

CMF's Combined Task Force 150 Carries Out First Drug Interdiction with New Zealand In Command



Coast Guardsmen from the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) seize illegal narcotics from a stateless vessel in the Arabian Sea. (U.S. Coast Guard)

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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, seized nearly 2,400 kilograms of illegal drugs from a vessel in the Arabian

Sea, Feb. 7.

The interdiction by the Sentinel-class fast-response cutter USCGC Emlen Tunnell (WPC-1145) represents CTF 150's first drug seizure since New Zealand assumed command Jan. 15.

The cutter's boarding team discovered and seized 2,357kg of hashish from the vessel. After weighing and documenting the haul, the crew properly disposed of the narcotics.

Commodore Rodger Ward, commander of CTF 150, said he's proud of the team effort that went into making this interdiction a reality after only a few weeks in command.

"Our command is a small cog in a system focused on interdicting illicit trafficking on the high seas," Ward said. "This is a team effort and this bust would not have been possible without the support of the 46 nations who make up the Combined Maritime Forces."

Ward noted that every bust we make reduces the flow of finances to terrorist organizations. "This is why we're here, to contribute to maritime security and protect the rules-based international order," he said.

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 Combined Maritime Forces, 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.