

# Ingalls Shipbuilding Completes Acceptance Trials for NSC Stone



Ingalls Shipbuilding successfully completed acceptance trials for the U.S. Coast Guard's ninth National Security Cutter, Stone (WMSL 758). Lance Davis/HII PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding division successfully completed acceptance sea trials for the U.S. Coast Guard's newest national security cutter, Stone (WMSL 758), the company said in an Oct. 2 release. During sea trials, the ship spent two days in the Gulf of Mexico proving its systems.

"I am very proud of the Ingalls team that conducted another outstanding acceptance trial on our ninth national security cutter Stone. This ship, like all of the national security cutters we have delivered, will be capable of undertaking the most challenging Coast Guard missions with great capability and endurance," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias said. "We are proud of our shipbuilders and the state-of-the-art design and construction of Stone, and we look forward to the ship's upcoming delivery."

Ingalls has delivered eight Legend-class NSCs with two more under construction and one additional under contract. Stone is scheduled to deliver later this year and will be homeported in Charleston, South Carolina.

NSC 9 was named to honor Coast Guard officer 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 transatlantic 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.

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## Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf Returns Home After 3-Month Patrol



Fireman Jose Castro-Acosta salutes during morning colors during a drug offload from Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf in San Diego, Sep. 10, 2020. The narcotics, worth an estimated \$390 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean between May and August 2020. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 2nd Class Travis Magee

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) returned home to Alameda, California, Oct. 3 following a three-month, 15,000-mile, multi-mission patrol, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Bertholf's crew spent more than 50 days patrolling the Eastern Pacific Ocean [conducting a counter-narcotics mission](#), resulting in the apprehension of 6,700 pounds of cocaine with an estimated wholesale value of more than \$115 million.

The crew also patrolled over 3,000 square nautical miles of Ecuadorian and international waters conducting a joint patrol

with the Ecuadorian navy to [detect and deter potential Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated \(IUU\) fishing in the vicinity of the Galapagos Islands](#). Bertholf and the Ecuadorian naval vessel LAE Isla San Cristobal (LG-30), provided persistent presence and surveillance of fishing activity throughout the region during the week-long mission.

The joint operation highlights a significant Coast Guard partnership with a South American country to detect, deter and ensure adherence to international maritime norms for fishing.

“It was a unique opportunity to sail together with the Ecuadorian navy, and we were impressed by their professionalism and dedication to the fight against illegal fishing,” said Capt. Brian Anderson, Bertholf’s commanding officer. “This joint operation demonstrates the effectiveness and importance of our international partnerships.”

Following the two month multi-mission Eastern Pacific patrol, [Bertholf offloaded more than 26,000 pounds of cocaine](#) Sept. 10 in San Diego; an accumulation from multiple U.S. ships conducting counter narcotic operations in the Eastern Pacific.

Bertholf’s crew entered a three-week long Tailored Ship Training Assessment (TSTA) in San Diego following their patrol. TSTA is a comprehensive evaluation on the crew’s capabilities to respond to a wide-range of scenarios from rescuing a man overboard to battling a fire on the ship.

“I’m extremely proud of the hard work and dedication displayed by the men and women of the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, especially in this current environment,” said Anderson. “The crew adapted and implemented new protocols in response to the added risk of COVID-19 exposure in the course of operations. They remained focused on what they needed to do to keep each other safe and effectively accomplish the mission of keeping

these drugs off our streets, which will save countless lives.”

To ensure the safety of Bertholf’s crew deploying during the COVID-19 global pandemic, the crew conducted pre-deployment COVID-19 testing, followed by a 14-day quarantine and a second round of testing. The crew maintained social distancing until the results of the second test came back negative. Throughout their patrol, Bertholf’s crew maintained strict health precautions during all interactions with the public and during boardings, including wearing N95 respirators and undergoing intensive decontamination procedures following the completion of each boarding.

Commissioned in 2008, Bertholf was the Coast Guard’s first 418-foot Legend-class national security cutters built, and one of four homeported in Alameda. National security cutters have a crew of more than 150 and are among the largest and most technologically sophisticated vessels in the Coast Guard’s fleet. The cutters can operate globally in the most demanding open ocean environments, from the North Pacific’s hazardous fishing grounds to the Eastern Pacific’s vast approaches, where its crews battle transnational organized crime networks.

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## **Coast Guard Offloads \$48M in Cocaine, 6 Suspected Smugglers in Puerto Rico**



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez

(WPC-1114) offloaded 62 bales of cocaine weighing 1,981 kilograms and one 28-kilogram bale of amphetamines at Sector San Juan Oct. 2, 2020, following two separate interdictions of smuggling go-fast vessels in the Caribbean Sea. .S. Coast Guard / Ricardo Castrodad

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) offloaded approximately 1,981 kilograms of cocaine, 28 kilograms of amphetamines and six suspected smugglers at Sector San Juan Oct. 2, following two separate interdictions in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 3 release.

The seized illegal narcotics have a wholesale value of more than \$48 million.

The interdictions are the result of multi-agency and international partnership efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) 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 the two cases.

"The Coast Guard is uniquely equipped to support the U.S. Navy and partner nation navies and coast guards in the interdiction of illicit drugs," said Rear Adm. Eric C. Jones, Seventh Coast Guard District commander. "Our relationships with nations across the Caribbean basin, along with our law enforcement authorities, enable us to provide essential support to the mission against international criminal networks attempting to smuggle people and drugs into the U.S. We strive to continue building these relationships, further enabling our essential missions that safeguard the American people and our nation's vital maritime commerce."

"We continue to work with federal and state law enforcement agencies, along with our partners from the Royal Netherlands and United Kingdom navies, against drug traffickers in our area," said W. Stephen Muldrow, U.S. Attorney for the District

of Puerto Rico. "These seizures mark two more successful operations in our fight against criminal organizations attempting to use our territories as a hub for their illegal operations."

The most recent interdiction occurred Monday, Sept. 28. During a routine patrol of the RFA Argus, a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship from the United Kingdom, the ship's helicopter crew observed a suspect go-fast vessel with multiple packages and barrels of fuel onboard. The HNLMS Groningen, a Holland-class offshore patrol vessel from the Royal Netherlands Navy that was operating nearby with a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment onboard, responded and interdicted the go-fast with the assistance of the ship's surface asset.

The crew of the HNLMS Groningen embarked three smugglers; a Colombian, a Venezuelan and a Dominican Republic national from the go-fast. They also located and recovered aboard the go-fast 49 bales that weighed 1,721 kilograms and tested positive for cocaine, and one package that weighed 28 kilograms and tested positive for amphetamines.

The second interdiction occurred Sept. 24, after the aircrew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected a suspicious 35-foot go-fast vessel transiting without the use of navigational lights. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan directed the launch of a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft that relieved the first aircraft and maintained aerial coverage of the go-fast.

The cutter Heriberto Hernandez responded to the sighting and interdicted the go-fast with the assistance of the cutter's small boat and the Coast Guard aircrew. The Coast Guard boarding team embarked the three men, who claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals, along with 13 bales of suspected contraband that were located under a blue tarp aboard the go-fast. The seized contraband tested positive for cocaine and

weighed 260 kilograms.

The cutter Heriberto Hernandez transported the seized contraband and suspected smugglers from both cases to Sector San Juan, where awaiting federal law enforcement agencies received custody.

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

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## **DHS S&T, USCG Partner to Develop High-Tech, Ruggedized Tracking Buoy**



Kenautics' Diver Navigation and Imaging System will be repackaged into a ruggedized buoy. Kenautics

WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [Science and Technology Directorate's](#) (S&T) [Silicon Valley Innovation Program](#) (SVIP) has awarded \$157,801 in Phase 1 funding to Kenautics, Inc., of Encinitas, California, to provide a more reliable system for marking objects in water, under SVIP's [Maritime Object Tracking Technology](#) (MOTT) solicitation, the department said in an October release.

The MOTT solicitation supports U.S. [Coast Guard](#) (USCG) missions by seeking more reliable tracking systems for accurately marking and monitoring objects in the water for recovery. The solution is intended to be used during operational missions to bolster waterway security, drug interdiction, search and rescue, and disaster response.

Kenautics proposes to adapt their handheld Diver Navigation and Imaging System – meant for waypoint navigation; subsea imaging; situational awareness; and information, surveillance, and reconnaissance – by repackaging the system into a ruggedized buoy deployable from land, air, and sea under adverse conditions. The Kenautics GPS-AIS Navigation and Tracking Buoy will be usable in both overt and covert operations and will be designed to provide tracking and position data, geo-referenced forensic data sets, localization capabilities, and interactive functions.

“Working together with DHS S&T and SVIP allows the Coast Guard to pursue innovative solutions through start-ups and small companies that are developing advanced technology, and we are looking forward to Kenautics’ Phase 1 effort,” said Wendy Chaves, chief of Coast Guard Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, and Innovation.

“This marks the first award made under our partnership with USCG,” said Melissa Oh, SVIP Managing Director. “With experience designing for Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal, special operators, and first responders, we are optimistic that this project with Kenautics will enhance the USCG’s ability to carry out their missions.”

The MOTT solicitation is open through 12:00 p.m. PST on February 20, 2021. Applications will be accepted on a continuous, rolling basis, and SVIP will evaluate applications three times on a quarterly basis. The next application deadlines are Oct. 20, 2020, and Feb. 20, 2021.

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# Coast Guard Cutter Northland Returns Home from Patrol



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Northland conducts a live firing of the MK 75 76mm weapons system while underway, September 20, 2020, in the Atlantic Ocean. The cutter returned to its homeport of Portsmouth, Virginia, Wednesday after a 47-day patrol . U.S. Coast Guard / Seaman Vincent Bologno  
PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Northland (WMEC-904) returned to its homeport in Portsmouth after a 47-day patrol conducting counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, Sept. 30, the Coast Guard 5th District said in an Oct. 1 release.

The Northland deployed in August and offered pre-storm information and assistance to locals off the coast of Haiti.

Prior to the arrival of Tropical Storm Laura off the island of Hispaniola, Northland crewmembers located a disoriented fisherman who had drifted approximately 17 miles offshore. The crew provided him with food and water as the ship escorted him back to land well ahead of the storm's passage.

The Northland also hosted a civilian Haitian-Creole interpreter for the majority of the patrol to assist with translations.

“Before this mission I did not know anything about the Coast Guard,” said Rishi Jolivian, a Haitian-Creole interpreter aboard the Northland. “But, now I have so much gratitude and appreciation for what the Coast Guard does. I have tremendous respect for the Northland and it’s truly an awesome place to be.”

The Northland crewmembers provided Coast Guard presence along the north coast of Haiti by conducting 20 transits through the

Canal de Tortue. The crew also maintained a robust training schedule earning more than 160 qualifications in addition to running over 60 shipboard drills and over 30 hours of small boat training. A highlight for the crew was the live-fire gunnery exercise of the 76mm Mk75 Gun Weapon System.

“I am truly humbled to command a crew that diligently works to get the job done,” stated Cmdr. Patricia Bennett, commanding officer of the Northland. “Their remarkable ability to overcome the inherent challenges of serving aboard an aging 36-year old asset downrange during a global pandemic cannot be overstated. The crew maintained a high level of morale and camaraderie that, in my opinion, is really only encountered by those of us who serve aboard Coast Guard cutters. This crew truly demonstrates the spirit of why I go to sea.”

Upon the Northland’s return to homeport, the crew will conduct critical maintenance and repairs to extend the ship’s service life and will undergo a rigorous training assessment to ensure emergency readiness for future deployments.

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

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**U.S. Coast Guard Conducts  
Joint Arctic Operations,  
Scientific Research Off**

# Greenland



USCGC CAMPBELL ventured into Disko Bay with the HDMS Knud Rasmussen for joint helicopter training exercises. Disko Bay is known for its heavy concentration of large icebergs calving off the Jacobshavn Glacier. U.S. COAST GUARD ATLANTIC DIVISION KITTERY, Maine – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) returned to homeport Tuesday, following a two-month deployment supporting joint Arctic operations off Greenland’s western coast, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Sept. 29 release.

Campbell’s crew contributed to joint exercises, research and development efforts, and critical diplomatic engagements while covering more than 11,500 miles (10,000 nautical miles).

“I am very proud of the efforts and adaptability of every one of Campbell’s crew who demonstrated the ability to operate and execute our mission aboard one of the finest Famous-class cutters in the fleet, said Capt. Thomas Crane, commanding officer of Campbell. “Their dedication to duty and commitment to the Coast Guard helps to affirm the United States as an Arctic nation. It is also a credit to the name Campbell and our five predecessors. In addition to notable narcotics seizures and being the command ship for the 1996 TWA 800 recovery, we are now the first 270-foot medium-endurance cutter to earn the Arctic Service Medal.”

Campbell sailed with additional support, including an embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and aviation detachment consisting of two pilots and four aircrew, including a rescue swimmer. In all, eight shipriders augmented the 100-person crew during the patrol, assisting in operations, providing health services, and documenting the journey.

“I am humbled by the opportunity to be a part of this historic

mission and am glad our crew's experiences will be shared with family, friends and future generations," Crane said. "Going to sea is challenging and requires personal sacrifices both from our crew and loved ones left onshore. Still, the camaraderie, teamwork and pride of our crew are the reasons I go to sea. Campbell is a great ship with a great crew able to execute missions of strategic national significance amid a global pandemic."

In early August, Campbell departed Kittery for Nuuk, Greenland, to participate in joint search-and-rescue exercise operations with French and Royal Danish naval assets.

"This effort strengthens international partnerships and provides a foundation for standard operations in the rapidly developing Arctic maritime environment," said Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, commander U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. "As interest and maritime traffic in the area increases, the importance of the U.S. Coast Guard's interoperability with allied partners becomes more critical to ensuring we protect national and shared security interests. Exercising our unique blend of polar operational capability, regulatory authority and international leadership across the full spectrum of maritime governance is vital to the future of the Arctic."

The Kingdom of Denmark defense force's Joint Arctic Command Search and Rescue Exercise ARGUS included 13 simulated coastal and open-ocean scenarios, evaluating processes and interoperability through communications testing, vessel towing evolutions, rescue boat training, and helicopter sea and land operations.

Campbell's crew employed its embarked Dolphin crew extensively, conducting joint evolutions and professional maritime exchanges with the Royal Danish navy vessels HDMS Knud Rasmussen and HDMS Triton. They also applied NATO procedures to test interoperability with regard to ship-

controlled approaches, launch, recovery and hoisting. The crews conducted joint U.S.-Danish surface and air operations in Eternity Fjord and Disko Bay, Greenland, the most active iceberg-producing area globally.

Professional exchanges with HDMS Knud Rasmussen provide an opportunity to gain valuable navigation knowledge along Greenland's coastline and fjord system. Campbell patrolled the Labrador Sea waters, Davis Strait and the Baffin Bay, navigating Greenland's largely uncharted western coast, including ice-laden bays and fjords, often using rudimentary sounding data as electronic charts are unavailable for the area. Throughout the patrol, Campbell safely completed over 200 helicopter evolutions, including 16 joint evolutions with the Danish navy.

In support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, International Ice Patrol, and Coast Guard Research and Development Center, Campbell's crew conducted testing of specialized equipment and resources in the Arctic environment. They deployed oceanographic research buoys across Baffin Bay, the Labrador Sea and the North Atlantic to measure ocean currents and wave heights that influence iceberg drift and deterioration.

"This valuable data can provide a better understanding of the lifecycle of icebergs that impact transatlantic shipping lanes," said Mike Hicks, of the International Ice Patrol.

IIP also analyzed 317 synthetic-aperture radar and multispectral images from satellites to monitor iceberg danger during Campbell's operations. This effort, led by IIP's Lt. Don Rudnickas, denotes the first time in history, novel, scalable and tailored iceberg warning products were produced with only satellite observations, depicting iceberg danger at higher granularity using oceanographic models to provide forecasted iceberg positions.

“This input significantly shapes the future of iceberg warning products in the North Atlantic and expands the capability of IIP to provide direct, tailorable support to vessels operating independently: an ability beyond the IIP’s statutory mission, but one that is likely to become highly desired with increasing Arctic operations,” said Hicks.

Mr. Matthew Lees was the RDC Demonstrations Liaison and coordinated technology evaluations for the patrol. These included an Iridium Certus Terminal, which helped provide internet access for the crew to maintain communications with Atlantic Area; two different enhanced night vision goggle devices improved law enforcement and flight operations, even integrated into ship’s display screens; a long-range acoustic device was evaluated for enhanced communications with vessels at longer distances; and a handheld Glare Helios Green Laser tested for similar stand-off hailing capabilities.

The crew also learned essential lessons using a FiFish remotely operated vehicle in cold weather to conduct underwater inspections.

“As cruise ship and commercial vessel traffic increases through the Northwest Passage, Campbell’s recent patrol highlights our commitment to ensuring the safety and security of U.S. citizens,” said Rear Adm. Thomas Allan, commander Coast Guard 1st District. “This was also a fantastic demonstration of how we work with our partners as we seek to respect sovereignty, maximize the use of our assets, and promote environmental stewardship.”

They facilitated multiple key diplomatic engagement opportunities throughout their Arctic deployment. Campbell’s crew welcomed aboard Danish Maj. Gen. Kim Joergensen, commander of Joint Arctic Command, and Sung Choi, U.S. consul in Nuuk. Campbell’s diplomatic work was underscored by the

opportunity to host Greenland's Premier, Kim Kielsen, signifying the importance of international cooperation for the region, according to the release.

"Campbell's efforts continue the United States' strong relationship with Greenland, furthering a positive foundation for how the Coast Guard will interact and operate in the region," said Poulin. "As an Arctic nation, cooperation and understanding of the dynamic and ever-changing Arctic operating environment is vital. The U.S. Coast Guard is the primary polar and Arctic surface operator of the U.S. military. The Coast Guard is committed to working collaboratively with like-minded partners through exercises like ARGUS strengthening global maritime security, regional stability, and economic prosperity."

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## **Coast Guard Interdicts 9 Cuban Migrants**



A Coast Guard Cutter William Trump (WPC-1111) smallboat crew and a Coast Guard Station Marathon 33-foot Special Purpose Craft-Law Enforcement crew interdict a rustic vessel 10 miles south of Key Colony Beach, Florida, Sept. 27, 2020. U.S. COAST GUARD

KEY WEST, Fla. – The Coast Guard interdicted nine Cuban migrants approximately 10 miles south of Key Colony Beach, Florida, Sept. 27, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Sept. 29 release.

Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders received a report of a migrant vessel with nine people aboard south of Key Colony Beach. Watchstanders launched a Coast Guard Station Marathon

33-foot Special Purpose Craft-Law Enforcement crew and launched Coast Guard Cutter William Trump (WPC-1111) crew.

Both crews arrived on scene and the cutter William Trump crew safely embarked the 9 male Cuban migrants. The Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore (WPC-110) crew repatriated the nine Cuban migrants to Cabanas, Cuba.

The Coast Guard interdicted approximately 40 Cuban 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 327 Cuban 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.

“The crew and I are extremely pleased with the outcome of the recent joint interdiction with our shipmates from Station Marathon,” said Lt. Kyle Pearson, command officer of the cutter William Trump. “Sector Key West’s readiness posture and increased Maritime Domain Awareness allowed for a prompt and safe interdiction, preserving both the safety of life at sea and the integrity of our maritime borders.”

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## **Coast Guard Repatriates 20**

# Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) cutter boat helps transfer 20 migrants, who claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals, to the Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC-617) during a rendezvous in the Mona Passage Sept. 27, 2020. U.S. COAST GUARD

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC-617) repatriated 20 migrants to the Dominican Republic between Sept. 27 and Sept. 29, following the interdiction of an illegal migrant voyage in the Mona Passage just off Rincon, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Sept. 29 release.

The interdiction is the result of ongoing multiagency efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group CBIG.

“The crew of the Heriberto Hernandez is glad to help save all 20 lives from this grossly overloaded makeshift vessel,” said Lt. Andrew Russo, Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) commanding officer. “Unfortunately like in most cases, the conditions these migrants faced placed their lives in great danger. These makeshift vessels are unstable; they are unseaworthy and continuously take on water. Throughout the voyage, the migrants are exposed to the elements and leaking fuel, and they rarely have any serviceable lifesaving equipment onboard.”

Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan received a communication late Saturday night from a Ramey Border Patrol Sector agent, who informed a Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit was on scene with an illegal voyage, approximately five nautical miles southwest of Rincon, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders diverted the Coast

Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez to the scene.

Once on scene with the interdicted 20-foot makeshift boat, the crew of cutter Heriberto Hernandez safely embarked the migrants for safety of life at sea concerns. The migrant vessel was transporting 16 adult men and two women, as well as two male unaccompanied minors, who claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals.

Once aboard a 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 later transferred the migrants to the cutter Vigilant, which in turn completed the repatriation of the migrants. Eighteen of the migrants were repatriated at sea, where they were transferred to a Dominican Republic navy vessel Sunday, while the remaining two were repatriated and transferred to local authorities in Santo Domingo Tuesday morning.

Cutters Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while the cutter Vigilant is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Port Canaveral, Florida.

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## **Coast Guard, OPBAT Halt Drug**

# Smuggling Operation Near Bahamas



Operations Bahamas and Turks and Caicos personnel stand amongst 2,274 pounds of interdicted marijuana near Exuma, Bahamas, Monday. Royal Bahamas Police Force MIAMI – The Coast Guard, along with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air Marine Operation (CBP-AMO), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) interdicted four Bahamian suspected drug smugglers, Sept. 21, approximately 10 miles south of the Exuma Island chain in the Bahamas, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Sept. 23 release.

Coast Guard 7th District watchstanders initially received a report of a go-fast vessel crew suspected of drug smuggling transiting northbound approximately 10 miles south of Exuma Islands, Bahamas. Operations Bahamas and Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) launched two Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crews with DEA agents aboard that assisted a CBP-AMO Maritime Patrol Aircraft crew in tracking the go-fast vessel for more than four hours. Additionally, one of the MH-60 helicopter crews vectored the Bahamas police boat crew for intercept and a high-speed pursuit that led to the successful interdiction of the drug-laden go fast.

During the pursuit, one of the suspected smugglers was injured, and an MH-60 helicopter crew medevaced the suspect to Exuma International Airport for further transfer to medical facilities in Nassau. The RBPF apprehended the other three suspects and seized 2,274 pounds of marijuana.

“This collaborative success is a testament to the longstanding relationship we share with all our OPBAT partners and has allowed us to keep over 2,000 pounds of illegal narcotics off the streets,” said Cmdr. Mike Benson, the OPBAT director

stationed in Nassau. “The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Basin requires a unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring, interdiction, and criminal prosecutions. We are very fortunate to have such a healthy working relationship with our partner nations.”

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## **Coast Guard, RBDF Seize 12,000+ Pounds of Illegal Catch off Bahamas**



Coast Guard watchstanders and the Royal Bahamas Defence Force crew interdict two Dominican Republic-flagged ships illegally fishing off Diamond Point, Great Bahama Bank, Sept. 17, 2020. Royal Bahamas Defence Forces

MIAMI – Coast Guard watchstanders and the Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) crew interdicted two Dominican Republic-flagged ships Sept. 24 illegally fishing off Diamond Point, Great Bahama Bank, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Watchstanders from the Coast Guard’s Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos operation center coordinated with RBDF crews to board two commercial fishing vessels, El Ship and Angel Gabriel, which had 83 fishermen aboard.

The RBDF boarding team seized more than 12,000 pounds of illegally caught fish and lobster.

The partnership between the Coast Guard and RBDF to catch these illegal fishermen came just days after the Coast Guard released a new strategy to enhance global safety, security,

and stewardship of the maritime domain by combating [Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated \(IUU\) fishing](#).

IUU fishing is a collection of dishonest fishing practices, both on the high seas and in areas within national jurisdiction, that threatens global geo-political security and prosperity and weakens rules-based order; especially as the worldwide demand for fish as a protein source continues to grow. The strategy announces the Coast Guard's commitment to leading an international effort to combat illegal exploitation of the ocean's fish stocks and protect our national interests.

"The Seventh Coast Guard District includes a 1.8 million square mile area of responsibility shared with 32 foreign countries and overseas territories," said Rear Adm. Eric C. Jones, commander, Seventh District. "The Coast Guard's recently released Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Strategic Outlook is a commitment to our international partners throughout this region, and I look forward to continuing to build and maintain strong relationships with our like-minded foreign allies as we work together to combat the threat IUU fishing poses to our region."

The vessels and crew were apprehended and escorted to New Providence, Bahamas for further enforcement action.