

# U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Trains with Royal Australian Navy

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HMAS Sirius conducts a dual replenishment at sea with HMAS Canberra and USCG Cutter Munro as HMAS Anzac sails behind, during Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2021. *LSIS Leo Baumgartner*  
ALAMEDA, Calif. – U.S. Coast Guard members aboard the Alameda-based Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) participated in a cooperative three-day at-sea exercise with the Royal Australian Navy in the South China Sea Sept. 11 to 13, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Sept. 16 release.

The joint training engagement included joint operations, professional exchanges, and multi-unit maneuvering at sea to strengthen interoperability between the U.S. Coast Guard and Royal Australian Navy.

“These at-sea engagements with our long-standing partners in the Indo-Pacific region provided an excellent joint training opportunity for the crew,” said Munro’s Commanding Officer Capt. Blake Novak. “Enhancing cooperation and building trust strengthens our relationship with the Royal Australian Navy while expanding our regional security cooperation initiatives.”

The U.S. Coast Guard has a long history of cooperation with the Royal Australian Navy. The U.S. and Australia, along with New Zealand and France, make up the Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group or P-QUAD. P-QUAD endeavors to enhance maritime security in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean in partnership with the Pacific Island Countries through organizations such as the Fisheries Forum Agency.

“The United States and Australia have deep and abiding

interests throughout the Pacific,” said Vice Adm. Michael F. McAllister, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area. “As leaders in maritime safety and security, our forces are dedicated to upholding regional sovereignty, stability and security. Through joint operations with Australia, we strengthen our interoperability with an ally deeply committed to promote international rules and norms within the Indo-Pacific.”

“The Royal Australian Navy has enjoyed multiple opportunities throughout the year to work with the United States in the Indo-Pacific,” said Capt. David Teitzel, Royal Australian Navy, commander Task Group 635.3. “Being able to operate with a United States Coast Guard cutter like USCGC Munro has strengthened how we interoperate and boosts how we work together in the interest of regional security. I thank Munro for their time in-company and we look forward to sailing with the United States Coast Guard again.”

Munro, a 418-foot national security cutter, departed its homeport of Alameda in July for a months-long deployment to the Western Pacific. Operating under the tactical control of the U.S. 7th Fleet, the cutter and crew are engaging in professional exchanges and capacity-building exercises with partner nations, patrolling and conducting operations as directed.

National security cutters like Munro feature advanced command and control capabilities, aviation support facilities, stern cutter boat launch and increased endurance for long-range patrols, enabling the crews to disrupt threats to national security further offshore.

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# Northland Returns Home after 80-day Eastern Pacific Patrol, Miami Drug Offload

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Coast Guard Cutter Northland crews rescued three people after their boat caught fire approximately 150 miles south of Golfito, Costa Rica, August 18, 2021. Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre Costa Rica contacted 11th Coast Guard District command center watchstanders to relay the report of a vessel fire and requested Coast Guard assistance. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – USCGC Northland (WMEC 904) returned to Portsmouth Sept. 13, following an 80-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of the Coast Guard 11th District and Joint Interagency Task Force South, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Sept. 15 release.

The Northland's crew patrolled the Eastern Pacific performing counter-drug operations with the support of an aviation detachment from the U.S. Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron flying an MH-65 Dolphin Helicopter. In addition to Northland's HITRON detachment, aircraft crews from the U.S. Navy and Customs and Border Protection provided critical aerial surveillance and reconnaissance for the cutter throughout the patrol.

During the patrol, Northland successfully interdicted several suspected drug smuggling vessels. On Sept. 8, the cutter pulled into U.S. Coast Guard Base Miami Beach and offloaded 7,833 pounds of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$148 million. The cutter crew also transferred three suspected narcotics smugglers to Coast Guard Seventh District and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration personnel, signaling the culmination of a successful joint interagency effort in the

Eastern Pacific.

Aside from successfully interdicting suspected drug smuggling vessels, Northland maintained a maritime assistance presence in the region throughout the patrol. On Aug. 11, the Coast Guard Eleventh District relayed an alert from the Maritime Rescue Coordination Center Costa Rica reporting the fishing vessel Baula X on fire with three mariners trapped aboard. On Aug. 18, Northland launched the Dolphin crew in search of the boat. Upon successfully locating the burning fishing vessel, the helicopter crew guided Northland's small boat team to the location. They safely rescued the three fishers and delivered them to the nearby cargo vessel Avra GR, participating in the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue program.

When not actively chasing drug runners or rescuing fishers, Northland maintained a steady training regimen for new and veteran crewmembers on navigation, engineering, and nautical activities. Training for emergencies and routine operations is critical to sustaining Northland's peak mission effectiveness and is in keeping with the Coast Guard's motto, Semper Paratus – Always Ready.

"During this patrol, our crew showed terrific adaptability when responding to equipment malfunctions, scheduling changes, issues spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, and a litany of other challenges faced. Throughout all of this, the crew displayed tremendous determination and teamwork, resulting in multiple mission accomplishments. I am extremely proud of the effort put forth by Northland, our embarked aviation detachment, and all of the support elements that worked to ensure our safety and success throughout," said Cmdr. Patricia M. Bennett, Northland's commanding officer.

USCGC Northland is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth. The crew routinely deploys in support of counter-drug, migrant interdiction, fisheries, search and rescue, and homeland security missions.

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# Coast Guard Crews Observe Chinese Warships near Alaska

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During a routine maritime patrol in the Bering Sea and Arctic region, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf spotted and established radio contact with Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) task force in international waters within the U.S. exclusive economic zone, Aug. 30, 2021. All interactions between the U.S. Coast Guard and PLAN were in accordance with international laws and norms. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ensign Bridget Boyle*

JUNEAU, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard demonstrated its commitment to the Bering Sea and Arctic region with deployments of national security cutters Bertholf and Kimball, and a U.S. Arctic patrol by icebreaker Healy, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a Sept. 13 release.

“Security in the Bering Sea and the Arctic is homeland security,” said Vice Adm. Michael McAllister, commander Coast Guard Pacific Area. “The U.S. Coast Guard is continuously present in this important region to uphold American interests and protect U.S. economic prosperity.”

Crews interacted with local, national and international vessels throughout the Arctic. During the deployment, Bertholf and Kimball observed four ships from the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) operating as close as 46 miles off the Aleutian Island coast. While the ships were within the U.S. exclusive economic zone, they followed international laws and norms and at no point entered U.S. territorial waters.

The PLAN task force included a guided-missile cruiser, a guided-missile destroyer, a general intelligence vessel, and

an auxiliary vessel. The Chinese vessels conducted military and surveillance operations during their deployment to the Bering Sea and North Pacific Ocean.

All interactions between the U.S. Coast Guard and PLAN were in accordance with international standards set forth in the Western Pacific Naval Symposium's Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea and Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

The Bering Sea produces more than 50 percent of the nation's fish and shellfish harvest – worth more than \$5 billion annually – and is the gateway to the Arctic, which encompasses 900,000 square miles of the U.S. exclusive economic zone off the Alaskan coast.

Bertholf and Kimball are 418-foot legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda, California, and Honolulu, Hawaii, respectively.

Healy is a 420-foot medium icebreaker homeported in Seattle.

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## **Coast Guard Continues to Support Hurricane Ida Recovery Efforts**

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Coast Guard Capt. Wade Russell, commanding officer of Marine Safety Unit Houma, reviews navigation charts with a member of the Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving in Morgan City, Louisiana, Sep. 9, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

NEW ORLEANS – The Coast Guard continues to respond to impacts

to the waterways and assess the environmental threats across Southeast Louisiana Sept. 9, post-Hurricane Ida, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release.

In partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving (SUPSALV) the Coast Guard is continuing efforts to reopen waterways impacted by Hurricane Ida in the areas of Bayou Lafourche, Houma Navigation Canal and portions of the Intracoastal Waterway.

Obstructions to the affected waterways are being identified and removed to restore the area to pre-storm conditions.

To date, 25 obstructions comprised primarily of fishing vessels, crew vessels, and offshore supply vessels have been identified in the Bayou Lafourche channel. Additionally, 30 submerged targets have been identified in the Houma Navigation Canal. Fifteen of those targets in the Houma Navigation Canal have been cleared or removed.

The Coast Guard also continues to receive and investigate all reports made to the National Response Center.

Coast Guard crews are working to identify and prioritize threats to the environment and navigable waterways through overflights and surface inspections of areas impacted by the storm.

The Coast Guard is working closely with the State of Louisiana, Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of Environmental Quality, to respond to reports of pollution.

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# The Coast Guard and American Maritime: A Vital Post-9/11 Partnership

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A Coast Guard rescue team from Sandy Hook, New Jersey, races to the scene of the World Trade Center terrorist attack. A subsequent call for “all available boats” led to the largest maritime evacuation in history. *U.S. COAST GUARD / PA2 Tom Sperduto*

Twenty years ago this week, al Qaeda carried out attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and perhaps would have succeeded in attacking a third target but for the bravery of the airline passengers who forced their plane down in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

These attacks would ultimately claim thousands of lives and dramatically alter America’s domestic security posture and the geopolitical landscape for years to come. But in the tense, chaotic hours that followed the unimaginable horror of commercial airliners striking the Twin Towers, amid the uncertainty of whether more was on the way, the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. maritime industry were focused on a single shared mission in New York: Get people to safety.

When the local Coast Guard commander put out the call for “all available boats” to make their way to lower Manhattan to help rescue people stranded due to the closure of bridges and tunnels, the response was widespread and immediate. An armada of tugboats, ferries and other vessels quickly arrived on the scene and, in a collective undertaking of tremendous skill and grit, safely evacuated 500,000 people. It was the largest maritime evacuation in history, even exceeding the heroic achievement at Dunkirk in 1940.

This kind of proactive collaboration to keep people safe has long defined the relationship between the Coast Guard and the U.S. maritime industry. And in the years since 9/11, they have continued their close partnership to keep our waterways and our nation secure – a partnership made possible by a mix of sound policy, focused coordination and shared commitment. The continued strength, agility and effectiveness of the partnership in the face of existing and emerging threats will depend on several key factors.

### **The Jones Act**

First, the Jones Act, the law requiring that vessels moving cargo between two U.S. points be American built, owned and crewed, plays a foundational role in our maritime security and must remain sacrosanct. By keeping our domestic maritime industry in American hands, the law ensures a reliable pipeline of experienced American mariners for the long-term – the kind that works seamlessly with the Coast Guard and risks their own lives to evacuate half a million people from New York, without hesitation. It also greatly reduces the potential for malign actors who might seek to use our waterways to carry out attacks, decreasing the operational burden on the Coast Guard and allowing the service to channel its limited resources where they are needed most.

The Jones Act is also instrumental to the durability of what the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments [calls](#) the Defense Maritime Industrial Base – the vast network of public and private sector maritime entities that collectively serve as a major component of our national security. The U.S. must be able to rely on American shipyards to build boats the Coast Guard needs to patrol and defend our territorial waters and that America's maritime industry needs to move the cargo that drives our economy and supports military readiness.

### **Cyber Risk Management**

Second, cyber risk management must remain an urgent priority. The Coast Guard's latest [alert](#) discussing recent cyberattacks on South African ports and leaked Iranian documents describing research on how a cyberattack can be used to target the Maritime Transportation System (MTS) is a stark reminder that our adversaries don't have to be in our waters to attack our waterways. And as ever, with greater technology innovation comes greater cyber risk to the MTS as these threats continue to evolve.

The Coast Guard recently issued its [2021 Cyber Strategic Outlook](#), detailing its approach to this complex, high-stakes threat landscape. Notably, among the report's major Lines of Effort is to "Protect the Marine Transportation System," elements of which emphasize continued coordination with the maritime industry to manage cyber risks and "improve the ability for owners and operators to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to threats to maritime critical infrastructure." Recognizing the importance of its own role in safeguarding the MTS, the tugboat, towboat and barge industry has taken proactive steps to improve that ability, including by developing [Best Practices for the Towing Industry](#), a cyber risk management guide for use by marine towing companies of all sizes and sectors. This is important progress, but more surely remains to be done.

Finally, whether in response to threats of physical attacks, or attacks carried out in cyberspace, for the partnership to continue achieving results that keep the American people safe, the policies and practices guiding it into the future must be crafted with an eye toward facilitating the tracking and exchange of threat information in real time; ensuring that security regulations are informed by practical operational realities and risk management principles; and maintaining effective security for our waterways without impeding the waterborne commerce that is itself fundamental to our national security.

That worst of days 20 years ago summoned what is best in our Coast Guard and our mariners, whose actions helped prevent further loss of life. And while we hope and pray not to hear another call for “all available boats,” we owe it to our nation to make sure this vital partnership is ready if we do.

*Adm. James Loy, retired, served as the 21<sup>st</sup> commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard from 1998-2002 and subsequently as deputy secretary of homeland security. Jennifer Carpenter is president and CEO of The American Waterways Operators.*

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## **U.S., Canadian Crews Conduct Exercise during CGC Healy's Northwest Passage Transit**

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An aircrew aboard a Canadian coast guard Bell 429 helicopter prepares to land aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) while near Resolute, Nunavut, Canada on Sept. 6, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer First Class Michael Underwood*  
ALAMEDA – The Coast Guard Cutter Healy's (WAGB 20) crew conducted a search-and-rescue exercise and professional exchange with members of the Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Rangers near Resolute Bay in Nunavut, Canada, Sept. 6, 2021, during Healy's Northwest Passage transit, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Sept. 6 release.

The search-and-rescue exercise enhanced interoperability and effectiveness of response capabilities among the services.

U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz, Canadian Coast

Guard Commissioner Mario Pelletier and Canadian Coast Guard Assistant Commissioner for the Arctic Region Neil O'Rourke were aboard Healy to meet with the crew and observe the joint training exercise.

"Training alongside our Canadian partners while underway in the Arctic during a historic circumnavigation of North America is a great example of enhancing our interoperability and mission capabilities," said Schultz. "Healy is supporting oceanographic research with the science community during this deployment to the critically important Arctic region."

The U.S. Coast Guard is the nation's leader in Arctic surface operations and coordinates with international partners to maintain the region as safe, prosperous and cooperative by strengthening international and intergovernmental partnerships in the region through joint exercises and professional exchanges.

"Seeing the members of the Canadian Coast Guard work hand in hand with their counterparts from the Healy has been inspiring," said Pelletier. "The vastness of the Arctic makes this a very difficult environment for emergency response making every opportunity for training valuable. These exercises ensure our two countries' coast guards stand ready and able to assist should we be needed."

Coast Guard icebreaker crews aboard Healy and the Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) deploy to conduct statutory Coast Guard missions in the Polar Regions such as search-and-rescue and the protection of marine resources. Additionally, the crews support oceanographic research in the Arctic and Antarctic.

The Healy crew is collaborating with the international science community and institutions from the U.S., Canada, Norway and Denmark to perform oceanographic projects throughout the Northwest Passage and within Baffin Bay to inform

environmental change research.

The Healy, a 420-foot-long medium icebreaker, departed its Seattle homeport July 10 for a months-long Arctic deployment and circumnavigation of North America. Since departing, the crew has been executing Coast Guard missions, supporting oceanographic research and conducting training to develop the Coast Guard's future Polar security cutter Sailors.

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## **USCGC Escanaba Returns Home after Historic 50-Day Patrol**

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The crew of USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907) greet their families as they return home to Portsmouth on Sep. 7, 2021, following a historic 50-day patrol in support of Operation Nanook in the Arctic region and the Labrador Sea. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Senior Chief Petty Officer Sara Muir*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907) returned home to Portsmouth on Tuesday following a historic 50-day patrol in support of Operation Nanook in the Arctic region and the Labrador Sea, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Sept. 7 release.

Operation Nanook supports the Coast Guard Arctic strategy to develop international relations with like-minded Arctic states, enhance maritime domain awareness, and expand service capabilities within the region.

Escanaba deployed with the 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter Richard Snyder and an embarked members of the Maritime Security Response Team East. The operation expanded the logistical boundaries of the FRC fleet and further refined

the modular capabilities of deployable special forces to enhance a cutter's organic law enforcement capabilities.

Operation Nanook was made up of two phases, Tuugaalik and Tatigiit. The Tuugaalik phase brought the crews of Escanaba, Richard Snyder, and the Royal Canadian navy together to exercise best practices and demonstrate responsive capabilities to potential terrorist or adversarial threats. The training exercises included were a live-fire surface gunnery exercise, close-quarters formation steaming, towing, small boat approaches, and communication drills. In the following phase, Tatigiit, the Escanaba, and Richard Snyder teams participated in a mass casualty and pollution event along the shores of Baffin Island. Both cutters crews seamlessly supported the Royal Canadian navy in rescue and assistance procedures and creating search and rescue patterns.

In addition to conducting law enforcement operations, Escanaba's crew participated in Frontier Sentinel, a training event with the U.S. and Royal Canadian navies. The exercise simulated a multi-national response to a maritime threat and strengthened interoperability between all three services.

USCGC Escanaba is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter, previously known as "The Pride of Boston," now re-homeported to Portsmouth.

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## **Coast Guard Repatriates 35 Migrants to Cuba**

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The Coast Guard interdicted 13 Cuban migrants from an inflatable raft approximately 61 miles south of Key West, Florida Sep. 1. The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Raymond Evans' (WPC-1110) crew repatriated the migrants to Cuba, Sep. 4. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Raymond Evans' crew repatriated 35 Cubans to Cuba, Sept. 4, following five interdictions off the coast of Key West, Florida, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

While on a routine patrol, a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 airplane crew notified Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders at 5:10 p.m., Aug. 29, of a rustic vessel with five people aboard approximately 63 miles south of Key West, Florida. They were brought aboard Coast Guard Cutter Raymond Evans and reported in good health.

While on a routine patrol, a Coast Guard Air Clearwater HC-130 airplane crew notified Sector Key West watchstanders at 5:40 p.m., Aug. 31, of a rustic vessel with 13 people aboard approximately 61 miles south of Key West. They were brought aboard the Cutter Raymond Evans and reported in good health.

A Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations airplane crew notified Sector Key West watchstanders at 9:40 p.m., Aug. 31, of a 20-foot fishing vessel with five people aboard approximately 25 miles south of Marathon, Florida. They were brought aboard the Cutter Raymond Evans and reported in good health.

A good Samaritan notified Sector Key West watchstanders at 10:15 a.m., Sept. 1, of a green raft with three people aboard approximately 23 miles southeast of Marathon. They were brought aboard the Cutter Raymond Evans and reported in good health.

A Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations airplane crew notified Sector Key West watchstanders at approximately 12:10 a.m., Sept. 3, of a rustic vessel with

nine people aboard approximately two miles south of Marathon. They were brought aboard Cutter Raymond Evans and reported in good health.

“Navigating the Florida Straits is difficult and unpredictable in rustic vessels,” said Lt. Cmdr. Mario Gil, Coast Guard Liaison Officer, U.S. Embassy Havana. “Taking to the seas on unsafe vessels is dangerous and can result in loss of life.”

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## **Coast Guard Offloads \$51 Million of Interdicted Cocaine in San Juan, Puerto Rico**

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The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Richard Etheridge crew offloaded approximately 1,700 kilograms of seized cocaine at Coast Guard Base San Juan Friday, following the disruption go-fast vessel smuggling attempt by Coast Guard and British Virgin Islands authorities near Anegada, British Virgin Islands. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Richard Etheridge crew offloaded approximately 1,700 kilograms of seized cocaine at Coast Guard Base San Juan Sept. 3, after Coast Guard and British Virgin Islands authorities thwarted a go-fast boat smuggling attempt near Anegada, British Virgin Islands, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

This disruption and seizure is the result of multi-agency efforts involving the Caribbean Border Interagency Group and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. The seized cocaine has an

estimated wholesale value of approximately \$51 million dollars.

During a routine patrol the night of Aug. 27, 2021, the Coast Guard Cutter Richard Etheridge responded to the sighting of a suspect go-fast vessel, in waters northeast of the British Virgin Islands. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan directed the launch of a Coast Guard MH-60T aircraft from Air Station Borinquen to vector cutter Richard Etheridge to the go-fast vessel's position. Additionally, Coast Guard and British Virgin Islands authorities maintained communication to interdict the suspect go-fast vessel. As the cutter Richard Etheridge closed in on the go-fast vessel, the smugglers proceeded to jettison their cargo and flee the area at high speed. Afterwards, the Coast Guard helicopter crew proceeded to assist cutter Richard Etheridge in locating the jettisoned cargo. In total, the crew of cutter Richard Etheridge recovered 57 bales, which tested positive for cocaine.

"Despite the challenging sea state conditions and thanks to the close collaboration and coordination with our Royal Virgin Islands Police partners, our crews did an outstanding job in disrupting a major shipment of cocaine and keeping it from ever reaching the streets," said Capt. Gregory H. Magee, Sector San Juan commander. "Our strong partnerships, as in the case of the British Virgin Islands and island nations throughout our area of responsibility, are key to achieving safe and secure maritime borders from drug trafficking and other smuggling threats in the Eastern Caribbean."

"This is a great example of the close working relationship between the U.S. and the U.K. overseas territories," said Detective Inspector Mike Jones, head of Intelligence for the Royal Virgin Islands Police. "The excellent work of the U.S. Coast Guard forced the crew of the go-fast vessel to jettison their cargo. We will continue to work closely with all agencies and partners in order to disrupt and detect the movement of narcotics, illegal money and people trafficking."

Cutter Richard Etheridge is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in Miami.

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# Coast Guard Repatriates 91 Migrants to the Dominican Republic

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A makeshift boat, one of three illegal migrant voyages, interdicted by the Coast Guard and Caribbean Border Interagency Group partner agencies Sept. 2, 2021 in the Mona Passage just off Puerto Rico. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Reliance crew repatriated 91 migrants to the Dominican Republic Sept. 3 from three at-sea interdictions in the Mona Passage off the west coast of Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

These interdictions are the result of ongoing Coast Guard and Caribbean Border Interagency group partner efforts to deter and stop illegal voyages in the Mona Passage.

In the first interdiction, the Coast Guard Richard Etheridge located and interdicted an illegal voyage at 3:26 a.m. Sept, 2, comprised of a 17-foot makeshift vessel with 32 migrants onboard, 30 men and two women, in waters just off Rincon, Puerto Rico.

In the second interdiction, a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit interdicted a 30-foot makeshift boat at 7 a.m. Sept. 2 just off Aguadilla, Puerto Rico that was carrying 50 migrants onboard; 47 men and three women.

In the third interdiction, a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit interdicted a 15-foot makeshift boat at 9:20 a.m. Sept. 2 just off Rincon, Puerto Rico that was carrying 12 migrants onboard, 11 men and a woman.

“These interdictions highlight the professionalism, commitment and unwavering resolve of the Coast Guard and our Caribbean Border Interagency Group partners in safeguarding the maritime border of Puerto Rico,” said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Sector San Juan chief of response. “We continue to implore anyone thinking about taking part in an illegal voyage that they not take to the sea. It is just not worth it, not only would you be putting your life at risk, but the life of everyone else if the voyage. You are also risking federal prosecution for attempting to enter illegally into the United States.”

In the last eight days, Coast Guard and Caribbean Border Interagency Group partner agencies have interdicted 10 illegal voyages with 211 migrants, who were traveling illegally to Puerto Rico aboard grossly overloaded makeshift boats. Since Oct. 1, 2021, the Coast Guard and CBIG federal and state partner agencies have interdicted and or apprehended over 2,100 migrants who were traveling illegally to Puerto Rico.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdictions, Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19. There were no migrants in these cases reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

The Coast Guard Cutter Richard Etheridge is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in Puerto Rico, while the Coast Guard Cutter Reliance is a medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola, Florida.