

USCGC Myrtle Hazard crew concludes 46-day patrol in the Pacific



[Release from Coast Guard 14th District](#)

SANTA RITA, Guam – Marking the culmination of a 46-day patrol, the USCGC Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139) crew completed a series of operations in partnership with Papua New Guinea and other regional allies, bolstering maritime security and resource management in exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and on the high seas, returning to Guam on Sept. 24, 2023.

The recent patrol operation specifically supported the Pacific

Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's annual Operation Island Chief at the outset of the patrol and the broader U.S. Coast Guard's Operation Blue Pacific, further solidifying the U.S. commitment to resource security and regional stability.

Expanded Partnerships and Engagements

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing fundamentally erodes national security and exacerbates existing maritime governance gaps. This patrol significantly contributed to closing those gaps. By navigating the EEZs of the United States, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Papua New Guinea, Myrtle Hazard's crew strengthened the rule of law at sea, which the U.S. Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to enforce.

They also made port calls in Manus Island, Rabaul, Port Moresby, Lae in Papua New Guinea, and Cairns, Australia. This visit was the first by a U.S. Coast Guard vessel to Lae, laying the foundation for future visits. These stops also facilitated engagement with agency representatives throughout Papua New Guinea, including the government of Papua New Guinea, their National Fisheries Authority and Customs Service, and the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby. In multiple locations, the crew worked with the PNG Defence Force, and in Manus, they also hosted the deployed U.S. Navy Seabees Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE. The team was fortunate to observe PNG Independence Day in Lae, deepening cultural bonds.

The recent joint maritime patrol between the U.S. Coast Guard and multiple Papua New Guinea agencies was a historic step forward in U.S.-PNG relations. The collaborative operation led to advancements in maritime domain awareness and law enforcement expertise and successfully countered illegal activities like unregulated fishing. With the Western and Central Pacific Oceans being a significant source of the world's tuna, the joint effort emphasized the mutual

commitment to protect valuable marine resources. The patrol yielded six contact and observation reports, one of which led to immediate action by the PNG Fisheries Authority against a foreign fishing vessel crew for a Vessel Monitoring System violation. Additionally, four boardings of foreign fishing vessels took place to enforce regulations and deter illegal activity in PNG's EEZ. These outcomes highlight the operation's regional impact and set a strong foundation for future cooperation.

In Cairns, Australia, the Myrtle Hazard team engaged in memorable interactions with the Australian Royal Navy and Border Force. Notably, an all-out, full-court, officiated basketball game took place, with members from both services participating—highlighting the ever-growing camaraderie. They also spent time at the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College.

Milestone Achievements and Experiences

“Our 46-day patrol has been an exceptional journey. The sheer dedication and grit exhibited by my crew have been nothing short of remarkable,” said Lt. Jalle Merritt, commanding officer of the USCGC Myrtle Hazard. “From once-in-a-lifetime experiences like observing PNG Independence Day to earning new qualifications, this patrol signifies the hard work, joy of human connection, and increased competence we've gained.”

During the patrol, a line-crossing ceremony at the equator en route to Guam marked a significant rite of passage for the crew, symbolizing their transformation into more seasoned mariners.

“I had the honor of serving aboard a 110-foot Island-class patrol boat based out of Guam early in my career. Due to the platform's capabilities, we were limited in our operational reach to Palau and portions of the Federated States of Micronesia. Today, the FRCs based here are redefining the

dynamic for our Service and our regional partners,” said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. “From Guam, we’ve expanded our area of operations to areas that include our partners in the Republic of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, but also the Republic of Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia, and Nauru. And we have plans to reach the Philippines soon. Most FRCs are engaged in near-coastal operations, but ours are venturing farther, more frequently, substantiating the U.S. Coast Guard’s role as a significant maritime security actor across the Indo-Pacific.”

Strategic Impact

Building upon last year’s visit by a Guam-based fast response cutter crew and the recently ratified bilateral agreement with PNG, the Myrtle Hazard’s team patrolled 7,484 nautical miles, significantly bolstering maritime security and resource protection in multiple EEZs. The patrol enhanced interoperability with regional allies like PNG and Australia and advanced U.S. national priorities through targeted operations and cultural diplomacy. The patrol also contributed to the broader objectives of the PIF Forum Fisheries Agency’s annual Operation Island Chief and the U.S. Coast Guard’s Operation Blue Pacific, strengthening both bilateral and multilateral relationships in the region.

The Long View

The U.S. Coast Guard 14th District, based out of Honolulu, Hawaii, and U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, continue to foster enduring partnerships with regional allies. With humanitarian Service at its core, the U.S. Coast Guard remains committed to maritime safety, security, and stewardship, solidifying its longstanding reputation in the Pacific as a trusted partner. Plans and additional patrols are already underway for further engagement with regional partners.

The Myrtle Hazard is the 39th 154-foot Sentinel-class FRC, named in honor of the first enlisted woman in the U.S. Coast Guard who served as an electrician and radio operator. The Guam-based cutters serve as a cornerstone for the U.S. Coast Guard's ongoing commitment to the people of Oceania, focusing on maritime safety, security, and stewardship.

U.S. Coast Guard Leads Multi-Agency Operation Safeguarding Cargo Transport at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach



[Release from Coast Guard District Eleven](#)

Sept. 22, 2023

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard coordinated and participated in a Multi-Agency Strike Force Operation (MASFO) at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach on Wednesday, September 20, 2023.

This operation, with the primary goal of ensuring the safe and legal transportation of containerized cargo, involved seven partner agencies working together to conduct more than 700 identification credential checks and inspected over 300 containers.

“The success of this operation reflects the strength of unified agency efforts,” Chief Petty Officer John Herman said. “By combining our expertise and resources, we enhanced the overall safety and security of maritime commerce, ensuring shipping container integrity and enabling access to MTSA regulated facilities by authorized personnel.”

Coast Guard offloads more than \$160 million in illegal narcotics



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard 7th District](#)

Coast Guard 7th District

MIAMI – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Confidence offloaded more than 12,100 pounds of cocaine worth more than \$160 million in Miami, Tuesday.

Coast Guard and partner agency crews interdicted the illegal drugs during nine separate cases in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea.

“Our team worked extremely hard, day-in and day-out, to stop illicit narcotics from reaching the United States,” said Cmdr. Thomas Martin, commanding officer of Confidence. “I am honored to serve with such a proficient crew and share in their success.”

The following assets and agencies were involved in the multiple interdictions:

- USCG Cutter Confidence (WMEC 619)
 - USCG Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621)
 - USCG Tactical Law Enforcement Team – Pacific
 - Royal Netherlands Navy Ship HNLMS Groningen (P843)
 - Royal British Navy Ship HMS Dauntless (D33)
-
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations (AMO) aircrew
 - Joint Interagency Task Force South

“Yesterday’s contraband offload represents what can be achieved when U.S. and international defense and law enforcement agencies work together to combat the entry of illicit drugs into the United States,” said Lt. Fernando Pla, duty enforcement officer for Coast Guard District Seven. “This teamwork continues to deter the illicit drug trafficking market and is a testament to the hard work of these crews.”

Along with the illicit narcotics, 17 suspected smugglers were apprehended and face prosecution in federal courts by the Department of Justice.

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.

US Coast Guard Cutter Thetis nabs \$70 million in illegal narcotics during 55-day patrol

[Release From USCG News](#)

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC 910) returned home to Key West, Friday, following a 55-day patrol in the Western Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Patrolling in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South, Thetis worked alongside other Coast Guard cutters and U.S. partners to conduct counterdrug operations and fight transnational criminal organizations with the assistance of an embarked aviation detachment from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron.

While underway, Thetis seized approximately \$70 million worth of illegal narcotics over the course of two counterdrug operations. During one case, Thetis crew members apprehended three suspected drug traffickers. In another case, collaboration with a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft led to the recovery of approximately 5,325 pounds of illegal narcotics by the Thetis' pursuit team.

“These cases highlight the need for Coast Guard presence in these regions to combat the illegal trafficking of drugs and

emphasizes the operational capabilities of our platform and crew,” said Cmdr. Gavin Garcia, the commanding officer of Thetis. “I am extremely proud of our crew’s dedication and operational achievements during this patrol.”

Thetis is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutter’s primary missions are counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws as well as search and rescue.

Medium-endurance cutters fall under the command of the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area in Portsmouth, Virginia. 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.

First missionized Coast Guard HC-27J completes inaugural flight



[U.S. Coast Guard Release](#)

Sept. 6, 2023 – The Coast Guard successfully performed the first flight of the newly missionized HC-27J prototype aircraft, CGNR 2712, today at Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River, Maryland. The milestone flight is part of the Coast Guard's effort to enhance its fixed-wing surveillance aircraft fleet with improved capabilities to gather, process and transmit information during maritime patrol aircraft joint operations.

The flight was a culmination of efforts by the Coast Guard's Aviation Projects Acquisition Center and Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft program office along with Naval Air Systems Command's Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division AIRWorks Team and the original equipment manufacturer, Leonardo Aircraft Division (LAD). The first flight of the HC-27J was a modified functional check flight and was tailored to exercise the program's Safety of Flight and Safety of Test systems prior to fully proceeding into the flight test phase. The initial flight tests will be performed by the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 20 HC-27J test team with support from the Coast Guard and LAD at NAS Patuxent River.

The Coast Guard is in the process of missionizing 14 C-27J aircraft that were transferred from the U.S. Air Force under the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014. As originally delivered, the C-27Js were outfitted with weather radar and communications equipment. Missionization refers to the process of integrating specialized equipment, such as radar, sensors and processors, that enhance the aircraft's effectiveness in carrying out Coast Guard missions. The Coast Guard is using Minotaur mission system architecture developed by the Navy across its fixed wing fleet to integrate the specialized components such as surface search radar and electro-optical/infrared sensors because it offers significant increases in speed and memory capability.

Vigor Begins Work on USCGC John McCormick at Ketchikan Shipyard



[Release from Vigor](#)

Ketchikan-based cutter to undergo repairs and maintenance at local facility

KETCHIKAN, Alaska (September 12, 2023) – The U.S Coast Guard has awarded Vigor Alaska, a Titan company, a contract to perform maintenance and repairs on U.S. Coast Guard Cutter John McCormick at the Ketchikan Shipyard. USCGC John McCormick will be the first U.S. Coast Guard maintenance solicitation

awarded at the Ketchikan Shipyard since 2011. The Fast Response Cutter is stationed at Coast Guard Base Ketchikan, just 3.5 miles from Ketchikan Shipyard, ensuring work on this locally-based vessel supports jobs in Ketchikan's local economy. Work on the vessel begins this week.

"Vigor and our skilled employees are looking forward to beginning work on CGC John McCormick at our local Ketchikan Shipyard," said Adam Beck, Vigor EVP of Ship Repair. "Having a strong partnership with the Coast Guard supports family wage jobs in Ketchikan and helps get vessels back into service patrolling our coastlines faster. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve the Coast Guard and ready to get to work."

The \$3.65 million contract represents a significant milestone in Vigor's tenure as operator of Ketchikan Shipyard, which is owned by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA). The critical partnership between owner and operator supports a strong local economy in Ketchikan.

"AIDEA is proud to partner with Vigor in providing jobs in Ketchikan and boosting the local economy," said Randy Ruaro, Executive Director of AIDEA. "We applaud USCG in trusting the Ketchikan Shipyard for this important maintenance work and look forward to similar projects in the future. The U.S. Coast Guard's District 17 fleet has an Alaska maintenance facility to rely on."

Work on USCGC McCormick will cover comprehensive maintenance and repair of the vessel. After USCGC McCormick is dry docked, the skilled team at Ketchikan Shipyard will inspect the hull plating, conduct maintenance on the ship's propulsion system and renew hull coatings, as well as several other key maintenance and repair operations. Work is anticipated to last through the fall, with approximately 40 employees supporting the project.

In addition to USCGC McCormick, Vigor continues to conduct critical work for the Alaska Marine Highway System at Ketchikan Shipyard. Maintenance work on MV Kennicott began last month and will continue into November. Work on MV Stikine was completed earlier this year.

USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) Decommissions

[Release from Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two](#)

11 September 2023

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT (Sept. 8, 2023) – Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) was decommissioned in Mayport, Fla., September 8.

As an operational unit, Milwaukee and its crew played an important role in the defense of our nation and maritime freedom. Milwaukee and its Sailors were key to determine the operational success and deployment capabilities of today's LCS platform.

During the ceremony guest speaker, Vice Adm. Dirk Debbink (USN, Ret), former chairman of Milwaukee's commissioning committee wished the crew of Milwaukee fair winds and following seas as they bid farewell to their ship.

"We are all very proud of the way this ship served our Navy and our nation since that cold day in November 2015." said Vice Adm. Dirk Debbink (USN, Ret), former chairman of

Milwaukee's commissioning committee. "She was the first true serial production ship of the Freedom Class, having incorporated literally hundreds of changes, lessons learned from Freedom and Fort Worth."

Milwaukee and its Sailors contributed a tremendous amount of work and time to ensure success of the LCS program during the ship's time in naval service. Milwaukee completed two successful deployments in April 2022 and June 2023. The ship deployed to U.S. Fourth Fleet and integrated with the embarked US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), other US warships, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and SOUTHCOM/JIATF-S. During their second deployment, Milwaukee and her embarked LEDETs, seized an estimated \$30 million in suspected cocaine and three detainees during interdictions as sea, preventing 954kgs of cocaine from entering the United States. She also transported six detainees and case packages on behalf of USCGC BEAR in support of the counter-narcotic/interdiction mission. While deployed, Milwaukee provided maritime security presence enabling the free flow of commerce in key corridors of trade.

"Throughout the life of the ship, the Sailors that sailed Milwaukee led the way in training and operations that led to fleet improvements and culminated with operational success that supported national security objectives and demonstrated U.S. commitment to our allies." said Cmdr. Jason Knox, Milwaukee's commanding officer. "Not only can her Sailors be proud of their distinctive accomplishments, but the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin can be proud of their ship, too."

Milwaukee was designed by Lockheed Martin and constructed by Marinette Marine Corporation (Fincantieri) Marinette, Wisconsin, Milwaukee was commissioned November 21, 2015, in Lake Michigan at Milwaukee's Veteran's Park. Mrs. Sylvia Panetta, wife of former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, served as the ship's sponsor.

USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) is the fifth United States Navy Warship named after the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The ship represents the proud people of the Milwaukee community. Upon decommissioning, Milwaukee's Sailors will receive follow-on orders to new assignments.

LCS are fast, agile, mission-focused platforms designed to operate in near-shore environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats. LCS are versatile and are capable to support a broad spectrum of fleet missions and operate alongside regional navies and coast guards while supporting forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence missions around the globe.

For more news from Commander, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two, visit <https://www.surflant.usff.navy.mil/lcsron2/> or follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/comlcsron2/>

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa and Crew Return to Home Port Following 67-day Patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa and crew return to home port following 67-day patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa (WMEC 902) and crew returned to their home port in Portsmouth, Tuesday, after a 67-day patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage.

Tampa deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry within the Coast Guard Seventh District’s area of responsibility. During the patrol, Tampa’s crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while working with other Coast Guard cutters to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal maritime migration ventures bound for the United States.

While underway, Tampa’s crew interdicted one migrant vessel

attempting a dangerous and unlawful voyage toward the United States. Crew members contributed to the care and repatriation of 429 migrants during the patrol.

“This was a rewarding first patrol as the commanding officer,” said Cmdr. Walter Krolman, commanding officer of Tampa. “To see the officers and crew, experienced and new, come together to complete the mission was amazing. As a team, we conducted drills and exercises and qualified members in new watch stations while meeting operational demands. Tampa controlled surface assets and coordinated air coverage to ensure the security of the southern maritime border. We worked successfully with Coast Guard, state and federal partners to save lives and prevent a mass migration event.”

HSTF-SE serves as the Department of Homeland Security lead for operational and tactical planning, command and control, and acts as a standing organization to interdict illegal maritime migration attempts with federal, state and local partners. HSTF-SE continues enhanced enforcement efforts in support of OVS, the 2004 DHS plan to respond to irregular and unlawful mass 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 counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws 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.goCoastGuard.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](#).

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Resolute returns home following 67-day Caribbean patrol



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

Aug. 31, 2023

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC 620) returned to their home port in St. Petersburg, Thursday, following a 67-day patrol in the Windward Passage of the Caribbean Sea.

Resolute deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) to patrol the Coast Guard’s Seventh District area of operations. While underway, Resolute’s crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while working to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

During the patrol, Resolute’s crew interdicted an overloaded and unseaworthy vessel with 94 Haitian migrants 30 miles off the north coast of Haiti. Boarding teams embarked all 94 migrants onto Resolute where crew members provided shelter and care for three days, before repatriation.

“I could not be prouder of this crew and what they were able to accomplish during this patrol,” said Cmdr. Michael Ross, commanding officer of Resolute. “They answered the call and responded to each case with dignity, compassion, and professionalism.”

Resolute also conducted joint training with an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew from the Coast Guard’s forward-deployed aviation detachment in the Bahamas, while underway in the Caribbean. Resolute performed in-flight refueling, vertical replenishment, and basket hoist training to enhance mission readiness.

During time off from operations, Resolute crew members volunteered at Fundación Casa Niños Felices, an orphanage in the Dominican Republic. Resolute’s crew volunteered their liberty to spend time with over 30 orphans, furthering their humanitarian outreach efforts.

HSTF-SE serves as the Department of Homeland Security 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 plan to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Straits of Florida.

Resolute is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction, 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](#).

Coast Guard transfers custody of 3 suspected smugglers, offloads \$19 million in seized cocaine in San Juan, Puerto Rico



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard 7th District](#)

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley (WPC – 1117) offloaded approximately 1,709 pounds of seized cocaine and transferred custody of three suspected male smugglers to federal law enforcement authorities in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Thursday.

The suspected smugglers are Venezuelan nationals who now face criminal prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice in the U.S. Federal District Court in Puerto Rico. The seized contraband is estimated to have a wholesale value of \$19 million.

Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley interdicted a suspect non-compliant 46-foot go-fast vessel Saturday night, after the

aircrew of a maritime patrol aircraft detected the vessel while patrolling Caribbean Sea waters southeast of Puerto Rico. Following a high-speed pursuit and the interdiction of the suspect vessel, the cutter crew apprehended the suspected smugglers and successfully recovered 31 bales of contraband which had been jettisoned from the go-fast vessel during the pursuit.

“The strong collaboration and coordination between our Coast Guard units and our partner law enforcement agencies operating in the Caribbean are instrumental to achieving continued successful outcomes like in this case,” said Capt. José E. Díaz, Coast Guard Sector San Juan commander. “Our shared resolve and collective efforts are critical to further strengthening the security and stability of the region, while safeguarding our citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from this threat.”

The Transnational Organized Crime Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case, while Special Agents supporting the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force are leading the investigation.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts involving the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), the Caribbean Border Interagency Group and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. 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>. For breaking news, follow us on Twitter. For additional information, find us on Facebook and Instagram.

Cutter Donald Horsley is a 154-foot fast response cutter that is homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.