

CGC Bertholf crosses Arctic Circle

Posted by PA3 Grant DeVuyst, Monday, September 10, 2012



The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf sails in the Arctic Ocean just north of Barrow, Alaska, Aug. 30, 2012. The Bertholf is patrolling in the Arctic as part of Operation Arctic Shield and testing its capabilities in the region. To increase its Arctic domain awareness, the crew of the cutter is talking with local mariners and ships transiting the area as well as conducting helicopter flights to monitor ship traffic and the changing sea and ice conditions. Photo courtesy of Chris Bray, Teleport yacht

JUNEAU, Alaska – The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf crossed into the Arctic Ocean in support of Arctic Shield approximately three weeks ago, Aug. 23, making it the first time a national security cutter has patrolled this remote region. “We are excited to introduce the NSC’s exceptional endurance, operational, and command and control capabilities to the Arctic,” said Capt. Thomas Crabbs, the commanding officer of the Bertholf. “We are witnessing first-hand the increased research, private enterprise and recreational maritime pressure on the opening Arctic.”

As the nation’s lead federal agency for ensuring maritime safety, security and stewardship in the Arctic, the Coast Guard is responsible for conducting its statutory missions in the Arctic to ensure it remains a safe, secure and environmentally sustainable region. To meet this requirement the Coast Guard 17th District, began operation Arctic Shield and focused on outreach, operations and capability assessments.

In August the crew hosted the Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Adm. Robert Papp, and Alaska State Senator, Lisa Murkowski.

“Showcasing our NSC in its working environment to appointed and elected officials was critical to helping them understand why the Coast Guard needs these highly efficient and well equipped assets in our fleet to protect and support our nation’s interests,” said Ostebo.

Cutters like Bertholf routinely conduct operations from South America to the Bering Sea where their unmatched combination of range, speed, and ability to operate in extreme weather provides

the mission flexibility necessary to conduct counter-narcotics, homeland security, and alien migrant interdiction operations, domestic fisheries protection, search and rescue, and other Coast Guard missions at great distances from shore keeping threats far from the U.S. mainland. Now the Bertholf is expanding that presence and responsibility to the Arctic Ocean.