

Coast Guard Crew Offloads \$223 Million Worth of Drugs in San Diego



The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL-756) crew offloads about 11,300 pounds of cocaine and roughly 4,000 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$223 million on March 31 in San Diego. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray*

SAN DIEGO – The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) crew offloaded more than 11,300 pounds of cocaine and more than 4,000 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$223 million March 31 in San Diego, the Coast Guard 11th District said in a release.

The drugs were interdicted in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Central and South America, including contraband seized and recovered during eight interdictions of suspected drug smuggling vessels

between late February and early March.

“At-sea interdictions of pure cocaine are the most effective way to limit cartel’s destabilizing effects throughout the Western Hemisphere,” said Vice Adm. Michael McAllister, Coast Guard Pacific Area commander. “Coast Guard national security cutters like Kimball are the service’s most capable asset to strengthen maritime governance, but when team partners from the Royal Canadian Navy and U.S. Navy Littoral combat ships they leverage our network of international and interagency partners to reduce the availability of illicit drugs in the Western Hemisphere and facilitate U.S. Attorney’s efforts to close the cycle of justice.”

The drugs were interdicted by the following ships (the total amount listed below is 11,301 pounds of cocaine and 4,076 pounds of marijuana):

- Kimball’s crew was responsible for one interdiction seizing approximately 2,295 pounds of cocaine.
- Coast Guard Cutter Legare’s (WMEC 912) crew was responsible for four interdictions, seizing approximately 4,714 pounds of cocaine and 1,826 pounds of marijuana.
- Coast Guard Cutter Spencer’s (WMEC 905) crew was responsible for one interdiction seizing approximately 635 pounds of cocaine and 2,250 pounds of marijuana.
- Jointly, Her Majesty’s Canadian Ship Yellowknife (MM 706) and Kimball’s crews were responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 331 pounds of cocaine.
- Jointly, the crews of the Kimball and Legare were responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 3,326 pounds of cocaine.

“This marks the first of likely many counter-drug patrols for Kimball and I am extremely proud of our crew’s preparation and hard work to make this an extremely successful deployment.

Kimball's crew demonstrated that through teamwork we were able to remove over \$100 million dollars of cocaine, preventing it from ever crossing our borders or entering our neighborhoods, and further removing a source of illicit revenue from transnational criminal networks," said Capt. Thomas D'Arcy, commanding officer of the Kimball.

The Kimball is a 420-foot Legend-Class national security cutter and is homeported in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Students Help Coast Guard to Find Unmanned Smuggling Boats



A student-built unmanned autonomous surface vessel is brought aboard a Coast Guard patrol craft to conduct detectability testing near Galveston, Texas. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty*

Officer 3rd Class Alejandro Rivera

GALVESTON, Texas – A unique student project is helping the Coast Guard find small and hard to detect unmanned autonomous surface vessels that might be used to transport drugs into the U.S.

Several USVs have been recovered attempting to transit drugs across the maritime border with Mexico and into California. The boats can carry about 90 pounds of cargo, which could be illegal narcotics or other hazardous cargo.

To learn how these boats might be detected by sensors, the Coast Guard engaged the National Security Innovation Network, a Department of Defense office which collaborates with major universities and the venture community to develop solutions that drive national security innovation. With Coast Guard Sector San Diego as the project sponsor, NSIN capstone students at San Diego State University and Rice University in Houston, Texas, have been prototyping boats this semester.

Four USVs have been seized by federal law enforcement authorities in Southern California. The first was found in March 2018, another in December 2020, and two more in February and March of 2021, suggesting a high likelihood there are many more that have gone undetected.

The vessels are three to four feet long and have a freeboard of just seven inches. They navigate autonomously and can travel for about 66 nautical miles at a speed of about 2.5 knots.

According to information provided by the U.S. Coast Guard, their above-water profile is minimal, which makes it hard for existing maritime domain awareness tools and detection capabilities to see them. Not only are they capable of reaching uninhabited shores with illegal narcotics, they could also penetrate defense layers surrounding coastal and harbor-based high value targets – military bases, power plants, or

critical infrastructure – with explosives.

The purpose of the NSIN project is to improve coastal surveillance, detection and interdiction capabilities to threats posed by this evolving threat. The students were tasked with designing and testing a USV with similar characteristics to ones previously detected, and to test and demonstrate detection using an existing surveillance tool.

Students from Rice University built a replica boat that was “reverse engineered” and demonstrated in Galveston, Texas, March 29-30 to see how a special high-resolution and wide-angle camera called the WAV Surveillance System could be used to detect the boat in realistic conditions.

“The Rice student team designed and constructed a model that can be used to test existing systems leading to enhanced capabilities and also providing a roadmap for others to replicate similar platforms to routinely test their own system,” said Fritz Kuebler, Rice University’s Office of Research NSIN program director.

“This project has been underway for about two months and has involved extensive research, design and testing by the student team with regular interaction from the project sponsor,” Kuebler said.

“Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston has been an ardent supporter of this project and provided assets to assist with the testing including deploying and recovering the [unmanned vessel] on the testing days, and coordinated participation with local maritime security stakeholders,” said Kuebler.

WAV is a long-range video surveillance solution for homeland security applications and other situations that require persistent visual-domain awareness of very wide areas. It was designed by and developed by Innovative Signal Analysis Inc., of Richardson, Texas, and has both commercial and military applications. WAV is uniquely able to function as both a wide-

angle and zoom camera at the same time, and is currently deployed in San Diego Harbor.

“The WAV surveillance system is capable of finding these low probability of intercept targets, because it can survey a wide area, 90-degrees, at a high resolution at a higher refresh rate than a standard point-to-zoom camera,” said Jonathan Ray of Innovative Signal Analysis of Richardson, Texas, the company that makes WAV. “We take advantage of these components in our algorithms to build a history of detects of the object to improve location accuracy and object detection confidence.”

WAV’s imagery led to the eventual discovery of the autonomous USVs.

“This project highlights the value of bright, dedicated STEM students working with national security experts to make a real difference,” Kuebler. “It also serves as a proof of concept and example for how creative thinking and new methodologies advances broader U.S. strategic objectives regarding maritime security and the value of this critical infrastructure.”

Coast Guard Cutter Tampa Returns to Homeport following 70-day Patrol



The USCGC Tampa tows the fishing vessel Jenna Lee, being towed east of Cape Cod, Feb. 6. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Seaman Ryan Lloyd* PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Virginia, March 26, after a 70-day patrol in the North Atlantic Ocean, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said March 29.

Throughout the patrol, Tampa's crew conducted search and rescue, law enforcement and living marine resources missions. The Tampa boarded 26 vessels to ensure that commercial vessels were adhering to mandates regarding catch size, catch amount, gear type and catch area. In addition, boarding teams found eight violations while inspecting the vessel's safety equipment for compliance and recommended one vessel to return to port to correct safety of life at sea regulation compliance violations.

Tampa's crew focused on mainly on scallop, sole, cod, haddock, redfish, pollock and lobster populations off of the New England coast. The mission includes ensuring the country's protected marine species are provided the protection necessary

to help their populations recover to healthy and sustainable levels.

“Our crew performed admirably in trying sea-going conditions, often facing extreme weather and frigid temperatures. Their perseverance to effect mission execution was truly inspiring. We cherished the opportunity to operate in New England, working with our partners to enforce regulations that sustain fish and shellfish stocks for future generations, while keeping fishing vessel crews safe,” said Cmdr. Sky Holm, commanding officer of Tampa.

Coast Guard Cutter Tampa is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The crew routinely deploys in support of counter-drug, migrant interdiction, fisheries enforcement, search and rescue and homeland security missions in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

U.S. Coast Guard Decommissions Three Cutters in Bahrain



USCGC Monomoy (WPB 1326), USCGC Maui (WPB 1304), and USCGC Wrangell (WPB 1332) sit pierside in the U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY BAHRAIN – The U.S. Coast Guard decommissioned three Island-class patrol boats, March 22, in a ceremony at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

Rear Adm. Keith Smith, deputy commander of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, attended the ceremony and commemorated 102 years of combined active service by USCGC Maui (WPB 1304), Monomoy (WPB 1326), and Wrangell (WPB 1332).

“For nearly two decades, these cutters and the Coast Guardsmen that crewed them have worked closely with our [U.S. Naval Forces Central Command] partners and served as the heart of Coast Guard operations in the Middle East,” said Smith.

Maui was originally homeported in Miami and conducted counter-narcotics and other law enforcement activities near United States for 18 years.

Monomoy was previously homeported in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The ship helped secure New York City's harbor immediately following terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

In 2004, Maui and Monomoy arrived in the U.S. 5th Fleet region where they have remained for the next 18 years in support of U.S. 5th Fleet maritime security operations.

Previously homeported in Portland, Maine, Wrangell conducted counter-narcotics and maritime patrol operations along the East Coast of the United States before deploying to the Middle East in 2003.

Bollinger Delivers the Future USCGC Pablo Valent



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Pablo Valent, delivered to the Coast Guard on March 17. *BOLLINGER SHIPYARDS*
LOCKPORT, La. – Bollinger Shipyards LLC delivered the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Pablo Valent to the service in Key West on March 17, the company said in a release.

This is the 174th vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 48th fast response cutter delivered under the current program.

“The early delivery of the USCGC Pablo Valent is another win in Bollinger’s nearly four-decade partnership supporting the men and women of the United States Coast Guard,” said Bollinger president and CEO Ben Bordelon. “We are incredibly proud that the FRC platform is a model program for government acquisition and has surpassed all historical quality benchmarks for vessels of this type and complexity. The results are in the detail and the continued early delivery of truly extraordinary Coast Guard cutters that will serve our

nation for decades to come.”

The USCGC Pablo Valent is the first of three FRCs to be homeported in St. Petersburg, Florida. Sector St. Petersburg has become one of the Coast Guard’s largest commands, with an area of responsibility encompassing over 400 nautical miles of coastline along Florida’s west coast and the third largest U.S. port for domestic trade. The sector has responsibility for five primary operational missions: search and rescue; marine safety; maritime law enforcement; ports, waterways and coastal security; and living marine resources.

This week, President Joe Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal 2022, which included \$130 million for two additional FRCs, continuing the program beyond its 64-vessel program of record. This is the second time Congress has added FRCs beyond the original 58 vessel program of record.

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. The Florida Keys Hurricane of September 1919 was one of the worst in Texas history, heavily damaging the Brazos Life-Saving Station and leveling the Coast Guard Station at nearby Aransas. Seventy-seven-ton schooner Cape Horn had been fishing far out in the Gulf as the storm descended on the schooner and its crew of eight, capsizing the vessel and flooding the hold. The men clung to the flooded hulk as the strong hurricane pushed it toward the Texas coast.

The Brazos Station lookout spotted the Cape Horn and took immediate action. The crew launched the surfboat in some of the worst sea conditions ever experienced in the area. Although the men were skilled surfmen, the boat shipped seas constantly as waves boarded the vessel from the stern. Pablo Valent and the rest of the crew held the boat steady and safely landed with all 15 occupants. For their valiant efforts, Valent and the rest of the Brazos crew received the

Silver Life-Saving Medal. Valent went on to have a successful career in the Coast Guard, taking command of the Brazos Station (a.k.a. Port Isabel Coast Guard Station) in 1935, becoming the first Hispanic American in the service to do so. Valent retired after 28 years of service in the Coast Guard.

Cutter Stratton Returns to Alameda Following 97-Day South Pacific Patrol



Petty Officer 2nd Class Jose MataAyala, a machinery technician stationed on the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton, observes unqualified crew members as they participate in man-overboard

drills off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands, Dec, 31, 2021.
U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class David Graham
ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL 752) returned to Alameda, California, March 19 after completing an Operation Blue Pacific Patrol in the south Pacific, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

While underway, Stratton's crew worked with Pacific partner nations, including Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Australia and the United Kingdom on an array of missions and prioritized combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing on the high seas or in partner nations' exclusive economic zones.

In the effort to combat IUU fishing, Stratton teams boarded 11 vessels during the 20,348-mile patrol and found 21 violations.

"Our collaboration with our partners and utilization of our shiprider agreements gave us the ability to accomplish our mission of combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in order to maintain regional stability and protect the fishing industry," said Capt. Steve Adler, Stratton's commanding officer. "By bringing aboard shipriders from Fiji, we were able to patrol their exclusive economic zones to better assist them in enforcing their maritime laws."

In February, Stratton embarked three shipriders from Fiji with representatives from the Fiji Revenue and Customs Services, the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and the Republic of Fiji Navy, who led bilateral enforcement efforts for Stratton to patrol their exclusive economic zones.

There is a shared interest for both Fiji and the United States, as well as other partner nations, to protect fisheries as they provide a renewable source of food and income to the Pacific nations.

The Stratton crew also used small unmanned aircraft systems to

increase the ship's capabilities and further extend the cutter's patrol area.

"Stratton's capacity for employing cutting-edge technology like sUAS, gives the Coast Guard the upper hand in the fight against IUU fishing," said Cmdr. Charter Tschirgi, Stratton's executive officer. "The vast area covered during patrols like these displays the reach the Coast Guard has and the length we will go to assist our partners in the Pacific."

While on patrol, Stratton's crew also participated in multiple joint exercises with partners in the region. These included a formation sailing with the HMS Spey, a tactical maneuvering drill with HMS Spey and USS Sampson, a joint patrol with an Australian Border Force patrol aircraft, fueling-at-sea with New Zealand's newest replenishment vessel HMNZS Aotearoa, and joint steaming with the French naval vessel FMS Arago and Fijian Patrol vessel Savenaca.

Bollinger Submits Final Proposal to Build Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Cutter



Coast Guard Cutter Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139), built by Bollinger Shipyards, steams through Apra Harbor before arriving at its new homeport in Santa Rita, Guam, in 2020.
U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class MacAdam Kane Weissman

LOCKPORT, La. – Bollinger Shipyards submitted on March 18 its final proposal to the United States Coast Guard to build Stage 2 of the Heritage-class Offshore Patrol Cutter program. If chosen, Bollinger would construct and deliver a total of 11 vessels to the U.S. Coast Guard over the next decade, helping to sustain the Bollinger workforce through 2031.

The proposal submitted by Bollinger states the construction will occur at its facilities in Houma, Louisiana, a shipyard strategically placed within a 100-year hurricane risk reduction system with direct access to the Gulf of Mexico and without drafts or time-zone differences.

In a new study conducted by the Economics & Policy Research Group at Louisiana State University on the economic impact should Bollinger be chosen to build up to 11 ships for the OPC

Program, LSU found the project would create more than 2,700 direct and indirect jobs and generate \$7.3 billion in economic output for Louisiana.

“The numbers tell a compelling story – the Offshore Patrol Cutter program would be a major game changer for the state of Louisiana and Bollinger is the right shipyard at the right time to build this platform for the U.S. Coast Guard,” said Ben Bordelon, Bollinger president and CEO. “For over 75 years, Bollinger has been proud to be a major job creator and economic contributor in south Louisiana. To be awarded the contract for OPC would allow us to continue that legacy. It is my hope that we’re able to continue our long partnership supporting the brave men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard.”

Bollinger has been actively involved in the U.S. Coast Guard’s OPC acquisition process, including execution of the Stage 1 Preliminary and Contract Design, where the company was included in the final three shipyards, as well as execution of the OPC Stage 2 industry study. In June 2021, Bollinger submitted its initial proposal to build Stage 2 of the OPC program.

Bollinger has delivered Sentinel Class Fast Response Cutter hulls 1139 through 1148 a total of 180 days ahead of the contract schedule, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic and sustaining significant damage from a direct hit by Hurricane Ida, a powerful Category 4 storm.

Coast Guard Cutters Conclude

Operation Aiga in Oceania



The crews of the Coast Guard Cutters Juniper and Joseph Gerczak return to Honolulu after completing a 42-day patrol in Oceania in support of Operation Aiga, March 7. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU – The crews of the Coast Guard Cutters Juniper and Joseph Gerczak returned to Honolulu March 7 after completing a 42-day patrol in Oceania in support of Operation Aiga, the Coast Guard 14th District said March 11.

Both crews deployed on a combined 14,000-mile patrol to provide maritime support and patrol coverage for Samoa and American Samoa's exclusive economic zones as well as conducted joint-training operations with the armed forces in French Polynesia.

Operation Aiga, the Samoan word for family, is designed to integrate Coast Guard capabilities and operations with Pacific Island County partners to effectively and efficiently protect shared international interests, combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and strengthen maritime governance in Oceania.

"The Coast Guard remains committed to combating IUU fishing as fish stocks remain a critical component to maritime sovereignty and resource security for many nations, especially those in the Pacific," said Cmdr. Jeff Bryant, chief of enforcement for Coast Guard District Fourteen. "The Juniper and Joseph Gerczak were able to establish stability for our partners on the high seas and while patrolling their EEZs in support of Operation Aiga."

While underway, both cutters conducted hoist training with French Dauphin N3 helicopter crews designed to increase interoperability on the high seas. Additionally, both cutter commanding officers met with Rear Adm. Jean-Matthieu Rey, commander of armed forces in French Polynesia, in Tahiti to discuss the importance of regional maritime security partnerships to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"We had the privilege to integrate our capabilities and strengthen existing partnerships with the French, while protecting global resources on the high seas and exclusive

economic zones of our regional partners,” said Cmdr. Christopher Jasnoch, commanding officer of the Juniper. “I am extremely proud of the crew of Juniper for their hard work preparing for this patrol, resiliency in overcoming the challenges of COVID-19 and their dedication to protecting national interests in Oceania while modeling professional maritime behavior to our partners and competitors.”

Additionally, the Juniper and Joseph Gerczak crews helped fill an operational presence, conducting security patrols in Samoa’s EEZ throughout the month of February to protect fisheries and other natural resources while Samoa’s Nafanua II patrol boat was down.

The Joseph Gerczak made an inaugural visit in Pape’ete, Tahiti, marking the first time a Coast Guard fast response cutter conducted vital port calls on the island.

“Although Coast Guard missions, new cutters, and adventure make serving afloat attractive, the top incentive remains having the opportunity to serve alongside the most talented and humble men and women our country has to offer,” said Lt. Joseph Blinsky, commanding officer of the Joseph Gerczak. “Without the skill and hard work from Joseph Gerczak’s crew, our more than 2,300 NM transit to Tahiti from Honolulu would not have been possible. Coupled with first-class support from District 14, Sector Honolulu, and Juniper, made executing this expeditionary patrol a reality.”

Cutter Steadfast Returns Home

Following Interdiction, Narcotics Patrol

Migrant- Counter-



The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast crew conducts cutter boat pursuit training with a crew from the Coast Guard Cutter Forrest Rednour on Feb. 8. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ASTORIA, Oregon. – The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) and crew returned to the cutter's homeport in Astoria March 7 after a 48-day patrol of the California coast, the cutter's crew said in a release.

The 54-year-old cutter and crew conducted drug and migrant interdiction, living marine resource protection and search and rescue operations along the U.S.-Mexico maritime border.

The Steadfast crew coordinated with Customs and Border Protection, Coast Guard aircraft and Mexican Navy vessels to interdict three boats suspected of attempting to illegally

transport migrants into the United States, resulting in the safe recovery and repatriation of 75 people.

Additionally, the crew boarded 23 U.S. vessels operating in the area and participated in a multi-asset search operation following a flare sighting.

“This was a challenging yet successful patrol for the crew of Steadfast, highlighting the important interagency effort required to secure our maritime borders,” said Cmdr. Craig Allen, commanding officer of the Steadfast. “It was rewarding to work alongside our many partners during the patrol, including Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Border Patrol, and both Mexican and U.S. Navy assets.”

The Steadfast’s permanent crew makeup is 63 enlisted personnel and 12 officers. To aid in this patrol, the permanent party welcomed multiple temporary duty members from across the nation, including: Petty Officer 1st Class Bradley Kwasny and Petty Officer 2nd Class Christian Matranca, both from Maritime Safety and Security Team San Francisco; Petty Officer 2nd Class Aaron Holroyd from Training Center Yorktown, Virginia; and Lt. Ryan Guinee from the Surface Forces Logistic Center – Patrol Boat Product Line in Seattle.

“We had a top-notch team on this patrol, and I’m especially proud of them for overcoming some difficult equipment casualties that were necessary to keep the 54-year-old cutter mission capable,” Allen said. “The crew achieved noteworthy results due to superb skill and professionalism. We’re also thankful to the men and women at Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles for the excellent support they provided during multiple port visits.”

Commissioned in 1968, the Steadfast is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Astoria and routinely deploys in support of counter-drug, migrant interdiction, fisheries, and search and rescue and homeland

security missions.

Coast Guard, Partner Agencies Respond to Haitian Migration Venture off Florida Keys



Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and partner agencies crews respond to a suspected Haitian migrant venture, March 6, approximately 200 yards off Ocean Reef, Florida. The vessel grounded Sunday with no injuries reported. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and partner agencies responded to a grounded Haitian vessel on

March 6, approximately 200 yards off Ocean Reef in Key Largo, Florida, the Coast Guard 7th District said March 7.

Coast Guard, CBP and partner agencies rescued 356 Haitians from the vessel and no injuries were reported. A good Samaritan notified Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders March 6, at approximately 1 p.m., of a blue Haitian vessel grounded off Ocean Reef.

“We worked seamlessly with our state and federal partners to safely remove all the persons from this vessel.” said Capt. Jeffrey Randall, chief of Staff, Coast Guard 7th District. “The Coast Guard and partner agencies are continuously patrolling the Mona Passage, Windward Passage, Caribbean Sea and the approaches to the United States to stop these dangerous and unsafe voyages.”

“The coordinated and timely response of the U.S. Border Patrol and our federal, state, and local partners potentially saved the lives of these migrants today,” said Walter N. Slosar, chief patrol agent, U.S. Border Patrol, Miami Sector.