

Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk Returns Home After 70-day, Counter-Drug Patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean



From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, March 24, 2025

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC 913) returned to their home port in Key West, March 16, following a 70-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Mohawk deployed in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South (JIATF-S) and Operation Martillo, where crew members conducted counter-drug missions in the Coast Guard Eleventh District’s area of responsibility. While at sea, Mohawk’s crew

successfully contributed to protecting their fellow Americans by countering transnational criminal organizations and preventing dangerous and illegal narcotics from reaching the United States. The crew worked side by side with Coast Guard units, embarked law enforcement personnel from the Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific (PACTACLET) and the Costa Rican Coast Guard.

Throughout the deployment, crew members interdicted three suspected drug smuggling vessels and apprehended six suspected drug smugglers. Crew members seized nearly 8,200 pounds of cocaine and 330 pounds of marijuana.

While on patrol, Mohawk's crew interdicted a sailing vessel suspected of illicit activity. Mohawk's boarding team embarked the vessel and subsequently located contraband, seizing 637 pounds of cocaine and detained the crew.

Additionally, the crew of Mohawk coordinated with Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL 754) and Coast Guard Cutter Stone (WMSL 758) to deter narcotics trafficking in the region. Notably, Mohawk's crew jointly interdicted a go-fast style vessel with James' crew off the coast of Colombia, seizing more than 5,900 pounds of cocaine. Coordinating with a maritime patrol aircraft, Mohawk's pursuit caused the go-fast vessel to jettison bails of cocaine overboard for later recovery. James' crew proceeded to stop the go-fast vessel and apprehend three suspected narcotics smugglers for future prosecution.

Mohawk's crew also had the opportunity to operate with the Costa Rican Coast Guard Grupo de Operaciones Policiales Especiales (GOPES), a Costa Rican special police operations unit. Mohawk identified a fishing vessel suspected of drug smuggling and proceeded to board it. The boarding team discovered 1,600 pounds of cocaine and 330 pounds of marijuana. Following the boarding, the three suspected drug smugglers, fishing vessel and contraband were transferred to GOPES for prosecution in Costa Rica. This joint operation

underscores the ongoing U.S. commitment to regional stability and support for partner nation efforts to combat the destabilizing effects caused by transnational criminal organizations.

During a visit in Golfito, Costa Rica, Mohawk's crew and embarked PACTACLET personnel exchanged best practices with GOPES and shared law enforcement techniques and other tactics for interdicting illicit drug ventures at sea. Mohawk crew members provided a tour of the cutter as well and exchanged coins and patches with their Costa Rican counterparts. In addition, Mohawk crew members volunteered their free time to clean, complete yard work and undertake preservation projects at Hogar de Ancianos de Golfito, a local retirement home.

Furthermore, the Mohawk's crew participated in training evolutions with James' embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron aviation detachment and MH-65 Dolphin helicopter. This training served to increase competency for shipboard-helicopter operations and bolstered the tactical relationship between deployed units operating together in the Eastern Pacific.

"I am extremely proud of our accomplishments during this deployment," said Cmdr. David Ratner, commanding officer of Mohawk. "The Mohawk crew, with the support of embarked law enforcement personnel from the Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team, displayed toughness and grit to effectively fight back against destabilizing transnational criminal organizations in the Eastern Pacific and kept nearly 8,200 pounds of cocaine and 330 pounds of marijuana from reaching the United States."

Based in San Diego, California, PACTACLET personnel provide counter-narcotic law enforcement capabilities and support the interdiction, apprehension and processing of suspected drug smugglers. PACTACLET members are skilled in law enforcement boarding procedures at sea and are critical for mission

execution.

Launched Jan. 15, 2012, Operation Martillo, Spanish for “Hammer,” is a counter-narcotic campaign support by U.S. Southern Command and led JIATF-S. By leveraging interoperability between numerous domestic and international partnerships, the task force strives to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations by fighting crime and defunding their illicit ventures.

Mohawk is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter and was commissioned in 1991. The cutter’s primary missions are counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws as well as search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Mohawk falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia. U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, they also allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit GoCoastGuard.com to learn about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

Coast Guard Cutter Naushon

Decommissioned After Nearly 40 Years of Service



From U.S. Coast Guard 17th District, March 21, 2025

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Coast Guard decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter Naushon (WPB 1311) during a ceremony in Homer, Friday.

Rear Adm. Megan Dean, the commander of Coast Guard District 17, presided over the ceremony honoring the nearly 40 years of service Naushon and its crews provided to the nation.

Commissioned on October 3rd, 1986, Naushon was the 11th Island-Class cutter to join the fleet.

Naushon has been stationed in Homer since 2016 and has since responded to over 50 search-and-rescue cases and completed nearly 900 law enforcement sorties.

Naushon is a 110-foot, Island-Class patrol boat, a multi-

mission platform that conducted operations to support search and rescue response, marine environmental protection, and national defense.

The Coast Guard is replacing the aging Island-Class patrol boats with Sentinel-Class Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) which feature enhanced capability to meet service needs. There are currently four FRC's homeported in Alaska, with two more scheduled for delivery in the near future.

"I'm incredibly proud of the partnerships we've built and the positive impact Naushon and its crew have had on the local community and economy," said Lt. Markham Ross, the commanding officer of Naushon. "I'm honored to have had the opportunity to write the final chapter in Naushon's storied history, and I'm blessed to have served the people of Alaska with the finest crew and cutter in the fleet."

CMF's Combined Task Force 150 and U.S. Coast Guard Integration Key in Recent Drug Seizure



ARABIAN SEA (March 23, 2025) Illegal narcotics seized from a stateless vessel are stacked on the deck of the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) in the Arabian Sea. (Photo by U.S. Coast Guard)
By Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | March 24, 2025

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Coast Guard fast-response cutter, working in direct support of New Zealand-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), seized 260 kilograms of illegal narcotics from a vessel in the Arabian Sea, March 19.

The Sentinel-class fast-response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell's (WPC-1145) boarding team discovered and seized 200kg of methamphetamine and 60kg of heroin from the vessel. After weighing and documenting the haul, the crew properly disposed of the narcotics.

Royal New Zealand Navy Capt. Dave Barr, CTF 150 deputy commander, said this drug bust is a testament to the tenacity and expert seamanship of the Coastguardsmen on the Emlen Tunnell operating so far off the coast in challenging waters, and the ability to seamlessly integrate with the multinational CTF 150 staff.

“The waters in this area are full of legitimate fishing and trading vessels so it’s important to get this part right and accurately identify those vessels that are likely to be carrying narcotics,” said Barr. “A big part of our mission is to deter smugglers, so that those legitimate operators can continue to navigate freely to carry out their business.”

This interdiction is part of ongoing efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking in international waters and demonstrates the CMF’s continued commitment to safeguarding maritime security against malign non-state actors.

Emlen Tunnell is forward deployed to Bahrain. The fast response cutter is part of a contingent of U.S. Coast Guard ships operating in the region under Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA). PATFORSWA deploys Coast Guard personnel and ships alongside U.S. and regional naval forces throughout the Middle East.

CTF 150 is one of five task forces under CMF, the world’s largest international naval partnership. CTF 150’s mission is to deter and disrupt the ability of non-state actors to move weapons, drugs and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Combined Maritime Forces is a 46-nation naval partnership upholding the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world’s most important shipping lanes.

Coast Guard offloads over \$517.5 million in illicit drugs interdicted in Eastern Pacific Ocean



Crew members from USCGC Stone (WMSL-758) stand at parade rest in front of interdicted narcotics at Port Everglades, Florida, Mar. 20, 2025. The Stone's crew secured the illegal drugs from 14 interdictions in the international waters of the Eastern Pacific. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class James Hague)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, March 20, 2025

Editor's Note: Click the desired date for b-roll showing specific cases from [Jan. 30](#), [Jan. 31](#), [Feb. 19](#) & [March 10](#).

MIAMI – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stone offloaded approximately 45,600 pounds of illicit narcotics worth more than \$517.5 million at Port Everglades, Thursday.

The seized contraband was the result of 14 interdictions in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, and 35 suspected smugglers were transferred ashore to face federal prosecution in U.S. courts.

“You heard it said before that the Coast Guard’s national security cutters are game changers in the counter-drug mission, but they still require a crew of men and women willing to serve on or over the sea, and place themselves in harm’s way,” said Capt. Jonathan Carter, commanding officer of Stone. “I’m incredibly proud of our crew’s performance and their efforts to combat narco-terrorism this deployment. In one exceptional case, the crew interdicted four go-fast vessels in 15 minutes, seizing nearly 11,000 pounds of cocaine that will never be mixed with deadly fentanyl to threaten American lives here at home.”

On Dec. 21, Stone’s embarked aircrew from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 321 miles west of Ecuador. Stone’s boarding team interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehended three suspected smugglers and seized over 1,630 pounds of cocaine.

On Dec. 22, a maritime patrol Dash-8 aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 180 miles southeast of the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. Stone’s embarked HITRON aircrew and boarding team interdicted the low-profile go-fast vessel, apprehended three suspected smugglers and seized approximately 12,220 pounds of cocaine.

On Jan. 9, a maritime patrol Dash-8 aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 148 miles west of Salinas, Ecuador. Stone’s embarked HITRON

aircrew and boarding team interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehended three suspected smugglers and seized approximately 2,370 pounds of cocaine.

On Jan. 28, Stone's embarked [unmanned aircraft system \(drone\)](#) crew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 459 miles south of Manzanillo, Mexico. Stone's boarding team interdicted the vessel, apprehended five suspected smugglers and seized approximately 3,885 pounds of cocaine.

On Jan. 30, Stone's embarked UAS crew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 715 miles off Mexico. Stone's boarding team interdicted the vessel, apprehended two suspected smugglers and seized approximately 3,800 pounds of cocaine.

On Jan. 31, Stone's embarked UAS crew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 630 miles off Mexico. Stone's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics to compel the non-compliant vessel to stop, and the boarding team apprehended three suspected smugglers and seized more than 2,565 pounds of cocaine.

On Feb. 12, Stone's embarked UAS crew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 655 miles south of Mexico. Stone's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics to compel the non-compliant vessel to stop, and the boarding team apprehended three suspected smugglers and seized more than 3,640 pounds of cocaine.

On Feb. 18, [Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk](#)'s crew detected and boarded a sailing vessel approximately 70 miles northwest of Isla Malpelo, Colombia. Mohawk's boarding team apprehended three suspected smugglers and seized approximately 635 pounds of cocaine.

On Feb. 19, Stone's embarked UAS crew detected multiple suspicious vessels approximately 110 miles south of the

Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. Stone's embarked HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics to compel the non-compliant vessels to stop, and their boarding teams interdicted four go-fast vessels, apprehending eight suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 10,885 pounds of cocaine.

On Feb. 25, Mohawk's crew detected and interdicted a suspicious vessel approximately 230 miles south of Costa Rica. Mohawk's boarding team apprehended three suspected smugglers and seized approximately 1,600 pounds of cocaine and 330 pounds of marijuana. Costa Rican authorities took custody of the fishing vessel, suspects and bulk contraband for prosecution.

On March 10, Stone's embarked HITRON aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 270 miles southeast of the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. The HITRON aircrew employed airborne use of force tactics to compel the vessel to stop, and Stone's boarding team interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehending two suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 3,980 pounds of cocaine. The transfer of custody from this case will occur at a later date.

"The fight against drug trafficking and transnational criminal organizations doesn't begin at our U.S. maritime borders," said Cmdr. David Ratner, commanding officer of Mohawk. "Our efforts to defend Americans at home begins with denying drug traffickers access to maritime routes and disrupting the flow far out at sea where we operate alongside interagency and strategic regional partners like Costa Rica."

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdiction operations:

[U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stone \(WMSL 758\)](#)

[U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk \(WMEC 913\)](#)

U.S. Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron

(HITRON) Jacksonville

U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team-Pacific (PAC-TACLET)

[Joint Interagency Task Force-South \(JIATFS\)](#)

[Eleventh Coast Guard District](#)

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard for the interdiction and apprehension phases. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

The Coast Guard continues increased operations to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs by sea. These drugs fuel and enable cartels and transnational criminal organizations to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl, threatening the United States.

Each of these interdictions initiate criminal investigations by federal law enforcement partners. Several were tied to the transnational criminal organizations responsible. Drug evidence from these cases is linked to cartels recently designated as foreign terrorist organizations by the U.S. government, including Sinaloa and Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación. These interdictions denied those criminal organizations more than half a billion dollars and provide critical evidence for their total elimination.

USCGC Stone is one of four 418-foot Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Charleston, South Carolina

under [U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command](#). The U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Law Enforcement Academy where Coast Guard boarding officers train to conduct these missions, in Charleston, celebrated its 20th anniversary on March 14.

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Coast Guard Achieves Major Milestone in Drug Interdiction, Border Control Operations



ATLANTIC OCEAN (March 22, 2024) – The Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) and Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50 work together to intercept a self-propelled semi-submersible drug smuggling vessel (SPSS), in the Atlantic Ocean, March 22, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard Courtesy Photo/Released)

From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, March 18, 2025

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard achieved a major milestone this week, interdicting over 80,000 pounds of illicit drugs since Jan. 21, being smuggled by drug cartels in an attempt to reach the U.S.

The Coast Guard's achievement comes as U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) deployed two U.S. Navy warships to the southern border to support Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Coast Guard operations.

These U.S. Navy warships will operate in direct support of the Coast Guard and carry Coast Guard law enforcement teams that will enable them to shift to Coast Guard control during interdiction operations. As the Coast Guard hardens and sustains its operational posture, including the arrival of these U.S. Navy warships, it is fully integrated with DHS and the Department of Defense (DoD) through NORTHCOM and U.S. Southern Command.

“The Coast Guard leads the U.S. government’s efforts to control, secure and defend the nation’s borders and maritime approaches, starting at the U.S. southern border where the president has declared a national emergency,” said Adm. Kevin Lunday, acting Coast Guard commandant. “We are now leveraging U.S. Navy capabilities with Coast Guard teams aboard to augment our forces off Southern California and Texas. We are grateful for this crucial support from our teammates at NORTHCOM and the U.S. Navy. These Navy ships provide unique capability to complement U.S. Coast Guard operations to achieve 100% operational control of the border.”

Since Jan. 21, the Coast Guard has tripled its forces operating on the southern border.

Later this week, the Coast Guard will further recognize its interdiction efforts with a record-setting drug offload by Coast Guard Cutter Stone (WMSL 758). Additional details will be provided via media advisory.

For more information about the Coast Guard, visit www.uscg.mil.

Crowley and Naturgy Deploy First U.S. LNG Carrier, American Energy, to Serve Puerto Rico

From Crowley, March 18, 2025

Crowley has raised the U.S. flag on American Energy, commencing operations of the first domestic liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier to transport U.S.-sourced natural gas to Puerto Rico. The milestone will provide Puerto Rico with increased access to the reliable supply of U.S.-produced LNG, helping address the island's ongoing power demands.

Crowley and Naturgy have entered into a multi-year agreement that provides for the regular delivery of the U.S. mainland-sourced LNG to Naturgy's operating facility in Penuelas, Puerto Rico.

The Crowley-owned carrier American Energy, which has capacity of 130,400 cubic meters (34.4 million gallons) per voyage, will operate in accordance with the U.S. Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1996. The vessel has a CAP 1 rating, certifying its top rating for safety and vessel condition, and its compliance with all regulatory requirements.

"The entry into service of American Energy marks a significant step for fuel supply reliability in Puerto Rico for our energy grid, which will greatly benefit our people," said Puerto Rico Gov. Jenniffer González-Colón. "This partnership is an initiative to act using existing regulations to increase access to a U.S.-based LNG source that expands our options for the stabilization of our energy grid, as we work towards providing our residents and businesses a more consistently reliable power generation source."

The 900-foot-long (274 meters) LNG carrier builds on Crowley's 70-plus years commitment to Puerto Rico. The company also operates the full-service marine Isla Grande cargo terminal in San Juan for its container and roll-on/roll-off vessels, including two LNG-fueled ships, and logistics services. Crowley annually delivers more than 94 million gallons of LNG through its LNG Loading Terminal in Penuelas as well as provides ocean delivery and land transportation using ISO tank containers.

At capacity, each delivery of LNG aboard American Energy provides enough energy to power 80,000 homes for a year. LNG is also a lower-carbon fuel emitting less greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to diesel and other traditional energy sources.

"We are proud and privileged to expand U.S. LNG availability in Puerto Rico in partnership with Naturgy," said Tom Crowley, chairman and CEO of Crowley Corporation. "LNG is an ample, reliable energy source available in the U.S. that provides a more resilient and lower-emission option as part of our nation's energy portfolio for quickly serving the growing power needs of Puerto Rico while supporting American jobs, American energy production and U.S. national security."

"This contract strengthens our presence in the global LNG market, particularly in the United States, and allows Puerto Rico to obtain a stable and competitive energy supply route," said Jon Ganuza, general manager of supply and wholesale markets, Naturgy.

"AMO is proud to be a part of this historic partnership that benefits the people of Puerto Rico," said American Maritime Officers National President Willie Barrere. "U.S. Merchant Mariners, many of whom were born in Puerto Rico, sailing on Jones Act vessels, have been reliably delivering goods to the Commonwealth for decades. Now we will deliver LNG fuel to power the residents and further strengthen the bond between

Puerto Rico and our U.S. seafarers.”

“The SIU is tremendously excited about providing crew members for the American Energy,” said David Heindel, president of the Seafarers International Union (SIU). “Our members have a long, proud history of working aboard LNG vessels, and our affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland, regularly conducts U.S. Coast Guard-approved curriculums that help prepare mariners for this kind of work. We congratulate Crowley, and we look forward to helping safely operate the newly reflagged ship.”

Coast Guard Conducts Joint Operation to Disrupt Illicit Maritime Activity in Philadelphia



Coast Guard service members from Sector Delaware Bay lead a joint operation with partner agencies to ensure compliance with federal regulations at the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal, Philadelphia, March 11, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo courtesy of Sector Delaware Bay)

From U.S. Coast Guard 5th District, March 14, 2025

PHILADELPHIA – A Coast Guard law enforcement team from Sector Delaware Bay led a joint operation with partner agencies to ensure compliance with federal regulations at the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal, Tuesday.

The joint operation included 27 officers. The goal was to ensure the facility was in compliance with the Maritime Transportation Security Act while deterring and detecting illicit activity within a key port area. The team screened 121 trucks and containers resulting in a shipping container being detained for a hazardous material violation.

“Operations like this one are an important part of the Coast Guard’s mission of detecting and disrupting potential illicit

maritime activity” said Capt. Kate Higgins-Bloom, captain of the port and commander of Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay. “We are fortunate to have a great group of federal, state, and local partners here in Philadelphia. Working as an interagency team is one of the most efficient ways for us to secure and defend the ports and waterways that fuel our national economic security.”

This operation was led by members of Sector Delaware Bay’s response and prevention departments. Participating agencies included the Philadelphia Police Department and Transportation Security Administration’s Vehicle Intermodal Prevention and Response team.

The Maritime Transportation Security Act provides a framework for ensuring the security of maritime commerce and domestic ports. The act’s main goal is to prevent a transportation security incident which is defined as any incident that results in significant loss of life, environmental damage, transportation system disruption and economic disruption to a particular area.

“When we conduct these missions, we focus our efforts towards dismantling the exploitation of the maritime transportation system from drug trafficking operations and other maritime crime,” said Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Zangle, the enforcement division chief at Sector Delaware Bay. “Our partnership with local and federal agencies to disrupt the smuggling of narcotics like fentanyl and to deter illicit activity within the port not only increases our maritime security and resilience but also ensures the safety of the general public.”

While conducting the operation, the Coast Guard’s prevention inspectors ensured compliance of federal regulations which resulted in the positive identification of improperly stowed hazardous materials inside a shipping container. The container was detained and released upon corrective action taken by the

responsible party.

“What this operation proved is we have the know-how and interagency relationships necessary to get the job done and ensure a major point of entry in our country remains safe and secure,” said Higgins-Bloom.

Coast Guard Cutter Reliance Returns Home After 60-Day Maritime Border Security Patrol

From U.S. Coast Guard 8th District, March 14, 2025

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Reliance (WMEC 615) returned to their home port in Pensacola, Monday, following a 60-day patrol in the Florida Straits, Windward Passage and Gulf of America.

Reliance deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District’s area of responsibility, where crew members contributed to safeguarding America by patrolling U.S. maritime borders.

While underway, the crew assisted in the interdiction of 12 aliens attempting to reach the United States unlawfully by sea, including several young children. Crew members provided humanitarian aid and care until the aliens were repatriated to their country of origin.

Reliance maintained presence and directed operations for

additional Coast Guard assets to deter dangerous and unlawful alien migration departures in the Windward Passage, which enabled other Coast Guard crews to assist with joint force operations for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-led mission at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

While at sea in the Eighth Coast Guard District area of responsibility, Reliance's crew patrolled the U.S.-Mexico maritime border in the Gulf of America to deter illicit activity such as illegal maritime migration, fishing and smuggling at sea.

Reliance's crew also worked with two nearby Coast Guard air stations to conduct flight operations and maintain critical ship-helicopter interoperability.

"I am enormously proud and impressed by the Reliance crew's exceptional professionalism, versatility and adaptability, which they demonstrated across multiple dynamic, high-profile and demanding missions during this patrol," said Cmdr. Aaron Kowalczyk, commanding officer of Reliance. "Their tireless commitment to the aggressive deterrence of alien maritime migration ventures and the relentless compassion displayed in their dedication to the Coast Guard's humanitarian mission was exemplary, once again saving countless lives while safeguarding our borders."

Established in 2003, HSTF-SE is the DHS-led interagency task force charged with directing operational and tactical planning, command and control, and functions as a standing organization to deter, mitigate and respond to maritime mass migration in the Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits.

OVS is the 2004 DHS plan that provides the structure for deploying joint air and surface assets and personnel to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean corridor of the United States. Its primary objectives are to prevent the unnecessary loss of life at sea while deterring

and dissuading maritime mass migration alongside our federal, state and local partners.

Reliance is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 77. The cutter's primary missions are counter-narcotics and migrant interdiction operations, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goCoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

U.S. Coast Guard cutter arrives in Papua New Guinea, embarks law enforcement officers to conduct joint maritime patrol



International partners from Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Indonesia, New Zealand, the United Nations, the European Union and the United States, stand on the flight deck of the Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea Mar. 6, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jennifer Nilson)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, March 12, 2025

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea – At the invitation of the Papua New Guinea government, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) arrived in Port Moresby, Thursday, to embark Papua New Guinean law enforcement officers. This visit directly supports Papua New Guinea’s leadership in the Pacific Islands and its commitment to maritime security, specifically in combatting illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

Midgett’s presence reinforces the U.S. Coast Guard’s commitment to deeper relations with Pacific Island nations and regional stability. This collaborative effort marks the first

time a national security cutter, the U.S. Coast Guard's most capable law enforcement cutter, will conduct bilateral maritime law enforcement operations in Papua New Guinea's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), under the existing bilateral agreement that was signed in May 2023.

This joint patrol will represent a tangible demonstration of the bilateral agreement between the United States and Papua New Guinea, strengthening maritime governance within the Pacific and deterring illegal activities within Papua New Guinea's EEZ to promote the sustainable use of marine resources.

Midgett, commissioned in 2019 and homeported in Honolulu, is the eighth Legend-class national security cutter. These 418-foot vessels are equipped with advanced technology and a range of capabilities, making them ideally suited to support a wide range of missions, including maritime security, law enforcement, and search and rescue operations. Midgett's deployment to Oceania highlights the United States' enduring commitment to promoting a peaceful, secure, prosperous, and resilient Pacific Islands region

**USCGC Polar Star Crew
Concludes Operation Deep
Freeze 2025, Departs
Antarctica**



The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) stand for a photo while the cutter is hove-to in McMurdo Sound during Operation Deep Freeze, Jan. 7, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Briana Carter)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, March 6, 2025

SOUTHERN OCEAN – Accomplishing its missions, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew departed the Antarctic region Tuesday, after 65 days south of the Antarctic Circle in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2025.

Operation Deep Freeze is an annual event, led by the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) in conjunction with the Department of Defense, to support the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). The USAP advances the nation's goals to support the Antarctic Treaty, fosters cooperative research with other nations, protects Antarctic resources, and develops measures to ensure the wise use of those resources.

Operation Deep Freeze showcases a complex symphony of strategic inter-theater airlift, tactical intra-theater

airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation support, search and rescue response, sealift, seaport access, bulk fuel supply, port cargo handling, and transportation requirements. Polar Star's crew performed icebreaking duties in McMurdo Sound, clearing routes to ensure safe passage for cargo vessels for McMurdo Station and New Zealand's Scott Base.

"The surface ice conditions in McMurdo Sound were abnormally light this year, a welcome change of pace from the extreme conditions experienced last year," said Capt Jeff Rasnake, Polar Star's commanding officer. "Operation Deep Freeze presented a number of challenges, beyond those inherent in maintaining and operating a 49-year-old ship to complete this arduous mission. We benefitted tremendously from a great deployment plan which allowed us to take advantage of favorable conditions and use the elements to stay ahead of events without pressing the cutter or crew excessively. That up-front planning made a big difference."

Polar Star also conducted a crew exchange with the New Zealand Defense Force ship Aotearoa.

"Operation Deep Freeze works closely with other Antarctic programs to include those of New Zealand and Australia, as well as their respective defense forces," said Lt. Cmdr. Rachel Rand, Polar Star's operations officer. "The ability to collaborate with others to achieve mission success and ensure the United States' vital interests in the Polar regions makes this assignment so unique."

Polar Star also worked with the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) to support a secure and sustainable Southern Ocean. Polar Star was the first United States surface asset to support CCAMLR. The crew's efforts to observe and monitor fishing and other activity on the high seas safeguarded resources and U.S. national interests in the Antarctic region.

“Each trip to Antarctica for Operation Deep Freeze requires careful planning and coordination due to the extreme weather and inhospitable environment,” said Rasnake. “The joint-agency teamwork within Joint Task Force – Support Forces Antarctica this year was outstanding and certainly lived up to the proud tradition of U.S. military support to the U.S. Antarctic Program in promoting security and stability across the region.”

The crew has transited nearly 16,000 miles since departing its Seattle homeport in November with stops in Honolulu, Sydney, and McMurdo Station. Polar Star celebrated its 49th year of Service to the Nation and visited Cape Polar Star in the northern part of the Ross Sea. Cape Polar Star was named after Polar Star for the scientific support provided by the cutter in the area during Operation Deep Freeze 86.

The Polar Star is the United States’ only asset capable of providing access to both Polar Regions. The Seattle-based cutter is a 399-foot heavy polar icebreaker commissioned in 1976, weighing 13,500 tons and is 84-feet wide with a 34-foot draft. The cutter’s six diesel and three gas turbine engines produce up to 75,000 horsepower.