

**RVTEC ANNUAL MEETING  
U. S. Coast Guard Agency Report  
6 November 2007**

**Status of the USCG Polar Icebreaker Fleet**

The Coast Guard polar icebreaker fleet consists of three polar icebreakers. Two Polar-class icebreakers, the POLAR SEA and POLAR STAR, which were both commissioned in the 1970's, have provided the annual heavy icebreaking services needed to break open a channel into McMurdo Station. In addition, in past years, they have supported science missions in both polar regions. HEALY, which was commissioned in 2000, is primarily assigned to support science in the Arctic.

HEALY's operating time since commissioning has been dedicated to supporting Arctic research, except once – in early 2003 – when it was sent to assist POLAR SEA with the McMurdo break-in. This summer HEALY completed three phases of science missions in the Western Arctic and recently returned to homeport to conduct dockside maintenance in preparation for Arctic West Summer 2008.

POLAR SEA completed Operation Deep Freeze 2007 in conjunction with the Swedish Icebreaker ODEN. She recently completed drydock work and a training cycle in preparation for Deep Freeze 2008. NSF plans to use ODEN as the primary icebreaker and POLAR SEA in standby. If POLAR SEA does not deploy for Deep Freeze 2008 the Coast Guard intends to deploy her to the Arctic in 2008 primarily for training to maintain crew proficiency but also to conduct Coast Guard missions.

POLAR STAR remains in caretaker status. The Coast Guard is currently working on awarding a contract to conduct a study on the maintenance requirements and crew options for long-term lay-up.