

Eastern Shipbuilding Awards L3Harris Comms Contract for Offshore Patrol Cutter



An artist's rendition of an Offshore Patrol Cutter. Eastern Shipbuilding Group / U.S. Coast Guard

CAMDEN, N.J. – L3Harris Technologies has received a contract from Eastern Shipbuilding Group to provide the integrated communications system for the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC), L3Harris announced in an Oct. 19 release. The Coast Guard has said that the OPC program is the highest acquisition priority in the Coast Guard, providing the capability bridge between the National Security Cutter and Fast Response Cutter.

The initial award to L3Harris includes the design, development and production of the first two ship systems with options for up to as many as four OPC systems. L3Harris integrates its MarCom voice communications system, K2 tactical terminal and Symphony communications manager products. The L3Harris integrated system is also designed to support the Department of Defense's cyber risk management framework requirements, providing Eastern Shipbuilding and the Coast Guard with a lower-risk solution.

"The OPC award reinforces our investments in C5ISR technology and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to bring integrated mission-critical capabilities to the Coast Guard," said Dave Zack, president, Maritime, L3Harris. "L3Harris is continuing to develop a full range of highly reliable and affordable capabilities to enable secure interoperability across all military and interagency partners."

Offshore patrol cutters will conduct missions, including law enforcement, drug and migrant interdiction, search and rescue,

and other homeland security and defense operations. Each cutter, equipped with L3Harris technology, will be capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups and serving as a mobile command and control platform for surge operations such as hurricane response, mass migration incidents and other events. The cutters will also support Arctic objectives by regulating and protecting emerging commerce and energy exploration in Alaska.

Coast Guard Transfers \$6.8M in Cocaine, 4 Suspected Smugglers to Federal Agents



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC-625) transfers custody of four suspected smugglers and \$6.8 million dollars of seized cocaine to federal law enforcement authorities in San Juan, Puerto Rico Oct. 15, 2020. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC-625) transferred custody of four suspected smugglers and 246 kilograms of seized cocaine to federal law enforcement authorities at Sector San Juan Oct. 15, following the interdiction of a drug smuggling go-fast vessel in the Caribbean Sea.

The interdiction was the result of multi-agency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDEF) program and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF). The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the

prosecution for this case.

The estimated wholesale value of the seized drug shipment is more than \$6.8 million.

“Successful outcomes as in this case are a testament to the strong relationships between the Coast Guard and participating partner agency units who share an unwavering resolve to stopping drug smuggling vessels at sea,” said Lt. Andrew Russo, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) commanding officer. “The crew of the Heriberto Hernandez is proud to help safeguard the Caribbean and our nation’s southernmost maritime border to protect our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands against this threat.”

The bust occurred during the evening hours of Oct. 5 and early morning hours of Oct. 6, 2020, after the aircrew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air Marine Operations aircraft detected a suspicious panga style 35-foot go-fast vessel in Caribbean Sea waters near the Dominican Republic. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan directed the launch of a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft, which relieved the CBP aircraft and maintained aerial coverage of the go-fast throughout the interdiction.

The cutter Heriberto Hernandez responded to the sighting and interdicted the go-fast vessel with the assistance of the cutter’s small boat. During the interdiction, the Coast Guard boarding team seized eight bales of suspected contraband, which tested positive for cocaine.

The crew of the cutter Heriberto Hernandez embarked four men from the go-fast, two Venezuelan, a Colombian and a Dominican Republic national, along with the seized contraband. The cutter Venturous transported the suspected smugglers and contraband to San Juan, Puerto Rico, where they were transferred to awaiting Caribbean Corridor Strike Force federal law enforcement agents.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while the Cutter Venturous is a medium endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Coast Guard Repatriates 45 of 48 Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116) interdicts an illegal migrant voyage with 38 migrants Oct. 9, 2020, approximately 17 nautical miles northwest of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. This was the first of three separate migrant interdictions within 72 hours in the Mona Passage by Coast Guard and Puerto Rico Police totaling 48 migrants, whom all claimed Dominican Republic nationality. U.S. Coast Guard SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser (WPC-1116) repatriated 45 of 48 migrants to the Dominican Republic Oct. 11, following the interdiction of three illegal voyages in the Mona Passage near Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 13 release.

Two of the interdicted migrants remain in Puerto Rico to face possible federal prosecution on charges of attempted illegal re-entry into the United States.

One other female migrant is receiving medical care at a local hospital in Puerto Rico.

The interdictions are the result of ongoing multiagency efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the

Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“The close collaboration, coordination and capabilities of the Coast Guard units and of our local and federal law enforcement partners who responded to these cases helped save the lives of all 48 migrants and safeguard the nation’s southernmost maritime border,” said Lt. Joel Wyman, cutter Winslow Griesser commanding officer. “These illegal voyages greatly endanger the lives of the migrants, since for the most part, these makeshift vessels are grossly overloaded, unseaworthy and are continuously taking on water, which could cause them to sink or capsize with little or no warning.”

The first interdiction occurred Oct. 9, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage approximately 17 nautical miles northwest of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders diverted the cutter Winslow Griesser to interdict, while a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action (F.U.R.A.) marine unit also responded.

Once on scene, the Coast Guard and Puerto Rico Police marine units interdicted the 25-foot makeshift boat. The crew of the cutter Winslow Griesser safely embarked the 38 migrants, 31 men and seven women, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality.

The second interdiction also occurred on Oct. 9, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage, approximately 58 nautical miles northwest of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders diverted the Coast Guard Cutter Charles David Jr. (WPC-1107), which interdicted the 18-foot makeshift boat with the assistance of the cutter’s small boat. The cutter crew safely embarked seven migrants, five men and two women, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality. A female migrant in this group who experienced deteriorating health complications while aboard the migrant vessel, was med-

evaced to a local hospital.

A Puerto Rico Police F.U.R.A. marine unit interdicted the third illegal voyage Oct. 11, approximately two nautical miles north of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The cutter Winslow Griesser diverted to the scene and embarked three men, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality.

Once aboard the Coast Guard cutter, all migrants received food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

After embarking all migrants, the crew conducted biometrics processing for the group, which revealed the criminal and immigration history for the two migrants, who are facing federal prosecution. U.S. Border Patrol agents received custody of both migrants in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

Cutter Winslow Griesser completed the repatriation of the remaining migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel in waters just off Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Cutters Winslow Griesser and Charles David Jr. are 154-foot fast response cutters respectively homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Key West, Florida.

USS Tornado Completes Patrol to U.S. 4th Fleet



The Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship USS Tornado (PC 14) conducts a man overboard drill Sept. 16, 2020. Tornado is deployed to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility to support Joint Interagency Task Force South's mission, which includes counter illicit drug trafficking in the Caribbean and

Eastern Pacific. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dan Serianni

MAYPORT, Fla. – The Cyclone-class patrol ship USS Tornado (PC 14) and embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 408 (LEDET) returned to Mayport, Florida, October 13, following a 75-day counter-narcotics patrol in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, said Lt.j.g Miranda Rossum, U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs, said in a release.

Tornado and embarked LEDET contributed to Joint Interagency Task Force South's disruption of an estimated 1906 kilograms of cocaine. This led to keeping an estimated street value of 133 million dollars' worth of drugs off U.S. streets.

"I could not be more proud of the ship and her crew, Tornado is going out on top," said Lt. Cmdr. Graham Van Hook, USS Tornado commanding officer. "Tornado is a beautiful ship that has repeatedly answered the call."

USS Tornado's size makes it capable of navigating into shallow waters as well as working with partner nation coast guards closer to shore than other U.S. ships.

Tornado joined other U.S. Navy warships, numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperating in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, are all playing a role in counterdrug operations.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the

Caribbean, Central and South American region.

Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless Nets \$59 Million in Cocaine during 56-Day Patrol



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless (WMEC-624) offloads bales of cocaine weighing 2290 kilograms at Sector St. Petersburg Oct. 7, 2020. Federal law enforcement agents received custody of the \$ 86.6 million drug shipment and 10 male-suspected smugglers apprehended. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 1st Class Ayla Hudson

NEW ORLEANS – The Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless and crew returned to their homeport of Pensacola, Florida, after a 56-day patrol where the cutter and crew interdicted and seized more than 59 million dollars in cocaine, the Coast Guard 8th District said in an Oct. 11 release.

In late August, the Dauntless crew responded in support of Hurricane Laura relief efforts as an offshore search and rescue asset near Lake Charles, Louisiana. The crew also provided critical updates on the locations of navigational aids marking the Port Arthur entrance channel and worked to respond and relay information concerning distress signals to the appropriate search and rescue mission coordinator.

After assisting relief efforts, the Dauntless crew transited through the Panama Canal. They crossed into the Pacific Ocean and supported interagency efforts in combating the transport of illegal drugs. Working closely with interagency assets, the Dauntless crew interdicted and seized approximately 3,500

pounds of cocaine with an estimated street value of over 59 million dollars.

“Every Dauntless shipmate put forth an astounding amount of effort to overcome challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as hurricanes Marco and Laura to ready themselves and the cutter for the counter-narcotics mission,” said Cmdr. Paul S. McConnell, Dauntless’ commanding officer. “Their preparation and effort resulted in the successful execution of multiple interdictions. I am proud of the crew’s accomplishments, and grateful for the sacrifices of my shipmates and their families back home, who have been enduring the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and rebuilding in the wake of Hurricane Sally, which made landfall near Pensacola, Florida, while Dauntless was underway.”

This patrol marks the Dauntless’ second operational patrol during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Dauntless is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola.

Coast Guard, CBP Interdict 23 Illegal Migrants, 2 Suspected Smugglers



Pictured are 23 illegal migrants and two suspected smugglers on a 25-foot pleasure craft approximately 10 miles east of Palm Beach, Florida, Oct. 09, 2020. Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations interdicted 23 illegal Haitian migrants and two Bahamian suspected smugglers, repatriated the migrants and transferred the suspected

smugglers to CBP. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew Huber

KEY WEST, Fla. – The Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations interdicted 23 illegal Haitian migrants and two Bahamian suspected smugglers approximately 10 miles east of Palm Beach on Oct. 9, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 11 release.

The Coast Guard Cutter Richard Etheridge (WPC-1102) crew and a CBP AMO surface asset crew interdicted a 25-foot pleasure craft with 25 people aboard approximately 10 miles east of Palm Beach. During the interdiction, it was determined that this was an illegal migrant smuggling operation involving 15 Haitian male migrants, eight female Haitian migrants and two Bahamian male suspected smugglers. One female migrant was medevaced by a Coast Guard Station Lake Worth Inlet 45-foot Response Boat–Medium crew over the course of the interdiction.

The cutter Richard Etheridge crew transferred the two suspected smugglers to CBP for potential prosecution and repatriated 22 Bahamian migrants in accordance with federal policy.

“I’m proud of my crew and the collaboration between Station Lake Worth Inlet and CBP AMO involved in these cases,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jane Sarnecky, commanding officer of the cutter Richard Etheridge. “They ensured the safety of all 23 migrants and two human smugglers in a fluid and dynamic environment in which migrant condition and weather quickly deteriorated. If you are considering taking part in an illegal voyage do not take to the sea, you are risking your life and the lives of everyone else aboard. The Florida Straits are dangerous and unforgiving, especially in the case of grossly overloaded and unseaworthy boats with inadequate lifesaving equipment aboard.”

The Coast Guard interdicted approximately 418 Haitian migrants

who have attempted to illegally enter the U.S via the maritime environment in fiscal year 2020, which began Oct. 1, 2019, compared to 885 Haitian migrants in fiscal year 2019. These numbers represent the total number of at-sea interdictions, landings and disruptions in the Florida Straits, the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean.

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.

USCG, Partners Interdict 2 tons of Drugs throughout Caribbean in September



The Coast Guard and partner nations halted more than two tons of cocaine trafficking in the Caribbean in September. This image shows the result of a rain from late August in the Caribbean, where 225 kilograms of cocaine were seized. U.S. Coast Guard

MIAMI – The Coast Guard and partner nations halted more than 4,000 pounds of cocaine during September, worth almost \$73 million, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 8 release.

These interdictions were a direct result of the partnerships with crews aboard Dutch, British and U.S. naval ships with embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment boarding teams who worked jointly with U.S. Southern Command and other

Department of Defense agencies to detect and interdict illegal drugs and stopping the flow of drugs throughout the Caribbean.

“Coast Guard law enforcement detachments – or LEDETs – are highly specialized and play a vital role in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in the maritime domain,” said Rear Adm. Eric C. Jones, commander of Seventh Coast Guard District. “Our LEDETs deploy with the U.S. Navy and Allied navies supporting enhanced counter narcotics operations, bringing broad law enforcement authority critical to successful interdictions throughout the Caribbean Basin.”

The Coast Guard’s Western Hemisphere Strategy assigns three specific priorities of combatting networks, securing borders and safeguarding commerce. To achieve success in these priorities, the Coast Guard continuously strives for close coordination between partnering naval assets as well as its own. Effective communication, persistence and teamwork are among many characteristics that contribute to mission success. The diversity of the assets that contributed to these interdictions demonstrates the effectiveness of the high level of cooperation between the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy, British Royal navy, and Dutch navy. The Coast Guard remains committed to the enhancement of counter-narcotic operations throughout the maritime domain to diminish transnational threats and maximize our country’s security.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives. Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions for these 12 interdictions by Attorney's Offices from the District of Puerto Rico, the Middle District of Florida and the Southern District of Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 11th District](#), headquartered in Alameda, California, and the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean Sea is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 7th District](#), headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the Coast Guard.

In 1986, [Public Law 99-570](#) authorized Coast Guard personnel, such as LEDETs, to conduct law enforcement operations from U.S. Navy ships, in addition to Coast Guard vessels. In 1988, [Public Law 100-456](#) required all Navy surface units transiting drug interdiction areas to carry Coast Guard law enforcement personnel increasing the need for LEDETs. In addition, the 1989 National Defense Authorization Act tasked [Department of Defense](#) agencies with monitoring maritime and aerial importation of illegal drugs. The act named the Coast Guard as the lead agency for waterborne drug interdiction and apprehension of illegal drug traffickers.

**Coast Guard Interdicts,
Repatriates 33 Migrants to**

the Dominican Republic



The crew of the cutter Heriberto Hernandez small boat is on scene with an illegal voyage interdicted moments earlier in Mona Passage waters near Puerto Rico Oct. 6, 2020. The migrant vessel was the first of two illegal voyages interdicted by the cutter Heriberto Hernandez within hours of each other, which totaled 33 Dominican migrants, who were repatriated to a Dominican Republic Navy patrol boat near Punta Cana, Dominican Republic Oct. 7, 2020. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) repatriated 33 migrants to the Dominican Republic Oct. 7, following the interdiction of two illegal voyages in the Mona Passage near Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The interdictions are the result of ongoing multiagency efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“I’m proud of the crew of the Heriberto Hernandez and our fellow partner agencies, who responded and worked tirelessly throughout the night to interdict two migrant smuggling voyages and ensure all 33 migrants were safely recovered from these grossly overloaded and unseaworthy makeshift boats,” said Lt. Andrew Russo, Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) commanding officer.

The first interdiction occurred late Tuesday night, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage 43 nautical miles north of Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan directed the launch of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft from Air Station Miami to relieve the CBP aircraft and diverted the cutter Heriberto Hernandez to interdict the suspect vessel.

Once on scene, the crew of cutter Heriberto Hernandez interdicted the 25-foot makeshift boat and safely embarked 20 migrants, 19 men and a woman, for safety of life at sea concerns. The migrant group claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals.

The second interdiction occurred early Wednesday morning, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage 38 nautical miles northwest of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico. Shortly thereafter, cutter Heriberto Hernandez arrived on scene and interdicted a 20-foot makeshift boat with the assistance of the cutter's small boat. The cutter crew safely embarked 13 migrants from the migrant vessel, two women and 11 men, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality.

Once aboard the Coast Guard cutter, all migrants received 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. There were no migrants in these cases reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez rendezvoused and repatriated the migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel near the Dominican Republic.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Coast Guard Begins Testing

USVs off Hawaii



A concept photo of the unmanned surface vehicle that will be demonstrated by Spatial Integrated System in the maritime domain awareness technology evaluation by the Coast Guard Research and Development Center this summer. U.S. Coast Guard ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard Research and Development Center (RDC) has begun testing and evaluation of unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) off the south shore of Oahu, Hawaii, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a release.

The testing is scheduled to run from Oct. 7 through Nov. 5. The testing will be conducted in partnership with local Coast Guard units.

“The tests will focus on autonomous vessel systems from Saildrone and Spatial Integration Systems, in addition to a USCG owned autonomous research vessel made by Metal Shark,” the release said.

“This evaluation will examine each vessel’s ability to provide persistent maritime domain awareness, especially in remote areas of the oceans. While potentially applicable to many Coast Guard missions, there is potential these technologies will help enable the Coast Guard to better protect critical natural living marine resources from Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated [IUU] fishing and other illicit activities.”

The Coast Guard awarded two contracts on Feb. 7, 2020, totaling nearly \$1.8 million, for USVs. Approximately \$1.1 million goes to Saildrone Inc. of Alameda, California, and approximately \$660,000 to Spatial Integrated System Inc. of Virginia Beach, Virginia. The USVs will be contractor-owned/contractor-operated during the testing and evaluation.

The testing will be used to examine “the operational utility of the USV, including feasibility, costs and benefits,” the

Coast Guard said. “Following the completion of the evaluation, the RDC will publish a report with recommendations for potential future actions for the Coast Guard.”

Last month, Boston-based Sea Machines Robotics, partnered with shipbuilder Metal Shark Boats, of Jeanerette, Louisiana, supplied the RDC with a new Sharktech 29 Defiant USV (see SeapowerMagazine.org, Sept. 29).

The Defiant is a “29-foot, welded-aluminum monohull pilothouse vessel that comes equipped with the Sea Machines SM300 autonomous-command and remote-helm control technology, offering the USCG capabilities including transit autonomy, collaborative autonomy, collision avoidance and remote vessel monitoring,” Sea Machines said in a release.

“During demonstrations scheduled for October off the coast of Hawaii, the RDC team will test and evaluate the Sharktech vessel’s autonomous capabilities for their potential in supporting USCG surveillance, interdiction, patrol and other missions. Following the Hawaii demonstrations, the autonomous vessel will be returned to the RDC’s New London facility, where it will be used in additional testing to investigate application to various Coast Guard missions.”

Coast Guard Cutter Offloads \$67+ Million of Cocaine in San Diego



Rear Adm. Peter Gauiter, the 11th Coast Guard District

commander, Cmdr. Daniel Ursino, the Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast commanding officer, and crew of Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast, stand in front of the pallets of cocaine the crew of Steadfast seized, July 26, 2019. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 2nd Class Jordan Akiyama

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC-623) offloaded approximately 3,905 pounds of suspected cocaine in San Diego, Oct. 1, the Coast 11th District said in a release.

The drugs, worth an estimated \$67 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean and represent two suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America in early September by the Steadfast crew.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives. Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperate in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean 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. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Steadfast is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter that was

commissioned in 1968 and is homeported in Astoria, Oregon.