

Polar Star Returns Home After Six Months in Dry Dock

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard cutter Polar Star arrived home Oct. 17 following a six-month maintenance period at Mare Island Dry Dock in Vallejo, California, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

The 42-year-old icebreaker received extensive repairs and upgrades to engineering and electronic systems while completing the dry dock availability at Mare Island for the second time in as many years.

“We successfully accomplished an annual dry dock availability valued at over \$7.6 million,” stated Lt. Cmdr. Chris Pelar, Polar Star’s engineering officer. “More than 50 work items were completed while in dry dock. We will complete remaining maintenance requirements in Seattle before departing for our upcoming Antarctic deployment.”

Polar Star received extensive overhauls to equipment, most notably in auxiliary systems, generator upgrades and replacing propellers in preparation of supporting Operation Deep Freeze (ODF) 2019, the U.S. military’s contribution to the National Science Foundation managed U.S. Antarctic Program.

Polar Star, the nation’s only operational heavy icebreaker, deploys annually to Antarctica in support of ODF. The 399-foot, 13,000-ton cutter and crew transit through the Ross Sea and forcibly break through ice up to 21-feet thick clearing a path through frozen waters for supply ships to reach Antarctica’s logistics hub, McMurdo Station, Scott-Amundsen South Pole Station and other international bases. The critical supply deliveries allow the stations to stay operational year-round, including during the dark and tumultuous winter.

The Coast Guard has been the sole provider of the nation’s

polar icebreaking capability since 1965 and is essential to ensuring national presence and access to the Polar regions.

Coast Guard Offloads Cocaine, Marijuana Seized in the Caribbean Basin

MIAMI – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Bernard C. Webber offloaded approximately 3,516 pounds of cocaine and 50 pounds of marijuana worth an estimated wholesale value of over \$47 million seized in international waters off the Caribbean Basin from late September to early October, Oct. 16 at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach.

The drugs were seized during the interdictions of three suspected smuggling vessels off the coasts of the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Aruba by the Coast Guard Cutters Donald Horsley, Vigilant and Charles Sexton.

■ Sexton was responsible for one case Oct. 10, seizing an estimated 2700 pounds of cocaine.

■ Donald Horsley was responsible for one case Oct. 4, seizing an estimated 816 pounds of cocaine.

■ Vigilant was responsible for one case Sept. 30, seizing an estimated 50 pounds of marijuana.

“The contraband landed by the Bernard C. Webber crew is a testament to the professional expertise and dedication of U.S. law enforcement agencies and international partners working together to combat the flow of illicit drugs through the Caribbean Region and into the United States,” said Lt. Cmdr.

Jeremy Montes, duty enforcement officer at 7th Coast Guard District. "These partnerships are imperative in the identification, intercept, and seizure vessels engaged in illicit trafficking and without the hard work from U.S. and international agencies, these illicit drugs would negatively impact the prosperity and security of the Caribbean Region."

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 counterdrug operations. The fight against transnational organized crime networks in the Caribbean Basin requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring, and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by U.S. Attorneys in districts across the nation.

The Coast Guard increased U.S. and allied presence in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Basin, which are known drug transit zones off of 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 Caribbean Basin is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 7th District, headquartered in Miami, Florida. The interdictions, including the actual boarding, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Charles Sexton is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in Key West, Florida. Bernard C. Webber is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in Miami. Donald Horsley is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Vigilant is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in

Port Canaveral, Florida.

Coast Guard, Caribbean Border Interagency Group Seize \$30 Million in Cocaine off Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – Coast Guard and Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) law enforcement authorities seized 2,324 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated \$30 million, following the interdiction of a go-fast vessel off Luquillo, Puerto Rico, Oct. 13 the 7th Coast Guard District said in an Oct. 16 release.

This interdiction is the result of ongoing multi-agency law enforcement efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group.

“This successful interdiction is a testament to the crew’s vigilance, dedication to the mission, and quick action, and I couldn’t be prouder,” said Lt. Katherine Ustler, Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley commanding officer. “Their efforts, along with support from our partner agencies, directly prevented over a ton of cocaine from reaching the streets of Puerto Rico.”

While on a routine patrol of the area, the crew of the Donald Horsley detected a suspicious go-fast vessel at 1:16 a.m. Oct. 13 transiting without navigational lights and three people onboard, approximately nine nautical miles off the coast of Luquillo.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan alerted CBIG partner agencies of the developing situation, while the Donald Horsley remained in hot pursuit of the go-fast with the assistance of unit's Over-the-Horizon IV cutter boat.

Upon detecting the Coast Guard's presence, the crew of the go-fast proceeded to attempt to flee the area at high speed with Donald Horsley's cutter boat remaining in hot pursuit. During the pursuit, the Donald Horsley crew observed the suspected smugglers jettison numerous bales of their cargo overboard. Shortly thereafter, the go-fast made landfall near La Pared Beach in Luquillo, where the smugglers fled the area and abandoned the go-fast with the remaining cargo onboard.

Following the pursuit, Donald Horsley combined efforts with responding U.S. Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch and Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine units, as well as, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) land teams, which located and recovered 47 bales from the water and the abandoned go-fast. A Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and a Coast Guard Auxiliary fixed-wing aircraft also assisted in the search for the jettisoned cargo. The recovered cargo tested positive for cocaine.

The seized contraband is in the custody of ICE-HSI, which is leading the investigation into this case.

Operation Caribbean Guard is a Department of Homeland Security multi-agency law enforcement operation to support ongoing efforts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands executed under the San Juan Regional Coordinating Mechanism/CBIG.

CBIG unifies efforts between U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico, and Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action, in their common goal of securing the borders

of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands against illegal migrant and drug smuggling.

Donald Horsley is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Legare Returns to Virginia After Rescue Missions Off the East Coast

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Legare returned home to Coast Guard Base Portsmouth Oct. 15 following a 12-week patrol in the North Atlantic, providing search-and-rescue capability and living marine resource protection, the 5th Coast Guard District said in a release.

In more than 12,000 miles of patrolling, the crew supported five search-and-rescue missions, including a disabled and adrift 438-foot liquid asphalt tanker that suffered a catastrophic engine room fire approximately 50 miles off Nantucket. The response to these missions resulted in 40 lives saved and assisted.

They also towed a disable fishing vessel through dense fog over 75 nautical miles and completed over 90 boardings, enforcing federal fishing regulations in America's exclusive economic zone.

“I could not be prouder of this crew and their incredible accomplishments during these days we've been away. I know it is not without sacrifice and certainly the families back home take on a lot of that burden, but rest assured, your sailor is

doing their duty and doing it well,” said Cmdr. Blake Stockwell, Legare’s commanding officer. “The successes from this patrol highlight and remind me why I love going to sea, the sailors that bring the ship to life and serve with devotion and honor the country we love.”

Legare is a multimission 270-foot medium-endurance cutter. Missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security, and national defense operations.

Alert Returns Home Following Counterdrug Patrol

ASTORIA, Ore. – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert returned home Oct. 13 following a 50-day counterdrug patrol to the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 15 release.

The 75-member crew aboard Alert conducted multiple law enforcement boardings in international waters off the coasts of Central and South America. The cutter interdicted a suspected smuggling vessel and seized approximately 1,300 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$17 million wholesale.

Coast Guard cutters operate under the tactical control of 11th Coast Guard District in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) while conducting counterdrug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. The U.S Coast Guard partners with other nations through bilateral agreements to conduct interdictions in foreign and international waters.

“The Coast Guard Cutter Alert crew once again exceeded all

expectations during this diverse patrol,” said Cmdr. Tobias Reid, Alert’s commanding officer. “They represented the Coast Guard in exceptional style during LA Fleet Week 2018, made great strides in preparing for our major annual training evaluation, and successfully stopped suspected drug smugglers from transporting cocaine into our country.”

Commissioned in 1969, Alert is one of 14 remaining 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutters built for the Coast Guard. Alert’s crew routinely operate from the Straits of Juan de Fuca down to the waters off South America.

Alert conducts nine of the Coast Guard’s 11 statutory missions, including search and rescue, drug interdiction, fisheries enforcement and homeland security.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez Repatriates 12 Dominican Migrants

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez repatriated 12 Dominicans and returned two Haitians to Dominican authorities Oct. 14, following the interdiction of a migrant vessel Oct. 11 in waters just off Mona Island, Puerto Rico, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

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

Two of the interdicted male migrants are Dominican nationals,

who are facing potential federal criminal immigration charges in Puerto Rico for attempted illegal re-entry into the United States.

“The outstanding work by the Coast Guard and our interagency partners focused on humanitarian efforts and preventing loss of life at sea,” said Lt. Cmdr. Rafael Battle, U.S. Coast Guard Heriberto Hernandez commanding officer. “The Mona Passage is a volatile waterway with heavy seas. Transiting on dangerously overloaded and unseaworthy vessels poses large risk to anyone making the journey from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico. Fortunately, we discovered and saved 16 people before they encountered other potential dangers.”

During a routine patrol of the Mona Passage on the night of Oct. 11, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry maritime patrol aircraft detected a grossly overloaded 25-foot migrant boat transiting without navigational lights, approximately 10 nautical miles north of Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted Heriberto Hernandez to interdict the vessel. The crew of Heriberto Hernandez arrived on scene, stopped the boat and safely embarked all 16 migrants: 14 Dominican nationals, 10 men and four women, and two Haitian men.

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

Ramey Sector Border Patrol Agents in Puerto Rico received custody of the two migrants facing prosecution, while the Heriberto Hernandez later rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic navy vessel and transferred custody of the remaining migrants to Dominican authorities.

The Coast Guard’s efforts under Operation Unified Resolve contribute to the interagency results being achieved locally under Operation Caribbean Guard, which coordinates efforts between the Coast Guard, its Department of Homeland Security,

Commonwealth and Territorial law enforcement partners, who are working diligently to deter, detect and disrupt illicit maritime trafficking to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

CBIG unifies efforts between U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico, and Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action, in their common goal of securing the borders of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands against illegal migrant and drug smuggling.

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

Coast Guard Cutter Active Returns Home After Seizing \$87 Million Worth of Cocaine

PORT ANGELES, Wash. – The Coast Guard Cutter Active returned home Oct. 12 following a 50-day counterdrug deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

The 75-member crew aboard Active conducted multiple law enforcement boardings in international waters off the coasts of Central and South America. The cutter interdicted three suspected smuggling vessels, disrupting the movement of 5,794 pounds of illicit narcotics valued at more than \$87 million.

An Air Station Port Angeles aircrew and a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter embarked aboard Active for the majority of the

patrol. The aircrew aided in the interdiction of suspected narcotics traffickers. Two members of the Chilean Navy also deployed aboard Active during the patrol.

Coast Guard cutters operate under the tactical control of 11th Coast Guard District in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South while conducting counterdrug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. The U.S Coast Guard partners with other nations through bilateral agreements to conduct interdictions in foreign and international waters.

Active is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter commissioned in 1966 and homeported in Port Angeles. Active's crew routinely operate from the Straits of Juan de Fuca down to the waters off Central America. Active conducts nine of the Coast Guard's 11 statutory missions, including search and rescue, drug interdiction, fisheries enforcement and homeland security.

Coast Guard Conducting Search and Rescue After Hurricane Michael

MOBILE, Ala. – The Coast Guard is conducting search-and-rescue operations throughout areas affected by Hurricane Michael, the U.S. Coast Guard Hurricane Michael Response Center in Mobile, Alabama, said in an Oct. 11 release.

As of 9 a.m. on Oct. 11, Coast Guard crews have rescued approximately 17 people and assisted six. Currently, the Coast Guard has nine aircraft and three shallow-water response teams conducting rescues.

Nine people were rescued by Coast Guard aircrews after they became trapped in a bathroom when a roof collapsed in Panama City, Florida, on the afternoon of Oct. 10.

“We have multiple aviation and ground assets focused on saving lives,” said Cmdr. Jason Franz, Sector Mobile incident commander for Hurricane Michael. “We’re working closely with Customs and Border Protection aircrews to help with our search and rescue operations.

“Our pollution and damage assessment teams have begun evaluating major areas of pollution and damage to our waterways, and we’ve partnered with the Army Corps of Engineers and other port partners to begin the process of re-establishing our ports to ensure we have commerce flowing as soon as possible,” he said.

Coast Guard Releases ‘Maritime Commerce Strategic Outlook’

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Coast Guard has released a 10-year vision for enabling maritime commerce, which “emphasizes the critical need for a ready, relevant, responsive Coast Guard,” the service said in an Oct. 11 message.

The Coast Guard “Maritime Commerce Strategic Outlook” will guide the service’s efforts in securing the strategically critical maritime environment while enabling its impact on the nation’s economic prosperity.

A message to the service signed by Vice Adm. Daniel B. Abel,

deputy commandant for Operations, noted that “America is a maritime nation. It is a nation shaped by seafarers who recognized the tremendous economic potential derived from unrestricted access to the oceans, internal waterways, deep-water ports, and protected straits and bays. Our American prosperity remains inextricably linked to the fate of the maritime environment.

“Our waterways, a wealth of natural resources and marine transportation networks, remain critical to our prosperity, our security and our identity as a nation. Americans have come to expect goods to be shipped safely and efficiently, and the Coast Guard has a vision for how our nation’s waterways can meet the increased demand.”

In the “Maritime Commerce Strategic Outlook”, the Coast Guard outlined three lines of effort (LOEs) that are critical to the success of the strategy.

■ LOE 1, “Facilitating Lawful Trade and Travel on Secure Waterways. The ease of moving people and cargo on America’s waterways is a competitive advantage and wellspring for economic prosperity and national security. The Coast Guard will manage risks to critical infrastructure, ensure efficient delivery of Coast Guard services, support vessel and facility standards, and promote resiliency and unity of effort among Marine Transportation System stakeholders.”

■ LOE 2, “Modernizing Aids to Navigation and Mariner Information Systems. Through technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, mobile and cloud-based computing, and data analytics, the Coast Guard will keep the service in step with emerging trends in the maritime industry. The Coast Guard must modernize information technology networks and applications that enable the Coast Guard to assess, monitor, and manage risk. The service will optimize maritime planning in order to address competing uses and growing demands for commerce, energy, food, resources, and recreation in U.S.

waters. The service must also balance traditional navigation systems while building next generation waterway management systems, modernizing inland and coastal aids-to-navigation cutters, and applying emerging technologies. Regulatory frameworks, applications, and standards will be adapted to accurately incorporate the implementation of emerging technologies that will transform maritime operations, such as autonomous systems.”

■ LOE 3, “Transforming Workforce Capacity and Partnerships. The Coast Guard needs to develop an adaptive force that is proficient operating in a highly complex environment amid rapid acceleration of technology. The service needs to strengthen the workforce with the digital competencies to respond to changes in commercial markets and the maritime industry. The Coast Guard will leverage robust auditing capabilities of third-party organizations to improve vessel plans, surveys, and certain required certificates to ensure the highest standards of compliance oversight. It is imperative to transform the workforce and roles of other enabling organizations to have the capability, experience, and expertise to address the broad spectrum of threats to our national interests.”

Coast Guard Rescues 10 from Disabled Cargo Ship

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Confidence rescued 10 crew members, who had been stranded on a disabled cargo ship for almost 20 days, Oct. 8 approximately 1,380 miles southeast of Bermuda, the 5th Coast Guard District said in an Oct. 5 release.

"We were conducting a law enforcement patrol near Puerto Rico when we were assigned to assist the crew of the motor vessel Alta," said Cmdr. Travis Emge, the commanding officer of the Confidence. "We traveled over 1,300 nautical miles to get to the disabled ship ahead of Hurricane Leslie's forecasted track and brought the 10 crew members aboard. We are all proud of our part in this coordinated Coast Guard response to rescue this crew."

The Coast Guard was notified Sept. 30 that the 250-foot Tanzanian-flagged cargo ship, Alta, became disabled Sept. 19, while transiting from Greece to Haiti, and was unable to make repairs. The crew reported that they had enough food for two days and water for 15 days, and that there were no injuries or immediate medical concerns.

An aircrew on an HC-130 Hercules airplane from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina, dropped about a week's worth of food to the crew Oct. 2, helping sustain the men until help could arrive.

The Confidence is taking the 10 men to Puerto Rico and is scheduled to arrive there Oct. 12.

The Coast Guard's Fifth District command center has been working to coordinate with the ship owner for a commercial tug to tow the vessel to shore.