Coast Guard Offloads More than 7.1 Tons of Cocaine in San Diego

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Waesche offloaded in San Diego on April 5 more than 14,300 pounds of cocaine seized in international waters of the eastern Pacific Ocean from February to late March, the Coast Guard 11th District said in a release.

“The offload that you see behind me, the bales of cocaine, represents a successful example of the cycle of justice,” said Rear Adm. Nathan Moore, deputy commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area. “This cycle of justice disrupts a cycle of crime which, left unchecked, fuels violence and instability that erodes our hemisphere’s social and economic fabric and directly contributes to historically high numbers of drug-related deaths in North America.”

The drugs were seized during six separate interdictions off the coasts of Mexico and Central and South America by the Coast Guard Cutters Active (WMEC-618), Steadfast (WMEC-623) and Waesche (WMSL-751):

• Active was responsible for two cases, seizing about 1,297 kilograms of cocaine.

• Steadfast was responsible for two cases, seizing an estimated 2,350 kilograms.

• Waesche was responsible for two cases, seizing about 2,874 kilograms.

“The national security cutter is the Coast Guard’s most sophisticated and technologically advanced asset,” said Capt.

Patrick Dougan, Waesche's commanding officer. "However, it would be ineffective without the men and women who serve aboard. Everyone on board plays an important role and manning these ships requires everyone to contribute. This crew and those of our other assets are relentless in their pursuit of professional excellence. This offload is just a small sample of our success."

Numerous U.S. agencies from the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement along with allied and international partner agencies play a role in counter-drug operations.

The Coast Guard increased U.S. and allied presence in the eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Basin, which are known drug transit zones off Central and South America, as part of its Western Hemisphere Strategy. During at-sea interdictions in international waters, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida. The law-enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boarding, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Waesche is a 418-foot national security cutter homeported in Alameda, California. The Active is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter and is homeported in Port Angeles, Washington. The Steadfast is also a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter and is homeported in Astoria, Oregon.

Coast Guard Interdicts 10 Cuban Migrants 20 Miles South of Matecumbe Key

MATECUMBE KEY, Florida – The Coast Guard interdicted 10 migrants Monday 20 miles south of Matecumbe Key attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an April 5 release.

Coast Guard Sector Key West watch-standers received a notification from a good Samaritan boat reporting a suspicious vessel with 10 passengers aboard.

A Coast Guard Station Islamorada 45-foot response boat-medium crew arrived on scene after a Coast Guard Air Station Miami MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew sighted the vessel with 10 adult Cuban males aboard and embarked them with no medical concerns.

The 10 Cuban nationals were transferred to Cuban authorities by the Coast Guard Cutter Isaac Mayo (WPC-1112) crew and will be transferred back to their home of origin.

“Illegal maritime migration voyages are extremely dangerous, often on homemade, unseaworthy vessels, and put the safety of those aboard in great jeopardy,” said Lt. j.g. Karrie Jeffries, command duty officer of Sector Key West. “The Coast Guard remains poised to protect the safety of life at sea and interdict these vessels in an effort to prevent the loss of life while also enforcing the law.”

Isaac Mayo is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in Key West, Florida.

NAVSEA SIOP Office Leading $21 billion Naval Shipyard Modernization

WASHINGTON – A new Navy program office will centrally coordinate a plan to recapitalize its four public shipyards, the Naval Sea Systems Command Office of Corporate Communication said in an April 3 release.

The Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan (SIOP) Program Office, PMS-555, established in June 2018, is working in concert with Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), and Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) to recapitalize and modernize the infrastructure at the four public nuclear shipyards to include critical dry dock repairs, restoring needed shipyard facilities and optimizing their placement, and replacing aging and deteriorating capital equipment.

Executing this plan will improve the naval shipyards' productivity and increase their maintenance throughput to support the combat readiness of the Navy.

Without major upgrades and reconfigurations, the shipyards would not be able to meet the fleet's future aircraft carrier and submarine depot maintenance and inactivation requirements looking out through 2040.

"The Navy relies on NAVSEA to deliver combat-ready ships and submarines out of planned maintenance availabilities on time," said NAVSEA Cmdr. Vice Adm. Tom Moore. "Modernizing our four naval shipyards – a massive task under any circumstance – is critical because it's the only way we will be able to meet our

future mission requirements."

"This is a comprehensive plan, developed in partnership with NAVFAC and CNIC, that will allow the Navy to bring its organic shipyards into the 21st century to fully support the Navy the nation needs," Moore added.

The Navy's four public shipyards – Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia; Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine; Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Bremerton, Washington; and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii – were originally designed and built in the 19th and 20th centuries to support construction of sail- and conventionally-powered ships using industrial models of the time. As a result, they are not configured to maintain and modernize nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines.

Developing, programming and executing the plan falls to the PMS-555 program office, which is staffed by industrial engineers, process improvement specialists, facilities engineers, regulatory compliance specialists, strategic and financial analysts, Civil Engineer Corps officers, construction managers and construction schedulers from NAVSEA, CNIC and NAVFAC.

"The Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan articulated a vision that shipyard infrastructure has three interdependent components: the dry docks, the facilities and the capital equipment; and that these configurations are fundamentally linked to the shipyards' ability to execute the mission they are tasked to do," said Steven Lagana, PMS-555 program manager.

"We are utilizing modeling and simulation as a tool to integrate these components to better inform the desired infrastructure layout. Through this, the Navy will be in a better position to make meaningful, long-lasting investments

that not only address the condition of the facilities and equipment but also change the way the work is conducted. Once we're finished, the Navy will recover more than 300,000 work days per year, every year."

The first milestone PMS-555 is scheduled to achieve is the development of a "digital twin" of the naval shipyards. This will be a virtual representation of the shipyards that will be used to conduct modeling and simulations of the shipyard environment to aid in evaluations and decisions for the future shipyard infrastructure. The program office is also developing comprehensive strategies to address historic preservation and environmental compliance during this recapitalization effort.

The program office is hosting its first industry day April 8 at the Washington Navy Yard.

"We're sold out," Lagana said. "We have more than 100 companies from 19 states and the District of Columbia who are coming to hear about the program and see how they can be part of this once-in-a-century team that will deliver the shipyards the Navy needs."

HII Completes Acceptance Trials for National Security Cutter Midgett

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – National Security Cutter (NSC) Midgett (WMSL-757) has finished its acceptance trials, Huntington Ingalls Industries' (HII) shipbuilding division announced. Midgett, the eighth NSC Ingalls has built for the U.S. Coast

Guard, spent two days in the Gulf of Mexico proving the ship's systems.

"The success of these trials is a direct result of the hard work and expertise of our shipbuilders, the INSURV team and our U.S. Coast Guard customer," said George S. Jones, Ingalls' vice president of operations.

The U.S. Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) were on board, as Ingalls' test and trials team led the sea trials and conducted extensive testing of the propulsion, electrical, damage control, anchor-handling, small boat operations and combat systems. The team finished the trials with a completed full-power propulsion run on Midgett.

"With the success of these trials, NSC 8 is one step closer to becoming another highly capable, vital asset to the men and women of our Coast Guard," said Derek Murphy, Ingalls' Coast Guard program manager. "Our dedicated NSC team has proven themselves once again, and we could not be more proud of what they have accomplished."

Ingalls has delivered seven Legend-class NSCs and has two more under construction, including Midgett, set to be delivered before the end of 2019. Stone (WMSL-758) is scheduled for delivery in 2020. In December of 2018, Ingalls received two fixed-price incentive contracts with a combined value of $931 million to build NSCs 10 and 11.

NSC 8 is named to honor the hundreds of members of the Midgett family who have served in the U.S. Coast Guard and its predecessor services. At least 10 members of the Midgett family earned high honors from the Coast Guard for their heroic lifesaving deeds. Seven Midgett family members were awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal, the Coast Guard's highest award for saving a life, and three were awarded the Silver Lifesaving Medal.

State Department OKs Possible Sale of MH-60R Helicopters to India

WASHINGTON – The State Department has approved a possible sale to India of 24 MH-60R Seahawk helicopters for an estimated cost of $2.6 billion, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said in an April 2 release, the day the DSCA delivered the required certification notifying Congress.

India requested the MH-60R helicopters along with mission equipment, crew-served weapons and spare systems. The request includes 1,000 sonobuoys, 10 Hellfire missiles, four Hellfire training missiles, 30 Mk54 torpedoes and four Naval Strike Missile inert training missiles.

Support also would include spare engine containers; facilities study, design and construction; spare and repair parts; support and test equipment; communication equipment; ferry support; publications and technical documentation; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistical and program support. The total estimated cost is $2.6 billion.

The proposed sale will provide India the capability to perform anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare missions along with the ability to perform secondary missions including vertical replenishment, search and rescue, and communications relay. India will use the enhanced capability as a deterrent to regional threats and to strengthen its homeland defense. India

will have no difficulty absorbing these helicopters into its armed forces.

The principal contractor will be Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems of Owego, New York.

Leonardo Submits TH-119 for Navy Training Helicopter Competition

PHILADELPHIA – Leonardo submitted to the U.S. Navy its proposal to manufacture and support up to 130 training helicopters, the company said in an April 2 release.

Manufactured in Philadelphia and featuring a Pratt & Whitney PT-6 engine, the TH-119 boasts the highest power margins in its class. Its Genesys Aerosystems' avionics equip pilots to fly safely during low visibility and challenging weather while providing a foundation for transitioning to combat helicopters.

The "hot" pressure refueling in the TH-119 allows fuel tanks to be filled without shutting the engine down, leading to quicker turnaround and more time spent flying. A durable metal box-beam airframe stands up to the daily grind of training and enables repairs to be conducted on-site, unlike the repairs on most composite aircraft, which require lengthier off-site attention.

The TH-119 has completed its flight tests and meets all FAA requirements and safety standards for IFR certification. Based

on the successful AW119 helicopter – in service in 40 countries and selected by military and government customers such as the Portuguese Air Force and New York City Department of Environmental Protection Police – the TH-119 is manufactured on an FAA-certified Part 21 production line within the United States. Leonardo's Philadelphia plant also is building the U.S. Air Force MH-139 for Boeing.

Coast Guard Cutter Seneca Returns Home After 86-Day Atlantic Patrol

BOSTON – Coast Guard Cutter Seneca returned to its homeport in Boston on March 30 after an 86-day patrol in the northern Atlantic Ocean, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

During the patrol, Seneca's crew responded to four search-and-rescue cases. One notable case involved a disabled fishing boat taking on water 100 miles offshore during blizzard conditions. The crew rescued four fishermen and put the fishing boat in tow. The tow was later transferred to a 47-foot motor lifeboat crew from Station Rockland, Maine, for escort to shore.

Seneca boarding teams completed 31 living marine resource boardings to ensure safety and environmental regulations are being followed. The Coast Guard is the primary agency for at-sea enforcement of federal laws concerning U.S. aquatic food resources.

“I am incredibly proud of this crew’s accomplishments during this patrol,” said Cmdr. John J. Christensen, Seneca’s commanding officer. “Their efforts ensured the continued preservation of our national fisheries, the safety of our offshore fishermen and the security of sea lanes to some of our largest marine transportation hubs. They did this all while keeping our 34-year-old cutter fully operational, enabling us to meet every mission, every time.”

Seneca is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter with a crew of 14 officers and 86 enlisted personnel.

Navy Secretary Names Destroyer in Honor of Korean War Helicopter Crewman

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer named a future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer (DDG-131) in honor of a Korean War veteran and Navy Cross recipient, Aviation Machinist’s Mate 3rd Class George M. Neal, the secretary’s public affairs officer said in a March 26 release.

Neal, a Springfield, Ohio, native, served with Helicopter Utility Squadron One (HU-1), a Navy helicopter rescue unit embarked from Australian light cruiser HMAS Sydney during the Korean War.

“At significant risk to his personal safety, Petty Officer Neal distinguished himself by volunteering to go into harm’s way into North Korea to rescue a fellow service member,” Spencer said. “He was a hero, and I am proud his legacy will

live on in the future USS George M. Neal.”

Neal was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on July 3, 1951, when while serving with HU-1, he and pilot Lt. j.g. John Koelsch attempted to rescue Marine Corps Capt. James Wilkins. Wilkins crashed near Yondong in North Korea after his Corsair took antiaircraft fire.

Koelsch and Neal located Wilkins and, under increased enemy fire, lowered the rescue sling. However, the helicopter was disabled and crashed. For nine days, Neal assisted Koelsch and Wilkins in evading enemy forces before being captured and held as a prisoner of war. Koelsch died during captivity but Wilkins and Neal were released and returned to the United States in 1952 with more than 320 fellow POWs. Koelsch was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers conduct a variety of operations from peacetime presence and crisis response to sea control and power projection. The future USS George M. Neal will be a Flight III destroyer capable of fighting air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously and will contain a combination of offensive and defensive weapons systems designed to support maritime warfare, including integrated air and missile defense and vertical launch capabilities.

The ship will be built at Huntington Ingalls in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The ship will be 509 feet long, have a beam length of 59 feet and be capable of operating at speeds in excess of 30 knots.

Marines Perform ‘Arduous’ Evaluation of New Grenade Launcher

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Virginia –The Marine Corps plans to introduce a new weapon intended to enhance the lethality of infantry Marines on the battlefield, the Marine corps Systems Command said in a March 26 release.

The M320A1 is a grenade launcher that can be employed as a stand-alone weapon or mounted onto another, such as the M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle. Scheduled to be fielded in fiscal year 2020, the system will give fleet Marines the ability to engage with enemies near and far, day or night.

“The M320A1 will provide good range and accuracy, making the infantry squad more lethal,” said Lt. Col. Tim Hough, program manager for infantry weapons in Marine Corps Systems Command’s Ground Combat Element Systems.

The functionality of the M320A1 makes it unique, Hough said. Its ability to be used as a stand-alone or in conjunction with a firearm should help warfighters combat enemy forces. The weapon will replace the M203 grenade launcher that is currently employed by Marines.

“The mounted version of the M320A1 is a capability we’re currently working on so that Marines have that option should they want it,” Hough added.

Before the Marine Air-Ground Task Force receives the M320A1, the Corps must draft technical documents for the weapon. These publications provide Marines with further information about the system.

In early March, Ground Combat Elements Systems collaborated with fleet maintenance Marines and logisticians from Albany, Georgia, to conduct various analyses to determine provisioning, sustainment and new equipment training requirements for the system.

The first evaluation was a Level of Repair Analysis, or LORA. A LORA determines when a system component will be replaced, repaired or discarded. This process provides information that helps operational forces fix the weapon should it break.

The LORA establishes the tools required to perform a task, test equipment needed to fix the product and the facilities to house the operation.

“It’s important to do the LORA now in a deliberate fashion so that we don’t do our work in front of the customer,” Hough said. “And it ensures the system they get is ready to go, helping them understand the maintenance that must be done.”

The second evaluation was a Job Training Analysis, which provides the operational forces with a training package that instructs them on proper use of the system to efficiently engage adversaries on the battlefield.

“This process helps us ensure this weapon is both sustainable and maintainable at the operator and Marine Corps-wide level,” said Capt. Nick Berger, project officer in infantry weapons at MCSC. “It sets conditions for us to field the weapon.”

Sustainability is key in any systems-acquisition process. The goal of the LORA and Job Training Analysis is to ensure the operator and maintenance technical publications of a system are accurate, which reduces operational ambivalence and improves the grenade launcher’s sustainability.

The LORA is an ongoing process that continues throughout the lifecycle of the M320A1 to establish sustainability, Hough said. After fielding the M320A1, the Corps will monitor the

system to ensure it is functioning properly.

During this time, the program office will make any adjustments and updates necessary.

“We’re looking to have the new equipment training and fielding complete prior to fourth quarter of [fiscal 2019] to ensure they can be used and maintained properly once they hit the fleet,” said Berger.

The analyses, which occurred over the course of a week, were no easy task.

“This was an extensive and arduous process,” Hough said. “We scheduled three days for the LORA – all day – so you’re looking at about 24 hours of work for the LORA. And that doesn’t include reviews, briefs and refinements to the package.”

However, at the end of the week, Hough expressed gratitude for all parties involved in the M320A1 analyses, which he called a success. He said the tasks could not have been completed without the help of several key individuals.

“I will tell you what’s noteworthy is working with our contract support, the outside agencies and the deliberate efforts by our team – specifically Capt. Nick Berger and Steve Fetherolf, who is a logistician,” Hough said. “Those two have made a significant effort to get this together and move forward.”

Berger also expressed pride about the accomplishments of the analyses.

“This week has been a success,” he said. “We got the system in Marines’ hands, worked out the kinks and began to understand how we’re going to use this moving forward.”

Coast Guard Demobilizes Two Alaska Forward Operating Locations

KODIAK, Alaska – Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak aircrews demobilized forward operating locations (FOLs) in St. Paul and Cold Bay on March 15, concluding the supplemental coverage of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Chain, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a March 25 release.

The aircrews deployed on two-week rotations to increase readiness and decrease response times to the Bering Sea fishing fleet during periods of increased maritime activity.

Air Station Kodiak MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrews deployed to Cold Bay from Oct. 20 to Nov. 20, 2018, and then again from Jan. 15 to Feb. 19, 2019. Aircrews later deployed to St. Paul from Feb. 17 to March 15 in support of Coast Guard operations in the Bering Sea to provide search-and-rescue and maritime law-enforcement coverage.

In addition to the deployed Jayhawk aircrew, the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley, the Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Munro and the Coast Guard Cutter John Midgett, with an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew embarked, provided supplemental SAR support and maritime law-enforcement coverage in the Bering Sea.

Throughout the three-month season, Coast Guard assets and crews conducted 24 SAR cases and provided more than 114 SAR hours, resulting in 19 lives saved and 29 assisted.

Due to the fishing fleet moving further north in the Bering

Sea and to augment the cutter presence, Air Station Kodiak increased its readiness by deploying crews to St. Paul. Before re-opening the St. Paul FOL, it had been without a deployed crew since 2014.

To meet mission requirements, aircrews performed 15 HC-130 Hercules airplane logistics flights, totaling more than 90 flight hours from Kodiak to St. Paul. While forward-deployed, St. Paul MH-60 aircrews responded to two cases, resulting in one life saved and five assisted.

“This has been a great Bering Sea deployment season, and as the fleet shifted further north, it was an all-hands-on-deck evolution to mobilize our crews and reopen our facility in St. Paul mid-season,” said Lt. Cmdr. Tom Huntley, Air Station Kodiak Jayhawk assistant operations officer. “This shift allowed us to maintain our search-and-rescue posture and protect our critical fishing industry, and it allowed us to be ready and responsive when called upon.”

Both FOLs are part of the Coast Guard’s mobile presence and as such are focused on performing the services’ statutory missions to ensure maritime safety, security and stewardship throughout Alaska.

To follow the fishing fleet and to prepare for the projected increased summer maritime activity, Jayhawk aircrews are scheduled to deploy to FOLs in both Cordova and Kotzebue.