

Coast Guard Cutter Shearwater Decommissioned after 19 Years of Service



Coast Guard Cutter Shearwater, homeported in Cape May, New Jersey, is moored to the pier prior to the cutter's decommissioning ceremony at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, April 15, 2021. Coast Guard Cutter Shearwater was the 49th vessel of the Marine Protector Class of Coast Guard Patrol Boats. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Kimberly Reaves*

CAPE MAY, N.J. – The Coast Guard decommissioned the cutter Shearwater during a ceremony at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May that was presided over by Capt. Jonathan Theel, the commanding officer of Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay, April 15, 2021, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

Shearwater was one of the Coast Guard's 70 remaining 87-foot Marine Protector-class patrol boats. Training Center Cape May

is now the homeport to three Coast Guard Fast Response Cutters.

Commissioned in 2002, the Shearwater was the 49th of 73 coastal patrol boats built for search and rescue, ports, waterways, and coastal security, living marine resource enforcement, marine safety, and marine environmental protection.

"Shearwater is a special ship that has served District 5 throughout the course of her history," said Master Chief Petty Officer Tony Martinez, commanding officer of the Shearwater. "With a who's who of prominent Coast Guard members, including high profile command master chiefs and command cadres with multiple tours, Shearwater boasted some of the finest crews throughout her tenure. She has been a fixture in both of her homeports, remaining durable and dependable throughout her history. I personally want to thank all of the crews for their dedication and service to our great nation as they were instrumental to Shearwater's mission of takin' care of business."

Shearwater's keel was laid on April 30, 2002 at Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana. Shearwater was launched on Aug. 6, 2002, and commissioned on Oct. 5, 2002.

Over the past 19 years of service, Shearwater's crews conducted a wide range of operations. Living up to the Shearwater's motto "Takin' Care of Business," coined by the commissioning crew, crews completed 1,664 activities ranging from law enforcement boardings to search and rescue responses throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. From 2002 to 2018, the ship was homeported at Coast Guard Base Portsmouth, Virginia. Upon relocating to Cape May in 2018, the ship was dubbed "the Queen of the Cape" by a Coast Guard Auxiliarist.

During the cutter's last year of service, the sunset crew of 12 enlisted crew members continued this legacy, conducting

high profile operations including the disentanglement of a leatherback turtle off of Cape May in August of 2020, and an 18-hour tow of a disabled fishing vessel 70 nautical miles east of Cape Charles, Virginia.

“With a strong personal connection to the first officer in charge of this ship, I felt an immense honor being the final OIC aboard Shearwater,” said Martinez. “As I pause and reflect, remembering the first time I saw the ship from an 87 on the other end of the pier, the pride I feel commanding this ship is indescribable. To lead this sunset crew and watch them grow over the past two years has been humbling and rewarding. I am grateful for their dedication and service and look forward to staying in touch and following their careers. While our business here is done, we will proudly carry on Shearwater’s legacy of hard work and reliability.”

Navy, Coast Guard Formalize Partnership Between Naval Postgraduate School and Coast Guard Research and Development Center



A Coast Guard crewmember jettisons a Maritime Object Tracking Technology marker as part of a Coast Guard Research and Development Center technology demonstration on the Thames River, New London, Connecticut, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018. *U.S. COAST GUARD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER*

The U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and Coast Guard Research and Development Center (RDC) signed a new five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) on April 14, 2021, which facilitates collaboration on joint research that directly supports common defense priorities and Coast Guard statutory missions.

NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau and RDC Commanding Officer Capt. Dan Keane met on a virtual platform to both sign the document that will continue and enhance collaborative research and educational cooperation between the two institutions. The document establishes a framework for future collaboration, joint research and access to capabilities.

“The Tri-Service Maritime Strategy (TSMS), Advantage at Sea, prioritizes developing future capability and capacity for both the Navy and the Coast Guard,” said Rondeau. “Our formalized

partnership not only strengthens the strong ties between NPS and the Coast Guard, but it brings to bear our defense-focused faculty and operationally experienced Navy and Coast Guard students in joint projects to develop our future force and support that strategy.”

Keane said partnerships are vital to the RDC portfolio accomplishment strategy, such as with Department of Defense and Department of Energy labs, the Federal Lab Consortium, and academia. “Perhaps one our strongest and most impactful partnerships is with the Naval Postgraduate School,” he said.

“Since an MOU was signed three years ago, the RDC has become a topic sponsor, we have proposed questions related to our portfolio that have turned into academic products; NPS researchers have worked with our researchers on summer studies; and we have provided platforms for NPS experimentation. We believe that we have just scratched the surface and the future is incredibly bright,” said Keane. “The partnership is strong today, and is only going to grow stronger in the future. We are excited about the next five years.”

According to a joint statement about the signing, the MOU will help focus NPS on aspects of the TSMS that chiefly fall to the Coast Guard to define research projects that those students, and NPS faculty, can work on together and advance toward solving key maritime challenges. “In addition to identifying thesis topics of mutual interest, the MOU includes access and use of each institution’s unique laboratories and facilities, and involves other key research exchanges to mutually advance their mission of research and education for warfighting advantage,” the statement said.

Planning is underway to facilitate joint research projects on such things including renewable energy, additive manufacturing, maritime-domain awareness and wargaming.

There is a small cohort of mid-career Coast Guard officers attending NPS as students, joining the 600 naval officers and 300 Marine Corps officers attending the school.

According to NPS Dean of Research Dr. Jeffery Paduan, NPS has an impressive cadre of subject matter experts. The school offers masters and doctorate programs in 70 different fields of studies with 227 tenure-track faculty and 347 non-tenure track faculty.

Paduan said both NPS and RDC have distinguished histories as leading research institutions. “The Navy and Coast Guard face overlapping challenges at sea, and both of our organizations complement each other in addressing these problems. This MOU will lead to many more joint projects and shared benefits.”

Students will benefit from thesis topics and capstone projects of mutual interest, with access to each institution’s unique laboratories, facilities, expertise and research capabilities at sea and ashore.

Rondeau said the teaming brings opportunities to understand and solve problems, and solidifies a promising “partnership in science, technology, education, learning and teaming – and in the end, winning. This MOU opens up our apertures to possibilities that are in front of us. I truly believe this has power beyond even what we can imagine today.”

Coast Guard Repatriates 14 Migrants to Cuba



Coast Guard crews took 14 migrants off a rustic vessel, April 10, 2021, due to safety of life at sea concerns off Key West, Florida. They were repatriated to Cuba on April 13, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Raymond Evans' crew repatriated 14 Cuban migrants to Cuba April 13, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

A good Samaritan reported the rustic vessel with 14 people aboard to Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders Saturday approximately 35 miles northwest of Key West.

Station Key West rescue crews arrived on scene to find the people showing signs of dehydration and being sunburnt. They were taken off their vessel due to safety of life at sea concerns.

"The Florida Straits are unpredictable," said Coast Guard Liaison Officer Lt. Cmdr. Mario Gil, U.S. Embassy Havana. "It is not safe to take to the seas in makeshift vessels that aren't seaworthy."

Since Oct. 1, 2020, Coast Guard crews have interdicted 166 Cubans compared to fiscal year 2019, Oct. 1, 2018 – Sept. 30, 2019, where crews interdicted 314 Cubans.

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. There were no migrants in these cases reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

Coast Guard Cutter Forward Returns Home after Drug-

Busting Patrol



Coast Guard Cutter Forward and Coast Guard Cutter Bear, homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, finish an at-sea transfer while underway on a two-month patrol. Coast Guard Cutter Forward returned to homeport on April 10, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) returned to its homeport in Portsmouth April 12 after a two-month patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, working to suppress and eradicate the movement of illegal drugs in the region, the Coast Guard 5th District said in an April 13 release.

The crew of the Forward worked in conjunction with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO) and the Canadian Navy to execute the mission, resulting in the seizure of 6,800 pounds of cocaine, 5,300 pounds of marijuana, two pounds of methamphetamine and the detainment of 14 suspected drug smugglers.

“These deployments highlight our successful interoperability

with multiple domestic and international partners all committed to curbing the flow of illegal drugs to our borders,” said Lt. Vincent Zieser, the operations officer and lead coordinator aboard the Forward. “We certainly enjoyed their support and teamwork.”

U.S. Southern Command began what was then known as Enhanced Counter-Narcotics Operations in the Western Hemisphere to increase drug traffic disruption on April 1, 2020. This counter Transnational Criminal Organizations operational approach, which is now enduring, supports objectives to degrade the capabilities of TCOs and ultimately save lives. With increased presence, collaborative efforts have bolstered support to U.S. and partner nations’ law enforcement agencies by sharing information and intelligence. Key partners have been involved in over 60% of drug disruptions since April 2020, an increase of 50% from 2019. By strengthening partnerships, we maximize regional coverage and increase effectiveness.

There are 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 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 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

The Forward is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth. The cutter's primary mission includes search and rescue, illegal drug interdictions, alien migrant interdictions, ensuring safety of life at sea and enforcing international and domestic maritime laws.

Cutter Kimball Returns Home from Expeditionary Patrol in the Pacific



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) underway in the Pacific, April 4, 2021. The Kimball was conducting an expeditionary patrol supporting Operation Blue Pacific, Op Rai

Balang, and Op Aloha Shield. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) returned to Honolulu April 9 after completing an expeditionary patrol supporting Operation Blue Pacific, Operation Rai Balang and Operation Aloha Shield in the Pacific, the Coast Guard 14th District said in an April 9 release.

During the 82-day patrol, the cutter's crew worked closely with partners and allied nations on numerous missions ranging from search and rescue to the prevention of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) while promoting stability and security throughout the region.

"I'm tremendously proud of my crew's exceptional performance, especially considering how their dedication and teamwork allowed them to overcome the many challenges associated with operating by ourselves for long periods of time in remote locations and the difficulties created by the global pandemic," said Capt. Holly Harrison, the Kimball's commanding officer. "They adapted and overcame every obstacle and challenge put in their way with ease, exactly what you'd expect from our phenomenal Coast Guardsmen and women."

One of the main goals of the 20,000 nautical-mile patrol was to assist the United States' partners in the region with combating IUU.

Throughout the deployment the cutter's crew worked closely with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) during Op Rai Balang, a coordinated effort between partners in the region to combat IUU, while also enforcing Western and Central Fisheries Commission regulations on the high seas to protect the region's fish stocks.

Fish stocks are a vital renewable resource for many nations in the Pacific. Because of the migratory nature of fish, efforts

towards their conservation requires teamwork between the partner nations.

The multi-million-dollar IUU fishing industry represents a direct threat to the partners efforts to ensure these resources remain sustainable for years to come and throughout the patrol the crew of the Kimball worked with the governments of the Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Papau New Guinea to strengthen domain awareness and resource security within the nation's economic exclusive zones.

During the patrol, the crew queried 21 foreign fishing vessels and boarded six, generating vital information reports for the partners in their efforts to combat IUU.

"The National Security Cutters bring a capacity and capability into the Coast Guard which are truly game changing when it comes to curbing IUU in the Pacific," said Rear Adm. Matthew Sibley, commander, Coast Guard 14th District. "Patrols such as the Kimball's display these cutters ability to cover large swaths of the Pacific and support our partners in joint conservation efforts while contributing to the overall stability of the region."

The Kimball is one of the Coast Guard's newer 420-foot Legend-class National Security Cutter and boasts a wide array of modern capabilities helping the crew to complete their varied missions.

Throughout the patrol, the crew used the cutter's ability to deploy unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to collect observation reports on vessels of interest which were shared with Maritime Security Advisors and the FFA Regional Fisheries Surveillance Center.

The UAS was also utilized during both day and night searches

for a missing mariner southwest of Guam, displaying the versatility of the new technology and its potential in multiple types of missions.

Another key goal of the patrol was to increase interoperability between the Coast Guard and partners in the region.

The Kimball's crew participated in a number of exercises with partners in the region, including training with a Royal Australian Navy Sea Dragon aircraft crew during the FFA Op Rai Balang, joint interdiction training with the Japan coast guard ship Akitsushima, and an exercise with the USS Tulsa.

"Over the past 82-days, Kimball's crew conducted joint operations with the Japanese coast guard, Royal Australian Navy, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and U.S. Navy," said Harrison. "In each operation, we were thoroughly impressed with our partners' professionalism, skill, and commitment to Oceania and regional security."

Cutter Returns Home following Eastern Pacific Law- Enforcement Patrol



The USCGC Alert (WMEC 127) and its crew return to homeport in Astoria, Oregon, Wednesday, April 7, 2021, following a 63-day patrol that began in early February. The cutter and crew patrolled off the coast of Mexico and in the vicinity of the United States-Mexico Maritime Boundary Line enforcing international laws and treaties to disrupt illegal narcotics and migrant smuggling. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Cynthia Oldham.

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) returned home to Astoria, Oregon, April 7 following a 63-day counterdrug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Working in conjunction with different Coast Guard and Mexican law enforcement agencies, Alert's crew disrupted more than 2,100 pounds of cocaine, valued at over \$41 million wholesale, from entering the United States.

The Oregon-based cutter and crew patrolled international

waters off the coast of Mexico and the United States-Mexico Maritime Boundary Line, enforcing international laws and treaties throughout their deployment and disrupting the flow of illegal narcotics and migrant smuggling.

While on patrol, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected smuggling vessel. Alert's crews launched both cutter small boats and pursued the vessel until it ran out of fuel. The case was transferred to Mexican law enforcement officials from the Secretaría de Marina (SEMAR).

Through the collaborative and international team effort, the smugglers were successfully apprehended, and 1,600 pounds of illegal narcotics seized by Mexican Law Enforcement.

Within 48 hours, Alert's crew identified another law enforcement case for interdiction and changed course to intercept the suspected smuggling vessel. After a multi-hour pursuit, the crew successfully interdicted approximately 550 pounds of cocaine and apprehended six suspected narco-traffickers for prosecution in the United States.

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.

Alert's crew transferred the seized narcotics and suspected drug traffickers to the Department of Justice, via Coast Guard Station San Diego March 1 before steaming north to complete their three-week Tailored Ship Training Assessment, a bi-annual assessment designed to evaluate the cutter's training teams and operational readiness.

"Once again, the crew of Alert was able to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and equipment failures on

a 50-year-old ship to execute a wide range of Coast Guard missions from the US-Canada Border to the Mexico-Guatemala border over a two-month period,” said Cmdr. Tyson Scofield, Alert’s commanding officer. “Overall, Coast Guard Cutter Alert successfully completed a variety of operations through the combined effort of every member of the crew.”

While patrolling the Eastern Pacific, Alert’s watchstanders identified a sea turtle entangled in fishing debris. The cutter maneuvered into position and launched its small boat to help the endangered sea animal, ultimately setting the sea turtle free from the entwined debris. Marine environmental protection is a statutory mission of the Coast Guard and every year approximately 300 sea turtles are saved by the Coast Guard.

“Marine life has always had a special place in my heart. When the opportunity to save a turtle arose, I was beyond excited to help,” said Petty Officer Third Class Timothy Waters who was aboard the small board to help free the entangled sea turtle. “I am honored to have done something so small that contributes to something much larger than me.”

Coast Guard, Navy Begin High Seas Oceania Maritime Security Initiative Patrol



Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa (LCS 16), with an embarked Coast Guard law enforcement detachment from the Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team are conducting maritime law enforcement operations through the enforcement of international law and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention to protect United States and Pacific Island Nations' resource security and sovereignty. *U.S. NAVY SAN DIEGO, Calif.* – The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy began their joint mission in the Western and Central Pacific under the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) to reduce and eliminate illegal, unregulated, unreported (IUU) fishing, combat transnational crimes and enhance regional security, April 5, the U.S. 3rd Fleet said in an April 6 release.

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The Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) program is a

Secretary of Defense program that leverages Department of Defense assets transiting the region to improve maritime security and maritime domain awareness, ultimately supporting regional stability and partnerships in Oceania.

“USS Tulsa is proud to contribute to the OMSI mission” said Cmdr. William Dvorak, Tulsa’s commanding officer. “Working with the embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment, our crew is looking forward to supporting maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.”

The OMSI improves maritime security and maritime domain awareness by enabling U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement personnel to conduct maritime law enforcement operations from U.S. Navy assets in coordination with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

“Our team is ready and excited to execute the OMSI mission,” said Cmdr. Robert Berry, commanding officer of the embarked law enforcement detachment. “Collaborating with our U.S. Navy counterparts enables us to monitor and deter IUU fishing in the Western and Central Pacific and provides a presence for maritime surveillance and security in the region.”

U.S. Coast Guard Ships Depart Puerto Rico on Mission to Strengthen Trans-Atlantic Ties



Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, and Command Master Chief Devin Spencer, visit the crew of the Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) in Puerto Rico prior to beginning their transit across the North Atlantic to Europe, March 31, 2021. The Moulthrop and USCGC Robert Goldman (WPC 1142) crews will continue to their new homeport of Manama, Bahrain, with brief stops for logistics and relationship building. Planning for the escort and deployment began last year to ensure smooth delivery of the fast response cutters, replacing the Island-class ships currently in operation under the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet command. *U.S. COAST GUARD/ Lt. Dana Wanjon*

ATLANTIC OCEAN – The Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) with the Sentinel-class fast response cutters USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) and USCGC Robert Goldman (WPC 1142) departed Puerto Rico on April 1 to transit the North Atlantic to Europe, Coast Guard Atlantic Area announced April 2.

“U.S. Coast Guard cutters have a long history of protecting

America's interests at home and abroad. This historic deployment demonstrates how we can strengthen our national security by extending the Coast Guard's global reach and firming our commitments to allies and partners in the region," Capt. Timothy Cronin, commanding officer, USCGC Hamilton.

Hamilton is escorting the fast response cutters across the Atlantic before conducting a patrol in the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet area of responsibility to maintain maritime security alongside NATO allies and partners. The Moulthroe and Goldman crews will continue to their new homeport of Manama, Bahrain, with brief stops for logistics and relationship building. Planning for the escort and deployment began last year to ensure smooth delivery of the fast response cutters, replacing the Island-class ships currently in operation under the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet command.

"Our primary goal for the fast response cutters is to complete the 9,000-mile voyage to homeport safely and efficiently. In addition, we will capitalize on opportunities to strengthen international partnerships promoting security and prosperity throughout some of the world's busiest maritime trade routes," Lt. Cmdr. Steven Hulse, commanding officer, USCGC Charles Moulthroe.

"We expect to showcase the capabilities of the fast response cutter, and the U.S. Coast Guard to advance the shared maritime strategy for security with the U.S. Navy and naval partners in the region, while concurrently engaging with them on the more traditional U.S. Coast Guard missions of search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, and illegal fisheries enforcement," said Lt. Cmdr. Samuel Blase, commanding officer, USCGC Robert Goldman.

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 country's commitment,

flexibility and capability to operate and address security concerns throughout Europe and Africa, the Coast Guard said.

“The U.S. Coast Guard is a member of the joint force, a key and always-ready instrument to further national security objectives globally,” said Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. “It’s been almost two decades since we sent the Island-class patrol boats to Bahrain. As we seek to modernize our asset support to the U.S. Navy in the Arabian Gulf, this is an excellent opportunity to advance partnerships and learn from our allies in the region.”

Hamilton is the fourth ship in its class. The Legend-class is the largest current cutter class of the U.S. Coast Guard. These vessels support various missions, including environmental protection, search and rescue, fisheries, port security, counterterrorism, law enforcement, drug interdiction, defense operations and other military operations.

Moulthrop and Goldman are the first two of six Sentinel-class ships headed to U.S. Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. Established in 2002 to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, PATFORSWA played a critical role in maritime security and maritime infrastructure protection operations. It is the U.S. Coast Guard’s largest unit outside of the United States.

PATFORSWA is currently providing U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet and U.S. Central Command with combat-ready assets, using its unique access to foreign territorial seas and ports, formulating strong and independent relationships with patterns throughout the Arabian Gulf, and leveraging the full-spectrum, flexible vessel boarding capabilities and maritime country engagements on the shore.

U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, to advance U.S. national

interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Based in Portsmouth, Virginia, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. Also, they allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

Coast Guard Cutter Walnut Arrives at New Homeport in Pensacola



The Coast Guard Cutter Walnut returns to its new homeport in

Pensacola, Florida, March 31, 2021. The Walnut crew performed a major maintenance availability project to enable the 225-foot cutter to reach the end of its 30-year planned life service and was previously homeported in Honolulu. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Walnut arrived at the cutter's new homeport, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a March 31 release.

The Walnut crew performed a major maintenance availability project to enable the 225-foot cutter to reach the end of its 30-year planned life service.

"The Walnut crew looks forward to our arrival in Pensacola, Florida, and values our role in supporting Coast Guard District Eight's continued efforts to maintain a safe and effective maritime transportation system," said Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Bonner, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Walnut. "As evidenced by the historic hurricane season of 2020, the Coast Guard and its buoy tender fleet played and will continue to play a critical role in responding to devastating natural disasters and reconstituting waterways in and around this nation's most critical maritime ports."

The dockside period included loading and inventorying thousands of pounds of critical shipboard materials and equipment, conducting mission critical training to prepare for possible shipboard casualties while underway, and conducting extensive maintenance and repair on most of the shipboard machinery, electronics and auxiliary systems.

The cutter Walnut is a 225-Foot seagoing buoy tender, which was previously homeported in Honolulu and will now be homeported in Pensacola, Florida. The cutter's primary missions are aids to navigation, search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, maritime environmental protection and national defense missions.

Coast Guard Offloads More than 19,600 Pounds of Cocaine, Marijuana



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Munro gather in formation behind seized contraband during a drug offload in Alameda, California, March 23, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Taylor Bacon*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) offloaded approximately 8,200 pounds of seized cocaine and 11,450 pounds of marijuana March 23 at the ship's homeport at Coast Guard Base Alameda, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Prior to the Munro's arrival in Alameda, the crew transferred 12 detainees, approximately 9,200 pounds of cocaine and 2,150

pounds of marijuana to law enforcement officials in San Diego.

The drugs, in total worth an estimated \$330 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean between January and March, representing 15 suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America by the following Coast Guard and Navy ships:

The Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) crew was responsible for nine interdictions, seizing approximately 10,200 pounds of cocaine and 11,450 pounds of marijuana.

The Coast Guard Cutter Bear (WMEC 901) crew was responsible for two interdictions, seizing approximately 66 pounds of cocaine.

The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC 617) crew was responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 1,870 pounds of cocaine.

The Coast Guard Cutters Bear and Munro conducted a joint interdiction, seizing approximately 3,747 pounds of cocaine.

Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 107 deployed aboard the USS Freedom (LCS 1) was responsible for two interdictions, seizing approximately 1,600 pounds of cocaine and 2,150 pounds of marijuana.

Video of the news conference can be viewed at <https://fb.watch/4pThfJ-raQ/>, and footage of the offload can be viewed and downloaded at <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/788115/coast-guard-offloads-more-than-19600-pounds-cocaine-marijuana-alameda-calif>

“National security cutters like Munro are national-level assets and are game changers for the United States government’s maritime interdiction capability,” said Vice Adm.

Linda Fagan, the commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area. "As your Coast Guard, we use our unique capabilities and authorities as a military service and a law enforcement agency to secure the nation's maritime border and to disrupt illegal activity of dangerous cartels. This offload demonstrates another successful cycle of justice."

"Transnational criminal organizations have not slowed down due to the pandemic, and the Coast Guard women and men continue to protect our nation on the frontlines," said Capt. Blake Novak, the commanding officer of the Munro. "Our crew intercepted a group of suspected smugglers, on average, every 90 hours for 45 days straight, seizing nearly 30,000 pounds of cocaine and marijuana valued at over \$330 million. Maintaining such a high level of performance was only possible because of a total team effort. This crew set the bar for excellence, and I am incredibly proud of all of them."

Munro is one of four national security cutters homeported in Alameda. These Legend class cutters are 418-feet long, 54-feet wide, and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, endurance of up to 90 days and can hold a crew of nearly 150.