

Coast Guard Interdicts Migrants, Suspected Smuggler off Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard interdicted 29 migrants, and one suspected smuggler Jan. 22 following two separate at-sea interdictions, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Two of the interdicted migrants are facing potential federal criminal immigration charges in Puerto Rico for attempted illegal re-entry into the United States, one will be further investigated as a possible smuggler and the other 27 migrants were repatriated to the Dominican Republic, Jan. 23.

The interdiction resulted from ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“An outstanding coordination between the Coast Guard, CBP [Customs and Border Protection], FURA [Puerto Rico Joint Forces of Rapid Reaction] and our other partner agencies was a critical component for our joint crews to safely complete both these interdictions,” said Cmdr. Luis Rodriguez, 7th District deputy chief of enforcement. “These partnerships are not only vital to our maritime border security but are instrumental in stopping these perilous voyages before they end in tragedy.”

On Jan. 22, a CBP Air and Marine Branch aircrew located a migrant vessel approximately 18 miles northeast of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos interdicted the vessel with 10 migrants.

A FURA Cobra unit interdicted 19 migrants, and one suspected smuggler Jan. 22, 4 miles west of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser embarked the 20 migrants.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

Joseph Tezanos and Winslow Griesser are 154-foot fast response cutters homeported in San Juan.

Vigor Awarded Contract for Maintenance of Coast Guard Cutter Healy

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard’s most technologically advanced polar icebreaker, Healy, arrived at Vigor’s shipyard in Seattle in early January for maintenance, the company announced in a release.

The \$7.3 million contract includes sea valve renewal and overhaul, bow thruster modifications, ballast tank and underwater hull paint preservation and various machinery overhauls.

The Seattle-based vessel will be at Vigor’s Harbor Island facility through June. Healy returned home at the end of November following a four-month deployment in the Arctic.

In addition to providing presence and access in the Arctic during the 129-day summer deployment, the Healy crew completed three research missions in partnership with the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Office of Naval Research, conducting physical and biological research in the Arctic Ocean.

Along with science operations, Healy is capable of conducting a range of Coast Guard operations such as search and rescue,

ship escorts, environmental protection and the enforcement of laws and treaties in the polar regions. Healy provides access and presence throughout the Arctic region to protect U.S. maritime borders and to safeguard the maritime economy.

Coast Guard Rescues 31 from Disabled Boat North of Bimini

MIAMI – The Coast Guard rescued 31 Haitians from the disabled pleasure craft, Summer Art, Jan. 20 approximately 9 miles north of Bimini, Bahamas, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

At approximately 5 a.m., 7th Coast Guard District watchstanders received a report of a disabled vessel with 31 people aboard approximately 9 miles north of Bimini. Watchstanders authorized the launch of a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane crew and diverted the Cutter Bernard C. Webber crew to the scene. The Bernard Webber crew safely embarked all 31 people and transferred them to Freeport, Bahamas.

“Due to an approaching cold front, high seas and wind made this rescue extremely challenging,” said Cmdr. Jason Aleksak, chief of response at Coast Guard Sector Miami. “The responsiveness and professionalism of the crew of the Bernard C. Webber was remarkable and demonstrated our Coast Guard core value of devotion to duty.”

Coast Guard Interdicts Suspected Migrant Smuggling Boat off Florida Coast

MIAMI – The Coast Guard Cutter Bernard C. Webber crew interdicted a boat with six people, including four who did not have current U.S. visas, attempting to illegally enter the United States, near Sunny Isles, Jan. 19, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

At approximately 2:40 p.m., the crew of the cutter Bernard C. Webber crew sighted the 20-foot boat heading west approximately 30 miles east of Sunny Isles. Aboard the boat were two U.S. citizens, two Jamaicans, one Dominican and one Bahamian, all adult males.

“While the Coast Guard continues to deal with the lapse in appropriations and identify methods to alleviate the impacts to our workforce, this illegal activity in the Florida straits that threatens our maritime border security, remains a top priority for our service,” said Rear Adm. Peter J. Brown, commander of the 7th Coast Guard District. “I continue to be humbled and inspired by our dedicated Coast Guard women and men who stand the watch and remain dedicated to serve the public during this time of personal financial uncertainty.”

One of the migrants had previous convictions for kidnapping, aggravated assault and narcotics trafficking. A second had previous convictions for the sale of narcotics.

In coordination with the Department of Justice’s Southern District of Florida, the crew of the Bernard C. Webber transferred all persons to Homeland Security Investigations and U.S. Customs and Border Protection for further investigation and possible prosecution.

National Security Cutter Bertholf Departs for Western Pacific Patrol

ALAMEDA, Calif. – On a gray and foggy morning, tears intermingled with rain as family members braved the elements to say goodbye to the 170 crewmembers of Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, a 418-foot national security cutter, which departed Alameda, California, Jan. 20 for a patrol in the Western Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release of the same date.

The U.S. 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.

"The United States is a Pacific nation," said Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area, who was present to see the cutter depart. "We have deep and long-standing ties with our partners in the region, and more importantly, we share a strong commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, governed by a rules-based international system that promotes peace, security, prosperity and sovereignty of all nations."

Bertholf will be operating in support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, which oversees military operations in the region. As part of its planned operations, the cutter will engage in professional exchanges and capacity building with partner nations.

"Security abroad equals security at home," said Fagan.

“Enhancing our partners’ capabilities is a force multiplier in combating transnational criminal and terrorist organizations and deterring our adversaries.”

As both a federal law enforcement agency and an armed force, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to conduct defense operations in support of Combatant Commanders on all seven continents. The service routinely provides forces in joint military operations worldwide, including the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft and deployable specialized forces.

“I’m excited to see Bertholf sail today to the Indo-Pacific region of operations,” said Fagan, who described the cutter as one of the most capable in the Coast Guard fleet.

“They will be serving alongside other DoD military forces, particularly the U.S. Navy, and I know they will contribute key capabilities to that mission set. This crew has worked incredibly hard to get ready for today’s sailing, and I can’t think of a better ship and crew to be sending to the Indo-Pacific.”

Commissioned in 2008, Bertholf is the first of the Coast Guard’s Legend-class national security cutters. These advanced ships are 418-feet long, 54-feet wide, and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, endurance of up to 90 days and can hold a crew of up to 170.

The Coast Guard is scheduled to commission its seventh national security cutter, Kimball, in 2019. Kimball, along with the Midgett, which is currently under construction, will be homeported in Honolulu and will enhance the Coast Guard’s presence throughout the Indo-Pacific.

“The U.S. Coast Guard’s unique authorities, capabilities, and missions make us the maritime safety and security partner of choice for sea-going countries around the world,” said Capt. John Driscoll, Bertholf’s commanding officer. “Our increased

presence throughout the Indo-Pacific will enhance regional stability and improve maritime governance and security.”

In an address to the families and crew before the cutter set sail, Driscoll emphasized how critical family support is to crew wellbeing and readiness.

“Support from our families, wherever they live, is vital to ensuring we are ready to sail and answer the demands of our nation,” Driscoll said. “We must ensure our families are ready to weather the storm at home. We operate in a dangerous and high-consequence environment, and your ability to focus on mission can become easily compromised if you are worried about family.”

Fagan acknowledged the current lapse in appropriations and government shutdown has added stress and feelings of uncertainty to the typical emotions that surround a cutter departure.

“I know it is hard for these crews to be leaving behind their dependents and spouses – it’s a thousand times more so when everyone is wondering when our next paycheck will be, and how they can support the family they are leaving behind,” Fagan said.

“There has been an incredible outpouring of support for the families here in the Alameda area, but the tension and the anxiety for the crew is real,” said Fagan. “We are standing by to help support those families who are left behind the same way that we are going to support the crew as they sail for the Western Pacific.”

Leonardo DRS to Provide Advanced Hybrid Electric Drive for Second Coast Guard OPC

ARLINGTON, Va. – Leonardo DRS Inc. will provide a second hybrid electric drive (HED) system for the U.S. Coast Guard's next offshore patrol cutter (OPC) under a contract from Eastern Shipbuilding, the company announced in a Jan. 15 release. Eastern Shipbuilding is the prime contractor and builder of the next-generation OPCs.

Under the contract, originally announced in 2017, Leonardo DRS would provide the HED systems for the first nine ships of the OPC program with a contract value totaling \$10.7 million. The first HED system is set to be delivered in mid-2019.

Under the contract, Leonardo DRS will provide its high-performance, permanent magnet motor-based Auxiliary Propulsion System. This integrated hybrid electric drive system provides capability for the ship to operate much more efficiently at slower speeds, increases mission duration capability, reduces emissions and provides emergency take-home capability in the event of a failure of the main propulsion diesel engines. When coupled to the main propulsion gearbox, the system allows the ship to operate quietly and efficiently during loitering operations while providing superior fuel economy for increased on-station operations and capability.

"Our hybrid electric drive will offer crews of these new ships operational flexibility when they need it, while significantly increasing cost savings in yearly maintenance and fuel," said Christine Borglin, senior program manager for DRS Naval Power Systems. "As we move from design and development onto

production of the first HED system, and now to this second drive, we are proud to continue to be a part of the Eastern Shipbuilding team for this vital program.”

The Auxiliary Propulsion System includes two of the most power-dense permanent magnet motors on the market today. They have significant advantages in size, weight, efficiency and performance over conventional electric induction motors and produce more torque from the same amount of supplied current. Their smaller footprint allows greater flexibility in engine room design and increased cargo space, while the simpler more rugged construction results in proven reliability and durability.

Using propulsion diesel engines at slow speeds adds significant wear and tear on the engines and increases the potential for coking/wet stacking. By adding this electric Auxiliary Propulsion System, the Coast Guard will have a built-in advantage of reducing fuel, maintenance requirements and lifecycle costs, while increasing safety for the fleet.

Coast Guard's Only Heavy Icebreaker Arrives at Antarctica

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The 150 crew members of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star arrived Jan. 17 in Antarctica along with a resupply vessel during Operation Deep Freeze – a joint military service mission to resupply U.S. interests in Antarctica, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Homeported in Seattle, the 42-year-old cutter is the United

States' only operational heavy icebreaker, and the crew is making their sixth deployment in as many years to directly support the resupply of McMurdo Station – the United States' main logistics hub in Antarctica.

Operation Deep Freeze is a joint military service mission in support of the National Science Foundation – the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program. Since 1955, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has assisted in providing air and maritime support throughout the Antarctic continent. This year marks the 63rd iteration of the annual operation.

Each year, the Polar Star crew creates a navigable path through seasonal and multiyear ice, sometimes as much as 21-feet thick, to allow a resupply vessel to reach McMurdo Station. The supply delivery allows Antarctic stations to stay operational year-round, including during the dark and tumultuous winter.

The 399-foot, 13,000-ton Polar Star arrived after completing an 18-mile trip through the ice to McMurdo Sound, where 400 containers will be offloaded from the supply ship Ocean Giant.

Presently, the U.S. Coast Guard maintains two icebreakers –Healy, which is a medium icebreaker, and Polar Star. Protecting national interests in the polar regions is essential to ensure the Coast Guard's national defense strategy and search-and-rescue capabilities are ready for action, but in order to do so, the icebreaker fleet requires modernization.

Commissioned in 1976, the Polar Star is showing its age. Reserved for Operation Deep Freeze each year, Polar Star spends the winter breaking ice near Antarctica, and when the mission is complete, it returns to dry dock in order 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 itself.

During this year's deployment, 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 ship also experienced a leak from the shaft that drives the ship's propeller, which halted icebreaking operations in order to send scuba divers in the water to repair the seal around the shaft. A hyperbaric chamber on loan from the U.S. Navy aboard the ship allows Coast Guard divers to make external emergency repairs and inspections of the ship's hull.

Coast Guard, Partners Recover Section of Downed Jet off Oahu

HONOLULU – Personnel from the Coast Guard and the State of Hawaii oversaw local salvor's recovery of a section of the fuselage from a Hawker Hunter aircraft, downed initially in December, off Honolulu, Jan. 8.

“Using a blend of local salvage assets, remote engineering guidance, and advanced sensing technology sourced from the mainland, the locally based salvage company Parker Marine Corp. has completed the next stage of the aircraft salvage,” said Chief Warrant Officer Russ Strathern, a marine safety specialist, and response officer at Sector Honolulu. “The main section of the fuselage containing residual oil and potentially hazardous substances has been salvaged and transported to a staging location for the ongoing National Transportation Safety Board-led investigation.”

Strathern also noted, "Because of the incident complexity and operational environment, this evolution was technically challenging. The aircraft owners worked tirelessly with the salvor and jurisdictional authorities to safely mitigate the threat to the public and environment, all while preserving evidence critical to future root-cause analyses. I'm pleased to note that there were no reported injuries after the initial accident or impacts to wildlife, these are great measures of success, and indicative of the hard work of the involved parties."

Following exhaustive searches, the fuselage was positively identified in 260-feet of water by a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) in early January. After analyzing the data from the ROV, the salvor consulted with an engineer, formulated a plan, and received concurrence from the Coast Guard to proceed.

Using the ROV, the salvage company lassoed the tail of the aircraft wreckage with line and slowly raised it to the surface. The team towed the section to a haul-out point designated by the State's Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation Division. Following the section's removal from the water, it was transported by truck to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, where the National Transportation Safety Board will continue its investigation into the cause of the crash.

Throughout the operation, the Coast Guard worked closely with representatives from the Hawaii State Department of Health Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response and Department of Land and Natural Resources offices to monitor the salvage and recovery efforts.

"With the removal of this section, which contained the aircraft's engine, any oil or hazardous substances from the aircraft has either been removed or naturally dissipated and the remaining pieces do not pose a significant or substantial threat to the public or environment," Strathern said. "Any

future actions related to the crash site or remaining debris will be coordinated with the State's Department of Land and Natural Resources."

The privately owned aircraft crashed in December while participating in the Hawaii Air National Guard-sponsored training exercise Sentry Aloha. The pilot ejected before the crash and was rescued by the Coast Guard with the assistance of nearby good Samaritans.

Coast Guard Academy Announces Next Superintendent

NEW LONDON, Conn. – The Coast Guard Academy announced in a Jan. 10 release that Rear Adm. William G. Kelly to be its 42nd superintendent.

Kelly will relieve current Superintendent Rear Adm. James E. Rendon this summer.

Kelly currently serves as the assistant commandant for Human Resources since April 2016. He also oversees the Coast Guard's human resources field activities, from accession of new military personnel to retirees' pay and benefits. His previous flag assignment was as the commander, Personnel Service Center.

Kelly is a 1987 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy and he earned his master's degree in Instructional Systems Design from Florida State University and a Certificate in Human Resource Management. He has extensive experience in personnel development as the director of the Coast Guard's Leadership Development Center in New London, and also served as the

school chief for Officer Candidate School.

Ranked among the nation's most prestigious institutions of higher learning, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London is proud to educate future leaders of America's multimission, maritime military force. Each year, approximately 200 graduates are commissioned as Coast Guard officers to help ensure the safety, security and stewardship of our nation's waters.

Coast Guard, Partners Stop Multiple Smuggling Events off Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard interdicted a vessel Jan. 7 with 35 Dominican migrants and 4 kilograms of heroin approximately 34 miles west of Desecheo, Puerto Rico, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

The crew of a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry, deployed to Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, detected the vessel on the evening of Jan. 7. Watchstanders with Coast Guard Sector San Juan diverted the Cutter Heriberto Hernandez, which arrived on scene, embarked the 35 migrants and discovered a backpack with 4 kilograms of heroin floating near the vessel.

“While this interdiction is certainly a success of Coast Guard operational units through Operation Unified Resolve partnered with the Caribbean Border Interagency Group, it is also a symptom of a serious threat to our national security and maritime borders where narcotics smuggling is paired with

illegal migrant ventures.” said Capt. Jason Ryan, chief of enforcement for the 7th Coast Guard District.

“Together with other DHS [Department of Homeland Security] components and local law enforcement partners, we will continue to diligently patrol throughout the Caribbean Basin and Florida Straits to stem the flow of maritime smuggling and criminal organizations that bring violence to our shores and fuel the growing epidemic of drug use and overdoses throughout our country.”

On Jan. 10, 27 of the migrants were repatriated to the Dominican Republic, while the remaining eight were transferred into the custody of the Department of Justice’s District of Puerto Rico for further investigation and possible prosecution. One of the individual’s is a suspected smuggler who is being investigated for participation in prior smuggling operations in which several migrants lost their lives.

In the past month, the Coast Guard and partners have made multiple interdictions in the Caribbean. Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan.