

Ship Report Transcript

Monday, July 1, 2024

By Joanne Rideout

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It's time for the Ship Report, the show about all things maritime. I'm Joanne Rideout. It's Monday, July 1st, 2024.

Let's take a look at our marine weather forecast. We'll look at some ship schedule information. And then I want to tell you an interesting story about what happened to one of the Coast Guard ships that we used to be here in Astoria, where she is now.

But first, a look at the weather. We have a weak front moving across our waters. Otherwise surface high pressure will persist offshore with thermally induced lower pressure over California and the Great Basin. This will result in fairly typical north to north westerly winds. Today we have northwest winds 5 to 10 knots, rising to 10 to 15 in the afternoon. That's pretty typical that the winds kind of kick up in the afternoon a bit. Seas 4 to 5 feet, wave detail from the northwest, three feet high at 5 seconds apart and from the west, four feet at 11 seconds apart.

Our first inbounder today is the Citrus Tiger arriving from China, headed for the Astoria Anchorage. She'll be picking up wheat eventually upriver. She will be in the Astoria Anchorage by about 11:30 this morning. And the Shandong Fu Zhi is arriving from China also headed for Astoria's Anchorage. She's another wheat ship. She'll go up river eventually to pick up that cargo. She will be in Astoria's Anchorage by about 1 a.m. tomorrow morning.

In our outbounders, we have the GH Glory leaving Kalama carrying corn, soy or wheat on board, leaving around 5 a.m., passing Astoria outbound around 10 a.m.

And we have a Military Sealift Command vessel leaving Portland from the shipyard there where these vessels are homeported when they're in our area, the U.S. Washington Chambers is a dry cargo ship. The ship delivers ammunition, provisions, spare parts, potable water and petroleum products to U.S. Navy and other Navy ships at sea, allowing them to remain under way and combat ready for extended periods of time. So that's the story there. So essentially, a general cargo ship for the military.

She will leave the shipyard in Portland at about 7:30 a.m.. Look for her past Astoria outbound. Around 130 this afternoon, the Kanda Logger is leaving Longview carrying logs, leaving around 2 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 5:30 p.m..

The Sang Shin is leaving Portland. She's a car carrier. Hondas on board there. I think she brought some of them into the port. Possibly Ford's for export. They're leaving around 3 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 9 p.m.. The Elm K is leaving Portland carrying wheat at about 6 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around midnight.

The ATB Island Monarch is leaving Portland, refined petroleum there. She came in to deliver it, leaving around 8 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 2 a.m. on Tuesday and the ATB Dublin Sea - those are articulated tug and barge rigs leaving Portland Refined Petroleum. They're leaving around 9 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 3 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

Well, today I thought it would be fun to talk about a ship that used to be here but was transferred elsewhere. And that is the beloved U.S. Coast Guard cutter Alert that used to be tied up at the 17th Street dock by the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria. She was there for years.

She and the Cutter Steadfast were two of our most beloved hometown ships, ones that called Astoria home. Now they are gone and have been replaced by a new cutter, the David Duran, which is a brand new ship that was just commissioned into service this month here in Astoria last Thursday.

The Steadfast is no longer here and as far as I know, will be entered into a federal program making her eligible for purchase by another country that needs a ship for their military. And this is kind of standard procedure for older ships.

Now the Alert is on to new horizons and is in service in a different U.S. port. And so that's what I wanted to talk with you about today. Here's a bit from a U.S. Coast Guard press release about it:

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Alert and its crew arrived at their new homeport of Cape Canaveral June 10th, 2024, for service while homeported in Astoria, Oregon. So she was here for 30 years along the Pacific Northwest Columbia River. Over the course of the 30 day 6000 nautical mile transit, the alert crossed the equator transited the Panama Canal, and responded to search and rescue cases marking a new era. Alert rendered honors to the U.S. Coast Guard cutter David Duran, a fast response cutter transiting northbound to Astoria in order to relieve alerts watch in the Pacific Northwest. So they kind of crossed paths and sort of handed off the assignment In a show of respect from one ship to another. Alert is now assigned to the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic area, headquartered in Portsmouth, Virginia, and is taking the place of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Confidence in Cape Canaveral. The confidence his former crew will now crew the alert. So she'll be based in Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Here is a quote from Commander Lee Crusius commanding officer of the alert. "This is not the first time alert has shifted homeport. Prior to her time in Astoria, the alert was homeported on the East Coast in Cape May, New Jersey. In a sense, the Alert is returning to her home area where she will continue to perform the vital missions demanded of the Coast Guard cutter fleet by our partner nations and the American people."

Now, The alert was commissioned in 1969, so she's 55 years old, and she was the final 210 foot reliance class, medium endurance cutter ever built. Alert performs a variety of missions, including search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime defense and protection of the maritime environment.

One question that came to mind for me as I was thinking about this is how often do Coast Guard cutters move from one port to another? So I did some checking around, and here's what I found. The frequency of U.S. Coast Guard cutter transfers to different home ports can depend on various factors, such as operational needs, fleet management, strategic considerations. So in other words, they go where they're needed. And while there's no specific time frame set in stone for this, cutter transfers can occur periodically to optimize the Coast Guard's resources. That really is just another way of saying they put them where they need them.

So this is so they can effectively cover the coastal areas that they need to patrol for search and rescue enforcement operations and other things.

And this is very a very interesting site that I got this information from that I wanted to share with you. It's an AI site that I subscribe to called Marine Insight Chat GPT. It's all about maritime topics and it's worth noting.

So the information I got from them said that cutter transfers involve a complex process, including logistical planning, coordination with stakeholders and consideration of the impact on the crew and their families.

So the short answer here is there is no time frame per se, like there is with Coast Guard Coast Guard personnel who typically change assignments every few years. So they move around quite a bit in the Coast Guard. So the short answer is that the alert moved to a place where they needed her. And in our case, we traded a 55 year old ship for a brand new one, with another new ship, another new Coast Guard cutter, to arrive sometime soon. So very soon we will have two brand new Coast Guard home townships that I hope will be with us for a long time.

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