Established: The Coast Guard Cutter Alert was the last 210-foot medium endurance cutter constructed. The keel was laid Jan. 5, 1968, at the Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, Md., and the cutter was commissioned Aug. 4, 1969. Alert derives its name from an early 19th century sailing ship, which served in the Revenue Cutter Service under President George Washington. Alert has a long and distinguished record of Coast Guard service. Prior to being assigned to its present homeport of Astoria, Ore., Alert was at the Coast Guard Recruit Training Center in Cape May, N.J. The cutter conducted fisheries conservation patrols in the North Atlantic as well as alien migration interdiction and drug enforcement operations in the Caribbean. In January 1993, Alert returned to Curtis Bay for an overhaul that will extend its service well into this century. These improvements include modernization of living and working quarters for the crew, installation of updated electronics systems, and redesign of major engineering and damage control spaces. Alert has an endurance of approximately 30 days and a cruising range of 5,000 miles at a speed of 15 knots. Direct pilothouse control of its two 2,500 horsepower engines, together with variable pitch twin screws, allows for great control and maneuverability. Alert has two small boats that are used for boarding vessels as well as search and rescue. The cutter can also accommodate a Coast Guard HH-65A Dolphin, which increases Alert’s effectiveness as a search and rescue and law enforcement asset.

What we do: The Alert’s primary missions include law enforcement, search and rescue and Homeland Security. It patrols the U.S. exclusive economic zone to enforce federal fisheries and vessel safety laws. Alert also enforces laws regarding illegal immigration. Alert patrols the Northern Pacific Ocean, from the stormy Alaskan seas to the warm waters off Central America, and west to Hawaii.

Accomplished Operations: The Alert made its first marijuana seizure during a patrol off the coast of Mexico in January 2000. Working with the Mexican Navy and the cutter Active, home-ported in Port Angeles, Wash., the crew of the Alert found 350 pounds of marijuana while investigating a call for an overturned fishing vessel.

High resolution copy can be found at http://www.uscg.mil/images.html