

# AeroVironment Awarded \$4.8M Contract for U.S. Coast Guard ROVs



[Release From AeroVironment](#)

POTTSTOWN, Pa. – December 11, 2025 – AeroVironment, Inc. (“AV”) (NASDAQ: AVAV), a leading provider of underwater robotic systems, today announced it has been awarded a \$4.8 million United States Coast Guard contract through its wholly owned subsidiary, [VideoRay](#), to deliver Mission Specialist Defender remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) as part of the Service’s Force Design 2028 modernization initiative.

The Defender will enhance the Coast Guard’s maritime response capabilities by enabling rapid underwater inspections, pier inspections, hull assessments, subsurface infrastructure surveys, disaster response and search and rescue operations in challenging environments—reducing diver risk while increasing mission safety, operational efficiency, and fleet readiness.

“The selection of the Mission Specialist Defender reinforces our ability to deliver proven technology to address the most demanding defense and security missions,” said Chris Gibson,

Chief Executive Officer at VideoRay. “Customers have come to depend on VideoRay when failure is not an option. As AV’s maritime pillar, we’re proud to contribute to the organization’s all-domain uncrewed systems strategy to ensure the safety and security of our forces.”

As part of [Force Design 2028](#), the Coast Guard established the Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Program Executive Office to rapidly integrate unmanned and robotic technologies across all missions, including investments in robotics and autonomous systems designed to build a more agile, technology-enabled, and globally ready force for the evolving maritime domain.

AV’s \$4.8 million award—the largest award of the \$11 million executed in fiscal year 2025 for rapid autonomous fleet upgrades—will strengthen Coast Guard operations with proven, advanced maritime robotics. The selection of the Mission Specialist Defender builds on the company’s expanding track record with U.S. and allied defense customers, including the Navy’s Maritime Expeditionary Standoff Response (MESR) program.

“These unmanned systems provide increased domain awareness, mitigating risk and enhancing mission success as the Coast Guard continues to operate in hazardous environments,” said Anthony Antognoli, the Coast Guard’s first RAS program executive officer, in a [separate release](#) issued by the U.S. Coast Guard in September 2025. “The Coast Guard’s mission demands agility, awareness and adaptability. Robotics and autonomous systems deliver all three, enabling us to respond faster, operate smarter and extend our reach where it matters most. We are not waiting for the future to arrive. We are delivering it to the fleet today.”

Built on a modular, open-architecture design, the Mission Specialist Defender allows operators to easily integrate advanced sensors, manipulators, and specialized payloads. This flexibility ensures adaptability to evolving mission

requirements, while field-swappable modules enable on-site maintenance and repairs—minimizing downtime and maintaining operational tempo.

Details regarding the Mission Specialist Defender can be found at: <https://videoray.com/products/mission-specialist-defender>

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## **Coast Guard Cutter James Conducts Counter-Drug Patrol in Eastern Pacific Ocean**



From U.S. Coast Guard Southeast District, Dec. 12, 2025

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL 754) returned to their home port in Charleston, Wednesday, following a 92-day deployment conducting counter-narcotics operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of [Operation Pacific Viper](#).

During the patrol, the James crew interdicted over 46,500 pounds of narcotics valued at nearly \$350 million. The James crew conducted nine interdictions and detained 33 suspected drug traffickers. The patrol focused on disrupting illegal narcotics smuggling in collaboration with international partners.

The James crew worked alongside international partners including Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Colombia. The collaboration included multiple partner nation transfers.

To support maritime governance and strengthen international relations, the James crew transferred 22 detainees pier side in Manta, Ecuador, prior to a visit from Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

The James crew worked with the Costa Rican coast guard and national police to transfer two Colombian detainees and offload approximately 9,500 pounds of cocaine in Golfito, Costa Rica. During the visit, James hosted Costa Rican Minister of Security Mario Zamora Cordero.

“I am exceptionally thankful and proud of this crew’s dedication,” said Capt. Thomas Rodzewicz, commanding officer of the James. “Time away from family and missed holidays is never a small sacrifice, but the crew’s time and commitment to combatting narco-terrorism and protecting our nation from illicit drugs crossing our borders are highlighted by the success of this patrol.”

The James crew offloaded more than 26,000 pounds of cocaine

and 500 pounds of marijuana in Port Everglades, Florida, Monday, before heading home.

Since 2017, Coast Guard Cutter James crewmembers have interdicted 104 shipments totaling 285,140 pounds of cocaine worth \$2.11 billion wholesale and 34,539 pounds of marijuana worth \$27.8 million wholesale.

James is one of four 418-foot Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Charleston under U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations and defense readiness.

Detecting and interdicting narco-terrorism on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force-South, based in Key West, Florida, detects and monitors both aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard's Southwest District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

The Coast Guard is the United States' lead federal agency for maritime drug interdiction.

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## **Navy Invests \$448M in AI and**

# Autonomy to Accelerate Shipbuilding

[Release From SECNAV Public Affairs](#)

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan today announced a \$448 million strategic investment in the Shipbuilding Operating System (Ship OS) to accelerate the adoption of artificial intelligence and autonomy technologies across the industrial base.

The announcement was made during the first Department of the Navy Rapid Capabilities Office Industry Day where Phelan was joined by Palantir Chief Executive Officer, Alex Karp. Ship OS will leverage Palantir's software to bring modern best practices to the complex, data heavy environment of Navy shipbuilding.

"This investment provides the resources our shipbuilders, shipyards, and suppliers need to modernize their operations and succeed in meeting our nation's defense requirements," Phelan said. "By enabling industry to adopt AI and autonomy tools at scale, we're helping the shipbuilding industry improve schedules, increase capacity, and reduce costs. This is about doing business smarter and building the industrial capability our Navy and nation require."

The initiative, managed by the Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program in collaboration with Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), will aggregate data from enterprise resource planning systems, legacy databases, and operational sources to identify bottlenecks, streamline engineering workflows, and support proactive risk mitigation, providing a unified, data-driven approach to production management that enables faster, more informed decisions.

During pilot deployments, these AI-powered

capabilities demonstrated transformative results. At General Dynamics Electric Boat, submarine schedule planning was reduced from 160 manual hours to under 10 minutes, while Portsmouth Naval Shipyard cut material review times from weeks to under one hour. These early outcomes demonstrate that integrating AI and autonomy directly into shipbuilding operations can dramatically improve efficiency, accuracy, and output.

The initial investment will focus on Submarine Industrial Base shipbuilders, shipyards, and critical suppliers. The expansion beyond the Submarine Industrial Base will be systematic and informed by lessons learned, with the Navy validating approaches and developing proven implementation strategies that can be adapted for surface ship programs.

This initiative is designed to deliver measurable cost savings over time through improved schedules, reduced delays, and increased production efficiency, with productivity gains offsetting the initial investment while establishing a more capable and resilient industrial base.

The Ship OS launch marks a critical milestone in the Navy's broader effort to revitalize the maritime industrial base and foster innovation.

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**Coast Guard seizes 150,000 pounds of cocaine through**

# Operation Pacific Viper, interdicts drug smuggling vessel loaded with over 20,000 pounds of cocaine



From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Dec. 9, 2025

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard announced Tuesday it has seized more than 150,000 pounds of cocaine in the Eastern

Pacific Ocean since launching Operation Pacific Viper in early August.

With a dose of 1.2 grams of cocaine being enough to kill a person, the amount seized through Operation Pacific Viper equates to over 57 million potentially lethal doses.

“Operation Pacific Viper has proven to be a crucial weapon in the fight against foreign drug traffickers and cartels in Latin America and has sent a clear message that we will disrupt, dismantle and destroy their deadly business exploits wherever we find them,” U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said. “In cutting off the flow of these deadly drugs, the Coast Guard is saving countless American lives and delivering on President Trump’s promise to Make America Safe Again and reestablish our maritime dominance.”

Through Operation Pacific Viper, the Coast Guard has been accelerating counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, where significant transport of illicit narcotics continues from Central and South America. The Coast Guard surged additional assets – cutters, aircraft and tactical teams – to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs. Operation Pacific Viper continues the Coast Guard’s efforts to protect the Homeland, counter narco-terrorism and disrupt Foreign Terrorist Organizations, Transnational Criminal Organizations and cartels seeking to produce and traffic illicit drugs into the United States. 80% of all U.S.-bound narcotics seizures occur at sea, highlighting the impact of maritime drug interdiction.

“This milestone is a testament to the vigilance and tenacity of our crews,” said Adm. Kevin Lunday, the Coast Guard’s acting commandant. “When we say we own the sea, it reflects our relentless pursuit to securing the maritime domain and disrupting the criminal networks that threaten our communities.”

Recent operations have highlighted the effectiveness of this surged posture, including multiple record-setting efforts. On Dec. 2, Coast Guard Cutter Munro seized over 20,000 pounds of cocaine in a single interdiction, after utilizing disabling fire on a heavily laden go-fast vessel. This was the Coast Guard's largest at-sea interdiction since March 2007. The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter James executed a remarkable run of four significant seizures across 10 days in November, netting 19,819 pounds of cocaine. This series of interdictions included 9,581 pounds on Nov. 15, 3,225 pounds on Nov. 23, and two separate seizures on Nov. 25 totaling 7,055 in coordination with Coast Guard Cutter Active.

The success of Operation Pacific Viper is marked by unprecedented seizure amounts, demonstrating continued success in the fight against narco-terrorism and Transnational Criminal Organizations. These operations deny smugglers from using Eastern Pacific maritime routes to transport illicit narcotics from South and Central America to the United States. [The Coast Guard Cutter Stone made history in November, offloading approximately 49,010 pounds of illicit narcotics worth over \\$362 million at Port Everglades](#) – the largest single-patrol seizure by any Coast Guard cutter.

These continuous interdictions deny criminal organizations more than \$1.1 billion dollars in illicit revenue. By disrupting the flow of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs, the Coast Guard is cutting off revenue that fuels the ability for narco-terrorists to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl, threatening American communities.

Detecting and interdicting narco-terrorism on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force-South, based in Key West, Florida, detects and monitors both aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to

the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard's Southwest District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

The Coast Guard is the United States' lead federal agency for maritime drug interdiction. We are part of the Department of Homeland Security team protecting our nation and are at all times a military service and part of the joint force defending it.

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## AUSTAL USA Lays Keel of Its First Offshore Patrol Cutter



From Austal USA, Dec. 8, 2025

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA hosted a keel laying ceremony today for the first U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Heritage-class Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) to be built at the company's Mobile, Ala. ship manufacturing facility. Pickering (WMSM 919) is being built under a contract that includes up to 11 cutters and has a potential value of \$3.3 billion. The Coast Guard has executed contract options for six of the 11 cutters to date.

Ship sponsor Dr. Meghan Pickering Seymour authenticated Pickering's keel by welding her initials onto a keel plate in front of over a hundred distinguished guests including The Honorable Mike Ezell, House of Representatives Mississippi's 4th District *and Chair of House Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation*, Admiral Kevin Lunday, Commandant (acting) U.S. Coast Guard, as well as Mobile community leaders and members of the Austal USA and USCG shipbuilding team.

Dr. Seymour is the great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of Colonel Timothy Pickering, the namesake of the first USCGC Cutter Pickering launched in 1798. She was assisted in welding her initials by one of Austal USA's advanced welders, Mr. Ravi Khamsourin.

The OPC program will recapitalize the Coast Guard's aging medium endurance cutters and provide a capability bridge between the service's national security cutters, which operate in the open ocean, and the fast response cutters which operate closer to shore.

"Meeting this important milestone for the Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Cutter program is a significant achievement that underscores our commitment to the on-time delivery of the cutters the USCG needs," stated Austal USA President Michelle Kruger. "Today's ceremony is representative of the hard work and dedication of our skilled workforce and the strength of

the shipbuilding team of Austal USA, the Coast Guard and our suppliers. We are proud to be building these critically important cutters that will help ensure the security of our Nation.”

The 360-foot OPC will provide the majority of the Coast Guard’s offshore presence conducting a variety of missions including law enforcement, drug and migrant interdiction, and search and rescue. With a range of 10,200 nautical miles at 14 knots and a 60-day endurance period, each OPC will be capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups, serving as a mobile command and control platform for surge operations such as hurricane response, mass migration incidents and other events. The cutters will also support Arctic objectives by helping regulate and protect emerging commerce and energy exploration in Alaska.

Pickering is one of two Coast Guard OPCs, and one of ten total surface vessels, under construction at Austal USA’s Mobile, Ala. ship manufacturing facility. Austal USA started construction on its second Heritage-class Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC), Icarus (WMSM 920), in August 2025.

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**USCG, CBP, HSI seize vessel  
with \$28M in illicit  
narcotics off Miami Beach**



Law enforcement crews from U.S. Coast Guard Station Miami Beach and CBP Air and Marine Operations seized approximately 3,715 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated \$28 million, from a suspected drug smuggling vessel 2 miles east of government cut, Nov. 2, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Coast Guard Station Miami Beach)

From Coast Guard Southeast District, Dec. 5, 2025

MIAMI – A U.S. Coast Guard Station Miami Beach law enforcement boat crew along with CBP Air and Marine Operations (AMO) and HSI seized approximately 3,715 pounds of cocaine, worth an estimated \$28 million, from a suspected drug smuggling vessel 2 miles east of government cut, Tuesday.

CBP AMO law enforcement boat crews provided assistance with multiple marine units and specialized search tools upon initial interdiction by Coast Guard Station Miami Beach crew.

“This was the largest USCG Small boat station cocaine seizure since 1995,” said Lt. Matthew Ross, Coast Guard Station Miami Beach commanding officer. “Protecting our maritime borders from illicit drug trafficking and transnational criminal

organizations remains one of our highest priorities. The Coast Guard and our federal, state and local law enforcement partners remain vigilant in our shared efforts to keep our maritime borders safe by preventing illicit narcotics from reaching our communities.”

CBP’s Office of Field Operations (OFO) Miami Seaport also responded with a K9 team once the vessel was brought pierside. The OFO K9 alerted to multiple locations within the vessel. A physical search by AMO agents uncovered more than 1,000 concealed packages of cocaine, weighing over 3,700 lbs. Federal agents took custody of three subjects and transported them.

“Disrupting maritime narcotics smuggling like this demonstrates the power of teamwork in safeguarding our nation and holding criminals accountable,” said Executive Director Andy Blanco, CBP Air and Marine Operations Southeast Region. “Smugglers should be warned that our whole-of-government team is watching, and they will be caught.”

We are part of a whole-of-government approach to secure our borders by dismantling Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) and Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO), including narco-trafficking and human smuggling operations.

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## **USCG Heavy Icebreaker Departs Seattle for Months-Long Deployment to**

# Antarctica



USCGC Polar Star (WAGB 10) is seen moored ahead of deploying for Operation Deep Freeze 2026, Seattle, Nov. 20, 2025. Operation Deep Freeze is a joint service, inter-agency support operation for the National Science Foundation, which manages the United States Antarctic Program. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Bokum)

[Release From U.S. Coast Guard Northwest District](#)

SEATTLE – The USCGC Polar Star (WAGB 10) departed Seattle on Thursday commencing its 29th deployment to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze.

Operation Deep Freeze is an annual joint military mission to resupply the United States Antarctic stations in support of the National Science Foundation (NSF), the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program. Historic investment in the Big Beautiful Bill of nearly 25 billion, \$9 billion of which is specifically for icebreakers and infrastructure in the high latitudes. This massive investment in icebreakers will secure

U.S. access, security, and leadership in the polar regions.

As the U.S. Coast Guard prepares to revitalize its icebreaking fleet, the Polar Star remains the only U.S. vessel capable of breaking a navigable channel through the ice to reach McMurdo Station, the largest Antarctic station and the logistics hub of the U.S. Antarctic Program.

Each year, the cutter serves a vital role in ensuring surface access for fuel and supply ships through the Ross Sea to resupply the U.S. Antarctic bases. Polar Star's mission directly protects the security, freedom, and prosperity for the U.S., our allies and partners.

"Polar Star's crew does remarkable work maintaining and operating this ship," said Capt. Jeff Rasnake, commanding officer of Polar Star. "Each year brings unique challenges, and I'm proud to say this crew has risen to meet them all. The way we've come together over the course of maintenance, and our logistical preparations is exciting as we enter the operational phase of our annual deployment cycle."

Commissioned in 1976, Polar Star is 399 feet, weighing 13,500 tons with a 34-foot draft. Despite reaching nearly 50 years of age, Polar Star remains the world's most powerful non-nuclear icebreaker with the ability to produce up to 75,000 shaft horsepower.

The continuous effort Polar Star's crew commits to maintaining the aging cutter ensures the nation's access to the continent and the economic, environmental, and national security interests in the high latitudes. Polar Star will continue to support Operation Deep Freeze until new Polar and Arctic Security Cutters enter service in the coming decade.

Since 1955, Active, Reserve, and Guard members of the U.S. Coast Guard, Air Force, Navy, and Army have proudly supported the USAP by the air and sea lift of supplies to McMurdo

Station.

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# Coast Guard Cutter Tampa Returns Home After 67-Day Counterdrug Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Tampa (WMEC 902) returns home to Portsmouth, Virginia, Nov. 21, 2025, following a 67-day deployment. Tampa's crew deployed in support of counterdrug operations in the Eastern Pacific. (U.S. Coast Guard photo Petty Officer 3rd Class Mason Svitenko)

[From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area](#)

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Tampa (WMEC 902) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Friday,

following a 67-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of the counterdrug mission "Operation Pacific Viper."

Tampa's crew deployed in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South and conducted counterdrug missions in the Coast Guard's Eastern Pacific area of responsibility. While at sea, Tampa's crew successfully contributed to protecting Americans by countering transnational criminal organizations and preventing dangerous and illegal narcotics from reaching the United States. The crew worked alongside Coast Guard Cutter Stone (WMSL 758) and their embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron.

On Oct. 8, approximately 270 nautical miles southeast of the Galapagos Islands, Tampa intercepted a 40-foot low-profile vessel suspected of carrying illicit narcotics. Tampa's crew intercepted three suspected smugglers, transferring them to Stone. After recovering about 620 kilograms of the cocaine, the boarding team disembarked because the vessel became unseaworthy after it started taking on water. Tampa's crew conducted a controlled sinking to prevent the vessel from becoming a hazard to navigation.

Tampa made port calls in San Cristobal, Galapagos Islands, hosting members of the Ecuadorian coast guard for tours, and in Panama City, Panama. On Nov. 2, the crew anchored near Isla de Cocos, Costa Rica, exchanging professional experiences with Costa Rican park rangers. This exchange strengthened international relations with Costa Rica and demonstrated the Coast Guard's commitment to building partnerships throughout the region.

"I am extremely proud of our crew's dedication and professionalism during this challenging deployment," said Cmdr. Joshua DiPietro, commanding officer of Tampa. "The Tampa crew displayed exceptional seamanship, tactical expertise and cultural sensitivity while operating across two oceans. Their efforts directly contributed to disrupting criminal networks,

keeping dangerous narcotics from reaching American communities and strengthening vital partnerships with our regional partners.”

Tampa is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter commissioned in 1984. The cutter’s primary missions include counterdrug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue operations in support of Coast Guard missions throughout the Western Hemisphere. Tampa operates under U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, based in Portsmouth, Virginia.

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**Coast Guard Continues to Break Records, Offloading Over \$362M in Illicit Drugs**



From Coast Guard Southeast District – Nov. 19, 2025

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stone’s crew offloaded approximately 49,010 pounds of illicit narcotics worth more than \$362 million at Port Everglades, Wednesday.

This offload marks the most amount of cocaine seized by a single cutter in one patrol in Coast Guard history.

The seized contraband was the result of 15 interdictions in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

“I am extremely proud of the crew’s incredible performance during this deployment,” said Capt. Anne O’Connell, commanding officer, Coast Guard Cutter Stone. “This offload demonstrates our increased posture and continued success in the fight against narco-terrorism and transnational criminal organizations. The Coast Guard, in conjunction with our inter-agency and international partners, continues to patrol areas commonly associated with drug trafficking in the

Eastern Pacific, denying smugglers access to maritime routes by which they move illicit drugs to our U.S. land and sea borders.”

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdiction operations:

### [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stone](#)

U.S. Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron  
Jacksonville

### [Joint Interagency Task Force-South](#)

### [Coast Guard Southeast District watchstanders](#)

### [Coast Guard Southwest District watchstanders](#)

80% of interdictions of U.S.-bound drugs occur at sea. This underscores the importance of maritime interdiction in combatting the flow of illegal narcotics and protecting American communities from this deadly threat. U.S. Southern Command’s Joint Interagency Task Force -South based in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard’s Southwest District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

To protect the Homeland from ongoing trafficking of illicit narcotics from South America to the United States, the Coast Guard is accelerating our counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of Operation Pacific Viper.

The Coast Guard continues increased operations to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk

illicit drugs by sea. These drugs fuel and enable cartels and transnational criminal organizations to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl, threatening the United States.

These interdictions deny criminal organizations more than half a billion dollars in illicit revenue. They provide critical testimonial and drug evidence as well as key intelligence for their total elimination. These interdictions relate to Panama Express, an initiative of HSTF Tampa, investigations in support of Operation Take Back America. PANEX identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach.

USCGC Stone is one of four 418-foot Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Charleston, South Carolina, under [U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command](#).

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## **USS St. Louis Returns from Deployment in Support of Southern Border Operations**



NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. (Nov. 10, 2025) – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis (LCS 19), operating under U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), returns to Naval Station Mayport, Fla., after completing a surge deployment, Nov. 10, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jasmin L. Aquino)

From Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet, Nov. 11, 2025

The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis (LCS 19), operating under U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) in the Gulf of America, returned to Naval Station Mayport ), along with the “Valkyries” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50 Detachment 5 and embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 408 after completing a surge deployment on November 10, 2025

U.S. Navy assets are deployed under U.S Northern Command’s maritime homeland defense authorities with a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment embarked to enable maritime interdiction missions to prevent the flow of illegal drugs or other illegal activity. USNORTHCOM is working together with

the Department of Homeland Security to augment U.S. Customs and Border Protection along the southern border with additional military forces.

“The crew of St. Louis is grateful for the opportunity to support and defend the homeland,” stated Cmdr. Lee Shewmake, commanding officer, USS St. Louis (LCS 19). “We are always ready to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to international cooperation and supporting regional security and prosperity. Our Officers and Sailors onboard welcome every opportunity to collaborate with our partners, strengthening our interoperability and shared goals in the area.”

In support of USNORTHCOM’s mission to restore territorial integrity at the U.S. southern border, St. Louis reinforced the nation’s commitment to border security by enhancing maritime efforts and supporting interagency collaboration. The ship’s deployment highlights the Department of War and Navy’s dedication to national security priorities, contributing to a coordinated and robust response to combating maritime-related terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration.

“The U.S. Navy commends the crew of the St. Louis for their deployment in support of U.S. Northern Command’s mission,” stated Capt. Wade Smith, commodore, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 2. “St. Louis reinforced our nation’s commitment to border security and interoperability with our partners and Allies.”

St. Louis brought maritime capabilities in response to Presidential executive orders and a national emergency declaration and clarification of the military’s role in protecting the territorial integrity of the United States.

A U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) was embarked aboard St. Louis. Coast Guard LEDETs carry out a

variety of maritime interdiction missions, including counter-piracy, military combat operations, alien migration interdiction, military force protection, counter terrorism, homeland security, and humanitarian response.

USS St. Louis (LCS 19) is assigned to Littoral Combat Ship Squadron (LCSRON) 2 and homeported in Mayport, Fla. The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) is a fast, agile, mission-focused warship designed to operate in near-shore environments to counter 21st-century threats. It is a class of small surface combatants armed with capabilities to defeat challenges in the world's littorals. LCS can operate independently or in high-threat scenarios as part of a networked battle force that includes larger, multi-mission surface combatants such as cruisers and destroyers.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime ready forces to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.