

# USCGC Vigilant Offloads 17,000 Pounds of Illegal Narcotics in Port Everglades



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC-624) crewmembers pose with approximately 17,000 pounds of illegal narcotics at Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 15. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Estrada*

PORT EVERGLADES, Fla. – The USCGC Vigilant crew (WMEC 617) offloaded illegal narcotics worth an estimated \$236 million on Wednesday in Port Everglades before returning to homeport in Port Canaveral, the Coast Guard 7<sup>th</sup> District said in a release.

The crew of the 67-year-old Vigilant offloaded more than 17,000 pounds of cocaine and marijuana following a 45-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. An embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment augmented the ship's crew,

leveraging the service's unique capabilities and authorities to perform law enforcement operations in international waters.

The drugs, which include nearly 12,000 pounds of cocaine and more than 5,000 pounds of marijuana, were seized during five interdictions conducted by crews of the Vigilant, USCGC Tampa (WMEC 902), and the Royal Canadian Navy's HMCS Harry Dewolf (AOPV 430) in international waters off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America.

Numerous U.S. and partner nation agencies cooperate to combat transnational organized crime.

"The successful interdiction of over 17,000 pounds of illegal narcotics and the apprehension of 17 suspected traffickers are the result of tremendous teamwork," said Cmdr. Jay Guyer, commanding officer of the Vigilant. "We are thankful for coordinated efforts across the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of Defense, Customs and Border Protection, as well as our international partners from Canada and throughout Central and South America."

Vigilant, a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter, patrols the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean, performing counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction operations, search and rescue and fisheries enforcement.

---

## **Coast Guard, Partners Stop 3 Human Smuggling Attempts,**

# Detain 100 People



An abandoned vessel on Juno Beach, Florida, Dec. 12. U.S. Border Patrol officers apprehended 26 people following a maritime smuggling event. *U.S. BORDER PATROL*

MIAMI – Coast Guard, U.S Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations and U.S. Border Patrol officers stopped three human smuggling attempts and detained 100 people between Dec. 12 and Dec. 14, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Coast Guard and CBP AMO officers detained 43 people at sea, and one suspected smuggler was transferred to Homeland Security Investigation officers for further investigation,

Sunday, off the coast of Jupiter, Florida. Additionally, 26 people were apprehended by Border Patrol officers after a maritime smuggling event landed in the vicinity of Ocean Blvd.

Coast Guard and CBP AMO officers detained 28 people of various nationalities at sea, and the case is under investigation by Homeland Security Investigation officers, Dec. 14, off Pompano's coast.

Additionally, two landings happened off Pompano Beach, Dec. 12 and Dec. 14, and approximately 26 people were not apprehended.

"Human smuggling is dangerous and illegal," said Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson, commander of Coast Guard 7th District and director of Homeland Security Task Force-Southeast. "Smugglers exploit vulnerable people for profit with no regard for their safety. We work hard, along with our dedicated local law enforcement and fellow DHS partners, to protect all lives on and offshore."

"Air and Marine Operations has the duty to patrol the waters around the Florida Straits, and along with our partners, we work every day to defeat the efforts of smugglers who have little regard for the human suffering they cause," said Gerald Burgess, spokesman for Air and Marine Operations, Southeast Region. "Together with DHS partners, we work to keep the waters safe and secure."

Those intercepted at sea are transferred or repatriated to their country of origin.

Homeland Security Task Force-Southeast is a standing task force that provides the organizational framework to detect a mass migration event or other contingency operation, facilitate the assignment of roles to participating agencies, and establishes processes for intra-departmental and inter-departmental collaboration. Partners within HSTF-SE routinely conduct a broad range of readiness activities, including periodic surge operations and exercises.

---

# Schultz: Two FRCs Soon to Depart for Basing in Persian Gulf



The U.S. Coast Guard commissioned the USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145), Patrol Forces Southwest Asia's fourth 154-foot Sentinel-class cutter, into service at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia on Oct. 15. The ship will soon be bound for basing in Bahrain along with the USGCG Glenn Harris (WPF 1144). *U.S. COAST GUARD / Clinton Muir*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The second pair of Sentinel fast-response cutters are soon to depart U.S. waters on a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean bound for permanent basing in the Persian Gulf.

Coast Guard Commandant Karl Schultz, speaking Dec. 8 at a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast, said the two 154-foot-long FRCs will be escorted across the ocean by the USCGC Thetis (WMEC 910), a Famous-class medium-endurance cutter that was topping off with fuel in Puerto Rico. Schultz said that after the escort mission the Thetis will be operating off Africa.

The two FRCs, USCGC Glenn Harris (WPC 1144) and USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145), will replace two of the four remaining Island-class 110-foot-long patrol boats in Patrol Forces Southwest Asia at their base in Bahrain.

Earlier this year, the first two FRCs assigned to the Persian Gulf, USCGC Charles Moulthrop (WPC 1141) and USCGC Robert Goldman (WPC 1142), were escorted across the Atlantic by the national security cutter USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753).

The first two FRCs in the Gulf replaced the Island-class patrol boats USCGC Adak (WPB 1333) and USCGC Aquidneck (WPB 1309), which were decommissioned on June 15 for transfer to Indonesia.

Patrol Forces Southwest Asia conducts maritime security patrols in the Persian Gulf in concert with the U.S. 5th Fleet and other allies and partners

The voyage to Bahrain from the U.S. East Coast covers 9,000 nautical miles.

---

**Coast Guard Offloads More than \$148 Million of Illegal**

# Narcotics in Miami



A crew member of the Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless offloads a bale of illegal narcotics at Base Miami Beach, Florida, Dec. 7. The contraband was seized by members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Wave Knight and the His Netherlands Majesty's Ship Holland during three separate interdictions in the Caribbean Sea. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Zimmerman*

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless' crew offloaded more than \$148 million of illegal narcotics at Base Miami Beach, Dec. 7, from three separate interdictions in the Caribbean Sea in the past two weeks, the Coast Guard 7th District said Dec. 9.

Following the three interdictions, nine suspected drug smugglers with Dominican Republic and Colombian nationalities were apprehended. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary Wave Knight crew seized approximately 1,200 pounds of cocaine, and Coast Guard Cutter William Trump and the His Netherlands Majesty's Ship Hollands' crew seized approximately 6,700 pounds of cocaine in

two interdictions.

The U.S. Attorney's Offices for the District of Puerto Rico, Southern District of Florida and the Eastern District of Virginia are prosecuting these cases.

"These successful interdictions are the result of professional partnerships between the Coast Guard, RFA Wave Knight, and HNLMS Holland crews," said Hansel Pintos, 7th District spokesperson. "The Coast Guard's strong international partnerships, counter threats in the maritime domain, protect each of our countries from transnational organized crime, and work to stabilize and promote good governance in the region."

This effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces operation. OCDEF identifies, disrupts and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach.

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea 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.

During at-sea interdictions, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida. The law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean Sea is conducted under the authority of the Seventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

---

# Coast Guard Cutter Completes Operation Blue Pacific Patrol in Oceania



The Coast Guard Cutter William Hart participates in the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's Operation Kurukuru off American Samoa, Oct. 29. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter William Hart completed its 39-day patrol over 7,000 nautical miles in Oceania in support of the Coast Guard's Operation Blue Pacific, last week, said the Coast Guard 14th District.

Operation Blue Pacific is an overarching multi-mission Coast Guard endeavor promoting security, safety, sovereignty and economic prosperity in Oceania while strengthening relationships between our partners in the region.

“This patrol had multiple goals, which really displayed the adaptability of our crew,” said Lt. Cmdr. Cynthia Travers, the commanding officer of the William Hart. “While we continued to support international efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the region, we’ve also worked with our partners including New Zealand’s National Maritime Coordination Centre, the nation of Samoa, the National Park Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on a number of joint endeavors.”

In November, the crew of the William Hart, one of the Coast Guard’s new Fast Response Cutters, participated in the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency’s Operation Kurukuru, an annual coordinated maritime surveillance operation with the goal of combating IUU fishing.

IUU fishing presents a direct threat to the efforts of Pacific Island countries and territories to conserve fish stocks, an important renewable resource in the region.

Following the successful conclusion of Operation Kurukuru, the William Hart’s crew continued to patrol the exclusive economic zones of the United States, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati and Fiji to prevent illicit maritime activity.

Upon request from NOAA, the crew visited Fagatele Bay in the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, using the cutter’s small boat to ensure there was no fishing or activity which would damage the coral within the United States’ largest national marine sanctuary.

The crew of the William Hart also supported a National Park Service boat during a transit between Tutuila Island and the Manu’a Islands, providing search and rescue coverage.

The cutter’s crew then departed for Fiji’s EEZ, where they

supported New Zealand's NMCC by locating an adrift Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis buoy and reporting the buoy's condition to Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand and other stakeholders.

DART buoys are real-time monitoring systems strategically deployed throughout the Pacific to provide important tsunami forecasting data to researchers.

"These expeditionary patrols are important to the continued stability and prosperity of Oceania," said Lt. Cmdr. Jessica Conway, a Coast Guard 14th District operations planner. "Partnerships are key to promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific. Operation Blue Pacific allows us to coordinate with regional partners and most effectively employ our assets towards shared goals."

---

## **Coast Guard Conducted 78 Lancha Interdictions in Fiscal 2021 Along Texas Coast**



A Coast Guard Sector and Air Station Corpus Christi HC-144 Ocean Sentry captures imagery of a lancha near South Padre Island, Texas, Sept. 30. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – Coast Guard law enforcement crews interdicted 78 lanchas, seized 15,484 pounds of catch and detained 208 fishermen during fiscal year 2021 along the Texas coast, the Coast Guard 8<sup>th</sup> District said Dec. 5.

Since the first recorded lancha interdiction in the late 1980s, the Coast Guard has seen a significant uptick in the detection of the vessels, recording close to 300 lancha interdictions in the past three fiscal years combined.

A noteworthy case from this year was on Aug. 4, when Coast Guard Station South Padre Island worked with Coast Guard Sector and Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Coast Guard Cutter Pelican to interdict four lanchas with a total of 320 pounds of red snapper and 1,160 pounds of shark in one day.

In cooperation with other law enforcement agencies, the Coast Guard uses a layered approach to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing through aircraft, small boats and

cutters, as well as improved technology on those assets, resulting in the drastic increase in lancha interdictions.

“The crew at Station South Padre Island takes their role of protecting our natural resources from poaching along the Maritime Boundary Line very seriously,” said Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Ippolito, commanding officer of Coast Guard Station South Padre Island. “The last few years of record-breaking lancha interdictions speak to the steadfast commitment, professionalism, and teamwork of the Coast Guard crews and our partners at Texas Parks and Wildlife to this mission. We ask that the public continue to stay vigilant and report any instances of illegal fishing to the Coast Guard or Texas Parks and Wildlife.”

A lancha is a fishing boat used by Mexican fishermen that is approximately 20-30 feet long with a slender profile. They typically have one outboard motor and are capable of traveling at speeds exceeding 30 mph. Lanchas pose a major threat, usually entering the United States’ exclusive economic zone near the U.S.-Mexico border in the Gulf of Mexico with the intent to smuggle people, drugs, or poach natural resources.

---

## **Leonardo DRS to Provide Fourth Shipset of Hybrid Electric Drive Technology for Coast Guard OPCs**



Leonardo DRS will provide the Auxiliary Propulsion System for the Coast Guard's new fleet of Offshore Patrol Cutters.  
*LEONARDO DRS*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Leonardo DRS Inc. has again been awarded a contract by Eastern Shipbuilding Group to provide the Auxiliary Propulsion System for the fourth shipset in the U.S. Coast Guard's new fleet of Offshore Patrol Cutters, Leonardo DRS said Dec. 6.

This platform is the first combined diesel electric or diesel propulsion system application for the Coast Guard. Eastern Shipbuilding Group is the prime contractor and builder of these next-generation Offshore Patrol Cutters.

Under the contract, Leonardo DRS will provide its high-performance, permanent magnet motor-based Auxiliary Propulsion System, which has been optimized to meet the Coast Guard's operational tempo and provides capability for the ship to operate much more efficiently at slower speeds, increases mission duration capability, reduces emissions, and provides emergency take-home capability in the event of a failure of the main propulsion diesel engines. When coupled to the main propulsion gearbox, the system allows the ship to operate

quietly and efficiently during loitering operations while providing superior fuel economy for increased on-station operations and capability.

Maximizing use of the electric drive increases the platform's green credentials and reduces operational time on the main propulsion engines, providing additional multiple benefits. Because electric motors are virtually maintenance free, life cycle costs over the planned 40-year vessel life are minimized by reducing maintenance hours needed on the engines. Using propulsion diesel engines at slow speeds adds significant wear and tear on the engines and increases the potential for coking/wet stacking. By adding this electric Auxiliary Propulsion System, the Coast Guard can expect to have a built-in advantage of reducing not only fuel and maintenance requirements, but total lifecycle costs and increased safety for the fleet. The main engine overhaul cycle, typically planned at 15 years, can be extended to 25 years.

"Leonardo DRS is a leading innovator in the naval hybrid electric drive technology arena, and we are proud to be able to provide our advanced technology to the Coast Guard's fleet of next-generation Cutters," said Jon Miller, senior vice president and general manager of the Leonardo DRS Naval Power business. "These new propulsion systems will give operational flexibility while significantly increasing cost savings in yearly maintenance and fuel, enabling crews to put more focus on their missions."

---

**Coast Guard Buoy Tender**

# Departs San Francisco for Major Maintenance Period



The Coast Guard Cutter Aspen (WLB 208) departs the San Francisco Bay Area Nov. 29. The Aspen served the California coastline since Sept. 28, 2001. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Taylor Bacon*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard Cutter Aspen (WLB 208) and crew departed the Bay Area Nov. 29 for the last time as a San Francisco-based cutter and are en route to the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore to undergo major maintenance and overhaul, the Coast Guard 11th District said Nov. 30.

This marks the end of two decades of service along the California Coastline for the Aspen as one of 16 of the nation's Juniper class sea-going buoy tenders. The 225-foot ship and its 48-person crew have been stationed at Yerba Buena Island since Sept. 28, 2001.

Aspen's area of responsibility encompassed the coastal areas from the Oregon-California border to San Diego. In addition to its primary buoy tender operations, the cutter also has a long history in search and rescue, drug and migrant interdiction and marine pollution prevention and response missions. Since 2005, the cutter has worked with U.S. partners in Mexico to interdict tens of millions of dollars in illicit narcotics in support of U.S. Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South objectives, most recently interdicting \$3.2 million worth of cocaine in 2017. In 2007, Aspen responded to the Cosco Busan oil spill in San Francisco and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 to assist in oil spill cleanup efforts.

The crew is slated to travel approximately 6,000 miles over the course of 40 days and pass from the Pacific to the Atlantic by way of the Panama Canal. The Aspen is scheduled to undergo a \$20 million, 12-month major maintenance availability (MMA) overhaul.

The MMA is a planned dry dock event at the Coast Guard Yard, the first such major availability in the life of this class of ship. The availability will recapitalize many of the ship's critical systems, to include complete crane replacement, topside preservation work and technology modernization. The availability is designed to ensure that the cutter can reach its designed 30-year service life. Aspen will be the 11th 225-foot Juniper Class buoy tender to begin the MMA period.

The Coast Guard Cutter Alder (WLB 216) formerly homeported in Duluth, Minnesota, is slated to be brought back into service in summer of 2022 by the former Aspen crew and re-homeported in San Francisco. The Aspen's scheduled final destination will be Homer, Alaska, in early 2023.

"It has been a privilege to serve along California's rugged, oftentimes austere coastline; the beauty is without parallel,

and the Pacific Ocean's winds, current, fog and constant swells offshore continue to mold us as the stern teachers they are," said Lt. Cmdr. Paul Ledbetter, the Aspen's commanding officer. "The U.S. is and always has been a maritime nation, and my crew relishes the challenges of keeping the maritime transportation system up and running in our capacity as a WLB. We look forward to continuing to serve this great country when we return to San Francisco aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Alder next year."

Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team San Francisco will be standing by to perform routine maintenance on the Aspen's buoys throughout the Bay Area. Additionally, the Coast Guard Cutter George Cobb, a 175-foot buoy tender homeported in San Pedro, is slated to maintain all aids to navigation south of San Francisco and the Coast Guard Cutter Elm, a 225-foot buoy tender homeported in Astoria, Oregon, is also slated to assist throughout Northern California in spring 2022.

---

## **USCGC Hamilton Returns Home after 72-day Patrol, Drug Offload**



Two Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL 753) small boats repatriates Haitian migrants on the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Sept. 18. The Cutter Hamilton repatriated 199 migrants during its 72-day patrol. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) crew returned home Nov. 24 to Charleston after completing a 72-day patrol throughout the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The crew offloaded 26,250 pounds (11,907 kilograms) of cocaine and 3,700 pounds of marijuana worth \$504 million Monday at Port Everglades.

Hamilton's crew interdicted five drug-laden vessels while patrolling the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Hamilton's law enforcement team detained all 14 suspects, stopped 199 Haitian migrants, and rescued two people.

Hamilton's crew, along with an aviation detachment from the Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron,

began the deployment in early September anticipating a counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

With changes in the Haitian political climate, Hamilton's crew transitioned to alien migration interdiction operations in the Windward Pass. Hamilton's crew focused on dangerous maritime migration voyages, then interdicting 199 Haitian migrants. They also managed tactical control of seven U.S. Coast Guard cutters, which reduced Haitian migration by 93% with no loss of life.

"We are thrilled to be back in the low country in time for the holidays. The past 72 days have taken us from deterring illegal migration off Haiti to combatting drug trafficking organizations in the Eastern Pacific," said Capt. Matthew Brown, commanding officer of Hamilton. "Every day brought new challenges but also new opportunities for this crew to come together and solve complex problems. The product of their hard work was the successful deterrence of unsafe migrant ventures from the claw of Haiti and the seizure of nearly 12 tons of illegal drugs destined for North America."

Hamilton is one of three 418-foot national security cutters homeported in Charleston under U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command with two more anticipated by 2025. With its robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment, they are the most technologically advanced ship in the U.S. Coast Guard's fleet. These crews regularly work cooperatively under U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, district commanders and combatant commands.

NSCs are a worldwide deployable asset that supports the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense and national objectives through drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, national defense, SAR, fisheries enforcement and national intelligence collection.

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area command, based in Portsmouth, Virginia, oversees all U.S. 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 Rescues 27 Migrants Stranded on Monito Island, Puerto Rico**



The Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless rescues 27 stranded migrants from Monito Island, Puerto Rico Nov. 27, 2021. The rescued

migrants, 25 Haitian and two others of undetermined nationality, reportedly were traveling with 10 other Haitian migrants, who were also rescued by the cutter Dauntless from a disabled migrant vessel near Monito Island Nov. 24, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless rescued 27 migrants Nov. 27 after the migrants abandoned a disabled vessel Wednesday and ended up stranded on Monito Island, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7<sup>th</sup> District said in a release.

The rescued migrants, 25 Haitian and two others of undetermined nationality, reportedly were traveling with 10 other Haitian migrants who were rescued by the Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless Wednesday from a disabled makeshift vessel near Monito Island.

Coast Guard rescue crews ended the search for possible migrants in the water Friday afternoon, after confirming the migrants who abandoned the disabled vessel had safely reached Monito Island.

“This case was a very close call, and I commend the efforts of our partner agencies and all Coast Guard units and personnel who helped save 37 lives from a disabled migrant vessel and from the harsh and dangerous environment of Monito Island, preventing what could have been a major loss of life,” said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Sector San Juan chief of response. “To anyone considering taking part in one of these voyages we urge them to not take to the sea, you are putting your life and the life of others at risk. If caught, you are also risking prosecution for migrating illegally to the United States. Migrants, who are interdicted at sea and not prosecuted, will be returned to the country they departed from.”

During search efforts Thursday, the crew of a Coast Guard MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Borinquen observed there were more than 20 people stranded on Monito Island.

The crew of the cutter Dauntless combined efforts with a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft, U.S. Border Patrol agents and a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit Friday to deliver food, water and a hand-held radio to the stranded migrants. Shortly thereafter, the crew of the cutter Dauntless established successful radio communications with the migrants on Monito Island who confirmed, along with statements received from survivors of the disabled migrant vessel, that all the passengers from the illegal voyage were accounted for and safe.

The following morning, the Dauntless crew used the cutter's Over the Horizon boats to rescue the stranded migrants from Monito Island, while a Coast Guard helicopter flew rescue support on scene. During the rescue, the Coast Guard boat crews recovered several migrants from the water who jumped from the bottom of the cliff, including a pregnant woman.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout rescue efforts, Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.

The 27 rescued migrants were transported to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where they were received by awaiting Border Patrol Agents and Emergency Medical Service personnel.

The Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola, Florida.