



Salute

to the U.S. Coast Guard

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History of the U.S. Coast Guard

STAFF REPORT Country Media, Inc.

The U.S. Coast Guard is the oldest continuous seagoing 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 responsibility 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. Life-saving 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 Security, 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."

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The creed of a Coast Guardsman

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 surfmen during the past 8 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 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



Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Enrique Lemos (surfman #559) operates a 47-foot Motor Lifeboat near the entrance to the Umpqua River in Winchester Bay, Oregon, Dec. 26, 2019. When Coast Guard crews are operating in the surf there has to be another asset nearby to respond if something goes wrong in the dangerous conditions.

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



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Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay

Since 1908, Tillamook Bay and the surrounding waters have been patrolled by personnel from the United States Coast Guard and its predecessor, the Life Saving Service.

Today, 69 Coast Guard personnel are stationed at Coast Guard Station Tillamook Bay in Garibaldi, operating two lifeboats and a skiff to monitor the waters from Tillamook Head to Cape Kiwanda.

The first station to provide service to Tillamook Bay was built in 1907 and opened in 1908 at Barview Jetty as part of the United States Life-Saving Service, one of the two precursor organizations to the United States Coast Guard, which was formed in 1915. The first station featured a 26-foot, manually propelled surfboat that was the only craft stationed in the bay for three decades.

In 1937, the coast guard began operating from a new boathouse a little over a mile and a half from the mouth of the bay, just west of Garibaldi. Situated at the end of a 650-plus-foot pier, the new boathouse featured rails in the

floor to facilitate easier launching of the two, new, 36-foot motorboats that arrived a year after the boathouse's completion in 1936. Today the boathouse has been restored by the local community and is open to visitors on weekends during the summer and hosts schoolchildren for field trips during the school year.

The boathouse was manned by around 30 personnel, who continued to live in Barview until 1943, when new housing was constructed across Highway 101 from the boathouse.

In the mid-1960s, the next generation of boats arrived in Garibaldi, with two 44-foot lifesaving boats originally stationed in the Port of Garibaldi's boat basin, before the current boathouse was opened in 1981.

The station's 39 active-duty personnel, 26 reservists and four civilian personnel 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.

In addition to these duties, the guard members work to educate

locals and visitors to the potential hazards of recreating and boating in the area's waters.

Two 47-foot motor lifeboats are the main vessels used by the guard members in search and rescue operations, while a skiff is also housed at the station. The motor lifeboats 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.

The Coast Guard is well embedded in the local community after more than a century, and the community's support was formally recognized in 2024 when Garibaldi was designated a Coast Guard City, one of 34 across the country. In

addition to restoring the historic boathouse, Garibaldians have also promoted Coast Guard history at the Garibaldi Museum and integrated those at the station into the community through traditions such as the annual water ball tournament against local fire crews during the Garibaldi Days festival.

Historic U.S. Coast Guard Boathouse

WILL CHAPPEL
Country Media, Inc.

Located at the end of a quarter-mile pier at the north end of Garibaldi, the Historic United States Coast Guard Boathouse gives visitors a chance to view a unique chapter in the area and guard's histories.

The boat house was originally constructed between 1935 and 1936 to house two new 36-foot lifesaving boats, as well as a 26-foot, manually propelled surfboat that had previously been the only vessel stationed in Tillamook Bay. Located at the end of a 650-plus-foot pier, the boathouse previously contained three sets

of rails, down which carriages holding the boats would be lowered into the water.

At the time, it was standard practice for the coast guard to construct boat houses in this manner, according to Denning, although the Tillamook Bay boathouse was the last built using this design.

Operations began at the boat house in 1937, after a delay in procuring the carriages to move the boats prevented a 1936 opening. For the first six years of the boathouse's existence, guardsmen still lived in the old station in Barview, until new housing opened across Highway 101 from the boathouse in 1943.

The boathouse's mis-

sion began to scale down in the mid-1960s when two new 44-foot lifesaving boats were stationed at the Port of Garibaldi. For the next decade, the boathouse remained operational as guardsmen used the aging boats for towing practice, but by the mid-1970s it was decommissioned before ownership was transferred to the Port of Garibaldi in 1980.

After serving as home to several businesses over the next decades, the boat house's maintenance was turned over to the Garibaldi Cultural Heritage Initiative in 2017, at which point it became an educational asset for the community. It now features displays on local and coast



guard history, as well as tanks with aquatic creatures from Tillamook Bay.

The boathouse is open to the public from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and

Sundays between Memorial Day and Labor Day.



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Station Yaquina Bay's long history of service

JEREMY C. RUARK
Country Media, Inc.

U.S. Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay has a long history in Newport — one that stretches well over a century. In fact, the first U.S. Lifesaving Service, the predecessor of the modern-day Coast Guard, opened a station at South Beach, now part of Newport, in 1896.

The Coast Guard moved to its present-day location on the north side of the bay in 1906.

The current 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. Work is currently underway to renovate and restore buildings on the site as needed.

Station Yaquina Bay's area of responsibility extends from Cape Perpetua on the south end

to Spencer Creek on the north, totaling 27 miles of coast. With the primary mission of search and rescue, the station responds to hundreds of cases per year. In addition to search and rescue, another primary mission at Yaquina Bay is law enforcement.

When needed, Coast Guard crews will also assist police departments, fire departments, county search and rescue, and county marine patrol with emergency response.

The current Commanding Officer at U.S. Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay in Newport is Chief Warrant Officer Jason McCommons. He assumed command of the station on June 20, 2025.

The Coast Guard has had a major impact on Newport and the surrounding communities, safeguarding life and property as part of its day-to-day mission. In March of 2005, Newport was recognized as a Coast Guard City, a



Crews from Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay in Newport respond in all types of weather and ocean conditions to fulfill their primary mission of search and rescue.

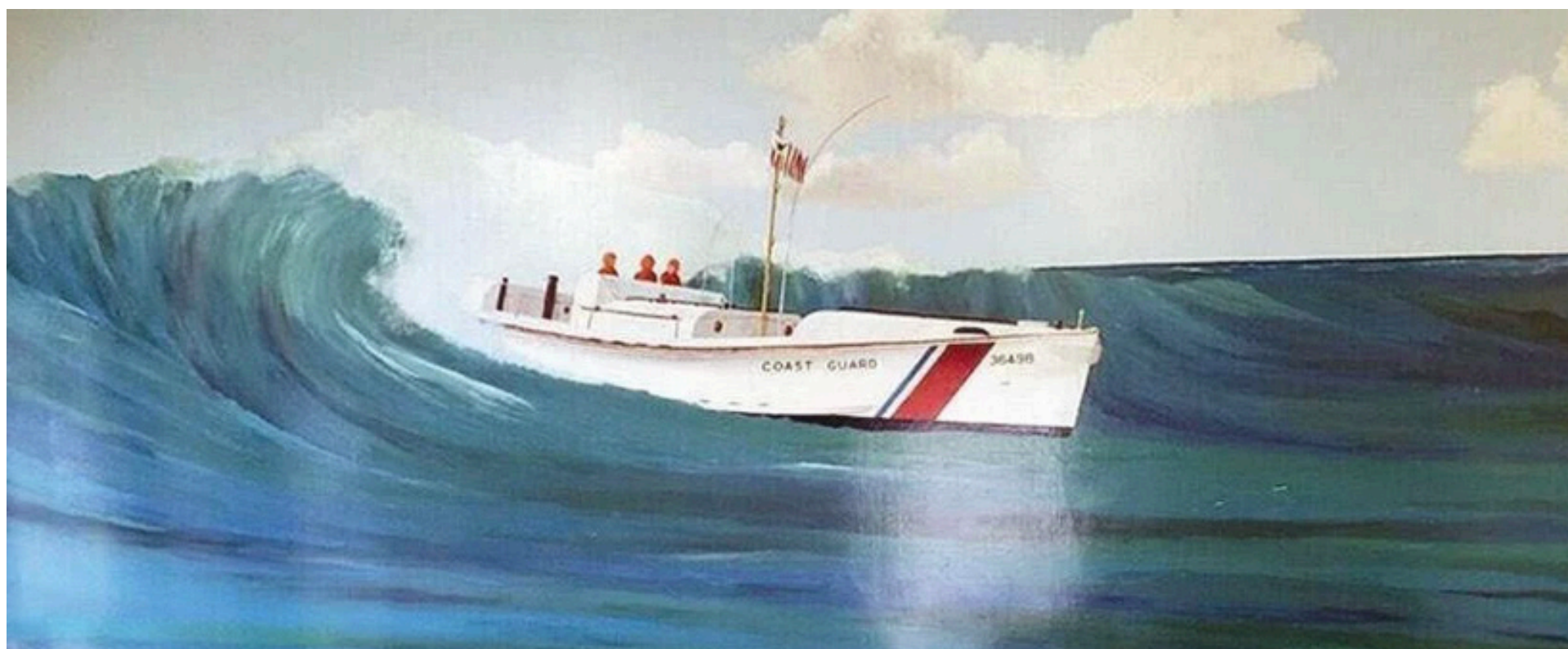
Courtesy photo

designation it still holds nearly two decades later. "The men and woman of the Coast Guard are

an important part of any community with strong economic ties to the oceans and waterways. We are

fortunate to have these guardians in our community, and we are pleased to hold the honor of being

a Coast Guard City." The City of Newport states on its website.



Coast Guard Air Facility in Newport called a 'life saver'

JEREMY C. RUARK
County Media, Inc.

In the early 1980s, after a commercial fishing vessel went down off Newport and resulted in the loss of a life, members of the fishing community and local officials initiated a push for a Coast Guard helicopter to be stationed in Newport to respond to search and rescue missions in the area. There was already an air base in North Bend, but response times from that station to emergencies further up the coast were costing lives.

Finally, in March of 1986, then Oregon Gov. Vic Atiyeh lent his support to the effort, urging Congress to "see the federal commitment and appropriations necessary to ensure the establishment" of the air facility. Atiyeh cited a drowning of two young people swept of the rocks at Otter Rock, saying, "They drowned while several hundred residents watched helplessly."

Congress appropriated the money in 1986, and although still technically part of Air Station North Bend, the Newport Air Facility was created to cut response time by having a helicopter stationed in Newport around the clock.

And then after about 28 years of providing this much needed service to the central Oregon Coast, this protection was very nearly lost. It was a time when federal agencies at all levels were scrambling to

find ways to cut their budgets. In a budget request for fiscal year 2014 to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security by the Coast Guard commandant, Admiral Robert Papp Jr., the following sentence was included: "The Coast Guard will also consolidate regional assets where overlapping capabilities exist by closing air facilities in Newport, Ore. and Charleston, S.C."

The possibility of the Newport facility being closed quickly created an uproar in the local community, which was soon echoed by state officials and Oregon's federal legislators. Led locally by the Newport Fishermen's Wives Association, the effort included condemnation by the city of Newport, Port of Newport, Lincoln County and the six Democrat members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

Ultimately, the Newport Air Facility was given new life when the U.S. Coast Guard Act of 2015 was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama. That legislation guaranteed funding for a Coast Guard rescue helicopter in Newport through at least Jan. 1, 2018.

The community, Newport Fishermen's Wives, and Oregon's congressional delegation led a second successful fight to retain the helicopter in 2025 following attempts by the Trump administration to move the craft out of Lincoln County.



Lincoln County Leader

A Coast Guard helicopter is based in a hangar at the Newport Municipal Airport, ready for a rapid response when a rescue is needed.

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Meeting challenges, seeing rewards

JEREMNY C. RUARK
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U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officers Second Class Elijah Johnston is tasked with operating the Station Depoe Bay motorboats with a crew of four members.

"I am basically the boat captain," he said. Operating out of Depoe Bay can be challenging, according to Johnston.

"It has an absolutely tight harbor entrance," he said. "It's very narrow. It's approximately 50-feet wide, which leaves narrow margins for error when you are transiting through there or towing another vessel, especially as the seas get bigger and the

conditions become more challenging."

The Fort Townsend, Wash. native has been a member of the Coast Guard for six years.

"I intend to be in the Coast Guard for 20 years," he said.

Rewards of serving Johnston said he finds rewards as a Coast Guard member.

"The security for myself and my family," he said. "Obviously it's a good job. There are excellent benefits. It pays well and it provides for my family. There's a sense of satisfaction when going out on the water, assisting mariners, saving lives, saving property and saving homes, and leading, empowering and devel-

oping and my crew."

Johnston said the Coast Guard is a good place to be.

"The Coast Guard is always looking for young, able-bodied people who want to serve their country, get out on the water and do some good in the process," he said. "My advice to somebody who wants to join is to do well in school. Don't get in trouble. Don't get on the wrong side of the law. Anybody who has the right mentality and is willing to work hard can get in. It's very difficult to overcome those other things if you've made mistakes in your life."

Life lessons learned Johnston said the Coast Guard has guided

his life development.

"I was originally a high school dropout," he said. "I went back to school when I was 20 years old and got my diploma. I think because of some of those earlier challenges, I wasn't the greatest leader for a long time, but the service put me in a leadership position. I just didn't have very good leadership skills. I definitely faced challenges in inspiring and gaining the respect from the crew that I needed and just getting the job done."

Station Depoe Bay Background

Station Depoe Bay was established in 1940 as a Search and Rescue motor lifeboat station.

The need for highly

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

The primary role of Station Depoe Bay is Search and Rescue with an emphasis in surf and heavy weather operations. As one of only 19 surf stations in the Coast Guard, Station Depoe Bay members train and operate in seas up to 30-feet, surf up to 20-feet and sustained winds up to 50-knots. Those challenges require an extensive and robust training plan in order to certify the Coast Guard members to operate effectively in such conditions.

Federal laws and

regulations also are enforced by the Coast Guard Station Depoe Bay members by conducting vessel boardings to ensure boaters meet all safety and navigation requirements. The members also respond to environmental hazards and accidents.

Station Depoe Bay utilizes three 47-foot Motor Lifeboats approved for operations in heavy weather and surf conditions. The station crews also can use ground vehicles for landside response during beach and cliff rescue operations.

This story was first published in July 2024.



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Jeremy C. Ruark / Country Media, Inc.
U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officers Second Class Elijah Johnston takes a break on board one of the Depoe Bay Coast Guard vessels that was being decorated for the annual Fleet of Flowers.

Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star holds change-of-command ceremony

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) held a change-of-command ceremony on June 29 at Base Seattle.

Rear Adm. Jeffery Novak, deputy commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area and commander of Coast Guard District Southwest, presided over the ceremony in which Capt. Justin Vanden Heuvel relieved Capt. Jeffery Rasnake as the Polar Star’s commanding officer.

Rasnake served as Polar Star’s commanding officer from July 2024 to June 2026, overseeing 150 crew members through two deployments to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze. Operation Deep Freeze provides logistical support for the U.S. Antarctic Program, which is managed by the National Science Foundation. The mission includes strategic and tactical airlift, airdrop, aeromedical evacuation, search and rescue, sealift, seaport access, bulk fuel supply, cargo handling, and other transportation requirements. These efforts enable continuous critical scientific research in one of the most remote regions on Earth.

During Rasnake’s command, Polar Star enabled the resupply of the Antarctic continent via five commercial ships and one New Zealand navy vessel. The crew also completed the first observations of fishing vessels in Antarctica supporting the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. Rasnake led international exchanges with members of the New Zealand Defence Force and military members from French Polynesia, strengthening partnerships across the Pacific.

“Today, I stand here filled with an immense sense of pride and gratitude



Courtesy photo

The change-of-command ceremony at Base Seattle.

for the privilege of having served as your Captain,” said Rasnake, “You are without a doubt, the hardest-working, most resilient, innovative, and dedicated crew in the Coast Guard. You all have taken our 50-year-old cutter and not only kept her sailing but have pushed her to excel in the most demanding marine environment on the planet.”

Vanden Heuvel most recently served as the Leadership Development Center’s school chief of Command and Operations, where he led curriculum development, evaluation and training for five C-schools. In this role, he prepared more than 2,500 Coast Guard leaders, afloat and ashore, for the responsibilities of command.

Vanden Heuvel has been a permanent cutterman since 2002 and has served aboard 11 cutters, commanding five. He served aboard Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WHEC 715) in San Pedro, California; Coast Guard Cutter Point Hobart (WPB 82377) in Oceanside, California; Coast Guard Cutter Hawksbill (WPB 87312) in Monterey, California; Coast Guard Cutter Haddock (WPB 87347) in San Diego; Coast Guard Cutter Aspen (WLB 208) in San Francisco; and

Coast Guard Cutter Oak (WLB 211) in Charleston, South Carolina. He commanded Coast Guard Cutter Line (WYTL 65611) in Bayonne, New Jersey; Coast Guard Cutter Joshua Appleby (WLM 556) in St. Petersburg, Florida; Coast Guard Cutter Frank Drew (WLM 557) in Portsmouth, Virginia; Aspen in San Francisco; and most recently Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC 620) in St. Petersburg.

“After observing the standards of excellence you have set, I am deeply honored to take command, with the privilege of serving alongside you and serving you,” said Vanden Heuvel.

The change-of-command ceremony is a time-honored tradition that formally transfers responsibility, authority and accountability from one commanding officer to another.

Commissioned in 1976, Polar Star is the United States’ only surface asset capable of providing year-round access to both polar regions. It is a 399-foot heavy polar icebreaker commissioned in 1976. The cutter weighs 13,500 tons and is 84 feet wide with a 34-foot draft. Its six diesel and three gas turbine engines produce up to 75,000 horsepower.

Commercial fishermen training courses

JEREMY C. RUARK
County Media, Inc.

The U.S. Coast Guard conducts frequent training sessions for commercial fisherman.

District 13 and Sector Columbia River successfully hosted the first of five Drill Conductor Courses in Newport, Oregon in March 2025.

“These courses are designed to equip commercial fishermen with essential sur-

vival techniques for emergencies at sea,” the Coast Guard stated in a release.

Over the course of two days, participants engaged in both classroom instruction and hands-on training. Activities included proper use of flares, immersion suits, life rafts, and firefighting drills.

Crews also practiced aboard the wet trainer, simulating real-life scenarios such as hull breaches and ruptured hoses, with practical exercises in plugging and patching.

Coast Guard renames operational districts

STAFF REPORT
MyCG Staff

The U.S. Coast Guard today announced the renaming of its operational districts from numerical to geographic designations, a key initiative under Force Design 2028 (FD2028).

This change will not impact operations or change existing geographical district boundaries.

This strategic change, directed by Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem on May 21, 2025, will help the District names more accurately reflect the regions they serve and represent.

“This renaming is more than just a change in labels; it’s a critical step in our journey to become a more agile, capable, and responsive fighting force,” said Acting Commandant Kevin E. Lunday. “Under Force Design 2028, we are driving fundamental changes to speed decision-making, improve strategic alignment, and ultimately best serve the American people for decades to come. This initiative underscores our commitment to ensuring that change is lasting and has an enduring impact on the Service and the Nation.”

Renaming operational districts revises a numbered

Current Name	New Name
District 1	USCG Northeast District
District 5	USCG East District
District 7	USCG Southeast District
District 8	USCG Heartland District
District 9	USCG Great Lakes District
District 11	USCG Southwest District
District 13	USCG Northwest District
District 14	USCG Oceania District
District 17	USCG Arctic District

system established during World War II, when the Coast Guard operated as part of the Navy to ensure alignment between the services. In the 80 years since the Coast Guard separated from the Navy, the Service has maintained the numbered districts. However, the Navy stopped using numbered districts over 25 years ago.

Renaming operational districts is a direct action within FD2028’s Organization campaign, which is focused on adapting the Coast Guard’s structure to remain effective and responsive.

Updating operational districts to regional names will more clearly align districts with their areas of responsibility, facilitate collaboration with interagency partners,

and ensure the American public and maritime stakeholders can easily find and understand the districts in which they live, recreate, and operate.

This change is a direct action within FD2028’s Organization campaign, which is focused on adapting the Coast Guard’s structure to remain effective and responsive.

To memorialize the updated names for operational districts, the Coast Guard is undertaking the process of formally changing district names in the Code of Federal Regulations. Through this process, the Coast Guard will continue to communicate with stakeholders and provide updated resources and information as appropriate.

Station Siuslaw River: Here for the community

By **TONY REED**
The Siuslaw News

While we all know the United States Coast Guard stands ready to head out into the ocean to protect life and property, residents of Florence regularly see them on land serving the local community. From Earth Day to Memorial Day to Veterans Day and many local events, personnel from Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River arrive, take part, help out, and return to duty.

Senior Chief Petty Officer Christopher Ouellette said personnel refer to themselves as “proud volunteers” who will help with everything from community projects to individual needs like packing and moving.

“We typically will offer volunteers for anything going on in our community that’s

announced at our muster meetings,” Ouellette said.

USCG personnel recently attended the City’s Block Party and were at several locations during Rhododendron Days.

Ouellette said personnel attend “at least 20 events” per year, and will often bring a small boat or vehicle for kids to check out.

From helping Habitat for Humanity to preparing local athletic fields for use, personnel have taken part in many community endeavors.

“We’re here to help and proud to be part of the community, so if there’s anything people need, we’re available,” he said.

The coast, guarded

Every year, Mayor Rob Ward recognizes US Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River by proclaiming Florence



Coast Guard City Day.

Station Siuslaw River personnel serve as law enforcement officers on the water, responding to everything from boaters under the influence to environmental protection calls.

The station’s area of responsibility overlaps with those of stations north and south of Florence.

“We go from Yachats to Ten Mile so basically, 25 miles north and south for coastal coverage,” Ouellette said, noting that personnel can also go 50 miles or more out on the open ocean. “We could go out to 100 [miles] if we absolutely had to.”

However, as its name would suggest, the river’s coast is also a responsibility for Station Siuslaw River.

“We have responsibility all the way to Mapleton,” Ouellette said, “although

the river depths become a factor up there.” He said the station’s 47-foot boat will not go to Mapleton, but a 29-foot response boat can get there.

Personnel respond mostly to watercraft disabled by fuel or mechanical issues. However, the station also responds to distress calls for missing hikers and kayakers and can assist local law enforcement or perform some rescues on land.

The station also works with personnel from Station Yaquina River in Newport and Station Umpqua River in Winchester Bay but helps other Oregon Coast Guard stations.

Personnel will work with law enforcement agencies on land, including the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and park rangers. While boat personnel don’t assist with inland emergencies as much as the air crews do, USCG helicopter personnel have transported injured loggers from mountain regions.

Coast Guard personnel also assist with marine mammal entanglements by helping locate the animal and relay information to rescuers, but don’t have specialized divers or equipment.

According to the USCG website, the Coast Guard protects 95,000 miles of coastline, has stopped 231 narcotic terrorists, conducted 6705 search and rescue cases, and has saved \$974 in property. Personnel have also saved 5220 lives, assisted over 21,000 people, and have interdicted 231 metric tons of drugs.

The Siuslaw Station was established in 1917 and remodeled in the 1980s.

Station Siuslaw River is located at 4255 Coast Guard Road in Florence.

Note that the station’s phone number changed last year, and locals should now call (206) 815-6720 for assistance and information.

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Coast Guard Air Station North Bend

No Strangers to Rescues

By Nate Schwartz
Coos Bay World

Despite the duties outlined in their very name, not all Coast Guard rescues take place over open water. The men and women of Coast Guard Air Station North Bend make sure they are ready for rescue scenarios over all terrain. As was needed last month, when tragedy struck the UTV Takeover event at the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area in Northern Coos County.

The call went out to emergency crews at around 5:00 p.m. on May 24. Two riders were in need of immediate trauma care following a collision between two dirt bikes and a side-by-side ATV.

The bikes had jumped the dune without realizing the side-by-side had come to a stop on the other side. The elder rider, a 35-year-old man, was in critical condition. As such, a medical evacuation by the team at Air Station North Bend was requested.

On the forefront of most air operations along the South Coast, the crew are no strangers to rescues and medevacs of all kinds. In this case, the MH-65 Dolphin crew was dispatched to the dunes as quickly as possible. They sent down the basket and the 35-year-old was taken to Bay Area Hospital. Despite doing all they could, he would succumb to his injuries.

The other rider, a

13-year-old boy, suffered multiple broken bones. Though, thanks to the heroic efforts made by first responders from the Hauser Fire Department, was able to be stabilized at Bay Area before being transferred to Portland for specialized treatment.

Not all rescues can be successes, but the only way to reduce losses is through thorough training. Just days prior, the MH-65 rescue crew was up in the Bayview mountains east of Coos Bay helping the Coos Forest Protective Association conduct a multi-agency rescue training. Over 80 representatives from forest agencies, fire departments, timber companies we're on hand for ropes courses and a

basket rescue demonstration.

Upon arriving above a scene, the Dolphin Helicopter will fly several laps around the area judging wind speed and fuel levels. If the conditions lend themselves to a safe evac, the aircraft will slowly lower itself right to the top of the tree line, preferably over a reasonably clear area. Keeping the helicopter and anyone it may be lowering and picking back up out of the trees is the obvious goal.

Upon maintaining a steady hover, the basket will be lowered along with a USCG swimmer who will secure the injured party and raise them back up for transit to the nearest capable hospital.

The scenes of the bright orange helicopter hanging in the air just above the tips of the timber was quite a sight.

The Coast Guard swimmer on hand was very clear about the importance of communication and urged that the cooperation between USCG and forest protection was paramount. For instance, during a firefighting scenario the winds caused by helicopter rotors may make the situation on the ground more dangerous. The CFPA are the experts in the forest and can communicate those conditions to the USGC who are literally a bit out of water up in the mountains.

Training is critical, not just for the sharp-

ness of the Coast Guard pilots, medics and rescue swimmers. Clear communication and collaboration with partnering agencies are equally important for the rescue crews to be effective. When it all comes together correctly, lives are saved, inland or otherwise. This was the case with a well-documented rescue last year.

In the dead of night, a 71-year-old woman lost control of her vehicle and ended up in the white water of the McKenzie River outside of Eugene and things looked dire. Crews from the local fire and police departments were on scene quickly, but it

See **NORTH BEND** Page 14



COURTESY PHOTOS FROM U.S. COAST GUARD
Fire crews look on as Rescue Swimmer Tyler Gantt is suspended below the Dolphin helicopter before perching on the hood of a car stranded in the McKenzie river.

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Coast Guard Station Chetco River

Guardians of the Southern Oregon Coast



Each 47-foot Motor Lifeboat is identical to the other.



PHOTO BY LINDA LEE

Petty Officer Third Class Zeus Reyes and Seaman Talan Zettler perform the daily maintenance on the Ready Motor Lifeboat.

Nestled on the beautiful Brookings coast, Station Chetco River is a vital hub for maritime safety along a significant stretch of the Pacific coastline between Oregon and California.

The Coast Guard Station Chetco River was established in 1961 as a direct result of a vote put forth by the citizens of the region who recognized the importance of having an active-duty station in the area.

The geographical service area of the station is wide reaching as it covers from Port Orford down to the Klamath River to include Crescent City, California as it does not have its own Coast Guard station.

With thirty-two active-duty service members, and two reservists, their primary mission is focused on search and rescue and boater safety.

Each morning, the service members start their day with a quick huddle in order to keep the line of communication open and

transparent. They recognize and acknowledge achievements within the crew, then every boat is inspected, cleaned and put through the ringers to ensure all are in top working condition.

Because search and rescue is the primary responsibility of the station, service members rely on the forty-seven-foot Motor Lifeboats as their primary response vessels.

The workhorse Motor Lifeboats are designed for resilience. They require a minimum of four personnel to operate, can travel fifty to sixty miles offshore and can hold up to thirty people during a search and rescue.

"It takes four people to move the boat in those (open ocean water) conditions," explained Colin Chief Joyce. "The guy driving the boat is called the Surfman."

Amazingly, the Motor Lifeboats can manage waves up to thirty feet. The boats are designed to float and remain upright.

"They are self-righting, so they'll re-right in eight to ten seconds," explained Chief Joyce. "They're fun. It's like if you would stick a football in the water, how that would ride on the water, that's kind of how these ride. They want to float. They want to stay upright."

The Surfman will 'read' the waves and steer the hull of the boat in a direction that allows the waves to break in front, or behind, the boat rather than on the boat itself.

"The height of the driver is fourteen feet," said Chief Joyce, "so you know when you're looking up at a wave, that's pretty significant."

In addition to the Motor Lifeboats, there also is one smaller Quick Response Boat that can hold up to ten people and is used when a swifter response is required; however, given the size of the boat, it can't handle any extreme conditions.

"This is one we pretty

much use for law enforcement," said Chief Joyce. "It's easier to get onto other boats. It's quicker and more agile."

Every year, the station's crew responds to approximately sixty-five search and rescue missions, which include not only boats in trouble out on the open ocean waters, but people who get stuck on the rocky shoreline from hiking or climbing into areas that aren't meant to be traversed.

"The bread and butter of this unit is search and rescue," said Chief Joyce, "but it also includes recreational boater safety, fishing boater safety and commercial fishing safety."

Another important daily activity for the station is managing the Chetco River's Bar Report. On most days, just before sunrise, some of the crew take the Ready Motor Lifeboat (the boat that is housed in the

Continued next page



LINDA LEE / CURRY COASTAL PILOT
The Surfman, and his crew, are out on the river taking the Ready Motor Lifeboat through its paces.

CHETCO RIVER
From Page 12

vessels can navigate safely out into the open ocean.

“We keep one boat in the house. This is our Ready Boat, so if we get a call they’re going to hop on and go,” explained Chief Joyce as he gave a tour of the boat. “They have a range of 200 nautical miles, easily. They can handle up to twenty-foot surf, thirty-foot waves and fifty knots of wind.”

According to the region’s website, their mis-



Chief Colin Joyce is on board the ten-foot Quick Response Boat.



Seaman Connor McBride, Seaman Tristen Kirkaldie, Petty Officer Third Class Zeus Reyes, Fireman Norman Aldridge, Seaman Gunnar Backstrom and Machinery Technician Second Class Omar Rivera. (Front Row): Seaman Talan Zettler, Chief Colin Joyce, Boatswain’s Mate Second Class David Brink, Boatswain’s Mate First Class Adam Delano and Boatswain’s Mate Third Class Taylor Willman.

sion statement is: “We, the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard Northwest District, provide critical maritime services within the Pacific Northwest. Our

missions, maritime security, safety, and national defense, require superior professionalism, devotion to excellence and the highest standards of integrity.

We pride ourselves in treating others with respect and dignity, facilitating partnerships with local, state and national agencies, and being innovative in our approach

to meeting the region’s needs.” (www.pacificarea.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/District-13)

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Chetco River remains steadfast, so too is the commitment the service members of the Coast Guard give to our region, our country, our home.—



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**NORTH HBEND from
Page 12**

was clear that there was no way to get to the car given the precarious swiftness of the water. That's when, once again, the specialized training of North Bend's Dolphin helicopter crew was needed.

Having just finished a training exercise, the duty crew received a text that they were needed and they arrived as quickly as they could.

"As we got overhead and the swimmer got to the [helicopter] door, he noticed that the water was not being redirected by the car. The car was wedged on the rocks and water was actually flowing underneath the car as well. The swimmer also recognized the car had a sun roof," explained

Lt. Cdr. Kevin Shanahan, the flight commander.

That sunroof would be crucial to the rest of the rescue, as AST2 Tyler Gantt, the rescue swimmer, was lowered right down onto the roof of the car.

"Once I got my feet planted on the hood, I could feel the car moving. At that point I knew that where it was in the river wasn't stable, and it wasn't guaranteed to stay there," explained Gantt. "I had to switch gears to move quickly. If the car starts to go, I can't go with it, I'm attached to the helicopter still. So, I knew if the car started to go, I'd have to slide off, they'd have to pick me up and we'd have to start this thing all over again."

Gantt used his

crash axe to make a small crack in the sunroof, issued the woman a warning to keep their head down, and started smashing in the rest.

"We prepared that she wouldn't be responsive when we got down there, but one of the best comms I heard that night was when the flight medic said 'He's talking to the survivor and she's moving'. I knew she was responsive and we were going to get her out of there," said Shanahan.

And so they did, they were able to lift her into the helicopter and get her safely to emergency medical services at the Eugene Airport. Not after thanking Gantt with a big hug and kiss on the cheek.

"Little things like that make it all worth it for sure. It means



everything," said Lt. JG. Jimmy Hollingsworth, the copilot that night. "Teamwork all-around. What we do requires a lot of trust. Love to trust these guys, we go out there every day and execute it so that we

have it down picture perfect."

Video of the entire rescue is available on the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station North Bend social media, and is quite the site. Visibility on the river was good that night

thanks to the help of the local fire and police crews, which the Coast Guard thanked for their help in a successful operation. Yet another in a long list of rescues for the Dolphin crew.

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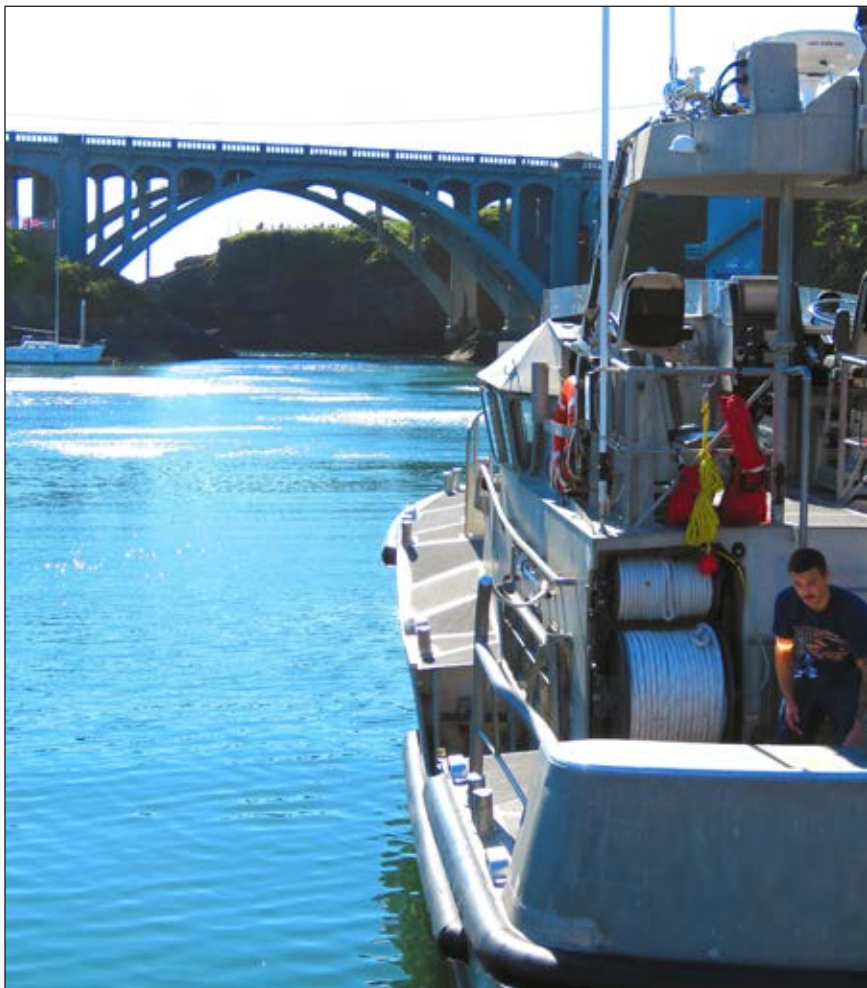
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Coast Guard personnel escort boats from the tiny harbor during the Fleet of Flowers celebration in Depoe Bay.



Station Siuslaw River personnel navigate its 47-foot motor lifeboat under the Siuslaw River Bridge.





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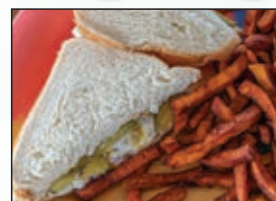
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