

# USCGC Bear returns home following 60-day deployment in Florida Straits



Family members of a USCGC Bear (WMEC 901) crew member pose for a photo on the pier in Portsmouth, Va., Feb. 15, 2023. Bear returned home following a 60-day deployment conducting maritime safety and security missions in the Florida Straits. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard)

[Release from United States Coast Guard](#)

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Feb. 15, 2023

*Editor's Note: For b-roll of Bear's patrol, click [here](#); homecoming footage can be viewed [here](#).*

**PORTSMOUTH, Va.** – The crew of the USCGC Bear (WMEC 901) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth Wednesday after completing a 60-day deployment in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage.

Bear's crew supported Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry in the Coast Guard's Seventh District area of operations. While underway, Bear's crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while working to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

Within the first days of patrol, Bear interdicted an overloaded Cuban rustic vessel in the Florida Straits and transferred 27 migrants on board the cutter.

Bear also spent part of the patrol acting as a visual deterrence to illegal migration in the region by operating close to Haiti's shore, which resulted in the interdiction of two overloaded migrant voyages. Both vessels were approximately 50 feet in length and each carried more than 200 migrants. After providing food, water, and medical care, Bear's crew repatriated the migrants back to Haiti.

Throughout the deployment, Bear's crew members cared for and provided medical attention to 502 migrants on board the cutter before repatriating them to their country of origin.

"Bear's mission was to deter illegal maritime migration and rescue those in distress before the sea claimed their lives," said Cmdr. Brooke Millard, Bear's commanding officer. "This deployment was challenging. It's tough to witness fellow humans risk all for a better way of life in an unforgiving sea. Know that your Coast Guard is 'all in' to protect our maritime border as well as save lives."

Since the fiscal year began in October, Coast Guard crews have interdicted over 7,100 Cubans and Haitians at sea.

Bear is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100. The cutter's primary mission areas include homeland security, law enforcement, counter drug, search and rescue, migrant interdiction, and fisheries enforcement in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.