

USS Illinois Returns Home from Indo-Pacific Deployment



[Release from Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs](#)

July 19, 2023

By Chief Petty Officer B. Biller, Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Illinois (SSN 786) returned to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on July 3, following a seven-month deployment.

Illinois deployed from Pearl Harbor in December 2022, during which the submarine and its crew performed a full spectrum of

operations, to include anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare missions in the Indo-Pacific region.

“The Illinois crew demonstrated the extreme resiliency and endurance required to operate at sea,” said Illinois Commanding Officer Cmdr. Daniel McNab, from Brewster, Minnesota. “Operating a deployed submarine through the most remote parts of the Pacific is incredibly challenging. The strength of our families and support from home was essential to accomplishing our mission of defending a free and open Indo-Pacific region. It has been the highest honor of my career to serve at sea with this amazing crew. I could not be more proud of my Sailors, their families, our Illinois supporters, and the dedication each of them has to our nation.”

During the deployment, the crew traveled approximately 35,000 nautical miles under the sea. The Sailors aboard Illinois trained to be combat-ready prior to departure and maintained those standards throughout the deployment.

“The grit and positive attitude displayed by the entire Illinois crew has been extraordinary,” said Illinois Chief of the Boat Master Chief Fire Control Technician (Submarines) Mark Walter, from Burke, Virginia. “Every day, Illinois Sailors demonstrated our ability to maintain a sustained presence at sea. Special thanks are owed to all the families for keeping our home front secure. Our nation is stronger and our loved ones are safer because of your sacrifice.”

During the deployment, 41 Illinois Sailors became fully qualified in submarines and earned their Submarine Warfare Specialist designation known as “dolphins”.

“The most unforgettable moment of deployment was when I qualified in submarines, especially because I was pinned on my birthday,” said Torpedoman Fireman Apprentice Jeremiah J. Bruce from Montgomery, Alabama. “Earning my silver dolphins

was tough and it took a lot of sleepless nights of studying. It was achievable with help from the entire crew along the way. I'm extremely proud and appreciative to be a part of the Illinois team."

Illinois was commissioned Oct. 29, 2016, and is the 13th Virginia-class submarine. It is 377 feet long with a beam of 34 feet. USS Illinois is the second ship to be named for the nation's 21st state, the first being the battleship USS Illinois (BB 7) which was in service from 1901 to 1920, serving as part of President Theodore Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet".

USS Little Rock: Back with a Vengeance



[Release from U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command](#)

July 19, 2023

Caribbean Sea – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Little Rock (LCS 9) with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) has made its presence known in the fight against illicit drug-trafficking since entering the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) area of responsibility (AOR).

In early April, the team interdicted a go-fast vessel (GFV), detained four suspected drug smugglers, and recovered 50 kilograms of cocaine. Based on observations from the deployed helicopter, the suspected smugglers had jettisoned an estimated 650 kilograms of cocaine.

Later that month, while on patrol in the Caribbean, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected drug smuggling GFV and

vectored Little Rock in for an intercept. In response, Little Rock deployed a helicopter and a sea asset. LEDET members saw a package get tossed into the water before the GFV stopped and the LEDET gained positive control of the vessel. After receiving permission to conduct a boarding, the LEDET detained three suspected drug smugglers and recovered an estimated 570 kilograms of suspected cocaine worth an approximate street value of more than \$14.25 million. This was just the beginning.

In early May, the Little Rock team interdicted another GFV, detained two suspected drug smugglers, confiscated one firearm, and recovered an approximated 652 kilograms of cocaine. Later that month, the Little Rock had two more interdictions amounting to the detainment of six suspected drug smugglers and a recovery of an estimated 2,530 kilograms of cocaine overall.

“Little Rock is here to bring down the hammer on illicit trafficking in the Caribbean,” said Cmdr. Mike Chesnut, commanding officer of the USS Little Rock. “Together with JIATF-S (Joint Interagency Task Force – South) and our embarked team, we will pursue and disrupt Transnational Criminal Organizations to support stability at home and throughout the Americas.”

The USS Little Rock has had six GFV interdictions to date and Little Rock will continue to raise this number. As long as the ship is assigned to Commander, Task Force 45 (CTF-45), she will continue interdiction operations. CTF-45 is the 4th Fleet task force charged with executing combined naval operations, building and strengthening Latin American, south of Mexico, and Caribbean maritime partnerships, and acting as a DoD ready service provider to JIATF-S in support of counter illicit-drug trafficking operations in the Central and South American waters.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports

USSOUTHCOM's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American region.

LEDETS are deployable specialized forces of the U.S. Coast Guard that enforce U.S. laws and treaties in the maritime domain. LEDETs conduct counter-smuggling operations as their primary mission from U.S. and allied platforms. The U.S. Coast Guard is simultaneously a member of the Joint Force, a law enforcement organization, a regulatory agency, and a member of the intelligence community. The U.S. Coast Guard's wide suite of specialized maritime capabilities, competencies, and authorities enhances the Joint Force's comparative advantage at sea.

Coast Guard crew offloads more than \$158 million worth of narcotics in San Diego



[Release from the U.S. Coast Guard 11th District](#)

July 17, 2023

USCG District 11 Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) offloaded more than 11,600 pounds of cocaine and 5,500 pounds of marijuana worth an estimated \$158 million in San Diego, Monday.

The interdictions were conducted during counter-narcotics patrols in the Eastern Pacific Ocean between May and July by crews of the Coast Guard Cutters Vigilant (WMEC 617), Mohawk (WMEC 913) and Steadfast.

“The crews of the Coast Guard Cutters Vigilant, Mohawk and Steadfast worked diligently to combat transnational organized crime, disrupt drug flow and prevent a significant amount of drugs from reaching the U.S.,” said Rear Adm. Andrew Sugimoto,

commander, Coast Guard Eleventh District. "Their unwavering commitment while interdicting drug smugglers at sea is not only commended, but their continued efforts are unmatched."

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with the Mexican Navy (SEMAR), contributed to this counter-narcotic operation. These coordinated efforts underscore the strong collaboration between the U.S. and SEMAR.

"Nothing is guaranteed when a Coast Guard crew says 'goodbye' to loved ones and embarks on a multi-month patrol," said Cmdr. Brock Eckel, commanding officer of the Steadfast. "However, our team worked incredibly hard, day-and-night, to stop three smuggling vessels, preventing more than five tons of illicit narcotics from reaching American soil. I am honored to serve with the amazing Steadfast crew and share in their success."

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring, and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. U.S. Coast Guard members lead and conduct the interdictions, including the actual boardings.

The Steadfast is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Astoria, Oregon. This multi-mission platform falls under the operational command of the Coast Guard Pacific Area Commander. As a Coast Guard resource, Steadfast deploys in support of the Coast Guard's Eleventh and Thirteenth Districts as well as Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South

(JIATF-S). During deployments, Steadfast patrols along the western seaboard of the United States, Mexico and North and Central America conducting search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, living marine resource protection, and homeland defense operations.

Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection seize 223 pounds of narcotics



[Release from Coast Guard 11th District](#)

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – U.S. Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles – Long Beach and U.S. Customs and Border Protection recovered 223 pounds of cocaine today from a vessel that became disabled on July 4, off the coast of Columbia.

Two individuals on a disabled panga-style vessel flagged down a good Samaritan en route to Long Beach, California. The good Samaritan vessel recovered the two individuals and their boat.

As they approached Long Beach, the crew contacted the Coast Guard to assist with disembarking the two individuals and recovering their boat.

During that process, the crew notified the Coast Guard that drugs were possibly aboard the vessel. A subsequent search revealed that narcotics were concealed within a false bottom.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection took the two individuals into custody and seized narcotics and the vessel.

“This operation exemplifies the outstanding interagency collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard and CBP,” said Lt. Cdr. Keith Robinson, chief of law enforcement at Sector Los Angeles – Long Beach.

USCGC Legare returns home following a 69-day patrol in the Florida Straits



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

July 13, 2023

PORTSMOUTH, Va. –The crew of the USCGC Legare (WMEC 912) returned to their home port in Portsmouth Thursday following a 69-day maritime safety and security patrol in the Florida Straits.

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

Legare’s crew interdicted seven different migrant vessels attempting a dangerous and irregular journey to the United States. Legare’s crew processed, cared for and repatriated 116

migrants.

During the patrol, Legare also worked alongside other Coast Guard assets to protect the safety of life at sea, including rescuing a man after his 37-foot sailing vessel became disabled 86 miles off Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

“The officers and crew of Legare performed admirably in what is a very taxing mission of securing our maritime borders while showing compassion and care for migrants who are often in harm’s way on the sea,” said Cmdr. Jeremy Greenwood, Legare’s commanding officer. “Deterring dangerous and irregular migration to the United States by sea is not only a matter of ensuring U.S. border security but also a matter of saving the lives of those who take to the sea without understanding the hazards and perils of that journey. We reiterate our plea to those wishing to come to the United States to do so by official channels, taking to the sea is never the answer.”

Legare 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.

The Coast Guard is one component of HSTF-SE, a standing Joint Task Force that integrates the capabilities of local, county, state and federal agencies to effectively respond to maritime migration events. 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 support of Operation Vigilant Sentry, the 2004 DHS plan to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit GoCoastGuard.com to learn 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 icebreaker departs for months-long Arctic deployment



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

July 12, 2023

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) departed Seattle, Tuesday, for a months-long Arctic deployment.

The crew aboard Healy, a 420-foot icebreaker, will provide U.S. surface presence in the Arctic, conduct high latitude science and research missions, engage in exercises and professional exchanges with foreign partners, and conduct other operations as directed throughout the deployment.

Healy's deployment supports the [Coast Guard's Arctic Strategy](#) while providing critical training opportunities for Polar sailors and future operations in the Arctic.

"We're excited to begin our Arctic deployment to the high latitudes," said Capt. Michele Schallip, Healy's commanding officer. "Our deployment will support scientific exploration to increase understanding of the changing Arctic environment and associated impacts. We'll also have opportunities to deepen the Coast Guard's cooperation with our allies, and partner nations through engagements and joint exercises to promote regional stability, security and strengthen our collaborative partnerships."

Schallip [assumed command of the Healy](#) in June, having previously served as the cutter's executive officer.

The Healy deploys annually to the Arctic to support multiple science missions and Operation Arctic Shield, the service's annual operation to execute U.S. Coast Guard missions, enhance maritime domain awareness, strengthen partnerships, and build preparedness, prevention, and response capabilities across the Arctic domain.

Commissioned in 2000, Healy is one of two active polar icebreakers in the Coast Guard's fleet. The Seattle-based Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) is a Polar icebreaker commissioned in 1976.

The Coast Guard is recapitalizing its Polar icebreaker fleet to ensure continued access to both Polar regions and support the country's economic, commercial, maritime, and national security needs.

Ingalls Shipbuilding Successfully Completes Builder's Trials for Calhoun (WMSL 759)



[Release from HII](#)

PASCAGOULA, Miss., June 30, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII's (NYSE: HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division announced today the successful completion of builder's sea trials for the U.S. Coast Guard's newest national security cutter, *Calhoun* (WMSL 759). The ship successfully tested propulsion and auxiliary equipment, as well as various ship systems.

"Every successful sea trial is a major accomplishment for our

shipbuilders, and the NSC team has worked hard to ensure the Coast Guard receives another highly capable and advanced cutter for the fleet,” Ingalls Shipbuilding NSC Program Manager Amanda Whitaker said. “Our team will continue to prepare NSC 10 for the next set of trials and ensure that this ship will be ready to undertake the most challenging Coast Guard missions.”

For over two decades, Ingalls Shipbuilding has served as the sole designer and provider of the Coast Guard *Legend*-class national security cutter. The flagship of the Coast Guard fleet, national security cutters are capable of embarking and supporting a wide range of Coast Guard, Navy and NATO manned and unmanned aircraft. National security cutters have proven to be ideal platforms for drug interdiction, global illegal fishing, disaster relief and defense support operations.

Photos accompanying this release are available at: <https://hii.com/news/ingalls-shipbuilding-builders-trials-calhoun-wmsl-759/>.

NSC 10 is named to honor Charles L. Calhoun, the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the U.S. Coast Guard. Calhoun served in the U.S. Navy for three years during World War II and was honorably discharged in 1946 as a torpedoman second class. He enlisted in the Coast Guard that same year and held varying positions of leadership over the course of his career.

Ingalls has delivered nine *Legend*-class national security cutters to the Coast Guard further enabling their important missions around the globe.

HII's Ingalls Shipyard Has Capacity for More Navy Shipbuilding



An aerial image of HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding.

ARLINGTON, Va. – HII's Ingalls Shipyard is always looking for opportunities for more shipbuilding work and its yard has the capacity to take on more work, a senior company official said, including future awards of new classes of frigates and medium landing ships.

"We're looking at all of our opportunities, said George Nungesser, Ingalls' vice president for Program Management, speaking June 27 to reporters during the Modern Day Marine expo in Washington, noting that Ingalls is interested in being a second construction shipyard for the Constellation-class

guided-missile frigates currently being built by Fincantieri's Marinette Marine shipyard in Wisconsin. "We know surface combatants!"

The Ingalls shipyard builds Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers (DDGs), San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ships, and America-class amphibious assault ships for the U.S. Navy and Legend-class national security cutters (NSCs) for the Coast Guard.

The company delivered the first Flight III Arleigh Burke-class DDG, the future USS Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), June 27, and the 10th NSC, the future USCGC Calhoun (WMSL 759) began its first sea trials the same day.

Asked if Ingalls was interested in bidding on the Navy's future medium landing ship (LSM) program, Nungesser said, "We're always interested in future ship classes, future endeavors. With a legacy of over 85 years, we're pretty agile. We will continue to monitor the program development of that particular program and look forward to working with the Navy to see where this goes, when it something comes out as an RfP [Request for Proposals]."

Nungesser said the Ingalls shipyard currently has excess capacity, noting that the company has invested more than \$1 billion in Shipyard of the Future initiatives that were completed last year. He noted that hiring and retaining the work force is a more challenging aspect industry-wide, and that Ingalls has funded a number of initiatives with local educational institutions to attract young people toward the shipbuilding trades.

"We do not meet the needs of our customers without our work force, and we are pleased with the trends that we are seeing in terms of hiring, retention, and developing talent," he said.

"What we need – including our defense industry base – is a strong, consistent demand signal from the government to keep

this shipbuilding industry healthy and responsive,” he said. “A strong demand signal enables companies to plan for the future, to hire, to train, and retain a skilled work force, and also promote investment in new equipment, facilities, and technologies.

USCGC Vigilant returns from Eastern Pacific patrol, conducts international collaboration



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

June 27, 2023

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The USCGC Vigilant (WMEC 617) returned home to Cape Canaveral, Sunday, following a 50-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Florida Straits.

Patrolling 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 counter drug operations with the assistance of an aviation detachment from a Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron.

During the patrol, Vigilant's crew disrupted illegal narcotics smuggling, interdicting more than 2,000 pounds of illicit drugs. While in theater, Vigilant interdicted two drug-smuggling vessels and apprehended five suspected traffickers, contributing directly to U.S. Coast Guard objectives to combat transnational criminal organizations.

In addition, Vigilant led a two-day engagement and joint training exercise with the Ecuadorian Coast Guard in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. The purpose of the exercise was to strengthen ties with international partners and promote regional stability and security.

"I'm extraordinarily proud of this crew and continually impressed by their professionalism and tenacity," said Cmdr. Jay Guyer, Vigilant's commanding officer. "Drug trafficking generates violence and instability in the region. Interdicting these shipments and working with an important partner like Ecuador, helps bring security and stability to our nation and to our partners."

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 cutters fall 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.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goatguard.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 offloads more than \$23 million in illegal narcotics in San Juan, Puerto Rico



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

June 27, 2023

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier (WPC 1115) offloaded more than 2,024 pounds of cocaine worth more than \$23 million in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Monday.

The offloaded drugs were interdicted by the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier and U.S. Customs and Border Protection multi-role enforcement aircraft June 18, 2023, in Caribbean Sea international waters south of Puerto Rico.

“This crew never ceases to amaze with their dedication and relentless work ethic, especially our pursuit team who swiftly interdicted and stopped another drug-smuggling vessel from making it to Puerto Rico,” said Lt. DeVonte Weems, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier commanding officer. “This was a smooth interdiction made possible by the great work of the Napier crew, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air & Marine Branch, and Sector San Juan Command Center personnel.”

“The commitment and resolve of the Coast Guard and our U.S. and local law enforcement partners in interdicting drug smuggling vessels at sea is unwavering,” said Capt. José E. Díaz, Coast Guard Sector San Juan commander. “Our guardians risk their lives daily to safeguard the people of in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands from this threat and prevent illegal narcotics from reaching U.S. shores.”

Along with the illicit narcotics, four suspected smugglers, one Colombian, one Dominican Republic and two Venezuelan nationals, were apprehended and face prosecution by the Department of Justice in the U.S. Federal District Court in Puerto Rico.

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 Joseph Napier is a 154-foot fast response cutter that is homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.