

U.S. Coast Guard Cutters Return Home After Successful Central American Deployment



U.S. Coast Guard 11 District, June 10, 2024

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – U.S. Coast Guard cutters Forrest Rednour and Blackfin have returned to their homeports after a 49-day deployment in Central America, where they played a crucial role in multiple operations.

During this period, both cutters demonstrated outstanding readiness and operational capability, significantly contributing to international cooperation, search and rescue missions, and efforts to combat criminal activities. This deployment was part of a broader strategy to enhance regional

security and strengthen partnerships. Throughout the mission, Forrest Rednour covered over 8,200 miles and logged 800 operational hours, while Blackfin covered over 8,300 miles and also logged 800 operational hours.

“The amount of effort and commitment from both crews during this 49-day deployment was remarkable,” said Rear Adm. Andrew Sugimoto, commander, Coast Guard District 11. “Their readiness and professional exchanges provided an invaluable experience to our partner nations and crews. The enthusiasm to lead multiple engagements with several international maritime organizations helped strengthen ties and fortify continued collaboration between all.”

Key Achievements:

Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX):

- Manzanillo, Mexico: Blackfin led a successful SAR operation, including helicopter rescue exercises with the Mexican Navy.

- Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala: Hosted tours and conducted SAR exercises with the Guatemalan Navy, building stronger maritime partnerships.

- La Union, El Salvador: Rednour led a SAR exercise and joint operations with the Salvadoran Navy, marking the first U.S. vessel visit to this port in two years.

Partnership and Training:

- Amapala, Honduras: Engaged in discussions and training on maritime law enforcement and security with the Honduran Navy and Merchant Marine.

- Golfito, Costa Rica: Shared knowledge on maritime governance with the Costa Rican Coast Guard, enhancing mutual understanding.
- Rodman, Panama: Provided damage control and medical evacuation training to Panamanian forces, marking the first U.S.-Panama Coast Guard engagement in over two years.
- PASSEX with ARM PALENQUE: Forrest Rednour and Blackfin conducted a passage exercise (PASSEX) with the Mexican Navy's ARM PALENQUE. This included formation steaming, code exercises, and a crew exchange to enhance mutual operational understanding and cooperation.

"This patrol was truly an amazing experience and a testament to the incredible devotion to duty that the crews of the Forrest Rednour and Blackfin have," said Lt. Kevin Ng, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Forrest Rednour. "Both crews adapted and overcame several challenges leading up to and during the patrol, but never took their eyes off the main objective. As a result, the Coast Guard was able to strengthen the valuable relationships that the United States has with our international partners throughout Central America and unify our efforts to address critical maritime security initiatives in the Eastern Pacific. Thank you to crews on a job well done, District 11 and Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach for the coordination, and the families and friends of the crew for all of the support; the success of this historic patrol could not have been accomplished without them all."

"I could not be prouder of both crews for the incredible amount of hard work they have dedicated to making this historic patrol possible. The success of this Surface Action Group is a testament to the Coast Guard's ability to overcome

dynamic challenges in the completion of unprecedented mission sets. It also signifies the Coast Guard's steadfast commitment to advancing our vital maritime partnerships in the Eastern Pacific. The international relationships formed and strengthened during this deployment have set the groundwork for future engagements which I look forward to watching," said Lt. j.g. James Morrison, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Blackfin.

Commissioned in 2018, the Coast Guard Cutter Forrest Rednour is one of the Coast Guard's Sentinel-class fast response cutters homeported in San Pedro, California. Sentinel-class cutters are 154 feet long and 25 feet wide and have a 353 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots and a range of 2,500 nautical miles. They can hold a crew of up to 24. [The namesake of the Forrest Rednour is Petty Officer 2nd Class Forrest O. Rednour, who heroically rescued survivors from the torpedoed USAT Dorchester during World War II and was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal.](#)

Commissioned in 2000, the USCGC Blackfin is one of the Coast Guard's Marine Protector-class patrol boats homeported in Santa Barbara, California. Marine Protector-class patrol boats are 87 feet long and 19.5 feet wide and have a 100 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed of 25 knots and a range of 900 nautical miles. They can hold a crew of up to 10. The Blackfin is equipped with advanced electronics and navigation systems for multi-mission operations, including search and rescue, law enforcement, and homeland security. The Blackfin shares the name of the USS Blackfin (SS-322), a submarine that participated in World War II and the Korean War.

U.S. 4th Fleet Announces Continuing Promise 2024 Deployment



SANTA MARTA, Colombia (Aug. 20, 2023) Expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Burlington (T-EFP 10) arrives in Santa Marta, Colombia, Aug. 20, 2023. Continuing Promise 2023 marks the 13th mission to the region since 2007 and the first involving USNS Burlington. The mission will also foster goodwill, strengthen existing partnerships with partner nations, and encourage the establishment of new partnerships among countries, non-government organizations, and international organizations. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Nicko West)

By USNAVSOUTH/4TH FLEET PUBLIC AFFAIRS, June 11, 2024

MAYPORT, Fla. – MAYPORT, Fla. – (June 10, 2024) – The U.S. Navy expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EFP 10) will deploy this July and August to the U.S. Southern Command

area of operations as part of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet's Continuing Promise 2024 mission. After several months of detailed planning, USNS Burlington is scheduled to visit Jamaica, Costa Rica, Honduras, Colombia, and Panama during the nearly two month-long mission.

Continuing Promise 2024 marks the 14th mission to the region since 2007 and the second aboard USNS Burlington. The mission will foster goodwill, strengthen existing partnerships with partner nations, and encourage the establishment of new partnerships among countries, non-government organizations, and international organizations.

The focus during each mission stop will be working alongside partner nation medical personnel to provide direct patient care and technical expertise in community clinics to improve medical readiness, strengthen partnerships, and enhance the combined capabilities of the U.S. Navy and partner nations to respond to public health disasters and humanitarian crises. 30 U.S. Navy medical professionals, including general practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, radiologists, dentists, optometrists, and biomedical technicians from Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC Portsmouth, NMRTC Jacksonville, NMRTC Great Lakes, NMRTC Pensacola, NMRTC Camp Lejeune) and Naval Medicine Readiness and Logistics Command bring their expertise to this year's iteration of Continuing Promise.

"During Continuing Promise 2024, we're working side-by-side and step-by-step with our partners," said Rear Adm. Jim Aiken, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet Commander. "Our investment into the region is our enduring relationships, and we are committed to ensuring improved interoperability and collaborative regional security together. We gain so much by this opportunity to serve alongside true professionals."

The Continuing Promise team includes a U.S. Army veterinary team from the 248th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Service Support), which will collaborate with host nation colleagues to provide direct public health education and animal care at local veterinary organizations in-country. U.S. Navy Seabees from Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 1 will assist in host nation led community engineering projects. U.S. Navy experts will host seminars and training exercises with host nation civilian officials and military professionals covering disaster preparedness and response. These exchanges aim to support host nation facilities, improve readiness, and empower local and national officials with the knowledge and experience to act with confidence during emergencies.

“Actions certainly speak louder than words and Continuing Promise 2024 will certainly demonstrate that,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Scott Maloney, Continuing Promise 2024 mission commander. “It is a way for us to collaborate and work alongside our partners in the Caribbean, Central and South America and make a positive impact in local communities at each stop.”

Continuing Promise will also continue its popular series of seminars on the prevention of gender-based violence in support of the mission’s Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) initiative.

WPS is a United Nations (UN) initiative that started with UNSCR 1325 signed in 2000. The UN resolution is a public acknowledgement that women are more adversely impacted by conflict and crisis, and including women in security planning will lead to a more peaceful world.

Continuing Promise will feature the U.S. Fleet Forces Band, “Uncharted Waters”. The band will embark on USNS Burlington to conduct classes at community schools, collaborate with military and civilian musical organizations in partner nations, and entertain local communities with concerts at each

mission stop. This cultural exchange aims to strengthen community ties and foster goodwill.

USNS Burlington is an expeditionary fast transport (EPF) operated by Military Sealift Command and crewed by 26 Civil Service Mariners led by Ship Master, Capt. Tyler Driscoll. The crew composition follows a commercial model of bridge and engineering watches. The ship is a shallow draft, all aluminum, commercial-based catamaran capable of regional transport of personnel and cargo lift, providing combatant commanders high-speed sealift mobility with inherent cargo handling capability and agility to achieve positional advantage over operational distances. Burlington will bring the personnel, equipment and supplies necessary to conduct the Continuing Promise mission, as well as act as the mission's logistics and command hub.

USNAVSOUTH/FOURTHFLT is the trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South America maritime forces leading to improved unity, security and stability. Learn more about USNAVSOUTH/4th Fleet at <https://www.fourthfleet.navy.mil>, <https://www.facebook.com/NAVSOUS4THFLT> and @NAVSOUS4THFLT.

Senators Blast Coast Guard Chief for Sexual Assault Response



Adm. Linda L. Fagan, commandant of the Coast Guard, speaks to guests during the 2024 State of the Coast Guard Address in Washington, D.C., March 20. *U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Giles*

Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Linda L. Fagan endured withering criticism of the service's treatment of sexual harassment issues at the Coast Guard Academy on June 11, as Senators from both sides of the aisle said the Coast Guard has not been forthcoming with its investigations or in helping the Senate panel conduct its own.

The Homeland Security & Government Affairs Committee's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations looked into the Coast Guard's Operation Fouled Anchor investigation into sexual assault at the Coast Guard Academy. During a hearing, members said the Coast Guard buried its own critical report, retaliated against whistleblowers and has been dragging its feet in providing information about the report to the committee.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut), the panel's chair,

said Operation Fouled Anchor “was hidden from the public as well as Congress” and decried what he called “a culture of coverup continuance.”

Blumenthal said the Coast Guard attempted to say much of the assault and harassment had occurred in the past, but more than 40 whistleblowers told the committee it is ongoing.

“The question is, what will the Coast Guard do about it now, in the present?” Blumenthal asked. “We are now expecting action.” He also said, “our investigation has shown a deep moral rot inside the Coast Guard.”

Fagan appeared at the hearing as the primary witness, along with Master Chief Heath Jones, the highest-ranking enlisted officer in the Coast Guard

Fagan said the Coast Guard is trying to provide all relevant documents to the committee, is cooperating with an Inspector General review of the Fouled Anchor effort, and is about to contract with an outside, independent investigator with \$1.5 million provided by Congress.

The Inspector General (IG) is “looking into Operationa Fouled Anchor, the totality of it, including action or inaction of senior leadership,” Fagan said.

“Sexual assault is “unacceptable. Not in my Coast Guard,” said Fagan, the service’s first female commandant. “It is not who we are.”

She said she has met with victims of assault, and “to the victims, the survivors, I am truly sorry for what you have had to go through.”

She said the failure to provide the Fouled Anchor report to Congress was a mistake that eroded trust but said now the service is being fully responsive to the subcommittee.

“I cannot change the past. But as the commandant today, I

reaffirm to our workforce, past and present, that I remain steadfast to making lasting cultural change,” Fagan said.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin), the ranking member of the panel, complained that the Coast Guard had issued a “data dump” of 1,000 pages of heavily redacted material on Operation Fouled Anchor, which he said was purposefully confusing and hard to follow.

Operation Fouled Anchor

The issue of Operation Fouled Anchor, first uncovered by CNN, burst into the news just days before the hearing, when Shannon Norenberg, the sexual assault response coordinator at the Coast Guard Academy, resigned and post an open letter on Maritime Legal Aid.com in which she wrote, “The Coast Guard lied to me. Worse than that, they used me to lie to victims, used me to silence victims, and used me in a coordinated effort to discourage victims of sexual assault at the Academy from speaking to Congress about their assaults and about the Coast Guard’s investigation of their cases.”

Fagan said Norenberg, who was in the room, “has been an incredible employee for us” and “the allegations she has made will be part of the IG investigation.” She said she had not read Norenberg’s posted statement but would do so.

Norenberg had started working with Operation Fouled Anchor in 2018, her letter says, but it had been ongoing for four years before that and had investigated dozens of sexual assaults reported at the academy.

Part of her work with the operation was to call victims and offer what she called “official expressions of regret,” along with in-person meetings in 2019 with 25 to 30 victims. Norenberg discovered she would not be offering CG-6095s to victims, which is proof offered to the Department of Veterans Affairs that the victim reported an assault while in the military, making it easier for them to obtain VA services to

deal with their trauma.

Blumenthal said he was especially outraged by this, calling it “one of the most damning parts of her letter.” He asked Fagan what she would do to provide access to VA services for sexual assault victims.

Fagan replied “I am committed to working with the IG,” and later said, “my priority is supporting victims ... I don’t want any victim to not get the support they are entitled to.”

Blumenthal said “the IG report cannot be used as a shield for inaction” or as a reason for not disclosing documents, drawing a small smattering of applause.

Fagan said she did not become aware of the full extent of potential victims uncovered by Operation Fouled Anchor “until we had some of the FOIA requests from CNN.”

She said her predecessor, Admiral Karl Schultz, was commandant of the Coast Guard at the time the decision was made to not reveal the findings of Operation Fouled Anchor but said she did not know if he was involved.

Blumenthal said maybe she didn’t want to know, but Fagan replied, “I am committed to full transparency with regard to the allegations.” She said the service will continue to cooperate with the IG and the third-party investigator “so we can understand what was known, when, and bring clarity to the allegations.”

RIMPAC to begin June 27



Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet (C3F) Vice Adm. John Wade participates in briefings about Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2024 at C3F headquarters, June 11, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Sarah C. Eaton)
From Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs, 12 June 2024

SAN DIEGO- Planning and preparations are being finalized for the 29th biennial Exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), a multinational exercise involving 29 nations and more than 25,000 personnel, set to run June 27 to Aug. 1, in and around the Hawaiian Islands.

Hosted by Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, RIMPAC 2024 will be led by Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, who will serve as the Combined Task Force commander. Vice Adm. John Wade, who recently took command of U.S. 3rd Fleet, received overview briefs, June 10-11, from staff members on the full range of exercise elements.

“The subject matter expertise and wide-ranging insights that

our partner nations, non-military organizations, sister services, and 3rd Fleet staff bring to planning is the reason RIMPAC is the premier joint and combined maritime exercise in the world," said Wade. "I'm looking forward to returning to Hawaii to exercise and rehearse as a combined multinational operational force."

Prior to the exercise several surface groups sailing from their respective home ports will meet at designated points and conduct multinational group sails to Hawaii to build upon the established interoperability. The 29 nations are sending 40 surface ships, three submarines, 14 national land forces, and over 150 aircraft. Aircraft including the F-35 Lightning II, P-8 Poseidon, and V-22 Osprey will be operating out of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and Marine Corps Base Hawaii at Kaneohe Bay.

The exercise will include multi-domain warfare in a range of scenarios from anti-submarine warfare, multi-ship surface warfare, multinational amphibious landings, and multi-axis defense of the carrier strike group against live forces.

"RIMPAC offers a uniquely complex and challenging multinational environment for forces to train in areas where common national objectives overlap," said RIMPAC coordinator Royal Australian Navy Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Gill. "Throughout the planning process we've built true partnerships based on mutual understanding and respect and expect that to continue during execution."

RIMPAC 2024 amphibious and land forces will be made up of nine partner nations and 13 ships, with a unique and highly capable mixture of aircraft, ground assault vehicles and ship-to-shore connectors. During execution of RIMPAC, this group of Sailors, Soldiers, and Marines will apply knowledge from their respective nations and skillsets to build a better joint, combined force that can respond to challenges, ranging from high-end conflict to humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

This year's RIMPAC will host its largest humanitarian aid and disaster relief exercise with eight countries, five ships, five landing craft, five aircraft, multiple land forces, and over 2,500 total participants including the statewide Hawaii Healthcare Emergency Management exercise. The exercise control and scenario development are supported by subject matter experts from the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management, Pacific Disaster Center, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, and Singapore's Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre.

"Environmental stewardship is a top priority during RIMPAC, and all participants will observe protective measures for cultural and natural resources throughout the exercise," said Wade. "We have the immensely valuable opportunity to train in the Hawaiian Islands and surrounding ranges – nowhere else in the world provides a more realistic and relevant training opportunity!"

RIMPAC is designed to foster and sustain the cooperative relationships that are critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. RIMPAC trains and enhances preparedness at all levels, including individual proficiency, and sharpens command and control skills while challenging participants to integrate across changing conditions as part of a joint or combined force.

US Coast Guard Cutter

Resolute Returns Home From Caribbean Patrol; Interdicts Four Suspected Smugglers, 3,736 Pounds Of Illicit Drugs



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC 620) transits outbound for sea from homeport, St. Petersburg, Florida, ahead of a migrant interdiction and maritime safety and security patrol in the Caribbean Sea, April 10, 2024. Resolute routinely performs deterrence of illegal maritime migration throughout the Windward Passage, prioritizing the safety of life at sea and protecting the Nation's southern maritime border. (U.S. Coast Guard photo courtesy of Coast Guard Cutter Resolute)

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, June 8, 2024

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. - The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Resolute (WMEC 620) returned to their homeport in St. Petersburg, Saturday, following a 60-day patrol of the

Caribbean, in support of [Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast’s Operation Vigilant Sentry](#) and Joint Interagency Task Force-South’s counterdrug mission.

While deployed within the Coast Guard’s Seventh District area of operations, and off the southwest coast of Haiti, the Resolute crew, together with the Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC 913), interdicted one go-fast vessel, apprehended four suspected smugglers and seized 3,736 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$3.5 million.

In addition to the drug interdiction and deterring illegal maritime migration, the Resolute crew conducted over 24 hours of search and rescue efforts for two missing mariners after the 90-foot Vanuatu-flagged schooner, [De Gallant](#), sank approximately 20 miles north of Great Inagua on May 21, 2024. Resolute refueled Coast Guard helicopters searching for the missing sailors, conducted strategic search patterns, and recovered floating debris from De Gallant life rafts. Together, Coast Guard and Royal Bahamas Defence Force crews covered over 3,700 square miles before suspending the search.

“The officers and crew of Resolute completed this deployment in extraordinary fashion,” said Cmdr. Michael Ross, commanding officer of Resolute. “They answered the call and responded to each case with dignity, compassion and professionalism. The Coast Guard’s overt presence in this region is essential to deter dangerous and life-threatening maritime migration ventures. Our extensive Coast Guard presence in the area significantly decreased the number of migration events preventing loss of life at sea while protecting the homeland.”

Resolute is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter’s primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western

Hemisphere.

EpiSci Selected by Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific for Project Overmatch's Mission Autonomy Proving Grounds

POWAY, California (10 June 2024) – The Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific (NIWC PAC) has awarded EpiSci, a leader in trusted warfighter autonomy solutions, a follow-on contract for Project Overmatch's Mission Autonomy Proving Grounds following EpiSci's successful performance during a 12-month demonstration event. "As a hardware-agnostic software company that prioritizes input from experienced military individuals at every stage, EpiSci is uniquely positioned to be at the forefront of the next stage of battle management solutions," said Aaron Gibney, EpiSci's VP of Battle Management Command and Control (BMC2).

With this award, EpiSci will continue to develop their domain and vehicle-agnostic mission autonomy applications. EpiSci's TacticalAI-enabled software will enable heterogenous, multi-domain swarms to work together and carry out missions for Unmanned Surface Vehicle's (USVs) and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle's (UAVs). The software-only capabilities reduce human workload and enhance mission success rates and survivability on operational timelines.

EpiSci's commitment to software-first methodologies offers

scalable autonomy solutions that transcend traditional platform limitations. Capable of integrating on sensors or weapons, or orchestrating diverse multi-domain platforms, TacticalAI software ensures seamless collaboration and operational efficiency.

“Our teams have integrated and operated TacticalAI-enabled autonomy products on 12 uncrewed airborne and maritime platform types in only 6 months,” said Bo Ryu, CEO of EpiSci. “We are proud to be partnering with NIWC PAC and look forward to meeting their needs with trusted, scalable autonomy capabilities. This effort will broaden the application of our software into maritime environments and ensure they have access to our critical technology solutions.”

U.S. Central Command Update

From U.S. Central Command

June 11, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – In the past 24 hours, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed two anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM) launchers in a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen.

It was determined the launchers presented an imminent threat to U.S. and coalition forces and to merchant vessels transiting the region. U.S. forces will continue to take actions that protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for vessels in the Red Sea region.

June 10, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – In the past 24 hours, partner forces successfully destroyed one uncrewed aerial system (UAS) launched by Iranian-backed Houthis into the Gulf of Aden. There were no injuries reported by U.S., coalition, or merchant vessels.

It was determined the UAS presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

RTX Awarded \$677 Million US Navy Contract for SPY-6 Family of Radars



ANDOVER, Massachusetts, (June 10, 2024) – Raytheon, an RTX

(NYSE: RTX) business, was awarded a \$677 million contract to continue to produce AN/SPY-6(V) radars for the U.S. Navy. This is the third option exercised from the [March 2022 hardware, production and sustainment contract](#) that is valued up to \$3 billion over five years.

Under this contract, the U.S. Navy will receive seven additional radars, increasing the total amount of radars under contract for procurement to 38.

“SPY-6 provides the fleet with superior air surveillance, electronic warfare protection and enhanced detection abilities,” said Barbara Borgonovi, president of Naval Power at Raytheon. “This contract is a significant step forward in ensuring this technology is delivered to ships to improve the overall self-defense of the fleet.”

The U.S. Navy is integrating SPY-6 into its surface fleet beginning with the USS Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125) that was commissioned in October 2023. The USS Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29) is the second ship and the first to deploy the (V)2 variant. LPD 29 was delivered to the U.S. Navy April 11 following successful completion of builder’s and acceptance trials in the Gulf of Mexico. The SPY-6(V)2 radar not only provides defense against missile threats but will also provide air traffic control capability.

The SPY-6 [family of radars](#) is the most tested, most advanced radar technology in production today. It is projected to be deployed on 65 U.S. Navy ships over the next 10 years to defend against air, surface, and ballistic threats.

Coast Guard Offloads \$7.4 Million in Seized Cocaine, Transfers Custody of 9 Smugglers to DEA in San Juan, Puerto Rico



From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, June 7, 2024

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Charles David Jr. offloaded and transferred custody of 245 kilograms of cocaine and nine suspected smugglers to Drug Enforcement Administration authorities at Coast Guard Base San Juan, Puerto Rico, Friday.

The seized contraband is estimated to have a wholesale value of \$7.4 million dollars, while the interdiction and seizure is the result of multi-agency efforts involving Coast Guard's Western Hemisphere Strategy, the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force Initiative and Operation Unified Resolve.

The Drug Enforcement Administration is leading the investigation in this case.

In the early morning hours of June 3, 2023, the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernández located a suspect vessel, approximately 75 nautical miles south of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. As cutter Heriberto Hernández approached, the crew observed the occupants of the suspect vessel jettison multiple packages overboard. The crew of cutter Heriberto Hernández successfully stopped the suspect vessel that had nine men onboard, who claimed to be Venezuelan nationals. The cutter crew also recovered multiple packages of the jettisoned cargo and seized a total of 10 bales and two additional bags, with individual packages, which tested positive for cocaine.

The crew of cutter Heriberto Hernández embarked the nine detainees and seized contraband that were later transferred to cutter Charles David Jr. for final transport to San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"We appreciate the efforts of Cutter Heriberto Hernández's crew as well as the work and collaboration of all other Coast Guard personnel, units and partner agencies involved in this case," said Lt. Cmdr. Edward Kunigonis, Sector San Juan chief of enforcement. "The daily work and collaboration with our federal, local and regional partners is critical to achieving successful outcomes like in this case to help safeguard the Caribbean region from this threat."

"Today's successful interdiction and seizure underscore the relentless commitment and collaboration of our federal, local, and regional partners in combating drug trafficking in the

Caribbean,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Denise Foster. “The efforts of the Coast Guard and all agencies involved in this operation are vital to our mission of safeguarding our communities from the scourge of narcotics. The DEA will continue to lead the investigation to ensure that those responsible for these crimes are brought to justice.”

The Coast Guard’s efforts under Operation Unified Resolve contribute to the interagency results being achieved daily under Operation Caribbean Guard, which coordinates efforts between the Coast Guard, DHS, and Commonwealth and Territorial law enforcement partners, who are working diligently to deter, detect and disrupt illicit maritime trafficking to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Caribbean Corridor Strike Force is an initiative of the U.S. Attorney’s Office created to disrupt and dismantle major drug trafficking organizations operating in the Caribbean. CCSF is part of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) that investigates South American-based drug trafficking organizations responsible for the movement of multi-kilogram quantities of narcotics using the Caribbean as a transshipment point for further distribution to the United States. The initiative is composed of HSI, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, the Coast Guard, CBP and Puerto Rico Police Department’s Joint Forces for Rapid Action.

June 9 U.S. Central Command

Update

From U.S. Central Command, June 9, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – In the past 24 hours, Iranian-backed Houthis launched two anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM) from Houthi controlled areas of Yemen into the Gulf of Aden. One ASBM struck M/V Tavvishi, a Liberian-flagged, Swiss owned and operated container ship. M/V Tavvishi reported damage but has continued underway. The second ASBM was successfully destroyed by a coalition ship. There were no injuries reported by U.S., coalition, or merchant vessels.

Separately, Iranian-backed Houthis launched one ASBM and one anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM) into the Gulf of Aden. Both missiles struck M/V Norderney, an Antigua and Barbados flagged, German owned and operated cargo ship. M/V Norderney reported damage but has continued underway. There were no injuries reported by U.S., coalition, or merchant vessels.

Additionally, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed one uncrewed aerial system (UAS) over the Gulf of Aden. Later, USCENTCOM forces successfully destroyed two Houthi land attack cruise missiles (LACM) and one missile launcher in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

It was determined these systems presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. This action was taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.