

CENTCOM Intercepts Iranian Weapons Shipment Intended for Houthis



Military-grade weapons and other lethal supplies are stacked on the deck of a vessel seized by the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast-response cutter USCGC Clarence Sutphin Jr. (WPC 1147) in the Arabian Sea, Jan. 28. Clarence Sutphin Jr. operates in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to help ensure maritime security and stability in the Middle East region. **(Photo by U.S. Coast Guard)**

By U.S. Central Command Public Affairs | February 15, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – A U.S. Coast Guard cutter, forward deployed to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility, seized advanced conventional weapons and other lethal aid originating in Iran and bound to Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen from a vessel in the Arabian Sea on Jan. 28.

The U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast-response cutter USCGC Clarence Sutphin Jr. (WPC 1147), assigned to U.S. Naval Forces

Central Command, located the vessel and boarded it in the Arabian Sea. The boarding team discovered over 200 packages that contained medium-range ballistic missile components, explosives, unmanned underwater/surface vehicle (UUV/USV) components, military-grade communication and network equipment, anti-tank guided missile launcher assemblies, and other military components.

The direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of such aid violates U.N. Security Council Resolution 2216 (as extended and renewed by resolutions 2675 and 2707).

“This is yet another example of Iran’s malign activity in the region, ” said Gen. Michael Erik Kurilla, CENTCOM commander. “Their continued supply of advanced conventional weapons to the Houthis is in direct violation of international law and continues to undermine the safety of international shipping and the free flow of commerce.”

CENTCOM is committed to working with our allies and partners to counter the flow of Iranian lethal aid in the region by all lawful means including U.S. and U.N. sanctions and through interdictions.

Coast Guard Cutter Tampa returns home after 77-day patrol in the Florida Straits



Feb. 13, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa (WMEC 902) and crew returned home Tuesday, following a 77-day maritime safety and security patrol in the Florida Straits.

Tampa deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS), patrolling within the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of responsibility. While underway, Tampa's crew performed as Commander Task Unit (CTU) for operations in and around the Florida Straits, coordinating with other Coast Guard units to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal maritime migration ventures bound for the United States.

While at sea, Tampa's crew interdicted one vessel with two Cuban migrants aboard, attempting to reach the U.S. through dangerous and unlawful channels. In total, Tampa's crew also contributed to the interdiction of 207 migrants throughout the patrol.

While deployed, the crew also celebrated the cutter's 40th birthday. Tampa commissioned on Dec. 12, 1982.

“CGC Tampa has gracefully completed a multitude of missions throughout her 40 years of service,” said Cmdr. Walter Krolman, commanding officer of Tampa. “From mass migration rescues to participating in multi-nation military exercises and conducting counterdrug operations, Tampa continues to prove her motto, “Thy way is the sea, thy path in the great waters.”

HSTF-SE serves as the DHS lead for operational and tactical planning, command and control, and as a standing organization to deter, mitigate and respond to maritime mass migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits. HSTF-SE continues enhanced enforcement efforts in support of OVS, the 2004 DHS-developed plan to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits.

Tampa 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.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit www.GoCoastGuard.com to learn more about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

Coast Guard Cutter Willow crew returns to homeport

after 32-day patrol in Caribbean Sea



Feb. 13, 2024

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Coast Guard Cutter Willow (WLB 202) crew returned to their homeport in Charleston, Saturday, after a 32-day patrol throughout the Caribbean Sea.

The Willow crew serviced 37 aids to navigation in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

Working alongside the Coast Guard Research and Development (R&D) Center, the Willow crew installed a prototype buoy to replace Bahia de San Juan Lighted Buoy 2, which has historically been reported off station or missing due to the significant weather it encounters. Mariners utilize buoys to identify the best water for their vessels transiting into San

Juan Harbor. The Sealite Trident 2600 buoy hull is a lightweight, non-ferrous hull made of recyclable plastic material. This plastic hull has been tested for heavy weather by the R&D Center and was moored in Bahia de San Juan, Jan. 16, 2024. The deployment of a prototype buoy is part of ongoing Coast Guard-wide field research into the next generation of aids to navigation (ATON) and mooring designs to support future decisions on the most cost-efficient ATON buoy inventory.

Additionally, Willow crew members worked with Aids to Navigation Team (ANT) Puerto Rico and Coast Guard Regional Dive Locker East to recover two wayward buoy hulls and one sunken buoy hull. Two wayward buoy hulls were in areas too shallow for Willow to operate in, so smaller craft from ANT Puerto Rico and divers from the Regional Dive locker were able to recover the two buoys from critical marine areas and complete an at-sea delivery to Willow. Removing these buoys is important as it eliminates hazards of navigation, prevents deterioration of the marine environment, and allows for the refurbishment and recapitalization of the buoy.

“We always look forward to our deployments to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to ensure the proper maintenance of the maritime transportation system,” said Cmdr. Erin Chlum, Willow’s commanding officer. “The positive relationships we have with the local Coast Guard units and the pilot associations throughout the region allow us to address any concerns or discrepancies as soon as possible.”

Willow conducted a port call in Frederiksted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, where the crew offered public tours and brought in more than 300 visitors, educating the community on the Coast Guard’s role in maintaining the maritime transportation system and search and rescue. Willow crew members also participated in a beach cleanup on the island, helping to remove 50 pounds of trash.

“The officers and crew of Coast Guard Cutter Willow greatly appreciate the warm welcome and hospitality we received on the beautiful island of St. Croix,” said Chlum. “I would like to thank everyone who came to the public tours of the cutter at the Frederiksted Pier. It was an amazing opportunity to hear directly from the people we serve when conducting our primary mission of maintaining the buoys of the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

Willow is a 225-foot Juniper class sea-going buoy tender. The tender crew is responsible for servicing 246 aids to navigation in South Carolina, Georgia, and throughout the Caribbean, including Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Willow crew conducts law enforcement, search and rescue, and marine environmental protection missions.

Coast Guard Cutter Dependable returns home after 59-day patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage



Feb. 10, 2024

Coast Guard Cutter Dependable returns home after 59-day patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Dependable (WMEC 626) returned to their home port in Virginia Beach, Saturday, following a 59-day maritime safety and security patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage.

Dependable and crew members deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force-Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while patrolling in the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of operations. Dependable's crew conducted illegal migration deterrence and interdiction operations while collaborating with other Coast Guard and interagency assets across the region to protect life at sea and secure U.S. maritime borders.

While underway in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage, Dependable worked with additional law enforcement entities, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Haitian Coast Guard Commission, to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe

and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States. During the patrol, Dependable located and deterred four unlawful voyages with approximately 100 migrants on board. In addition, Dependable's crew rescued 33 people aboard a 25-foot vessel in distress 6 miles off Haiti's coast during heavy seas. Crew members conducted the search and rescue mission in 8-to-12-foot seas and winds gusting to 46 mph, saving all on board.

"Over the last two months, the crew of the Dependable have executed all assigned missions with dedication, skill, and initiative," said Cmdr. Kristopher Ensley, commanding officer of Dependable. "Most notably, there are 33 people still alive today because of our crew and the way they courageously braved 12-foot seas, 40-knot winds, and limited visibility to execute this critical rescue. I could not be more proud of this team; they have truly lived up to our ship's motto: 'Count on Us!'"

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.

Dependable is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 76. Since commissioning in 1968, Dependable has executed counterdrug and migrant interdiction operations, enforced federal fishery laws, and conducted

search and rescue missions in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit www.GoCoastGuard.com to learn more about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

Coast Guard Cutter Resolute Returns Home, Offloads \$55M Worth of Drugs in Tampa Bay



ST. PETERSBURG, Florida – Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC 620) and crew returned from a 60-day counterdrug patrol and

offloaded approximately \$55 million worth of illicit narcotics, Monday, in St. Petersburg.

Patrolling in support of Joint Interagency Task Force - South, the Resolute crew stopped two suspected drug trafficking ventures, preventing 6,565 pounds of marijuana and approximately 3,700 pounds of cocaine from entering the United States, and detained six suspected traffickers. The drugs were seized in the international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Supporting the Resolute was an embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and crew from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, and a law enforcement detachment from Tactical Law Enforcement Team - South.

During the patrol, Resolute's crew met with Panama's National Aeronaval Service to strengthen the partnership between the United States and Panama, and discuss strategies to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

"The pride and dedication of Resolute's crew was evident throughout the entirety of our patrol," said Cmdr. Matthew R. Kolodica, commanding officer of Resolute. "Despite being deployed throughout the holiday season, the crew served with professionalism. The result of their collected effort was an extremely successful patrol which kept \$55 million dollars of drugs from reaching its intended destination. Every Resolute sailor and their loved ones should be proud; they are a living example of the Coast Guard's motto, "Semper Paratus – Always Ready." It is an honor to lead such a fine ship and crew."

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea requires a unity of effort in all phases, from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, through criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. Joint Interagency Task Force – South in Key West,

Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 11th District](#), headquartered in Alameda, California, and the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 7th District](#), headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) designated investigations. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Resolute is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg with a crew of 80. The cutter's primary missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, protection of living marine resources, homeland security and defense operations, international training and humanitarian operations throughout the Western hemisphere.

**U.S Coast Guard Cutter
Steadfast decommissioned
after 56 years of service**



Feb. 6, 2024

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard decommissioned the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) during a ceremony, Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024, in Astoria.

Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson, deputy commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area, presided over the ceremony honoring the 56 years of service Steadfast and its crews provided to the nation.

Commissioned in 1968, Steadfast was one of 16 Reliance-class medium endurance cutters built for search and rescue, counter-narcotic operations, and migrant interdiction.

“The cutter Steadfast has been a stalwart ship for the Coast Guard, frequently conducting lifesaving missions, contributing to our national security and protecting our Marine Transportation System.” said McPherson. “I am immensely proud of Steadfast’s crew for their dedication to duty while enhancing our nation’s maritime safety and security throughout the Pacific Ocean.”

During the cutter’s most [recent deployment](#), the crew transited

11,742 nautical miles on a 64-day multi-mission deployment, from Oregon to several hundred miles off the coast of Central Mexico conducting training, law enforcement, recruiting and public affairs missions, along with helicopter operations.

“Steadfast has an incredible legacy of honorable service to our nation,” said Cmdr. Brock Eckel, Steadfast’s commanding officer. “I am grateful to have had the opportunity to lead such an amazing crew through dynamic patrols and high-risk counter-narcotics operations. I want to thank the crew for their dedication, camaraderie, and desire to serve our country; they are what make this ship so special.”

As part of the U.S. Coast Guard’s [Foreign Military Sales Program](#), Steadfast will transfer to Baltimore where she will be available for transfer to another country as an Excess Defense Article.

Steadfast was one of the Coast Guard’s 13 remaining 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutters. As part of the Coast Guard’s [acquisition](#) program, the 360-foot [Heritage-class](#) offshore patrol cutters and the 154-foot fast response cutters will replace the Coast Guard’s 270-foot and 210-foot medium endurance cutters. The offshore patrol cutters will provide the majority of offshore presence for the Coast Guard’s cutter fleet, bridging the capabilities of the 418-foot national security cutters, which patrol the open ocean, and the 154-foot fast response cutters, which serve closer to shore

Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley Returns to Kodiak from Bering Sea Patrol



Crew members on USCGC Alex Haley conduct vertical replenishment training with the crew of an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Kodiak in the Bering Sea Jan. 8. *U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 1st Class Jasen Newman*

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of USCGC Alex Haley (WMEC-39) returned home to Kodiak on Jan. 29 following a 45-day winter Bering Sea patrol during which they conducted domestic fisheries enforcement, responded to search and rescue and conducted several shipboard training exercises.

Prior to departing for the Bering Sea, the crew completed their Tailored Ship Training Assessment in Seattle. This

assessment is a comprehensive evaluation on the crew's capability to respond to a wide range of scenarios, from seamanship drills to battling shipboard fires and flooding. The crew of Alex Haley completed this biennial assessment ahead of schedule and with an overall score of 98% across all warfare areas.

After spending the holidays in the Bering Sea, Alex Haley was recalled from a logistics stop to respond to the motor vessel Genius Star XI on fire west of Dutch Harbor. After arriving on scene and determining the situation was stable, Coast Guard District 17 redirected the cutter to disabled fishing vessel Aleutian No. 1 off the coast of Amchitka, 575 miles southwest of Dutch Harbor. Alex Haley sailed through heavy seas to arrive on scene and safely establish a tow during nighttime gale conditions subsequently towing the 121-foot ship and crew of eight 160 miles to safe harbor in Adak.

In addition to maintaining a search and rescue presence in the Bering Sea, the crew conducted law enforcement and living marine resource protection throughout the Bering Sea and Aleutian Island chain to ensure compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and support a working relationship with the Alaskan fishing fleet. Alex Haley conducted nine fisheries boardings, issuing three Living Marine Resources violations and two safety violations.

USCGC Confidence Returns to Cape Canaveral After Patrol

in the Windward Passage, Florida Straits



The Coast Guard Cutter Confidence is shown on a patrol in April 2018. The Confidence is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported out of Cape Canaveral, Florida. *U.S. Coast Guard*

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Confidence (WMEC 619) returned to their homeport in Cape Canaveral on Jan. 26, following a 60-day deployment in the Windward Passage and Florida Straits.

Confidence worked to promote maritime safety and secure maritime borders, in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast’s Operation Vigilant Sentry within the Coast Guard 7th District’s area of responsibility. During the patrol, Confidence’s crew interdicted and oversaw the humanitarian treatment and processing of 65 migrants from various countries of origin and assisted with one damaged vessel.

Confidence's crew deterred two unsafe migrant ventures in the Windward Passage. Confidence escorted both vessels back to their countries of origin, ultimately ensuring safety of life at sea.

Confidence's crew assisted a damaged American-flagged vessel low in fuel off the coast of Haiti. Confidence provided critical supplies to the vessel to ensure the safe voyage to its final destination.

"Confidence's crew demonstrated exceptional commitment and skill throughout the patrol," said Cmdr. Thomas Martin. "I am incredibly proud of the Confidence crew for exemplifying the cutter motto 'Measure of Excellence' in all facets of this patrol."

Confidence 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 throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Coast Guard Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Base Charleston Campus



Adm. Linda L. Fagan, Commandant of the Coast Guard, and retired Senior Chief Petty Officer Thomas Gelwicks salute during the groundbreaking ceremony in North Charleston, South Carolina, Jan. 26. *U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 3rd Class Vincent Moreno*

CHARLESTON, South Carolina – Coast Guard Base Charleston held a groundbreaking ceremony on Jan. 26 for a new 64-acre campus in North Charleston. Adm. Linda Fagan, Commandant of the Coast Guard, presided over the ceremony.

The 64-acre campus along the Cooper River will support the five Charleston-based national security cutters, their crews and the support personnel with completion expected in late 2026.

Marking a new trajectory for the Coast Guard in Charleston, Base Charleston is slated to become the service's largest homeport and a base for global operations, training and support.

Since its commissioning in 2015, Base Charleston has delivered

customer-focused premiere support to all Coast Guard members, assets, and mission partners from Northern Florida to South Carolina. Moreover, the base generates Coast Guard global operational readiness.

Growth estimates show that the Coast Guard workforce may double in the Charleston area by 2030 and continued prioritization and investment in the future of Base Charleston is needed to make this vision a reality.

As one of the original 10 homeports for the Revenue Cutter Service, the greater Charleston area has proudly supported members of the Coast Guard and its predecessor agencies for more than 230 years.

The Coast Guard footprint in Charleston includes eight major commands; Coast Guard Base Charleston, Coast Guard Sector Charleston, and the Maritime Law Enforcement Academy, as well as numerous tenant commands and personnel in supporting roles throughout the region.

Coast Guard Rescues 9 from Ice Floe on Lake Erie



The Coast Guard rescued nine people from an ice floe on Lake Erie, near Catawba Island, Monday. *U.S. Coast Guard*
CLEVELAND – The Coast Guard rescued nine people from an ice floe on Lake Erie, near Catawba Island, on Monday, the service announced Jan. 23.

At 10:21 a.m., Coast Guard and local authorities responded to an initial report of more than 20 people on an ice floe a half mile offshore near Catawba Island, Ohio.

Coast Guard crews from Station Marblehead and Air Station Detroit responded in conjunction with the Put-in-Bay Fire Department and Ottawa County Sheriff's Office.

The Coast Guard rescued nine people and four more were rescued by the Put-in-Bay Fire Department. Seven people were able to self-rescue via their own airboat. A total of 20 people were rescued from the ice floe.

“We are committed to public safety and want to remind everyone the importance of exercising caution around ice formations,” said Lt. Adeb Ahmad, Sector Detroit public affairs officer. “Ice floes are unpredictable and can quickly become hazardous, particularly in windy conditions or strong currents. Always check local ice conditions before venturing out and be prepared for any emergencies. Your safety is our top priority.”