

# Coast Guard Offloads \$12 million in Seized Cocaine



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier offloads 430 kilograms of cocaine at Sector San Juan on Aug. 5. U.S. COAST GUARD DISTRICT 7 / Ricardo Castrodad

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The U.S. Coast Guard transferred custody of two suspected smugglers and 430 kilograms of seized cocaine to federal law enforcement at Sector San Juan on Aug. 5 following the interdiction of a go-fast boat in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard's 7th District said in a release.

The interdiction was the result of multiagency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force program and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case.

The estimated wholesale value of the seized drug shipment is more than \$12 million.

"The positive outcome in this case is a reflection of the professionalism and unwavering resolve of the Richard Dixon crew and of our fellow Coast Guardsmen and federal law enforcement partners involved in this case," said Lt. Matthew Monahan, cutter Richard Dixon's commanding officer. "Our collective efforts resulted in preventing 430 kilograms of cocaine from reaching the streets and the apprehension of two smugglers who will now have their day in court."

The interdiction occurred on Aug. 2 afternoon following the detection of a suspicious 30-foot go-fast vessel, with two people aboard, by the crew of a patrolling U.S. maritime patrol aircraft.

The Richard Dixon responded to the sighting and interdicted the go-fast with the assistance of the cutter's small boat. The cutter's boarding team located 21 bales of suspected contraband aboard the go-fast that the smugglers attempted to conceal with a blue tarp. The boarding team placed the two men in custody and embarked them aboard the cutter along with the seized contraband.

The seized cocaine, destined for the United States, and two detainees were later transferred to the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier and transported to San Juan, where CCSF federal law enforcement agents received custody.

The Richard Dixon and Joseph Napier are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in San Juan.

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## **Cutter Legare Offloads Nearly 5,000 Pounds of Interdicted Drugs**



Coast Guard Cutter Legare crew members offload about 3,900 pounds of marijuana in the rain on Aug. 5 in Port Everglades, Florida. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicole J. Groll

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Legare's crew offloaded nearly 5,000 pounds of interdicted contraband, worth an estimated \$25.7 million, on Aug. 5 at Port Everglades, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser crew also interdicted nearly 1,100 pounds of cocaine, and the Cyclone-class patrol

ship USS Shamal crew with an embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment interdicted about 3,900 pounds of marijuana while on patrol in the Caribbean Sea from suspected drug smuggling vessels.

The Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Legare is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The USS Shamal is a 179-foot Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship homeported in Mayport, Florida.

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## **Coast Guard Seizes 1,395 Pounds of Cocaine From Smuggling Vessel**



The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) and a go-fast vessel interdicted in the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the Coast of Central America in late-July 2020. The Bertholf's crew boarded the boat and interdicted approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine and three suspected smugglers. This photo has been edited for law enforcement purposes. U.S. COAST GUARD

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard seized approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine in late-July with an estimated value of \$24 million from a go-fast vessel in international waters of the Pacific Ocean off Central America, the Coast Guard 11th District said in an Aug. 5 release.

A maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected smuggling vessel and diverted the crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) to the go-fast vessel's position.

Once on scene, Bertholf's crew launched a small unmanned

aerial system to locate the suspected smugglers. After the suspected smugglers complied with orders to stop their boat, the Coast Guard crew boarded the vessel and discovered approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine. Three suspected smugglers aboard the vessel were detained.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives. 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 fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, homeported in Alameda, was commissioned in 2008.

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# Bollinger Delivers 40th FRC to Coast Guard



The 40th fast-response cutter, the Coast Guard's Oliver Henry. BOLLINGER SHIPYARDS

LOCKPORT, La. – Bollinger Shipyards has delivered the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Henry in Key West, Florida, the company said in a July 30 release.

This is the 163rd vessel Bollinger has delivered to the Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 40th fast-response cutter (FRC) under the current program.

The Oliver Henry is the second of three FRCs to be homeported in Apra Harbor, Guam, increasing the presence for the Coast Guard in the Indo-Pacific theater. Additionally, later in 2020, Bollinger deliver the first of six FRCs that will be based in Manama, Bahrain, which will replace the Island-class patrol boats supporting the Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, the Coast Guard's largest unit outside of the U.S.

“Bollinger is proud to continue enhancing and supporting the Coast Guard's operational presence and mission in the Indo-Pacific region with the delivery of the USCGC Oliver Henry,” said Ben Bordelon, Bollinger's president and CEO.

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished himself or herself in the line of duty. Oliver Henry was the first minority service member to move from the wardroom to the engine room and rose rapidly through the ranks of enlisted mechanics.

He was one of the Coast Guard's first minority warrant officers and served over 15 years of his 26-year career as a warrant. As a leader and role model, he mentored many of the next generation of service leaders, including officers

and enlisted men.

The homeporting of three FRCs in Guam is part of the Coast Guard's "doubling down on Oceania," allowing more frequent and longer patrols in an area where the Coast Guard has increased its presence over the past 18 months and is aligned with the U.S. position on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

In a speech last year, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl L. Schultz stressed the strategic importance of the service's presence in the region saying, "We're on a trajectory where the geostrategic importance of the Oceania region has not been higher here in decades, and it's a place that the Coast Guard's looking to be part of the whole-of-government solution set."

While the last 20 weeks of the Oliver Henry's build occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, Bollinger took precautions to ensure the health and safety of employees and keep its delivery schedule. In addition to enhanced sanitization practices across the shipyard, Bollinger enacted more liberal leave and remote work policies as well as altered shift schedules to promote social distancing.

Bordelon continued, "Delivering vessels on schedule and on budget to the Coast Guard in these unprecedented times given the COVID-19 challenges that we are all facing shows the resiliency and dedication of our incredibly capable workforce."

FRCs are consistently being deployed in support of the full range of missions within the Coast Guard and other branches of the U.S. armed services. FRCs have conducted operations as far as the Marshall Islands – a 4,400 nautical mile trip from their homeport. Measuring in at 154-feet, FRCs have a flank speed of 28 knots, ultramodern command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and stern

launch and recovery ramp for a 26-foot, over-the-horizon interceptor cutter boat.

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## **Diligence Arrives in New Homeport After 64-Day Patrol**



Capt. Tim Kinsella, commanding officer of Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, greets the crew of the Diligence as they arrive at their new homeport on July 27. U.S. NAVY / Petty Officer 1st Class Timothy Schumaker

NEW ORLEANS – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence arrived at the cutter's new homeport in Pensacola, Florida, at the end of a 64-day patrol in the Caribbean, July 27, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release.

The Diligence crew performed counter-drug, search and rescue, and migrant interdiction operations in support of the Coast Guard's 7th District.

This patrol began May 25 when the ship departed Wilmington, North Carolina, for the last time. The Diligence spent the prior 28 years homeported on Wilmington's historic downtown Riverwalk, along the bank of the Cape Fear River. The cutter marked the completion of its third homeport shift throughout its service history after mooring on July 27 at Naval Air Station Pensacola.



The Diligence at its new homeport at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida. U.S. NAVY / Jason Bortz

The Diligence crew patrolled the Windward Pass between Cuba, the Bahamas, and Haiti alongside interagency and international

partners to prevent and respond to dangerous illegal maritime migration and narcotics smuggling from Central and South America. The crew also completed necessary shipboard training to maintain qualifications and operational readiness during a summer period that featured an approximate one-third turnover of the ship's crew.

“Diligence’s departure from Wilmington, North Carolina, was bittersweet, and we look forward to starting the next chapter of Diligence’s long and storied history in Pensacola,” said Cmdr. Luke Slivinski, Diligence’s commanding officer. “The crew’s commendable professionalism and proficiency enabled Diligence’s successful patrol execution amidst the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Diligence is a 56-year-old, 210-foot medium-endurance cutter and has a crew of 70 personnel. The cutter’s primary missions are counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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## **USS Shamal Interdicts Drugs From Go-Fast Vessel**



The Cyclone-class patrol ship USS Shamal with embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET team conducts enhanced counter narcotics operations on July 4. U.S. COAST GUARD

CARIBBEAN SEA – The Cyclone-class patrol ship USS Shamal with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment (LEDET) recovered more than 3,900 pounds of suspected marijuana on July 4, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S.

4th Fleet public affairs said in a July 27 release.

While on routine patrol in the Caribbean Sea, Shamal spotted the go-fast vessel. Once detected, the crew observed suspected drug smugglers aboard jettisoning packages overboard.

In a coordinated effort, Shamal launched their small boat and the LEDET was deployed to the scene to further investigate.

Upon arriving on scene, the Shamal and the embarked LEDET recovered a total of 708 bales of suspected marijuana, totaling more than 3,940 pounds worth over an estimated wholesale value of \$6.9 million.

“The Shamal team performed very well during the interdiction and safely boarded the vessel,” said Shamal’s commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Daniel O’Neill. “We received outstanding training in preparation for this patrol, and it really motivates the Shamal team when we’re able to demonstrate our abilities with a successful bust.”

USS Shamal is deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations supporting U.S. Southern Command’s enhanced counter drug operations mission in the Caribbean.

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## **Coast Guard Offloads \$38.5 million in Interdicted Cocaine**



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) offloaded 55 bales of cocaine weighing 1,375 kilograms at Sector San Juan July 22, 2020. U.S. COAST GUARD /

Ricardo Castrodad

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) offloaded approximately 1,375 kilograms of cocaine at Sector San Juan on July 22, following the disruption of a drug smuggling go-fast in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The seized drug shipment is estimated to have a wholesale value of more than \$38.5 million.

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 and during Operation CASTNET II, in coordination with Joint Task Force East.

"I'm extremely proud of my crew as well as the performance and reliability of the Coast Guard fast response cutter," said Lt. Russo, cutter Heriberto Hernandez commanding officer. "The crew's proficiency in using all of the cutter's systems and capabilities throughout our patrol gave us the ability to effectively operate deep inside the Caribbean Sea, which led to this successful outcome and prevented over a ton of cocaine from ever reaching the streets."

The disruption and seizure occurred during a patrol the afternoon of July 16, 2020, when the crew of the cutter Heriberto Hernandez came upon a suspect go-fast vessel.

As the cutter Heriberto Hernandez closed in to interdict the go-fast, the smugglers detected the cutter's presence and began to jettison multiple bales of suspected contraband while fleeing the area at high speed. The crew of the Heriberto Hernandez conducted a thorough sweep of the area where the jettison occurred, and they were able to recover 55 bales of suspected contraband. The recovered bales tested positive for cocaine.

The cutter Heriberto Hernandez transported the seized contraband to Sector San Juan, where it was received by

awaiting federal law enforcement agents in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan.

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## **Coast Guard, CBP Interdict 23 Migrants Off Delray Beach**

MIAMI – Coast Guard and Customs and Border Patrol teams halted an illegal voyage, Thursday, about 8 miles east of Delray Beach, Florida, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a July 20 release.

Coast Guard Station Lake Worth Inlet, Coast Guard Cutter Ibis and CBP law enforcement teams stopped the 25-foot boat. The cutter crew safely embarked 23 Haitian migrants, two who were medically transported for symptoms of severe dehydration.

The interdicted migrants were turned over to Bahamian authorities for repatriation back to Haiti.

“These illegal ventures attempting to immigrate to the United States are extremely dangerous because weather and sea conditions can dramatically change and the vessels are not equipped with the required safety equipment for passenger operations putting lives at higher risk of being lost at sea,” said Lt. j.g. Karolina Del Hierro Vega, 7th Seventh District, Enforcement. “Migrants caught attempting to gain access into the U.S. through these illegal voyages will be repatriated to their country in accordance with existing U.S. immigration policy.”

The Coast Guard and CBP have interdicted approximately 2,500 Haitian migrants who have attempted to illegally enter the U.S via the maritime environment in fiscal year 2020, which began Oct. 1, 2019, compared to 3,499 Haitian migrants in fiscal year 2019. These numbers represent the total number of at-sea interdictions, landings and disruptions in the Florida Straits, the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.

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## **U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Mellon Completes Final Patrol**



The Seattle-based Coast Guard Cutter Mellon (WHEC 717) moors at U.S. Coast Guard Base Kodiak's fuel pier in Kodiak, Alaska, July 10, 2020. Commissioned in 1968, the Mellon stopped in Kodiak during their final patrol before the cutter's scheduled Aug. 20, 2020, decommissioning. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class John Arredondo

SEATTLE – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Mellon (WHEC 717) returned to their homeport July 7 after completing the final patrol for the 52-year-old ship, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a July 20 release.

The 150-person crew left Seattle April 17 to conduct missions throughout the Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea.

During the patrol the crew conducted 38 law

enforcement boardings, four search and rescue cases, and enforced federal regulations governing Alaska's \$13.9 billion commercial fishing industry.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mellon crew instituted protective measures to ensure crew safety and the safety of the commercial fishing fleet and Alaskan public.

The Mellon is one the last remaining 378-foot high-endurance cutters built for extended offshore patrols. Its capabilities span from helicopter operations to pursuit boat operations and served as a key asset for the Department of Homeland Security and humanitarian missions at sea.

The Mellon was the third of the 378-foot high-endurance class to be completed and the first cutter to be named after Andrew W. Mellon, the 49th secretary of the treasury, who served between 1921 and 1932. The cutter's keel was laid July 25, 1966, and the ship was launched Feb. 11, 1967. It was commissioned 11 months after its launching on Jan. 9, 1968. The construction cost for the vessel totaled approximately \$14.5 million.

Its namesake, Andrew W. Mellon, was born in 1855 in Pittsburg and was a successful businessman and banker prior to his appointment as secretary of the treasury by President Warren G. Harding in 1921. Mellon actively worked for tax reform in order to reduce public debt and tax burden. The "Mellon Plan" became law as the Revenue Act of 1924 and successfully reduced public debt and taxes until 1930 when the depression caused debt to rise again. In addition to serving in the cabinet of President Harding, Mellon was secretary of the treasury under Presidents Coolidge and Hoover and served one year as the U.S. ambassador to Great Britain.

The Mellon was originally homeported in Honolulu and spent 12 years patrolling the Pacific Ocean from Hawaii to Alaska. It was then transferred to Seattle in 1981.

The Mellon returned to Hawaii after service in Vietnam. Many rescue efforts took place during its Hawaii patrol. In 1974, crew members of the Italian supertanker Giovanna Lolli-Ghetti survived an explosion, fire and subsequent sinking of the vessel off the coast of Hawaii. The Mellon responded and played a key role in rescuing the crew members.

The rescue was successful in two ways – first, it involved close cooperation between crews and vessels from Norway, Russia and the United States, and second, the rescue was a positive event that involved cooperation between Cold War nations.

The Mellon and its crew also experienced tragedy and damage while stationed in Hawaii.

The vessel was docked in the Dillingham Shipyard for repairs and maintenance on Sept. 7, 1971, when an explosion occurred aboard, which resulted in the death of a civilian who was installing insulation. Extensive damage to the vessel included buckling of the deck, hull and frame. More damage occurred in April 1972, while unmooring in Kodiak Harbor. The vessel touched bottom and sustained damage to the sonar dome and the bow thruster unit.

Awards that the Mellon and its crew members received include the Meritorious Unit Commendation for operations conducted between June 28, 1975, and Feb. 2, 1976.

The award was given to the Mellon crew for their response to four search-and-rescue cases, investigating and disproving allegations of violations of the Unimak Island Crab Sanctuary. Crew members of the vessel also reported the illegal discharge of oil into the sea by two Russian trawlers to authorities. Gunnery operations on the Mellon earned the unit the Commandant's Gunnery Award in October 1999.

The Mellon crew spent 1980 participating with the Coast Guard Cutter Boutwell (WHEC-719) in search-and-rescue operations.

Two notable rescue efforts were accomplished in 1982. The first rescue was conducted with the Boutwell crew, other military units and a merchant ship. The Mellon rescued passengers from the burning luxury liner Prindsendam off the Alaskan coast. The combined effort rescued a total of 510 passengers and crew members from lifeboats after they abandoned ship. The second rescue effort saved four crash survivors from a Coast Guard C-130 aircraft on Attu Island.

The Mellon operated in areas 150 miles from the Soviet Union to areas off the coast of California after it was recommissioned. It patrolled areas in the North Pacific from the Gulf of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands into the Bering Sea. It spent three months of the year engaged in extensive training and exercises with the U.S. Navy off the coast of Southern California.

In January of 1990, the Mellon was the first of five Coast Guard cutters to become fitted with an anti-ship missile. The cutter also received an antisubmarine warfare suite that included the AN/SQS-38 sonar and Mark 46 torpedoes. The suite and anti-ship missile served as proof of capability for all Coast Guard cutters; however, they were later removed due to budget constraints.

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## **Coast Guard Commissions Cutter Harold Miller**



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Harold Miller stand at attention after the ship was brought to life during its commissioning ceremony at Sector Field Office Galveston, Texas, on July 15. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class

Paige Hause

HOUSTON – The U.S. Coast Guard held a commissioning ceremony for the Coast Guard Cutter Harold Miller, the service's 38th fast-response cutter, at Sector Field Office Galveston, Texas, on July 15, the Coast Guard 8th District said.

The district commander, Rear Adm. John Nadeau, presided over the ceremony, along with Lt. Michael Salerno, the Harold Miller's commanding officer.

Harold Miller, the cutter's namesake, was a Coast Guard boatswain's mate second class and a Silver Star recipient for his heroic actions that led to the victory at Tulagi Island during World War II.

On Aug. 7, 1942, while stationed aboard the USS McKean, Miller piloted the first wave of landing craft on Tulagi Island in the Pacific theater against a Japanese force on Guadalcanal Island. Miller then made repeated trips despite heavy enemy fire to affect the landing of his embarked troops, equipment ammunition and supplies.

The Harold Miller's patrol area will encompass 900 miles of coastline for the 8th District, from Carrabelle, Florida, to Brownsville, Texas. Fast-response cutters are named after Coast Guard enlisted heroes and will replace the service's 110-foot patrol boats.

These vessels feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment.