



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Joseph Gerczak* (WPC 1126) is the Coast Guard's 26<sup>th</sup> Fast Response Cutter (FRC) and 2<sup>nd</sup> FRC to be homeported in Honolulu, HI. Commissioned in Honolulu on March 9, 2018, *Joseph Gerczak* executes USCG statutory missions in the Coast Guard's Fourteenth District, to include combatting Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in Oceania. The cutter's namesake, Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Joseph Gerczak, was killed in action while defending USS LST-66 from Japanese bombers during an assault on Borgen Bay in New Britain, Papua New Guinea on December 26, 1943. Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Gerczak was the first to react when enemy bombing began and shot down two of the attackers before shrapnel from an explosion fatally wounded him. The Purple Heart and Silver Star were awarded to him posthumously.

#### **Leadership:**

Commanding Officer: LT Caitlin Piker

Hometown: West Hartford, Connecticut

Executive Officer: LTJG Frank Joslin

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

Engineer Petty Officer: MKC Vincent Bucaneg

Hometown: Honolulu, Hawaii

#### **Recent Mission Highlights:**

➤ **March 27 – April 9, 2023:** executed mini-expeditionary patrol ISO Operation BLUE PACIFIC. Served as the first cutter to support the Memorandum of Arrangement (MOA) between the U.S. Coast Guard and Australian Border Force (ABF).

➤ **August 8-11, 2023:** first endurance CG asset on-scene/responder to Maui Wildfires in Lahaina harbor. Dedicated 3 days of response efforts to saving lives at sea until relieved by USCGC *Kimball* (WMSL 758).

➤ **September 19-21, 2023:** first on-scene/responder to S/V NO BAD DAYS (145nm N of Kauai); assisted 2 mariners in distress and escorted their vessel to safe harbor.

➤ **September 24-25, 2023:** first on-scene/responder to S/V ISHI (5nm E of Big Island). Ensured the safety of the S/V from running aground, towed disabled vessel into Hilo Harbor at night, and conducted joint law enforcement boarding with state and federal partners.