

# Coast Guard Cutter Warren Deyampert commissions in Boston



[Release from Coast Guard 1st District](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

March 31, 2023

Coast Guard Cutter Warren Deyampert commissions in Boston

BOSTON – The Coast Guard’s newest cutter, the Coast Guard Cutter Warren Deyampert (WPC-1151), was commissioned at Coast Guard Base Boston, March 30.

Chief Warrant Officer Lance DeFoggi, assumed command of the cutter during a ceremony presided over by Vice Admiral Kevin Lunday, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area commander. The

Warren Deyampert is the second of six Fast Response Cutters that will be homeported in Boston, serving along the 1st Coast Guard District.

“This is truly a special moment in our lives and a milestone for our family’s history that will be remembered for generations to come,” said Pamela Jackson, a cousin of Deyampert, and the ship’s sponsor “To the crew, congratulations on the commissioning of the 51<sup>st</sup> Fast Response Cutter that will bear the name of my cousin, Warren Deyampert. I am so honored to serve as the sponsor and know that this crew will always have a special place in my heart.”

The Sentinel-class fast response cutter (FRC) is designed for multiple missions, including drug and migrant interdiction; ports, waterways and coastal security; fishery patrols; search and rescue; and national defense. The Coast Guard has ordered 65 FRCs to replace the 1980s-era Island-class 110-foot patrol boats. The FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment to reach vessels of interest; and improved habitability and seakeeping.

“Now, we are standing ready, to get underway to perform all of the missions we have been training for in the birthplace of the Coast Guard,” said DeFoggi. “We will strive to embody the words of our motto, ‘Gallantry during grave peril’, as what was written on Deyampert’s award citation”.

Born in Attalla, Alabama, the cutter’s namesake joined the Coast Guard at age 19, and served aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba during World War II, beginning in August, 1941. Deyampert’s primary role was within the food service rating, but he also served as one of the ship’s three rescue swimmers.

Following a torpedo attack on the U.S. Army transport ship

Dorchester in North Atlantic waters on Feb. 3, 1943, Deyampert swam in absolute darkness to rescue survivors in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic. His efforts affected the rescue of more than 100 crewmembers, many of whom were hypothermic and unable to swim.

Four months later, June 13, 1943, the Escanaba sank, following an explosion onboard that was believed to be from a torpedo attack. All but two crewmembers were killed in the explosion. Deyampert was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and Purple Heart Medal for his heroic rescue of the Dorchester crew.

---

**USCGC Northland returns home following 62-day Florida Straits and Windward Passage patrol**



## [Release from Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the USCGC Northland (WMEC 904) returned to their home port in Portsmouth, Thursday, following a 62-day maritime safety and security patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage.

Patrolling in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry in the Seventh Coast Guard District’s area of responsibility, Northland’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.

Northland’s crew interdicted multiple unsafe and overloaded migrant vessels during the patrol, providing food, water, shelter and medical aid to 515 migrants. In one case, Northland partnered with additional Coast Guard air and surface assets to intercept an overloaded, tugboat-style

vessel attempting to reach the United States. In another case, Northland was one of the primary assets to respond to a report of multiple people in the water just south of Key West, Florida, rescuing 27 migrants.

“I am immensely proud of the Northland crew,” said Cmdr. Andrew Dannelly, commanding officer of Northland. “Day in and day out, the crew demonstrated they are always ready to deliver exceptional service to the nation. Their inspirational vigilance, professionalism and actions saved hundreds of lives.”

Northland is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. Its primary missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, drug interdiction, fisheries enforcement, migrant interdiction, homeland security, international training, defense and humanitarian operations. Northland patrols the offshore waters from Maine to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the Eastern Pacific and the Caribbean Sea.

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 the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

---

**Coast Guard crew offloads  
\$166 million worth of  
counternarcotics in San Diego**



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

\*\*\*\*\*

SAN DIEGO – The Coast Guard Cutter Woesche (WMSL 751) crew offloaded more than 6,325 pounds of cocaine and more than 13,220 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$166 million, Wednesday, in San Diego.

The five interdictions occurred in international waters in the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Central and South America in February and March.

“The Coast Guard is dedicated to preventing illicit drugs from entering our country via the maritime environment,” said Rear Adm. Andrew Sugimoto, Eleventh District commander. “These transnational criminal networks will be met on the water by our vigilant service members, like the crew of the Woesche, at every turn and brought to justice by the U.S. Attorney’s office.”

The counternarcotics were interdicted by the following U.S.

## Coast Guard cutters:

- Waesche's crew was responsible for two interdictions seizing approximately 881 pounds of cocaine and 9,500 pounds of marijuana.
- Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) crew was responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 3,300 pounds of cocaine.
- Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) crew was responsible for two interdictions seizing approximately 2,116 pounds of cocaine and 3,716 pounds of marijuana.

"This marks Waesche's first counter-narcotics patrol in several years and the crew did an outstanding job to work with international and inter-agency partners to successfully prevent \$166 million dollars' worth of illicit drugs from entering our country, cities, and neighborhoods," said Capt. Robert Mohr, commanding officer of the Waesche. "I am extremely impressed with the crew's dedication throughout this dynamic patrol. They overcame multiple challenges with collective hard work, ingenuity, and positive attitudes to keep us in pursuit of these cartels and their dangerous drugs. I couldn't be prouder of this remarkable crew and what they do to protect our communities."

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperate 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 counternarcotic operations.

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. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

“Like the United States Coast Guard and our other law enforcement partners, we are always ready to bring drug smugglers to justice in court,” said Sean P. Costello, United States attorney for the Southern District of Alabama. “Disrupting and dismantling the organizations responsible for transporting and distributing this poison remains among our highest priorities.”

The Waesche is the second Legend-class cutter of the U.S. Coast Guard and is homeported at Coast Guard Island in Alameda. The Waesche is 418 feet long with a top speed of 28 knots and a range of 12,000 nautical miles. It is equipped with a flight deck and hangars capable of housing two multi-mission helicopters, and outfitted with the most advanced command, control, and communications equipment.

---

## **SaiLdrone Scales Production of New Mid-size USV**



## [Release from Saildrone](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

To meet the growing demand for advanced data-collection capabilities at sea, Saildrone has developed the 33-foot Voyager designed for near-shore ocean mapping and maritime security missions.

(March 28, 2023 – ALAMEDA, CA) – Saildrone, the world leader in providing near real-time maritime intelligence using small uncrewed systems, announced today a new, mid-size class of uncrewed surface vehicles (USVs). The 33-foot (10 m) Voyager is specifically designed for near-shore ocean and lakebed mapping, and to meet the challenges of IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing), ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance), law enforcement and maritime safety, drug interdiction, and border and harbor security.

Saildrone's three USV models—the Voyager along with the 23-foot (7 m) Explorer and 65-foot (20 m) Surveyor—have been developed to balance mission payload flexibility and endurance. The Voyager's larger size, compared to the Explorer, allows for a more persistent datalink, increased power available for ocean mapping and ISR payloads, and versatile payload integration options.

The ocean mapping sensor suite includes multibeam sonar equipment capable of seafloor mapping of depths to 900 feet (300 m), and the ISR sensor suite includes a smart camera array, digital radar, and sub-surface passive acoustics. Primarily powered by wind and solar, the Voyager also features an electric propulsion alternative, useful for low-wind and near-shore operations.

“With our Voyager platform, Saildrone helps to eliminate maritime gaps above and below the ocean surface, reducing risk to mission and risk to force. We want to be a force-multiplier for our partners and allies when it comes to ISR capabilities,” said Richard Jenkins, Saildrone founder and CEO.

To date, Saildrone has built 100 23-foot Explorer-class USVs at its headquarters in Alameda, CA. To meet the increasing demand for the new Voyager platform, Saildrone has elected to outsource the production of the wing, hull, and keel to composite specialists: [Janicki Industries](#) will manufacture the wing and keel in Washington, and [Seemann Composites](#) will manufacture the hull in Mississippi. Saildrone will continue to produce, install, and service internal components in Alameda.

“One of the truly exceptional aspects of working at a company like Saildrone is the fact that hardware and software engineering, manufacturing, mission operations, and G&A are all housed under one roof—in a former airplane hangar on a site known for aviation and naval innovation,” said Saildrone

COO Mark Cuyler. “But with the rapidly increasing demand for ocean data collection across the fleet, it is necessary to outsource some of our production. Saildrone is proud to work with great US-based companies like Janicki and Seemann, whose expertise in the marine composites industry will help us to more rapidly meet the demanding challenges of the world’s oceans.”

Saildrone has been conducting sea trials of the Voyager in the San Francisco Bay and offshore of California since late 2022, and the first operational maritime security and ocean mapping missions will begin this spring. The company is currently producing new Voyagers at a rate of one per week.

The data collection capabilities of Saildrone’s autonomous vehicles have been proven in numerous operational missions, covering almost 1 million nautical miles from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The company looks forward to its continued and close partnership with the US Government and its allies in boosting maritime security around the globe.

Visit Saildrone at 2023 IPF, March 28-30, at the Baltimore Convention Center and at the Navy League’s Sea Air Space 2023 at the Gaylord National Convention Center in National Harbor, MD.

---

**Fairbanks Morse Defense  
Launches Accelerator Program  
to Support Emerging**



[Release from Fairbanks Morse](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Defense contractor dedicating mentors and additional resources to*

*foster promising mission-critical technologies*

BELoit, Wis. – March 28, 2023 – [Fairbanks Morse Defense](#) (FMD), a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management (Arcline), has launched the FM Defense Accelerator program to

identify and nurture emerging technologies with mission-critical applications for the future of maritime defense. The defense contractor is now accepting applications for participants.

“As a principal supplier of best-in-class maritime defense technology, we are well positioned to recognize and foster pioneering solutions that have the potential to solve challenges faced by the industry,” said FMD CEO George Whittier. “The FM Defense Accelerator is open to eligible entrepreneurs with a great idea, a plan for bringing it to fruition, and an appetite to work with us and benefit from our expertise and relationship with the Navy, Coast Guard, and Military Sealift Command (MSC).”

Once selected, participants will work with FMD mentors selected from the defense contractor’s Technology Center of Excellence specifically for their expertise. In addition to the dedicated mentors assigned to FM Defense Accelerator participants, program benefits include the following:

- Individual programs created specifically for each technology ranging from three months to several years
- Access to broader FMD resources, including technical experts and a worldwide service network
- Brand exposure opportunities and marketing support
  
- Route to market advice and support

Once a technology reaches a predetermined development milestone, it has the opportunity to be demonstrated at various industry events, giving FM Defense Accelerator participants exposure to representatives from the Navy, Coast Guard, MSC, and other key stakeholders.

FMD has recently been working with technology collaborators through the Technology Center of Excellence, and a selection of these companies will be transitioned into the FM Defense Accelerator program.

The FM Defense Accelerator will be featured at the FMD booth (837) at the [Sea-Air-Space](#) Exposition from April 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at National Harbor, MD, along with live demonstrations of naval defense technologies being developed by FMD and its technology collaborators.

Companies interested in applying for a place on the program can visit the landing page at <https://rb.gy/f4qogd> to complete the online application.

### **About Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD)**

Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD) builds, maintains, and services the most trusted naval power and propulsion systems on the planet. For more than 100 years, FMD has been a principal supplier of a growing array of leading marine technologies, OEM parts, and turnkey services to the Navy, Coast Guard, Military Sealift Command, and Canadian Coast Guard. FMD stands ready to rapidly support the systems that power military fleets without compromising safety or quality. In times of

peace and war, the experienced engineers, sailors, and technicians of FMD demonstrate our commitment to supporting the mission and vision of critical global naval operations wherever and whenever needed. FMD is a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management.

To learn more, visit [www.FairbanksMorseDefense.com](http://www.FairbanksMorseDefense.com)

---

## **Navy, Coast Guard Begin Oceania Maritime Security Initiative Patrol**



USS Mobile (LCS 26) heads towards Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division in California for a ship groom on the afternoon of Nov. 28. LCS 26, an Independence-class littoral combat ship, was commissioned in 2021 and is

homeported in San Diego. (U.S. Navy photo by Eric Parsons/Released)

[Release from Commander, U.S. Third Fleet Public Affairs](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

24 March 2023

SAN DIEGO - The U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard began their joint patrol in the Western Pacific under the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) to reduce and eliminate illegal, unregulated, unreported fishing, combat transnational crimes, and enhance regional security, March 20.

“OMSI is imperative to ensure that the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Convention (WCPFC) agreement is upheld within the Indo-Pacific region,” said Cmdr. Richard Skinnell, Mobile’s commanding officer. “This initiative allows us the opportunity to work jointly with other branches of the military as well as our allies and partners.”

OMSI, a Secretary of Defense program, improves maritime security and domain awareness by enabling Coast Guard law enforcement personnel to conduct maritime law enforcement operations from Navy ships. These joint and combined operations ensure the U.S. military honors its security commitments to allies, partners, and friends.

“Collaborating with our partners throughout Oceania is essential in ensuring a free and open Blue Pacific,” said Cmdr. Jeff Bryant, chief of enforcement, U.S. Coast Guard District Fourteen. It is a privilege and we are proud to support the Federated States of Micronesia through dedicated partnership in the effort to maintain maritime governance and preserve maritime sovereignty.”

The WCPFC international fisheries agreement prioritizes the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

“The U.S. Coast Guard is always ready and looking forward to executing the OMSI mission alongside our U.S. Navy partners,” said Bryant.

Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Mobile (LCS 26), with an embarked Coast Guard law enforcement detachment from the Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team, supports maritime law with partner nations by enforcing the WCPFC agreement and by suppressing illicit activities. Independence-variant LCS is the platform of choice for this mission due to its fast and agile maneuvering capabilities, large flight deck with manned and unmanned aviation assets and surface warfare mission set.

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy’s role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

---

**U.S. Coast Guard works with counterparts in Saipan to**

# sharpen maritime operations skills



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

SANTA RITA, Guam – The U.S. Coast Guard conducted a subject matter exchange with boating safety and customs counterparts in Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on March 21, 2023, to enhance maritime operations management.

Personnel from U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam and USCGC Sequoia (WLB 215) with small boat station experience worked with the CNMI Department of Public Safety – Boating Safety and the CNMI Customs and Biosecurity – Marine Unit.

The exchange was based on the standards used by U.S. Coast Guard small boat stations nationwide and focused on

administrative topics, such as completing unit organization manuals, standing orders, detailed duties, assignments, and watch schedules.

“The engagements were at no cost to our search and rescue and law enforcement partners,” said Lt. Cmdr. Christine Igisomar, U.S. Coast Guard FM/SG maritime advisor. “Future engagement topics will include navigation, training, personal protective equipment, and naval engineering. This engagement series will culminate in a search and rescue exercise in the CNMI, currently slated for August.”

The U.S. Coast Guard’s last Saipan-based search and rescue exercise took place in August 2022 with 40 CNMI participants from six CNMI agencies and eight Coast Guard members.

“The excellent participation, support, and free exchange of experience and ideas made for a successful endeavor,” according to Lt. Henry Dunphy, the chief of emergency management and force readiness at U.S. Coast Guard FM/SG.

That exercise simulated a response to a capsized kayak off Tanapag Harbor, leading to tabletop discussions on planning, safety, and communications, followed by search patterns and boat handling offshore the following day.

Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, personnel hold training and search and rescue exercises in Guam, the CNMI, and the Compact of Free Association states. They evaluate notification and response procedures and identify shortfalls in communication and coordination of response during SAR incidents. Each agency holds individual capabilities that complement each other’s efforts and bolsters the overall success of the SAR system.

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam comprises nearly 300 personnel and provides a significant portion of the U.S. Coast Guard’s enduring regional presence in Oceania. These teams conduct the service’s six major operational mission programs: maritime law enforcement, maritime response,

maritime prevention, marine transportation system management, maritime security operations, and defense operations.

---

## Second New England-based Fast Response Cutter to be commissioned in Boston



[Release from Coast Guard 1st District](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

BOSTON – The Coast Guard Cutter Warren Deyampert (WPC-1151) is scheduled to be commissioned during a ceremony at Coast Guard Base Boston March 30.

The Coast Guard's newest cutter was accepted by the Coast Guard on Dec. 23, 2022, and will be the second of six Fast

Response Cutters homeported in Boston.

The Sentinel-class fast response cutter (FRC) is designed for multiple missions, including drug and migrant interdiction; ports, waterways and coastal security; fishery patrols; search and rescue; and national defense. The Coast Guard has ordered 65 FRCs to replace the 1980s-era Island-class 110-foot patrol boats. The FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment to reach vessels of interest; and improved habitability and seakeeping.

Born in Attalla, Alabama, the cutter's namesake joined the Coast Guard at age 19 and served aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba during World War II, beginning in August 1941. Deyampert's primary role was within the food service rating, but he also served as one of the ship's three rescue swimmers.

Following a torpedo attack on the U.S. Army transport ship Dorchester in North Atlantic waters on Feb. 3, 1943, Deyampert swam in absolute darkness to rescue survivors in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic. His efforts affected the rescue of more than 100 crew members, many of whom were hypothermic and unable to swim.

Four months later, June 13, 1943, the Escanaba sank, following an explosion onboard that was believed to be from a torpedo attack. All but two crewmembers were killed in the explosion. Deyampert was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and Purple Heart Medal for his heroic rescue of the Dorchester crew.

---

# U.S. Coast Guard, Federated States of Micronesia National Police conduct at-sea engagements to combat illegal fishing, strengthen skills



The USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) makes a port call in Yap during a Federated States of Micronesia patrol on March 13, 2023. The Oliver Henry is the 40th 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter named for Oliver T. Henry, Jr., an enlisted African American Coast Guard member first to break the color barrier of a then-segregated Service and homeports in Guam. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Breandan Muldowney)

SANTA RITA, Guam – The U.S. Coast Guard and Federated States of Micronesia National Police conducted a successful at-sea engagement to combat illegal fishing in Yap State on March 16, 2023.

The crews of USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) and the FSS Tosiwo

Nakayama (P901) conducted a joint patrol near Yap State in support of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's Operation 365, part of the FFA's regional monitoring control and surveillance operations to stop illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the Pacific.

"The crew enjoyed conducting a professional exchange including navigation and seamanship training during a close-quarters formation steaming with our colleagues aboard the FSS Tosiwo Nakayama before they pulled into Yap," said Lt. Freddy Hofschneider, commanding officer of the Oliver Henry.

The Tosiwo Nakayama is currently FSM's only active Guardian-class patrol boat. Under the Australian Pacific Maritime Security Program, Australia is delivering 22 Guardian-class Patrol Boats to 12 Pacific Island nations and Timor-Lesté. They also provide additional training to enable nations to make the most out of this capability.

The FSM is a sovereign nation with full diplomatic relations, deep ties, and a cooperative relationship with the United States. They participate in an amended Compact of Free Association with the U.S., under which the FSM and the United States agreed that the U.S. has full authority and responsibility for defense and security matters relating to the FSM. Many FSM citizens also live, work, and study in the U.S. and voluntarily serve in the U.S. Armed Forces at per capita rates higher than many U.S. states.

"The ongoing partnership between the FSM and the U.S. Coast Guard seeks to enhance FSM's sovereignty and capability to combat illicit maritime activity, particularly illegal fishing, to the benefit of all Pacific partners but with a focus on the people of the FSM and their economic and food security needs," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "We appreciate the efforts of the National Police, the U.S. Embassy, and our Australian Pacific Maritime Security Program partners to make

these shared multilateral operations possible to increase regional security and prosperity.”

The crew also leveraged time underway while on patrol in the FSM Exclusive Economic Zone for maintenance, Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises or BECCs, and cutter boat training. The crew is on a four-week expeditionary patrol throughout Western Oceania.

The Oliver Henry is the 40th 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter named for Oliver T. Henry, Jr., an enlisted African American Coast Guard member first to break the color barrier of a then-segregated Service.

It homeports in Guam, working with U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, which comprises nearly 300 personnel to provide a significant portion of the U.S. Coast Guard’s enduring regional presence in Oceania.

Operation 365 is the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre’s overarching plan for Regional Monitoring Control and Surveillance operations. OP365 provides comprehensive support to regional surveillance and enforcement efforts in Pacific Island Countries on an ongoing basis. OP365 requires the concerted and consistent effort of all 17 Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency member nations and the four members of the Pacific Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group countries, Australia, France, New Zealand, and the United States, to be successful.

For more U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam news, visit us on [DVIDS](#) or [subscribe](#)! You can also visit us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) at @USCGForcesMicronesia or [Twitter](#) @USCGFMSG.

---

# Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast returns home following counternarcotics patrol



[Release from the United States Coast Guard](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

March 16, 2023

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) and crew returned to their Astoria homeport, Tuesday, following a 69-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Steadfast's crew disrupted the flow of illegal narcotics on three separate occasions during their patrol preventing a combined total of more than 7,500 pounds of cocaine, valued at \$85.6 million, from reaching the U.S. maritime borders.

The crew steamed more than 12,000 nautical miles conducting training, law enforcement missions, providing search-and-rescue coverage, and conducting helicopter operations while patrolling the waters from their Astoria homeport to international waters off the coast of Central America.

The Steadfast deployed with a Jacksonville, Florida, based Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and aircrew along with temporarily assigned crewmembers from the Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903), and soon-to-be-commissioned Coast Guard Cutter Argus (WMSM 915).

During nighttime patrol operations, Steadfast personnel were notified by a Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) of a suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel transiting international waters. Steadfast personnel launched an Over-the-Horizon (OTH) crew and boarding team who interdicted the vessel after a multi-hour pursuit. The suspected smugglers jettisoned contraband, resulting in the disruption of 2,260 pounds of cocaine, valued at \$25.6 million.

Additionally, Steadfast's crew tracked another suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel with the assistance of a Mexican Navy (SEMAR) surveillance aircraft and aircrew. Steadfast personnel launched an OTH boat crew and HITRON helicopter aircrew while the Mexican MPA tracked the vessel. Steadfast's small boat and helicopter crews interdicted the suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel and seized 3,300 pounds of cocaine valued at \$37.5 million.

"The successful coordination between a U.S. Coast Guard cutter and Mexican MPA was a significant step in advancing our strategic partnerships in combatting the flow of illicit narcotics in Eastern Pacific," said Cmdr. Brock S. Eckel, Steadfast's commanding officer.

The next day, Steadfast crew launched an OTH boat crew and HITRON aircrew to intercept another suspected smuggling vessel. The aircrew located the suspected smuggling vessel and worked with a nearby Mexican Naval vessel to vector in a Mexican Naval helicopter. This multi-national effort resulted in the seizure of 1,984 pounds of cocaine valued at \$22.5 million.

“From battling heavy seas off the Oregon and California coasts, to overcoming equipment casualties, and multiple smuggling vessel interdictions in the darkest of nights, the determination, resilience, and professionalism of the Steadfast crew was simply exceptional,” said Eckel. “The crew’s operational success was matched only by the strengthening of international and inter-agency relationships along the way. Steadfast’s crew once again proved their proficiency in working with partner nations jointly executing the counternarcotics mission successfully.”

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 for these interdictions by United States Attorney’s Offices throughout the country.

Commissioned in 1968, Steadfast is one of two 210-foot medium endurance cutters homeported in Astoria. The cutter and crew deploy along the western seaboard of North and Central America enforcing living marine resource laws and regulations, detecting and interdicting narcotics and migrant smuggling, and conducting search-and-rescue operations.