

Coast Guard Offloads More than \$101 Million in Illegal Narcotics



A crewmember from Coast Guard Cutter Northland offloads illegal narcotics in Port Everglades, Florida, Nov. 11, 2022.
U.S. COAST GUARD

MIAMI – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Northland (WMEC 904) offloaded approximately 5,363 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$101 million in Port Everglades, Nov. 18, along with 11 suspected smugglers who were apprehended to face prosecution in federal court by the Department of Justice, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The drugs were interdicted, during five separate cases, in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea by crews from:

- Royal Netherlands Navy Ship HNLMS Holland (P840),

embarked USCG Law Enforcement Detachment 408 and a USCG Helicopter Interdiction Squadron helicopter

- U.S. Navy ships USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) and USS Wichita (LCS 13), and embarked USCG Law Enforcement Detachments 104 and 107
- USCGC Valiant (WMEC 621)
- USCGC Venturous (WMEC 625) and embarked USCG Helicopter Interdiction Squadron helicopter

“We are proud of the drug seizures the crews of our sister ships recently completed. We are honored to share a role in helping remove narcotics from U.S. streets and delivering justice to those attempting to bring illicit substances to U.S. shores,” said Cmdr. Andrew Dannelly, commanding officer of Northland. “We are always ready to protect those on the sea, protect America from threats delivered by the sea, and protect the sea itself.”

Northland’s 57-day patrol of the Windward Passage, Old Bahama Channel and South Florida Straits primarily focused on deterring dangerous and irregular maritime migration.

Initially, a suspect vessel is detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard during throughout this phase. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard’s Seventh District, headquartered in Miami.

Northland is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutters primary missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, drug interdiction, fisheries enforcement, migrant interdiction, homeland security and defense operations and international training. Northland patrols the offshore waters

from Maine to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

USCGC Valiant Returns Home after 35-day Caribbean Sea Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant crew recovers their cutter boat Sept. 2018, while underway in the Carribean Sea. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) returned to their homeport at Naval Station Mayport Nov. 7, 2022, following a 35-day Caribbean Sea patrol, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Nov. 7 release.

While underway in the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of operations and in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South, Valiant conducted counterdrug and migrant interdiction operations.

Within the first week of patrol, Valiant's crew boarded a vessel suspected of carrying illegal narcotics and seized just under 900 pounds of cocaine worth approximately \$8 million.

Valiant's crew also patrolled off the coast of Haiti as a deterrent to dangerous and irregular maritime migration events occurring because of continued instability in the country.

Prior to patrol, Valiant completed a 7-month dry-dock period in Tampa where the 55-year-old cutter completed extensive maintenance and preservation work.

"The past eight months have certainly been very busy for Valiant's crew, and we are glad to finally be back in Jacksonville," said Cmdr. Jacob McMillan, commanding officer of Valiant. "The crew's remarkable ability to quickly transition from maintenance to operations has been impressive. I'm very proud of the crew and I'm honored to be serving at sea with them."

Valiant is a multi-mission, 210-foot medium-endurance cutter. Its primary missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.

Five Allied Carrier Strike

Groups Patrol Waters in NATO's Area of Operations



The Italian navy flagship, aircraft carrier ITS Cavour (CVH 550), arrives at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, March 26, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mitchell Banks*

MONS, Belgium – Five Allied aircraft carriers will be operating in the Atlantic Ocean and the North and Mediterranean Seas in November, as part of their regularly scheduled activities, SHAPE Public Affairs said in a Nov. 17 release.

This occurrence presents an opportunity for Allied nations to coordinate credible combat power throughout the Euro-Atlantic Area and showcases NATO cohesion and interoperability.

Participating forces comprise the Carrier Strike Groups (CSG) formed in support of the French Navy Charles De Gaulle, the Italian Navy ITS Cavour, the United Kingdom Royal Navy Queen

Elizabeth and the United States Navy's George H.W. Bush and Gerald R. Ford.

Although each nation's forces are operating in support of their own mission objectives, the advanced cooperation shows unity towards the collective defence of the Alliance. Ships and assets from various allies and partners are included in the groups, and the activity is coordinated with the Standing NATO Maritime Groups 1 and 2.

"NATO routinely demonstrates its cohesion, coordinating with multiple international maritime assets at once," said Commander, NATO Allied Maritime Command Vice Adm. Keith Blount. "This opportunity demonstrates our ironclad commitment to the stability and security of the Euro-Atlantic Area and the strength of our collective capability."

"Five carriers within our operating area presents a further opportunity to consolidate our approach to air defense, cross-domain cooperation and maritime-land integration," he said.

There is a continuous presence of Allied aircraft carriers around the NATO area of operations, and it is common for multiple CSGs to be deployed simultaneously. The multi-carrier deployment is an opportunity to test the cooperation and practice NATO's Deter and Defend concept as it leverages a deliberate rhythm of military activity across all geographic areas of the Alliance, as well as across all operational domains and functional areas.

Allied maritime forces and NATO Maritime Groups regularly patrol the waters around Europe to assure Allies of the maritime commitment to collective defense.

Navy Accepts Delivery of Ship-to-Shore Connector, Landing Craft, Air Cushion 106



The U.S. Navy accepted delivery of the next generation landing craft, Ship to Shore Connector (SSC), Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 106 on Nov. 17. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Navy accepted delivery of the next generation landing craft, Ship to Shore Connector (SSC), Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 106 on Nov. 17, Team Ships Public Affairs said in a release.

LCAC 106's delivery follows the completion of Acceptance Trials with the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey to test the readiness and capability of the craft and to validate requirements.

“We are excited to deliver this next generation craft to the Navy and Marine Corps team,” said Capt. Jason Grabelle, program manager, Amphibious Assault and Connectors Programs, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. “LCACs are providing our Navy and partners with the speed and agility essential to our missions.”

LCACs are built with similar configurations, dimensions and clearances to the legacy LCAC, ensuring the compatibility of this next-generation air cushion vehicle with existing well deck-equipped amphibious ships.

The LCAC program is in serial production, with an additional 11 craft currently being built at Textron Systems.

Coast Guard Polar Icebreaker Departs Seattle; Bound for Antarctica



The Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star and crew departs Seattle to begin Operation Deep Freeze, Nov. 16, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Clark*

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew departed Seattle Nov. 16 and is in transit to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Nov. 17 release.

Operation Deep Freeze is an annual joint military mission to resupply the United States Antarctic stations in support of the National Science Foundation, the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program. This marks the 26th year for the Polar Star to render support.

Each year, the Polar Star crew breaks a navigable channel through ice, sometimes as much as 21-feet thick, to allow fuel and supply ships to reach McMurdo Station, which is the largest Antarctic station and the logistics hub of the U.S. Antarctic Program.

“This is a unique and important mission that the Coast Guard

undertakes each year,” said Capt. Keith Ropella, commanding officer of the Polar Star. “It takes a special crew to make the 20,000 nautical mile round trip through some of the most remote locations and arduous conditions on the planet to get the job done, and perhaps more significantly, to prepare this 46-year-old cutter for the challenge. I am overwhelmed and immensely proud of the tireless work this crew and our shore side support partners have done since returning from the last Operation Deep Freeze back in April to get us ready to go, and I am incredibly excited to make this once in a lifetime journey with them.”

The U.S. Coast Guard is recapitalizing its polar icebreaker fleet to ensure continued access to the Polar regions, project U.S. sovereignty and protect the country’s economic, environmental and national security interests.

“As the Nation’s most active and visible maritime presence in the high latitudes, the Coast Guard maintains a vital leadership role in Antarctica and deeply values its relationship as a trusted partner to the National Science Foundation and U.S. Antarctic Program,” said Vice Adm. Andrew J. Tiongson, commander Coast Guard Pacific Area. “Polar Star’s continued support of Operation Deep Freeze exemplifies the Coast Guard’s unique blend of operational capability, regulatory authority and strategic leadership in the polar regions. It is an honor to ensure uninhibited access to the region, and join together with our international allies and Department of Defense sister services to support essential scientific research and the preservation of a safe, secure and cooperative environment on the Antarctic continent.”

Through Operation Deep Freeze, the U.S. Coast Guard provides direct logistical support to the National Science Foundation and maintains a regional presence that preserves Antarctica as a scientific refuge.

Boeing Reorganizes Defense, Space & Security Business Unit



A P-8A Poseidon aircraft lifts off from Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan. The P-8A is now built by newly organized Boeing's Mobility, Surveillance & Bombers Division. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brandon J. Vinson*
ARLINGTON, Va. – Boeing is executing a series of executive leadership changes and reorganizations aimed at accelerating operational discipline, first-time quality and performance while streamlining senior leadership roles and responsibilities, the company announced in a Nov. 17 release.

Effective immediately, Boeing Defense, Space & Security (BDS) will consolidate its eight divisions into four, including:

- Vertical Lift, led by Vice President and General Manager Mark Cherry.
- Mobility, Surveillance & Bombers, led by Vice President and General Manager Dan Gillian, which will include KC-46, SAOC, E-7, VC-25B, P-8, Bombers, AWACS/AEW&C, 777X components and all executive transport programs.
- Air Dominance, led by Vice President and General Manager Steve Nordlund, which will include classified programs; the F/A-18, F-15, T-7, MQ-25 and MQ-28 programs; and the non-space Phantom Works portfolio, including the Virtual Warfare Centers. Steve will also become the senior site executive for the St. Louis region.
- Space, Intelligence & Weapon Systems, led by Vice President and General Manager Kay Sears, which will include space exploration and launch programs, satellites, munitions, missiles, weapon system deterrents, maritime undersea, Phantom Works Space and subsidiaries (BI&A, Millennium, Insitu, Liquid Robotics, Spectrolab, Argon and DRT). Between now and Feb. 4, 2023, Jim Cilton, senior vice president for Space and Launch, will continue to manage space exploration and launch programs, satellites and Phantom Works Space. On Feb. 5, 2023, Cilton will become a senior advisor to Ted Colbert, president and chief executive officer of BDS, focusing on future space ventures.

These changes build upon a consolidation of Manufacturing and Safety, Total Quality, Supply Chain and Program Management, and the appointment of Steve Parker as BDS chief operating officer.

“I am confident this reorganization will drive greater and more simplified integration and collaboration across Boeing Defense, Space & Security,” said Colbert. “These changes will help accelerate operational discipline and program quality and performance, while stabilizing our development and production programs. These are necessary steps to put BDS on the path to

stronger, profitable growth.”

Additionally, Tim Peters, currently vice president and general manager of Mobility and Surveillance, and Cindy Gruensfelder, currently vice president and general manager of Missile and Weapon Systems, will be retiring after assisting with the transitions.

“Over the past three decades, Tim and Cindy have played an integral role in delivering critical capabilities for our customers and developing top talent across the enterprise,” Colbert said. “The Boeing Executive Council and I are grateful for their leadership and years of service.”

Coinciding with these changes, Boeing Global Services (BGS) will integrate all government services – domestic and international – into one organization, led by Torbjorn (Turbo) Sjogren, vice president and general manager of BGS Government Services.

USS Zumwalt Returns from First Western Pacific Deployment



The Zumwalt-class guided-missile destroyer USS Zumwalt (DDG 1000) sails through the Pacific Ocean. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Christopher Sybert*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The guided-missile destroyer USS Zumwalt (DDG 1000), lead ship of its three-ship class, completed a short deployment to the Western Pacific Ocean on Nov. 11, marking the first operational employment the class as part of the fleet integration process.

The Zumwalt, which departed Naval Station San Diego on Aug. 1, operated in the U.S. 3rd Fleet and U.S. 7th Fleet areas of responsibility. The deployment involved a wide variety of training, testing and evaluation of operational concepts, fleet integration, crew size and ship systems, said Capt. Shea Thompson, commodore of Surface Development Squadron One, and Capt. Amy McInnis, commanding officer of USS Zumwalt, in a Nov. 16 media roundtable.

The deployment, which concentrated on fleet integration, was termed “very successful” by Thompson who called it an

important milestone for the DDG 1000 class and for the Navy” and that it marked “significant strides in learning how to employ, integrate and sustain Zumwalt as she operated forward” and a “significant step forward for the future of this class.”

During the deployment, the Zumwalt operated and trained in joint simulated fires training with a Japanese destroyer and a U.S. Air Force B-1B bomber; mine countermeasures proof of concept work with a forward-deployed explosive ordnance detachment; operations with fleet maritime operations centers, and the staff of the 7th Fleet’s Task Force 71; and operations with U.S. Army aviation. The ship also conducted expeditionary maintenance in Pearl Harbor – a location outside of home port – with contractor maintenance support, which Thompson said was by design for the Zumwalt class.

McInnis, who joined the crew as executive officer in January 2020 and fleeted up to command of the ship in November 2021, said that during a year of work-ups with the crew of 171 the ship practiced integrated and advanced scenarios, as well as radar, acoustic, thermal and magnetic signature testing.

She said the ship did not carry a helicopter detachment during the deployment but did carry two rigid-hull inflatable boats for mine countermeasures exercises.

Thompson said the Zumwalt exercised all of its mission areas typical for a DDG. He also said the ship took advantage of the deployment for testing and assessment of signature management, about which he was not at liberty to detail because of classification.

“We expect to capitalize on those lessons learned as we continue to employ the ship forward and integrate that platform into fleet operations and exercises,” Thompson said.

Thompson said that in his assessment, Zumwalt achieved Initial Operational Capability “today.”

The commodore said the Zumwalt had no direct interaction with Chinese navy ships during the deployment.

The Zumwalt will be modified during 2024-2025 with Conventional Prompt Strike hypersonic missile launchers for its primary strike mission, he said.

1,200 U.K. Jobs Created as Naval Shipbuilding Returns to Belfast



The Royal Fleet Auxiliary replenishment tanker RFA Tidespring (A 136) transits the Gulf of Aden in preparation for a refueling-at-sea with the guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh (CG 67), not pictured, July 12, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Rawad Madanat*

LONDON – The Ministry of Defence has selected a preferred bidder to build support ships for the Royal Navy, with a

contract that will create 1,200 U.K. shipyard jobs, hundreds of graduate and apprentice opportunities and an expected 800 further jobs across the U.K. supply chain, the ministry said in a Nov. 16 release.

British-led Team Resolute, comprising BMT, Harland & Wolff and Navantia UK, has been appointed as the preferred bidder to deliver three crucial support ships to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA). Team Resolute will be awarded a £1.6 billion contract, before inflation, to manufacture the vessels providing munitions, stores and provisions to the Royal Navy's aircraft carriers, destroyers and frigates deployed at sea, subject to HM Treasury and Ministerial approval.

Pledging to invest £77 million in shipyard infrastructure to support the British shipbuilding sector, the investment will create one of the most advanced yards in the United Kingdom, significant for future export and domestic shipbuilding and offshore opportunities.

The entire final assembly for all three ships will be completed at Harland & Wolff's shipyard in Belfast, with the three 216m long vessels – each the length of two Premier League football pitches – built to Bath-based BMT's entirely British design.

The majority of the blocks and modules for the ships will be constructed at Harland & Wolff's facilities in Belfast and Appledore, with components to be manufactured in their other delivery centres in Methil and Arnish. This program, which will also support a significant British-based supply chain, will be undertaken in collaboration with internationally renowned shipbuilder, Navantia. Build work will also take place at Navantia's shipyard in Cadiz in Spain, in a collaboration that allows for key skills and technology transfer from a world-leading auxiliary shipbuilder.

"This is a welcome boost to the UK shipbuilding industry,"

said Defence Secretary Ben Wallace. “By selecting Team Resolute, the Ministry of Defence has secured £77 million of investment into U.K. shipyards, creating around 2,000 U.K. jobs, and showcasing cutting-edge British design. “Building on ambitions laid out in the National Shipbuilding Strategy, we are also bolstering technology transfer and key skills from a world-renowned shipbuilder, crucial in the modernisation of British shipyards.”

The contract will deliver 200 further education opportunities on graduate placements and apprentice programs, as well as supporting thousands more supply chain jobs. Harland & Wolff’s welding academy is set to train 300 new U.K. welders during the contract. The contract will also support 120 high-skilled jobs at BMT.

Delivering on ambitions to bolster U.K. shipbuilding as laid out in the [National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh](#), the contract will deliver significant capital investment in the United Kingdom while providing ships which are essential to the Carrier-led Maritime Strike Group.

“Team Resolute is proud to have been selected as preferred bidder to provide the Royal Fleet Auxiliary with three state-of-the-art, adaptable ships which will fulfil the Royal Navy’s needs while strengthening UK sovereign design and shipbuilding capability, as well as generating around £1.4 billion in national social and economic value,” said John Wood, Group CEO of Harland & Wolff, on behalf of Team Resolute. “Team Resolute will be making a significant investment into the U.K. and help to level up U.K. Government defence spend across the whole Union. We will create high quality U.K. jobs, apprenticeships and four facilities across the UK which will have shipbuilding capabilities fit for the 21st century.”

The ships will be the second longest U.K. military vessels behind the two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers. They will have commonality with the RFA’s Tide class fleet tankers,

also built to a British BMT design.

The majority of the three ships' build will take place in the UK, and the contract will increase industrial productivity, develop the domestic supply chain and workforce while improving the industry's environmental sustainability.

Designed to support Net Carbon Zero by the end of their 30-year service lives, the RFA vessels will be equipped with energy efficient technologies to reduce power demand and will have the capability to reduce their carbon intensity by adopting low-carbon, non-fossil fuels and future energy sources.

"FSS will deliver worldwide logistic and operational support to the Royal Navy, including the Maritime Strike Group on deployment," said Vice Adm. Paul Marshall, DE&S Director General Ships. "Significant investment in emerging shipyards across the U.K. will also strengthen and diversify our industrial base. Alongside our investment in the Type 26 and Type 31 frigate programs, this breadth will be vital to grow and support a highly capable and modern Navy."

Production is due to start in 2025 and all three support ships are expected to be operational by 2032. The manufacture contract is due to be awarded by DE&S by the first quarter of 2023, subject to completion of a successful preferred bidder stage and final approvals.

FRC Southeast Begins

Activation as Second Source of Repair for the F135 Engine



An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) recently began activation as a Department of Defense second depot source of repair (DSOR) for the F135 engine, the propulsion system that powers the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter. The first DSOR for the F135 was designated in 2012 with activation complete in 2014 at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

“It’s great to be a part of the FRCSE Team as we prepare to activate the F135 engine product line,” said FRCSE’s Commanding Officer, Capt. Grady Duffey. “The new scope of work

won't just expand our support of the Joint Strike Fighter, but will help meet the sustainment demands of our military. I am confident that FRCSE will be ready to answer the call and commence repair of F135 engine modules in the near future, and at an even greater rate later as we expand infrastructure."

FRCSE officially activating as second DSOR doesn't come without certain challenges. Before the command sees its first Power Module (PM), one of the five major modules that make up the F135 power plant, artisans will need to go through a three-phase Pratt & Whitney (P&W) training and maintenance qualification and certification process, which is set to begin in January 2023.

The first two training phases focus on classroom and practical skills. The engine's PMs and associated mini-modules (MMs) will be used to accomplish the hands-on portion of the training with artisans and P&W trainers working side-by-side.

Once the practical hands-on phase is complete, qualification and certification will be the final step in the process. FRCSE is expected to induct its first PM by April 1, 2023, with a second arriving about two weeks later.

After certification is achieved, F135 engine line artisans will work only on the PM and its four MMs – the high-pressure compressor, high-pressure turbine, low-pressure turbine and diffuser combustor – in designated areas called cells. The current plan is to have nine PM cells and 22 mini-module cells.

While FRCSE's Crinkley Engine Facility complex currently performs work on four other engines (F404, F414, TF34 and J85), expansion is a must to support the full anticipated F135 workload.

"In preparation of this engine workload, we had to make multiple facility improvements along with purchasing new industrial plant equipment and machinery unique to the F135,"

said Rick Eveson, FRCSE's F135 production line director. "New high-capacity bridge cranes, a new entrance, floor paint and Andon lighting have all been procured to support the F135 engine maintenance process, which will also benefit our other engine programs. In addition, we've developed a custom shelving unit to more efficiently store parts, tooling and gear."

FRCSE won't just accommodate this new workload through the optimization of shops and processes in its current state, but also through the renovation of its existing engine test cell and construction of an entirely new engine facility by way of military construction (MILCON). A MILCON will be utilized in order to renovate FRCSE's engine test cell as well as a whole new engine facility to streamline workflow. The new building is expected to break ground in 2026 with completion in 2028, and it will significantly increase the plant's capacity for F135 work.

Furthermore, the engine test cell modification project will make significant changes to the existing structure, as the facility must be upgraded to accommodate the F135 engine's 50,000 pounds of thrust and over 18-foot size. The building's anticipated completion date is 2027.

"We expect engine production to ramp up through 2034 to the max production requirement – roughly 600 MMs and 120 PMs annually, correlating to about 600,000 man-hours," Eveson continued.

From repair of the F135's PM and its MMs to establishing depot capability for the F-35 airframe and associated systems, the command is certainly on its way to becoming the go-to facility in support of fifth and future generations of aircraft.

"The entire FRC Southeast team is excited to begin work on the F135 and showcase our world-class facility," said Duffey. "We are unequivocally committed to this program's success and to

activating the U.S. Navy's first F135 engine product line."

U.S. Naval Forces Intercept Explosive Material Bound for Yemen



Guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) and patrol coastal ship USS Hurricane (PC 3) sail in the background as Sailors inventory a large quantity of urea fertilizer and ammonium perchlorate discovered on board a fishing vessel intercepted by U.S. naval forces while transiting international waters in the Gulf of Oman, Nov. 9. *U.S. NAVY / Sonar Technician (Surface) 1st Class Kevin Frus*

MANAMA, Bahrain – On Nov. 8, U.S. 5th Fleet intercepted a fishing vessel in the Gulf of Oman smuggling lethal aid, including a large quantity of explosive material, from Iran to Yemen, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said

in a Nov. 15 release.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter John Scheuerman (WPC 1146) and guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) interdicted the vessel as it transited international waters. Patrol coastal ship USS Hurricane (PC 3) and Navy explosive ordnance disposal technicians from U.S. 5th Fleet's Task Force 56 also assisted during a weeklong effort to fully search the vessel and verify the type of material found.

U.S. forces discovered more than 70 tons of ammonium perchlorate, a powerful oxidizer commonly used to make rocket and missile fuel as well as explosives. This is U.S. 5th Fleet's first ever interdiction of ammonium perchlorate.

"This was a massive amount of explosive material, enough to fuel more than a dozen medium-range ballistic missiles depending on the size," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. "The unlawful transfer of lethal aid from Iran does not go unnoticed. It is irresponsible, dangerous and leads to violence and instability across the Middle East."

The search also found more than 100 tons of urea fertilizer. Urea is a chemical compound with agricultural applications that is also known for use as an explosive precursor.

The vessel and its four Yemeni crewmembers were intercepted while transiting from Iran along a route historically used to traffic weapons to the Houthis in Yemen. The direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of weapons to the Houthis violates U.N. Security Council Resolution 2216 and international law.

U.S. forces sank the vessel Nov. 13 in the Gulf of Oman after determining it was a hazard to navigation for commercial shipping. The four crewmembers were transferred to Yemen for repatriation Nov. 15 when The Sullivans completed an at-sea

exchange in the Gulf of Aden with the Yemen Coast Guard.

“Alongside our partner forces, CENTCOM is committed to security and stability of the region and to deterring the illegal and destabilizing flow of lethal material into the region over land, in the air and the sea,” said Gen. Michael “Erik” Kurilla, U.S. Central Command commander.

U.S. 5th Fleet previously seized 40 tons of urea fertilizer Jan. 18 when guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) and patrol coastal ship USS Chinook (PC 9) interdicted another fishing vessel in the Gulf of Oman that had attempted to smuggle illicit weapons off the coast of Somalia months earlier.

The U.S. 5th Fleet operating area includes 21 countries, the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb and Suez Canal.