

# Coast Guard, CBIG Interdict Go-Fast, Seize \$30 Million in Cocaine

SAINT THOMAS, U.S. Virgin Islands – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos offloaded 2,606 pounds of cocaine and transferred custody of three suspected smugglers Dec. 14 to U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) special agents in St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Coast Guard and Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) law enforcement authorities seized the \$30 million cocaine shipment and apprehended the suspected smugglers following the interdiction of a go-fast vessel on the morning of Dec. 11 in international waters off Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This interdiction is the result of ongoing multi-agency law enforcement efforts in support of Operations Full Court Press, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group.

The suspected smugglers are facing likely federal prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"This case was a team effort and perfect example of Caribbean Border Interagency Group partners working in coordination with Joint Interagency Task Force-East to protect the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands," said Lt. Cmdr. Mario Gil, commanding officer of Joseph Tezanos. "This case involved a high-speed chase of over 10 hours in challenging weather conditions that was possible thanks to the tenacity and persistence of the Tezanos' crew and of our partners, who are proud to have completed the mission and prevented a large

quantity of drugs from reaching the streets.”

While on a routine patrol, the crew of a HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft from Air Station Miami detected a suspicious go-fast vessel Dec. 10 transiting with three people onboard, approximately 65 nautical miles north of San Juan. Upon sunset, the go-fast continued to transit in the dark without the use of navigational lights.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan alerted CBIG partner agencies of the developing situation and diverted the Coast Guard Cutters Joseph Tezanos and Thetis to interdict the suspect vessel. The crews of two Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch maritime patrol aircrafts also responded and supported the interdiction by maintaining aerial surveillance of the go-fast.

Throughout the pursuit, the Coast Guard and CBP aircrews vectored-in Joseph Tezanos to the go-fast's position. Once on scene, Tezanos remained in hot pursuit, as the crew launched the cutter's Over-the-Horizon Boat IV that closed-in and interdicted the go-fast approximately 95 miles nautical miles northeast of St. Thomas.

The three suspects onboard the go-fast claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals. The Tezanos boat crew located 52 bales of suspected contraband aboard the go-fast that a field test yielded positive results for cocaine. The Tezanos crew apprehended and embarked the suspected smugglers along with the seized contraband.

The go-fast was later destroyed as a hazard to navigation.

The suspected smugglers and seized contraband were transported to Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, where they were transferred to the custody of DEA special agents, who are leading the investigation into this case.

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# Navy Awards Austal USA Contracts for LCS 36 and 38

MOBILE, Ala. – After delivering three Independence-variant littoral combat ships (LCSs) this year, Austal USA was awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy Dec. 17 to build two additional hulls – bringing the total to four of LCSs awarded to company in 2018. The specific value of each contract is under the congressional cost cap of \$584 million per ship.

“To be awarded two more LCS contracts before the end of the year is beyond exciting,” said Austal USA President Craig Perciavalle. “This contract directly reflects the confidence the U.S. Navy has in Austal USA and our supplier base of over 10,000 nationwide and our ability to build highly capable ships at an affordable cost.”

With eight delivered, six under construction, and three awaiting start of construction, these two additional ships represent Austal USA’s 18th and 19th ships in the class.

“The skill, hard work, and dedication of our employees is second to none and strengthens as we continue to play an important role in helping build the Navy’s 355-ship fleet,” said Perciavalle.

As the role of the LCS continues to take shape as a key component to the Navy’s ability to gain sea control through distributed lethality, Austal USA continues to deliver ships on-time and on-budget to support the needs of the fleet. The Independence-variant LCS, along with Austal USA’s expeditionary fast transport, are designed, constructed, and well positioned to meet the needs of the fleet today and into the future.

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# **Navy Awards General Dynamics SeaPort NxG Contract**

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) announced Dec. 17 it will support the U.S. Navy through a new contract vehicle known as SeaPort NxG. The multiple-award, indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract holds a total value of \$5 billion. It includes a five-year base period with one five-year option.

“We are excited to expand our firm relationship with the Navy and deliver cutting-edge technologies and services through this new contract vehicle,” said Senior Vice President Leigh Palmer, head of GDIT’s Defense Division.

Through this contract, GDIT will compete for individual task orders supporting Naval Sea Systems Command, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, Naval Supply Systems Command, Military Sealift Command, Naval Facilities Command, the Office of Naval Research and the U.S. Marine Corps. GDIT will perform a variety of engineering services and program support as required by the individual task orders.

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# **Virginia-Class Submarine Delaware is Launched**

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries has launched the recently christened Virginia-class submarine Delaware (SSN

791) into the water for the first time at the company's Newport News Shipbuilding division.

During a three-day process that began Dec. 12, the 7,800-ton submarine was moved out of a construction facility and into a floating dry dock using a transfer car system. The floating dry dock was submerged, and the submarine was launched into the James River. Once in the water, the boat then was moved to the shipyard's submarine pier for final outfitting, testing and crew certification.

"Successfully launching Delaware into the water the first time is a proud moment for the Virginia-class submarine team and the thousands of dedicated shipbuilders involved in constructing the ship," said Dave Bolcar, Newport News' vice president of submarine construction. "With this significant key event behind us, we look forward to completing construction and sea trials next year so this great warship can join the fleet and defend our nation."

Delaware is the 18th Virginia-class submarine built as part of the teaming agreement with General Dynamics Electric Boat and the ninth to be delivered by Newport News. More than 10,000 shipbuilders from Newport News and Electric Boat have participated in Delaware's construction since the work began in September 2013. The submarine was christened by Jill Biden, the former Second Lady of the United States and the ship's sponsor, during a ceremony in October.

Following testing, Delaware is scheduled to be delivered to the U.S. Navy next year.

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# Hamilton Returns Home from 54-Day Counter-Drug Patrol

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton crew returned to home Dec. 17 at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Charleston, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Hamilton's crew spent the majority of their 54-day deployment conducting counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. At the beginning of the patrol, Hamilton executed an exhaustive three-day search, along with Coast Guard aircraft, for a civilian aircraft that reportedly crashed approximately 100 miles off the coast of South Carolina.

While patrolling the drug-trafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Hamilton detained 21 suspected drug smugglers from five different vessels, and seized over 4.7 tons of cocaine, valued at over \$140 million bound for the shores of the United States. In addition, the cutter crossed the equator, a milestone for sailors and cuttermen alike.

Demonstrating the robust command and control capabilities of the national security cutter, Hamilton's crew temporarily assumed complete tactical control of all counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean, coordinating tasking of all air and surface assets in the fight against transnational criminal and drug-trafficking organizations.

During the final days of the patrol, Hamilton's crew responded to report of an injured crew member from the Panamanian-flagged cargo vessel Pacific Talent in the Gulf of Mexico. Hamilton's crew supported the medical evacuation of the crew member by directing response operations, providing vital command and control, and delivering fuel to the helicopter

that hoisted the crew member to safety.

Hamilton's crew visited Aruba, Panama, Costa Rica, and made two transits through the Panama Canal. In Golfito, Costa Rica, Hamilton's crew transferred four suspected drug smugglers to Costa Rica's Policia Control de Druqa following the successful interdiction of a Costa Rican-flag fishing vessel increasing the nation's partnerships in the fight against drug trafficking organizations.

Building upon that partnership, Hamilton's crew hosted Costa Rican officials aboard to discuss current and future cooperation between Costa Rica and the United States. Attendees included the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Sharon Day; U.S. Coast Guard Deputy for Operations Policy and Capabilities, Rear Adm. Meredith Austin; as well as Costa Rica's National Assembly Speaker of the House, Minister of Public Security and Commandant of the Costa Rican Coast Guard. Members of U.S. Joint Task Force-Bravo, based out of Honduras, conducted a medical readiness exercise, enhanced dialogue and reinforced the United States' commitment to Costa Rica.

"I could not be more impressed by this crew and their dedication to keeping over 4,290 kilograms of cocaine off of the streets," stated Capt. Mark Gordon, Hamilton's commanding officer. "It has been a busy two months for this ship and her crew in this constantly demanding maritime environment. We're excited to be returning to homeport for the holidays and to prepare for our next patrol."

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## **ONR Recognizes 2019 Young**

# Investigators

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Office of Naval Research (ONR) recognized 25 awardees of the 2019 Young Investigator Program (YIP) Dec. 17. These recipients will share \$16.5 million in funding to conduct naval-relevant scientific research with direct benefits for Sailors and Marines.

“To meet the demand signal from the National Defense Strategy, we must attract the best and brightest minds to work on naval warfighting challenges. The Young Investigator Program does just that, and I’m honored to announce the recipients for 2019,” said Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. David Hahn. “Since 1985, this program has attracted outstanding scientists and engineers from across academia to support our Navy and Marine Corps – and in this era of great power competition, that is more important than ever before.”

The ONR YIP is a highly competitive program in which academic achievements and potential for scientific breakthroughs are major factors in the evaluation process. The winning candidates were selected from more than 260 applicants – all of whom are college and university faculty and obtained a PhD within the past seven years.

Awardees represent 23 academic institutions nationwide, supporting efforts related to aerodynamics, autonomy, energetics, power and energy, machine learning, sensing and sensors, quantum materials and undersea-breathing technologies. The YIP awards support laboratory equipment, graduate student stipends and scholarships, as well as other expenses critical to ongoing and planned research. Typical grants range between \$500,000 to \$750,000 over a three-year period.

Established in 1985, the ONR YIP is one of the nation’s oldest and most selective basic research early career awards in

science and technology. Its purpose is to fund tenure-track academic researchers, or equivalent, whose scientific pursuits show outstanding promise for supporting the Department of Defense, while also promoting their professional development.

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## **Navy Marks Establishment of the First CMV-22B Squadron**

SAN DIEGO – The Navy held a ceremony Dec. 14 at Naval Base Coronado to commemorate the establishment of Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30, the Navy's first CMV-22B squadron, commander, Naval Air Forces Public Affairs, said in a release.

VRM-30 was established to begin the Navy's transition from the C-2A Greyhound, which has provided logistics support to aircraft carriers for four decades, to the CMV-22B, which has an increased operational range, greater cargo capacity, faster cargo loading/unloading, increased survivability and enhanced beyond-line-of-sight communications compared to the C-2A.

"Where no instructions existed, no patch existed, no 'here's how we are going to perform our duties everyday' existed, this team will define that. And it's exciting because we can establish right off the bat those best practices," said Vice Adm. DeWolfe H. Miller III, commander, Naval Air Forces. "This platform is our future and when you look at the nature of the future fight, we need that versatility, that flexibility that's going to be provided in every subsequent squadron that transitions."

The first CMV-22B aircraft are scheduled to be delivered to the squadron in fiscal 2020. While VRM-30 awaits the arrival

of the CMV-22B, Navy pilots and maintainers will train with the U.S. Marine Corps, which has flown the MV-22 since 2007. As the C-2A squadrons stand down, their pilots and aircrew will transition to the CMV-22B. The final C-2A squadron is scheduled to stand down in 2024.

The CMV-22B is the U.S. Navy version of the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.

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## **Littoral Combat Ship St. Louis Christened and Launched**

MARINETTE, Wis. – The Lockheed Martin-led shipbuilding team launched littoral combat ship (LCS) 19, the future USS St. Louis, into the Menominee River at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Shipyard. Ship sponsor Barbara Broadhurst Taylor, the daughter of a decorated World War II aviator, christened LCS 19 just prior to launch.

“LCS 19 is the second ship we’ve christened and launched this year,” said Joe DePietro, Lockheed Martin vice president and general manager of Small Combatants and Ship Systems. “Our shipbuilding team has truly hit its stride. We completed trials on three ships and delivered two more. Once delivered to the Navy, LCS 19 will be on its way to independently completing targeted missions around the world. We remain focused on delivering these affordable ships to the fleet as quickly as possible and increasing capability with each hull.”

The Freedom-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future missions from deep water to the littorals. LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship, designed to support

focused mine countermeasures, anti-submarine warfare and surface warfare missions. LCS 19 is targeted to support the mine countermeasures mission.

Lockheed Martin is in full-rate production and has delivered seven ships to the U.S. Navy. There are seven ships in various stages of production and test at Fincantieri Marinette Marine. This year, the Lockheed Martin-led team began construction on two ships, delivered two ships, completed sea trials for three ships and saw one delivered ship commissioned. LCS 13, the future USS Wichita, is slated for commissioning in Mayport, Florida, on Jan. 12.

“I am thrilled and very honored to be the sponsor of the future USS St. Louis. The combination of my family’s military background and the enduring spirit of the great city of St. Louis make this incredibly meaningful,” Taylor said. “This is the seventh ship to bear the name St. Louis, and I know that the people of our great city are extremely proud that this distinguished legacy will continue.”

“We are proud to be building LCS 19 and her sister ships at the heartland’s only naval shipyard,” said Jan Allman, Fincantieri Marinette Marine president and CEO. “Today’s launch and christening is a testament to the hard work of more than 2,000 workers who pass through the shipyard’s gates, put on their hard hats and build American warships.”

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# **Riachuelo, the First Brazilian-Built Scorpène**

# Submarine, Has Been Launched

ITAGUAI, Brazil – The Brazilian Navy launched its first Brazilian-built Scorpène submarine, Riachuelo, on Dec. 14, the Naval Group said in a release. The ceremony took place at the Itaguaí Navy base.

In 2009, Naval Group was entrusted by the Brazilian Navy with designing and transferring the technology for four conventional Scorpène submarines, and for the design and manufacturing assistance for the non-nuclear part of Brazil's first nuclear-powered submarine. The contract also included the support for the construction of a naval base and a shipyard in Brazil.

The Prosub program is a key extension of the strategic defense cooperation agreement signed in December 2008 in Rio de Janeiro.

The launching of the Scorpène Riachuelo demonstrates the success of the program, with both the successful completion of the first submarine and of the shipyard's infrastructure. The latter is being built by a Brazilian company, Construtora Norberto Odebrecht (CNO), based on Naval Group specifications and on the French group's experience in the design, production engineering and in-service support of submarines.

The Riachuelo will start sea trials in 2019 for delivery in 2020. Delivery of submarines two, three and four will then follow every 12 to 18 months.

Since 2012, Naval Group has done considerable work to identify, select, negotiate, qualify Brazilian service providers in order to feed the supplier database for equipment or products supplied by Naval Group to the Brazilian Navy, and present and qualify local suppliers for the future needs of the Brazilian Navy.

This work enables the Brazilian Navy to rely more and more on a sovereign national industrial base.

It also enables the Brazilian industrial ecosystem to access new markets by promoting their “Naval Group” and “Brazilian Navy” accreditation and to avail of the know-how and experience of the French group in the fields of project management.

Finally, ICN (Itaguaí Construções Navais) will be able to call on this panel of suppliers for its own development as part of the future maintenance and support services of the submarines.

Today, 14 Scorpène submarines are in operational service or being built, for the Chilean Navy (two units), the Malaysian Navy (two units), the Indian Navy (six units) and the Brazilian Navy (four units).

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## **Comfort Returning to Norfolk After Completing Mission in South and Central America**

NORFOLK, Va. – The U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort is scheduled to return to Naval Station Norfolk Dec. 18, after completing a deployment to South and Central America, Military Sealift Command announced in a Dec. 14 release.

Returning to Norfolk signifies the conclusion of Comfort’s 11-week medical support mission to the region as part of U.S. Southern Command’s Operation Enduring Promise initiative.

Comfort’s embarked medical team worked with health and government partners in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Honduras,

providing care both aboard the ship and at land-based medical sites, helping to relieve pressure on national medical systems caused partially by an increase in cross-border migrants. The deployment reflected the United States' enduring promise of friendship, partnership and solidarity with the Americas.

The ship's crew included more than 465 U.S. and partner nation military doctors, nurses and corpsmen. In addition, about 90 medical and dental professional volunteers from nongovernmental organizations were aboard to support the medical assistance mission. The mission was supported by a team of civil service mariners who oversaw the ship's operation and navigation. During the mission, Comfort visited Esmeraldas, Ecuador, Paita, Peru, Turbo, Colombia, Riohacha, Colombia, and Trujillo, Honduras.

Health services provided during Comfort's deployment included general surgery, ophthalmologic surgery, dermatology, medical evaluation and treatment, preventive medicine, dental screenings and treatment, optometry screenings, eyewear distribution, and general public health. Medical capabilities aboard the hospital ship include surgical and post-surgical rooms, a CAT-scan unit, four X-ray machines, a dental suite, an optometry lab, a physical therapy area, two oxygen-producing plants and a 5,000-unit blood bank.

During the port visits, Comfort's medical team treated over 26,000 patients and conducted approximately 600 surgeries to include cataracts, hernias, cleft palates and more. Additionally, Comfort hosted approximately 1,000 distinguished visitors and guests during 53 distinguished visitor and media days to include the president of Honduras and prime minister of Peru.

Comfort's Enduring Promise mission demonstrated U.S. commitment to the Americas and is part of a continuum of support provided by U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). SOUTHCOM-sponsored civic assistance and humanitarian missions were conducted in close

cooperation with partner nations in the region as well as with U.S. interagency partners at the U.S. Department of State and USAID. Similar missions include Continuing Promise, New Horizons, Beyond the Horizon, medical readiness training exercises and the Medical Civil Action Program.

This mission marked the sixth time the hospital ship has provided medical assistance in the region. Since first deploying to the region on a similar mission more than a decade ago, the hospital ship has visited 18 nations in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. During those missions, military medical professionals worked with host nation and civilian

partners to provide medical treatment to nearly 390,000 people, including more than 6,000 surgeries.