

# Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba Completes 46-day Counter-Drug Patrol in Eastern Pacific Ocean



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba poses for a group photo on the cutter's flight deck during a contraband offload, Aug. 23, 2024, alongside select personnel from Coast Guard Cutters Spencer (WMEC 905), Legare (WMEC 912), Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, Pacific Area Tactical Law Enforcement Team, and Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command while moored to the pier in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Escanaba conducted a 46-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Aug. 29, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba

(WMEC 907) returned home to Portsmouth, Wednesday, following a 46-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

While deployed, crew members supported the Coast Guard Eleventh District, headquartered in Alameda, California, and Joint Interagency Task Force – South, headquartered in Key West, Florida.

During the patrol, Escanaba's crew disrupted illegal narcotics smuggling, interdicting 3,408 pounds of cocaine and 4,418 pounds of marijuana valued at nearly \$50 million during two separate interdictions. The drugs were offloaded in Port Everglades, Florida on Aug. 23. Additional information about Escanaba's drug offload, including photos and video, can be found [here](#).

Escanaba's drug seizures contributed directly to furthering Coast Guard objectives to combat transnational criminal organizations and enhance regional stability and security.

While at sea, Escanaba's crew was assisted by members of Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON), based in Jacksonville, Florida and members of Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET) Pacific – Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 107, based in San Diego, California.

HITRON crew members delivered air support for the use of force and enhanced long-range detection capabilities while deployed aboard Escanaba. The TACLET Pacific LEDET supplied skilled boarding personnel critical for mission execution and served as a force multiplier for other law enforcement activities.

"The crew of Escanaba and our shipmates from HITRON and TACLET are to be commended for executing a demanding mission with professionalism and precision," said Cmdr. Jared Silverman, commanding officer of Escanaba. "In concert with the Coast Guard's partner agencies and with support from Joint Interagency Task Force – South, the accomplishments of Escanaba serve as a reminder of how vital this mission is."

Escanaba is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The cutter's primary duties are counter-narcotics operations, migrant interdiction, 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.uscg.mil) 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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## **Coast Guard Cutter Campbell Returns Home Following 73-day Patrol in Windward Passage**



Coast Guard Cutter Campbell is moored to the pier, June 26, 2024, during a port-of-call in Miami, Florida. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Cmdr. Jonathan R. Harris)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Aug. 29, 2024

NEWPORT, R.I. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) returned to their home port in Newport, Wednesday, following a 73-day migrant interdiction patrol in the Windward Passage.

Campbell 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. During patrol, Campbell's crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while working to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal maritime migration ventures bound for the United States.

While deployed, Campbell served in the lead role as commander,

task unit for multiple assets operating in the Windward Passage and coordinated the employment of Coast Guard Cutters Venturous (WMEC 625), Isaac Mayo (WPC 1112), Joseph Napier (WPC 1115) and Robert Yered (WPC 1104).

During the patrol, Campbell's crew cared for and repatriated 11 Haitian migrants. In addition, the combined presence of U.S. Coast Guard assets in the Windward Passage supported the interdiction and deterrence of 643 migrants throughout Campbell's deployment.

"I am continuously impressed by the professionalism and work ethic demonstrated by the many other U.S. Coast Guard crews on cutters and aircraft that are constantly operating in the Windward Passage," said Cmdr. Jonathan Harris, commanding officer of Campbell. "Teamwork is one of our greatest strengths on Campbell, and that was a key factor in preventing unsafe migrant ventures on board overcrowded vessels in these waters."

To ensure operational readiness for this mission, the crew of Campbell trained extensively while underway with Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater and Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod. Campbell conducted bow hoisting, flight deck hoisting, helicopter launches and landings. These exercises were aimed at preparing for medical emergencies and improving response times when working with aviation assets.

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.

Campbell is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-narcotics

operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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## Coast Guard Heavy Icebreaker Returns to Seattle Following Antarctic Deployment



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) transits Elliott Bay near the Seattle waterfront as the cutter approaches its homeport of Coast Guard Base Seattle, Aug. 25, 2024. At a length of 399-feet, the Polar Star is one of the largest cutters in the Coast Guard's fleet. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Capt. Holly Harrison)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Aug. 28, 2024

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew returned to Seattle, Sunday, after 285 days away from the cutter's home port.

Following a 138-day deployment to Antarctica [supporting Operation Deep Freeze 2024](#), the Polar Star reported directly to Mare Island Dry Dock (MIDD) LLC. in Vallejo, California, to commence the fourth phase of a five-year Service Life Extension Project (SLEP).

The work completed at MIDD is part of the [in-service vessel sustainment program](#) with the goal of recapitalizing targeted systems, including propulsion, communication, and machinery control systems, as well as effecting significant maintenance to extend the cutter's service life.

Polar Star's SLEP work is completed in phases to coordinate operational commitments such as the cutter's annual Antarctic deployment. Phase four began on April 1, 2024, targeting three systems:

Boiler support systems were recapitalized, including the electrical control station that operates them.

The heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system was refurbished through the overhaul of ventilation trunks, fans and heaters that supply the cutter's berthing areas.

The flooding alarm system was redesigned, providing the ability to monitor machinery spaces for flooding from bow to stern.

Additional work not typically completed every dry dock included removing and installing the starboard propulsion shaft, servicing and inspecting both anchor windlasses, inspecting and repairing anchor chains and ground tackle, cleaning and inspecting all main propulsion motors and generators, installation of an isolation valve to prevent seawater intrusion into the sanitary system, and overhauling the fuel oil purifier.

Phase four of Polar Star's SLEP took place over approximately 140 days and represented a total investment of \$16.8 million. By replacing outdated and maintenance-intensive equipment, the Coast Guard will mitigate lost mission days caused by system failures and unplanned repairs. The contracted SLEP work items and recurring maintenance is taking place within a five-year, annually phased production schedule running from 2021 through 2025.

The Coast Guard is investing in a new fleet of [polar security cutters](#) (PSC) that will sustain the service's capabilities to meet mission needs in both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The SLEP allows Polar Star to continue providing access to the Polar regions until the PSCs are operational and assume the high latitude missions. Polar security cutters will enable the U.S. to maintain defense readiness in the Polar regions; enforce treaties and other laws needed to safeguard both industry and the environment; provide ports, waterways and coastal security; and provide logistical support – including vessel escort – to facilitate the movement of goods and personnel necessary to support scientific research, commerce, national security activities and maritime safety.

“Completing a dry dock availability is a positive milestone, and despite challenges due to being away from home port, our crew's energy and resilience inspires me every day,” said Capt. Jeff Rasnake, Polar Star's commanding officer. “The amount of time and effort put into Polar Star and its mission

is truly remarkable. The dedication and teamwork displayed across all stakeholders exemplifies the Coast Guard's flexibility and commitment to ensuring the continued success of Operation Deep Freeze as well as strengthened partnerships among nations invested in the Antarctic latitudes. I look forward to observing how this crew will continue to grow as a team and to discovering what we can accomplish together."

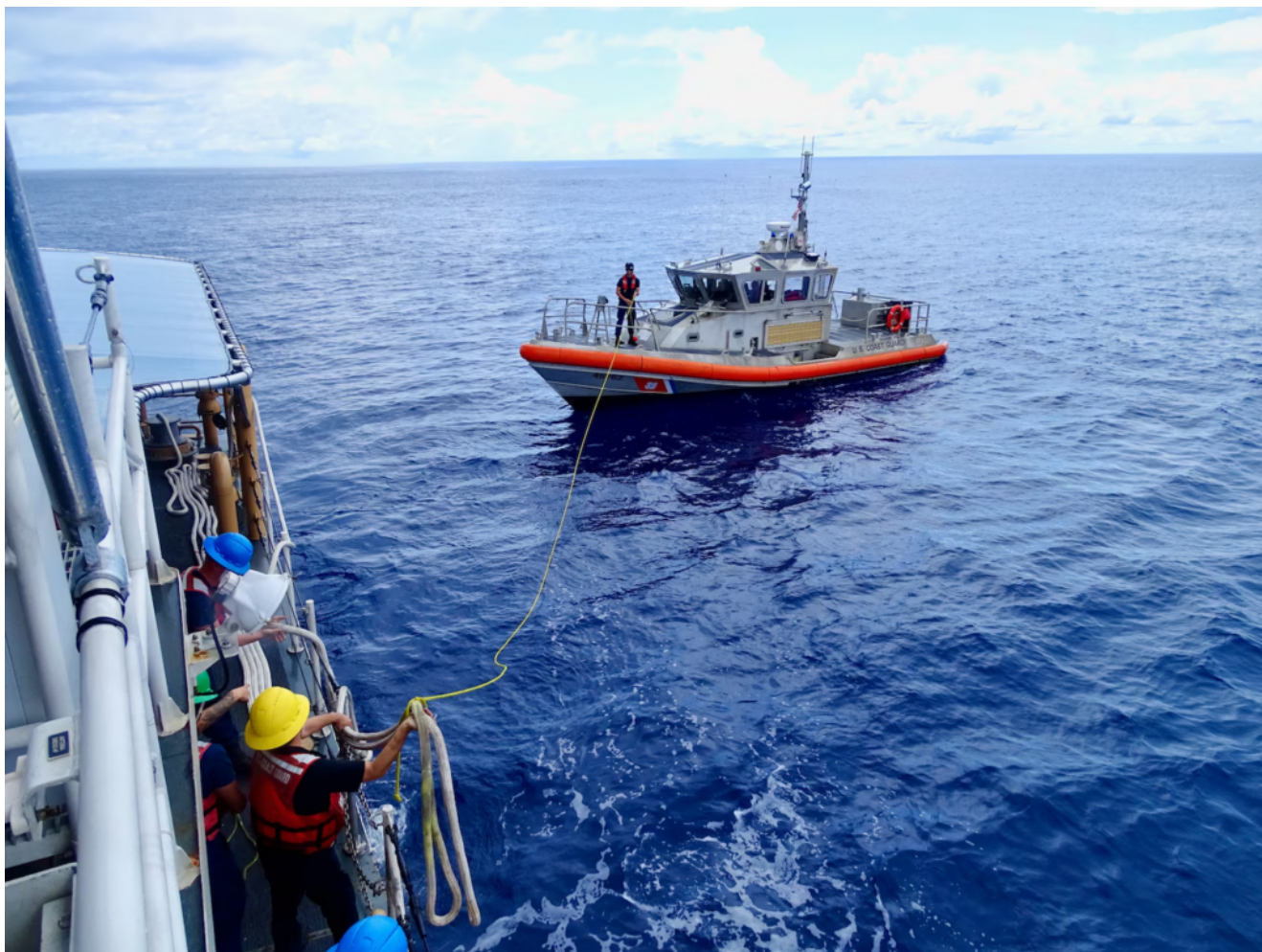
Along with the rigorous maintenance schedule, Polar Star [held a change of command ceremony](#) on July 8, 2024, in Vallejo, where Rasnake relieved Capt. Keith Ropella as the cutter's commanding officer. Rasnake served as the deputy director for financial management procurement services modernization and previously served as Polar Star's executive officer. Ropella transferred to the office of cutter forces where he will oversee the management of the operational requirements for the cutter fleet and develop solutions for emerging challenges facing the afloat community.

Polar Star is the Coast Guard's only active heavy polar icebreaker and is the United States' only asset capable of providing year-round access to both polar regions.

Commissioned in 1976, the cutter is 399 feet, weighing 13,500 tons with a 34-foot draft. Despite reaching nearly 50 years of age, Polar Star remains the world's most powerful non-nuclear icebreaker with the ability to produce up to 75,000 horsepower. Polar Star's SLEP is important to the survival of the Antarctic mission and crucial to the well-being and success of Polar Star and crew during these long missions.

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# USCGC Frederick Hatch Wraps up a Successful Patrol in the Blue Pacific



The crew of the USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) conduct training with Station Apra Harbor in Apra Harbor on Aug. 8, 2024. The towing exercise with a Station Apra Harbor 45-foot Response Boat-Medium crew enhanced inter-unit coordination and operational proficiency. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, Aug. 26, 2024

SANTA RITA, Guam – The crew of the USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) successfully concluded a productive patrol period from July 22 to Aug. 12, 2024, under the ongoing Operation Rematau, showcasing the U.S. Coast Guard's dedication to maritime

safety, security, and stewardship in the Blue Pacific.

This patrol saw the crew cover over 1,252 nautical miles and engage in various operations, from maritime law enforcement boardings to community outreach and crucial training.

During this patrol, the Frederick Hatch team boarded two foreign-flagged fishing vessels in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) operational area on the high seas, with no violations reported, ensuring the safety and security of the region's maritime activities.

"Our mission underscores the vital role we play in ensuring safe and lawful maritime activities in the Pacific," said Lt. Niki Kirchner-Hope, commanding officer of USCGC Frederick Hatch. "The successful execution of these boardings reflects our crew's high level of professionalism and dedication to the mission."

The cutter's crew participated in significant community relations events in Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands, including the March-On for the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Tinian. They also engaged in a local festival and were invited back for more in October, continuing to foster strong relationships with the local community and enhancing regional presence.

The Frederick Hatch crew, which experienced a substantial turnover this transfer season, with over 55 percent of members swapping out, benefited from extensive training during the patrol. They completed multiple training programs, including Marine Emergency Drills, Damage Control Training Team exercises, and small boat training.

"Training and mentoring our new crew members are key to our success and long-term effectiveness," said Petty Officer 1st Class Joseph Mendiola of the engineering team. "Routinely

operating thousands of miles from homeport makes this training even more crucial. It's what makes sure our team is ready to handle anything that comes our way with confidence and skill, really boosting our mission readiness and impact out here in the Pacific."

Key accomplishments of the patrol include completing anchor training in Agat Bay, successful law enforcement and tactical training, and vital inter-agency collaborations. The cutter crew participated in a towing exercise with a Station Apra Harbor 45-foot Response Boat-Medium crew, enhancing inter-unit coordination and operational proficiency.

The patrol also saw personnel achievements, including one crewmember advancing to E-5 and several others achieving new qualifications. These underscore the team's commitment to ongoing professional development and mission readiness. They will now focus on post-patrol debriefings to refine communication and operational procedures, further enhancing their capabilities for future missions.

"On behalf of the entire team aboard Hatch, I want to extend our gratitude to the personnel from USCGC Myrtle Hazard, Station Apra Harbor, the Forces Micronesia Sector Guam Sector Boarding Team, and the Base Guam MAT/WAT. Your support throughout this patrol, from filling critical TDY assignments to assisting with complex training and law enforcement evolutions, has been invaluable in ensuring Hatch's success and the well-being and readiness of our crew. Thank you for being so dedicated to others and for standing the watch with us in this demanding environment," said Lt. Kirchner-Hope

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# Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane Returns Home Following 68-day Operation Blue Pacific Patrol in Oceania



The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903), a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Honolulu, Hawaii, poses for a photo following the Royal Tongan Navy's International Fleet Review in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, July 4, 2024. The U.S. Coast Guard participated in the review to celebrate King Tupou VI's 65th birthday and the 50th anniversary of the Tongan Navy. (U.S. Coast Guard photo, courtesy Cutter Harriet Lane)

From Coast Guard District 14 External Affairs, Aug. 26, 2024

HONOLULU – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903) returned to Honolulu Friday following a 68-day patrol in support of Coast Guard District Fourteen's Operation Blue

Pacific in Oceania.

The Harriet Lane crew departed Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in June and traveled more than 13,400 nautical miles spanning from the Hawaiian Islands to Tonga. Patrolling in support of Operation Blue Pacific, the cutter's crew worked alongside Pacific Island Countries to forge and advance relationships with like-minded allies and partners who share a common vision for maritime governance.

The crew's efforts included enhancing maritime domain awareness, combatting illegal fishing activities across Oceania, and participating in exercises to bolster partner capacity and interoperability. Leveraging bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements with Tuvalu, Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands, the Harriet Lane crew conducted six boardings alongside Pacific Island partners in their respective exclusive economic zones (EEZs). Additionally, Harriet Lane law enforcement teams conducted four fishery boardings on the high seas in concert with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

During Harriet Lane's patrol, the crew made port calls in Tonga, American Samoa, Samoa, the Cook Islands and French Polynesia. While offshore Niue, the Harriet Lane crew hosted key leaders for a maritime roundtable discussion, offered local high students a tour of the cutter, and sent personnel ashore to assist with community service endeavors.

While transiting home, the Harriet Lane crew conducted the [medevac of a 53-year-old fishing vessel crewman](#) experiencing stroke-like symptoms approximately 480 miles offshore Oahu.

"This patrol was another resounding success for the crew of Harriet Lane and reinforces the Coast Guard's commitment to delivering as a trusted partner across Oceania," said Cmdr. Nicole Tesoniero, commanding officer, Cutter Harriet Lane.

“This patrol took us to the far reaches of the South Pacific that most crew could have never dreamed of seeing and they continue to serve as model ambassadors for our unique mission set. In the final days of our patrol, Harriet Lane answered the call to render aid to a local fisherman in need of medical assistance nearly 500 miles from Oahu. While every aspect of this mission is incredibly rewarding, the knowledge that we were able to assist a member of the local community in a moment of need truly resonated with the crew. I am proud of their tremendous commitment to operational success and look forward to watching Harriet Lane’s impact continue to grow.”

Commissioned in 1984, Cutter Harriet Lane is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Honolulu to support Coast Guard missions in the Pacific region. The service’s medium endurance cutter fleet supports a variety of Coast Guard missions including search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime defense, and protection of the marine environment.

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## **Coast Guard Offloads Nearly \$50 Million in Illegal Narcotics Interdicted in Eastern Pacific Ocean**



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba pose with more than 3,400 pounds of cocaine and 4,410 pounds of marijuana with a combined assessed street value of approximately \$50 million in Port Everglades, Florida, Aug. 23, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Rodriguez)

**From the U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Aug. 23, 2024**

MIAMI – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba (WMEC 907) offloaded more than 3,400 pounds of cocaine and 4,410 pounds of marijuana with a combined assessed street value of approximately \$50 million in Port Everglades, Friday, Aug. 23.

The Escanaba crew embarked a Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron aircrew, and Law Enforcement Detachment 107 from Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific. They worked alongside interagency and international partners to interdict illicit narcotics in the international waters off South America in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

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 under 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.

“The Coast Guard’s presence in the Eastern Pacific is vital to our mission of disrupting the flow of illicit narcotics and safeguarding our nation’s security. The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba, through their unwavering professionalism and dedication, has once again demonstrated the critical role our people play in these complex operations,” said Vice Adm. Nathan Moore, commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area. “By maintaining a strong presence in this region, we continue to protect our communities and uphold the highest standards of service. Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba’s success is a direct reflection of our commitment to mission excellence and the core values that guide us.”

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdictions:

- Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba (WMEC 907)
  
- Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) Jacksonville
  
- Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 107 from Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team – Pacific (PAC TACLET)
  
- Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South)

- Eleventh Coast Guard District

“The counter narcotics mission continues to be a vital mission of the Coast Guard,” said Cmdr. Jared Silverman, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba. “The crew of Escanaba, alongside our shipmates from HITRON and TACLET, executed the mission in outstanding fashion and ensured that the spirit of operational excellence lives on.”

Seven suspected smugglers were 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, 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 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 or foreign allied warships to conduct drug interdiction operations.

Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100 homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia.

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## **U.S. Coast Guard Completes Operation Island Chief in Pacific Region**



U.S. Coast Guard personnel from District Fourteen and Air Station Barbers Point pose for a photo with a member of the Royal New Zealand Air Force and Forum Fisheries Agency at the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre (RFSC) in Honiara, Solomon Islands, Aug. 13, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard District 14 External Affairs, Aug. 19, 2024

HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard completed Island Chief, a 13-day operation to safeguard the invaluable marine resources of Pacific Island nations and the Western Central Pacific Ocean.

From Aug. 5-16, an HC-130 Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point patrolled the South Pacific High Seas in and around the exclusive economic zones of Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Republic of Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to detect, investigate and report any

illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity.

The Hercules crew worked with the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre, a part of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in Honiara, Solomon Islands, to reinforce the conservation work of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

Coast Guard participation in Operation Island Chief is part of Operation Blue Pacific, an overarching multi-mission Coast Guard endeavor promoting security, safety, sovereignty and economic prosperity in the Pacific while strengthening relationships between partner nations.

The Coast Guard conducted Operation Island Chief alongside the Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group (Pacific QUAD), in support of the Pacific Islands FFA and its members.

FFA Director General Dr. Manu Tupou-Roosen highlighted the significance of the FFA-led Operation Island Chief 2024, coordinating surveillance efforts for participating Members.

“Operation Island Chief reinforces FFA’s commitment to sustainable fisheries management and maritime security in the Pacific,” said Dr. Tupou-Roosen. “This operation exemplifies the spirit of regional collaboration and determination among Pacific Island nations. The compliance checks of vessels and operators through a robust regional surveillance operation ensures effective management regime and preserving our marine resources, as well as securing the livelihoods and food security of our people.”

“Given the vastness of the Pacific region, close collaboration between U.S. Coast Guard personnel, patrol assets and regional partners is integral to sustained success in combatting IUU fishing across the region,” said Marc Stegman, IUU fishing strategic advisor, Coast Guard District Fourteen.

Joint efforts for Operation Nasse covered over 7 million

square miles, with the Coast Guard contributing:

Over 37 hours of flight time

Over 10,500 miles flown

Over 232,100 square miles searched

Three missions flown from Vanuatu and four missions flown from Solomon Islands

70 vessels sighted and analyzed

Located in Honolulu, U.S. Coast Guard District Fourteen covers more than 14 million square miles of land and sea, conducting operations over the Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa, Saipan, Guam, Singapore and Japan.

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## Japan Buys Two SeaGuardians From GA-ASI



SAN DIEGO, August 15, 2024 (Newswire.com) – The [Japan Coast Guard](#) (JCG) has signed a contract for the purchase of two SeaGuardian® Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI), scheduled for delivery in 2025. This follows JCG's ongoing Company-Owned, Contractor-Operated agreement with GA-ASI for operating SeaGuardian, which began in April 2022.

“Since JCG started operating SeaGuardians, they have been used for various JCG missions, including supporting search and rescue and disaster response, specifically during the 7.6 magnitude earthquake early this year near the Noto Peninsula of Ishikawa Prefecture and maritime surveillance during the 2023 G-7 Summit in Hiroshima, and the system has performed efficiently and effectively,” said GA-ASI CEO Linden Blue.

SeaGuardian is a medium-altitude, long-endurance RPA system that can fly for 24 hours or more, depending on the configuration.

GA-ASI has strengthened its Maritime Wide Area Surveillance (MWAS) for Japan with Optix+, which gathers information from the SeaGuardian sensors, as well as other data sources, displaying the full picture of surveillance information for its operator. This functionality makes it easy to task and direct its Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) information in real time. GA-ASI's Optix+ software suite rapidly correlates and exploits collected data into an easily shared common operational picture. Having multi-source correlated data enables automatic detection of anomalous behaviors over waters.

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# Senate Committee Report Calls for Coast Guard Action on Sexual Harassment Claims



Admiral Linda Fagan and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Heath Jones converse Oct. 19, 2023 with Senator Tammy Duckworth in observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. *U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 2nd Class Erik Villa Rodriguez*

In a new report entitled “A Pervasive Problem,” the majority staff of the Homeland Security Committee’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations concluded the U.S. Coast Guard must do more to eliminate sexual harassment in its ranks and at the service’s academy and should use evidence uncovered by the panel to prosecute perpetrators.

“The Subcommittee has heard from more than 80 whistleblowers, who together have made clear the need for immediate change

both at the Academy and in the Coast Guard,” the report’s conclusion says. “Their stories detail systemic sexual assault and harassment, including a culture of silencing, retaliation, and failed accountability. Although Operation Fouled Anchor initially brought these problems to light, they span both the Academy and the Fleet – the Coast Guard as a whole must work to build a culture in which everyone is safe, respected, and valued.”

The panel has been looking into the issue for more than a year, and recently [held a hearing](#) featuring Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Linda L. Fagan as the main witness, focusing on Operation Fouled Anchor, the Coast Guard’s investigation into sexual harassment allegations. Members of the panel charged the service had buried the results of its own investigation until CNN brought them to light. Fagan pledged to be transparent in dealing with the issue, which is also being investigated by the service’s inspector general.

However, in a “note from the chair” that begins the new report, panel chairman Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut writes, “I am deeply disappointed by the Coast Guard’s responses to this Subcommittee’s requests for critically necessary information. Despite repeatedly and publicly claiming a commitment to transparency, the organization has often resisted constructive responses. Such repeated opposition to disclosure has made us wonder whether the Coast Guard is, once again, attempting to escape Congressional scrutiny.”

## **Victim Reports**

The report includes statements from numerous reports of sexual assault going back decades, as well as what survivors describe as attempts to silence them.

“These stories, spanning from the 1970s through the 2020s, depict systemic failures at the Coast Guard Academy and in the

Coast Guard that continue to this day,” the report says.

In one account, “after learning that she had experienced months of sexual misconduct, a superior allegedly told an enlisted whistleblower: ‘Okay, I want you to think about these men and their careers. They could lose their jobs over this, and you could ruin their lives. And then CGIS [Coast Guard Investigative Services] is going to show up and make you out to be a liar. No one will believe you. Do you want that? I want you to think about all of this before you decide to tell anyone else.’”

In some cases, “fear of punishment for collateral misconduct deterred victims of abuse from reporting. One whistleblower shared that, as a cadet in the 2010s, the threat of discipline for unrelated misconduct was used to keep her from reporting repeated sexual assaults by the same perpetrator for a year. She said: ‘He blackmailed me, using his position over me and the fact that I drank underage to get me to have sex with him. He knew that I would get into more trouble for underage drinking than he would for blackmailing me for sex. He was right. ...’”

Blumenthal’s opening note says the subcommittee will continue its work, and “our continuing investigation is likely to provide evidence that will assist and motivate the Coast Guard to impose discipline. It is imperative that the Coast Guard uses all means available to hold accountable both individual perpetrators and the leadership that covered up their wrongdoing ... the culture will not change until the Coast Guard makes clear that sexual assault and harassment will not be tolerated.”

### **Coast Guard Response**

The Coast Guard provided a statement to *Seapower* in response to the report.

“Sexual assault, sexual harassment, and all forms of abuse

have no place in the Coast Guard. We are committed to fostering [lasting institutional and cultural change](#) that ensures a safe and respectful environment free of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other harmful behaviors. Should such incidents occur, the Coast Guard is committed to supporting victims, upholding the law, and reinforcing the service's core values," the statement says.

"We are actively implementing the commandant's 33 directed actions announced in November 2023 to strengthen our service culture, improve support and care of victims, and hold perpetrators accountable. Our progress completing 18 of these directed actions so far represents the early stages of enduring change that will ensure every person in the Coast Guard experiences a safe work environment where they are respected and valued. More information regarding the Coast Guard's actions to address sexual assault, and ensure accountability, care, and support, is [available here](#)."

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## **Coast Guard Offloads More Than \$18M in Illegal Narcotics Interdicted in Caribbean**



Bales of cocaine stacked on a pier at Base Miami Beach on August 14, 2024. This offload was the result of drug interdiction efforts by Coast Guard and Navy crews in the international waters of Caribbean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Strasburg)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Aug. 15, 2024

MIAMI – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered offloaded more than 1,380 pounds of cocaine with an assessed street value of approximately \$18.1 million in Miami Beach, Wednesday.

A U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment deployed aboard a U.S. Navy ship interdicted the illegal drugs in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea while working alongside interagency and international partners.

During the interdiction, the go-fast vessel began taking on water and capsized. A combined Navy and Coast Guard boat crew

rescued the three suspected smugglers from the water before recovering bales of jettisoned contraband from the sea.

“I am incredibly proud of the skill and tenacity displayed by our entire team during this interdiction,” said Cmdr. T.J. Orth, commanding officer of USS St. Louis. “This operation was a testament to the capability of our Navy-Coast Guard and interagency teams. The sailors of St. Louis and HSM-50, and Coast Guardsmen of LEDET 105 utilized every resource and capability at their disposal to track and intercept the vessel and then respond to safeguard the lives of the three suspected smugglers.”

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdictions:

- USS St. Louis (LCS 19)
  
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific (PAC-TACLET) Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 105
  
- U.S. Navy Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 50 (HSM-50) Detachment 4
  
- Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South)

The three suspected smugglers will face prosecution in federal courts 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 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.

This interdiction 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. 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>.