

# 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.

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# 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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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# 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.

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# Coast Guard Cutter Robert Ward Commissioned in San Francisco



SAN FRANCISCO – The Coast Guard commissioned a new, California-based 154-foot fast response cutter (FRC), named the Robert Ward, in San Francisco on March 2.

The Robert Ward is the second of four Sentinel-Class FRCs to be homeported at Coast Guard Base Los Angeles-Long Beach. While the FRCs will be based in Southern California, they will operate throughout the 11th Coast Guard District, which includes all of California and international waters off Mexico and Central America.

“This cutter is specifically designed to face today’s threats in the maritime domain,” said Rear Adm. Peter Gautier, commander of the 11th Coast Guard District. “This cutter is faster, goes further and can do more than any other Coast Guard patrol boat.”

FRCs are 154-foot multimission ships designed to conduct drug and migrant interdictions, ports, waterways and coastal security operations, fisheries and environmental protection patrols, national defense missions and search and rescue.

“The crew and I are truly honored to serve aboard such a capable platform, and we look forward to continuing the Coast Guard’s vital missions throughout California and the Pacific,” said Lt. Benjamin Davne, Robert Ward’s commanding officer.

To date, the Coast Guard has accepted delivery of 31 FRCs.

Each ship is designed for a crew of 24, has a range of 2,500 miles and is equipped for patrols up to five days. The FRCs are part of the Coast Guard's overall fleet modernization initiative.

FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment as well as over-the-horizon response boat deployment capability and improved habitability for the crew.

The ships can reach speeds of 28 knots and are equipped to coordinate operations with partner agencies and long-range Coast Guard assets such as the Coast Guard's national security cutters.

FRCs are named in honor of Coast Guard enlisted leaders, trailblazers and heroes. Robert Ward operated beach-landing boats during the Allied invasion of Normandy during World War II. He landed his craft on the Cotentin Peninsula and rescued two stranded boat crews in the face of a heavily fortified enemy assault.

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## **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.