

LRI-II Marks Operational Success in Pacific Area Drugs Bust

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The Long Range Interceptor-II (LRI-II), one of the Coast Guard's new standard classes of cutter boats, has already begun to make a name for itself, recently participating in a Pacific Area (PACAREA) counter-narcotics interdiction while undergoing Operational Testing (OT) aboard Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, the service's first National Security Cutter (NSC).

"When a boat goes out for OT, most of the tests are usually simulated or assessed," Cutter Boats Assistant Project Manager Diane Burton said. "This time we've sent a brand new boat into theater ... getting exercised in real operations. From what I've seen, heard, and read so far, this boat far exceeds the crews' expectations."

This recent case marked the second time the LRI-II has been put into action to support real-world operations, even while still undergoing test and evaluation activities. According to Coast Guard officials, this is testament to the high operational tempo of Coast Guard units, including new cutters such as Bertholf and its embarked boats and helicopters.

The Coast Guard awarded an LRI-II production contract to MetalCraft Marine U.S. in June 2012 and took delivery of the lead boat earlier this year. Under the contract, as many as 10 LRI-II boats may be ordered over a five-year period. The contract includes one LRI-II for each NSC and options for as many as two boats for others, such as Foreign Military Sales, U.S. Navy, or U.S. Customs and Border Protection.