

Coast Guard Offloads Over \$141M in Illicit Drugs Interdicted in Caribbean Sea



Crew members from USCGC Valiant (WMEC 621) stand at parade rest in front of interdicted narcotics at Base Miami Beach, Florida, Mar. 6, 2025. The Valiant's crew secured the illegal drugs from six interdictions in the international waters of the Caribbean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Strasburg)

From U.S. Coast Guard District 7, March 6, 2025

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant's crew offloaded approximately 12,470 pounds of cocaine, Thursday, worth an estimated \$141.4 million at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach.

The seized contraband was the result of six interdictions in the Caribbean Sea, and 17 suspected smugglers were transferred ashore to face federal prosecution in U.S. courts.

“These seizures are a testament to the Coast Guard’s continued dedication to safeguard America by securing our maritime borders,” said Lt. j.g. Jesus Martinez Borges, a Seventh Coast Guard District enforcement officer. “The Coast Guard and our partners work tirelessly to deny drug trafficking organizations access to smuggling routes bound for the United States. Our efforts contribute to federal investigations and prosecutions that further seek to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal activity abroad, which threaten Americans here at home.”

On Feb. 2, a Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 30 miles north of Venezuela. The Netherlands Royal Navy ship HNLMS Groningen crew, with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment 105 crew, interdicted a go-fast vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 6,220 pounds of cocaine.

That same day, a forward-deployed HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Miami detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 35 miles southwest of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The aircrew vectored in U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle’s crew who interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehending three suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 2,200 pounds of cocaine.

“I am proud of the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle in securing our maritime border,” said Lt. Cmdr. David Radin, commanding officer of Joseph Doyle. “It was a smooth operation working with Air Station Miami’s forward-deployed aircraft to detect these traffickers, which enabled our crew to interdict and prevent these deadly narcotics from reaching our nation’s borders.”

On Feb. 14, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew located a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 18

miles north of Venezuela. The Groningen crew deployed two small boats with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 105 crew to interdict the vessel. The go-fast vessel jettisoned bales of contraband during the pursuit and fled into Venezuelan territorial waters. The Groningen crew recovered the approximate 571 pounds of cocaine.

On Feb. 17, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 50 miles northeast of the Dominican Republic. The aircrew vectored in the Valiant crew who interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 1,280 pounds of cocaine.

“The Valiant crew’s interdiction is one of many law enforcement actions highlighting the time-tested partnership and outstanding coordination of the Seventh Coast Guard District, Coast Guard Sector San Juan, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch,” said Cmdr. Matthew Press, commanding officer of Valiant.

“AMO continues to predict, detect, identify, classify, track, deter and interdict threats through the coordinated application of aviation and maritime law enforcement resources within the air and sea,” said Christopher Hunter, director of CBP Air and Marine Operations in the Caribbean.

Tuesday, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew notified the HNLMS Groningen crew of a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 120 miles northwest of Aruba. The Groningen crew launched a helicopter aircrew who signaled the non-compliant go-fast vessel and employed warning shots to compel the suspected smugglers to stop with no injuries reported. The Groningen crew apprehended two suspected smugglers and seized approximately 545 pounds of cocaine.

Saturday, a Caribbean maritime patrol aircrew notified the

Royal Canadian Navy ship HMCS Harry DeWolf's crew of a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 176 miles north of Cabo De La Vela, Colombia. The Harry DeWolf crew and an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 crew intercepted the go-fast vessel, apprehending three suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 1,650 pounds of cocaine.

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

- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant \(WMEC 621\)](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle \(WPC 1133\)](#)
- [Royal Netherlands Navy HNLMS Groningen \(P 843\)](#)
- [Royal Canadian Navy HMCS Harry DeWolf \(430\)](#)
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team South
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific
- [U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations \(CBP-AMO\)](#)
- [Joint Interagency Task Force-South \(JIATF-South\)](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Juan](#)

- [Seventh Coast Guard District](#)

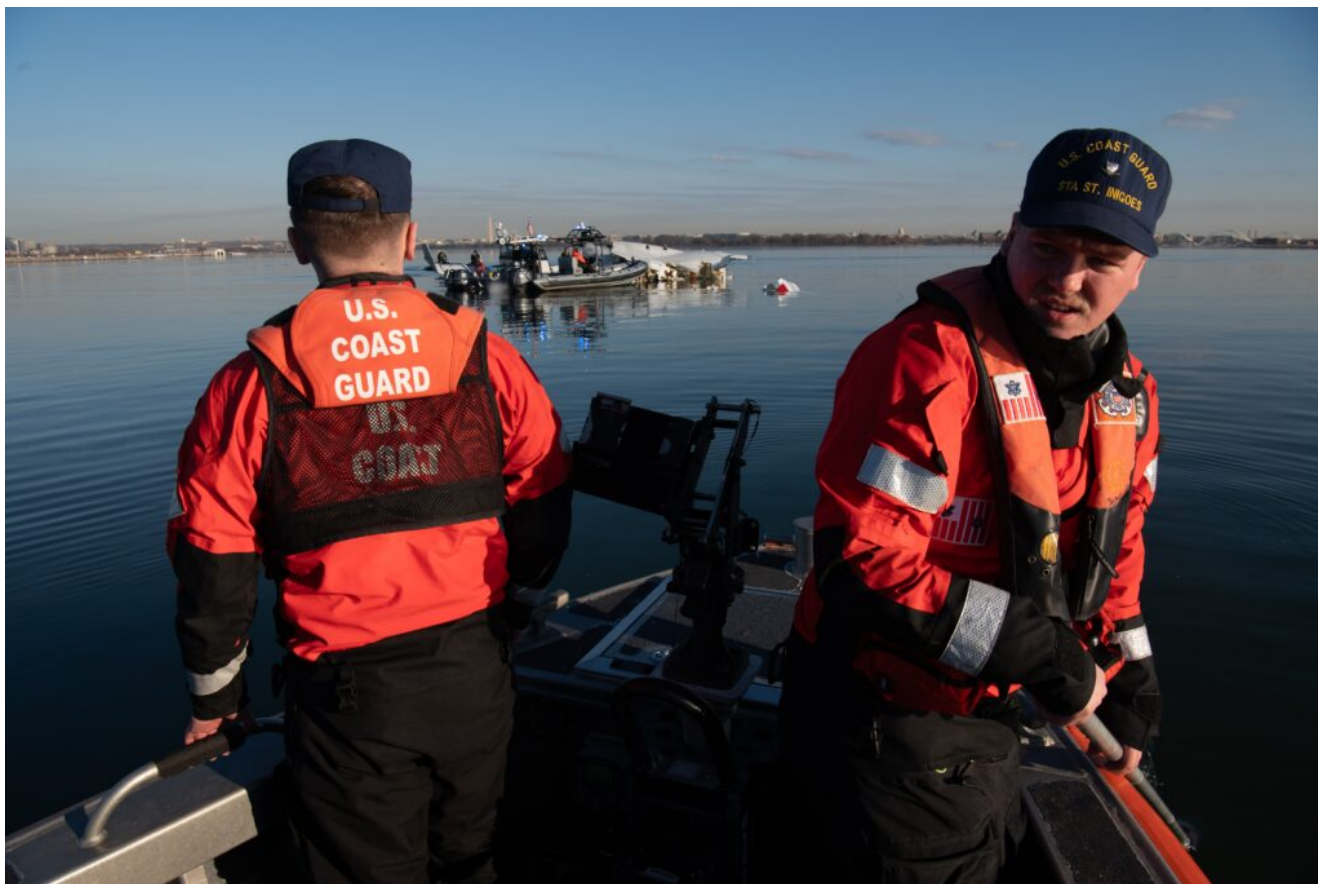
Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, 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 Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Seventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' (OCDETF) Strike Force initiatives and designated investigations. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

USCGC Valiant is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported at U.S. Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville under [U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command](#).

Unified Response: An Inside Look at 300 Coast Guardsmen

responding to Potomac Plane Crash



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Lance Ide, left, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Corbin Singleton, boatswain's mates at Station St. Inigoes, respond to the aircraft collision on the Potomac River, Washington, Jan. 30, 2025. The Coast Guard responded to the incident with local, city, state and federal partners. *Photo credit: U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Bokum*

WASHINGTON – On the evening of January 29, while most of the city slept, hundreds of Coast Guardsmen from across the East Coast deployed to the Potomac River, ready to face the unimaginable.

Crew members launched from Coast Guard Station Washington and arrived at the freezing river as a commercial jet and Army helicopter lay shattered.

For those directing first responders from the command center

at Sector Maryland – National Capital Region, managing the unimaginable is a part of the job.

“Having also responded to the Key Bridge collapse last year, this aircraft collision was another heartbreaking reminder of how quickly tragedy can unfold,” said Sector Maryland – National Capital Region command center chief Lieutenant Stasia Ellis. “Our thoughts still go out to the families who lost loved ones. Coast Guard first responders demonstrated exceptional courage and dedication, working tirelessly alongside our partners to bring answers and closure to those affected.”

By 5 a.m., Station Philadelphia was traveling over 100 miles to Washington in support of the mission.

At dawn, response boat crews from Stations Curtis Bay, Annapolis, Oxford, Crisfield and Coast Guard Cutter Sailfish were on scene.

In a unified effort, 278 Coast Guard service members and Auxiliarists from 33 units across the East Coast responded to the incident with an urgent mission – search, recover, and bring closure to a nation reeling from disaster.

Within hours after the incident, Sector Maryland – National Capital Region and subordinate commands stood up an Incident Management Team at Station Washington to coordinate the mission and streamline real-time communications.

“We came from over 70 miles away that morning before sunrise, not really sure what to expect on-scene,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Corbin Singleton, a machinery technician with Station St. Inigoes. “Whether it was search and rescue or enforcing the safety zone, we were determined to help and support the mission however we could.”

As Singleton and his crew supported the mission from the water, Captain Patrick Burkett, commander, Sector Maryland –

National Capital Region, welcomed the acting commandant, Admiral Kevin E. Lunday, and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, to meet with first responders at Station Washington.

Shortly after 10 a.m., Lunday and Noem were underway visiting the wreckage site on a Station Washington small boat.

“There were a lot of moving parts that morning as traumatic as it was, but I am so incredibly proud of our team’s efforts throughout this response,” said Burkett. “From the moment the accident took place, we’ve been here to support the American public.”

The Coast Guard rapidly integrated into the incident unified command to support local, city, state, and federal partners.

Beyond search and rescue, the Coast Guard’s objectives included ensuring the safety of the public and first responders on the water, aiding in victim recovery efforts, assisting salvage operations, and supporting the National Transportation Safety Board’s incident investigation.

“We put all available resources to bear on this response,” said Burkett. “We had many Coast Guard small boat stations and cutters arrive at the scene that morning and days after. We called in additional crews to help from Sector Delaware Bay to make sure we kept a 24/7 presence on the waterway and support by any means we could.”

A week after the accident, a total of 11 small boat stations and five cutters were deployed, including support from two Coast Guard sectors, Coast Guard headquarters, and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

“We worked together as a unified command,” said Burkett. “Everybody has their responsibilities from our responding units to the agencies in the unified command. We worked as a team to ensure we got the mission accomplished. This is what

we do. This is what we train to do. That's why we train with our partner agencies here in the greater Washington area to prepare for these types of tragedies."

President Says Military Recruiting Up, So Too Will Be American Shipbuilding, 'Golden Dome'

March 5, 2025 | By C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

During his first address to a joint session of Congress, March 4, 2025, President Donald J. Trump said that the changes he's made since his inauguration in January have enhanced recruiting within the U.S. military in ways that haven't been seen in years.

On his first day in office, the president signed an executive order ending diversity, equity and inclusion programs across the federal government. Less than a week later, newly sworn-in Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth drafted a message to the force that mirrored the president's words, saying he would rebuild the U.S. military with a focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards and readiness.

"Our service members won't be activists and ideologues," Trump said. "They will be fighters and warriors. They will fight for our country."

The president said the result of his executive order has filtered down into the armed forces, putting a new focus on

merit and spurring renewed interest in serving.

“I am pleased to report that in January, the U.S. Army had its single best recruiting month in 15 years and that all armed services are having among the best recruiting results ever in the history of our services,” Trump said. “What a tremendous turnaround. It’s really a beautiful thing to see people love our country again ... they love our country, and they love being in our military again.”

The president also said the United States will pursue a “Golden Dome,” similar to Israel’s own “Iron Dome” defense system, which is designed to protect against inbound missile attacks.

“My focus is on building the most powerful military of the future,” Trump said. “As a first step, I’m asking Congress to fund a state-of-the-art, ‘Golden Dome’ missile defense shield to protect our homeland – all made in the USA.”

The president said that President Ronald Reagan had wanted to build a similar system during his term, but the technology wasn’t available at the time to bring that project to fruition. But now, he said, that technology exists.

“Israel has it, other places have it, and the United States should have it, too,” he said. “This is a very dangerous world. We should have it. We want to be protected. And we’re going to protect our citizens like never before.”

Trump also promised an expansion of American shipbuilding in order to support both the U.S. military and the commercial sector. American shipbuilding is at a low point today, but the president promised new efforts to increase America’s shipbuilding efforts.

“We are also going to resurrect the American shipbuilding industry, including commercial shipbuilding and military shipbuilding,” Trump said. “I am announcing tonight that we

will create a new Office of Shipbuilding in the White House and offer special tax incentives to bring this industry home to America, where it belongs.”

The president said the U.S. once had a great domestic shipbuilding industry, which has largely died down now. That will change, he promised.

“We used to make so many ships. We don’t make them anymore, very much,” he said. “But we’re going to make them very fast, very soon.”

The president also said he planned to take action to expand domestic production of rare earth elements, which are critical to U.S. defense.

“Later this week, I will also take historic action to dramatically expand production of critical minerals and rare earths here in the USA,” he said.

Rare earth permanent magnets, for instance, are not only essential components in a range of defense capabilities, including the F-35 Lightning II aircraft, Virginia and Columbia class submarines and unmanned aerial vehicles, but are also a critical part of commercial applications in the United States. They are also used to generate electricity for electronic systems in aircraft and focus microwave energy in radar systems.

Finally, Trump said that the mastermind behind the terrorist attack at Abbey Gate during the August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan has been captured. Some 13 American service members were killed during that attack.

“I am pleased to announce that we have just apprehended the top terrorist responsible for that atrocity, and he is right now on his way here to face the swift sword of American justice,” Trump said.

Coast Guard Teams Deploy to American Samoa to Patrol Border, Conduct Boardings



A U.S. Coast Guardsman assigned to a Coast Guard Sector Honolulu boarding team, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement officer and American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources officer speak to the master of a foreign-flagged fishing vessel during a boarding offshore Pago Pago, American Samoa, Feb. 26, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo, courtesy Sector Honolulu)

From Coast Guard District 14 External Affairs, March 4, 2025

HONOLULU – Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Honolulu personnel and a boarding team from Coast Guard Sector Honolulu deployed to American Samoa from Feb. 10-27 to protect the U.S. maritime border, enforce U.S. laws and regulations,

enhance maritime domain awareness and coordinate with agency partners.

During the deployment, team members boarded six U.S.-flagged commercial fishing vessels, six foreign-flagged commercial fishing vessels, and five recreational boating safety boardings, resulting in the termination of one recreational voyage due to deficient safety equipment.

Crews patrolled the U.S. territorial maritime border and the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone surrounding American Samoa, which extends up to 200 miles offshore.

Additionally, MSST Honolulu and Sector Honolulu personnel conducted over 26 hours of training with the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security and American Samoa Marine Patrol, a law enforcement unit within the [American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources](#). Training primarily focused on boarding procedures and weapons proficiency.

“Working closely with partners in American Samoa heightens our awareness of any illicit activities in the area and hones our combined ability to safeguard the maritime border,” said Lt. Cmdr. Nic Iannarone, enforcement division chief, Sector Honolulu. “Teamwork is a key component of taking a stand against threats to our ports and waterways.”

In accordance with the President’s Executive Orders and direction from Adm. Kevin Lunday, the acting commandant of the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard is increasing cutter patrols and operations in American Samoa. The Coast Guard is surging assets to increase presence in key areas to protect America’s maritime borders, territorial integrity, and sovereignty.

Maritime Safety and Security Team Honolulu is a specialized unit of the Coast Guard dedicated to enhancing maritime security and safety in the Pacific region. With a highly trained personnel team equipped to conduct law enforcement

operations, port security assessments, and emergency response activities, MSST Honolulu collaborates closely with local, state, and federal agencies to safeguard vital maritime infrastructure and natural resources.

Sector Honolulu serves a broad expanse of the Pacific that includes 200 nautical miles surrounding the State of Hawaii, the islands and atolls of the Hawaiian Island Chain and American Samoa. The sector's primary missions include ensuring maritime security, conducting search and rescue operations, enforcing environmental protection laws, and facilitating law enforcement activities.

USCGC Vigorous Returns After Alien Interdiction Operations, Maritime Border Security Patrol



Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous' crew transfers aliens to the Margaret Norvell in the Florida Straits, Feb. 19, 2025. The aliens were transferred to The Bahamas following an illegal maritime venture interdiction off Key Biscayne, Florida. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Chief Petty Officer Ryan Youngblood)
From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, March 5, 2025

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous (WMEC 627) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Wednesday, following a 46-day maritime border security patrol in the Florida Straits.

Vigorous deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, where crew members conducted alien interdiction and border security operations. The crew worked alongside other Coast Guard units and partner agencies such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations and Homeland Security Investigations.

Throughout the patrol, Vigorous' crew interdicted, processed and repatriated more than 67 aliens attempting to enter the United States illegally, and transferred six suspected smugglers ashore to HSI custody to support further investigation for potential federal prosecution.

While at sea, the cutter participated in five interdictions of vessels attempting to smuggle aliens into the U.S. illegally. The aliens interdicted were from multiple countries including Honduras, Bangladesh, Haiti, and China.

"The integrity of our maritime borders is vital to national security, and I am proud of our crew's hard work and determination throughout this deployment," said Cmdr. Todd Batten, commanding officer of Vigorous. "Together with our partner agencies, including CBP AMO, HSI, and Florida state and local law enforcement, we were able to effectively enforce United States customs and immigration laws against illegal entry."

Vigorous, along with other Coast Guard assets and additional HSTF-SE partners, maintained a continual presence with air, land and sea assets in the Florida Straits in support of OVS. HSTF-SE combines a multi-layered approach to maritime border security, which is designed to protect the safety of life at sea while preventing illegal entry into the U.S. and its territories.

Vigorous is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations, alien interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws 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 Visits Australia, Furthers Collaboration and Maritime Security



Coast Guard Capt. Matthew Rooney, the commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) and Royal Australian Navy Capt. Rebecca Levitt, the commanding officer of His Majesty's Australian Ship Kuttabul, exchange patches during a media engagement in Sydney, Feb. 25, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jennifer Nilson)
From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, March 4, 2025

SYDNEY – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) recently completed a port call in Sydney, Feb. 25, 2025, conducting several engagements with Australian partners that strengthened ties and furthered collaborative maritime security throughout Oceania. Reflecting the spirit of the Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group, the U.S. Coast Guard continues its vital collaboration with Australian law enforcement to identify maritime vulnerabilities and cooperate on solutions that reduce risks to safety, health, and security throughout the region.

While in Sydney, Midgett hosted a law enforcement partnership event with Australian and United States stakeholders. Participants, including U.S. Consul General in Sydney Christine Elder, U.S. Coast Guard Attaché Capt. Amanda Ramassini, representatives from U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Secret Service, and Australian law enforcement and maritime security partners, joined the crew for breakfast and roundtable discussions in the wardroom, followed by a tour of the cutter. Law enforcement partners received a briefing on Midgett's capabilities and its current mission in the Pacific. Highlighting the close bond between the two nations and their agencies, Midgett's Lt. Jake Behne recently deployed to the Torres Strait as an observer with the Australian Border Force (ABF) Fast Response Boat unit, and now an ABF Officer in Charge is set to sail aboard Midgett as an observer.

Separately, Sydney media outlets were invited aboard with the assistance of U.S. Consulate Sydney; the subsequent reporting on partnerships reached more than a million Australians.

Beyond official engagements, the crew of Midgett embraced the opportunity to experience Australian culture and history during a visit to the Australian National Maritime Museum.

"This visit to Sydney was more than just a port call; it was a chance to reinforce the vital link between the U.S. Coast

Guard and our Australian counterparts,” said Capt. Matthew Rooney, Midgett’s commanding officer. “The support we received from HMAS Kuttabul was first rate and the warm welcome from our Royal Australian Navy shipmates made our time here truly memorable.”

The United States’ alliance with Australia remains a cornerstone of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The U.S. Coast Guard looks forward to continuing partnerships with Australia’s maritime and border forces to ensure a connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient Pacific.

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, making them ideally suited to support a wide range of missions, including maritime security, law enforcement, and search and rescue operations.

Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Gerczak Returns Home Following 37-Day Law Enforcement Patrol in American Samoa



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Kyle Cassidy, a boatswain's mate assigned to Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Gerczak (WPC 1126), monitors the cutter's approach of Pago Pago, American Samoa, Feb. 5, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Steven Zea)

From U.S. Coast Guard District 14 External Affairs, Feb. 23, 2025

HONOLULU – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Gerczak (WPC 1126) returned home to Honolulu Saturday following a 37-day territorial integrity patrol along the U.S. maritime border in American Samoa.

The Joseph Gerczak crew departed Coast Guard Base Honolulu in January and traveled more than 7,300 nautical miles spanning from the Hawaiian Islands to American Samoa.

The crew patrolled the U.S. territorial maritime border and safeguarded the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone surrounding American Samoa, which extends up to 200 miles offshore.

During the patrol, the crew conducted boardings on two U.S.-

flagged fishing vessels to ensure the territorial integrity of the U.S. maritime border and deter any threat of illicit trafficking. The crew also ensured the safety of the U.S. fishing fleet by reviewing the vessels' documentation, examining the captains' permits and inspecting the vessels' required safety equipment, fishing gear and, when applicable, the on-board catch. The crew worked alongside a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Law Enforcement Officer, who assisted the boarding team in identifying two living marine resource violations for which the vessel was cited.

The cutter's boarding teams observed 10 total violations, including a non-U.S. master who was neither a U.S. citizen nor U.S. national, expired documentation, an expired survival craft, expired hydrostatic releases for emergency position indicating radio beacons, expired flares, unsatisfactory condition of life jackets, and damaged turtle mitigation gear.

Due to safety violations, the Joseph Gerczak crew terminated the voyage of one fishing vessel and escorted the vessel to port in Pago Pago, American Samoa.

"Coast Guard law enforcement boardings and vessel safety inspections are vital to ensuring safety of those at sea and protecting our precious marine ecosystems," said Lt. Caitlin Piker, commanding officer, Cutter Joseph Gerczak. "Our patrols also enhance maritime domain awareness and serve as a critical line of defense against illegal activities that threaten our nation's security."

In accordance with the President's Executive Orders and direction from Adm. Kevin Lunday, the acting commandant of the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard is increasing cutter patrols and operations in American Samoa. The Coast Guard is surging assets to increase presence in key areas to protect America's maritime borders, territorial integrity, and sovereignty.

The Joseph Gerczak is a 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter homeported in Honolulu. The cutter's primary missions are maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and national defense.

Coast Guard Cutter Returns to Washington Following Law Enforcement Patrol



Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team – West servicemembers conduct joint training with U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) crews operating in the Pacific Ocean, Jan. 31, 2025. The Active returned to its Port Angeles, Washington, homeport after conducting a 65-day law enforcement patrol spanning more than 5,500 nautical miles off the coast

of California. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brenton Kludt.)

From U.S. Coast Guard 13th District, Feb. 14, 2025

PORT ANGELES, Wash. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) returned home to Port Angeles, Friday following a 65-day law enforcement patrol off the coast of Southern California.

As America's maritime law enforcement agency, the Coast Guard is increasing presence in key areas to protect U.S. maritime borders, territorial integrity, and sovereignty.

The crew covered more than 5,500 miles patrolling off the coast of California in support of the Coast Guard District 11's Southwest Maritime Border Security operations. The operations counter Transnational Criminal Organization activity in the Coastal California Region, and the United States Pacific Maritime Southern Border including alien interdiction operations.

Active's crew interdicted three vessels carrying 46 illegal aliens in total, while providing assistance and direction to aid in the apprehension of another 40 illegal aliens. The illegal aliens were all safely transferred to the custody of Customs and Border Protection agents in San Diego.

To enhance the crew's military readiness, they conducted numerous training exercises with regional Coast Guard crews including an Air Station San Francisco MH-65 helicopter aircrew, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Terrell Horne (WPC-1131), a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Pedro, Calif., and teams from the San Diego-based Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team West.

Additionally, while operating offshore northern California, the crew responded to four search and rescue cases.

The Active is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in

Port Angeles. Patrolling from the northern most part of the contiguous United States, and as far south as the equator, Active has conducted law enforcement, defense operations, and search and rescue missions for over 60 years.

The cutter is a multi-mission platform that falls under the operational command of the Coast Guard Pacific Area Commander. Protecting the American homeland and its territories is the Coast Guard's Pacific Area Commander's top priority. In doing so, the U.S. Coast Guard protects and defends against threats to the safety, security, and prosperity of the American public.

Coast Guard Offloads More Than \$275 Million Worth Of Illegal Cocaine In San Diego



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) crewmembers offload bales of seized narcotics in San Diego, Feb. 13, 2025. The drugs, worth an estimated \$275 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Christopher Sappey)

U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Southwest, Feb. 13, 2025

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) offloaded approximately 37,256 pounds of cocaine, with an estimated value of more than \$275 million, on Thursday in San Diego.

The offload is a result of 11 separate suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions or events off the coasts of Mexico and Central and South America by the Coast Guard Cutter Waesche in December through February.

“The Waesche crew faced numerous challenges during this patrol, overcoming the hardest adversities and still had 11 successful drug interdictions,” said Capt. Tyson Scofield, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Waesche. “Their

dedication, strength of character, and resilience ensured the success of our mission, preventing over \$275 million worth of illicit narcotics from reaching the United States and protecting our communities from the devastating effects of transnational crime.”

Multiple U.S. agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security, collaborate 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, all play a role in counter-narcotic operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases, from detection, monitoring and interdictions to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard continues to increase operations to interdict, seize, and disrupt transshipment 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 U.S.

The Coast Guard Cutter Woesche is one of four legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda, California.

The Coast Guard Cutter Woesche’s crew can operate in the most demanding open ocean environments, and the vast approaches of the Southern Pacific, where significant narcotics trafficking occurs.

CMF's Combined Task Force 150 Carries Out First Drug Interdiction with New Zealand In Command



Coast Guardsmen from the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) seize illegal narcotics from a stateless vessel in the Arabian Sea. (U.S. Coast Guard)

From U.S. 5th Fleet, Feb. 11, 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, seized nearly 2,400 kilograms of illegal drugs from a vessel in the Arabian Sea, Feb. 7.

The interdiction by the Sentinel-class fast-response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC-1145) represents CTF 150's first drug seizure since New Zealand assumed command Jan. 15.

The cutter's boarding team discovered and seized 2,357kg of hashish from the vessel. After weighing and documenting the haul, the crew properly disposed of the narcotics.

Commodore Rodger Ward, commander of CTF 150, said he's proud of the team effort that went into making this interdiction a reality after only a few weeks in command.

"Our command is a small cog in a system focused on interdicting illicit trafficking on the high seas," Ward said. "This is a team effort and this bust would not have been possible without the support of the 46 nations who make up the Combined Maritime Forces."

Ward noted that every bust we make reduces the flow of finances to terrorist organizations. "This is why we're here, to contribute to maritime security and protect the rules-based international order," he said.

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 Combined Maritime Forces, 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.