CMF’s Combined Task Force 150 and U.S. Coast Guard Integration Key in Recent Drug Seizure



ARABIAN SEA (March 23, 2025) Illegal narcotics seized from a stateless vessel are stacked on the deck of the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) in the Arabian Sea. (Photo by U.S. Coast Guard)
By Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | March 24, 2025

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Coast Guard fast-response cutter, working in direct support of New Zealand-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), seized 260

kilograms of illegal narcotics from a vessel in the Arabian Sea, March 19.

The Sentinel-class fast-response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell's (WPC-1145) boarding team discovered and seized 200kg of methamphetamine and 60kg of heroin from the vessel. After weighing and documenting the haul, the crew properly disposed of the narcotics.

Royal New Zealand Navy Capt. Dave Barr, CTF 150 deputy commander, said this drug bust is a testament to the tenacity and expert seamanship of the Coastguardsmen on the Emlen Tunnell operating so far off the coast in challenging waters, and the ability to seamlessly integrate with the multinational CTF 150 staff.

"The waters in this area are full of legitimate fishing and trading vessels so it's important to get this part right and accurately identify those vessels that are likely to be carrying narcotics," said Barr. "A big part of our mission is to deter smugglers, so that those legitimate operators can continue to navigate freely to carry out their business."

This interdiction is part of ongoing efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking in international waters and demonstrates the CMF's continued commitment to safeguarding maritime security against malign non-state actors.

Emlen Tunnell is forward deployed to Bahrain. The fast response cutter is part of a contingent of U.S. Coast Guard ships operating in the region under Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA). PATFORSWA deploys Coast Guard personnel and ships alongside U.S. and regional naval forces throughout the Middle East.

CTF 150 is one of five task forces under CMF, the world's largest international naval partnership. CTF 150's mission is to deter and disrupt the ability of non-state actors to move weapons, drugs and other illicit substances in the Indian

Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Combined Maritime Forces is a 46-nation naval partnership upholding the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world’s most important shipping lanes.