

Kristi Noem Allegedly Diverted Plane on Rescue Mission

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Homeland Security Secretary **Kristi Noem** diverted a Coast Guard aircraft from an active search and rescue mission to transport detained migrants, according to a new report.

The incident occurred when a twenty-three-year-old Coast Guard official went overboard in February of last year, NBC News [reported](#), shortly after Noem was [confirmed](#) as DHS secretary. Coast Guard resources, including multiple aircraft, were sent to search the Pacific Ocean where the guardsman had disappeared.

One such aircraft was a Coast Guard C-130 that had previously been set to transport detained migrants from California to Texas, two U.S. officials and a Coast Guard official told NBC. Noem told the acting commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral **Kevin Lunday**, to pull the plane from the search and rescue mid-flight so as not to miss the transport.

Lunday communicated Noem's verbal instruction to the National Command Center, which diverted the plane to San Diego to complete its [part](#) in DHS's Alien Expulsion Operation. Coast Guard command in San Diego ultimately found two available aircraft to transport the migrants to Texas, allowing the C-130 to return to the search and rescue mission after about an hour.

A DHS spokesperson told NBC that "the C-130 never left the search" for the Coast Guard member, who was never found, and that there is no documentation that the plane was pulled off the mission.

The sources who spoke to NBC claimed that the incident contributed to a strained relationship between Noem and the [Coast Guard](#).

"The primary mission was search-and-rescue," a former Coast Guard official told NBC. "And now the No. 1 stated mission of the Coast Guard is border security, that is a cultural change that the culture hasn't quite caught up to."

The alleged event was just one of several incidents cited by the report to depict tensions between Noem and the branch of the U.S. military she oversees.

Trump administration senior adviser **Corey Lewandowski** [reportedly](#) fired a Coast Guard pilot mid-flight after Noem's heated blanket was left on another plane, before relenting when the pilot informed him that if he was relieved of duty, he would need to land the aircraft immediately.