



The U.S. Coast Guard & Kosovo

In the summer of 1999, CGC *Bear* deployed to the Adriatic Sea in support of “*Operation Allied Force*” and “*Operation Noble Anvil*”, NATO's military campaign against the forces of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. *Bear* served in the *USS Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) Battle Group providing surface surveillance and SAR response for the Sea Combat Commander, and force protection for the Amphibious Ready Group operating near Albania. *Bear* provided combat escort for U.S. Army vessel's transporting military cargo between Italy and Albania. This escort operation took *Bear* up to the Albanian coastline, well within enemy surface to surface missile range.

When hostilities in the Adriatic concluded, *Bear* entered the Black Sea to participate in Exercise Cooperative Partner 1999. Cooperative Partner is a joint military exercise involving ships and aircraft from the U.S., France, Greece, Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia. *Bear* was the first United States Coast Guard Cutter to participate in this international exercise. *Bear* completed the summer by providing Military-to-Military training with the Tunisian Navy and Royal Moroccan Navy. In all *Bear* visited and acted as maritime ambassador to nine countries: Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Tunisia, Gibraltar (U.K.), Morocco, and the Azores (Portugal).

An example of the flexibility that cutters bring to the naval commander is the recent CGC *Bear* deployment to the Mediterranean Sea where it operated under the Navy Sixth Fleet for the peacetime engagement mission and was used to conduct merchant ship escort during the Kosovo conflict. Because *Bear* had a degree of interoperability, a crew competent in naval warfighting doctrine, and adequate defensive and offensive weaponry, the Commander, Sixth Fleet, was able to effectively employ *Bear* competencies in maritime vessel control and escort operations.

Bear earned the following decorations:

- Kosovo Campaign Medal
- NATO Kosovo Medal

