

# Coast Guard Offloads \$4.3 M in Seized Cocaine, Transfers Smugglers to DEA Custody



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos interdicted a drug smuggling vessel in which the crew seized 176 kilograms of cocaine and apprehended two suspected smugglers off the coast of Rincon, Puerto Rico, Sept. 28, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Oct. 2, 2024

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos offloaded 388 pounds (176 kgs) of seized cocaine and transferred custody of two smugglers to DEA Special Agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Sunday.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts in support of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force, while the seized cocaine is estimated to have a wholesale value of \$4.8 million dollars. The seized cocaine is estimated to have a wholesale value of \$4.3 million dollars.

The apprehended smugglers are U.S. citizens, who face federal prosecution in Puerto Rico on criminal charges including conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance aboard a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. The charges carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Helena B. Daniel and Max Pérez-Bouret, Chief of the Transnational Organized Crime Section are prosecuting the case.

During the morning of September 28, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft detected a suspicious 22-foot sport-craft vessel in international waters navigating towards Rincón, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Joseph Tezanos that arrived on scene and stopped the suspect vessel. Once alongside the suspect vessel, the Coast Guard crew located 142 brick-sized packages of suspected contraband inside the vessel, which tested positive for cocaine. The two persons onboard the vessel were arrested.

“I am extremely proud of my crew for their response and professionalism in disrupting organized crime within U.S. waters,” said Lt. Kali B. Carmine, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos, commanding officer. “This successful interdiction and seizure underscore the collaboration and commitment of our federal, local, and regional partners in countering the flow

of narcotics within the Caribbean, specifically the Mona Passage.”

“I congratulate the United States Coast Guard personnel for this successful interdiction of an international drug smuggling venture,” said United States Attorney W. Stephen Muldrow. “We greatly appreciate the U.S. Coast Guard’s unwavering support and dedication to keeping Puerto Rico and our nation safe.”

“This operation underscores the incredible power of collaboration between agencies like the DEA, Coast Guard, and our federal and local partners. It is through this unified effort that we can effectively combat transnational criminal organizations and disrupt their illegal activities. The teamwork demonstrated in this case is a shining example of how, when we come together with a shared mission, we strengthen our ability to protect the citizens of Puerto Rico the U.S. mainland and abroad from the scourge of drug trafficking. These partnerships are not just critical—they are the cornerstone of our success in keeping our communities safe,” said Denise Foster, Special Agent in Charge, DEA Caribbean Division.

This interdiction, seizure and prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations. The specific mission of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF) is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations. The CCSF is comprised of agents and officers from the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland

Security Investigations, United States Coast Guard Investigative Service, and United States Marshals Service, and prosecution is being led by the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos is 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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## **USCGC Oliver Berry Returns Home Following 46-day Operation Blue Pacific Patrol in Oceania**



A U.S. Coast Guard boat crew and boarding team from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry (WPC 1124) approaches a foreign fishing vessel to conduct a joint boarding inspection with members of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission on the high seas in Oceania, Sept. 22, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard)

From Coast Guard District 14 External Affairs, Oct. 1, 2024

HONOLULU – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry (WPC 1124) returned to Honolulu Friday after completing a 46-day patrol in Oceania.

The Oliver Berry crew departed Coast Guard Base Honolulu in August and traveled more than 7,600 nautical miles from the Hawaiian Islands to the west coast of Fiji. The crew conducted the patrol in support of Operation Blue Pacific, Coast Guard District 14's overarching, multi-mission endeavor promoting security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania.

The crew's efforts included enhancing maritime domain awareness, combatting illegal fishing activities across Oceania, and strengthening relationships with partners in the region. During Oliver Berry's patrol, the cutter's crew enacted two bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements with Fiji and Samoa.

While in Fiji, the crew exercised the shiprider provision of the bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement by hosting local law enforcement officers from the Fiji Revenue and Customs Service, Ministry of Fisheries, and the Navy, who conducted boardings in Fiji's archipelagic waters. The shipriders patrolled both the east and northwestern side of Fiji near the Yasawa Island chain group. While aboard the Oliver Berry, the shipriders conducted 35 boardings on recreational vessels, sailing vessels, and commercial fishing vessels, allowing Fiji to monitor and protect their archipelagic waters from potential illicit maritime activity.

Following operations in Fiji, the cutter patrolled in the vicinity of Samoa, exercising an enhanced bilateral maritime law enforcement agreement for the first time to detect and monitor vessels actively engaged in fishing in their Exclusive Economic Zone.

Additionally, the Oliver Berry crew conducted two Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission boardings in the Convention Area to identify and counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activity.

During their patrol, the cutter's crew moored in Pago Pago, American Samoa, Nadi, Fiji, and Apia, Samoa. In Apia, the crew participated in multiple community relations events, including subject matter exchanges with the First Canoe Club and the Paddling Club. During a [Partnership in Education](#) event at a local school, the Oliver Berry crew held a first aid and CPR demonstration, demonstrating basic life-saving techniques. The

crew also hosted the entire Samoa School of Maritime Training to show the students life on the Oliver Berry and convey the cutter's capabilities.

“The crew of the Oliver Berry was grateful for the opportunity to operate with our counterparts in Oceania,” said Lt. Jasen Kingsley, commanding officer of the Oliver Berry. “We look forward to strengthening our partnerships in the future, as these relationships are essential to maintaining maritime safety, security and stewardship. This patrol would not have been possible without the outstanding preparations, efforts, time and dedication of all the crew, as well as the support from their families.”

Commissioned in 2017, the Oliver Berry is one of six Fast Response Cutters stationed across the Coast Guard's Fourteenth District. The crew provides year-round search and rescue and maritime law enforcement coverage across a 15-million square mile area of responsibility, demonstrating the U.S. Coast Guard's enduring commitment to our partner nations across Oceania.

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## **U.S. Coast Guard Encounters Joint Chinese Coast Guard, Russian Border Guard Patrol in Bering Sea**



An HC-130J Super Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak observes two Russian Border Guard ships and two Chinese Coast Guard ships approximately 440 miles southwest of St. Lawrence Island Sept. 28, 2024. This marked the northernmost location where Chinese Coast Guard vessels have been observed by the U.S. Coast Guard. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard 17<sup>th</sup> District, Oct. 1, 2024

JUNEAU, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard located four vessels from the Russian Border Guard and Chinese Coast Guard conducting a joint patrol in the Bering Sea, Saturday.

While patrolling the maritime boundary between the United States and Russia on routine patrol in the Bering Sea, a HC-130J Super Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air

Station Kodiak observed two Russian Border Guard ships and two Chinese Coast Guard ships approximately 440 miles southwest of St. Lawrence Island.

The vessels were transiting in formation in a northeast direction, remaining approximately five miles inside the Russian Exclusive Economic Zone. This marked the northernmost location where Chinese Coast Guard vessels have been observed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

“This recent activity demonstrates the increased interest in the Arctic by our strategic competitors,” said Rear Adm. Megan Dean, commander of the 17th Coast Guard District. “The demand for Coast Guard services across the region continues to grow, requiring continuous investment in our capabilities to meet our strategic competitors’ presence and fulfill our statutory missions across an expanding operational area.”

The HC-130 aircrew operated under Operation Frontier Sentinel, an operation designed to meet presence with presence when strategic competitors operate in and around U.S. waters. The Coast Guard’s presence strengthens the international rules-based order and promotes the conduct of operations in a manner that follows international law and norms.

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## **USCGC Northland Returns Home After 67-day Patrol to Support Operation Nanook**



Coast Guard Cutter Northland (WMEC 904) crew members and an Air Station Cape Cod MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew conduct a medevac of an injured fisherman, Sept. 18, 2024, while underway in the Atlantic Ocean. The Coast Guard transported the fisherman to a higher level of care. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Anthony Randisi)  
From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Oct. 1, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Northland (WMEC 904) returned to their homeport of Portsmouth, Saturday, following a 67-day deployment in the North Atlantic Ocean and Arctic region.

Northland's patrol of the high northern latitudes directly supported the U.S. Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy and strengthened international relations with allies during Operation Nanook Tuugaalik 2024, a Canadian-led military exercise committed to furthering safety and sustainability of the Arctic region.

“This deployment has been an incredible experience for the crew of Northland,” said Cmdr. Brian Gismervik, commanding officer of Northland. “Our participation alongside Arctic region partners has emphasized the importance of these operations and showcased the powerful capabilities a combined force can bring to address the evolving challenges and opportunities in the rapidly changing high-latitude environment.”

While deployed, Northland’s crew conducted training operations with the Royal Canadian Navy, Danish Royal Navy, and U.S. Navy to include live-fire gunnery exercises, towing and formation steaming, medical facility open houses, and cross-deck trainings in maritime law enforcement, engineering, and deck operations.

Northland’s crew also conducted Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) living marine resources (LMR) inspections alongside fisheries officers from the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as U.S. Coast Guard District 1 LMR boardings, combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU-F) firsthand, culminating in over 50 hours and four violations.

The Northland’s crew sailed more than 8,500 nautical miles while strengthening ties with partner nations through a series of port calls. Northland’s crew visited Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, transiting alongside the Canadian Royal Navy HMCS Margaret Brooke (AOPV 431), Royal Danish Navy HDMS Lauge Koch (P572), and U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) toward high-northern latitudes, where the Northland and Delbert D. Black traveled through the Nuup Kangerlua Fjord, near Nuuk, Greenland. Afterward, the Northland steamed to St. John’s, Newfoundland, Canada, before returning to the United States.

On Sept. 18, Northland launched a small boat crew in response to a report of a commercial fisherman who suffered broken

ribs. Coordinating with the fishing vessel, Coast Guard First District watchstanders and a Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod aircrew, the boat crew embarked the man aboard, transited with him back to the Northland and conducted a medevac aboard an Air Station Cape Cod MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter to a higher level of care facility.

Northland is the fourth Famous-class medium endurance cutter in the Coast Guard fleet, homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The medium endurance cutters execute many missions to include search and rescue, law enforcement, drug and migrant interdiction, homeland security, and defense operations. Northland is under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Based in Portsmouth, Virginia, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goatguard.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](#).

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**AUSTAL USA Continues  
Expansion of Mobile Shipyard  
to Support Submarine  
Industrial Base**



NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (May 15, 2024) The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Toledo (SSN 769) is seen at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, May 15, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Shelby West)  
From Austal USA, Sept. 23, 2024

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA has been awarded a \$450 million contract by General Dynamics Electric Boat for the expansion of production capacity in support of the U.S. Navy submarine industrial base (SIB). This award will enable Austal USA to expand infrastructure in its Mobile, Ala. shipyard to support the U.S. Navy goal of delivering one Columbia-class and two Virginia-class submarines annually.

The award provides funding for Austal USA to design, build, and outfit a new module fabrication and outfitting facility in its Mobile shipyard. Construction of the new building will start this fall and be complete in 2026. When fully operational, the building will support approximately 1,000 new jobs at Austal USA and provide capability to fabricate, outfit, and transport submarine components.

This award follows the July 2024 groundbreaking for a 192,000 square-foot final new assembly bay designed to support construction of large steel ships for the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard. Together, these projects represent over \$700 million in facility expansion in the Mobile shipyard. When both projects are operational they will bring 2,000 new jobs to the region.

“This contract award further solidifies Austal USA’s strong industrial partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat to increase capacity in the submarine industrial base,” stated Austal USA President Michelle Kruger. “I’m proud of how the Austal USA team has responded to the call to accelerate production of Columbia and Virginia-class submarines, which is critical to our Nation’s defense.”

The construction of these two buildings continues Austal USA’s transformation into a shipyard with a diverse and sustainable portfolio. The projects increase capacity and capability enabling Austal USA to support a wider range of customer requirements.

“This award represents another significant milestone in the transformation of our Mobile facility to meet the diverse needs of our Navy and Coast Guard customers,” commented Larry Ryder, Austal USA Vice President of Business Development and External Affairs. “Since we broke ground for our steel panel line in 2021 we have continuously worked to grow the capacity and capability of our Mobile shipyard leveraging our highly skilled workforce.”

The new submarine manufacturing building will provide 369,600 square feet of production capacity on eight and a half acres, significantly expanding the current submarine module manufacturing capacity in the Mobile facility. The building will be designed and built to leverage Industry 4.0

technologies, including extended reality, cloud computing, horizontal and vertical integration, big data analysis, autonomous robots, and simulation with a digital twin. The project will include a material storage area, machine shop, and assembly area and waterfront improvements to support the transport of complete modules by barge.

“This announcement further solidifies Austal USA’s commitment to the Mobile region and underscores their confidence in our highly skilled workforce,” said Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson. “This expansion will bring 1,000 jobs to the area and take advanced manufacturing opportunities to the next level for our citizens and the City of Mobile. We are excited to see Austal USA’s future success and their continued support of U.S. naval defense.”

News of this award follows several recent announcements regarding major milestone achievements at Austal USA. In August the company celebrated start of construction on the Coast Guard’s Heritage-class Offshore Patrol Cutter, USCG Pickering (OPC 919), and, a couple of weeks ago, the laying of the keel for the final Navy Expeditionary Fast Transport vessel, Lansing (EPF 16), being built by Austal USA. These milestone achievements, coupled with the successful startup of Austal USA’s new steel panel line in mid-2022, are all signs of a bright future for the maritime industry along the Alabama Gulf Coast.

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## **USCG Strengthens Partnership**

# with Palau to Combat Illicit Maritime Activity



In a recent joint operation, which occurred Sept. 6-8, 2024, a U.S. Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules and aircrew embarked Palauan enforcement officials and Coast Guard specialists to patrol over 6,000 miles, identifying numerous illegal fish aggregation devices (FADs) and sighting vessels in and around Palau's EEZ. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam, Sept. 17, 2024

KOROR, Republic of Palau – At the request of the Republic of Palau and in response to their concerns of potential illicit maritime activity occurring in Palau's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam (FMSG) and U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point dispatched

personnel and equipment to enact the agreement between the U.S. and Palau Concerning Operational Cooperation to Suppress Illicit Transnational Maritime Activity (U.S. – Palau Bilateral Agreement), and in doing so enhanced Palau's maritime domain awareness.

In the recent joint operation, which occurred Sept. 6-8, 2024, a U.S. Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules and aircrew embarked Palauan enforcement officials and U.S. Coast Guard specialists to patrol over 6,000 miles, identifying numerous illegal fish aggregation devices (FADs) and sighting vessels in and around Palau's EEZ.

Exercising provisions of the U.S.–Palau bilateral agreement, the operation employed a Palauan air rider, Palau's Joint Operations Center (JOC), and U.S. Coast Guard liaisons to maximize technologies and maritime domain awareness tools to monitor and patrol Palau's waters and domestic fishing zones.

“Our collaboration with the Palauan air rider and Palau's Division of Marine Law Enforcement was instrumental in swiftly identifying illicit activities within Palau's waters. This mission demonstrates the power of partnership and shared commitment to protecting maritime resources and maintaining sovereignty,” said Lt. Cmdr. Derek Wallin, the U.S. Coast Guard Compact of Free Association maritime advisor.

U.S. Coast Guard liaison officers collaborated with the Division of Marine Law Enforcement and the Joint Operations Center in Koror to enhance maritime domain awareness alongside a U.S. Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules aircrew deployed to Palau by the U.S. Coast Guard 14th District. The U.S. Embassy in Koror coordinated the request from the government of Palau.

“It was fantastic to have members of the Republic of Palau's maritime law enforcement team aboard the aircraft, who've previously sailed with us on our Fast Response Cutters and

participated in Operation Irensia in Guam earlier this year,” said Wallin. “The participation underscores the deep and enduring ties between our teams, demonstrating the strength of our partnership and our shared commitment to protecting Palau’s waters and the wider Blue Pacific.”

### Operational Highlights

– U.S. Coast Guard Assets and Personnel Involved:

– 03 U.S. Coast Guard liaison officers and specialists

– Aircraft and aircrew from U.S. Coast Guard Hercules from Oahu, Hawai’i

– Enacted Agreement:

– Exercising the U.S. and Palau agreement to suppress illicit transnational maritime activity in and around Palau’s EEZ and territorial waters.

– Results:

– Approximately 50 hours of JOC watchstanding to coordinate and analyze maritime domain awareness efforts.

– Hercules aircrew patrolled approximately 2,000 miles daily.

– Hercules aircrew patrolled nearby high seas and verified 12 vessels and additional radar signatures of FADs along the Palau EEZ.

One of the Palauan air riders described the operation as an unforgettable experience, praising the smooth flight, the professionalism of the aircrew, and the lasting memories made during the mission. The reports gathered during these operations will guide future efforts by Palauan and U.S. Coast Guard surface asset crews to locate, dismantle, and deter illegal fishing operations. This collaborative mission emphasizes the importance of aerial surveillance and the enduring U.S.-Palau partnership in safeguarding sovereignty and promoting good governance across the Blue Pacific.

“The U.S. Coast Guard is proud to work alongside the Republic of Palau in this vital effort. The value of aerial support cannot be overstated, and together, we are strengthening maritime governance to ensure a secure and prosperous future for the Pacific. Our enduring partnership reflects our mutual dedication to protecting these vital waters from exploitation,”

said Capt. Robert Kistner, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia.

The U.S. Coast Guard remains dedicated to supporting Palau’s maritime security through continued aerial, surface, and information-sharing operations, fostering a secure maritime environment for all who rely on the region’s resources.

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## **U.S. Coast Guard Encounters Russian Naval Vessels Near Point Hope, Alaska**



The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) encountered and shadowed four Russian Federation Navy (RFN) vessels 57 miles northwest of Point Hope, Alaska, Sept. 15, 2024. The Russian Surface Action Group consisted of a Severodvinsk-class submarine, a Dolgorukiy-class submarine, a Steregushchiy- class Frigate, and a Seliva-class tug. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

U.S. Coast Guard 17th District, Sept. 16, 2024

JUNEAU, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard located four Russian Federation Navy (RFN) vessels Sunday, 57 miles northwest of Point Hope, Alaska.

While on a routine patrol in the Chukchi Sea, the crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) observed the RFN vessels transiting southeast along the Russian side of the Maritime Boundary Line (MBL).

The crew of the Stratton witnessed the RFN vessels cross the MBL into the U.S. Arctic and moved to observe the vessels. The Russian vessels were assessed to be avoiding sea ice on the Russian side of the MBL and operated in accordance with

international rules and customs as they transited approximately 30 miles into the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.

“We are actively patrolling our maritime border in the Bering Sea, Bering Strait, and Chukchi Sea, with our largest and most capable cutters and aircraft, to protect U.S. sovereign interests, U.S. fish stocks, and to promote international maritime norms,” said Rear Adm. Megan Dean, Commander of Coast Guard District Seventeen. “Coast Guard Cutter Stratton ensured there were no disruptions to U.S. interests.”

The Russian Surface Action Group consisted of a Severodvinsk-class submarine, Dolgorukiy-class submarine, Steregushchiy-class Frigate, and Seliva-class tug.

The Stratton is patrolling under Operation Frontier Sentinel, an operation designed to meet presence with presence when strategic competitors operate in and around U.S. waters. The Coast Guard’s presence strengthens the international rules-based order and promotes the conduct of operations in a manner that follows international law and norms.

Coast Guard Cutter Stratton is a 418-foot legend class national security cutter homeported in Alameda, Calif.

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# **USCGC Oliver Henry Crew Completes Patrol Under Operation Rematau**

**U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam**



Ensign Matt Go and Chief Robert Etiuweliug, chief of the community on Satawal, take a moment for a photo on the bridge of the USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140), offshore of Satawal, Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia. *U.S. Coast Guard | Lt. Ray Cerrato*

SANTA RITA, Guam – The USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) concluded a strategic patrol on Sept. 2, 2024, under Operation Rematau, marking significant achievements in maritime security and regional cooperation in the U.S. and Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Exclusive Economic Zones.

The crew successfully executed a series of operations that reinforced their readiness and operational capabilities. At the forefront of the patrol's accomplishments was the rescue of six fishermen whose vessel became disabled near Satawal, FSM. This operation underscored the crew's readiness, capability to respond effectively to maritime emergencies, and the value of using personal locator beacons.

“The rescue operation was a testament to the skill and preparedness of our crew,” said Lieutenant Ray Cerrato, commanding officer of the Oliver Henry. “Navigating through challenging conditions to ensure the safety of these individuals highlights our commitment to the core values of the Coast Guard. We encourage mariners to take personal locator beacons and keep an eye out for our white hulls and blue lights as we seek to bring them home safely.”

During the patrol, the crew of the USCGC Oliver Henry collaborated diplomatically and operationally with local maritime authorities and other stakeholders in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. These engagements helped reinforce mutual understanding and coordination capabilities, laying a stronger foundation for future joint operations. The mere presence of the USCGC Oliver Henry in critical maritime zones served as a deterrent to potential illicit activities. Regular patrols signal ongoing commitment and surveillance, discouraging illegal activities through visible enforcement presence.

The crew worked to enhance communication and information-sharing systems with regional partners through relationship strengthening. By improving these channels, Oliver Henry helped ensure that real-time data and insights could be shared more effectively, allowing for quicker responses to potential IUU fishing activities. The patrol also allowed the crew to follow up on previous commitments and relief efforts, such as those conducted in Satawal. These follow-ups help maintain strong community relations and ensure continued cooperation, which is vital for addressing broader maritime issues through a united front.

Throughout the patrol, the crew participated in rigorous training exercises, including gunnery exercise drills, where they expended both .50 caliber and 25mm ammunition to ensure proficiency in using and maintaining the weapons systems. These exercises ensure the crew remains at peak readiness.

“This patrol exemplifies the spirit and dedication of the Oliver Henry crew,” said Captain Robert Kistner, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. “Their ability to adapt and overcome challenges while achieving mission objectives reinforces our role as a steadfast protector in the Pacific.”

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## **Coast Guard Offloads More Than \$54 million in Illegal Narcotics Interdicted in Caribbean Sea**



Bales of illegal narcotics, worth an estimated \$54 million, are staged for an offload by crew members of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616) in Port Everglades, Florida, Sept. 23, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Rodriguez)

Sept. 10, 2024

## **Coast Guard offloads more than \$54 million in illegal narcotics interdicted in Caribbean Sea**

Coast Guard 7th District, Sept. 10, 2024

MIAMI – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence offloaded more than 4,125 pounds of cocaine with an assessed street value of approximately \$54 million in Port Everglades, Monday.

Coast Guard crews, working alongside interagency and international partners, seized the illegal drugs in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea during three separate interdictions.

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdictions:

- Royal Navy ship HMS Trent (P 244)
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific (PAC-TACLET)
- U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier (WPC 1115)
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations (CBP-AMO)
- Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South)

Along with the illicit narcotics, 11 suspected smugglers were apprehended and will face prosecution in federal courts by the U.S. Department of Justice.

“I am extremely proud of our crew’s tenacity and professionalism, coupled with outstanding coordination with Coast Guard aircrews, during this complex counter-drug mission,” said Lt. Matthew Carmine, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier commanding officer. “Their steadfast efforts, along with those of foreign allies and partner agencies, continue to prove vital to countering drug trafficking organizations and safeguarding the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. The Joint Interagency Task Force South in Key West, Florida 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 Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard’s Seventh 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>.

For breaking news, follow us on [“X” \(formerly Twitter\)](#). For additional information, find us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goatguard.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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# Austal USA Starts Construction of Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Cutter



Representatives of Austal USA and U.S. Coast Guard gathered to celebrate the start of construction on the future USCGC Pickering. (Photo from Austal USA)

From Austal USA, Aug. 29, 2024

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA celebrated the start of construction on the first U.S. Coast Guard Heritage-class Offshore Patrol

Cutter (OPC) to be built at the company's Mobile, Ala. ship manufacturing facility today. Pickering (WSMM 919) is the first OPC being built under a contract that includes up to 11 cutters and has a potential value of \$3.3 billion.

Austal USA was honored to have Coast Guard Rear Admiral Michael Campbell as a key speaker at today's event. The OPC program will recapitalize the Coast Guard's aging medium endurance cutters and provide a capability bridge between the service's national security cutters, which operate in the open ocean, and the fast response cutters which operate closer to shore.

"Austal USA is excited to begin construction on the first of these high priority cutters for the U.S. Coast Guard," commented Dave Growden, vice president of new construction programs. "This contract exemplifies the flexibility of our workforce and importance of our steel panel line to Austal USA's future success. Our multi-talented shipbuilders are well prepared to demonstrate their capability to produce the same high-quality steel ship as they have been producing for our aluminum programs."

The 360-foot OPC will support the national security strategy for maintaining the nation's economic, social, environmental and military security mission areas. The OPC will typically conduct its primary missions beyond 12 nautical miles from shore and will be employed anywhere the national interests require the Coast Guard's unique blend of authorities and capabilities.

OPCs meet the service's long-term need for cutters capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups to conduct law enforcement, search and rescue, homeland security and defense missions.

OPC will provide the majority of the Coast Guard's offshore presence conducting a variety of missions including law

enforcement, drug and migrant interdiction, and search and rescue. With a range of 10,200 nautical miles at 14 knots and a 60-day endurance period, each OPC will be capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups, serving as a mobile command and control platform for surge operations such as hurricane response, mass migration incidents and other events. The cutters will also support Arctic objectives by helping regulate and protect emerging commerce and energy exploration in Alaska.

Through continual capital investments, over \$500 million to date, Austal USA has expanded its capability and capacity to enable concurrent production of aluminum and steel ships. The company recently broke ground on a new assembly building which will provide 192,000 square feet of new covered manufacturing space. The building will consist of three bays, two of which will be sized specifically to erect the OPC.