

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



Feb. 10, 2024

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

Dependable and crew members deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force-Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while patrolling in the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of operations. Dependable's crew conducted

illegal migration deterrence and interdiction operations while collaborating with other Coast Guard and interagency assets across the region to protect life at sea and secure U.S. maritime borders.

While underway in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage, Dependable worked with additional law enforcement entities, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Haitian Coast Guard Commission, to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States. During the patrol, Dependable located and deterred four unlawful voyages with approximately 100 migrants on board. In addition, Dependable's crew rescued 33 people aboard a 25-foot vessel in distress 6 miles off Haiti's coast during heavy seas. Crew members conducted the search and rescue mission in 8-to-12-foot seas and winds gusting to 46 mph, saving all on board.

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

Established in 2003, HSTF-SE is the Department of Homeland Security-led interagency task force charged with directing operational and tactical planning, command and control, and functions as a standing organization to deter, mitigate, and respond to maritime mass migration in the Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits.

OVS is the 2004 DHS plan that provides the structure for deploying joint air and surface assets and personnel to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean

corridor of the United States. Its primary objectives are to protect life at sea while deterring and dissuading mass maritime migration alongside our federal, state, and local partners.

Dependable is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 76. Since commissioning in 1968, Dependable has executed counterdrug and migrant interdiction operations, enforced federal fishery laws, and conducted search and rescue missions in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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

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



ST. PETERSBURG, Florida – Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC 620) and crew returned from a 60-day counterdrug patrol and offloaded approximately \$55 million worth of illicit narcotics, Monday, in St. Petersburg.

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

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

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

illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

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

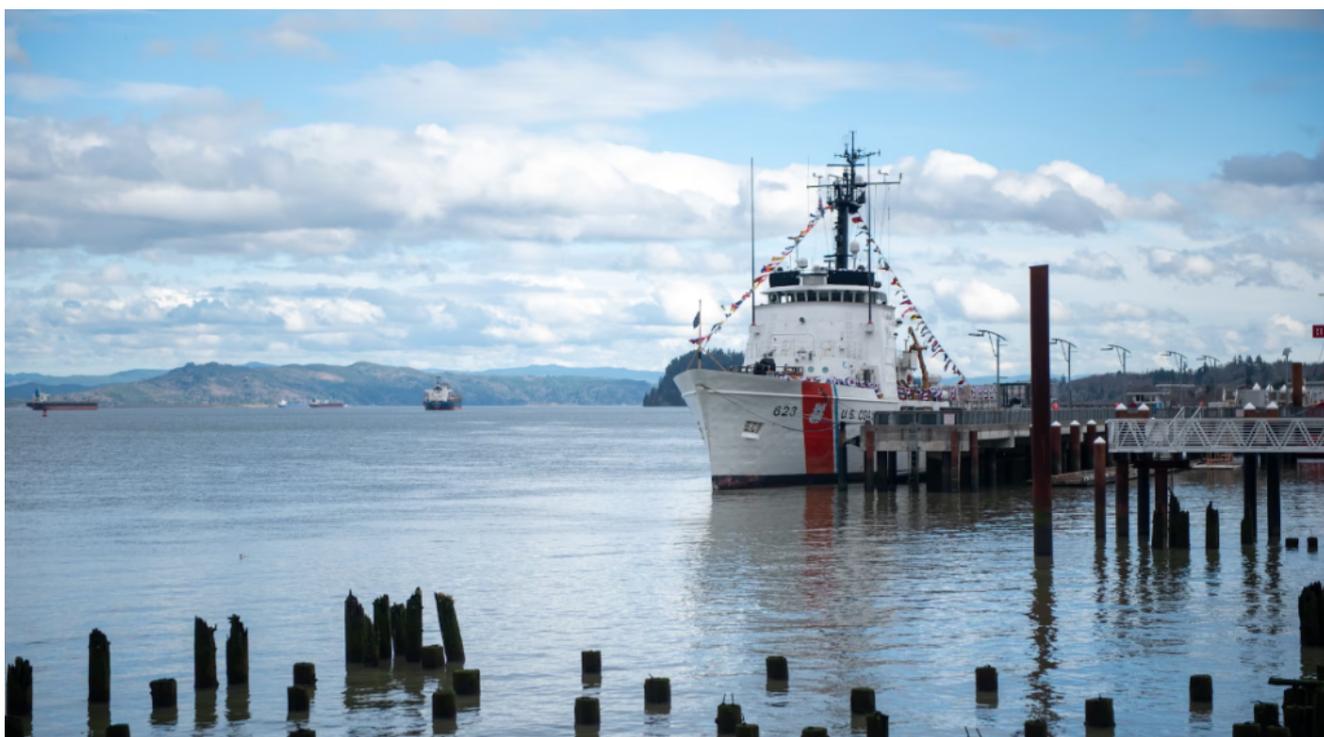
The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea requires a unity of effort in all phases, from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, through criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in districts across the nation. Joint Interagency Task Force – South in Key West, Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 11th District](#), headquartered in Alameda, California, and the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 7th District](#), headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

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

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

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



Feb. 6, 2024

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

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

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

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

During the cutter’s most [recent deployment](#), the crew transited 11,742 nautical miles on a 64-day multi-mission deployment, from Oregon to several hundred miles off the coast of Central Mexico conducting training, law enforcement, recruiting and public affairs missions, along with helicopter operations.

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

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

Steadfast was one of the Coast Guard’s 13 remaining 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutters. As part of the Coast

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

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



Crew members on USCGC Alex Haley conduct vertical replenishment training with the crew of an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Kodiak in the Bering Sea Jan. 8. *U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 1st Class Jasen Newman*  
KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of USCGC Alex Haley (WMEC-39) returned home to Kodiak on Jan. 29 following a 45-day winter Bering Sea patrol during which they conducted domestic fisheries enforcement, responded to search and rescue and conducted several shipboard training exercises.

Prior to departing for the Bering Sea, the crew completed their Tailored Ship Training Assessment in Seattle. This assessment is a comprehensive evaluation on the crew's capability to respond to a wide range of scenarios, from seamanship drills to battling shipboard fires and flooding. The crew of Alex Haley completed this biennial assessment ahead of schedule and with an overall score of 98% across all warfare areas.

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

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

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## **USCGC Confidence Returns to Cape Canaveral After Patrol in the Windward Passage, Florida Straits**



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

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

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

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

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

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

Confidence is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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## **Coast Guard Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Base Charleston Campus**



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

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

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

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

Since its commissioning in 2015, Base Charleston has delivered

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

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

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

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

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## **Coast Guard Rescues 9 from Ice Floe on Lake Erie**



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

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

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

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

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

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## USCGC Harriet Lane Holds Change of Home Port Ceremony



U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Andrew Tiongson renders a hand salute while departing the change of home port ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, Jan. 16. Harriet Lane recently transferred to Hawaii from its former home port in Portsmouth,

Virginia. *U.S. Coast Guard | photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Ty Robertson*

HONOLULU – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903) and crew held a ceremony celebrating their recent home port shift to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Jan. 17, presided by Adm. Steven Poulin, vice commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Harriet Lane is U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area's newest Indo-Pacific support cutter. Harriet Lane and crew departed Coast Guard Base Portsmouth, Virginia, in November and arrived at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December, after transiting more than 8,000 nautical miles for over 36 days.

The home port shift of Harriet Lane marks a significant milestone in strengthening the U.S. Coast Guard's capabilities and relations with nations in the Pacific Ocean. As part of this historic home port shift, Harriet Lane will work alongside allies and partner nations within the Oceania region with a focus on advising, training, joint deployments, and capacity building to promote and model good maritime governance.

"The U.S. has long supported peace, security and stability in the Pacific Islands," said Cmdr. Nicole Tesoniero, commanding officer of Harriet Lane. "Joining like-minded partners including Australia, New Zealand, and France, Harriet Lane stands ready to deliver sustained regional presence while signaling the Coast Guard's commitment to be a steadfast partner in one of the world's most dynamic economically significant regions."

"The presence of the Harriet Lane in the Pacific is significant," said Vice Adm. Andrew Tiongson, commander, Pacific Area. "The demand for maritime governance has never been higher especially today in this dynamic region. Harriet Lane is a shining symbol of maritime governance, and it will make a positive impact in this world to align their operations with overarching strategies."

“The Pacific stands out as a strategic and vital region for the United States,” said Poulin. “All Pacific nations must maintain sovereignty and must be able to enjoy their sovereign rights. The U.S. Coast Guard has unique capabilities and authorities that often make us the partner of choice, and we can meet the needs of other nations because we are flexible. We listen to what our partners and allies need and maintain strong relationships. This cutter reflects our enduring commitment to our partners.”

Harriet Lane, commissioned in 1984, is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter now homeported in Honolulu to support Coast Guard missions in the Pacific region. The service’s medium endurance cutter fleet supports a variety of Coast Guard missions including search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime defense, and protection of the marine environment.

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## **Polar Security Cutter Must Overcome Shipyard Shortages Before it Can Break Ice**



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) is seen moored up next to HMAS Adelaide (L01) at HMAS Kuttabul, Sydney, Australia, Dec. 12, 2023. *U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Graves*

ARLINGTON, Virginia – The polar security cutter, the Coast Guard’s planned next-generation icebreaker, has an obstacle to break through before it can begin breaking ice – a lack of welders and engineers in the shipbuilding industry.

Rear Admiral Chad L. Jacoby, the assistant commandant for acquisition and chief acquisition officer for the Coast Guard, brought up that concern while giving an icebreaker update at the Surface Navy Association’s national symposium on Jan. 11.

“We have one polar icebreaker, the Polar Star, right now. It’s almost 50 years old. And it’s pretty much breaking up McMurdo [McMurdo Station, Antarctica] every year, so it’s fully occupied,” he said. As a class of one the Polar Star has zero redundancy, “but we are doing a service life extension on that

in order to be able to use the Polar Star until we can build a polar security cutter.”

The service has authorized three prototype fabrication units, “so welding has started,” Jacoby said. “But it’s an interesting challenge. ... the availability of trades and the availability of engineers. So, while we’re welding, and we need to ramp up very rapidly certified welders on this EQ47 steel, which is very hard to work with, we also need to advance the global design at a rate where they meet in the future and we can authorize production.”

Those are both challenges, he said, acknowledging, “we are behind.”

Across all Coast Guard construction programs, “every shipyard says they’re going to hire 1,000 or 2,000 more people in order to execute the contracts that we have in place. They all happen to be on the Gulf Coast, so if you add up all those numbers, it’s probably physically impossible for every one of those individual shipyards to hire 2,000 more people in order to meet the production rates that we’re asking for. So, we are bumping up against probably a physical limitation of the number of workers and engineers out there.”

The future polar security cutters aren’t just icebreakers, Jacoby said.

“You may have noticed that I called the existing ship an icebreaker. The future ship is a polar security cutter and the distinction there is the polar security cutter is going to do way more than break ice. If you’re familiar with the national security cutter, it will have national security cutter-level capabilities: sensors, equipment, on a hull that can go anywhere in the world in any season. So, we’re not just breaking ice, we’re not just having presence, we’re going to be able to execute almost all Coast Guard missions up in the Arctic, down in the Antarctic, anywhere in the world.”

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# Coast Guard offloads more than \$32 million in illegal narcotics



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

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Jan. 9, 2024

MIAMI – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Margaret Norvell offloaded more than 2,450 pounds of cocaine with an assessed street value of approximately \$32.2 million in Miami, Tuesday.

Coast Guard crews interdicted the illegal drugs in

international waters of the Caribbean Sea during two separate cases.

“Thanks to the tremendous efforts of the Coast Guard crews and agency partners involved with this interdiction, Coast Guard Cutter Margaret Norvell brought these suspected smugglers and illicit contraband ashore for prosecution,” said Lt. Cmdr. Colin Weaver, Commanding Officer. “Coast Guard crews continue to deliver on our important missions of homeland and maritime security to save lives and thwart transnational criminal organizations operating in the Caribbean.”

The following assets were involved in the interdictions:

- USCG Cutter Richard Dixon
- USCG Cutter Dauntless
- Joint Interagency Task Force South

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

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces designated investigations. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF program can be found [here](#).

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.