter Service and the U.S. Lifesaving Service merged.

"The merge created the U.S. Coast Guard," Baird said, adding that the Coast Guard was then merged with the Lighthouse Service in 1939 and the Commerce Department's Bureau of Marine Navigation in 1946.

Because the Coast Guard comprises so many other services, Baird said it is the reason for the Coast Guard's 11 statutory missions.

"We don't do just one thing," he said.

Those 11 missions are: Port and Waterway Secu-

rity, Drug Interdiction, Aids to Navigation, Search and Rescue, Living-Marine Resources, Marine Safety, Defense Readiness, Migrant Interdiction, Marine Environmental Protection, Ice Operations, and Law Enforcement.

In addition, Baird said the Coast Guard has been part of every major conflict that the U.S. has fought.

"We've had people serve in every major war," he said. "We're at all times a military service. We're part of the Department of Homeland Security to help us maintain our law enforcement aspects."

Specific to the Oregon

Coast, Sector North Bend was officially established in 2013. Prior to that it was Group North Bend, established in 1968.

"(But) when you look at North Bend's Area of Operation, you can trace Coast Guard roots to 1870 with the Cape Blanco Lighthouse and 1878 with the first lifeboat station (which) was established in Coos Bay," Baird said. "We changed to a sector because in order to better conduct our missions, we transitioned from groups to air sectors. A lot of titles changed over the years, but our presence and primary mission hasn't changed too much."

U.S. Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay



Located in Newport, the history of Station Yaquina Bay dates back more than a century.

In 1896, the first U.S. Lifesaving Service station was opened at South Beach. Later in 1906, the U.S. Life-saving Service station moved to the present site of the Yaquina Point Lighthouse.

The present facilities were erected in 1944, after the first building was destroyed by fire. A modern annex with berthing, dining, haul out facilities, as well as emergency power supplies,

was completed in 1983.

The station is responsible for the area that extends from Cape Perpetua to Spencer Creek, totaling 27 miles of Oregon coastline. With the primary mission of search and rescue, the station responds to as many as 590 cases per year.

In addition to search and rescue, another primary mission at Yaquina Bay is law enforcement, of which the station conducted about 194 cases this year. Their supporting vessels include one of the Coast Guard's four

virtually unsinkable 52-foot vessels, which can tow vessels as large as 750 gross tons, take 30-foot seas, travel 150 nautical miles offshore and right it-self after a roll-over.

Because the station is close to the Siletz River, which floods every year, the station personnel are also trained to assist the local and state police departments, local fire departments, county search and rescue and county marine patrol with emergency flood response when the river floods.

Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard
Station Yaquina Bay in Newport is located near Yaquina Point Lighthouse.

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Female mechanic 'loves' her Coast Guard job

JEREMY C. RUARK

Country Media, Inc.

Seaman Second Class Maeve Katecavage is a mechanic at the Coast Guard Depoe Bay Station.

"Basically, I work on the diesel engines," she said. I make sure that the boat is still running, and I also play a part as an engineer when we are underway. I love this work. I think it is great. It's being able to always problem solve. There is always something new that you have to figure out. It's not the same thing every day, so it keeps you on your toes."

The hands-on work for 25-year-old Katcavage, such as swapping out boat engines, can be intriguing.

"I think there is a common misconception that a lot of men do this kind of job, but there are a lot of females as well that are

mechanics," she said. "We all do a little bit of everything (at Depoe Bay Station), including search and rescue. I enjoy doing my job, doing it well and serving the county.



The one thing that is keeping me in is that it is a wonderful job with wonderful people.

~ Seaman Second Class Maeve Katcavage



Katcavage joined the Coast Guard in 2018. She acknowledged there are rewards that come with her Coast Guard career.

"Many times, you start the day, and something isn't working, or some things aren't going

your way and then at the end of the day, you have a solution to your problem, and you have resolved what the issue was," she said.

Coast Guard members are usually stationed for two to four years at a particular location, Katcavage said. She has received orders to be reassigned from Depoe Bay to Maine this month.

Katcavage joined the Coast Guard after growing up in Pennsylvania. She said she wanted to experience the ocean surf.

"There are very few surf stations in the Coast Guard, and it just so happened that I thought it would be a really cool experience to join and to participate," she said.

As she departs from Depoe Bay, Katcavage said she will take along several memories.

"The wonderful people. I

have worked with some amazing people, and we have had really great commands," she said. "I also love the area. The people that live in the area. The community. It is such a small town, and it is so homely."

Her advice to anyone that would consider joining the Coast Guard?

"It is the best thing ever," she said. "If you are a little bit considering it, I say, go for it. The one thing that is keeping me in is that it is a wonderful job with wonderful people. I would say absolutely give it a try."

Katcavage is married and her husband will be joining her on the reassignment to Maine.

"I had actually been first assigned to Maine, now I am heading back," she said. "It is much like the Oregon Coast. It's beautiful."

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North Bend Air Station provides critical support in Coast Guard rescue missions

BREE LAUGHLIN

Country Media, Inc.

Air stations are a vital component of the Coast Guard's mission.

Air Station North Bend Sector has five helicopters that enables the Coast Guard to provide a rapid response for search and rescue and other missions.

The sector's area of responsibility encompasses 220 miles of shoreline extending from Pacific City, Oregon, south to the California border, west to 50 nautical miles offshore, and east to the I-5 corridor.

This station guards the Oregon Coast through the aggressive and professional prosecution of all Coast

Guard missions.

"Our primary mission along the coast is search and rescue, and the air station provides another asset to accomplish those missions," said Air Station North Bend Lieutenant Dylan Ferrell.

“

You have always got to be ready for any situation.
~ Air Station North Bend
Lieutenant Dylan Ferrell

”

"We work in concert with the boat stations going out. For persons in the water, we'll respond very rapidly for that. Also, if there are vessels in distress offshore making

mayday calls we'll go out for assistance," said Lieutenant Ferrell.

Air Station North Bend also works with other governmental agencies to provide assistance inland and regularly trains for search and rescue calls on vertical surfaces along the coast, he said.

This sector of the coast guard has a mission to safeguard their homeland at all costs. They conduct Search and Rescue as if they are assisting their own loved ones and they enforce the law with a balanced respect for both the law and those upon whom it is being enforced. Coast Guard personnel accomplish these, and all other missions,

See **NORTH BEND** Page 20



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard

The Coast Guard North Bend Sector conducts frequent search and rescue missions with helicopters.

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NORTH BEND

From **Page 20**



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard The Coast Guard Sector North Bend patch.

through vigilance, tenacity, teamwork, a commitment to service and the unwavering pursuit of operational excellence.

It takes specialized training to work at a Coast Guard air station, Ferrell said, but there are a few different avenues to get there. He said it

takes hard work and teamwork to work on a helicopter.

“It’s great working environment focused on teamwork and accomplishing specific tasks and missions,” Ferrell said.

“You are rarely going to be the only one working on a helicopter. Everybody’s got their specific roles, but they work with everybody else on the entire work staff to complete a job. So it’s important to be thorough, have attention to detail and, especially, to have teamwork,” he said.

The Coast Guard Lieutenant said he is rewarded by providing service to people when they need it the most.

“It’s hard work, but you know your work is having a direct impact when you are performing in a search and rescue mission. You have always got to be ready for any situation,” Ferrell said.



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard MH-65E crews from Sector North Bend participated in static displays at local schools to help educate students on Coast Guard missions.



Courtesy photo from the U.S. Coast Guard In the air with the North Sector Coast Guard crew.

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