

USCGC Dependable returns home after a 50-day patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Pass



USCGC Dependable's (WMEC 626) crew operates alongside USCGC James (WMSL 754) in support of Operation Vigilant Sentry in the Florida Straits off the coast of Key West, Florida, Jan. 21, 2023. Dependable's crew patrolled the Coast Guard's Seventh District area of operations to conduct maritime safety and security missions. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Fireman Olliver Miller)

[Release from Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – The crew of the USCGC Dependable (WMEC 626) returned to their homeport in Virginia Beach Thursday

following a 50-day maritime safety and security patrol in the Florida Straits and Windward Pass.

In support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, Dependable's crew conducted multiple interdiction evolutions and collaborated with other Coast Guard cutters and task force aircraft to continue the critical mission of maintaining safety at sea.

During the patrol, Dependable's crew processed, cared for and repatriated approximately 500 migrants. While operating in the Florida Straits, Dependable worked with other law enforcement entities, including Customs and Border Protection and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal ventures bound for the United States.

"The crew has been training to conduct migrant interdiction operations since July 2022," said Lt. Cmdr. Dana Prefer, Dependable's executive officer. "In preparation for the recent uptick in migration ventures, we worked hard to qualify over 50 crew members to stand watch and care for the migrants embarked onboard the cutter. The training and preparation paid off as it was truly a team effort to interdict, process and care for just about 500 migrants throughout our patrol."

Dependable is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 70. The cutter's primary missions include counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

USCGC Seneca's crew returns home following 24-day Caribbean Sea patrol



USCGC Seneca's (WMEC 906) crew pulls into home port in Portsmouth, Virginia, Feb. 17, 2023, following a 24-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea. Seneca's crew worked with Joint Interagency Task Force South and the U.S. Air Force to disrupt nearly 1,350 kilograms of narcotics from two law enforcement cases in the Caribbean Sea. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Kate Kilroy)

[Release from Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

Feb. 17, 2023

USCGC Seneca's crew returns home following 24-day Caribbean Sea patrol

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the USCGC Seneca (WMEC 906) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Friday, following a

24-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea.

During the patrol, Seneca supported Joint Interagency Task Force – South and worked alongside the U.S. Air Force to disrupt nearly 1,350 kilograms of narcotics during two law enforcement cases in the Caribbean Sea.

“The crew of Seneca displayed teamwork, grit and professionalism, patrolling the Caribbean Sea to deter, interrupt and interdict transnational criminal organizations smuggling illicit drugs into the United States and elsewhere,” said Cmdr. James McCormack, Seneca’s commanding officer. “Seneca rose to the challenge amidst strong winds and heavy seas to conduct surface-led interdictions in the Caribbean and stopped a drug laden go-fast vessel with three suspected drug smugglers.”

Seneca’s crew maintained a rigorous training regimen throughout the patrol to build proficiency following a six-month dry dock availability in Brooklyn, New York. Seneca’s crew balanced damage control, engineering and navigation drills with small boat operations and flight operations. Partnering with Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, Seneca completed two aviation training evolutions that enhanced both crew’s readiness.

“After a short, but successful, patrol in the Caribbean, we look forward to returning to our families and friends while we prepare for our next mission at sea,” added McCormack.

Seneca is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100. The cutter’s primary missions include counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

USCGC Legare returns home following 63-day Caribbean Sea patrol



USCGC Legare's (WMEC 912) crew interdicts an unsafe vessel with 396 migrants in transit to Florida in the Atlantic Ocean, Jan. 21, 2023. The Legare's crew patrolled the Coast Guard's Seventh District area of operations to conduct maritime safety and security missions. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Trever R. Hammack)

[Release from Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

Feb. 17, 2023

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the USCGC Legare (WMEC 912) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Friday, following a 63-day deployment in the Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea.

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

During the patrol, Legare’s crew cared for 1,309 migrants interdicted at sea and rescued people from 23 different unseaworthy vessels. Notably, Legare’s crew located and interdicted 396 migrants on a single, overcrowded 50-foot vessel.

Legare’s patrol efforts highlight the Coast Guard’s critical missions of maintaining safety of life at sea and preventing the potential for loss of life by deterring migrants from taking to the sea in dangerously overcrowded vessels in an attempt to enter the United States through non-legal channels.

“The migrant interdiction mission can be emotionally draining,” said Cmdr. Jeremy Greenwood, Legare’s commanding officer. “Legare’s success was the direct result of the patient determination of the crew. Being deployed during the holidays is never easy, but this crew will proudly return knowing they served during a unique part of our nation’s history and saved hundreds of lives.”

Legare is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 108. 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.

USCGC Bear returns home following 60-day deployment in Florida Straits



Family members of a USCGC Bear (WMEC 901) crew member pose for a photo on the pier in Portsmouth, Va., Feb. 15, 2023. Bear returned home following a 60-day deployment conducting maritime safety and security missions in the Florida Straits. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard)

[Release from United States Coast Guard](#)

Feb. 15, 2023

Editor's Note: For b-roll of Bear's patrol, click [here](#); homecoming footage can be viewed [here](#).

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the USCGC Bear (WMEC 901) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth Wednesday after completing a 60-day deployment in the Florida Straits and Windward Passage.

Bear's crew supported Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry in the Coast Guard's Seventh District area of operations. While underway, Bear's crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while working to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

Within the first days of patrol, Bear interdicted an overloaded Cuban rustic vessel in the Florida Straits and transferred 27 migrants on board the cutter.

Bear also spent part of the patrol acting as a visual deterrence to illegal migration in the region by operating close to Haiti's shore, which resulted in the interdiction of two overloaded migrant voyages. Both vessels were approximately 50 feet in length and each carried more than 200 migrants. After providing food, water, and medical care, Bear's crew repatriated the migrants back to Haiti.

Throughout the deployment, Bear's crew members cared for and provided medical attention to 502 migrants on board the cutter before repatriating them to their country of origin.

"Bear's mission was to deter illegal maritime migration and rescue those in distress before the sea claimed their lives," said Cmdr. Brooke Millard, Bear's commanding officer. "This deployment was challenging. It's tough to witness fellow

humans risk all for a better way of life in an unforgiving sea. Know that your Coast Guard is 'all in' to protect our maritime border as well as save lives."

Since the fiscal year began in October, Coast Guard crews have interdicted over 7,100 Cubans and Haitians at sea.

Bear is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100. The cutter's primary mission areas include homeland security, law enforcement, counter drug, search and rescue, migrant interdiction, and fisheries enforcement in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

**USCGC Confidence's crew
returns home following 40-day
Florida Straits patrol**



GONAIVES, Haiti – Crewmembers from Coast Guard Cutter Confidence, home-ported in Port Canaveral, Fla., launch a small boat with Coast Guard District Seven Transport System recovery assist team to surgery the port Nov. 7, 2010 after Hurricane Tomas hit the island of Haiti. The confidence became a staging platform for the MTSRAT and helped survey the channels for possible obstruction to navigation. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Sabrina Elgammal*
[Release from U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of the USCGC Confidence (WMEC 619) returned to their home port in Cape Canaveral Friday following a 40-day patrol in the Florida Straits.

Confidence deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry to conduct counter drug and maritime safety and security missions in the Coast Guard's Seventh District area of operations. While underway, Confidence's crew worked with additional Coast Guard cutters and air assets to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and

illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

During the patrol, Confidence's crew interdicted and cared for 496 migrants. Notably, Confidence worked with numerous Coast Guard air assets to rescue a group of 17 Cuban nationals stranded on islands within Cay Sal Bank, Bahamas.

Confidence's patrol efforts highlight the Coast Guard's critical missions of maintaining maritime safety and preventing the potential for loss of life by deterring migrants from taking to the sea in dangerously overcrowded vessels while attempting to enter the United States through non-legal channels.

"During this patrol, Confidence responded to record high migration in the Florida Straits," said Cmdr. Thomas Martin, commanding officer of Confidence. "I am proud of the work the crew did to prevent the loss of life at sea and safeguard our borders."

Confidence is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 82. The cutter's primary missions include counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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

Navy, MSC, Coast Guard Ships Involved in Search and Recovery of Chinese Balloon Payload



The next generation landing craft, ship to shore connector (SSC), landing craft, air cushion (LCAC), successfully completed well deck interoperability testing with the amphibious dock landing ship USS Carter Hall (LSD 50) and demonstrated the craft are another step closer to fleet integration.

ARLINGTON, Va. – Three U.S. Navy ships, a Military Sealift Command ship, and three Coast Guard cutters have sortied from the U.S. East Coast and are participating in the search and recovery effort for the payload of the Chinese balloon that

was shot down over U.S. territorial waters off South Carolina.

The Harpers Ferry-class dock landing ship USS Carter Hall (LSD 50), Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58) and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) took up station to track the descent of the balloon's payload as it fell into the water.

The ships now include the USNS Pathfinder (T-AGS 60), an oceanographic survey ship operated by the Military Sealift Command.

The Coast Guard also has deployed to the salvage area three cutters – USCGC Venturous (WMEC 625), USCGC Richard Snyder (WPC 1127), and USCGC Nathan Bruckenthal (WPC 1128) – as well as small boats and aircraft to ensure the safety of the salvage area.

According to the Defense Department, the payload fell into a depth of 47 feet of water, a depth easily accessible to divers.

Gen. Glen VanHerck, Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, briefing reporters Feb. 6, said that the recovery effort was being led by Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command and U.S. Naval Forces, U.S. Northern Command.

VanHerck said the Navy ships in the vicinity of the splashdown of the balloon are collecting and categorizing debris.

“The Pathfinder is a ship that conducts survey operations using sonar and other means to map out the debris field,” VanHerck said. “It’s capable of conducting oceanographic, hydrographic, bathymetric surveys of the bottom of the ocean to do that. And they’ll eventually produce us a map – they’re in the process of doing that, and I expect to have much more today – of the full debris field. But we expect the debris

field to be of the rough order of magnitude of about 1,500 meters by 1,500 meters, and so, you know, more than 15 football fields by 15 football fields. But we'll get a further assessment of that today."

VanHerck said that "[y]esterday's sea states did not allow us to conduct some of the operations that we would have liked to have conducted such as underwater surveillance. And so those forces that provide the explosive ordnance disposal to make sure the scene is safe, they're out today, this morning, and they went out in what's called a rigid hull inflatable boat this morning, Eastern time approximately 10:00 o'clock, to proceed to the – the area to utilize unmanned underwater vehicles using side scan sonar to further locate sunken debris. And so, we expect them to get on there and to do some additional categorization of potential threats such as explosives that may be on, hazardous materials that could be in batteries, et cetera, so we're working very hard.

The Military Sealift Command operates two dedicated salvage ships, but both are based in the Pacific Ocean.

The balloon, floating at about 60,000 feet above sea level, was launched by China on Jan. 21 and crossed into U.S. airspace over the Aleutian Islands on Jan. 28. It crosses over Canada and into the continental United States over Idaho on Jan. 31. President Joe Biden gave the order to shoot down the balloon on Feb. 1.

"Military commanders determined that there was undue risk of debris causing harm to civilians while the balloon was over land," a senior Defense Department official said in a Feb. 5 briefing to reporters. "As a result, they developed a plan to down the balloon once it was over water in U.S. territorial airspace. That mission has now been successfully completed. At the direction of the president, the U.S. military, at 2:39 p.m. this afternoon, shot down the high-altitude surveillance balloon off the coast of South Carolina and within U.S.

territorial airspace.”

According to Pentagon spokesman Brig. Gen Patrick Ryder, the Chinese balloon was steerable, and therefore able to be guided over sensitive U.S. defense bases.

On Feb. 4, the balloon was intercepted by two F-22A Raptor fighters launched from Joint Base Eustis-Langley, Virginia. One of the F-22As fired an AIM-9X air-to-air heat-seeking missile that deflated the balloon and sent the balloon’s solar panels and payload crashing into the ocean off Myrtle Beach.

“We have multiple U.S. Navy vessels and Coast Guard vessels in the region right now, establishing a security perimeter, conducting search for any debris that may be on the water to ensure the safety of U.S. civilians, any maritime activity that is ongoing out in the water,” a senior military official said in the Feb. 5 briefing. “We will provide, under NORTHCOM [U.S Northern Command] command and control, a salvage vessel, United States Navy, which will be on-scene within a couple of days. The debris is in 47 feet of water, primarily. The recovery, that will make it fairly easy, actually. We planned for much deeper water.”

The downing of the balloon is the first aerial kill attributed to the F-22A. The two F-22As in the intercept used the callsigns Frank One and Luke One in apparent reference to Frank Luke Jr., the U.S. Army Air Service ace who was credited with downing 14 German observation balloons as well as four airplanes during combat over the Western Front during World War I. Luke died on Sept. 28, 1918, from German machine fire from the ground.

USCGC Mohawk returns home following 46-day Caribbean Sea patrol



Photo by [Petty Officer 3rd Class Kate Kilroy](#)
[Release from U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

KEY WEST, Fla.— The crew of the USCGC Mohawk (WMEC 913) returned to their home port in Key West, Monday, after a 46-day deployment in the Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea.

Mohawk patrolled the Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea in support of Homeland Security Task Force–Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry in the Coast Guard Seventh District’s area of operations. While underway, Mohawk’s crew

conducted counter drug and maritime safety and security missions while working with other Coast Guard cutters and air assets to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

During the patrol, Mohawk's crew cared for 670 migrants interdicted at sea and rescued personnel from seven different unseaworthy vessels. Notably, Mohawk's crew assisted with the repatriation of 110 Haitian migrants to Cap-Haitien, Haiti, and 273 Cuban migrants to Matanzas, Cuba.

Mohawk's patrol efforts highlight the Coast Guard's critical mission of maintaining safety at sea and preventing the potential for loss of life by deterring migrants from taking to the sea in dangerously overcrowded vessels while attempting to enter the United States through non-legal channels.

"It's never easy being deployed over the holidays, away from family members," said Cmdr. Andrew Pate, Mohawk's commanding officer. "I am incredibly proud of the women and men aboard who continue to position Mohawk for success – their role in this historic effort, alongside our state and local partners as well as other Coast Guard units, is nothing short of heroic."

Mohawk is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100. 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 Has No Personnel Retention Problem, But Recruiting Is Another Story



USCGC Richard Snyder (WPC 1127) navigates in the Labrador Sea on Aug. 13, 2021. Snyder worked alongside USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907), the Royal Canadian Navy's HMCS Harry Dewolf (AOPV 430), and HMCS Goose Bay (MM 707) in Operation Nanook to enhance collective abilities to respond to safety and security issues in the High North through air and maritime presence activities, maritime domain defense, and security exercises. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by USCGC Richard Snyder)

ARLINGTON, Va. – Retaining veteran personnel is not a problem

for the U.S. Coast Guard says Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan, but recruiting the right people who want to go to sea remains “a challenge.”

From patrolling the Arctic, conducting counter-narcotics trafficking operations in the Caribbean Basin, helping vulnerable nations across Oceania protect their resources from illegal, [unreported and unregulated \(IUU\) fishing](#), to joining U.S. Navy ships in freedom of [navigation transits through the Taiwan Strait](#), “We have never been in greater demand around the world,” Fagan said.

However, the Coast Guard, like the [other armed services](#) and employers across the nation, “is facing the challenge of recruiting,” Fagan told attendees at the [Surface Navy Association’s annual national symposium](#) Jan. 11.

New USCG Recruiting Programs

The Coast Guard has several pilot programs to address the recruiting challenge, including one that would allow lateral entry for civilians with key skills, like culinary specialists and certified EMTs, to move more quickly into their chosen service job after basic training.

The Coast Guard’s first female commandant, Fagan said her number one priority is managing talent to keep a workforce “trained, ready and relevant for the work ahead.” The problem, she said, is getting young people to see the opportunity that service brings.

“We’re a sea-going service, and having a workforce that’s excited to go to sea on the state-of-the-art ships that we’re building is a priority,” Fagan said. The Coast Guard has set up sea duty readiness council to lead efforts to mitigate the challenges that go along with serving at sea.

That includes being responsive to the expectations of the

generation that the Coast Guard wants to recruit, such as reliable internet service. To that end, the Coast Guard has made antenna upgrades and increased spending on satellite reception and bandwidth.

“Improved connectivity helps people stay in touch with their friends and family and eliminates some of the arduousness of sea duty,” Fagan said.

While the Coast Guard has used incentive pay and signing bonuses to encourage old hands to stay and new ones to join, “I don’t think we can buy our way out of this,” Fagan said. “If you get the system right, the structure, the conditions of employment, that bonus becomes just a cherry on top. You’ve already sold them on the work and the values.”

**USCGC Spencer Completes
Multinational Maritime
Security Patrol off West
Africa**



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

DAKAR, Senegal – The Famous-class medium-endurance USCGC Spencer (WMEC 905) arrived in Dakar, Senegal for a scheduled port visit following a multinational maritime security patrol, Jan. 17, 2023, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet said in a Jan. 19 release.

Spencer’s visit to Dakar included meetings with Capt. Karim Mara, Senegalese deputy chief of naval staff, as well as leaders from the Senegalese Navy and the U.S. Office of Security Cooperation. Prior to the port visit, Spencer embarked maritime counterparts from Cabo Verde, Senegal, and The Gambia for a security patrol to identify and deter illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as build living marine resource enforcement capacity with African partner nations.

“We were able to build maritime domain awareness with our

partners by establishing an offshore law enforcement presence that demonstrated Cabo Verde's, Senegal's, and The Gambia's commitment to maritime security and living marine resource enforcement. We did this by conducting combined maritime law enforcement operations and effectively communicating and coordinating with each country's Maritime Operations Center," said Cmdr. Corey Kerns, Spencer's commanding officer.

This deployment demonstrates NAVAF's [U.S. Naval Forces Africa's] and the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment and longstanding partnership to work with our African partners to counter illicit maritime activity in the Atlantic Ocean. The U.S. Coast Guard regularly integrates and operates within the NAVAF area of operations. The U.S. Coast Guard's authorities and capabilities provide the Joint Force with unique tools that bridge the cooperation-to-conflict continuum.

Senegal and the United States share a proud history of promoting peace and security in Africa. Later this month, Senegal will participate in the NAVAF-led exercise Obangame Express 2023, the largest annual maritime security exercise in Western Africa. These types of exercises strengthen partnerships and allow countries to work more closely on shared transnational maritime challenges.

"The United States and Senegal enjoy an exceptional security partnership that bolsters our shared efforts to promote peace and security in West Africa, combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and protect marine resources," said Mike Raynor, U.S. Ambassador to Senegal. "The arrival of USCGC Spencer to Dakar reflects that robust partnership."

The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety, and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa's prosperity and access to global markets.

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, headquartered in Portsmouth,

Virginia, oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains.

Coast Guard, Partners Tracking Russian Vessel off Hawaiian Coast



In recent weeks, the U.S. Coast Guard has continued to monitor a Russian vessel, believed to be an intelligence gathering ship, off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands. The Coast Guard continues to coordinate with Department of Defense partners, providing updates to foreign vessel movements and activities and to appropriately meet presence with presence to encourage international maritime norms. Source: [dvidshub](#)

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

HONOLULU – In recent weeks, the U.S. Coast Guard has continued

to monitor a Russian vessel, believed to be an intelligence gathering ship, off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a release.

While foreign military vessels may transit freely through the U.S. economic exclusive zone (EEZ), as per customary international laws, foreign-flagged military vessels have often been observed operating and loitering within Coast Guard District Fourteen's area of response.

The Coast Guard continues to coordinate with Department of Defense partners, providing updates to foreign vessel movements and activities and to appropriately meet presence with presence to encourage international maritime norms.

"The U.S. Coast Guard is currently monitoring the Russian vessel operating in the vicinity of Hawaii," said Cmdr. Dave Milne, chief of External Affairs. "As part of our daily operations, we track all vessels in the Pacific area through surface and air assets and joint agency capabilities. The Coast Guard operates in accordance with international laws of the sea to ensure all nations can do the same without fear or contest. This is especially critical to secure freedom of movement and navigation throughout the Blue Pacific."

As a part of the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard is the lead federal agency for at-sea enforcement of U.S. fisheries laws; additionally, the Coast Guard assists in the enforcement of laws on the high seas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States' exclusive economic zone. Law and treaty enforcement account for approximately 1/3 of the Coast Guard's annual budget.