

# **Sexual Assault at Sea Study**

**Sponsored by the United States Coast Guard  
Performed by National Academies of Science**

***Committee Meeting - March 3, 2025***



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# Session 2



# Sponsor motivation for study

The U.S. Coast Guard is committed to the well-being and support of our Servicemembers.

Operation Fouled Anchor represents a challenging chapter in U.S. Coast Guard history. As we move forward, we remain committed to fostering a culture of accountability, respect, and prevention to ensure the safety and well-being of every member of the Service.

Incidents that occur while underway or away from home port create challenges by increasing the time and distance from vital victim support resources.

Obtain an unbiased professional assessment of U.S. Coast Guard processes and recommendations, considering the operational, logistical, and environmental constraints unique to the service.

The U.S. Coast Guard is committed to preventing sexual assault at its core and providing unwavering support to victims when it does occur.

# USCG Expectations of the Committee Study and Report



- ❖ Employ impartial investigators to prevent conflicts of interest.
- ❖ Consider the unique operational environments of the U.S. Coast Guard Servicemembers to establish reasonable expectations within resource-limited settings.
- ❖ Address challenges such as the lack of a robust healthcare system aboard ships and the limited availability of personnel qualified to administer Sexual Assault Forensic Exams (SAFE).
- ❖ Ensure reports follow a clear, transparent process that is accessible to all.
- ❖ Uphold victim confidentiality and implement protections against retaliation.
- ❖ Identify and enhance support methods for victims.

# Expected Benefits of the Report for the U.S. Coast Guard



The U.S. Coast Guard will incorporate report findings into strategy by establishing, developing, implementing the following:

- ❖ Clear and Accessible Reporting Mechanisms for Victims of Sexual Assault.
- ❖ Confidentiality and Protection from Retaliation
  - Guarantee confidentiality to the victim.
  - Strengthen anti-retaliation policies and procedures.
- ❖ Enhanced Investigation Processes and Timelines to improve accountability and responsiveness.

# Expected Benefits of the Report for the U.S. Coast Guard (cont'd)



- ❖ Identify and Address Gaps in Victim Support
  - Enhance civilian support services for victims
- ❖ Ensure Transparent and Consistent Disciplinary Actions for perpetrators.
- ❖ Strengthen a Culture of Prevention and Awareness across all levels and locations within the U.S. Coast Guard.
  - Focus prevention efforts on preventing perpetrators.
  - Enhance policies and procedures that continue to reinforce a culture of accountability and respect.

# Session 3





# U.S. Coast Guard 101



# US Coast Guard Missions

To secure the U.S. borders and ensure economic prosperity, the U.S. Coast Guard performs the following:

- ❖ Secures the U.S. maritime borders and approaches.
- ❖ Protects and secures the Nation's ports and waterways.
- ❖ Supports the national military strategy and Department of Defense.

The U.S. Coast Guard also:

- ❖ Saves lives.
- ❖ Enforces federal law.
- ❖ Leads in national emergencies.
- ❖ Maintains the flow of maritime commerce.







# Platforms



# NATIONAL SECURITY CUTTER (WMSL)



**Crew size:** 124

## **Space Constraints**

- Adequate space with Sickbay and Wardroom to conduct medical examinations.
- Space available to separate victim and accused for extended period

## **Limitations of medical**

- One Chief Health Services Technician (HSC). HSC is not a registered nurse, APP or doctor.
- Out of Hemisphere deployments typically augment staff with a military Physician's Assistant.



# MEDIUM ENDURANCE CUTTERS



## WMEC 210

**Crew size:** 76 crewmembers

### **Space Constraint**

- One small infirmary space
- No adequate spaces to separate victim from accused for extended period

### **Limitations of Medical Care:**

- One qualified Health Services Technician (HS) 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Petty Officer.
- HS2 is not a registered nurse, APP or doctor. Limited medical care equipment onboard.



## WMEC 270

**Crew size:** 100 crewmembers

### **Space Constraint**

- One small infirmary space
- No adequate spaces to separate victim from accused for extended period

### **Limitations of Medical Care**

- One qualified Health Services Technician 1<sup>st</sup> Class Petty Officer
- HS1 is not a registered nurse, APP or doctor. Limited medical care equipment onboard.



# POLAR ICEBREAKERS

- Personnel
  - *CGC Polar Star*. Crew of 137
  - *CGC Healy*. Crew of 84
  - Regularly deploy with additional TDY Coast Guard personnel, other military members, civilian scientists
- Medical Capabilities
  - Dedicated Sickbay
  - *Polar Star*. Staffed with HS3 and HSC, sails with additional TDY Physician Assistant
  - *Healy*. Staffed with Physician Assistant and HS1
- Range
  - Deploy for continuous 3-5 months, up to six weeks between port calls
  - Often days or weeks out of MEDEVAC range
- Weather/Seasonal
  - Frequent heavy winds and poor visibility in polar regions may delay MEDEVAC until a helicopter can safely hoist person from the cutter





# SEAGOING AND COASTAL BUOY TENDERS

- Crew size
  - Seagoing Buoy Tenders (WLB): Crew of 48
  - CGC *Mackinaw* (WLBB 30): Crew of 55
  - Coastal Buoy Tenders (WLM): Crew of 24
- Medical Capabilities
  - WLBs/*Mackinaw*: Dedicated Sickbay, one HS1
  - WLMs: No medical personnel or facilities on board
- Range
  - Underway up to three weeks at a time; generally, operate within a few days of ports
  - WLBs: Expeditionary deployments are outside MEDEVAC range
  - Alaska: Buoy tenders may transit to 1-2 days for MEDEVAC (most smaller communities lack medical facilities with SAFE kits)



# FAST RESPONSE CUTTERS



- Crew size: 24
- No dedicated medical personnel or facilities onboard
- Range: 5 days of continuous operations
- Connectivity: Satellite internet and satellite phone capabilities
- Limited Space onboard, only large gathering areas are mess-deck and bow of the cutter (outdoors). No sufficient space for private medical care.



# INLAND TENDERS AND ICEBREAKING TUGS



- Icebreaking Tugs (WTGB), Inland Buoy Tenders (WLI), Inland Construction Tenders (WLIC), River Tenders (WLR)
  - Crew sizes range from 8-17
- No medical personnel or facilities onboard
- Range
  - WTGBs: Up to 1 week between port calls, generally within 12-15 miles of shore, close to onshore medical facilities and accessible for MEDEVAC
  - WLI/WLIC/WLR: Up to couple days between ports on rivers and major waterways
- Communications
  - Spotty connectivity and cell service when operating further offshore (WTGBs) or on isolated parts of waterways (WLI/WLIC/WLR) may delay medical service contact up to 24 hours

# COASTAL PATROL BOATS



- Crew size: 11
- 87 feet in length
- No dedicated medical personnel or facilities onboard
- Range: 3-5 days of continuous operations
- Connectivity: Satellite phone capabilities
- Limited Space onboard, only large gathering areas are mess-deck and bow of the cutter (outdoors). No sufficient space for private medical care.



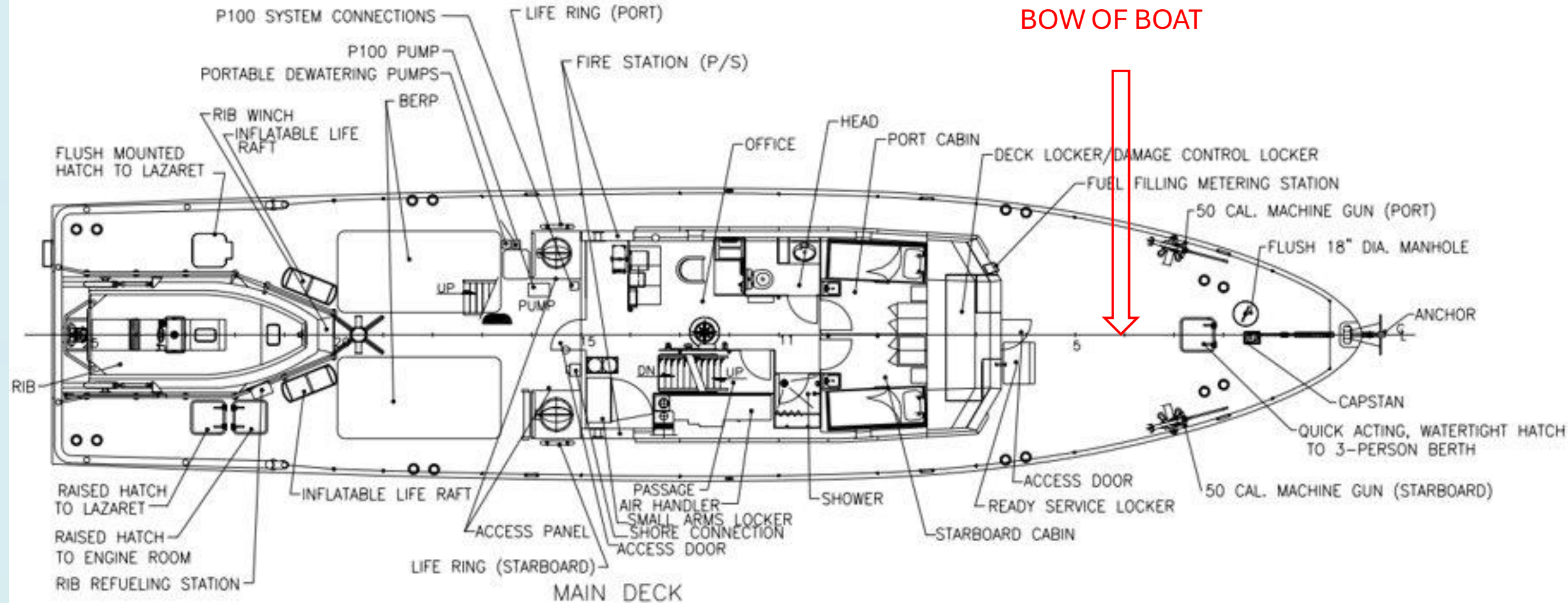
# COASTAL PATROL BOAT MESS-DECK



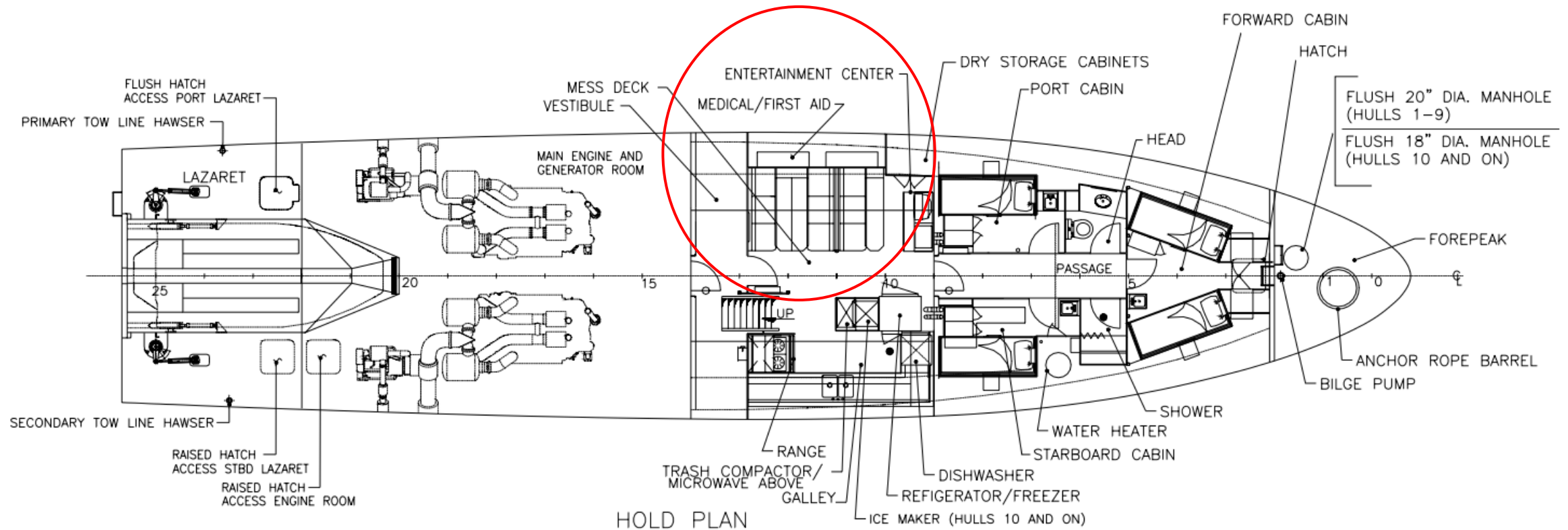
Only gathering space/open space onboard other than bridge



BOW OF BOAT



# MULTI-PURPOSE SPACE



# **USCG SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PROGRAM (SAPRR)**





# SAPRR REPORTING PROCESS WHILE UNDERWAY



Upon notification of an actual, suspected, or alleged sexual assault:

1. The command must immediately contact the servicing SARC and notify CGIS.
2. Commanding Officer (CO) offers victim the right to a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) and, if requested, will arrange for a SAFE at the closest appropriate medical facility.
3. CO initiates a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) meeting within 24 hours.
4. CO shall complete the Sexual Assault Incident Report (SAIR) within 72 hours and submit up chain of command.
5. Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) arranges assignment of a credentialed Victim Advocate (VA) to victim, if requested.
6. SARC offers services of a Special Victims' Counsel (SVC).
7. SARC informs victim of right to request an Expedited Transfer and access to support services and begins process of case management and documentation.

# DATA COLLECTION FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTS



Data collected from Sexual assault reports while underway is populated into the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID)

- ✓Name
- ✓Rank
- ✓Date of Report/Date Case Opened
- ✓Demographics of victim (Sex, Race, Ethnicity, etc.)
- ✓Location of Incident (to include state/country)
- ✓Date of Incident (if known)
- ✓Incident Type
- ✓Safety concerns
- ✓SAFE requested



# Current SARC/VAPS BILLET MAP

03 March 2025



**THANK YOU**

**QUESTIONS?**

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