



Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton's crewmembers man the rail following the cutter's commissioning in Charleston, South Carolina, Dec. 6, 2014. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Stephen Lehmann.

Acquisition Update: Coast Guard Commissions Fourth National Security Cutter Into Service

Dec. 9, 2014

The Coast Guard commissioned Hamilton – the fourth of eight national security cutters and the first on the East Coast – into service at Union Pier Terminal in the cutter's home port of Charleston, South Carolina, Dec. 6.

Adm. Paul Zukunft, the Coast Guard commandant, praised the NSC's capabilities and the talent and skill of Hamilton's crew in his address. He outlined the challenges facing the Coast Guard and the nation – with a focus on transnational organized crime networks – and emphasized that NSCs and the people who operate them perform essential national security and defense functions.

“The eight versatile national security cutters have the sensor capability, intelligence suite, fire control systems, aircraft and extraordinary people to command cutter task forces, operate as a part of a Navy battle group or sail independently,” Zukunft said. “They are the lynchpin to a national network that will defeat a criminal network.”

During the ceremony, Capt. Douglas Fears assumed command of Hamilton. “Today is a spectacular day, and Hamilton's crew is both humbled and pleased to have the great responsibility of bringing the Coast Guard's newest and most capable cutter Hamilton to life here in Charleston today,” he said.

Each NSC is 418 feet long, with a range of 12,000 nautical miles and endurance for 60-

to 90-day open-ocean patrol cycles. They conduct a variety of maritime security, law enforcement and national defense missions and are replacing the 378-foot high-endurance cutters, which have been in service since the 1960s.

The three other national security cutters in service – Bertholf, Stratton and Waesche – are based in Alameda, California. The fifth NSC, James, will also be based in Charleston and is scheduled for delivery in the summer of 2015. Delivery of the sixth NSC, Munro, is scheduled for 2016. The seventh, Kimball, is under production, and long lead time materials for the eighth, Midgett, have been ordered.