

Coast Guard Commandant Delivers Annual State of the Coast Guard Address



Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, March 21, 2024

WASHINGTON – Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Linda L. Fagan, delivered the annual State of the Coast Guard Address at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, DC Wednesday.

Fagan expressed pride in recent Coast Guard operations and the increasing global impact the service has in protecting our economic prosperity and national security, alongside the Department of Homeland Security, federal, interagency and international partners.

“Last year, the United States Coast Guard saved nearly five thousand lives and ensured the safety of thousands more through our operations to prevent maritime accidents before they happen,” said Fagan. “This is the Coast Guard people see every day protecting our economic prosperity and national security. This is the Coast Guard that is respected and admired around the world.”

She also highlighted the rapidly evolving threats the service is facing which impact the workforce, mission readiness, and recruiting. As the Coast Guard faces significant personnel, shoreside infrastructure and asset maintenance shortfalls, she called for consistent and reliable funding to meet readiness requirements.

“The quality of our facilities and ships not only impact mission readiness; it is an important factor potential recruits think about when they consider Coast Guard service,” said Fagan. “And recruiting is critical to operational readiness.”

Focusing on the importance of the Coast Guard’s core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty, Adm. Fagan highlighted new policies and training the service has implemented to prevent and stop harmful behavior, as well as a long-term initiative to strengthen service culture.

“Strengthening our culture demands consistent work and long-term commitment, and our values must always be reflected in our daily actions and traditions,” said Fagan. “This effort is as critical to our workforce and mission readiness as building new ships or infrastructure. A culture intolerant of harmful behaviors is the standard the American people expect. It is the standard I set for the service.”

View the full remarks and the recorded address at [USCG Commandant’s Home Page](#) and on [U.S. Coast Guard – YouTube](#).

USCGC David Duren is the First of Three FRCs to be Homeported in Astoria, Oregon



LOCKPORT, Louisiana – Bollinger Shipyards recently delivered the USCGC David Duren to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida. This is the 182nd vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 56th Fast Response Cutter (FRC) delivered under the current program.

“We’re incredibly proud to deliver the USCGC David Duren, the first of three Fast Response Cutters to be homeported in

Astoria, Oregon,” said Bollinger President & CEO Ben Bordelon. “We’re confident that pound for pound, the quality and capabilities of the FRC platform are unmatched and that this vessel will outperform its mission requirements and expectations in the challenging conditions where it will operate in the Pacific Northwest. Our unique experience building for the Coast Guard is unparalleled and has shown time and time again that we successfully deliver the highest quality vessels on a reliable, aggressive production schedule. We look forward to continuing our historic partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard.”

The USCGC David Duren will be the first of three FRCs to be homeported in Sector Columbia River, which is known as “The Protectors of the Pacific Northwest.” The sector is responsible for coastal safety, security, and environmental protection, as well as protecting and securing vital infrastructure, rescuing mariners in peril at sea, enforcing federal law, maintaining navigable waterways, and responding to all hazards impacting the maritime transportation system along the Oregon coast.

As the U.S. Congress continues to debate Fiscal Year 2024 government funding, the future of the Fast Response Cutter Program remains uncertain. While the House Homeland Security Appropriations Bill included funding for four new FRCs, the Senate bill did not include funding for any new vessels. The prospect for a year-long Continuing Resolution (CR) at last year’s funding level introduces a critical level of uncertainty, as funding levels continue to lag behind the meteoric rise in raw material and input costs.

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 and partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Last year, Adm. Linda Fagan, the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, said, “The Indo-Pacific is clearly a consequential region for America’s future. The

United States Indo-Pacific Strategy identifies an expanded role for the U.S. Coast Guard as a top Administration priority as we seek to ensure a region that is free and open. The U.S. Coast Guard will continue its long history of operational presence in the region with additional cutter patrols and deployable specialized forces.”

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Boatswain’s Mate Master Chief David N. Duren was one of the most iconic figures in the history of Coast Guard surfmen. Considered perhaps the finest boat driver in the history of the modern Coast Guard, he is remembered by his shipmates and mentees not only for his expertise in seamanship, but also for his leadership and character. Between 1979 and 1983, Duren deployed on search and rescue cases more frequently than any other officer-in-charge and, in one year, executed over 250 cases. During this tour, Duren received two Coast Guard Medals for exceptional heroism, and the Douglas A. Munro Inspirational Leadership Award. Perhaps more remarkable was the fact that the personnel under his watch at Depoe Bay earned a total of 24 medals and awards.

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 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 Frederick Hatch Supports Partners in Micronesia, Republic of Palau Under Operation Rematau



U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, March 14, 2024

SANTA RITA, Guam – The crew of the USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) completed a significant operational patrol under Operation Rematau from Feb. 15 to March 4, 2024, reinforcing the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment to maritime safety,

security, and environmental stewardship in the Pacific region.

“Frederick Hatch marked an important milestone in the U.S. Coast Guard’s relationship with our friends in Palau by pioneering the use of the recently signed enhanced bilateral agreement, and we look forward to deepening our ties with Palau’s Marine Law division going forward. The cutter’s first-ever visit to Tinian and participation in Yap Day were both very enjoyable ways to learn about the cultures of our neighboring islands while reflecting our commitment to communities across the Pacific,” said Lt. Patrick Dreiss, commanding officer of USCGC Frederick Hatch.

The Frederick Hatch crew proudly represented the U.S. Coast Guard at the annual Pika Fest Celebration on Tinian, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, and Yap Day in Colonia, Yap State, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Supporting local needs, they transported 1,500 lbs. of non-perishable food, 1,200 lbs. of water, and essential supplies, including fishing gear and tools, to Ulithi Atoll, FSM, during a state-declared emergency drought. The crew renewed the meaningful connection with the local community, engaging in direct support and sharing in the generosity and warmth of the island’s residents.

“The opportunity to contribute to the enduring partnership between the Ulithi community and the U.S. Coast Guard, rooted in World War II and grown throughout decades of collaboration, was a special experience for myself and the crew. Thank you to the local non-profit organizations we worked alongside, as the experience of supporting and visiting the people of Ulithi is one of the highlights of my career,” said Dreiss.

Further showcasing the spirit of cooperation and support, the

Hatch's crew organized a donation drive prior to sailing, collecting 40 bags of school supplies and clothing from the U.S. Coast Guard community in Guam and collaborated with the Ayuda Foundation and the Ulithi-based One People One Reef research foundation to facilitate these critical donations to the island.

"Today exemplifies the spirit of teamwork and camaraderie that we hold dear here in Ulithi. It warms our hearts to hear that your short visit to our island was enjoyable, and we're delighted that you appreciated the coconuts, bananas, and flowers. Knowing that the bananas are adorning your ship's canopy, and the flowers are being proudly worn by your crew fills us with immense joy," said Ulithi Mayor John Rulmal.

Yap Day, observed annually on March 1, is a significant cultural and legal holiday in Yap State, one of the four states of the FSM. Established in 1968 and renamed in 1979, it celebrates Yapese culture, highlighting traditional skills and competitions, such as tattooing, fresh produce contests, and traditional games. The U.S. Coast Guard regularly attends, and the 2024 celebration was particularly special as Petty Officer 2nd Class Eugene Halihslius, a native of Yap currently stationed in Guam, returned home aboard Frederick Hatch for the first time in years to participate, further symbolizing the deep connections between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Pacific communities served.

"Returning to Yap, I'm reminded of the values instilled in me: respect, humility, and the identity of being an islander. Coming from a family of navigators, we believe in the power of knowing your waypoints, a principle that guides us to success. Inspired by my brother Ken Raigeluw, who is also serving and driven by our service's unique opportunities and missions, this journey not only contributes to our collective mission but also my personal growth and family legacy," said Halihslius.

The Frederick Hatch crew responded to a request from the government of Yap State for a U.S. Coast Guard presence near Ngulu Atoll to deter illegal sea cucumber poaching, demonstrating a commitment to protecting the region's marine resources and aiding partners. This patrol also marked the first-ever boarding under the Palau enhanced bilateral agreement, signed in August 2023, authorizing U.S. Coast Guard boarding officers to conduct boardings in Palau's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) on the country's behalf without a Palauan officer present. While the crew found everything compliant with international and Palauan requirements, the action set a precedent for further regional maritime law enforcement cooperation. It reinforces the trust and confidence of partners in the U.S. Coast Guard's role to ensure compliance with fishing regulations within partner EEZs.

The patrol also emphasized the need for continued vigilance in the Western Pacific. Not for the first time, the Frederick Hatch crew identified areas of concern for illegal fishing activities and non-compliance with maritime regulations wherein fishing vessels were observed not transmitting on AIS or VMS near the Palau EEZ border with the high seas.

"These efforts not only affirm our dedication to preserving the region's marine biodiversity but also reinforce the strong and enduring partnerships we have, particularly in support of our Compact of Free Association partners addressing shared security challenges and advancing mutual interests in the Blue Pacific," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "Our partnership with local non-profits and the community in Guam exemplifies a holistic approach to strengthening the fabric of trust and mutual respect we've built over decades with Pacific Island communities and beyond as we face future challenges and opportunities together."

About Operation Rematau

Operation Rematau is how U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam supports the overarching Coast Guard endeavor Operation Blue Pacific to promote security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania. Rematau means people of the deep sea. It reinforces the U.S. commitment to working together to advance Pacific regionalism based on the Blue Pacific narrative. This action supports U.S. national security objectives, bolstering regional maritime good governance and security.

About USCGC Frederick Hatch

The Frederick Hatch is the 43rd 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter named for a surfman and lighthouse keeper who was a two-time Gold Life Saving Medal recipient. Designed for many missions, including search and rescue, national defense, and maritime law enforcement, the Frederick Hatch crew plays a significant role in safeguarding national interests and preserving good maritime governance.

French Air Force crew trains at U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point



U.S. Coast Guard 14th District, March 11, 2024

HONOLULU – A crew from the French Air Force arrived at Air Station Barbers Point on March 4, 2024, for a week-long subject matter exchange with U.S. Coast Guard aircrews.

The seven-member team, comprised of three pilots and four crew members, is stationed in French Polynesia, Tahiti, and flies a CN235 Casa aircraft; during their visit, they participated in various activities designed to enhance their aviation proficiency and build professional relationships with their Coast Guard counterparts.

On March 6, Commander Victor Yaguchi of Air Station Barbers Point provided the French aircrew with an in-depth briefing on Coast Guard aircraft missions. This included an overview of Air Station Barbers Point airframes, capabilities, and mission sets. The briefing served as a foundation for the crew's training experiences throughout the week.

“This visit is a valuable opportunity to collaborate with our French allies and share best practices in aviation

operations,” said Captain Maurice Murphy, Commanding Officer of Air Station Barbers Point. “The partnerships in the Pacific are invaluable, we work closely with our French Allies and Joint Rescue Coordination Center Tahiti to rescue mariners at sea.”

The French crew utilized the air station as their base of operations for the week and conducted flights throughout the Hawaiian Island chain. This exposure to a complex and busy airspace allowed them to refine their communication procedures and flight skills. They specifically focused on:

Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground Communications: The crew honed their ability to communicate effectively in a congested airspace, a skillset critical for safe operations.

U.S. Flight Rules: The training familiarized the crew with U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, ensuring smooth integration into the local airspace.

Coast Guard Search and Rescue Operations: The crew gained insight into the Coast Guard’s B-0 SAR response procedures, a vital capability for ensuring maritime safety in the vast Pacific Ocean.

The Hawaiian Islands provide the closest and busiest airspace to French Polynesia, making Air Station Barbers Point an ideal training location. This reinvigorated exchange program is expected to occur several annually, fostering continued collaboration and professional development between the U.S. Coast Guard and the French Air Force.

Upon arrival, the ASBP staff warmly welcomed the French crew and presented them with traditional kukui nut leis, symbolizing protection and peace. This gesture reflects the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that underpins this exchange program.

Canadian-led Combined Task Force 150 seizes 770 kg of methamphetamine in the Arabian Sea



Bags of illegal narcotics seized from a vessel are stacked on the deck of the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) in the Arabian Sea, March 5. Glen Harris was operating under Combined Task Force 150, one of five task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the largest multinational naval partnership in the world. CTF 150 focuses on maritime security operations outside the Arabian Gulf.

By Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs | March 09, 2024

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Coast Guard cutter operating under the Canadian-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 of Combined Maritime Forces seized 770 kg of methamphetamine from a dhow in the Arabian Sea, March 5.

Based on intelligence provided by CTF 150, the Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) seized the methamphetamines and, after documenting and weighing the illicit haul, properly disposed of it.

“I am extremely proud of the work of the Combined Task Force 150 team and USCGC Glen Harris in preventing these drugs from reaching their final destination. This interdiction demonstrates the value of multinational efforts within the Combined Maritime Forces to prevent and disrupt criminal and terrorist organizations at sea,” said Canadian Navy Capt. Colin Matthews, Commander CTF 150.

Glen Harris is forward deployed to Bahrain. The fast response cutter is part of a contingent of U.S. Coast Guard ships operating in the region under Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA). PATFORSWA deploys Coast Guard personnel and ships alongside U.S. and regional naval forces throughout the Middle East.

CTF 150’s mission is to deter and disrupt the ability of non-state actors to move weapons, drugs and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

CTF 150 is one of five task forces under CMF, the world’s largest multinational naval partnership, and focuses on maritime security operations in the region. CTF 150 supports other CMF Task Forces and their member nations, with support and intelligence further enabling weapons and drug interdictions in the region. The 41-nation naval partnership upholds the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of

water encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

US Coast Guard Cutter Forward returns home to Virginia after lifesaving deployment



March 4, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Sunday, following a 75-day patrol of the Windward Passage.

During the patrol, Forward's crew intercepted five unlawful migrant voyages and rescued 33 migrants from one vessel taking

on water. Forward provided essential life-saving equipment, to include personal flotation devices and dewatering equipment, to the migrants aboard.

Patrolling in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS), within the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of responsibility, Forward's crew deterred illegal migration. By conducting routine patrols of the Windward Passage, Forward was able to maintain safety of life at sea and protect U.S. maritime borders.

"We often encounter unseaworthy vessels making attempts to illegally enter U.S. waters," said Cmdr. Staci Rutsch, commanding officer of Forward. "The Coast Guard's overt presence in this region is essential to deter dangerous and life-threatening migrant ventures. Our extensive Coast Guard presence in the area significantly decreased the number of migration events. The crew did an outstanding job, around the clock, ensuring that these illegal and unsafe ventures were detected and expeditiously intercepted. Once again, the Coast Guard stands out as the partner of choice for preventing loss of life at sea while protecting the homeland."

OVS is the 2004 Department of Homeland Security plan that provides 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 the safety of life at sea while deterring and dissuading mass maritime migration alongside our federal, state, and local partners.

Additionally, Forward's crew conducted interactions with valued partners and the local community during a port call to the Dominican Republic. Forward hosted Dominican Republic navy leadership aboard the cutter and discussed ongoing relationships within the region. Forward's crew also participated in a community relations project held at a local

orphanage in Maimon, Dominican Republic. The crew donated toys and home items as well completed renovation and restoration projects, building stronger relationships between partners.

Forward is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. 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.

USCGC Vigilant Assists in Interdicting 1,200 Pounds of Cocaine during Caribbean Deployment



March 4, 2024

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC 617) returned home to Cape Canaveral, Sunday, following a 60-day patrol in the Central and Eastern Caribbean.

Deploying in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South, Vigilant worked alongside other Coast Guard cutters, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security units, and international partners to conduct maritime safety and security missions. Vigilant deterred illegal drug smuggling and directly contributed to U.S. Coast Guard and national objectives to combat transnational criminal organizations.

During the patrol, Vigilant's crew responded to a distress signal from a French-flagged sailing vessel. The signal came from two French crew members who were stranded at sea for over

eight days with no means of propulsion and no remaining drinking water. Vigilant was first on scene and provided them with water, shelter, and medical aid until their safe return home was coordinated.

Additionally, Vigilant assisted USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55) in stopping a drug trafficking venture, detaining six suspected drug traffickers, and interdicting 1,200 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$15.7 million.

In addition, Vigilant conducted a professional exchange with officials in St. Lucia as well as St. Kitts and Nevis. Vigilant worked to promote regional stability, security and strengthen partnerships. Members of the crew also conducted a community relations project in Basseterre, St. Kitts, where they joined members of the St. Kitts and Nevis Defence Force to paint two classrooms at a local school.

“As always, I couldn’t be prouder of our crew and our continued heritage of service,” said Cmdr. Jon Potterton, the commanding officer of Vigilant. “We enjoyed a great patrol where we were able to save lives and gain a greater appreciation for our Eastern Caribbean partner nation’s cultures and strengthen bonds through training and volunteerism.”

Vigilant is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. 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. The medium endurance cutter is under the command of the 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. 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.

Coast Guard Cutter Alert Returns Home to Astoria for the Last Time



By U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Feb. 26, 2024

ASTORIA, Ore. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) and its crew returned to their homeport, Monday, after a 59-day counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

This patrol is scheduled to be the cutter's last patrol out of its current homeport of Astoria, Oregon.

During the patrol, the Alert's embarked helicopter crew from, the Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON), based out of Jacksonville, Florida, sighted a suspected "go-fast"

vessel driving on a northerly course and alerted the cutters crew. The crew responded and launched both of its small-boat pursuit teams. Due to the vessel's refusal to stop when ordered, the HITRON helicopter disabled the engines of the "go-fast" and monitored until the pursuit crew gained control of the vessel. Simultaneously, the second small boat team recovered dozens of bales of cocaine jettisoned into the ocean by the suspected smugglers. The crew then worked tirelessly through the night to haul in and account for all 4,950 kg of cocaine, valued at more than \$143 million.

The interdiction is among the Coast Guard's largest single interdictions in the Eastern Pacific and represents a major blow to the criminal organizations attempting to smuggle illicit narcotics through the maritime domain. Additionally, it serves as the capstone in Alert's time in Coast Guard Pacific Area, as the cutter will shift homeport in June to be stationed in Cape Canaveral, Florida as part of the larger Coast Guard Force Alignment Initiative.

"The crew worked in the margins, and we won big in the margins," said Cmdr. Lee Crusius, commanding officer Coast Guard Cutter Alert. "The return on investment from the Coast Guard to the American people continues to be demonstrated by our ability to project capabilities and rule of law within the maritime domain. Day in and day out, the women and men of our service are doing important business, protecting vital international interests from those who wish to subvert order."

The smuggling of cocaine represents a large threat to not only the health of nations and rule of law, but destruction of fragile ecosystems in its manufacturing and movement.

The cutter Alert was commissioned in 1969 and is the newest of three 210-foot Reliance-class Medium Endurance cutters stationed on the West Coast. It performs a variety of missions to protect Americans and American interests in the Northern and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star completes Operation Deep Freeze 2024 mission, departs Antarctica



Feb. 23, 2024

SOUTHERN OCEAN – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew departed McMurdo Station, Antarctica, Feb. 12, after operating for 51 days below the Antarctic Circle in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2024.

The Polar Star and crew broke a 38-mile channel through fast ice to create a navigable route for vessels to reach McMurdo Station and escorted a cargo vessel and oil tanker through the

ice to and from the station.

“This year, the fast ice in McMurdo Sound was exceptionally thick due to the winds and temperature at the end of last season” said Lt. Cmdr. Don Rudnickas, operations officer. “It challenged our ship and our crew in almost every way, but we met those challenges to achieve our ultimate concern – the resupply of McMurdo Station by sea.”

Before departing the Antarctic Region, the cutter also visited the Bay of Whales, where members from all three of the Coast Guard Regional Dive Lockers dove 90 miles south of the previously documented record for southernmost scuba dive. The crew also went ashore adjacent to the Ross Ice Shelf in the Bay of Whales where they conducted their Antarctica Service Medal ceremony and were able to walk up to the ice shelf.

“Operation Deep Freeze demands more than just breaking ice; it requires navigating the complexities of keeping a 48-year-old cutter operational while subjecting her to the most extreme conditions possible,” said Capt. Keith Ropella, commanding officer. “We rely on the crew’s technical expertise, teamwork, and their commitment to overcoming the relentless obstacles posed by time and nature. It’s also the collaboration of a Joint Task Force, comprised of servicemembers from the U.S. Air Force, Army, and Navy, that play a crucial role in mission success.”

Operation Deep Freeze is the annual logistical support mission provided by the Department of Defense to the National Science Foundation (NSF) managed by the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP). This includes coordination of strategic inter-theater airlift, tactical intra-theater airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation support, search and rescue response, sealift, seaport access, bulk fuel supply, port cargo handling, and transportation requirements supporting the NSF. This is a unique mission demonstrating U.S. commitment to the Antarctic Treaty and to research programs conducted for the betterment

of all humanity. The Polar Star and crew contribute to this yearly effort through icebreaking to clear the channel for supply vessels.

The Polar Star is the United States' only asset capable of providing access to both Polar Regions. It is a 399-foot heavy polar icebreaker commissioned in 1976, weighing 13,500 tons and is 84-feet wide with a 34-foot draft. The six diesel and three gas turbine engines produce up to 75,000 horsepower.

US Coast Guard Cutter Thetis Disrupts Illegal Narcotics Trafficking During Caribbean Deployment



Feb. 23, 2024

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC 910) returned to their homeport in Key West on Friday following a 62-day patrol in the Central Caribbean Sea.

Thetis worked in support of the Joint Interagency Task Force-South alongside partners to deter illegal narcotics trafficking in the Central Caribbean. With an embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron and support from the USS Farragut (DDG 99), Thetis interdicted approximately 2,646 pounds of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$34.8 million.

Thetis pursued two cases while patrolling the region and conducted law enforcement operations through close coordination with multiple maritime patrol aircraft and other Coast Guard assets. With the Farragut, Thetis interdicted more than 2,094 pounds of cocaine.

In another case, Thetis interdicted a go-fast vessel, resulting in the detainment of two suspected narcotics traffickers and the seizure of 441 pounds of cocaine.

“The cases we encountered on this patrol emphasize the importance of collaboration across departments and agencies in deterring the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States,” said Master Chief Petty Officer AJ Gibson, the command chief of Thetis. “I am extremely proud of the adaptability and determination displayed by our crew in successfully completing the mission.”

Thetis is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter with a crew of 100. Their 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.