

U.S. Coast Guard Completes Operation Nasse in Pacific Region



U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Junior Grade Nick Fuist and Lt. Cmdr. Keith Arnold , two pilots at U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point, man the controls of a Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Super Hercules in the skies above Auckland, New Zealand, Jul. 9, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicholas Martino)

From Coast Guard District 14 External Affairs, Aug. 6, 2024

HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard completed participation in Operation Nasse, a three-month operation conducted by Australia, France, New Zealand, and the U.S. to safeguard the invaluable marine resources of Pacific Island nations and the Western Central Pacific Ocean, July 12.

From July 1-12, an HC-130J Hercules airplane crew from Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point patrolled the South Pacific High Seas in and around the Exclusive Economic Zones of Australia, New Caledonia, Fiji, New Zealand, Tonga, Niue, and the Cook Islands to detect, investigate and report any illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activity.

During the operation, the Coast Guard collaborated with Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group (Pacific QUAD) partners to enhance their Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) tools and communications to support regional and national maritime surveillance efforts.

The wide-ranging operations were supported by the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's (FFA) Regional Fisheries Surveillance Center (RFSC) and several FFA members to reinforce the conservation work of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) on the high seas. Alongside the P-QUAD partners, Fiji, Vanuatu, and the Cook Islands participated in the operation for the first time.

Coast Guard participation in Operation Nasse 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.

"Oceania is vast, and the challenges of illegal fishing require a united front," said Lt. Cmdr. Keith Arnold, HC-130J aircraft commander for U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point. "Collaborating with the Pacific Quad and other regional partners to combine our resources and expertise to enhance monitoring tools is crucial to countering illegal fishing activities in Oceania. Sharing data, strengthening our communication networks, and coordinating patrols allows us to create a more comprehensive picture of what's happening on the water in the region. This collaborative approach sends a strong message to those engaged in illegal fishing: we will

work together to stop these activities and protect these vital resources.”

Joint efforts for Operation Nasse covered over 16,000 square miles, with the U.S. Coast Guard contributing:

- Over 58 hours of flight time
- 37 vessels sighted and analyzed
- Four potential Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) violations reported
- 240 hours of analyst-to-analyst collaboration and training

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.

USCGC Thetis Returns After 75-Day Patrol in Windward Passage, Florida Straits



From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Aug. 2, 2024

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC 910) returned to their home port in Key West, Friday, following a 75-day migrant interdiction patrol in the Windward Passage and South Florida Straits.

Thetis' crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry while patrolling in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of operations. Crew members carried out maritime safety and security operations aimed at safeguarding lives at sea and upholding U.S. maritime regulations.

During two separate interdictions made by Thetis crew members and Coast Guard Station Key West personnel, 44 Cuban migrants were interdicted while attempting to reach the U.S. unlawfully by sea.

In addition, Thetis crew members cared for and repatriated 197 Haitian migrants after they were transferred aboard from Coast

Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621).

Thetis also embarked two suspected drug smugglers and seized contraband after a transfer with Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos (WPC 1118).

While deployed, Thetis crew members had the opportunity to work with the Haitian Coast Guard, providing assessments of their vessels and capabilities. The collaboration served to strengthen an important regional partnership with the Caribbean nation.

During a port-of-call in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, crew members volunteered to help the Fundación Casa Niños Felices, a local orphanage for Dominican children. Thetis crew members assembled fitness and sports equipment for the children, which upgraded the orphanage's recreational facility and created a long-lasting positive impact.

"This patrol was filled with diverse operations that highlighted the importance of the U.S. Coast Guard operating in the Windward Pass and South Florida Straits," said Cmdr. Gavin Garcia, commanding officer of Thetis. "I could not be more pleased with the performance of the men and women on board and their ability to overcome adversity, resulting in a resoundingly successful patrol."

Thetis is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100. 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](#).

USCGC Forward Returns Home Following 60-Day Deployment in the Central Caribbean Sea



Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) steams, July 19, 2024, while underway in the Caribbean Sea. Forward conducted a 60-day Caribbean Sea patrol to interdict illegal drugs and apprehend suspected smugglers on the high seas in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South. (U.S. Coast Guard photo) From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, 31 July 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) returned to their home port in Portsmouth, July 27, following a 60-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea.

During the deployment, Forward patrolled within the Seventh

Coast Guard District's area of responsibility in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South. Crew members conducted detection and monitoring operations throughout the joint operating area and executed interdiction and apprehension missions, which directly contributed to the reduction in flow of illegal drugs bound for the United States. These activities also served toward degrading and dismantling transnational criminal organizations (TCO).

Coordinating with naval forces from Canada, the Netherlands, and the U.S., along with an embarked aviation detachment from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, Forward assisted with the apprehension of five suspected smugglers and the seizure of 8,248 pounds of narcotics. Information gained from these at-sea interdictions was also used by federal agencies in multiple nations to arrest an alleged high-ranking member of a TCO.

While underway, Forward's crew rescued three migrants from a vessel taking on water. After they were provided with medical attention, the migrants were repatriated to their country of origin. The rescue exemplified Coast Guard missions to preserve the safety of life at sea and safeguard the maritime boundaries of the United States.

After departing the joint operating area, Forward's crew carried out activities aimed at strengthening partnerships and interoperability. On July 22, crew members conducted a narcotics offload in Port Everglades, Florida, which allowed for professional exchanges and training with both the Panama Express Strike Force, an organized crime drug enforcement task force, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection canine handlers. Forward also served as the platform for ship-helicopter landings with the U.S. Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

“Forward's operational success came down to two things: the crew's superior dedication and the strength of the Joint

Interagency Task Force – South network,” said Cmdr. Andrew Grantham, commanding officer of Forward. “I am proud of the crew’s tenacity to overcome all challenges to get the job done.”

Forward is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. 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 U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Coast Guard Cutter James Honored by White House at United States Interdiction Coordinator Awards Ceremony



Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL 754) personnel pose for a photo with other law enforcement agency officials, July 19, at the White House in Washington, D.C. for the annual United States Interdiction Coordinator Awards. James' crew was recognized with the top maritime interdiction during the awards ceremony. (Photo courtesy of the White House)

To view the full event, click [here](#).

From Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, 26 July 2024

WASHINGTON – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL 754) was honored at the White House during the United States Interdiction Coordinator Awards Ceremony on July 19.

The annual event, held by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), recognized the exceptional contributions and achievements of various law enforcement entities in drug interdiction efforts. James' crew was recognized for top maritime interdiction.

Amidst heavy seas on the afternoon of Sept. 11, 2023, a junior watchstander noticed what appeared to be the wake of a go-fast

vessel approximately 10 nautical miles off James' bow. The cutter set its go-fast response bill, spurring the entirety of James' crew in motion to prepare for a counter-drug pursuit. James used an operational procedure agreed upon with Ecuador that allowed law enforcement teams to embark the foreign-flagged vessel, where they found 73 bales of cocaine. Following the successful seizure of 3,863 pounds of cocaine and the detention of three suspected narcotraffickers, James coordinated an at-sea transfer of the detainees and contraband with Ecuador to enable home country prosecution and strengthen a key partnership.

To successfully spot a target of interest on the high seas without positive identification from aerial assets or radar is known as a cold hit. Within the realm of maritime interdiction, cold hits are the equivalent of finding the proverbial needle in a haystack, a complex difficult task made more challenging by the heavy seas and gray skies that limited visibility on that day. In this case, the cold hit detection of the go-fast vessel was made by the lookout, one of James' most junior crewmembers, who had been in the Coast Guard for only six months. Her initial cold hit spurred the rest of the crew and teams into action.

During the ceremony, ONDCP Director Dr. Rahul Gupta, commended the crew of James for their outstanding service and unwavering commitment to protecting the nation's borders and safeguarding the lives of countless Americans. The cutter's achievements are a testament to the Coast Guard's enduring legacy of excellence in maritime law enforcement and drug interdiction.

"It was an honor to receive this award on behalf of the entire James crew," said Capt. Donald Terkanian, commanding officer of James. "Our crew's exceptional efforts disrupted illicit drug trafficking, deprived transnational criminal organizations of millions of dollars in revenue, apprehended suspected traffickers, strengthened a key partnership, and

helped save lives by preventing drugs from reaching the streets.”

James is a 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutter, homeported in North Charleston, South Carolina. The cutter’s primary missions are counter-drug operations and defense readiness. James falls under the command of the Coast Guard Atlantic Area in Portsmouth, Virginia. Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, Atlantic Area also allocates ships to deploy to the Caribbean Sea, Eastern Pacific Ocean, and South Atlantic Ocean to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

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Coast Guard Cutter Stone Returns Home After 63-Day Patrol in the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea



Coast Guard Cutter Stone (WMSL 758) makes way, June 29, 2024, in the Atlantic Ocean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Thomas Settle)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, July 24, 2024

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Stone (WMSL 758) returned to their home port in North Charleston, Wednesday, following a 63-day patrol in the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea in support of homeland defense and counterdrug operations.

Supporting the Tri-Party partnership, Stone served as on-scene commander, leading U.S. Navy and Royal Canadian navy assets in a dynamic mission to preserve the sovereignty of U.S. waters and counter the actions of foreign actors and transnational criminal organizations.

The Tri-Party partnership, comprised of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, U.S. Second Fleet and Canadian Joint Task Force-Atlantic maritime forces, was established in 2015 and continues to be an effective partnership aimed at preserving

mutual interests and upholding the rules-based international order in support of good maritime governance.

“This deployment offered a unique opportunity to demonstrate the diverse capabilities of the national security cutter, and how seamlessly and rapidly the Coast Guard can integrate with joint and allied forces to counter maritime threats,” said Capt. Jonathan Carter, commanding officer of Stone. “The Stone’s crew performed admirably throughout the demanding mission.”

Stone is a 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutter. The cutter’s primary missions are counterdrug operations and defense readiness. Stone falls under the command of the Coast Guard Atlantic Area in Portsmouth, Virginia. Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, Atlantic Area also allocates ships to deploy to the Caribbean Sea, Eastern Pacific Ocean, and South Atlantic Ocean to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

Coast Guard Cutter James Returns Home Following South Atlantic Ocean Deployment to Counter Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL 754) and the Brazilian navy Amazonas (P 120) conduct a passing exercise at sea in the southern Atlantic Ocean, May 25, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Logan Kaczmarek)

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL 754) returned to their home port in North Charleston, July 11, after completing a 98-day patrol in the South Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

James' crew patrolled in support of Operation Southern Cross, promoting maritime governance with partners in the South Atlantic by working to illuminate and monitor illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU-F) activity in the region.

While on patrol, James interacted with partners in Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil, strengthening relationships by focusing on shared interests in countering illicit maritime activity. Through several subject matter expert (SME) exchanges and joint engagements, James demonstrated counter IUU-F capabilities to promote the rules-based order and advance

White House initiatives to further advance Atlantic Cooperation.

During the patrol, James' crew conducted port visits to Montevideo, Uruguay; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza, Brazil. At each city, Coast Guard personnel engaged with their international counterparts to promote partnership. Notably, James' command cadre met with senior leadership from the Uruguay Navy, the Argentine Prefectura Naval, and the Brazilian Navy, holding roundtable discussions to tackle the global impacts of IUU-F while devising strategies to enhance maritime domain awareness, improve information sharing and combat the threat together.

Additionally, James' small unmanned aircraft system (UAS)-contracted team presented their system and capabilities to senior naval leadership, illustrating the sizable benefits of UAS in detecting and monitoring IUU-F activity. The visits included community relations events and tours of the ship, and culminated in diplomatic receptions aboard James, bringing together key civilian and military leaders from each respective country.

Showcasing law enforcement expertise and dedication to joint efforts against illicit maritime activity, James' crew organized and hosted in-port SME exchanges and at-sea mock boarding engagements with the Argentine Prefectura Naval and the Brazilian Navy. James crew members conducted a mock counter-IUU-F engagement with the Argentine Prefectura vessel Mantilla (GC-24), demonstrating the procedures of a high seas boarding inspection on a foreign-flagged fishing vessel. James also organized multiple demonstrations of visit, board, search and seizure procedures to exercise interoperability with the Brazilian Navy.

During the cutter's visit to Buenos Aires, James's crew received a presidential welcome from Argentina's President Javier Milei. Coast Guard Capt. Donald Terkanian welcomed

President Milei on board and provided him with a tour of James. This historic event initiated several other key engagements with Argentina's Vice President Victoria Villarruel, senior military and civilian leaders.

During the deployment, James' crew members also had the unique opportunity to join U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group 10 to execute Operation Southern Seas 2024 with the Brazilian Navy and celebrate the bicentennial of U.S.-Brazilian diplomatic relations. Promoting interoperability with the Brazilian Navy and simultaneously advancing the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy through U.S. sea-service engagement, James completed formation steaming and close quarters maneuvering exercises with Brazilian Navy frigates BNS União (F 45) and BNS Independência (F 44) alongside the USS George Washington (CVN 73) and USS Porter (DDG-78). James conducted a joint live-fire exercise, utilizing its onboard 20mm close-in-weapon system to engage a target flare in tandem with Independência, União and Porter. Finally, James and Independência exchanged crewmembers for five days.

After departing the Southern Atlantic Ocean, James patrolled the Caribbean Sea to execute Operation Martillo in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South, collaborating with fellow Coast Guard units as well as the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and international partners to counter illicit trafficking in the region.

James is a 418-foot, Legend-class national security cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations and defense readiness. James falls under the command of the Coast Guard Atlantic Area in Portsmouth, Virginia. Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, Atlantic Area also allocates ships to deploy to the Caribbean Sea, Eastern Pacific Ocean, and South Atlantic Ocean to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

Coast Guard Offloads More Than \$96 Million in Illegal Narcotics Interdicted in the Caribbean Sea



Crew members from Coast Guard Cutter Forward offload more than \$96 million in illegal narcotics at Port Everglades, Florida, July 22, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Strasburg)

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

MIAMI – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Forward offloaded more than 7,302 pounds of cocaine with an assessed street value of approximately \$96 million in Port Everglades, Monday.

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

“This was another vital success of our combined drug interdiction efforts,” said Lt. Cmdr. Juan Ramirez, a Coast Guard District Seven staff attorney. “These drug offloads underscore our continued partnerships with the U.S. Navy and the Royal Netherlands Navy in combating the flow of illicit narcotics across the Caribbean. The success of our joint efforts to save lives by reducing the availability of these harmful drugs is dependent on our cooperation with regional and international partners.”

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdictions:

- Royal Netherlands Navy ship HNLMS Groningen (P 843)

- USS St. Louis (LCS 19)

- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific (PAC-TACLET) Law Enforcement Detachments 110 and 105

- U.S. Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON)

- Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South)

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations (CBP-AMO)

Three suspected smugglers will face prosecution in federal courts by the Department of Justice.

PAC-TACLET is part of the Coast Guard's deployable specialized forces program, with advanced training in high-risk interdiction operations in the maritime environment, including non-compliant vessel pursuit missions. Law enforcement detachments from PAC-TACLET and HITRON aircrews deploy aboard Coast Guard, U.S. Navy and foreign allied ships to augment their capabilities and authorities to perform counter drug missions under U.S. law.

Detecting and interdicting illegal 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) designated investigations. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

USCGC Forward (WMEC 911) is a 270-foot Famous-class, medium endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Coast Guard holds commissioning ceremony for Marine Safety Unit Lake Worth



Caption: Lt. Giacomo Terrizzi III assumed command of the newly established Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Lake Worth as the unit's first commanding officer during an assumption of command ceremony held at Port of Palm Beach, Florida, July 19, 2024 (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd class Eric Rodriguez)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, July 20, 2024

Miami □ Lt. Giacomo Terrizzi III assumed command of the newly

established Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Lake Worth, Friday, as the unit's first commanding officer during an assumption of command ceremony held at the Port of Palm Beach.

Capt. Chris Cederholm, Coast Guard Sector Miami commander, presided over the ceremony.

"The change from a marine safety detachment to an MSU in Lake Worth will bring more Coast Guard resources to the area," said Terrizzi. "The expansion in authority demonstrates our service's dedication to the surrounding maritime community as the area continues to expand and evolve."

In October 2023, the Commandant of the Coast Guard approved a request to convert 18 detached units to junior command units. The selected units were identified by the Junior Command Opportunities Work Group and selected based on a variety of factors such as mission complexity, distance from other Coast Guard units, and the personnel allowance list. The request, drafted by the Coast Guard Deputy Commandant for Operations, was in response to a research and development study that identified a need for junior command opportunities in marine safety to develop future leaders within the ranks.

USCGC Vigilant returns home after 55-day patrol in the Windward Passage



Credit: U.S. Coast Guard

From the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, 22 July 2024

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC 617) returned home to Cape Canaveral, July 11, following a 55-day maritime safety and security patrol in the Windward Passage. Vigilant deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS).

During the deployment, Vigilant's crew operated in the Seventh Coast Guard District area of operations and worked alongside other Coast Guard assets, international partners, the Department of Defense, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and Puerto Rico Police's Joint Force of Rapid Action units to conduct counterdrug and migrant interdiction operations.

While on patrol, Vigilant's crew assisted Coast Guard Sector Key West with the interdiction of 117 Haitian migrants in the Florida Straits from an unlawful voyage bound for the United States. The migrants were endangered by the unsafe conditions

aboard their grossly overloaded and unseaworthy vessel before being rescued by the Coast Guard.

Vigilant's crew also coordinated post-seizure operations after the Royal Netherlands Navy intercepted eight suspected drug smugglers and interdicted 503 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated value of \$6.8M. The joint-operations with the Royal Netherlands Navy served to strengthen ties with international partners and promote regional stability and security.

For over a week of patrol, Vigilant served as Cutter Tasking Unit for OVS while operating in the region. Crews executed maritime intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations while maintaining a continuous surface presence in the waters around Haiti. These operations were essential to deterring illegal migration ventures and illicit drug smuggling, contributing directly to the shared U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. national objective of combatting transnational criminal organizations.

"It was great to have another successful patrol aboard Vigilant, ensuring the safety and protection of mariners and conducting law enforcement operations," said Cmdr. Jon Potterton, commanding officer of Vigilant. "Our crew did an exceptional job maintaining and operating our vessel as it approaches 60 years of service to our nation. We look forward to returning to our community, family, and friends after we successfully deterred illegal maritime migration, saved lives, and prevented drugs from entering the United States."

Established in 2003, HSTF-SE is the Department of Homeland Security-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.

Vigilant is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations.

Valiant is a Coast Guard asset assigned to U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia. Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, Atlantic Area also allocates ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

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Coast Guard Cutter Valiant returns home after 49-day deployment in the Florida

Straits and Windward Passage



(U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo)
July 17, 2024

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) and its crew returned to their homeport at Naval Station Mayport, June 28, following a 49-day migrant interdiction operations patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage.

Valiant'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 operations. Throughout the patrol, the crew of Valiant conducted maritime safety and security missions to protect life at sea and enforce U.S. maritime law.

While at sea in the Florida Straits, crew members rescued eight Cuban migrants from a makeshift vessel that was

transiting northward toward the Florida Keys, attempting to reach the United States unlawfully by sea.

Valiant's crew also patrolled off coastal Haiti to deter illegal and dangerous maritime migration from the region. While underway in the Windward Passage, Valiant's crew interdicted two unsafe migrant vessels north of Haiti. These interdictions resulted in the collective rescue of 197 Haitian migrants who were adrift at sea, including three Haitian migrants who were retrieved from the water by crew members after they had fallen overboard due to their vessel being grossly overloaded.

While on patrol near Dominican Republic waters, Valiant located a 20-foot wooden vessel with no lights or safety equipment and 15 migrants on board. After intercepting the vessel, Valiant's crew transferred the migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel for repatriation to their country of origin. This action led to the successful rescue of the migrants and reinforced the U.S. Coast Guard's continued ability to interoperate with our partner nations in the region.

"This patrol was extremely busy, and the crew is proud that we were able to save over 200 people in unseaworthy vessels," said Ensign John Vaaler, a law enforcement officer aboard Valiant. "The vessels we interdicted were not carrying essential lifesaving equipment adequate for the many people on board. I am very glad we found them when we did, or people may have been lost at sea."

Later in the patrol, Valiant intercepted a go-fast, drug-smuggling vessel in the Windward Passage. This action disrupted the vessel's voyage and forced the suspected drug traffickers to jettison their contraband to the sea, preventing harmful narcotics from reaching American shores.

Valiant is a multi-mission 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-

endurance cutter. Its primary missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.

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