

Embassy, USAID, Coast Guard, CBP Discuss Haitian Earthquake Response Efforts



U.S. Agency for International Development for the Latin and Caribbean region senior official Tim Callahan (Left), Coast Guard Seventh District Commander Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson, and U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Michele Sison discuss unity of efforts in Port au Prince, Haiti, Aug. 20, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Villa Rodriguez*

MIAMI – Since the Aug. 14 earthquake in Haiti, Coast Guard men and women deployed there have flown 196 evolutions, saved 206 people, assisted 131 people, transported 306 urban disaster and relief personnel and transported 10,200 pounds of disaster and relief supplies, officials said Aug. 20.

U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Michele Sison joined Tim Callaghan, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Haiti earthquake disaster assistance response team leader, Coast Guard Seventh District Commander Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson and Customs and Border Protection AMO Southeast Region Executive Director John Priddy on Aug. 20 to discuss U.S. government disaster and relief operations and unity of efforts in Port au Prince following the magnitude 7.2 earthquake, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

According to Haitian government officials, since the earthquake on Aug. 14 Haitians suffered at least 2,189 deaths, 12,260 injuries and 130,000 homes damaged or destroyed.

“The United States’ response to the Aug. 14 earthquake and Tropical Depression Grace is a whole of U.S. government effort, led by USAID, to get help to those most in need,” said Sison. “The U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince is proud to work

alongside USAID, the Coast Guard, and Joint Task Force Haiti, in coordination with the Haitian government and international partners, to save lives.”

“USAID continues to expand relief operations to more areas impacted by the earthquake,” said Callaghan. “I would like to thank the U.S. Coast Guard team for the tireless work they have been doing not only to support the DART and help us quickly get out to affected areas, but also to save lives.”

“Coast Guard aircraft and personnel are medevacing critically injured citizens from impacted remote areas to Port au Prince where they may obtain higher levels of care,” said McPherson. “Additionally, we are coordinating with USAID and U.S. Southern Command, and JTF-Haiti to move urban search and rescue responders, medical personnel and supplies to impacted areas. Today’s leadership engagement with Ambassador Sison and others really highlight the American unity of effort to this response.”

“We stand shoulder to shoulder with our partners every day, carrying out the nation’s work,” said Priddy. “Our integrated operations with our partners enable us to better carry out our shared responsibilities and respond to disasters, as partnerships make us stronger.”

Coast Guard, Partner Agencies Continue to Support Haiti Relief Efforts



Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations agents

transporting injured Haitian citizen in Haiti, Aug. 19, 2021. Coast Guard and partner agencies continue to conduct ongoing operations in Haiti transporting medical personnel & evacuating those requiring higher levels of care. U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION AIR AND MARINE OPERATIONS

MIAMI – Coast Guard and partner agency aircrews continue to respond to critically injured Haitian citizens by transporting them to a higher level of care in Port au Prince, Haiti, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Aug. 19 release.

After several days of responding to a magnitude 7.2 earthquake in Haiti, Coast Guard aircrews returned home to Clearwater, Florida, Thursday, and more Coast Guard aircrews are returning to the response.

“We are proud, but we are also a little heartbroken,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Diglio, a rescue swimmer deployed to Haiti. “The Haitian citizens are strong, as they would ride in the helicopter calm and composed throughout the one-hour ride to the Port au Prince hospital.”

In the past 24 hours, Coast Guard men and women deployed to Haiti have flown 37 evolutions, saved more than 33 people, assisted more than 58 people, transported 49 urban disaster and relief personnel, and transported 1,700 pounds of disaster and relief supplies.

Since Sunday, Coast Guard men and women deployed to Haiti have flown 137 evolutions, saved 116 people, assisted 177 people, transported 234 urban disaster and relief personnel, and transported 8,500 pounds of disaster and relief supplies.

U.S. Coast Guard Completes Operation Nanook 2021



The USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907) sails by an iceberg in the Labrador Sea. The Escanaba is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of around 100 conducting many of the service's missions, emphasizing law enforcement and security. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Dyxan Williams*

NUUK, Greenland – Strengthening partnerships and testing interoperability, the Coast Guard cutters Escanaba (WMEC 907) and Richard Snyder (WPC 1127) participated in Operation Nanook in early to mid-August, Coast Guard Atlantic Area said Aug. 17.

Operation Nanook is the Canadian Armed Forces' signature Arctic operation, comprising a series of comprehensive, joint, interagency, and multinational activities designed to exercise the defense of Canada and security in the region and incident management response and search rescue capabilities. With commercial traffic and cruise ships increasingly visible in the Arctic, international collaborations are necessary to meet this increased traffic's potential search and rescue challenges. Nanook-Tuugaalik is the maritime component of the Nanook series of deployments and training events intended to be an Arctic naval presence operation and domain awareness of the waters in and around Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. Nanook-Tatigiit is the incident management and search and rescue exercise portion.

"We had excellent training with the crews of HMCS Harry Dewolf [AOPV 430], HMCS Goose Bay [MM 707], and Richard Snyder. The joint effort during Tuugaalik and Tatigiit included multi-ship small boat training, formation steaming, hailing and signals exercises, and more. Weather, especially in the Arctic, is a genuine consideration, and increasing sea state and fog tested

us,” said Cmdr. Ben Spector, the commanding officer of Escanaba. “The U.S. Coast Guard remains committed to conducting operations and combined maritime exercises throughout the Atlantic and the Arctic region, ensuring mission capacity and future force readiness. Training with our partners and allied nations ensure all countries are ready, relevant, and responsive in an ever-evolving maritime environment.”

This operation is also the first time the U.S. Coast Guard deployed a 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter to the region, USCGC Richard Snyder. As the inventory of FRCs grows, the U.S. Coast Guard continues to test the full range of their capability, including operations in high latitude environments. While these ships are not ice-strengthened, units observed mitigations, such as the deployment time of year and carefully considering operating areas.

“The FRC has fared exceedingly well in the Arctic. Our major concerns were fuel and food, and there have been no issues with either as the cutter continues to steam through the operational area and complete all training and interactions with stellar results,” said Lt. Cmdr. Gregory Bredariol, the commanding officer of Richard Snyder. “We’ve done some once-in-a-lifetime activities including fjords transits, getting close aboard icebergs much larger than the cutter, restricted waters transits in harsh conditions and deployment to an unfamiliar but mission-critical area. Our colleagues aboard the Escanaba were critical in our deployment, assisting with logistics and operational support. I can’t express enough our appreciation as we deployed far from our normal operations area and completed mission sets that we don’t generally practice. As a cutter based in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, we primarily focus on living marine resources and search and rescue.”

Following Nanook, both ship’s crews are conducting engagements and resupplying in Nuuk. Snyder will return home. Escanaba

will transition to support Frontier Sentinel, an annual exercise between the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, and Royal Canadian Navy, ensuring the ability of the Tri-Party Staff and tactical assets to work together. This year's live exercise uses feedback from the prior year's tabletop discussion.

Participants in all exercises are observing COVID-19 protocols to mitigate exposure and comply with host nation guidelines. Exercise scenarios took into account our COVID restrictions and respective realities.

Operation Nanook is the third of four major deployments of the U.S. Coast Guard's Atlantic Arctic Season. In June, the USCGC Eagle (WIX 327) visited Iceland, where Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, the Atlantic Area commander, hosted Icelandic officials for Arctic discussions. Also, in June, the USCGC Maple (WLB 207) participated in the Danish Joint Arctic Command's annual exercise, Ex Argus, in Southern Greenland with international partners. Later this fall, the USCGC Healy (WAGB 20) will make stops along the U.S. East Coast after transiting the Northwest Passage on their circumnavigation of North America.

Operation Nanook has been held annually since its inception over a decade ago. Last year's exercise was scaled down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While participants could not conduct port visits, the activity focused on naval readiness, ship tracking, and gunnery operations between multinational partners, including the United States, Canada, Denmark, and France. The U.S. sent the USCGC Tahoma (WMEC 908) and USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909) to participate.

USCGC Escanaba is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of about 100 operating for the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. USCGC Richard Snyder is a Fifth Coast Guard District 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter with a crew of about 24 also operating for U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. The Atlantic Area commander and staff oversee

all Coast Guard domestic operations east of the Rocky Mountains, including the Arctic, Caribbean and Southern Atlantic and Coast Guard out-of-hemisphere operations in Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia.

Navy, Coast Guard Units Rush to Aid Haitian Earthquake Victims



Canadian Medical Assistant Team Cristina Coams alongside with Petty Officer 1st Class Rob Updike and Hero Client Rescue paramedic Nadia Van der Heyden evaluate an injured female Aug. 15, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Villa-Rodriguez*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Under the direction of U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Navy and Coast Guard units have been deployed to provide disaster relief to the victims of the Aug. 14 earthquake that struck southern Haiti. More than 1,400 people are confirmed dead from the 7.2-magnitude earthquake, according to press reports.

U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has established a joint task force on Aug. 15 to handle the relief efforts. The command also established a Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) Situational Awareness Team in the Haitian capital, Port-Au-Prince, to help coordinate the relief efforts.

The U.S. Coast Guard responded Aug. 15 with several helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft to help evacuate injured people.

"On August 15, at the request of the Haitian Government, the Coast Guard surged aircraft and personnel to help critically injured patients from impacted areas to Port au Prince where they may obtain higher levels of care," said Coast Guard Seventh District Commander, Rear Adm. Brendan C. McPherson. "Additionally, we are coordinating with USAID and U.S. Southern Command to move urban search and rescue responders, medical personnel and supplies to impacted areas. Our crews are trained and empowered to use sound on-scene initiative to judge the risks as they respond to the most urgent requests for help. Our people have a true bias for action and know how to lead through a crisis."

Kirby said the Navy was sending the San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ship USS Arlington to Haiti. The ship is carrying two MH-60 helicopters and one landing craft.

Also en route is the USNS Burlington, a Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport operated by the Military Sealift Command, which is carrying ScanEagle surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles.

Two P-8A maritime patrol aircraft deployed to El Salvador have been staged near Haiti to provide support for the relief efforts with imagery of damaged areas of the country.

Two UH-60 and two CH-47 helicopters from Joint Task Force-Bravo are also en route to Haiti, where they will provide critical airlift support to ongoing relief efforts.

Kirby also said that four field hospitals also were being dispatched to Haiti.

The Coast Guard 7th District said its efforts from Aug. 15-16 included more than 38 Coast Guard members deployed, 34 aviation evolutions, 51 people saved and 12 people assisted.

Seventy-two Fairfax County Fire Department's urban search and rescue crews, USAID Disaster Assistance Response Teams,

medical personnel and first responders transported 5,500 pounds of medical supplies.

Coast Guard assets deployed for the relief efforts include two Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrews, a Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew, a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew, a Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater HC-130 Hercules aircrew and the Coast Guard Cutters Reliance, Winslow Griesser and Margaret Norvell.

Coast Guard Cutter Steelhead Shifts Homeport to Fort Macon, NC



The Coast Guard Cutter Steelhead (WPB 87324) officially arrived at its new homeport in Fort Macon, Aug. 6, 2021. The 87-foot coastal patrol boat is a capable multi-mission platform designed for search and rescue, law enforcement, and fisheries patrols, as well as drug interdiction and illegal alien interdiction duties up to 200 miles off shore. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

FORT MACON, N.C. – The Coast Guard Cutter Steelhead (WPB 87324) officially arrived at its new homeport in Fort Macon, North Carolina, Aug. 6, 2021, the Coast Guard 5th District said in an Aug. 17 release.

The Steelhead is a coastal patrol boat with a crew of 11 men and women whose area of operations ranges from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay near Cape Charles and Cape Henry, Virginia, to the South Carolina border.

Steelhead joins Coast Guard Cutters Maple, Bayberry, Smilax, Richard Snyder, and the Nathan Bruckenthal in Fort Macon.

“We are pleased to announce the Coast Guard Cutter Steelhead has relocated to Fort Macon, North Carolina,” said Capt. Matt Baer, commanding officer of Coast Guard Sector North Carolina. “As a multi-mission, maritime service with vast responsibilities and limited resources, we are constantly seeking ways to be more efficient and effective. Cutter Steelhead will conduct both law enforcement and search and rescue operations spanning the entire North Carolina coastline, providing an outstanding addition to the Coast Guard’s layered response strategy of shore-based boats, aircraft, and cutters. The change of homeport will ensure critical mission support functions for cutter maintenance and personnel needs are met, while improving offshore response capabilities from the Outer Banks throughout the Crystal Coast and across southeastern North Carolina. The crew and families of the cutter Steelhead are excited to join the long-standing heritage of lifesavers who call the Coast Guard community of Cartaret County their home.”

The 87-foot coastal patrol boat is a capable multi-mission platform designed for search and rescue, law enforcement, and fisheries patrols, as well as drug interdiction and illegal alien interdiction duties up to 200 miles offshore.

Coast Guard Responds to Haiti for Humanitarian Aid

following 7.2 Earthquake



A Coast Guard air crew member helps transport a critically injured child from the helicopter to awaiting emergency medical services at Port au Prince, Haiti, Aug. 15, 2021. U.S. Coast Guard forward deployed Jayhawk helicopter crews are from Air Station Clearwater, Florida. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Lt. David Steele*

MIAMI – Haitian’s government requested Coast Guard assistance following a magnitude 7.2 earthquake, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Aug. 15 release. The Coast Guard has committed numbers of air and surface assets to help in transporting medical personnel and supplies and transporting critically injured citizens to facilities needing a higher level of care in Port au Prince, Haiti.

“On behalf of the United States Coast Guard I express our deepest sympathies to the people of Haiti,” said Coast Guard District Seven Commander, Adm. Brendan McPherson. “Our hearts go out to our Haitian diaspora here in Miami and to those tragically impacted in Haiti. We are supporting USAID humanitarian relief efforts, U.S. Southern Command’s Enduring Promise, and coordinating closely with Ambassador Sison and her country-team to assist in every way that we can. Our helicopters and aircrews are transporting medical personnel and evacuating those requiring higher levels of care. Our cutters remain offshore and on standby to assist the citizens of Haiti and to support agency response locally. Our unity of effort, our commitment to our neighbors, and our ability to lead through crisis will help see us all through this tragic event.”

Cutter Munro Arrives in Western Pacific for Months-Long Deployment



Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team-West members fast-rope of an MH-60J Jayhawk onto the Coast Guard Cutter Munro during flight operations off the coast of San Diego, California, July 23, 2021. The Coast Guard Cutter Munro conducted flight operation training with the U.S. Navy and Maritime Security Response Team-West to maintain operational proficiencies. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Sgt. Kevin G. Rivas*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Legend-class cutter Munro (WMSL 755) arrived in the Western Pacific Aug. 15 from its homeport in Alameda for a months-long deployment to the region, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Aug. 13 release.

The crew is operating in support of United States Indo-Pacific Command, which oversees military operations in the region.

Operating under the tactical control of commander, 7th Fleet, the cutter crew plans to engage in professional exchanges and capacity-building exercises with partners and allies and will patrol and operate as directed.

“Forward-deployed Naval Forces routinely and seamlessly integrate as one maritime force with a proud heritage of serving and fighting together,” said Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet. “It is a fitting nod to that heritage that Munro joins us following the U.S. Coast Guard celebration of its 231st birthday on Aug. 4.”

The Coast Guard’s deployment to the Indo-Pacific theater aligns with the integrated all-domain naval power of the naval service and increases the traditional influence of sea power regionally.

“The U.S. Coast Guard’s unique authorities, capabilities, and missions position us to collaborate on maritime safety and security with partners around the world,” said Vice Adm. Michael F. McAllister, commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area. “An increased presence throughout the Indo-Pacific strengthens our alliances and partnerships through improved interoperability, which will enhance regional stability, promote rules-based order, and improve maritime governance and security in the region and globally.”

Coast Guard forces provide expertise within the mission sets of search and rescue; illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; maritime environmental response; maritime security; and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Deployable Coast Guard cutters, port security units, and advanced interdiction teams are also highly capable in augmenting naval operations in theater.

As both a federal law enforcement agency and an armed force, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to conduct defense operations and security cooperation in support of combatant commanders on all seven continents. The service routinely provides forces in joint military operations worldwide, including the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft and deployable specialized forces.

The U.S. Coast Guard has a 150-year enduring role in the Indo-Pacific. The service’s ongoing deployment of resources to the region directly supports U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives in the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the National Security Strategy.

Commissioned in 2017, Munro is one of four Coast Guard legend class national security cutters homeported in Alameda. National security cutters are 418-feet long, 54-feet wide, and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, endurance of up to 90 days and can hold a crew of up to 170.

Munro is the second cutter named for Signalmen First Class Douglas A. Munro, the only Coast Guardsman awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

National security cutters feature advanced command and control capabilities, aviation support facilities, stern cutter boat launch and increased endurance for long-range patrols to disrupt threats to national security further offshore.

Since 2018, three other Coast Guard Cutters – Bertholf, Stratton and Wausau – have deployed to the Western Pacific.

Cutter James returns Home from 82-day Patrol in Eastern Pacific Ocean



U.S. Coast Guard Ensign Arthur Wicke, a law enforcement officer aboard the Coast Guard Cutter James, wraps a pallet of illegal narcotics in Port Everglades, Florida, Aug. 5, 2021. The James is homeported in Charleston, South Carolina, and returned there Aug. 14. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Estrada*

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL- 754) and crew returned to Charleston, Aug. 14, following an 82-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Aug. 16 release.

The James crew offloaded nearly 51,000 pounds of cocaine and marijuana worth an estimated \$1.4 billion, Aug. 5, 2021, at Port Everglades, Florida.

Working alongside other Coast Guard cutters, U.S. Navy ships

and international allies, the James patrol efforts were in direct support of drug interdiction efforts in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean to put increased pressure on the drug trafficking organizations operating in Central and South America.

During their patrol, the James crew, augmented by an embarked armed helicopter aircrew from the Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON), successfully interdicted 11 drug smuggling vessels and seized or disrupted nearly 13,608 kilograms of cocaine. The James crew also successfully executed two search and rescue cases off the coast of Florida, saving eight distressed mariners over Memorial Day weekend.

"This patrol highlights our crew's continued commitment to protecting the maritime border from our adversaries. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic," said Capt. Todd Vance, James commanding officer. "The James crew demonstrated supreme resilience and the results of their exceptional performance are being showcased today."

The Coast Guard Cutter James is one of three 418-foot National Security Cutters (NSC) homeported in North Charleston, South Carolina. With its robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment, the NSC is the most technologically advanced ship in the Coast Guard's fleet. NSCs are equipped with three state-of-the-art small boats, a stern boat launch system, dual aviation facilities, and serve as an afloat command and control platform for complex law enforcement and national security missions involving the Coast Guard and numerous partner agencies.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutters Patrol the U.S. Arctic



The Coast Guard Cutter Midgett and the Canadian coast guard ship Sir Wilfrid Laurier conduct a joint maritime security patrol in the Chukchi Sea on July 20, 2021. The Midgett is the Coast Guard's eighth National Security Cutter and is homeported in Honolulu. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

JUNEAU, Alaska – Crews aboard Coast Guard Cutters Midgett and Healy patrolled the Bering and Chukchi Seas off the coast of Alaska this summer to demonstrate the Coast Guard's commitment to ensuring a safe and secure Arctic and to work respectively with Canadian and Russian counterparts on shared maritime interests, the Coast Guard 17th District said in an Aug. 12 release.

In late July, the crew of Coast Guard Cutter Midgett, one of the Service's National Security Cutters, conducted combined operations and training with the Canadian coast guard Ship Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the Chukchi Sea, a joint patrol of the U.S.-Russia maritime boundary north of the Diomed Islands with the Russian Border Guard vessel Kamchatka, and a joint transit of the Bering Strait with the Coast Guard Cutter Healy, one of the service's two operational polar icebreakers. In each case, Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak crews forward-deployed to Kotzebue, Alaska in an HC-130J Hercules airplane supported the operations.

The simultaneous presence of Healy and Midgett in the Arctic region signals the increasing demand for the merged icebreaking and maritime security capability required of future Polar Security Cutters.

Midgett is the Coast Guard's eighth National Security Cutter and is homeported in Honolulu. Featuring advanced command-and-control capabilities, national security cutters are the

flagship of the Coast Guard's fleet, deploying globally to confront national security threats, strengthen maritime governance, and promote economic prosperity. While National Security Cutters possess advanced operational capabilities, more than 70% of the Coast Guard's offshore presence is the service's aging fleet of medium-endurance cutters, many of which are over 50 years old and approaching the end of their service life. Replacing the fleet with new Offshore Patrol Cutters is one of the Coast Guard's top acquisition priorities. The first Offshore Patrol Cutter is scheduled to be delivered in 2022.

Healy is a medium icebreaker capable of conducting a wide range of Coast Guard operations including search and rescue, ship escorts, environmental protection, and enforcement of laws and treaties in the polar regions. Uniquely equipped to conduct scientific operations, Healy is also the Nation's premiere high-latitude research vessel. Healy is the only U.S. military surface vessel that routinely deploys to the ice-covered waters of the Arctic to provide access and secure national interests related to our maritime borders and natural resources.

Coast Guard Rescues 48 Haitian Migrants Stranded on Monito Island



A Coast Guard HC-144 aircrew spots a group of 48 Haitian migrants stranded on Monito Cay, Puerto Rico during a routine patrol in the Mona Passage Aug. 11, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*
SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – Coast Guard and Puerto Rico Police

crews rescued 48 Haitian migrants Aug. 13, stranded on Monito Cay, Puerto Rico in the Mona Passage, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

“This was a very complex rescue and the migrants were in pretty bad shape after being abandoned by smugglers in this austere and highly dangerous environment,” said Lt. Benjamin Williamsz, Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser commanding officer. “The Winslow Griesser crew performed superbly, while working with our Puerto Rico Police and Border patrol partners, in rescuing and saving the migrants from the cliff’s edge and jagged rocks and bringing them to the safety of the cutter.”

Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector San Juan were initially contacted late Wednesday night by the aircrew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft, who spotted the migrants flashing a light and waving their hands for assistance.

Coast Guard watchstanders proceeded to divert the Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser and launched an MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen to further investigate and rescue any persons in distress. A Puerto Rico Police marine unit also responded to assist.

Upon arriving on scene, the crew of the Winslow Griesser located the migrants, 26 men and 22 women, on the side of the cliff and taking shelter inside nearby caves. The Winslow Griesser launched their Over-the-Horizon IV small boat to recover the migrants.

The migrants were transported to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where they were transferred to awaiting U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol agents, who rendered assistance to the migrants along with emergency medical service personnel at the scene.