Coast Guard Cutter Tampa Offloads $94.6M in Cocaine in Miami

Coast Guard Cutter Tampa crew offloads approximately 5,500 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated $94.6 million, at Base Miami Beach, Miami, Florida, April 20, 2021. On April 9, a maritime patrol flight spotted a vessel, and a Tampa law enforcement team interdicted a low profile vesseloff the coast of Punta Gallinas, Colombia. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Charly Tautfest*

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Tampa's crew offloaded approximately 5,500 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated $94.6 million, in Miami, April 20, after interdicting a low-profile vessel off the coast of Punta Gallinas, Colombia, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

A maritime patrol flight spotted the vessel on April 9, and a law enforcement team from the cutter detained three suspects

and discovered 87 bales of cocaine. The vessel was destroyed as a hazard to navigation and the suspects are reported to be in good health.

“This event is the perfect example of numerous key partners unifying our efforts to counter transnational criminal organizations who look to exploit the maritime environment,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jason Neiman, Seventh District public affairs officer. “By strengthening partnerships, we counter threats together.”

The interdiction was the result of multi-agency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command’s enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area programs, and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all suspects receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crew members were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19. There were no suspects in these cases reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

Houston Nominated for Vice Adm., commander, Naval Submarine Forces

Rear Adm. William J. Houston, nominated for appointment to vice admiral and assigned as commander, Naval Submarine Forces, commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, and commander, Allied Submarine Command, Norfolk, Virginia. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. — Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced April 21 that the president has nominated Navy Rear Adm. William J. Houston for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, and assignment as commander, Naval Submarine Forces; commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; and commander, Allied Submarine Command, Norfolk, Virginia.

Houston is currently serving as director, Undersea Warfare Division, N97, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Rear Adm. Houston is a native of Buffalo, New York, and graduated from the University of Notre Dame in May 1990 with a bachelor of science in electrical engineering and was commissioned via the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) program. He holds a master's of business administration from the College of William and Mary.

His sea tours include division officer assignments on USS Phoenix (SSN 702), engineer officer onboard USS Hampton (SSN 767), and executive officer onboard USS Tennessee (SSBN 734) Blue. He commanded USS Hampton (SSN 767) in San Diego and was commodore of Submarine Squadron 20 in Kings Bay, Georgia.

His staff assignments include flag lieutenant for Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; the Atlantic Fleet Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board; special assistant to the Director of Naval Reactors for Personnel and Policy; deputy commander for Submarine Squadron 20; the principal director for Nuclear Matters within the Office of the Secretary of Defense; the submarine and nuclear community manager, Military Personnel Plans and Policy (N133) and division director of Submarine and Nuclear Propulsion Distribution, Navy Personnel Command (PERS-42).

His first flag assignment was deputy director for Strategic Targeting and Nuclear Mission Planning (J5N) United States Strategic Command. Following this, he served as director of operations, Naval Forces Europe-Africa; deputy commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, and commander, Submarine Group Eight.

Coast Guard Offloads Nearly $20 million in Seized Cocaine in San Juan, Puerto Rico

The Coast Guard Cutter Richard Dixon crew offloaded nearly $20 million in seized cocaine at Coast Guard Base San Juan on April 20. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Richard Dixon crew offloaded nearly $20 million in seized cocaine at Coast Guard Base San Juan on April 20, following the interdiction of a suspected drug smuggling vessel, approximately 45 nautical miles north of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an April 21 release.

A Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch maritime patrol aircraft crew detected a vessel on April 17 with three people aboard suspected of drug trafficking. The Coast Guard Cutter Paul Clark and a Coast

Guard MH-60 helicopter responded to intercept the vessel.

The Coast Guard Jayhawk aircrew successfully stopped the vessel. Following the interdiction, it was discovered one of the suspected smugglers was injured and needed to be medevaced. A Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen MH-65 Dolphin aircrew transported the person to a hospital in Puerto Rico to receive further medical care.

The Paul Clark crew embarked the two remaining suspected smugglers and recovered close to 18 bales, which weighed approximately 1,052 pounds and tested positive for cocaine.

The three suspects are two men and a woman, Dominican Republic nationals, who are facing possible federal prosecution on drug trafficking criminal charges. Department of Justice partners in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico are leading prosecution efforts in this case.

"Stopping illegal drug trafficking vessels like the one interdicted Saturday is inherently dangerous and involves a high level of skill and risk," said Capt. Gregory H. Magee, Commander of U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Juan. "These vessels represent a serious threat to the Caribbean region. The professionalism of the interdicting crews and strong partnerships with federal, local and regional law enforcement led to the apprehension of three smugglers and seizure of a major drug shipment in our shared resolve to protect the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from this threat."

The interdiction resulted from multi-agency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug-Enforcement Task Force and High-Intensity Drug-Trafficking Area programs and the DEA Caribbean Division Financial Investigative Team.

"This Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force

investigation is one of several cases targeting transnational criminal organizations operating out of South America, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico," said A.J. Collazo, DEA Caribbean Division special agent in charge. "DEA will continue to work alongside other federal agencies as more seizures like this one can be expected."

Cutters Paul Clark and Richard Dixon are 154-foot fast response cutters respectively homeported in Miami and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Italian Aircraft Carrier ITS Cavour Departs Norfolk, Completing F-35B Certification

U.S. Sailors, assigned to the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), greet the Italian navy flagship, aircraft carrier ITS Cavour (CVH 550), as it arrives at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, Feb. 13, 2021. The Cavour's visit is part of a series of operations alongside U.S. military assets to attain the Italian navy's "ready for operations" certification to safely land and launch F-35B aircraft, U.S. 2nd Fleet exercises operational authorities over assigned ships, and landing forces on the East Coast and the Atlantic. *U.S. NAVY*
NORFOLK, Va. – The Italian navy flagship, the aircraft carrier ITS Cavour (CVH 550), departed Naval Station Norfolk April 16 after Joint Force operations with U.S. military forces in the Atlantic Ocean, the U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs said in an April 21 release.

ITS Cavour participated in a sequence of operations with U.S. assets and the F-35 Joint Program Office has delivered a flight clearance recommendation to the Italian navy for the safe operation of fifth generation F-35B fighter aircraft.

"I am very proud for the success of ITS Cavour's 'Ready for Operations' campaign," said Italian navy Capt.

Giancarlo Ciappina, commanding officer of ITS Cavour. “Our allies will soon perceive the Italian navy and the Italian armed forces as a whole, as enhanced cooperative partners thanks to the strategic enabler that the fifth-generation aircraft carrier capability would represent, in either specific maritime or wider joint operations.”

An F-35 Joint Program Office (JPO) test team embarked on ITS Cavour to conduct sea trials, a series of tests and functional activities to create a safe flight operating envelope for the short-takeoff-and-vertical-landing (STOVL) variant of the aircraft aboard the recently upgraded ship.

The F-35 Pax River Integrated Test Force (ITF) team from Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, includes almost 200 people with the engineering and test pilot expertise and experience to conduct F-35B envelope expansion flight test, two specially instrumented developmental flight test aircraft, and support equipment.

During the sea trials, two F-35Bs of the ITF were embarked aboard Cavour and carried out more than 50 flight missions in challenging weather conditions sea states, a night session, around 120 vertical landings, 115 short takeoffs with the aid of the ski jump, and two vertical takeoffs. These activities were followed by a sufficient amount of data analysis, yielding the information telling the U.S. Marine Corps and the Italian navy how to safely conduct F-35B flight operations on Cavour.

“It was a privilege to work alongside our Italian counterparts while they certified their flagship to launch and recover the cutting-edge F-35B,” said Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis, commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet. “I look forward to continuing to build upon our trans-Atlantic bridge, enhancing our collective capabilities and strengthening partnerships with our NATO allies.”

In coordination with the Italian navy, U.S. Marine Corps MV-22s conducted shipboard landing qualifications on the deck of the Italian Carrier ITS Cavour.

Also while operating in the western Atlantic, ITS Cavour collaborated with the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stout (DDG 55). They conducted a three-day interoperability exercise with support from Carrier Air Wing Seven and Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 11. ITS Cavour also conducted dual-carrier operations alongside USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), marking the first time a Gerald R. Ford-class and Italian carrier operated jointly.

ITS Cavour departed Norfolk after disembarking the ITF personnel prior to completing the necessary preparation to undertake the last phases of the ready for operations campaign before returning to Italy. Cavour was also greeted by a performance by the U.S. Fleet Forces band as an expression of goodwill between the U.S. and Italian navies.

For decades, the bond between Europe and North America has made NATO the strongest alliance in history. Conducting training and exercises alongside allies and partners increases our collective capacity and capabilities as well as increased interoperability with the U.S. forces.

Future USS Mobile Set for Namesake City Commissioning

The future USS Mobile (LCS 26) moves from its construction bay to the Mobile River in this 2020 photograph. *OFFICE OF BRADLEY BYRNE / Wikipedia*

MOBILE, Alabama – The future USS Mobile (LCS 26), the U.S. Navy's newest Independence-variant littoral combat ship (LCS), will be commissioned May 22, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. (CT) in Mobile, Alabama, the U.S. Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet said in an Apr. 21 release.

Due to ongoing public health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony will take place in compliance with Department of Defense, Centers for Disease Control, state public health, state, and local government guidelines and restrictions. The event will be livestreamed to offer maximum viewing by the general public.

“The Mobile crew worked hard to prepare their ship for this moment, and they will continue to see the fruits of their labor as they train and operate at sea,” said Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. “We are refining the LCS class lethality and global sustainment infrastructure to better harness the versatility these ships bring to the surface force. Mobile is entering the fleet at a prime time in the LCS progression, as we implement lessons learned from other LCS deployers.”

Rebecca Byrne, president and CEO of The Community Foundation of South Alabama and wife of former U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Alabama, is the ship’s sponsor. As a former chairman of the Downtown Mobile Alliance and former executive director of United Way of Baldwin County, Rebecca has long served her community through civic, cultural, and church leadership roles.

Highlighting the commissioning is a time-honored Navy tradition where Rebecca will give the first order to, “man our ship and bring her to life.”

Mobile’s commanding officer, Cmdr. Christopher W. Wolff, a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Oklahoma, and the U.S. Naval War College, has deployed five times on five different ships. The third-generation naval officer leads a crew of 70 officers and enlisted Sailors.

USS Mobile was built in Mobile, Alabama, by Austal USA and was launched on January 11, 2020. The future USS Mobile is the fifth Navy ship to honor the city of Mobile, which has a rich historical relationship with the Navy.

The first Mobile was a Confederate, government-operated, side-wheel steamer operating as a blockade runner and captured in New Orleans in April 1862 by U.S. forces. Commissioned as USS Tennessee, the ship was later renamed Mobile. Commissioned in

March 1919, the second Mobile, a Hamburg Amerika Lines passenger liner operating between Germany and the U.S. until the outbreak of World War I, was taken over by the Allied Maritime Council and assigned to the United States after the Armistice. USS Mobile (CL 63) participated in numerous Pacific Theater campaigns during World War II. Commissioned on March 24, 1943, the cruiser received 11 battle stars for the ship's time in service and was decommissioned in May 1947. The fourth Mobile (LKA 115) was an amphibious cargo ship serving from September 1969 until decommissioning in February 1994.

LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship designed to support focused mine countermeasures, anti-submarine, and surface warfare missions. The Independence-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future missions, from deep water to the littorals.

LCS is now the second-largest surface ship class in production, behind the Navy's DDG 51 Arleigh Burke-class destroyer program. USS Mobile will be homeported at Naval Base San Diego, California.

HII Awarded $107M Advance Procurement Contract for LHA 9

USS Tripoli (LHA 7), the second America-class amphibious assault ship, transits toward Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Aug. 3, 2020. Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding division has been awarded a $107 million contract modification for the LHA 9. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Annaliss Candelaria*

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding division has received a contract modification from the U.S. Navy for $107 million to provide long-lead-time material and advance procurement activities for amphibious assault ship LHA 9, the company said in an April 19 release.

"The amphibious warship production line is a critical component of our nation's defense industrial base," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson said. "This funding will strengthen our suppliers and sustain jobs across the country in support of LHA 9 construction."

Ingalls is the sole builder of large-deck amphibious ships for the Navy. The shipyard delivered its first amphibious assault ship, the Iwo Jima-class USS Tripoli (LPH 10), in 1966. Ingalls has since built five Tarawa-class (LHA 1) ships, eight Wasp-class (LHD 1) ships and the first in the new America class of amphibious assault ships (LHA 6) in 2014. The second ship in the America class, USS Tripoli (LHA 7), was delivered

to the Navy in early 2020. Bougainville (LHA 8) is under construction.

Inaugural Unmanned Battle Problem 21 to begin April 19

Vice Adm. Michael Moran, principal military deputy assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), speaks with representatives from General Atomics Aeronautical about the MQ-9 Sea Guardian unmanned aircraft at Pier 12 on Naval Base San Diego. U.S. Pacific Fleet's UxS IBP 21, April 19-26, integrates manned and unmanned capabilities into the most challenging operational scenarios to generate war fighting advantages. *U.S. NAVY*

SAN DIEGO – The Navy begins its inaugural multi-domain manned and unmanned capabilities exercise April 19, the U.S. 3rd Fleet said in an April 16 release. The exercise will feature unmanned capabilities "Above the Sea, On the Sea and Below the Sea."

Led by U.S. Pacific Fleet and executed by U.S. 3rd Fleet, Unmanned Integrated Battle Problem 21 will generate warfighting advantages by integrating multi-domain manned and unmanned capabilities into the most challenging operational scenarios.

The exercise will feature operational, unmanned systems such as the MQ-9 Sea Guardian Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, the Medium Displacement Unmanned Surface Vessels Sea Hunter and Sea Hawk, and small and medium Unmanned Undersea Vehicles with modular payloads.

“Building off advances achieved over the past decade in unmanned aviation, Pacific Fleet is answering the Chief of Naval Operations’ drive to put the Navy’s Unmanned Campaign Plan into action,” says Rear Adm. Robert M. Gaucher, director of maritime headquarters at U.S. Pacific Fleet. “Furthermore, by exercising our full range of unmanned capabilities in a Pacific warfighting scenario, UxS IBP21 directly supports U.S. Indo-Pacific Command’s warfighting imperative of driving lethality through experimentation.”

Unmanned systems alongside the traditional, manned naval force will give the U.S. Navy the advantage needed to fight, win and deter potential aggressors. This exercise will directly inform warfighters, warfare centers and developers to further incorporate unmanned capabilities in day-to-day Fleet operations and battle plans.

“The overall goal is to integrate our unmanned capabilities across all domains to demonstrate how they solve CNO and Fleet Commander Key Operational Problems,” says Gaucher. “To get after these problems, UxS IBP21 will include maneuvering in contested space across all domains; targeting and fires; and intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance.”

USS The Sullivans Deploys in Support of British Carrier Task Group 21

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68), departed Mayport, Florida, April 19, for deployment to participate in HMS Queen Elizabeth (R08) Strike Group. *U.S. NAVY*

MAYPORT, Fla. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68), departed Mayport, Florida, April 19, for deployment to participate in HMS Queen Elizabeth (R08) Strike Group, the U.S. 2nd Fleet said in a release.

The inclusion of U.S. forces in the strike group will improve expeditionary capabilities and interoperability between NATO allies, demonstrating the United States' commitment to the NATO alliance.

"It is an honor to sail in this elite multi-national strike group on the frontline demonstrating a fully integrated force that showcases the special relationship that our countries have," said Cmdr. David Burkett, commanding officer of The Sullivans. "USS The Sullivans' namesakes would be extremely proud of us as we boldly show that, we stick together!"

The ship is named after the five Sullivan brothers who died when their ship, the USS Juneau, was sunk by a Japanese submarine during the battle of Guadalcanal in World War II. It is the second Navy ship to be named after the brothers.

The Sullivans recently participated in a successful Composite Unit Training Exercise alongside the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group and the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit that included a NATO vignette and training with SEALS from an East Coast-based Naval Special Warfare Group.

The vignette, developed by Carrier Strike Group Four and Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence (CJOS COE), consisted of familiarity training designed to facilitate allied maritime interoperability and integration, in practical terms using NATO procedures, messaging formats and chat capabilities.

The vignette developed and refined a clear list of interoperability requirements for future Navy force generation, and improved allied maritime command-and-control linkages.

"To ensure truly effective deterrence and defense in the North Atlantic, we need to make sure that the navies of NATO can

work as one team, and that means interoperability is vital," said Commodore Tom Guy, Royal Navy, deputy director CJOS COE. "This NATO vignette has been a great step forward in pursuing allied interoperability. CJOS COE looks forward to continuing to develop this for future deploying strike groups."

In Oct. 2020, USS The Sullivans participated in U.K.-led exercise Joint Warrior 20-2 as part of HMS Queen Elizabeth Strike Group. The exercise provided pre-deployment opportunities for the international strike group.

Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba Returns Home to Boston After 61-Day Patrol

The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba (WMEC 907), returned home to Boston, Tuesday, following a 61-day counter-narcotics patrol in the Caribbean Ocean. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

BOSTON —The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba (WMEC 907), returned home to Boston, Tuesday, following a 61-day counter-narcotics patrol in the Caribbean Ocean, the Coast Guard 1st District said in an April 19 release.

The 270-foot Escanaba's 100-person crew supported operation Leeward Horizon and Unified Resolve, presidential initiatives designed to disrupt transnational criminal organizations in Central and South America.

Escanaba's crew deployed with two members from the Barbadian Coast Guard, helping strengthen a vital maritime partnership and improving the interoperability between the two nations.

While transiting to their operational area, Escanaba's crew provided humanitarian and medical assistance to 25 Haitian migrants including five children and a pregnant woman. The migrants were rescued from an unseaworthy vessel and were ultimately repatriated to Haiti.

The crew of Escanaba also rescued two mariners stranded at sea approximately 25 miles from St. Lucia and conducted two boardings of Venezuelan fishing vessels actively fishing in the territorial seas of other countries These boardings assisted in the disruption and reporting of wide spread illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU) in the area.

"I am very pleased with the total team effort from our crew on this patrol," said Cmdr. Mike Nalli, Escanaba's commanding officer. "We completed multiple training events with partner nations to combat the flow of illegal drugs into our country and disrupt the criminal networks which operate in that part of the Caribbean. Overall, the crew and I are thrilled with what we accomplished and are excited to be home."

In addition, the crew of Escanaba also completed a biennial training assessments in Mayport, Florida prior to patrol departure. This training evaluated their overall readiness in five warfare categories: Weapons Systems, Command and Control, Damage Control and Medical, Engineering, and Navigation and Seamanship. Demonstrating proficient mission capabilities, the crew completed over 65 drills and evaluations, earning an overall score of 96%.

Known as “The Pride of Boston,” the Escanaba is a medium-endurance cutter homeported in Boston.

Crowley Completes First U.S. Design for Fully Electric Tug with Autonomous Technology

An illustration of Crowley’s fully electric tugboat with

autonomous technology. *CROWLEY ENGINEERING SERVICES*
SEATTLE – Crowley Engineering Services has completed the design of the first fully electric U.S. tugboat with autonomous technology, providing operators a sustainable and high-performing system for ship assist and harbor services in any port, the company said in a April 19 release.

The Crowley design, powered by the expertise of recently integrated subsidiary Jensen Maritime, leverages a large battery system and power saving technology to operate in a fully electric mode while producing zero air emissions or greenhouse gases. The 82-foot tug will provide 70 short tons of bollard pull, featuring an Azimuthing drive propulsion system with two 1,800 kW motors and a 6 MWh battery.

The new design is featured in an animated video available here.

The design also supports fully customizable features to meet the vessel design requirements with the future in mind. The platform design can be adjusted for alternate power capacities suitable for a standard hybrid framework if desired. The fully modular batteries allow for upgrades as technology changes. In addition, Crowley has developed an onshore charging station to fully support charging and reliable performance at the home port.

“Crowley’s design provides operators the tugboat solution to continue serving ships quickly and powerfully, while reducing their environmental impact by eliminating a carbon footprint,” said Ray Martus, vice president, Crowley Engineering Services. “This new design sets the standard for innovation by showing that sustainability and power can work together seamlessly in our maritime industries.”

With no exhaust stack, the tug has 360 degrees of visibility from the pilot’s station, allowing the operator to see without

obstruction. The tug has also been designed for future autonomous operation to increase the safety and efficiency of the operation including integrated automation and control systems. The intelligent maneuvering and control system offers more efficient vessel operations and allows masters to focus holistically on the overall control and positioning of the vessel in increasingly busy harbors.