



Astoria flight crew members receive this realistic and challenging training as chances are high they have to put these techniques into practice during their tour of duty. Unlike the Army and Air National Guard, Coast Guard personnel in most cases are not from Oregon and after their tour at a station they will be assigned to another part of the country.

The third most frequent mission in terms of flight hours is Enforcement of Laws and Treaties (ELT). This mission can be subdivided into Living Marine Resources (LMR), law enforcement (fisheries patrols), illegal drug interdiction, undocumented migrant interdiction and other enforcement. On average, 12 to 13 percent of total flight time is allocated thereto. In the Astoria operations area there has been an increase in drug crime, particularly with respect to amphetamine production and trafficking. Laboratories are known to have been transferred to ships offshore, with small boats transporting the drugs back to shore. The Jayhawks have consequently stepped up the number of missions dedicated to observe, document, interdict and apprehend drug offenders.

Furthermore, the necessity of setting up and coordinating a comprehensive national strategy to secure the United States from terror threats and attacks following 9-11 has had a direct effect on the Coast Guard. It has resulted in a higher degree of vigilance and readiness, and more patrols of ports and the coastline. Although the Homeland Security mission was not new to the Coast Guard, its increased significance resulted not only in an expansion of its scope but also a new name. Previously known as harbor patrol (HARPAT) missions, the Homeland Security

mission is now referred to as Ports, Waterways & Coastal Security (PWCS). Its emphasis is on ensuring the safety, security and stewardship of America's maritime domain. Increasingly, Astoria's Jayhawks are patrolling major waterways, bridges, ports and other critical infrastructure in its region to ensure they remain safe. The number of flight hours dedicated to this mission has increased significantly, and it is entirely possible the trend will continue to a point where Homeland Security missions will exceed those related to SAR.

Today, boarding teams routinely inspect vessels either sailing in the Exclusive Economic

*Above: Search and rescue (SAR) and other missions conducted along Oregon's rugged coastline are all in a day's work for the crew of the HH-60J. The helicopter is currently undergoing an upgrade to 'Tango' standard that includes a service-life extension and the incorporation of an array of more modern technologies.*

*Below: In the background is the Astoria-Megler Bridge, the longest continuous truss bridge in North America. Spanning the mouth of the Columbia River between Astoria, Oregon and Point Ellice near Megler, Washington, it is more than four miles (6.5 km) long and carries a section of Route 101, a vital north-south 'artery' that stretches from Canada to Mexico.*

