

USCGC Reliance Returns to Florida After 60-day Operation Vigilant Sentry Patrol



Coast Guard Cutter Reliance (WMEC 615) deck crew members handle line during towing operations with the cutter's small boat, Oct. 11, 2024, while at sea in the Windward Passage. Reliance's crew completed a 60-day patrol in the Seventh Coast Guard District area of responsibility to conduct maritime safety and security missions. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign Sarah Kaleta)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Nov. 7, 2024

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Reliance (WMEC 615) returned to their home port in Pensacola, Oct. 28, following a 60-day patrol in the Windward Passage.

Throughout their deployment in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, the crew's primary missions were to protect the safety of life at sea and deter dangerous and unlawful migrant ventures bound for the United States. Deployed in support of the Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) initiative Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS), Reliance's crew worked alongside additional Coast Guard and partner assets to dissuade maritime migration and enforce immigration laws on the high seas.

While on patrol, Reliance's crew interdicted four overloaded and unsafe vessels, ultimately saving the lives of 441 Haitian and Dominican migrants, including many infants and children.

During two hazardous and similar cases, Reliance's crew located the unseaworthy migrant voyages in the dark of night and evacuated nearly 200 migrants from each vessel. Crew members moved the migrants to safety while preventing their grossly overloaded vessels from capsizing. After transferring the migrants from their unsafe vessels aboard the cutter, the crew provided humanitarian aid and care until the migrants could be safely repatriated to their countries of origin.

Of note, this was an historic patrol for the Coast Guard's oldest medium endurance cutter; after 60 years in service, this was Reliance's first patrol with a fully mixed-gender crew. Reliance recently completed a project to provide onboard accommodations for female enlisted crew members, increasing opportunities for female Coast Guard members to serve afloat.

"I am extremely proud of and have been continually impressed by our crew during my first deployment onboard Reliance," said Cmdr. Aaron Kowalczyk, commanding officer of Reliance. "Their tireless effort and relentless compassion for the Coast Guard's humanitarian mission was inspiring and ultimately resulted in saving hundreds of lives while deterring illicit

maritime migration. As Reliance enters her seventh decade of service, the ship and especially this crew remain 'Semper Paratus – Always Ready' for the next mission.”

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

OVS is the 2004 DHS plan that provides the structure for deploying joint air and surface assets and personnel to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean corridor of the United States. Its primary objectives are to protect life at sea while deterring and dissuading mass maritime migration alongside our federal, state, and local partners.

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

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

Bollinger Shipyards Delivers

FRC 1158 John Witherspoon to U.S. Coast Guard



Photo credit: Bollinger Shipyards
From Bollinger Shipyards

LOCKPORT, La., – (November 7, 2024) – Bollinger Shipyards (“Bollinger”) today announced the delivery of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) John Witherspoon at Coast Guard Sector Key West. This is the 58th Fast Response Cutter (FRC) delivered under the U.S. Coast Guard’s current program and the 184th vessel built by Bollinger for the U.S. Coast Guard over a 40-year partnership and will be homeported in Kodiak, Alaska.

“We are honored to deliver John Witherspoon to the U.S. Coast Guard, continuing our proud tradition of providing high-

quality, mission-ready vessels,” said Bollinger President & CEO Ben Bordelon. “The FRC platform has proven itself time and again as a cornerstone of the Coast Guard’s fleet, excelling in a wide range of operational conditions. We’re confident John Witherspoon will serve its crew well in their mission of defending our nation’s national security interests over a vast and challenging area of responsibility.”

The John Witherspoon will be homeported in Kodiak, Alaska. This vessel is the fourth FRC to join the fleet in Alaskan waters, reinforcing maritime security and bolstering the U.S. Coast Guard’s ability to respond swiftly to emerging threats and protect vital infrastructure.

The Coast Guard’s Fiscal Year 2025 Budget to Congress includes procuring two more FRCs to provide increased Coast Guard presence and engagement with allied countries in the Indo-Pacific region. As negotiations on federal appropriations continue, the future of the FRC program holds significant weight for both national security and the economy. The House of Representatives has approved funding for four additional Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) in its defense appropriations bill, providing a boost to the U.S. Coast Guard’s fleet expansion. However, the Senate has yet to reach a consensus on future funding levels for the FRC program, leaving the long-term prospects for the program and the over 600 jobs that it supports in Lockport, La. uncertain.

Bordelon continued, “With over 600 jobs at our Lockport facility hanging in the balance, we’re not just building ships – we’re supporting families and communities throughout South Louisiana. Congress has long supported the FRC program for its essential role in defending our coastline, but also for the livelihoods it sustains in our community. We are hopeful that these efforts will continue to receive robust bipartisan, bicameral support as Congress finalizes appropriations.”

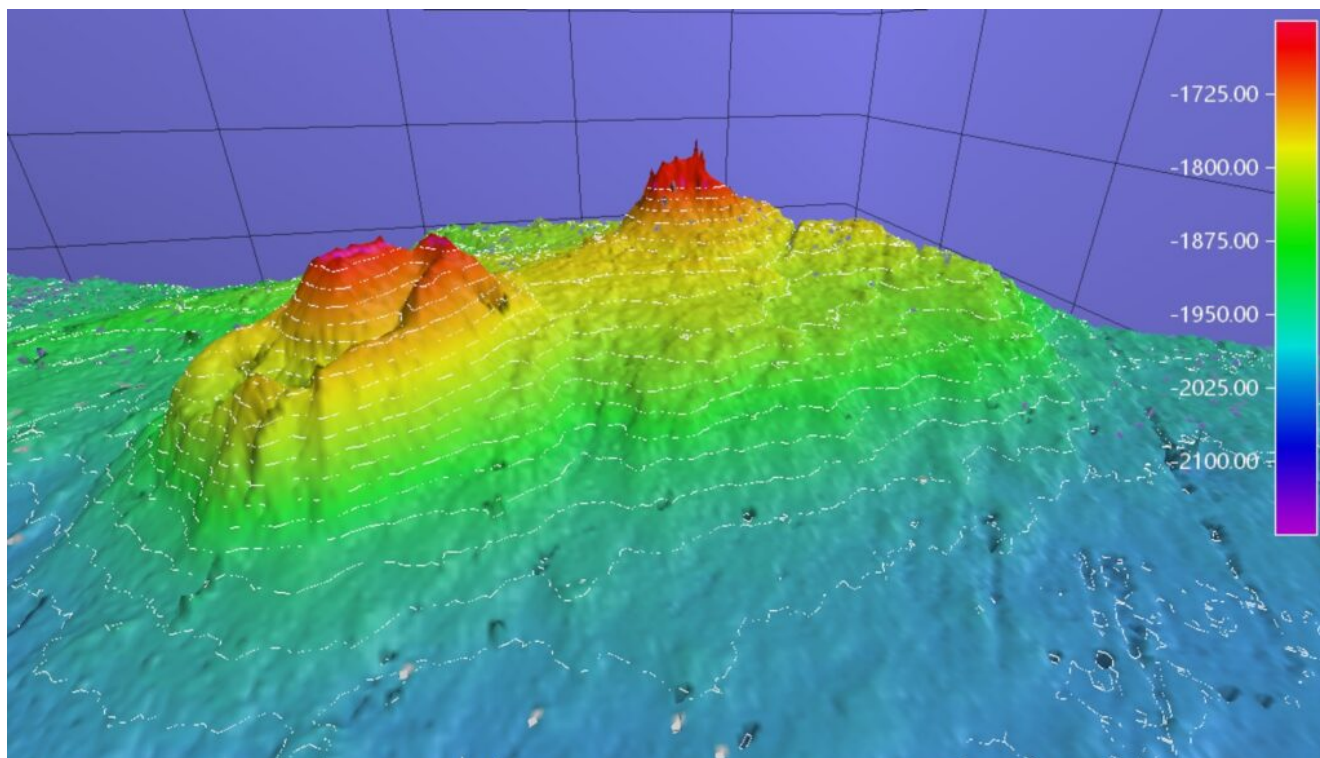
Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who

distinguished themselves in the line of duty. This vessel is named after Captain John Witherspoon, who served as commanding officer of cutters Mallow, Valiant, and Dependable. Notably, he was the first African American officer to command a shore unit when he assumed command of the Houston/Galveston Vessel Traffic Service. Upon taking command of Mallow in 1982, Witherspoon became the second ever African American officer to command a Coast Guard cutter. His legacy is further honored through the Captain John G. Witherspoon Inspirational Leadership Award, which recognizes officers who exemplify inspirational leadership, mentorship, and dedication to Coast Guard values. Captain Witherspoon upheld the highest traditions of the Coast Guard as an inspirational role model and mentor for Coast Guard men and women.

ABOUT THE FAST RESPONSE CUTTER PLATFORM

The FRC is an operational “game changer,” according to senior Coast Guard officials. FRCs are consistently being deployed in support of the full range of missions within the United States Coast Guard and other branches of our armed services. This is due to its exceptional performance, expanded operational reach and capabilities, and ability to transform and adapt to the mission. FRCs have conducted operations as far as the Marshall Islands – a 4,400 nautical mile trip from their homeport. Measuring in at 154-feet, FRCs have a flank speed of 28 knots, state of the art C4ISR suite (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance), and stern launch and recovery ramp for a 26-foot, over-the-horizon interceptor cutter boat.

USCGC Healy Crew and Science Teams Discover Volcano-Like Underwater Feature



Bathymetric data of volcano-like feature discovered by science teams aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) on the continental slope along Northern Alaska during the Healy's Phase 1 Arctic 2024 Fall Deployment supporting Alaskan Arctic Coast Port Access Routing Study and Opportunistic Mapping Initiative (Image courtesy of NOAA)

From U.S. Coast Guard 17th District, Nov. 7, 2024

NOME, Alaska – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) and embarked science teams completed the first two phases of the icebreaker's 2024 Arctic Fall deployment Sunday and continue operations offshore of western and northern Alaska.

Healy's crew and the science teams conducted multiple scientific and seafloor mapping missions, which resulted in the discovery of a subsea volcano-like feature during the

first phase.

The first two phases featured a collaboration between the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the University of New Hampshire.

The interagency science mission to the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas north of Alaska combined oceanographic buoy deployments with a coordinated mapping effort to survey uncharted waters and acquire depth data along a portion of the Alaskan Arctic Coast Port Access Route Study (AACPARS) corridor, a Coast Guard-proposed preferred vessel route from Utqiagvik, Alaska, to the demarcation point of the border between U.S. and Canada.

During the mission's first phase, the science party discovered a volcano-like feature rising 500 meters from the seabed, approximately 1,600 meters below the surface at its shallowest depth. Upon further review of water column data collected at the site, the science team detected a potential gas plume rising from just above the feature to near the water's surface. The feature poses no risk to navigation as it is well below navigable draft of the largest modern vessels.

"Although data analysis is ongoing, these findings are exciting and offer insight into what may exist beneath the ocean's surface, much of which is unknown in this region," said Capt. Meghan McGovern, commanding officer of NOAA Ship Fairweather and currently embarked with the Healy mapping team. "The coordination and partnerships during this mission fill critical gaps in the region for all waterway users and provide a foundation for safe navigation in the Arctic."

McGovern and a NOAA team from the Fairweather, an Alaska-based hydrographic survey vessel, joined the science party aboard Healy to support mapping coastal waters using Healy's

multibeam echo sounders for obtaining bathymetric data to provide highly accurate depths and detailed images of the sea floor and objects along the AACPARS corridor.

Healy hosted postdoctoral researchers and junior faculty members from a variety of institutions during the second phase of the Arctic deployment supporting the U.S. NSF-funded Polar Early Career Scientist Training project, with contributions from NOAA and the Coast Guard providing training and research opportunities in the operational areas of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas and within the marginal ice zone.

The time underway provided ten early career polar scientists and their mentors with at-sea training and hands-on experience for the researchers to gain the knowledge and skills that will prepare them to plan, implement, and lead future interdisciplinary scientific expeditions on U.S. Arctic vessels.

These early career scientists conducted multidisciplinary research, including mapping to fill critical bathymetric gaps and scientific sampling across various disciplines. They also developed skills in shipboard leadership, coordination, and execution.

“It’s an honor supporting such diverse research missions in the northern high latitudes while working towards enhancing navigation safety in a region where soundings are sparse,” said Healy’s Commanding Officer Capt. Michele Schallip. “As scientific interest in the Arctic Ocean Basin grows, Healy is on the front-line providing access to the scientific community facilitating Arctic research opportunities while inspiring future chief scientists. Our crew remains committed to ensuring we are ready to meet the challenges unique to operating in the austere environment to see completion of these vital missions.”

Homeported in Seattle, Healy is the Coast Guard's only icebreaker specifically designed to support research. It provides high-latitude U.S. presence and scientific access to areas too challenging for most research vessels to reach.

Coast Guard, Canadian Forces, Partners Wrap Up Operation North Pacific Guard 2024



A foreign fishing vessel discarding a finless shark carcass while conducting shark finning operations in the North Pacific, May 12, 2024. Regional Fisheries Management Organizations regulate the process of shark finning through Conservation and Management Measures. These measures require fully utilizing retained catches of sharks and limits on amounts of fins onboard in relation to those sharks. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard District 17 Oct. 29, 2024

JUNEAU, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard, Canadian forces, and international partners wrap-up Northern Pacific counter Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing patrol, Operation North Pacific Guard 2024.

Operation North Pacific Guard is an annual multi-mission effort between international partners that provides surface and air patrols and shares intelligence that guides patrol assets to detect and intercept illicit fishing activity.

The joint mission included U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak, U.S. Coast Guard District Seventeen, the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard Ship (CCGS) Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Japan Coast Guard, Fisheries Agency of Japan, and Korea Coast Guard.

As a result of the high seas patrols, air surveillance, and electronic monitoring, the joint crews identified potential instances of illegal harvesting of shark fins and dark vessels, a term for vessels that intentionally turn off their monitoring systems.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett patrolled the North Pacific for 65 days and conducted 21 high-seas boardings and inspections which detected four potential violations of conservation and management measures under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC).

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak HC-130J Super Hercules airplane crewmembers conducted five 12-day deployments near Yokota Air Base and Misawa, Japan and observed 411 vessels. The crews observed potential shark finning violations and improper fishing vessel markings on multiple vessels.

“IUU fishing is a complex and global problem that calls for an international unified response,” said Capt. Ryan Waters, chief

of enforcement for the Coast Guard's Seventeenth District. "North Pacific Guard is a prime example of a strong, sustained multi-lateral partnership to maximize the impact of collective counter-IUU fishing enforcement efforts and promote the rule of law at sea."

IUU fishing is detrimental to long-term, stable national security, international relations, and global economics. Up to 27 million tons of fish are caught illegally each year worldwide. The U.S Coast Guard leads U.S. Government efforts in multinational campaigns like North Pacific Guard that counter IUU fishing at-sea, uphold global rules-based order, and promote economic prosperity.

For breaking news, follow @USCGAlaska on X (formerly twitter)

USCGC Vigorous Returns Home Following 51-day Deployment in the Eastern Pacific Ocean



USCGC Vigorous (WMEC 627) underway in the South Florida Straits, Nov. 18, 2022. The cutter's primary missions are counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. (U.S. Coast Guard Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Payton Ray)
From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Oct. 29, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous (WMEC 627) moored at Naval Station Norfolk, Oct. 15, following a 51-day deployment in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Deployed in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South and patrolling within the Coast Guard Eleventh District area of responsibility, Vigorous' crew conducted counter-drug missions to prevent the flow of narcotics and other illicit smuggling into the United States by transnational criminal organizations.

Vigorous' crew partnered with the Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team – South's (TACLET-S) Law Enforcement Detachment 405 (LEDET 405) to detect, intercept and board

vessels suspected of illicit trafficking in the region.

During the patrol, Vigorous and LEDET 405 were successful in seizing 2,923 pounds of cocaine and detained 3 suspected smugglers, preventing an estimated \$40.4 million in drugs from hitting U.S. streets.

“Our crew has displayed an extraordinary level of dedication and resilience throughout this deployment,” said Cmdr. Todd Batten, commanding officer of Vigorous. “Their tireless efforts and strategic collaboration with our international partners have resulted in this successful interdiction and the continued strengthening of relationships with our regional allies. I am profoundly proud of each member of this team. This achievement not only enhances maritime security but also underscores the power of collective resolve against the destabilizing effects of the drug trade.”

Support from TACLET-S, which is based in Miami, improves mission capability. As part of the Coast Guard’s deployable specialized forces, LEDETs deliver boarding officer teams for high-risk maritime interdiction operations. These units are highly-skilled and experienced in counter-drug missions and enforcing U.S. law at sea.

Following patrol, Vigorous’ command and crew had the unique opportunity to share the importance of Coast Guard missions with the local community it serves. Vigorous participated in Fleet Fest 2024, which was held at Naval Station Norfolk. Joining Coast Guard Cutter Nathan Bruckenthal (WPC 1128) and U.S. Navy vessels Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gonzalez (DDG 66), the crew of Vigorous provided tours and took part in an event that hosted thousands from the local area.

Vigorous is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter commissioned in 1969. Homeported in Portsmouth, 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.

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Coast Guard Establishes First Junior ROTC Unit in New England



Rear Adm. Will Watson speaks at the commissioning ceremony for the first Coast Guard Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps unit in New England at Barnstable High School on Friday. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Chief Petty Officer Richard Brahm)
From U.S. Coast Guard 1st District, Oct. 25, 2024

BOSTON – The Coast Guard and Barnstable High School conducted a commissioning ceremony for the first Coast Guard Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) in the New England area, Friday morning.

The Coast Guard JROTC is a youth outreach program that instills the values of citizenship, service to the country, personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment in students.

During the event, Rear Adm. Will Watson, Coast Guard Director of Governmental and Public Affairs, talked about the program's objectives, curriculum and the benefits it will offer to develop service-minded citizens of character.

“The Coast Guard looks forward to this valuable partnership with Barnstable High School,” said Rear Adm. Will Watson. “We are eager to watch cadets grow from personal discipline and self-confidence to leadership and teamwork. The school’s unique values and strengths will elevate the heights to which the program and its cadets will climb.”

In 1992, the Coast Guard established its first JROTC unit in Miami. Recent legislation mandated the Coast Guard to establish and maintain one JROTC unit in every Coast Guard District by 2025.

Coast Guard Commissions Second Pacific Northwest- Based Fast Response Cutter



Coast Guard Cutter Florence Finch (WPC 1157) moves closer to the pier before mooring in its new homeport of Astoria, Ore., Aug. 17, 2024. The Florence Finch will primarily serve in the

Pacific Ocean, Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Columbia River. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer Will Kirk)

From the U.S. Coast Guard 13th District, Oct. 24, 2024

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard commissioned its 57th Fast Response Cutter during a ceremony held at Coast Guard Base Seattle, Thursday.

Coast Guard Cutter Florence Finch (WPC-1157) is the second of three planned Fast Response Cutter's (FRC) to be homeported in Astoria.

The ceremony was presided by Coast Guard Rear. Adm. Charles Fosse, 13th District Commander. Members of the Finch family were also in attendance, including the cutter's sponsor and Mrs. Finch's daughter, Mrs. Betty Murphy.

The cutter's namesake, Florence Ebersole Smith Finch, was a Filipino-American and a member of the World War II resistance against the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. During the war, she assisted the movement by diverting fuel destined for enemy use, falsifying documents for resistance members to obtain supplies, and using her position to facilitate acts of sabotage. In 1944, she was discovered and arrested, tortured, tried, and sentenced to three years of imprisonment. She remained in captivity until early 1945, when American forces liberated the Philippines.

Finch moved back to America following the war and joined the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves. Finch was awarded the Medal of Freedom in 1947 and was also awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon, the first woman to be so decorated.

During the ceremony, Florence Finch was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, which was presented to Finch's family by retired Army Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba, chairman of the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project (FilVetREP). The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest

civilian award given by the United States Congress.

“Florence Finch is a true Coast Guard and Filipino hero, and we couldn’t be prouder to honor her legacy,” said Coast Guard Vice Adm. Andrew Tiongson, Pacific Area Commander. “The cutter is now the only currently active ship in the United States military named after a Filipino-American.”

The crew of the Florence Finch will primarily operate in the Pacific Ocean, Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the Columbia River. The Sentinel-class FRC is designed for multiple missions, including search and rescue; fishery patrols; drug and migrant interdiction; ports, waterways and coastal security; and national defense.

The Coast Guard has ordered a total of 67 FRCs to replace the 1980s-era Island-class 110-foot patrol boats. The FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment to reach vessels of interest; and improved habitability and seakeeping.

The commissioning ceremony is one of the most important traditional milestones in the life of a cutter, as it represents the readiness of the cutter to conduct Coast Guard operations and marks her entry into active service.

For more information on Florence Finch, please visit the Coast Guard history website: [Florence Ebersole Smith Finch, USCGR > United States Coast Guard > All](#)

USCGC Resolute Crew Returns Home, Offloads \$115M Worth of Drugs in St. Petersburg



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Resolute unload interdicted narcotics onto Sector St. Petersburg South Moorings, Florida, Oct. 23, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Riley Perkofski)

From Public Affairs Detachment Tampa Bay, Oct. 23, 2024

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Resolute offloaded approximately 9,690 pounds of cocaine and 5,490 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated \$115 million, in their homeport of St. Petersburg, Wednesday.

In addition to the contraband, Resolute's crew previously transferred five suspected smugglers ashore to face federal prosecution by the U.S.

Department of Justice.

Resolute's crew deployed to the Caribbean Sea for 38 days in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South), an interagency and international task force that conducts counter-illicit trafficking and security cooperation operations in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. During their patrol, the Resolute crew was strategically positioned to deny drug trafficking organizations access to maritime smuggling routes from Central and South America to prevent harmful narcotics from reaching the United States.

Early in the patrol, Resolute's crew launched two small boat crews to pursue a go-fast vessel across 40 nautical miles of open ocean in six-foot seas. Despite the vessel's significant horsepower, the Resolute crew worked with a Dutch aircraft to disrupt the go-fast vessel, forcing the smugglers to jettison their illicit contraband. Two weeks later, the Resolute crew located a suspicious sailing vessel traveling through the central Caribbean. During the late-night boarding, Resolute's law enforcement boarding team discovered nearly 1,653 pounds of cocaine in a hidden compartment. The boarding team seized the contraband and detained the suspected smugglers onboard. The crew's efforts in both cases prevented an estimated \$58.1 million worth of contraband from reaching the United States.

"Time and time again, the crew demonstrated their professionalism, cohesion and excellence in mission execution," said Cmdr. Ian Starr, commanding officer of Resolute. "I am so incredibly proud of their efforts and their ability to achieve success in conditions where success is never guaranteed."

As part of the international partnerships under JIATF-South, the Resolute crew worked with the Royal Netherlands

Navy ship HNLMS Holland and their embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 102 from Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific to transfer custody of seized contraband and suspected smugglers for future prosecution in the United States. Holland's crew transferred more than 5,000 pounds of marijuana and 4,409 pounds of cocaine to Resolute, promoting diplomatic relations through the shared efforts to stem the flow of illegal narcotics through the Caribbean joint operating area.

In support of Homeland Security Task Force-Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry, Resolute's crew also worked with the crews of Coast Guard cutters William Trump and Reliance to interdict an overloaded and unseaworthy vessel with 181 migrants off the coast of Haiti. Resolute's crew worked throughout the night to safely transport Haitian migrants to Coast Guard Cutter Reliance, allowing the crew to provide timely shelter and care to dozens of men, women and children.

Resolute also conducted flight operations with an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Miami, successfully completing their Aviation Standardization Inspection. During the assessment, Resolute completed 30 helicopter evolutions including in-flight refueling, vertical replenishment and shipboard launch and recovery operations to enhance mission readiness.

The Resolute crew was permitted to return home early to reunite with their families following the devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene, but almost as soon as they arrived, they went back underway again for storm avoidance before Hurricane Milton made landfall on the west coast of Florida. The Resolute crew provided offshore search and rescue support to Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg in the wake of Hurricane Milton, along with Coast Guard Cutter Thetis and Coast Guard Cutter Pablo Valent.

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean requires a unity of effort in all phases, from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, through criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. attorneys' offices in districts across the nation. Joint Interagency Task Force-South in Key West, Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. The law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean is conducted under the authority of the [Seventh Coast Guard District](#), headquartered in Miami, and cases in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are 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.

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>.

Resolute is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. Resolute 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.go Coast Guard.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](#).

Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk Returns Home From 62-Day Migrant Interdiction Operations Patrol



A Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC 913) small boat crew rescues 25 migrants from a disabled vessel, Aug. 20, 2024, while underway in the Florida Straits. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign Brian Morel)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Oct. 23, 2024

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC 913) returned to their homeport of Key West, Oct. 11, following a 62-day migrant interdiction operations patrol in the Florida Straits.

Mohawk's crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility. While on patrol, crew members worked alongside additional Coast Guard units and partner agency crews to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

While at sea, Mohawk crew members interdicted and rescued 41 migrants from unseaworthy vessels. Of these, Mohawk's crew rescued 25 migrants aboard a single disabled vessel found taking on water in the Florida Straits on Aug. 20. Throughout the deployment, Mohawk cared for a total of 53 migrants, providing shelter, sustenance, hydration and medical care before conducting safe repatriation back to their country of origin.

On Oct. 3, Mohawk's crew conducted a rescue of four personnel stranded on the remote island of Cay Sal, Bahamas after their seaplane was disabled. Mohawk coordinated with a U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon airplane and a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane to vector in Mohawk's small boat crew for the rescue.

Most recently, the crew of Mohawk extended their deployment in response to the approach of Hurricane Milton. Mohawk sortied alongside other Key West-based Coast Guard cutters to avoid

potential storm damage and ensure response readiness after the hurricane. Mohawk's crew also conducted a tow of the Isaac Mayo during the sortie for several days of rough seas as the cutter was disabled due to scheduled maintenance.

Of note, this patrol marked a significant historical event for the Coast Guard's Famous-class medium endurance cutter fleet. Mohawk was the last in its class to fire the onboard Mk 75 mm gun weapon system. The largest caliber weapon in the Coast Guard inventory, it has been utilized by Famous-class cutters like Mohawk since they were first commissioned in the 1980's. Now, large caliber weapon systems onboard Famous-class cutters are being modernized for a service life extension program.

To successfully conduct the migrant interdiction mission, Mohawk partnered with U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations air and boat crews as well as additional Coast Guard units to include Coast Guard Cutters Charles Sexton (WPC 1108), Raymond Evans (WPC 1110), Isaac Mayo (WPC 1112), Maple (WLB 297), Coast Guard Station Key West, Coast Guard Sector Key West and Coast Guard Air Station Miami.

“Outstanding work by the Mohawk crew. I am very proud of our ability to secure our nation's maritime borders while maintaining the safety of life at sea,” said Cmdr. David Ratner, commanding officer of Mohawk. “We understand the importance of deterring unlawful and dangerous maritime migration attempts on often overloaded and unseaworthy vessels. One such vessel with 25 migrants on board was disabled with insufficient fuel to make it to land and was taking on water.”

Mohawk is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws as well as search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. Mohawk falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic

Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia. U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf.

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Coast Guard Offloads \$3.5M in Seized Cocaine, Transfers Smugglers to Puerto Rico



Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier crewmembers offload 664 pounds (301 kgs) of seized cocaine and transfer custody of six

smugglers to Coast Guard Investigative Service and FBI Special Agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Oct. 19, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Oct.22, 2024

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier offloaded 664 pounds (301 kgs) of seized cocaine and transferred custody of six smugglers to Coast Guard Investigative Service and FBI Special Agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Saturday.

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 approximately \$3.5 million.

The apprehended smugglers are facing 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 Maria L. Montañez, Deputy Chief of the Transnational Organized Crime Section are prosecuting the case.

During the afternoon of October 13, 2024, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft detected a suspicious 25-foot go-fast vessel in international waters north of Dorado, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Joseph Napier to interdict the suspect vessel. A Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine multi-role enforcement aircraft also responded and maintained aerial surveillance of the suspect vessel. Once on-scene, the cutter Joseph Napier crew launched the cutter's Over the Horizon boat to stop the suspect vessel. During the pursuit, the passengers aboard the suspect vessel were observed jettisoning suspected contraband cargo overboard. Shortly thereafter, the cutter

boat crew stopped the go-fast vessel. Following the interdiction, cutter Joseph Napier's crew recovered six bales and a single package of the jettisoned cargo which tested positive for cocaine. The six persons onboard the vessel were apprehended.

"This successful narcotics interdiction highlights the importance of interoperability with our Caribbean Corridor Strike Force and Caribbean Border Interagency Group partners." said Lt. Matthew Carmine, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier's commanding officer. "I am humbled by the professionalism and seamless coordination between multiple Coast Guard units including, Station San Juan, Air Station Miami, TACLET South, Sector San Juan Boarding Team, in conjunction with our interagency partners from Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations. Everyday my crew and I are proud to stand the watch alongside our Department of Homeland Security partners as we continue to relentlessly combat drug trafficking and illegal migration throughout the waters of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands."

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 Napier is 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.