

# Coast Guard Conducts Alien Expulsion Flight Operations Between California and Texas



U.S. Coast Guard conducts Alien Expulsion Flight Operations in coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. (U.S. Coast Guard)

From Coast Guard Headquarters Public Affairs, Jan. 25, 2025

SAN DIEGO – Today, the Coast Guard conducted several Alien Expulsion Flight Operations between California and Texas, in coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

“In accordance with the President’s Executive Orders, the Coast Guard continues to surge assets and leverage its unique capabilities to protect America’s borders, territorial integrity, and sovereignty,” said Adm. Kevin Lunday, the Coast

Guard's Acting Commandant. "Today's operation exemplifies our coordination with our Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense teammates, through which we are detecting, deterring, and interdicting aliens, drug smuggling, and other terrorist or hostile activity before it reaches our border."

The Coast Guard is coordinating the operations of multiple Coast Guard units in support of this operation. Led by the Eleventh Coast Guard District in California, the Service is surging assets and personnel from around the nation to support the Department of Homeland Security-led operation.

The Coast Guard's current role is to assist with the national transport of aliens to designated locations in Texas and California, where the Department of Defense will transport the aliens internationally.

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## **President Trump Removes Coast Guard Commandant**



Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan salutes the national ensign while embarking U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759), April 20, 2024, following the cutter's official commissioning in North Charleston, South Carolina. *Photo credit: U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard*

President Trump's new administration has removed Admiral Linda L. Fagan as commandant of the Coast Guard, an early end to the tenure of the first female to head a U.S. military branch.

The removal, on Trump's first full day back in office, was first reported by Fox News, which said Acting Homeland Security Secretary Benjamin Huffman removed Fagan. Admiral Kevin Lunday, the vice commandant, is now the acting commandant.

"She was terminated because of her leadership deficiencies, operational failures, and inability to advance the strategic objectives of the U.S. Coast Guard," a senior Department of Homeland Security official told *Seapower* in a statement.

The list of reasons includes failure to address threats at the

southern border, “especially in interdicting fentanyl and other illicit substances” and “insufficient coordination with the Department of Homeland Security to prioritize operations along maritime borders.”

It also includes “inadequate leadership” in recruitment and retention; persistent cost overruns in icebreakers and helicopter programs; “inadequate accountability for acquisition failures highlighted during the Trump 45 Administration;” the “mishandling and coverup of Operation Fouled Anchor,” an investigation into sexual harassment at the Coast Guard Academy and in the service; and “excessive focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies including at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, diverting resources and attention from operational imperatives.”

Fagan was the Coast Guard’s first four-star admiral and was confirmed as commandant in 2022.

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Connecticut), ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee’s Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee, posted on X that Fagan’s dismissal “is an abuse of power that slanders her good name and outstanding record. Under Admiral Fagan, Coast Guard recruitment is up, not down, and drug interdictions too. Trump’s fecklessness harms morale and confidence in the chain of command.”

On Jan. 21, the Coast Guard released a statement attributed to Lunday, which said, “Per the president’s executive orders, I have directed my operational commanders to immediately surge assets – cutters, aircraft, boats and deployable specialized forces – to increase Coast Guard presence and focus starting with the following key areas:

- The southeast U.S. border approaching Florida to deter and prevent a maritime mass migration from Haiti and/or Cuba;
- The maritime border around Alaska, Hawai’i, the U.S.

territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands;

- The maritime border between the Bahamas and south Florida;
- The southwest maritime border between the U.S. and Mexico in the Pacific;
- The maritime border between Texas and Mexico in the Gulf of America; and
- Support to Customs and Border Protection on maritime portions of the southwest U.S. border.

Together, in coordination with our Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense teammates, we will detect, deter and interdict illegal migration, drug smuggling and other terrorist or hostile activity before it reaches our border.”

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## **Florida-Based Cutter Returns Home After 40-day Patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean**



Coast Guard Cutters Venturous (WMEC 625) and Hamilton (WMSL 753) rendezvous at sea, Nov. 21, 2024, in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Venturous' crew conducted a 40-day counter drug patrol within the Coast Guard Eleventh District area of responsibility in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Jan. 13, 2025

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC 625) returned to their home port in St. Petersburg, Dec. 11, following a 40-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Venturous' crew deployed in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South (JIATF-S) and conducted counter-drug missions in the Coast Guard Eleventh District's area of responsibility.

Crew members worked alongside an embarked MH-65E Dolphin aircrew from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) and law enforcement detachment boarding team members from the Tactical Law Enforcement Team – Pacific.

While underway, Venturous' crew stopped two drug-smuggling vessels during separate interdictions at sea. During one interdiction, the cutter's embarked HITRON aircrew assisted in interdicting a vessel carrying 4,270 pounds of marijuana.

Days later, the cutter's boarding team interdicted a low-profile vessel and seized approximately 165 pounds of cocaine.

Along with the illicit narcotics, Coast Guard crew members apprehended six suspected smugglers who will face prosecution in federal courts by the U.S. Department of Justice.

While deployed, Venturous' crew navigated the Panama Canal enroute to the Pacific Ocean, crossed the equator, travelled more than 8,800 nautical miles and made ports of call in Central and South America.

During a port of call in Manta, Ecuador, the crew hosted five senior officers from the Ecuadorian Navy (Armada del Ecuador) for a tour and diplomatic engagement. The partner-building event highlighted the recent success of enacting a bilateral agreement between the two nations. The "Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Ecuador Concerning Counter Illicit Transnational Maritime Activity Operations" was entered in force on Feb. 23. Venturous also embarked an Ecuadorian Coast Guard (Armada del Ecuador Guardacostas) officer for two-weeks as part of the new shiprider program to help combat illicit maritime activity, including narcotic smuggling operations and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the region.

"A St. Petersburg-based cutter, we were hit by both Hurricanes Helene and Milton a month before the scheduled patrol. We took care of each other and Atlantic Area Command shifted our schedule to accommodate the devastation our crew and their families faced," said Cmdr. Karen Kutkiewicz, commanding officer of Venturous. "I am super proud of my crew, their

resilience, and their devotion to duty. Our training came to fruition, and we optimized our time in vector with two drug busts within one week, including an elusive low-profile vessel.”

The Coast Guard plays a critical role in securing U.S. maritime borders and is the lead federal maritime law enforcement agency for drug interdiction on the high seas.

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. JIATF-S based in Key West, Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs.

Venturous is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew complement of 76. The cutter’s primary missions are counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. The cutter was commissioned in 1968 and falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia.

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](#).

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## **Teledyne FLIR Defense Awarded**

# \$74 Million IDIQ Contract to Modernize U.S. Coast Guard Surveillance Systems



*Company has provided Coast Guard imaging solutions used for search & rescue and other maritime missions for 20 years*

From Teledyne FLIR Defense, Jan. 13, 2025

BOSTON, Mass., January 13, 2025 – Teledyne FLIR Defense, part

of Teledyne Technologies Incorporated (NYSE:TDY), announced it has been awarded a five-year Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract worth up to \$74.2 million to provide modernized imaging surveillance systems to the United States Coast Guard (USCG).

FLIR Defense will deliver more than 125 Electro-Optic Sensor System-Modernized (ESS-M) systems for use on USCG rotary wing aircraft, specifically the MH-60 and MH-65. The advanced ESS-M platform features a full-HD sensor suite and updated user interfaces, as well as advanced processing capabilities and software enhancements that will support future growth.

The ESS-M systems provide operators with high-definition daylight, low light, and infrared imagery and will be used in support of all Coast Guard missions, with an emphasis on search and rescue, living marine resources, and law enforcement. The new technology also will augment coastal security, drug and migrant interdiction, ports and waterways protection, and other Coast Guard rapid response needs.

Teledyne FLIR Defense has been delivering and supporting legacy ESS systems for USCG medium- and short-range recovery aircraft since 2005.

“The significant updates through ESS-M will enable the U.S. Coast Guard to stay on technology’s cutting edge while conducting its wide range of key maritime operations,” said Dr. JihFen Lei, president of Teledyne FLIR Defense. “We’re proud to extend our history of support and look forward to building our relationship across all missions areas.”

Deliveries will begin in Q4-2025. For more on Teledyne FLIR’s maritime surveillance solutions, visit us [online](#).

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# U.S. Coast Guard Refits Commercial Icebreaker Aiviq for Service as USCG Storis



The tug Aiviq traveling with the mobile drilling unit Kulluk in tow 116 miles southwest of Kodiak City, Alaska, in 2012. *Credit: U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 2nd Class Chris Usher* The Coast Guard awarded a contract Nov. 20 to Offshore Service Vessels LLC, of Cut Off, Louisiana, to acquire the motor vessel (M/V) Aiviq, a 360-foot U.S.-built polar class 3-equivalent icebreaker, U.S. Coast Guard Media Relations said in an Dec. 16 email.

“The Coast Guard first presented its research and

recommendation to acquire a commercial icebreaker in a 2021 report. This approach was made possible through direction and statutory relief provided in the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 and funding appropriated in fiscal year 2024," the email said.

The Coast Guard renamed the Aiviq into *Storis*, a Scandinavian term meaning "a floating mass of closely crowded icebergs and floes."

Much about the U.S. Coast Guard's modifications and conversion of the commercial icebreaker, Aiviq, remains unclear as Coast Guard media did not respond to specific questions from *Seapower* about its refit, including schedule, cost, armament, crew complement, and material and structural changes.

The Coast Guard did tell *Seapower* that, "with minimal modifications, this polar icebreaker will be capable of projecting U.S. sovereignty in the Arctic and conducting select Coast Guard missions. The service will evaluate the vessel's current condition and capability and identify requirements, and what modifications will be necessary, to attain full operational capability. The firm fixed-price contract, with a total value of \$125.0 million, also includes provisions for technical data, spares, necessary modifications, certifications, crew training, and operational readiness activities."

Built in 2012 by North American Shipbuilding Company of Larose, Louisiana, for \$200 million, Aiviq was designed for towing and laying anchors for drilling rigs and oil spill response in the Chukchi Sea of Alaska. That makes the *Storis* 12 years old as of 2024. In comparison, the only other Arctic medium icebreaker, USCGC *Healy*, was launched Nov. 15, 1997, and commissioned Aug. 21, 2000, and is 24 years old, and the only Antarctic heavy icebreaker, *Polar Star*, is 48 years old, having been commissioned in 1976. *Polar Sea*, *Polar Star*'s sister, is inactive due to an engine malfunction in 2010 and

has served as a parts donor to the Polar Star.

The 360-foot (110 meter) Storis has a crew of 28 and accommodations for 64 personnel. Its beam is 80 feet (24.4 meters), depth of 34 feet (10.4 meters) with a draft of 28 feet (8.6 meters). Powered by four Caterpillar C280-12 engines, each producing 4,060 kilowatts, driving two ducted controlled-pitch propellers, the Storis can sail at 15 knots (28 km/h; 17 mph) and five knots (9.3 km/h; 5.8 mph) in one meter (3.3 feet) of ice. Stability comes from three bow thrusters and two stern thrusters.

“The recently acquired polar icebreaker will bridge national presence in the Arctic while the service awaits delivery of the Polar Security Cutters,” said a Coast Guard Media Relations spokesperson. The Coast Guard said the Storis’s homeport is to be determined soon although maritime publications hint at Juneau, Alaska. Current estimate for delivery of the first PSC is 2030.

“The Coast Guard’s initial activities will be focused on readying the vessel for deployment to the Arctic in the summer of 2026,” Coast Guard Media Relations Office said. “A series of phased modifications will then occur between annual Arctic operations to achieve full operational capability.”

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## **A Week in the Life of Protecting American Fish and Seafood**



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Banka, a boarding officer aboard U.S. Coast Guard Cutter ANGELA McSHAN, completes a living marine resources fisheries inspection, Atlantic Ocean, Dec. 10, 2024. The crew of 25 completed a five-day living marine resource law enforcement patrol 100 miles off the coast of New Jersey. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Bokum)

From U.S. Coast Guard 5th District, Dec. 18, 2024

PHILADELPHIA – One hundred miles off the New Jersey coastline, the waters were vast and seemingly endless.

To the untrained eye, it was a serene stretch of blue, a world away from the bustling Jersey Shore. But amongst waves was a high-stakes arena where living marine resources (LMR) law enforcement took place.

The Coast Guard's LMR mission affects seafood enthusiasts and fishermen alike. A succulent seafood dinner cannot make it to a plate until the fishermen catch it, and it's the Coast Guard's mission to ensure those fish are caught legally.

From Dec. 9 to Dec. 13, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Angela McShan and its 25 crewmembers took to the Atlantic to carry out an LMR law enforcement patrol, ensuring the sustainability of the ocean's resources and enforcing federal regulations designed to protect marine ecosystems and commercial fishing livelihoods.

"Our mission is critical to protecting the natural resources within the mid-Atlantic fisheries," said the cutter's commanding officer, Lt. Gregory Schmidt, "especially ensuring the natural resources are sustained and also that there's a balance of the economic profit and the balance of the commercial fisheries within the area."

The Coast Guard is the lead federal maritime law enforcement agency and the only agency with both the authority and capability to enforce national and international law on the high seas, outer continental shelf, and inward from the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to inland waters.

During this deployment, the crew conducted five boardings for fisheries and served as a stronghold of maritime law enforcement.

Armed Coast Guardsmen boarded the fishing vessels using the cutter's over the horizon (OTH V) small boat, the only fast response cutter (FRC) in the fleet currently using this updated prototype OTH.

"Out here we're conducting inspections on commercial fishing vessels," said Petty Officer First Class Christopher Banka, a boarding officer. "As far as the fish, we're looking at sizes, quantity, and ensuring that the vessels have their proper certifications and documentation."

The goal for the week was clear: to ensure fishing operators complied with federal regulations while fostering mutual respect and cooperation.

"The biggest thing we're looking for are the targeted species," said the cutter's executive officer, LTJG Joseph Roth. "District Five provides us with a lookout list with known high-risk targets and repeat offenders. We're also looking for those targeted species and the area of the ocean where typical good fishing grounds are."

While some vessels were found to be fully compliant, other were not.

"A lot of times we've run into people just fishing with the wrong type of gear," said Roth. "This trip, we had someone fishing with a net that was too small. We caught it and we're protecting our fisheries by doing that. With a smaller net, they're catching a lot more things that they're not supposed to be catching."

As the crew's deployment showed, it's not just the fish themselves that are of interest, but also the equipment on the vessels.

"We've also run into some safety equipment violations," said Roth. "There's been expired flares, personal flotation devices that are unserviceable. So, we're indirectly saving a life by ensuring these vessels have the correct equipment on board."

As Schmidt explained, the Coast Guard is not only searching for illegal fishing during these boardings but also inspecting the vessels to prevent casualties.

"This fisheries mission is important because we get to see immediate impact on the federal fisheries and safety aspect," said Schmidt. "When we get on these boats, we not only check their fish but also check they are in compliance with their safety equipment. Ultimately, we're protecting their lives to make sure they're not a search and rescue case."

According to Roth, every single crew member contributes to the

fisheries mission while underway.

“We have our cooks out there helping to launch the small boat,” said Roth. “We’ve got our engineers on the small boat and out doing boardings. Our boatswain’s mates are doing the same thing. Every single person is involved in the law enforcement effort as well as the effort to keep the ship running and conducting maintenance.”

Amid the patrol, swells reached upwards of 10 feet with subfreezing temperatures.

For the crew, the Atlantic conditions are simply part of the job.

“It can get pretty rough out there,” said Roth. “Especially getting on and off the small boat and onto the vessels. You’ve really got to take precautions, and you don’t know what kind of deck you’re climbing on to.”

Despite the challenges, the crew successfully conducted the five boardings over the five-day deployment.

“One of the biggest challenges we face is the weather windows when these fisheries are open,” said Schmidt. “Often, we have to strategically plan to get offshore amidst the weather. Our main goal is to be able to target these guys when it’s safe to go out there and the maximum available targets out there with the weather and fisheries being open.”

LMR law enforcement is a duty under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act and several other federal laws focused on the protection of marine resources.

The core objective of these efforts is to provide enforcement to advance national goals for the conservation, management, and recovery of living marine resources, marine protected species, and national marine sanctuaries and monuments. This

includes the enforcement of LMR regulations in addition to numerous other activities that strengthen both domestic and international fisheries management regimes.

The Maritime Law Enforcement program protects America's maritime borders from encroachment, defends the country's maritime sovereignty from illicit activity, facilitates legitimate use of the waterways, and suppresses violations of federal law on, under and over the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

The Angela McShan, a Sentinel-class FRC homeported in Cape May, New Jersey, is named after the first African American female master chief in Coast Guard history. True to its namesake's legacy, the vessel exemplifies service, vigilance, and dedication.

The FRC's have recently been tasked and given the tools to find the top producers of the commercial fisheries, which allows them to target the vessels that are seeking the most fish.

"The crew are skilled operators fully aware of the challenges, risk, and importance of the enforcement efforts," said Schmidt. "It's something that we take pride in and something that we know has an immediate impact economically—not only among the Coast Guard's statutory missions but also in terms of protecting the natural resources."

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# Coast Guard Cutter Alert

# Completes First Patrol After Relocating to East Coast



Credit: U.S. Coast Guard photo courtesy of Petty Officer 1st Class Jeremy Humphreys

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Dec. 9, 2024

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) returned home to Cape Canaveral, Thursday, following a 60-day patrol in the Florida Straits.

This marked the cutter's first patrol since it shifted home ports from Astoria, Oregon to Cape Canaveral in June of this year.

The crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while operating in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility. Throughout the patrol, the crew of Alert conducted maritime safety and security missions to protect

life at sea and enforce U.S. maritime law.

While on patrol, the crew rescued four Cuban migrants in the south Florida Straits after they were discovered adrift after several days in the water. After embarking the migrants, Alert's crew provided care to include treating signs and symptoms of severe sunburn and attending to dehydration.

Amidst an active hurricane season, the crew maneuvered throughout the South Florida Straits to evade Hurricane Milton. Alert avoided storm damage to ensure response readiness after the hurricane.

Working alongside other Coast Guard units, Alert's crew provided care to additional migrants who were transferred to the cutter. Once on board the cutter, 7 Cuban and 13 Ecuadorian migrants all received medical and humanitarian care.

During the patrol, the crew of Alert worked with Coast Guard Cutters Margaret Norvell (WPC 1105), William Trump (WPC 1111), Paul Clark (WPC 1106) and William Flores (WPC 1103).

"Coast Guard Cutter Alert is a legacy 210-foot medium endurance cutter that is currently maintaining a vital stopgap ahead of final delivery of the next generation offshore ships," said Cmdr. Lee K. Crusius, commanding officer of Alert. "America's Coast Guard is sustaining this current fleet but will be superior at executing missions aboard our future cutters."

HSTF-SE serves as the Department of Homeland Security lead for operational and tactical planning, command and control, and acts as a standing organization to interdict unlawful maritime migration attempts with federal, state and local partners. HSTF-SE continues to enhance enforcement efforts in support of OVS, which is the 2004 DHS plan to respond to mass maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits.

The next generation of Coast Guard cutters is the Offshore Patrol Cutter, a 360-foot ship designed for sustained offshore presence and capabilities. Coast Guard Cutter Argus (WMSM 915), the first cutter produced in this class of ships, was launched in October of 2023.

Alert is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported in Cape Canaveral. The cutter's primary missions are counter-narcotic 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 [www.GoCoastGuard.com](http://www.GoCoastGuard.com) to learn more 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](#).

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## **Task Force 51/5-Led Operation Leads to Seizure of Narcotics At Sea**



ARABIAN GULF (Oct. 24, 2023) U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) sails in the Arabian Gulf, Oct. 24. Glen Harris operates in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to help ensure maritime security and stability in the Middle East region. (Official U.S. Army photo)

By Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | December 06, 2024

U.S. 5TH FLEET AREA OF OPERATIONS – The boarding team discovered and seized 5,316.1 kilograms of hashish, 181.4 kilograms of heroin and 1.3 kilograms of methamphetamine and, after documenting and weighing the illicit haul, properly disposed of it. Total estimated market value of the narcotics is \$4.6 million.

Glen Harris was supporting a Task Force (TF) 51/5 mission at the time of the seizure.

U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Stephen J. Lightfoot, commanding general of TF 51/5, said operations such as these help maintain freedom of the seas and is part of a larger effort with partner nations in the region.

“The collaboration between our Coast Guardsmen, Marines and Sailors is outstanding,” Lightfoot said. “I’m proud of our interoperability. We are disrupting criminal acts at sea and keeping over five tons of narcotics from hurting more people.”

“Glen Harris is one of six U.S. Coast Guard Fast Response Cutters performing maritime security operations throughout the region,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Patrick Murphy, commodore of TF 55, also known as Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 50, which has tactical control of Glen Harris. “The U.S. Coast Guard brings expertise and flexibility to the wide range of missions we execute.”

Glen Harris is forward deployed to Bahrain as part of a Patrol Forces Southwest Asia under tactical control of TF 55, consisting of surface forces, including U.S. Coast Guard patrol boats and independently deployed ships in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

Task Force 51/5 executes operations, responds to contingencies and crises, and conducts theater security cooperation at sea, from the sea and ashore in support of U.S. Central Command, 5th Fleet and Marine Forces, Central Command theater objectives.

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**Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton  
Offloads \$182.8M In**

# Counternarcotics At Port Everglades



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton pose with more than 16,100 pounds of cocaine worth an assessed street value of approximately \$182.8 million in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 2, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Rodriguez)

From Coast Guard 7th District, Dec. 3, 2024

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton’s crew offloaded more than 16,100 pounds of cocaine worth an assessed street value of approximately \$182.8 million in Port Everglades, Monday.

The crew worked alongside interagency and international partners to interdict the illicit narcotics in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off South and Central America.

Coast Guard crews often deploy to the U.S. Southern Command joint operating area, which includes the Caribbean Sea and the Eastern Pacific Ocean, to conduct counter drug missions in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South. Deployments for cutters assigned to the Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command include Panama Canal transits to deny transnational criminal organizations access to maritime trafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

“I’m proud of our accomplishments during this three-and-a-half-month deployment,” said Capt. Justin Carter, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton. “The exceptional crew of Hamilton, with the support of an aircrew from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Squadron, demonstrated the greatest professionalism, seamanship and airmanship while executing this important and challenging mission at sea in service to nation.”

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdictions:

- Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton
  
- Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron
  
- Joint Interagency Task Force-South
  
- Eleventh Coast Guard District

Six suspected smugglers were also transferred to federal custody and face prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international

coordination. The Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard's Eleventh District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' 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>.

The Coast Guard is the United States' lead federal maritime law enforcement agency with authority to enforce national and international laws on the high seas and waters within U.S. jurisdiction. Coast Guard HITRON aircrews are uniquely qualified to conduct airborne use of force for non-compliant vessels, enhancing the Coast Guard's ability to react to maritime security threats and to better secure our maritime borders since the program's inception in 1999. For 25 years, HITRON crews have forward deployed aboard Coast Guard cutters and U.S. Navy ships or foreign allied warships to conduct drug interdiction operations.

Hamilton is one of four 418-foot National Security Cutters homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. NSCs are a world-wide deployable asset that supports Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and national objectives through drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, national defense, search and rescue, fisheries enforcement, and national intelligence collection. The ship's crew of

approximately 150 personnel leverage robust sensor, electronic, engineering, weapons systems, pursuit boats and aircraft to complete their missions anywhere.

For more information, follow U.S. Coast Guard Southeast on [“X” \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and find U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Southwest on [“X” \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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

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**Coast Guard Heavy Icebreaker  
Departs Seattle for  
Deployment Bound for  
Antarctica**



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) transits across Elliott Bay after departing Coast Guard Base Seattle, Washington, Nov. 22, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Briana Carter)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Nov. 26, 2024

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew departed Seattle, Friday, beginning their deployment to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze.

Operation Deep Freeze (ODF) is an annual joint military mission to resupply the United States Antarctic stations in support of the National Science Foundation (NSF), the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP). This marks the 28th year that the Polar Star has supported ODF.

Each year, the Polar Star breaks a navigable channel through the ice, allowing fuel and supply ships to reach McMurdo Station, which is the largest Antarctic station and the logistics hub of the USAP.

“I am thrilled to lead Polar Star back to Antarctica for ODF

25. After months of pre-deployment preparation and working together through various challenges, the cutter and crew are ready to embark on this enduring and critical mission,” said Capt. Jeff Rasnake, Polar Star’s commanding officer. “I couldn’t be prouder of this crew’s tremendous dedication and teamwork. They have met or exceeded all my expectations in the maintenance and training phases and continue to push themselves to build upon those successes as we now shift into the cutter’s operations phase.”

The U.S. Coast Guard is recapitalizing its polar icebreaker fleet to ensure continued access to the polar regions and to protect the country’s economic, environmental, and national security interests in the high latitudes. Each year, the Polar Star’s crew commits significant time and effort preparing the 48-year-old cutter for the annual deployment in support of ODF. This year the Polar Star completed the fourth of five planned phases of the [service life extension project \(SLEP\)](#).

The U.S. Coast Guard provides direct logistical support to the NSF and maintains a regional presence that preserves Antarctica as a scientific refuge working under Joint Task Force-Support Forces Antarctica (JTF-SFA). JTF-SFA provides Department of Defense support to the NSF and the USAP through ODF. Every year, a joint and total force team works together to complete a successful ODF season. Active, Guard, Reserve service members from the U.S. Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, and Navy work together to forge a strong JTF-SFA that continues the proud tradition of U.S. military support to the USAP.