

Coast Guard Interdicts 26 Cuban Migrants 48 Miles Southeast of Long Key



LONG KEY, Fla. – The U.S. Coast Guard interdicted 26 migrants 48 miles southeast of Long Key attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a March 12 release.

Coast Guard Sector Key West watch-standers received a notification from a good Samaritan boat reporting a 30-foot disabled wooden sail vessel with 26 passengers aboard waving their arms.

A U.S. Navy ship that was conducting maritime operations in the area assisted the vessel in distress. The crew of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS James E. Williams (DDG 95) arrived on scene and safely transferred the 26 Cuban migrants to the Coast Guard Cutter Charles Sexton crew (WPC-1108).

“Illegal migrant ventures on unsafe and ill-equipped vessels are not only against the law but incredibly dangerous,” said Capt. Jason Ryan, chief of enforcement for the Coast Guard’s 7th District in Miami. “It is fortunate that the vessel did not capsize or end in tragedy, as we have seen all too recently in the Florida straits, and we are grateful for the assistance by the good Samaritan and the U.S. Navy in this case.”

One of the migrants was transferred to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol for further investigation and possible prosecution. The remaining 25 migrants were repatriated to Cuba on March 12 by the Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore (WPC-1109).

The Charles Sexton and Kathleen Moore are 154-foot fast

response cutters homeported in Key West, Fla.

Coast Guard Icebreaker Returns Home Following 105-Day Antarctic Trip



SEATTLE – The 150-member crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star returned March 11 to their homeport of Seattle following a 105-day deployment to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Deep Freeze is an annual joint military service mission in support of the National Science Foundation, the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program. Since 1955, the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Coast Guard have assisted in providing air and maritime support throughout the Antarctic continent.

This year marks the 63rd iteration of the annual operation. The Polar Star crew left Seattle on Nov. 27 for their sixth deployment in as many years and traveled 11,200 nautical miles to Antarctica.

Upon arrival in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, the Polar Star broke through 16.5 nautical miles of ice, 6 to 10 feet thick, to open a channel to the pier at McMurdo Station. Once the channel was open, the crew refueled Polar Star at McMurdo Station, the United States' main logistics hub in Antarctica. After a three-day port visit to McMurdo, the ship provided a six-hour familiarization cruise to 156 McMurdo station

personnel.

On Jan. 30, Polar Star escorted the containership Ocean Giant through the channel, enabling a 10-day offload of 499 containers with 10 million pounds of goods that will resupply McMurdo Station, Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station and other U.S. field camps for the coming year. The Ocean Giant is an ice strengthened vessel contracted by the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command for Operation Deep Freeze.

As in years past, getting the 43-year-old Polar Star to Antarctica was accomplished despite a series of engineering casualties aboard the ship. Commissioned in 1976, the cutter is operating beyond its expected 30-year service life. It is scheduled for a service life extension project starting in 2021.

During the transit to Antarctica, one of the ship's electrical systems began to smoke, causing damage to wiring in an electrical switchboard, and one of the ship's two evaporators used to make drinkable water failed. The electrical switchboard was repaired by the crew, and the ship's evaporator was repaired after parts were received during a port call in Wellington, New Zealand.

The impact from ice operations ruptured the cutter's centerline shaft seal, allowing water to flood into the ship. Icebreaking operations ceased so embarked Coast Guard and Navy divers could enter the water to apply a patch outside the hull so Polar Star's engineers could repair the seal from inside the ship. The engineers donned dry suits and diver's gloves to enter the 30-degree water of the still slowly flooding bilge to make the vital repairs. They used special tools fabricated onboard to fix the leaking shaft seal and resume icebreaking operations.

The Polar Star also experienced shipwide power outages while breaking ice in McMurdo Sound. Crew members spent nine hours

shutting down the ship's power plant and rebooting the electrical system to recover from the outages.

On Feb. 10, the crew spent nearly two hours extinguishing a fire in the ship's incinerator room while the ship was about 650 nautical miles north of McMurdo Sound. The fire damaged the incinerator and some electrical wiring in the room was damaged by firefighting water. There were no injuries or damage to equipment outside the space. Repairs to the incinerator are already scheduled for Polar Star's upcoming in-port maintenance period.

Presently, the U.S. Coast Guard maintains two icebreakers – the Coast Guard Cutter Healy, which is a medium icebreaker, and the Polar Star, the United States' only heavy icebreaker. If a catastrophic event, such as getting stuck in the ice, were to happen to the Healy in the Arctic or to the Polar Star near Antarctica, the U.S. Coast Guard is left without a self-rescue capability.

By contrast, Russia operates more than 50 icebreakers – several of which are nuclear powered.

Reserved for Operation Deep Freeze each year, the Polar Star spends the Southern Hemisphere summer breaking ice near Antarctica, and when the mission is complete, the ship returns annually to dry dock to complete critical maintenance and repairs in preparation for the next Operation Deep Freeze mission. Once out of dry dock, the ship returns to Antarctica, and the cycle repeats.

The Coast Guard has been the sole provider of the nation's polar icebreaking capability since 1965 and is seeking to increase its icebreaking fleet with six new polar icebreakers to ensure continued national presence and access to the Polar Regions.

In the fiscal year 2019 budget, Congress appropriated \$655 million to begin construction of a new polar security cutter

this year, with another \$20 million appropriated for long-lead-time materials to build a second cutter.

In response to the demands of the region, the service is set to release an updated version of its Arctic Strategy, which Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz is scheduled to discuss March 21 during his annual State of the Coast Guard address.

Coast Guard, Local Agencies Rescue 46 from Ice Floe in Western Lake Erie



CLEVELAND, Ohio – The U.S. Coast Guard and local agencies rescued 46 ice fishermen from an ice floe that broke free near Catawaba Island in Lake Erie on March 9, the Coast Guard 9th District said in a release of the same date.

An additional estimated 100 people were able to self-rescue from the ice floe either by swimming or walking on ice bridges that were still connected to the floe.

At 8:13 a.m., Coast Guard Station Marblehead received notification from an Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) representative that there were approximately 100 people stranded on an ice floe and that there were an additional 30 to 40 people in the water. Coast Guard District 9 Command Center launched two 20-foot Special Purpose Craft–airboats from Station Marblehead, two MH-65 Dolphin helicopters from Air Station Detroit, and two MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters from Air Station Traverse City to respond for a mass rescue.

Catawaba Island Fire, Put-in-Bay Fire and Southshore Towing also responded with airboats, while ODNR, North Central Emergency Medical Services and Danbury EMS assisted in the search-and-rescue efforts.

Coast Guard Station Marblehead arrived on scene at approximately 8:50 a.m. and there were no persons in the water. Those who had fallen in or intentionally entered the water to try to swim to land were all back on the ice or land.

Approximately 100 people were able to walk to shore via portions of ice that were still unbroken; however, as the temperature continued to rise, the ice broke into multiple separate ice floes. The remaining fishermen were rescued by the airboat crews and helicopter crews.

By approximately 11:15 a.m., all persons who had been stranded on the ice were rescued.

As temperatures begin to rise, the Coast Guard strongly urges people not to go out onto ice. Ice may look safe, but it is difficult to determine the thickness visually and the increase in warm weather will continue to melt and weaken the ice.

Mercury Systems Receives \$2.8M Order for Modular Rackmount Servers for Naval Weapon System Application

ANDOVER, Mass. – Mercury Systems Inc. has received a \$2.8 million order from a leading defense prime contractor for

modular rackmount servers to be used in a naval weapon system, the company said in a March 7 release. The order was booked in the company's fiscal 2019 third quarter and is expected to be shipped over the next several quarters.

Currently deployed on over 40 naval programs, Mercury's EnterpriseSeries rackmount servers are designed for mission-critical applications.

"Performance, availability and versatility are extremely important to our customer," said Scott Orton, vice president and general manager of Mercury's Trusted Mission Solutions group. "Designed to meet both current and future deployment needs, our composable servers not only minimize cost but also offer long-term sustainability."

General Atomics Successfully Demonstrates Aluminum Power system to Power Remotely Operated Underwater Vehicle

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced today that it has successfully completed the first end-to-end demonstration of its Aluminum Power System (ALPS), powering an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) at a GA-EMS test tank facility in San Diego. During the demonstration, a submerged ALPS provided hydrogen and oxygen to a Teledyne Energy Systems fuel cell, which provided electrical power to propel an ROV.

"This demonstration marks a major milestone for us,

illustrating for the first time that ALPS can be successfully integrated to supply hydrogen and oxygen to fuel cells to generate electrical power and drive an underwater vehicle,” stated Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS. “ALPS is a unique, high energy density system intended to provide up to 10 times the energy output of similar battery volume. With its unlimited shelf life, safe handling and high energy density, ALPS can truly enable underwater ‘refueling stations’ to support long-term underwater vehicle operations.”

“We view fuel cells as an important component in supporting challenging mission requirements for large UUVs [unmanned underwater vehicles] and other undersea platforms,” said Rolf Ziesing, vice president of Programs at GA-EMS. “Prior to this demonstration, we had successfully tested ALPS using only load banks. Working in cooperation with Teledyne, we were able to integrate an end-to-end system and test under real-world conditions. The results and data gathered during the demonstration will allow us to continue testing and advance ALPS to meet future undersea platform energy requirements.”

ALPS provides an energy-dense, cost-efficient power source for manned and unmanned undersea vehicles. The system significantly reduces safety concerns while providing a clean, reliable power source for long-endurance missions and underwater operations.

Coast Guard Interdicts 23 Illegal Migrants



POMPANO BEACH, Fla. –The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter

Bernard C. Webber (WPC-1101) on March 2 interdicted 23 illegal migrants with multiple nationalities 11 miles east of Pompano Beach attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a March 6 release.

The Bernard C. Webber crew sighted a 25-foot cabin cruiser with six adult Chinese females –three of whom were interdicted by the Coast Guard less than year ago for illegal entry into the United States –one adult Guyanese female, one adult Colombian female, five adult Haitian females, six adult Haitian males, three accompanied Haitian male minors and one unaccompanied Haitian male onboard.

“These illegal maritime migration voyages are extremely dangerous and put the safety of those aboard in great jeopardy. The Coast Guard remains poised to intercept these smuggling events in an effort to prevent the unnecessary loss of life,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Etelmaki, boarding officer for the Bernard C. Webber.

Six of the migrants interdicted –four Chinese nationals, one Guyanese national and one Haitian national –were handed over to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol for processing and Homeland Security Investigations is looking into the case. The remaining 17 migrants were transferred to the Royal Bahamian Defense Force and appropriate child services in Freeport, Bahamas, on March 3.

Navy Establishes New Program Executive Office for Columbia

Submarine



WASHINGTON (March 6, 2019) An artist rendering of the future Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines.

WASHINGTON – The Navy has established Program Executive Office Columbia (PEO CLB) to focus entirely on its No. 1 acquisition priority, Research, Development and Acquisition Public Affairs said in a March 6 release.

PEO CLB will provide oversight of the construction of 12 Columbia-class submarines (SSBN) that will help the Navy maintain a credible, survivable and modern sea-based strategic deterrent into the 2080s.

“This is the Navy’s most important program and establishing a new PEO today will meet tomorrow’s challenges head on,” said James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for acquisition, research and development.

“The evolution from initial funding to construction, development and testing to serial production of 12 SSBNs will be crucial to meeting the National Defense Strategy and building the Navy the nation needs. PEO Columbia will work directly with resource sponsors, stakeholders, foreign partners, shipbuilders and suppliers to meet national priorities and deliver and sustain lethal capacity our warfighters need.”

Geurts announced that Rear Adm. Scott Pappano will assume the first office of PEO Columbia.

PEO Columbia will be part of Team Subs and will work closely with PEO Submarines and the Naval Sea Systems Command’s In-Service Submarine Directorate (SEA 07) on all submarine and affiliated programs, including life-cycle support. PEO CLB will focus on the design, construction and sustainment of the Columbia program and associated efforts that include interface

with Strategic Systems Program and the United Kingdom for the Dreadnought Program.

The Columbia-class is a critical shipbuilding program and must deliver on time to meet U.S. Strategic Command nuclear deterrence requirements due to the Ohio-class submarines reaching maximum extended service life. The first Columbia-class ship is on track to begin construction of USS Columbia (SSBN 826) in fiscal year 2021, deliver in fiscal year 2028, and on patrol in 2031.

Marine Corps Seeks Ideas, Information for Optical Communication Transmission System



A U.S. Marine with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa performs a radio check during a training event with German soldiers in Seedorf, Germany, Dec. 6, 2018. This event, which focused on infantry tactics and maneuvers, marked the first time U.S. Marines have trained with German Fallschirmjäger Regiment-31. SPMAGTF-CR-AF is a rotational force deployed to conduct crisis-response and theater-security operations in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Katelyn Hunter)

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. –Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) has released a Request for Information (RFI) to identify a nondevelopmental solution to provide a complete Line of Sight (LOS) Optical Communication Transmission System (OTCS), the command said in a March 5 release

.According to the RFI, released on the Federal Business Opportunities website, the OCTS system must be capable of providing a high-bandwidth transmission path used for voice, video and data communications

.For program officials, this capability will consolidate capabilities into a complete LOS transmission capability

."The adage, 'Move, shoot, communicate' hasn't changed, but how we communicate is rapidly changing," said Maj. Eric Holmes, MCSC project officer. "Given the rapid pace of innovation in technology, the Marine Corps is currently evaluating maturing capabilities.

"Optical communications support greater bandwidth and provide additional relief for frequency allocations in an already constrained spectrum

."The Marine Corps is turning to industry to help rapidly develop and field this technology to protect vital command and control emissions from advanced adversaries," Holmes said. Responses to the RFI must be received by 1 p.m. on March 19.

Special Missions Training Center graduates first class from new N.C. location



CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – The Coast Guard celebrated the graduation of the first pre-deployment training class at Special Missions Training Center here on March 1.

Class 19-01's 104 students mark the first group to graduate from the Camp Lejeune location since the course was relocated from Portsmouth, Va., last May.

The SMTC crew made preparations for the inaugural Camp Lejeune-based course, which convened Sept 10, to be the first to graduate from the new location. But Hurricane Florence forced the staff and 90 students to evacuate to Charlotte.

The SMTC staff utilized makeshift classrooms at a hotel for classroom training and capitalized on relationships with Naval Operations Support Center, also in Charlotte, for medical screening and initial weapons classroom training. The students received weapons qualifications, water survival training master and responder qualifications, tactical combat casualty care instructor training, maritime tactical-egress and firearms instructor school qualifications.



After moving several times, the hurricane passed, but no one could return home or to SMTC due to the devastation at the Marine Corps base.

"SMTC trains over 300 members deploying to Patrol Forces Southwest Asia each year," said Capt. Adrian West, commander of the Special Missions Training Center. "Our highly trained and competent instructor staff does a great job each course preparing our Coast Guard men and women for deployment to the U.S. Central Command area."

Vice Adm. Scott A. Buschman, Coast Guard Atlantic Area commander, was the keynote speaker at the March 1 graduation while Capt. J. Paul Gregg, PATFORSWA commodore, watched as his first class of students graduated.

Coast Guard Interdicts Lancha Crews Illegally Fishing U.S. Waters

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – Coast Guard law enforcement crews detected and interdicted three Mexican lancha boat crews illegally fishing in federal waters off southern Texas on Feb. 27, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release.

Coast Guard crews stopped three lanchas with a combined 13 Mexican fishermen engaged in illegal fishing. A total of 3,533 pounds of red snapper and 1,122 pounds of shark was onboard the lanchas. The lancha boats, with fishing gear onboard, were seized. The Mexican fishermen were detained and transferred to border enforcement agents for processing.

A lancha is a slender fishing boat that is 20 to 30 feet long, typically has one outboard motor and is capable of traveling at speeds exceeding 30 mph. Lanchas are frequently used to transport illegal narcotics to the U.S. and fish illegally in the United States' Exclusive Economic Zone near the U.S.-Mexico border in the Gulf of Mexico.

Coast Guard Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi has interdicted 16 lanchas north of the U.S.-Mexico Maritime Border in the month of February and 43 lanchas since Oct. 1, 2018.