

Cutter Returns to Oregon Following \$54 Million Cocaine Seizure



Coast Guardsmen prepare bails of cocaine to be offloaded from the Coast Guard Cutter Alert in San Diego on Oct. 16. The crew offloaded about 6,800 pounds of cocaine. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray

ASTORIA, Ore. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert returned to their homeport on Oct. 25 following a 10,700-nautical-mile, 65-day, multimission patrol that resulted in the interdiction of nearly 4,000 pounds of cocaine worth about \$54 million, the Coast Guard said in a release.

Alert's crew conducted counterdrug operations in international waters of the eastern Pacific Ocean, where boarding teams interdicted two go-fast vessels, seizing the cocaine and detaining six suspected drug smugglers.

Three Mexican naval officers joined Alert for the patrol to share lessons learned and to build cohesion between the sea services.

"I am extremely proud of this crew for doing their part to keep these dangerous drugs off the streets," said Cmdr. Tyson Scofield, Alert's commanding officer. "The eastern Pacific ... is a challenging environment, especially on a ship that is in her 50th year of service, yet this crew persevered to disrupt the illegal flow of narcotics that fuels instability in Central and South America. The counterdrug mission is as important now as it has ever been, and these brave men and women can return home after a 65-day patrol knowing they made a difference."

The Coast Guard's medium-endurance cutters represent 70% of

the service's counterdrug interdiction fleet, but many are nearing the end of their service life. Replacing the aging fleet of medium endurance cutters with the offshore patrol cutter is one of the Coast Guard's top priorities.

As cartels become more advanced in their trafficking methods at sea, the Coast Guard is recapitalizing the fleet with modern assets equipped to detect, interdict and disrupt the growing flow of illegal drugs, weapons and people in the eastern Pacific.

Alert's crew offloaded more than \$92 million worth of cocaine Oct. 16 in San Diego before returning home. The cocaine offloaded represents a total of four suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions by the crews of the Alert and the Coast Guard Cutters Robert Ward and Seneca, who patrolled the same international waters between late July and early October.

Alert's crew also patrolled off the coast of California, providing an increased off-shore deterrence to illicit narcotics trafficking and human smuggling. The amount of recreational and commercial fishing traffic provided Alert's law enforcement teams with opportunities to board vessels not normally inspected at sea.

Alert's engineers also provided mechanical assistance to a disabled vessel, helping the distressed crew return to port prior to the arrival of gale force weather conditions.

Alert's embarked helicopter and aircrew from Air Station Humboldt Bay also assisted two U.S. Navy ships by flying their severely injured crew members ashore to receive advanced medical treatment.

Alert began its patrol by participating in the 2019 Los Angeles Fleet Week celebration, a public event that celebrated the U.S. armed forces and the Port of Los Angeles. During that week, Alert's crew provided shipboard tours to 880 people and worked jointly with the Coast Guard Cutter Forrest

Rednour to increase the public's awareness to the Coast Guard and its missions. The crew also volunteered in a Habitat for Humanity community service event where they aided a local food bank with boxing meals for families in need.

BAE to Develop Advanced Decoy Countermeasures to Protect Aircraft



An artist's rendering of the dual band fiber-optic towed decoy. BAE Systems

NASHUA, New Hampshire – BAE Systems has been awarded a \$36.7 million contract from the U.S. Navy to develop and demonstrate a next-generation, dual band fiber-optic towed decoy (FOTD) to protect aircraft and pilots from advanced threats, the company said in a release.

BAE Systems' FOTDs are radio-frequency countermeasure systems that provide robust self-protection capabilities for any aircraft, including fighters, bombers and transports. The company's dual band decoy development work is intended to expand the capabilities of its combat-proven AN/ALE-55 FOTD.

"Our towed decoys enable pilots to execute missions in highly contested airspace," said Tom McCarthy, dual band decoy program director at BAE Systems. "ALE-55 FOTD is a reliable, high-powered jamming system with years of mission success on the F/A-18E/F [Super Hornet] and extensive flight-testing on a variety of aircraft. Under this new Dual Band Decoy contract, our focus will be building upon the ALE-55's proven performance in order to defeat the threats

of tomorrow.”

The primary role of the decoy is to protect the warfighter by luring threat missiles away from the aircraft. The decoy also combines techniques that disrupt adversaries’ radar, preventing missile launch from occurring. Much like the ALE-55 FOTD, the dual band decoy will interface with onboard electronic warfare equipment, but it can also operate independently, enhancing its effectiveness against current and future threats.

Fincantieri Awarded \$9.6 Million Contract to Support Coast Guard

WASHINGTON – Fincantieri Marine Systems North America has been awarded a \$9.6 million contract to perform maintenance and repairs to the U.S. Coast Guard’s fleet of inland buoy tenders, the company announced Oct. 24 in a release.

The multiyear contract was awarded by the Coast Guard’s Surface Force Logistics Center in Virginia. The focus of the contract is the maintenance, repair and overhaul of the Isotta Fraschini Motori (IFM) V1312 main diesel engines onboard the 75-foot WLIC and 65-foot WLR-class cutters.

“This award with the U.S. Coast Guard builds on our proven expertise in the modification, repair and overhaul of the main diesel engines for the inland buoy tender fleet,” said Rick Dinsmore, FMSNA’s general manager and vice president.

“Since our original contract to repower the buoy tenders, FMSNA has provided continuous mission critical support to the U.S. government by assuring the highest levels of fleet readiness.”

USS Gerald R. Ford Returns to Sea



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford departs Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding on Oct. 25 to conduct sea trials. U.S. Navy

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford got underway Oct. 25 for sea trials from Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding division following a 15-month pierside maintenance period.

“I am proud of the crew's efforts to get USS Gerald R. Ford back out to sea,” Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said. “The Navy has diligently tackled issues associated with this first-in-class ship and will continue to do so. All are eager to demonstrate Ford's capacity to deliver combat power. There is more work to do, but this is a great milestone.”

Prior to getting underway, the Ford conducted a multiday, pierside “fast cruise,” where the crew worked through simulated at-sea operating scenarios. Gerald R. Ford then departed NNS and headed into the Atlantic Ocean for sea trials, putting into practice lessons learned from the fast cruise and starting a critical phase of underway testing.

While at sea off the Virginia coast, the crew, in cooperation

with NNS engineers and shipyard employees, will run through a comprehensive sequence of evolutions to test and validate systems maintained or modified during the extended maintenance period, known as a post-shakedown availability (PSA).

The PSA included combat systems installations, throttle control system improvements, propulsion train component repairs and corrections to discrepancies identified during prior testing and completion of 304 berthing spaces. The Huntington Ingalls NNS team also completed construction of four advanced weapon elevators (AWE), upgraded advanced arresting gear (AAG) water twisters and fully outfitted all galley spaces.

“After a challenging post-shakedown availability at Newport News Shipbuilding, the crew is excited to turn their hardhats in and get Warship 78 back out to sea,” said Capt. J.J. Cummings, Ford’s commanding officer.

“I am extremely proud of our Sailors and the remarkable work ethic they have demonstrated over the last 15 months. It is their energy, enthusiasm and grit that has gotten our ship to this point, and it will be their motivation and resiliency that will fuel our success during post-delivery test and trial.”

Sea trials are the culminating event prior the Ford returning to Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. The carrier will then enter a post-delivery test and trials period to certify fuel systems, conduct aircraft compatibility testing, certify the flight deck and test the combat systems installed aboard the ship.

As a first-in-class ship, the Navy is actively incorporating lessons learned from the Ford to improve the design and construction processes of future ships in the class.

Coast Guard Cutter Conducts DPRK Sanctions Patrol



Two small boat crews deployed aboard Coast Guard Cutter Stratton get underway for a training exercise in the Yellow Sea on Sept. 24. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 1st Class Nate Littlejohn

PUERTO PRINCESA, Philippines – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton pulled into Puerto Princesa on Oct. 14 for Maritime Training Activity (MTA) Sama Sama following operations in the Yellow Sea where the crew supported United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) enforcement against illicit ship-to-ship transfers that violate sanctions against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

The operations are a part of the United States’ ongoing contribution to international efforts in combatting DPRK’s maritime sanctions evasion activity. Ship-to-ship transfers of fuel and goods, like coal, going to and from DPRK are prohibited under the UNSCR.

Stratton personnel captured imagery of suspected illicit ship-to-ship transfers and conducted routine activities to detect, deter and disrupt activities in violation of UNSCR.

MTA Sama Sama is a maritime exercise designed to promote regional security cooperation, maintain and strengthen maritime partnerships and enhance maritime interoperability. This is the first year the Japanese Maritime Defense Force will participate alongside U.S. and Philippine navy counterparts.

The exercise will consist of both shore-based and at-sea activities designed to allow participating navies to advance the complex maritime training utilizing diverse naval platforms and operating areas.

The Coast Guard has an enduring role in the Indo-Pacific, going back over 150 years. The service's ongoing deployment of resources to the region directly supports U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives in the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the National Security Strategy.

"All of Stratton's operations are designed in accordance with international law and demonstrate that the United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," said Capt. Bob Little, Stratton's commanding officer. "That is as true in the South and East China Seas, as in other places around the globe. Our efforts in support of enforcing U.N. Security Council Resolutions in the Yellow Sea demonstrate that commitment."

Navy to Commission Littoral Combat Ship Indianapolis



The future USS Indianapolis sails Lake Michigan toward Naval Station Great Lakes for a sail-by and salute. The Navy will commission the littoral combat ship on Oct. 26 in Burns Harbor, Indiana. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Camilo Fernan

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy will commission its newest Freedom-variant littoral combat ship, USS Indianapolis, during a 10 a.m. CDT ceremony on Oct. 26 in Burns Harbor, Indiana, the Defense Department said in a release.

The future USS Indianapolis, designated LCS 17, honors Indiana's state capital and largest city. It will be the fourth ship to bear the name.

Lisa W. Hershman will deliver the commissioning ceremony's principal address. Jill Donnelly, wife of former U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly of Indiana, is the ship's sponsor. She will continue the time-honored Navy tradition of giving the first order to "man our ship and bring her to life!"

"This Freedom-variant littoral combat ship will continue the proud legacy created by ships previously bearing the name Indianapolis," Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said. "The crew will carry on the tradition of service to confront the many challenges of today's complex world. To the men and women who will ring in the first watch, you carry with you the fighting spirit of incredible bravery and sense of duty that is inherently recognized with the name Indianapolis."

The most recent Indianapolis was a Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine, which was commissioned in 1980 and served through the end of the Cold War before being decommissioned in 1998. The first Indianapolis was a steamer built for the U.S. Shipping Board (USSB) and commissioned directly into the Navy in 1918. After two runs to Europe, the ship was returned to the USSB following World War I.

It is the second Indianapolis, a Portland-class heavy cruiser, that is perhaps the best known of the three. Commissioned in 1931, its service ended when the ship was sunk by a Japanese torpedo minutes after midnight on July 30, 1945. Only 317 of the ship's 1,196 Sailors survived after five days afloat in the Pacific.

But it was the ship's impressive war record that first brought it to the attention of Navy leaders and Americans. The ship saw action in the Aleutians, the Gilbert Islands, Saipan, the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In

addition to frequently serving as the flagship of the U.S. 5th Fleet, the ship earned 10 battle stars for World War II service. Before it was sunk, Indianapolis successfully completed the top-secret mission to deliver components of the nuclear bomb "Little Boy" to Tinian that ushered in the end of WWII with the use of the bomb at Hiroshima.

The future USS Indianapolis, a Freedom-variant LCS, is a fast, agile, focused-mission platform designed for operation in near-shore environments as well as open-ocean operation. It is designed to defeat asymmetric "anti-access" threats such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft.

LCS is a modular, reconfigurable ship designed to meet validated fleet requirements for surface warfare (SUW), anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and mine countermeasures (MCM) missions in the littoral region.

The LCS class consists of two variants, the Freedom variant and the Independence variant, designed and built by two industry teams. The Freedom variant team is led by Lockheed Martin (for the odd-numbered hulls). The Independence variant team is led by Austal USA (for LCS 6 and the subsequent even-numbered hulls).

Navy C-40 Fleet Deliveries Complete



A U.S. Navy C-40 prepares to land at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay at Marine Corps Base Hawaii on July 26. U.S. Marine Corps/Sgt. Jesus Sepulveda Torres
PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy's C-40 fleet has undergone some

major changes in the last few months – adding two airplanes, one squadron and completing its current planned aircraft procurements, according to a Naval Air Systems Command release.

The Tactical Airlift Program Office (PMA-207) took delivery of the Navy's 16th aircraft in June and 17th aircraft on Sept. 26. The Navy's latest C-40A will be assigned to U.S. Naval Reserve Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 57.

These last two deliveries have allowed the C-40 fleet to realign and expand its horizons.

"The C-40 plays an important role in the Navy Unique Fleet Essential Airlift (NUFEA) fleet," said Capt. Steve Nassau, PMA-207's program manager. "These extremely flexible logistics support aircraft are an integral part of every type of maritime mission, from humanitarian assistance to long-range, high priority deliveries."

The sixth Navy C-40 squadron was established in September. VR-51, nicknamed the Windjammers and deploying from Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, received two C-40 aircraft from the fleet. The squadron will be fully operational in October, following receipt of its "safe for flight" certification.

"The ... certification is an entire program overview in which the government ensures that all contractor, aircrew and government operating procedures are in place and functioning correctly," said Darwin Lazo, PMA-207's medium-lift deputy assistant program manager for logistics. "It is the final certification for a new squadron."

VR-51 will soon begin entering the VR deployment rotation.

"There is always a C-40 deployed to U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command and U.S. Pacific Command to meet mission requirements," said Donna Elliott, PMA-207's medium-lift IPTL.

Over the past year, the C-40 fleet logged 24,374 hours of flight time, completed 1,555 missions, transported 95,746 passengers and 20 million tons of cargo. In doing so, the aircraft has maintained a 90% readiness rate and has played a vital role in providing military transport not available with contract or commercial carriers. The C-40, a commercial derivative of the Boeing 737-700C, is the mainstay of the Navy's medium-lift capability.

Coast Guard Cutter Dependable Returns Home After Patrol in Caribbean Sea

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dependable returned home Oct. 23 after a 49-day patrol conducting counter-drug and migrant interdiction missions in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

The crew of the Dependable conducted two separate counter-narcotics boardings while tasked as a surface asset to Joint Interagency Task Force South. In total, the ship's crew spent a combined 91 hours on counter-narcotics boardings, completed more than 40 small boat sorties and spent more than 647 hours ensuring that suspect vessels were in compliance with international laws.

The Dependable's crew sailed more than 7,500 nautical miles in the Caribbean Sea and traveled as far south as Curacao and as far east as the Greater Antilles. During the voyage, the crew conducted more than 100 drills in transit to maintain optimal readiness.

The Dependable is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Virginia Beach. The crew conducts homeland security missions in the offshore waters of the Western Hemisphere, from New England to the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific.

Cutter Alex Haley Returns Home After 40-Day, 5,000-Mile Patrol



A crew member aboard a 26-foot over-the-horizon boat prepares to come alongside Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley while underway in the Bering Sea. Alex Haley's crew returned to their homeport in Kodiak on Oct. 20. U.S. Coast Guard/Ensign Richard Zogby

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley returned to their homeport in Kodiak on Oct. 20 following a 40-day deployment throughout the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a release.

Since departing Kodiak in September, the crew patrolled 5,000 miles and conducted 13 at-sea boardings.

The crew also conducted law-enforcement operations during the opening of the red king crab season and participated in several search-and-rescue cases. Most notably, Alex Haley's onboard helicopter crew medically evacuated a crew member from fishing vessel Alaska Victory after he was exposed to a release of toxic ammonia refrigerant on Sept. 28.



A small boat from Alex Haley underway following a fisheries law enforcement and safety boarding in the Bering Sea. U.S. Coast Guard/Ensign Richard Zogby

Midway through the patrol, Alex Haley visited the remote community of St. Paul, Alaska, where crew members conducted a clean-up of a local lakefront and met with community elders. These events helped strengthen one of the many partnerships between the Coast Guard and local Alaskan communities.

“This patrol is my first aboard Alex Haley and my first in the Bering Sea,” said Cmdr. Benjamin Golightly, the cutter’s commanding officer. “After a long period in homeport, which included major dockside repairs, the crew did an outstanding job transitioning back into the demanding routine of operations at sea.”

“The opportunity to patrol the Bering Sea during the highly visible red king crab season was tremendously rewarding and uniquely challenging,” Golightly added. “Between the rapid operational pace of fisheries boardings, the notorious unpredictability of the weather, and the fact that search-and-rescue cases can occur at any time, there was no shortage of challenges to be met by the crew.”

Alex Haley is a 282-foot medium-endurance cutter that has been homeported in Kodiak since 1999, routinely operating throughout the Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska and Pacific Ocean. The cutter’s ability to operate in extreme weather provides the mission flexibility necessary to perform search and rescue, fisheries law enforcement and vessel safety inspections across Alaska.

These operations occur under the tactical control of the 17th Coast Guard District in Juneau, which encompasses the entire state of Alaska, as well as the coastal and offshore waters seaward over several thousands of miles.

Coast Guard Repatriates 76 Dominicans Following Three Interdictions at Sea



A white yola vessel with 20 people aboard 15 miles southwest of Mona Island, Puerto Rico, on Oct. 17. The boat was one of three interdicted, leading to the repatriation of 76 Dominican migrants by the Coast Guard Cutter Diligence crew. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Diligence repatriated 76 of 80 Dominican migrants to a Dominican Republic navy vessel on Oct. 18 following the interdiction of three separate illegal migrant voyages near Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard’s 7th District said in a release.

Four other migrants will remain in Puerto Rico to face possible federal prosecution on charges of violating U.S. code for trying to illegally re-enter the United States.

The interdictions were a result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“Medium endurance Coast Guard cutters like Dependable and Diligence provide persistent and robust search-and-rescue and law-enforcement presence along the United States’ vast maritime borders and ocean areas promoting safety of life at sea by helping prevent loss of life from perilous migrant voyages in overloaded and unsafe vessels, as well as enforcing compliance with federal laws and regulations,” said Cmdr. Luke Slivinski, commanding officer of the cutter Diligence.

“Our recent interdictions were expertly supported by CPB Air and Marine Operations patrol aircraft that located the migrant vessels and adeptly directed our small boats over dozens of miles of open ocean at night to safely intercept them. The success of these recent joint operations highlights the excellent cooperation, coordination and interoperability between marine law enforcement agencies in and around Puerto Rico.”

The first interdiction took place Oct. 14 after a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations DHC-8 marine patrol aircraft crew sighted a migrant boat near Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Dependable interdicted the illegal voyage and embarked all 29 migrants, 22 men and seven women.

The second interdiction took place Oct. 15 evening after a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations marine patrol aircraft crew sighted a migrant boat, approximately 18 nautical miles west of Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Diligence interdicted the illegal voyage and embarked all 31 migrants, 28 men and three women.

The third interdiction took place Oct. 17 after the crew of a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations DHC-8 marine patrol aircraft crew sighted a migrant boat in the Mona Passage, about 13 nautical miles southwest of Mona Island. The Coast Guard Cutter Diligence interdicted the illegal voyage and embarked all 20 migrant men.