

Coast Guard Cutter Diligence Returns to Homeport after 47-day Caribbean Sea Patrol



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence Flight Deck crew conducts helicopter operations in the Western Caribbean Sea. The cutter Diligence is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola with a crew of 75. U.S. Coast Guard / Ensign Ashley Hatfield

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of [Coast Guard Cutter Diligence](#) returned to homeport in Pensacola Friday after a 47-day Caribbean Sea patrol, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a Nov. 20 release.

Diligence performed counter-drug operations in support of the U.S. Government's [Joint Interagency Task Force–South](#), which conducts detection and monitoring operations in the Caribbean to facilitate the interdiction of illicit trafficking in support of national and partner nation security.

The U.S. Coast Guard works alongside interagency and international partners to prevent and respond to dangerous and illegal maritime smuggling from Central and South America. Diligence supported these efforts by patrolling the Southwestern Caribbean Sea in an effort to detect and deter maritime smuggling in the region.

During the patrol, Diligence intercepted a vessel with approximately 150 gallons of suspected liquefied cocaine and detained four suspected smugglers. Additionally, Diligence received from other U.S. law enforcement agencies more than 7,700 pounds of narcotics and six additional smugglers apprehended and orchestrated the successful transfer of the cases to U.S. authorities for prosecution. The 47-day patrol was also critical in allowing Diligence's crew to work

on shipboard training, qualifications and proficiency to maintain operational readiness.

“This patrol presented several unique and dynamic challenges,” said Diligence Commanding Officer [Cmdr. Luke Slivinski](#). “Characteristic of a seagoing service, we never know what adventures lay ahead. I am immensely proud of and impressed by Diligence’s crew for their steadfast ability to adapt to the task at hand and carry out the mission with professionalism and proficiency.”

The cutter Diligence is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola with a crew of 75. The cutter’s primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Coast Guard Cutter Returns Home after Crewmembers Test Positive for COVID



The Coast Guard Cutter Stratton, seen here near Annapolis in 2011. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley

ALAMEDA, Calif – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton (WMSL-752) returned to its homeport Wednesday at Coast Guard Island in Alameda after 11 crew members tested positive for COVID-19 during the deployment, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Nov. 18 release.

The affected crew members reported mild symptoms and are receiving medical care.

The cutter was met by Coast Guard medical staff, who conducted testing of the entire crew. Following testing, the crew went into quarantine. The cutter will continue to meet all in-port watchstanding requirements while at homeport.

“The crew’s health and safety is my highest priority,” said Capt. Bob Little, Stratton’s commanding officer. “Stratton has a highly resilient crew, always dedicated to the mission. Our mission today is to get healthy so we can continue our service to the nation.”

The Stratton departed Alameda Oct. 28 to begin a counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific. Prior to getting underway, the crew underwent a restriction-of-movement period where members were required to self-quarantine and pass two COVID tests.

On Nov. 11 and Nov. 12, several crew members began to develop COVID symptoms and were administered rapid testing kits. All affected personnel and close contacts were identified and quarantined.

“The safety of our people and the public remain my top priority,” said Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area commander. “We continue to perform all statutory missions while taking the necessary precautions to protect our members and the public. We are committed to maintaining our operational readiness and will continue to perform critical missions that protect our national interests, promote economic prosperity and ensure public safety.”

Coast Guard Provides Humanitarian Assistance to Honduras after Hurricane Eta



Coast Guard members with the Coast Guard Cutter Seneca and the Helicopter Tactical Squadron (HITRON) MH-65 Dolphin aircrew forward deployed aboard the Seneca assist Hondurans near Puerto Lempira, Honduras by providing urgent search and rescue and redistribution of relief aid. U.S. Coast Guard
PUERTO LEMPIRA, Honduras – A Coast Guard Helicopter Tactical Squadron (HITRON) MH-65 Dolphin aircrew forward deployed aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Seneca (WMEC-906) provided humanitarian assistance, Nov. 13, to Honduran villages after Hurricane Eta impacted the country, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Nov. 15 release.

The HITRON aircrew and Seneca crew medevaced multiple people and redistributed relief aid across the hurricane impacted area as needed.

“I am very thankful to have been able to assist in the medevac and rescue efforts following the wake of Hurricane Eta in Honduras,” said Petty Officer 1st Class James Mann, a HITRON flight mechanic. “Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Honduran people and our fellow service members continuing to help them rebuild. We wish for a speedy recovery to all those affected.”

“The Seneca is proud to be assigned to CTF-45 and support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Honduras,” said Cmdr. Matthew Rooney, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Seneca. “Our embarked MH-65 helicopter was well suited to provide medical evacuations, conduct aerial surveys of critical infrastructure and deliver emergency supplies in remote areas. The Seneca’s crew

performed magnificently and I am grateful that we could provide assistance after Hurricane Eta made landfall in Honduras.”

Joint Task Force-Bravo is leading the humanitarian aid disaster relief efforts under the responsibility of U.S. Southern Command. The mission of JTF-Bravo includes being prepared to support disaster relief operations in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, when directed by SOUTHCOM. JTF-B’s training and strategic location allows them to mobilize and respond to an emergency with very short notice, enabling them to rapidly respond to the needs of our partners.

Coast Guard Seventh District, along with regional partners, are monitoring Hurricane Iota and urges caution to all mariners in the Western Caribbean Sea. The Coast Guard stands ready, relevant and responsive to aid and render assistance when needed.

The Coast Guard Cutter Seneca is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter with a crew complement of 100, with missions ranging from counter-narcotics, migrant interdictions, search and rescue to living marine resource operations from the Gulf of Maine to the Pacific Ocean. The cutter was commissioned in 1987 and is homeported in Boston, Massachusetts.

Strategic Approach Needed for Coast Guard to Exploit

Unmanned Technology: NAS



Petty Officer 3rd Class John Cartwright, a Coast Guard Cutter Stratton crewmember, releases the unmanned aircraft Scan Eagle during a demonstration in 2012. The Coast Guard should move more aggressively to use such technology, a new National Academies report concludes. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 2nd Class Luke Clayton

WASHINGTON – As unmanned systems (UxS) continue to develop and be used by military services and federal agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard should proceed more aggressively and deliberately in taking advantage of UxS advancements, says a new congressionally mandated [report](#) from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

The Coast Guard should also produce a high-level strategy with critical goals and actionable steps toward fully utilizing UxS technology, the report says. UxS technologies include aerial, surface, and underwater vehicles with no human occupants; vehicles that may have a crew but with some level of remote control; and systems that are not vehicles.

As one of the country's six military services, the Coast Guard also serves as a first responder, law enforcement agency, maritime regulator, and member of the intelligence community. Despite multiple initiatives to explore and assess the applicability of UxS to these areas, the Coast Guard lacks a formal means for identifying, investigating, and integrating systems. Meanwhile, UxS technological advancements continue to accelerate, driven by both commercial and military demands.

“A major realignment of the Coast Guard's UxS approach is needed,” said Heidi C. Perry, assistant head of the Air, Missile, and Maritime Defense Technology Division at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Lincoln Laboratory and chair of the committee that wrote the report. “As other military services integrate UxS into their force structure,

the Coast Guard will be impelled to do the same.”

The new strategy must come from the top, the report says, and therefore, the commandant should issue a high-level strategy that lays out a compelling rationale for UxS, sets forth critical goals for the systems, and outlines the Coast Guard’s approach for achieving them. The Coast Guard has issued high-level strategies in the past, which are intended to convey urgency to senior leadership and spur changes needed across the organization, from setting strategic goals and objectives for achieving the new vision to establishing appropriate organizational structures and lines of authority.

One of the reasons for not fully exploiting the advances in UxS technology is the Coast Guard’s limited budget, including its modest research and development funding compared with other military services and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agencies. Furthermore, it is unlikely the funding needs for UxS will be met by simply reallocating traditional Coast Guard appropriations, the report stresses. The support of Congress and DHS will be vital for the Coast Guard to fully realize the potential of UxS technology. To properly assess the Coast Guard’s UxS funding needs, the commandant should commission an internal study of the multiyear spending that will be required for research, assets, integration, and personnel to fully implement the UxS strategy.

Organizational changes to the Coast Guard may be necessary to most effectively execute a new high-level UxS strategy. The commandant should designate a top Coast Guard official, at the flag officer or senior executive service level, to advocate for and advance the UxS strategy, the report recommends. This official would be responsible for identifying, promoting, coordinating, and facilitating the changes that will be needed across the organization to further the commandant’s strategic goals and objectives for UxS. Additionally, the commandant should establish an UxS program office that will work with the

top official to plan out, coordinate, assess, and promote UxS activities across the Coast Guard. One of the first initiatives of this program office should be to develop an UxS “road map” that translates the strategic goals into an actionable plan.

“A dedicated program office could play a vital leadership and coordinating role in expanding the use of UxS across the Coast Guard,” said retired Coast Guard Vice Admiral Fred M. Midgette, a committee member. “It would foster an organizational environment in which the Coast Guard is better able to leverage UxS technologies.”

In order to accelerate the introduction of UxS into the force structure, the report recommends that the Coast Guard expand its efforts to carry out operations-related experimentation with low-cost UxS. This would include potentially designating field units specifically for experimentation and rapid transitioning of systems into operations. Encouraging experimentation with low-cost UxS technologies will lead to the identification of beneficial uses and would nurture a more technologically proficient workforce.

The study – undertaken by the [Coast Guard Maritime Domain Awareness Committee](#) – was sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard. The National Academies are private, nonprofit institutions that provide independent, objective analysis and advice to the nation to solve complex problems and inform public policy decisions related to science, technology, and medicine. They operate under an 1863 congressional charter to the National Academy of Sciences, signed by President Lincoln.

HII Delivers National Security Cutter Stone to U.S. Coast Guard



National Security Cutter Stone (WMSL 758) sails in the Gulf of Mexico during builder's sea trials earlier this year. Photo by Lance Davis / HII

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding division has delivered National Security Cutter (NSC) *Stone* (WMSL 758) to the U.S. Coast Guard, the company said in a Nov. 10 release.

Documents signed Nov. 9 mark the official transfer of custody of the ship from HII to the Coast Guard. *Stone* is scheduled to sail away from the shipyard at the end of this year to its homeport in Charleston, South Carolina.

"We could not be prouder to deliver our ninth national security cutter to the Coast Guard," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias said. "Ending the year with this significant achievement is a true testament to the perseverance of our shipbuilders. *Stone* is a powerful ship that will have great opportunities to demonstrate the value of its multi-mission capabilities for many years to come."

NSC 9 is named to honor Coast Guard Commander Elmer "Archie" Fowler Stone, Coast Guard aviator number one, who made history in 1919 for being one of two Coast Guard pilots in the four-man air crew who completed the first trans-Atlantic flight in a Navy seaplane.

The *Legend*-class NSC is the most technologically advanced ship in the Coast Guard's fleet, which enables it to meet the high demands required for maritime and homeland security, law enforcement, marine safety, environmental protection and

national defense missions. NSCs are 418 feet long with a top speed of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 miles, an endurance of 60 days and a crew of 120.

Coast Guard Cutter Returns to Pensacola After Interdicting \$20M in Drugs



Member of Coast Guard Cutter Decisive's boarding team recovering contraband that was jettisoned during a pursuit. The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Decisive (WMEC-210) returned to their homeport of Pensacola Nov. 3, 2020, after completing a 40-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and offloading \$20.3 million worth of cocaine and marijuana in southern Florida. U.S. Coast Guard

NEW ORLEANS – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Decisive (WMEC-210) returned to their homeport of Pensacola, Florida, Nov. 3, after completing a 40-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and offloading \$20.3 million worth of cocaine and marijuana in southern Florida, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a Nov. 10 release.

The crew began their deployment in late September, partnering with Joint Interagency Task Force South and Tactical Law Enforcement Team-South, Law Enforcement Detachment 403.

In the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the crew of the Decisive interdicted two go-fast vessels and a low-profile vessel, carrying a combined total of approximately 900 pounds of cocaine and 2,735 pounds of marijuana, with an estimated street value of \$20.3 million of illegal narcotics

Decisive's law enforcement team detained nine suspected smugglers aboard the three interdicted vessels and transferred them to federal partner agencies for prosecution.

"Overcoming Hurricane Sally destruction at home, team Decisive set sail and performed exceptionally down range," said Cmdr. John McWhite, Decisive's commanding officer. "Counter narcotic operations and tactics are ever evolving, and our time in the operational area was short but we were highly efficient, relying heavily on each other and remaining adaptable. We maintained our ready posture with a continued focus on team over self; the key to our success."

To ensure the safety of Decisive's crew during the COVID-19 global pandemic, the crew conducted pre-deployment COVID-19 testing, followed by a 14-day monitoring period. Throughout their patrol, Decisive's crew maintained strict health precautions during all interactions with the public, including wearing N95 masks at all times and undergoing intensive health screenings prior to each boarding.

Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley Returns to Homeport following Fisheries Patrol



A crewmember aboard a 26-foot over-the-horizon boat prepares to come alongside Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley (WMEC 30) while underway in the Bering Sea in this 2019 photo. U.S. Coast Guard / Ensign Richard Zogby

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley returned to homeport in Kodiak, Alaska, Thursday, following an

85-day deployment throughout the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a Nov. 3 release.

The crew patrolled more than 11,000 miles for approximately three months and safeguarded a \$5.9 billion fishing industry, and enabled search and rescue coverage in an area spanning 890,000 square miles.

During the patrol, the Alex Haley crew conducted 20 boardings in partnership with six different fisheries.

In addition to patrolling the Maritime Boundary Line, the Alex Haley crew joined the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force vessel, Kashima, for a high-latitude exercise in early September. The two vessels completed tactical formation maneuvering and visual communication exercises in a show of international cooperation and goodwill.

On Aug. 26, Russian Naval vessels and aircraft participating in the Russian military exercise Ocean Shield without authority directed U.S. fishing vessels that were legally fishing within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to depart the area. Alex Haley was sent to the exercise area within the EEZ to provide U.S. military presence, gather information on the incident, and educate the fishing fleet on U.S. sovereign rights. Alex Haley boarded four of the five fishing vessels known to have interacted with the Russian Navy. The information Alex Haley collected was critical to developing an appropriate diplomatic response to the Russian military interaction with the fishing fleet.

The Alex Haley is a 282-foot medium-endurance cutter that has been homeported in Kodiak since 1999. The crew of the Alex Haley performs a multitude of the Coast Guards missions.

“Despite the extraordinary challenges imposed by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the crew of the Alex Haley displayed remarkable perseverance throughout the duration of the patrol,” said Capt. Benjamin Golightly, commanding officer of

the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley. “While nearly three months away from home can be daunting, the enthusiasm, maturity, and dedication from all hands made this patrol a resounding success.”

Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant Returns after Caribbean Counter-Drug Patrol



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC 617) conducting a helicopter in-flight refueling evolution with a MH-65 assigned to Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron during flight operations off the coast of St. Augustine, Florida, Sep. 26. U.S. Coast Guard.

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant returned to Cape Canaveral Wednesday after completing a counter-drug patrol in the Caribbean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Nov. 4 release.

The crew of Vigilant spent 48 days patrolling the Caribbean, promoting maritime safety and security in support of Operation Southeast Watch and Operation Unified Resolve. The crew’s efforts focused on ensuring the safety of life at sea while also enforcing border security by conducting counter-drug and alien migrant interdiction operations.

Patrolling the Windward Passage, the waterway located between Cuba and Haiti, as well as the northern coast of Haiti, Vigilant led the execution of Operation Southeast Watch for 13 days. Providing continuous overt presence along the Haitian coast, Vigilant discouraged illegal migrants from attempting

the dangerous sea-going voyage in overloaded and unsafe vessels that put their lives at risk.

While deployed, the crew also worked alongside Coast Guard units and federal law enforcement agencies to disrupt illicit drug and migrant ventures in the Mona Passage as part of Operation Unified Resolve.

Operating in the waterway located between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the crew supported the ongoing multiagency efforts of the Caribbean Border Interagency Group by interdicting, caring for, and repatriating suspected drug smugglers and illegal migrants. The collaborative efforts of the crew with the partner units and agencies enabled the interdiction, repatriation, and disposition of 166 migrants, who were endangered by the unsafe conditions of traveling aboard grossly overloaded and unseaworthy makeshift boats.

“I am extremely proud of how well our crew continues to respond to mission needs during these challenging times,” said Cmdr. Fred Bertsch, Vigilant’s commanding officer. “The Coast Guard’s primary responsibilities of protecting mariners on the seas and securing our homeland are vital and continue despite the impacts of the pandemic. Our crew worked together to overcome the hazards presented by the coronavirus so that they could continue to carry out and meet those responsibilities and duties. They are truly remarkable in the sacrifices they make and their devotion to duty.”

The cutter Vigilant is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Cape Canaveral. The cutter crew’s primary missions include search and rescue, illegal drug interdictions, alien migrant interdictions ensuring the safety of life at sea and enforcing international and domestic maritime laws.

Coast Guard Interdicts 22 Cuban Migrants at Cay Sal Bank



A Coast Guard Cutter Isaac Mayo (WPC-1112) small boat crew embarks Cuban migrants standing on Cay Sal Bank, Bahamas, Oct. 28, 2020. The Coast Guard Cutters Isaac Mayo and Robert Yered (WPC-1104) crew transferred the migrants to Bahamian authorities in Freeport, Grand Bahama. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 2nd Class Roger Amaya

MIAMI – The Coast Guard assisted Bahamian authorities in interdicting 22 Cuban migrants at Cay Sal Bank, Bahamas, Oct. 28, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Nov. 2 release.

A Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane crew located 22 Cuban migrants on land at Cay Sal Bank.

The Coast Guard Cutter Isaac Mayo (WPC-1112) crew embarked the 21 adult Cuban males and one adult female and safely transferred one migrant to the Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered (WPC-1104) crew.

“Our crew was proud to serve such an important mission,” said Lt. Cmdr. Nick Zieser, commanding officer of the cutter Isaac Mayo. “Rescuing these migrants, who were stranded for 10 days, was challenging but rewarding as we are always ready to protect those in need on the water. We continue to discourage migrants from taking part in illegal voyages at sea. These ventures risk the lives of everyone on board in the dangerous and unforgiving Florida Straits, especially when doing so in overloaded and unseaworthy vessels with inadequate lifesaving equipment aboard.”

The Isaac Mayo crew transferred 21 Cuban migrants and the Robert Yered crew transferred one migrant to Bahamian authorities in Freeport, Grand Bahama.

The Coast Guard acted on behalf of Bahamian authorities in keeping with the comprehensive maritime agreement, a bilateral agreement between the United States and Bahamas.

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

Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry Completes Farthest FRC Patrol



The crew of the Oliver Berry travel in a round-trip patrol from Sept. 12 to Oct. 27, 2020, from Hawaii to Guam, covering a distance of approximately 9,300 miles during their journey. The crew sought to combat illegal fishing and other maritime threats across the Pacific to protect the United States and our partner's resource security and sovereignty. U.S. Coast Guard

HONOLULU – The Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry (WPC-1124) returned to homeport in Honolulu after a mission in the Pacific to curtail illegal fishing and increase maritime law enforcement self-sufficiency with international partners, the Coast Guard 14th District said in an Oct. 30 release.

The crew of the Oliver Berry traveled in a first-of-its-kind round-trip patrol spanning from Sept. 12 to Oct. 27, 2020, from Hawaii to Guam, covering a distance of approximately 9,300 miles during their journey.

“Traveling just under 10,000 nautical miles, we [CGC Oliver Berry] operated further from our homeport than any other FRC to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in portions of Oceania,” said Ensign Michael Meisenger, weapons officer on the Oliver Berry.

The Oliver Berry collaborated with the governments of Republic of the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia, strengthening maritime domain awareness and resource security within their Exclusive Economic Zones. An EEZ is an area of coastal water within a certain distance of a country’s coastline for which the country claims exclusive rights for drilling, fishing, and other economic ventures.

The Oliver Berry aided international enforcement efforts by sending observational reports and imagery to the Maritime Security Advisors and the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency, Regional Fisheries Surveillance Center, thereby increasing mission success and showcasing the Coast Guard’s unwavering commitment to partner nations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We worked to increase awareness of unlawful fishing operations in remote portions of the United States, Republic of Marshall Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia’s EEZs, and on the high seas,” said Meisenger. “We executed 19 observation reports on fishing vessels, six of which had not been previously contacted by the Coast Guard.”

Fast Response Cutters are equipped with new advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems, and boast greater range and endurance compared to their predecessors, the 110-

foot Island-class patrol boats.

The FRCs represent the Coast Guard's commitment to modernizing service assets and maintaining a strong presence and support for a free and open Indo-Pacific. Oceania covers an area of 3.3 million square miles and has a population of approximately 40 million people. Its melting pot of cultures depends on the living marine resources and maritime commerce to allow their people to thrive.

The Coast Guard combats illegal fishing and other maritime threats across the Pacific to protect their resource security and sovereignty. Combating illegal fishing is part of promoting maritime governance and a rules-based international order that is essential to a free and open Oceania.