

Navy's RQ-4A BAMS-D Surveillance UAV Passes 40K Flight Hours



BAMS-D, which has been operational since 2009, surpassed 40,000 flight hours during a U.S. Central Command mission with the Coast Guard on April 13. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

SAN DIEGO – Northrop Grumman's autonomous high-altitude, long-endurance (HALE) Broad Area Maritime Surveillance-Demonstrator (BAMS-D) system surpassed 40,000 flight hours during a routine mission in the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) area of operations April 13, the company said in a May 27 release.

"This milestone in the BAMS-D program demonstrates Northrop Grumman's commitment to delivering critical capabilities to our customers that provide an advantage to U.S. and coalition partners in theater," said Doug Shaffer, vice president and program manager, Triton programs, Northrop Grumman. "BAMS-D providing operational support well beyond its intended demonstration period highlights the unrivaled strategic value of autonomous maritime HALE while the Navy integrates the MQ-4C Triton into its vital maritime patrol mission."

BAMS-D entered operational service for the U.S. Navy in 2009. Originally intended to be a six-month demonstration deployment, BAMS-D has supported U.S. Navy intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions in USCENTCOM for more than 12 years.

"BAMS-D sustainment is truly a Northrop Grumman cross-enterprise effort and is a testament to our unwavering commitment to mission readiness," continued Shaffer.

"This is a significant milestone for any aircraft, but especially remarkable for an originally planned six-month

demonstration system,” said Capt. James P. Johnston, commander, Task Force 57. “The persistence and dependability of the BAMS-D system and the resilience of the personnel who operate the platform here in 5th Fleet, are essential in sustaining maritime security and freedom of navigation throughout the region.”

While BAMS-D remains in operational service, its replacement, the MQ-4C Triton, completed its first year of an early operating capability deployment in the U.S. Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. The Triton system is currently progressing toward a multi-intelligence configuration and will ultimately support five operational orbits for the Navy with 68 operational aircraft. Australia is set to receive their first Triton in 2023 as part of a cooperative development program that will enable intelligence sharing between the U.S. and Australia.

Northrop Grumman’s family of autonomous high-altitude, long-endurance systems perform critical wide-area ISR collection. Today, autonomous HALE systems operate across the globe, with 24-plus hour endurance, collecting essential ISR data over land and sea to enable rapid, informed decision-making. In the future, these systems will connect the joint force, implementing advanced autonomy and AI and machine learning while delivering indispensable capabilities with fewer people to provide information at the speed of relevance.

Coast Guard Repatriates 21 Migrants to Cuba



Coast Guard Cutter William Trump crew repatriated 21 Cubans to

Cuba after they were interdicted off Key West's coast, Florida, May 24, 2021. A good Samaritan alerted Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders to a 16-foot raft with 11 people aboard Tuesday off Marathon. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – The Coast Guard Cutter William Trump crew repatriated 21 Cubans to Cuba May 24 at approximately 10 a.m. after they were interdicted off Key West's coast, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a May 25 release.

A good Samaritan alerted Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders to a raft with 11 people aboard at approximately 8 a.m., May 22, off Alligator Reef Light.

Station Islamorada law enforcement officers reported one of the Cubans deceased. The deceased's son reported the raft had capsized at the start of their voyage resulting in loss of their food, water, medication and his father passed away during the voyage.

In the second interdiction, a good Samaritan alerted Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders, May 25, to a 16-foot raft with 11 people aboard off Marathon.

The good Samaritan provided life jackets, food, and water to the Cubans and due to 10-12 foot seas and stayed with them until Coast Guard Cutter William Trump arrived on scene.

"The dangers of traveling through the Florida Straits cannot be overstated," said Chief Warrant Officer Matt James, commanding officer, Station Islamorada. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of the man who died as a result of losing critical medicine for a reported pre-existing condition during the capsizing."

Since Oct. 1, 2020, Coast Guard crews have interdicted 250 Cubans compared to:

- 5,396 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2016
- 1,468 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2017

- 259 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2018
- 313 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2019
- 49 Cuban migrants in Fiscal Year 2020

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crew members were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.

5th Fleet Bolstered by Arrival of Two Coast Guard Fast Response Cutters



Patrol boat USCGC Maui (WPB 1304) and fast response cutter USCGC Robert Goldman (WPC 1142) transit the Arabian Gulf en route to Bahrain, May 24. Robert Goldman and USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) are the newest additions to Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA), which is comprised of six 110-foot cutters, the Maritime Engagement Team, shore side support personnel, and is the Coast Guard's largest unit outside of the U.S. playing a key role in supporting Navy security cooperation, maritime security, and maritime infrastructure protection operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Seaman Logan Kaczmarek*
MANAMA, Bahrain – U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutters USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) and Robert Goldman (WPC 1142) arrived at their new homeport onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, May 25, the U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

The FRCs are two of six planned to be attached to Patrol

Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA), forward deployed to Bahrain with commander, Task Force 55. They will replace the existing Coast Guard Island-class patrol boats USCGC Aquidneck (WPB 1309) and USCGC Adak (WPB 1333).

"These crews have shown that they are more than ready for the mission at hand in this region through numerous successful engagements with partner maritime forces during port visits and bilateral exercises," said Capt. Willie Carmichael, commander of PATFORSWA. "I am extremely proud of the high performance they have displayed during their transit to Bahrain."

Aquidneck and Adak are set to decommission in Bahrain later this year and are being replaced as part of the Integrated Deepwater System Program, the Coast Guard's 25-year program to replace most of the branch's equipment. The IDSP plans to have 64 fast response cutters, with Charles Moulthrop and Robert Goodman being the 41st and 42nd, commissioned into service on Jan. 21 and Mar. 12, respectively.

The FRCs are designed to patrol coastal regions and perform expeditionary operations.

They feature advanced command, control, and communications systems and improved surveillance and reconnaissance equipment. They are also capable of launching and recovering small boats from the stern.

"The addition of the FRCs to our task force has been highly anticipated, and the team here is excited to work with these outstanding crews," said Capt. Christopher Gilbertson, commander of Destroyer Squadron 50 and CTF 55. "The advanced capabilities of these cutters greatly enhance our ability to provide high-end support to regional and coalition partners throughout the area of operations."

PATFORSWA, attached to CTF 55, comprises six patrol vessels, shoreside mission support personnel, and the Maritime

Engagement Team. They play a crucial role in maritime security, maritime infrastructure protection, and theater security cooperation in the region. The unit also supports other U.S. Coast Guard deployable specialized forces operating throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

CTF 55 operates in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, supporting naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and Pacific through the western Indian Ocean and three critical chokepoints to the free flow of global commerce.

Cutter Steadfast Returns to Homeport After Interdicting \$33 Million in Cocaine



Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) steaming in the Eastern Pacific Ocean on April 23, 2021. The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast seized more than 2,400 pounds of cocaine while patrolling in international waters. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ens. Grace Hodges*

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) returned to its Astoria, Oregon, homeport May 21 after completing a 10,000-mile, 49-day counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a May 26 release.

The cutter served as an on-scene law enforcement asset in support of U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force South and Coast Guard District 11, with primary missions of drug and migrant interdiction, search and rescue, and

international relations.

While the cutter patrolling international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Steadfast intercepted a vessel suspected of smuggling illicit narcotics. The interdiction resulted in the seizure of over 2,400 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$33 million, and the detainment of three suspected traffickers.

Coast Guard cutters operating in the Eastern Pacific push U.S. borders over 1,500 miles offshore which is critical to confronting drug cartels and enhancing national security.

Additionally, Steadfast completed biennial Aviation Standardization Training near the coast of Southern California with a Coast Guard MH-65 helicopter. This training is designed to increase the operational proficiency of the ship and helicopter crews.

“This patrol reinforced the maxim that people, not platforms, are the most important key to operational success,” said Cmdr. Craig Allen, commanding officer of the Steadfast. “Despite encountering some significant equipment and logistics challenges, the Steadfast crew rose to the occasion time and again and achieved remarkable results. We were fortunate to sail with several members filling key positions from other Coast Guard units, including USCGC Waesche, Maritime Safety and Security Teams LA/LB and San Francisco, Sector Field Office Southwest Maine, and Coast Guard Headquarters. All were superb additions to the Steadfast team. Additionally, we had the opportunity to work with a fellow Pacific Northwest 210-foot cutter, CGC Active, who helped us out on multiple occasions with time-sensitive logistics support.”

To ensure the safety of Steadfast’s crew during the COVID-19 global pandemic, the crew conducted pre-deployment COVID-19 testing, followed by a seven-day monitoring period. Throughout

their patrol, Steadfast's crew maintained strict health precautions during all interactions with the public, including wearing N95 masks at all times and undergoing intensive health screenings prior to each boarding.

Steadfast is a 53-year-old Reliance-class 210-foot medium endurance cutter that has been homeported in Astoria since 1994. Steadfast's primary missions include search and rescue, counter-drug, migration interdiction and homeland security operations.

Cutter Willow Services Aids to Navigation in Puerto Rico Maritime Ports



Coast Guard Cutter Willow prepares to enter the Port of San Juan, Puerto Rico May 8, 2021. The Willow completed a 12-day mission May 19, 2021, servicing 23 critical aids to navigation (AToN) across eight of the island's maritime ports in San Juan, Mayaguez, Tallaboa, Ponce, Guanica Ceiba, Culebra and the southwest pass of Vieques. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Willow has completed a 12-day mission servicing 23 critical aids to navigation (AToN) across eight maritime ports in Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The crew of the cutter Willow serviced AToN in the ports of San Juan, Mayaguez, Tallaboa, Ponce, Guanica, Ceiba, Culebra and in the southwest pass of Vieques, Puerto Rico.

“After 15 months of multiple major maintenance periods and COVID restrictions, the Coast Guard Cutter Willow is excited to be back in Puerto Rico,” said Cmdr. Margaret Kennedy, Coast Guard Cutter Willow commanding officer. “It’s dirty but satisfying work, which makes the waterways safe for commercial and recreational marine traffic and helps facilitate the flow of maritime commerce to and from the island. Our ship and crew still have a lot of work to do, and we look forward to returning to the Sector San Juan area later this summer to complete it.”

As the only heavy lift asset within the Coast Guard’s Seventh District, cutter Willow is primarily responsible for the continuous operation of 245 fixed and floating aids to navigation spanning from the U.S Virgin Islands to South Carolina and relies on a crew of 48 personnel to complete this and other Coast Guard missions.

The servicing of these maritime resources requires a systematic process that often places the cutter in hazardous waters while the crew works to lift the aid, steel chain, and concrete sinker out of the water to replace components of the buoy and mooring on deck.

This occurs up to six times a day and requires a team effort by all hands onboard to complete the task. Once set back in the water, the aid is precisely placed using GPS coordinates that best mark the waterway for the mariner to reference.

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Willow (WLB 202) is a 225-foot sea going buoy tender homeported in Charleston, South Carolina.

USCGC Hamilton Concludes Operations with U.S. Navy 6th Fleet



The Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) arrives in Valletta, Malta for a port visit May 17, 2021. Hamilton is in Valletta following at-sea engagements with the armed forces of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MEDITERRANEAN SEA – The Legend-class national security USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) transited out of the Mediterranean Sea, concluding the crew's recent operations in the U.S. Navy 6th Fleet's area of responsibility, May 24, 2021, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a May 25 release.

Hamilton entered the Mediterranean Sea on April 15 and the Black Sea on April 27 to support NATO Allies and partners. Hamilton was the first U.S. Coast Guard Cutter to visit the Black Sea since 2008. The last U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit the Black Sea was USCGC Dallas (WHEC 716) and sailed to the Black Sea twice, in 2008 and 1995.

Since leaving the Black Sea on May 14, Hamilton's crew visited Valletta, Malta, and conducted engagements at sea with the armed forces of Malta. They also conducted a brief logistics stop in Rota, Spain, on May 23.

"By operating with 6th Fleet, we expand the Coast Guard's global reach and advance our Nation's Tri-Service Maritime Strategy," said Capt. Timothy Cronin, commanding officer of USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753). "This deployment also reinforced our commitment to freedom of navigation in international waters while building capacity and partnerships with nations that have shared interests and threats in the maritime domain."

After departing North Charleston, South Carolina, on Feb. 28, the crew of Hamilton stopped in Puerto Rico and then headed toward Rota, with two Sentinel-class fast response cutters, USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) and USCGC Robert Goldman (WPC 1142). After escorting the fast response cutters and departing Spain, Hamilton then visited Italy, Georgia, Ukraine and Malta. The crew conducted various operational exercises with the maritime components of each country and Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria.

“The relationships we build are fundamental for establishing maritime safety and security worldwide,” said Lt. Cmdr. Taylor Kellogg, operations officer of USCGC Hamilton. “Working together with our NATO allies and partners, we advance the rule of law on the sea, ensuring free and open access to the maritime domain.”

The U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard operate forward, from the littoral to the open ocean, ensuring stability and open sea lanes across all maritime domains. U.S. Coast Guard operations in U.S. 6th Fleet demonstrate the service’s commitment, flexibility, and capability to operate and address security concerns throughout Europe and Africa.

The U.S. Coast Guard is conducting a routine deployment in U.S. Navy 6th Fleet, working alongside allies, building maritime domain awareness and sharing best practices with partner nation navies and coast guards.

U.S. Coast Guard Establishes

UxS Cross Functional Working Group



Technicians recover a ScanEagle small unmanned aerial system (SUAS) drone aboard USCGC Stratton (WMSL 752) in the Pacific, in 2019. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Sara Muir*

A report from the National Academies of Sciences has recommended the U.S. Coast Guard “take a more strategic and accelerated approach to exploit the capabilities of existing and future unmanned systems,” and the Coast Guard agrees.

The report, “Leveraging Unmanned Systems for Coast Guard Missions,” has called on the Coast Guard to engage more with unmanned systems (UxS) and the capabilities they bring to Coast Guard missions. The report acknowledges the service is currently investigating how to use UxS for its 11 statutory mission areas and to introduce their capabilities into the fleet and force structure.

“As other military services and other operational agencies of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) integrate UxSs into their force structures, the Coast Guard will be impelled to do the same, because it engages in joint and combined operations and missions with these partners,” the document said. “Abundant evidence in this report points to both a compelling need and burgeoning opportunities for the Coast Guard to proceed more aggressively, albeit strategically and deliberately, in leveraging UxS advancements. Indeed, the study committee concludes that to remain responsive and fully relevant to its many missions, it is imperative that the Coast Guard take a more strategic and accelerated approach to exploit the capabilities of existing and future unmanned systems.”

In fact, the report’s authors were “struck by the magnitude and breadth of opportunity that lies ahead for the Coast Guard

to pursue UxSs across its multiple operational domains and missions.” However, the report said “those initiatives have been characterized by limited funding spread over many years and the absence of a formal means, or a pacing mechanism, for proactively identifying, investigating, and integrating promising systems.”

The report found that, although the Coast Guard has multiple ongoing UxS initiatives, an opportunity for improvement exists by developing a formal means for identifying, investigating, and integrating promising systems. The report recommended the creation of a high-level UxS strategy.

The service has taken that advice seriously, and responded enthusiastically by establishing an Unmanned Systems Cross Functional Working Group on Dec. 21, 2020, to create a strategic vision for leveraging UxS across Coast Guard missions.

In his 2021 State of the Coast Guard address, Commandant of the Coast Guard Adm. Karl Schultz said the key to spotlighting bad behavior is maritime domain awareness.

“Last fall, our Research and Development Center tested the ability of unmanned surface vessels to augment traditional ship and aviation capabilities for operations in the far reaches of the Pacific Ocean. We learned that the future of our unmanned systems strategy will most likely rely on more diverse systems and effective integration of machine-learning to unlock actionable data for Coast Guard operators,” he said. “These are valuable lessons as we stand up an unmanned system element within our Coast Guard Requirements Shop to consider how unmanned technology can augment our future fleet.”

The UxS Cross Functional Working Group is currently developing the Coast Guard’s strategy for UxS. By leveraging and adapting these technologies, the service envisions achieving increased efficiencies, enhanced personnel safety, and improved mission

performance across Coast Guard operations.

The Coast Guard Research and Development Center and the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Science and Technology, through partnerships with the Department of Defense, have been evaluating UxS technologies for several years.

"These research-focused initiatives complement the service's requirements generation and evaluation, industry engagement, and robust acquisitions processes to ensure multi-mission operational requirements are met by the best-suited capability, including manned, unmanned, and hybrid solutions," said a Coast Guard spokesperson. "The UxS Working Group is responsible for aligning strategic efforts ranging from the identification and evaluation of emerging technologies to their operational deployment and related doctrine."

According to Lisa Kirkpatrick, Deputy Assistant Commandant for Capability (CG-7D, the cross-programmatic working group), under the direction of the Assistant Commandant for Capability (CG-7), is comprised of subject matter experts from across the Coast Guard including representatives from the Coast Guard Coast Guard Research, Development, Test & Evaluation and Innovation Program, the Office of Aviation Forces' Unmanned Aircraft Systems Division, the Office of Requirements and Analysis, the Office of Shore Forces, the Office of Cybersecurity Program Management, and the Directorate for Response Policy.

"The UxS Working Group follows a proven integrated product and process development approach, and will directly inform the service's next steps to incorporate unmanned systems to increase safety and enhance mission effectiveness across Coast Guard operations," Haring said.

The Working Group's accomplishments and lessons learned will inform the potential establishment of a permanent UxS office,

and help apply a holistic approach towards UxS across the range of Coast Guard multi-mission operations.

U.S. Coast Guard Academy Graduates 240 New Officers



President Joseph R. Biden Jr. delivered the keynote address at the Coast Guard Academy during the 140th Commencement Exercises May 19, 2021. The Coast Guard Academy graduated 240 new officers along with seven international students. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew Thieme*

NEW LONDON, Conn. – The U.S. Coast Guard Academy graduated 240 new officers along with seven international students with keynote speaker President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in attendance, May 19, 2021, the academy said.

The Class of 2021 consists of 34 percent women and 34 percent from underrepresented minority groups.

The class includes 22 African Americans who walked the stage, which marks the largest number of African American graduates to do so in academy history. This year also marked the second highest number of Asian American and Pacific Islanders in a single graduating class.

Next month, the new officers will begin to serve as leaders in a variety of operational roles throughout the Coast Guard, mostly in cutters.

Seven graduating international cadets from the countries of the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Georgia and will serve in their respective countries of origin.

“The Class of 2021 has led the corps during a very challenging time,” said Academy Superintendent Rear Adm. Bill Kelly. “I am confident they are fully prepared to graduate and serve our nation as officers in the U.S. Coast Guard.”

Founded in 1876, the Coast Guard Academy is one of the five U.S. service academies and is ranked among the nation’s most prestigious and selective institutions of higher learning. For more information, visit www.uscga.edu.

Cutter Offloads \$220 Million in Interdicted Illicit Drugs in San Diego



Rear Adm. Brian Penoyer, the Eleventh Coast Guard District commander; speaks to the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) during a drug offload in San Diego, Wednesday. The drugs, worth an estimated \$220 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean during April and May. *COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray*

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) offloaded approximately 11,500 pounds of seized cocaine in San Diego, May 19, the Coast Guard 11th District said in a release.

The drugs, worth an estimated \$220 million, were seized in the international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean during April and May. They represent four suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions off the coasts of Mexico, Central, and South America by the following Coast Guard ships:

The Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) crew was responsible

for two interdictions seizing approximately 5,650 pounds of cocaine.

The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) crew was responsible for one interdiction seizing approximately 2,250 pounds of cocaine.

The Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma (WMEC 908) crew was responsible for one interdiction seizing approximately 3,660 pounds of cocaine.

Speakers at the event included Cmdr. James M. O'Mara IV, Coast Guard Cutter Active commanding officer; Rear Adm. Brian Penoyer, Eleventh Coast Guard District commander; Brandon Tucker, Customs and Border Protection Deputy Director of Air Operations for the San Diego Air and Marine Branch; and Randy Grossman, the acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California.

"This is the end state result of teamwork across multiple inner agencies. This is what we train for; we are manned, trained, and equipped to come down here and do a mission," O'Mara said. "The competition of this mission is a testament to this crew's resolve and their persistence to get out there and get it done."

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command increased counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs. 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, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring, and interdictions, to criminal

prosecutions for these interdictions by United States Attorney's Offices from the Middle District of Florida, the Southern District of Florida and the Southern District of California. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Seizing 11,500 pounds of cocaine is no small feat. Of the 11,500 pounds you see here, the Active seized 5,600 pounds. And that is quite an accomplishment when you consider that Active and the other ships of her class have been in service for more than 50 years," Penoyer said. "I would like to congratulate Cmdr. O'Mara and the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Active for their hard work, dedication, and sacrifice."

The Active is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter, commissioned in 1966 and homeported in Port Angeles, Washington. The Steadfast is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter, commissioned in 1968 and homeported in Astoria, Oregon. The Tahoma is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter, commissioned in 1988 and homeported in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Coast Guard Repatriates 66 Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley repatriates 66 migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy patrol boat just off

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic May 18, 2021, following the interdiction of two illegal voyages in Mona Passage waters off Puerto Rico. The interdictions are the result of ongoing efforts by Caribbean Border Interagency Group partner agencies in their common goal of securing the borders of Puerto Rico against illegal migrant and drug smuggling. *U.S. COAST GUARD*
SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley crew repatriated 66 migrants to the Dominican Republic May 18, following the interdiction of two illegal voyages in Mona Passage waters off Puerto Rico.

The interdicted migrants consisted of 55 men and 11 women claiming to be Dominican Republic nationals.

The interdictions are the result of ongoing efforts by Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) partner agencies to combat illegal migrant smuggling.

The aircrew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected the first illegal voyage May 17, approximately 47 nautical miles northwest of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley responded to the sighting and interdicted the suspect vessel with the assistance of the cutter's small boat. The cutter's crew safely embarked the migrants, 44 men and 10 women, from a grossly overloaded 28-foot makeshift vessel that was riding low and taking on water.

The crew of a Puerto Rico Police Joint Force of Rapid Action marine unit interdicted the second illegal voyage May 18, approximately three nautical miles off the coast of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser arrived on scene shortly thereafter and embarked the migrants, 11 men and a woman, from the 20-foot makeshift vessel. The migrant group later embarked aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Donald Horsley for their repatriation.

Prior to embarking, the Coast Guard crews provided the migrants with lifejackets. Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter,

they receive food, water and basic medical attention.

“Illegal migrant voyages in the Mona Passage are incredibly dangerous,” said Lt. Christopher Martin, cutter Donald Horsley commanding officer. “The vessels utilized in these ventures are often unseaworthy, lack basic safety equipment, and are grossly overloaded putting each person on the voyage at risk. We are fortunate we were able to locate these vessels before the situation worsened, safely removing all 66 persons and repatriating them to the Dominican Republic.”

The cutter Donald Horsley rendezvoused with a Dominican Republic Navy vessel just off Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, where the crew transferred and completed the repatriation of the migrants to Dominican Republic Navy authorities.

Cutters Donald Horsley and Winslow Griesser are 154-foot fast response cutters homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.