

Coast Guard Cutter Active returns home following a 76-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific



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PORT ANGELES, Wash. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) and crew returned to Port Angeles following a 76-day, 12,000-mile counternarcotics patrol in the equatorial Eastern Pacific Ocean.

In February, the cutter and crew departed Port Angeles to operate on behalf of Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S), a multi-national and multi-agency task force designed to detect and deter transnational organized criminal activity operating in international waters off the coasts of North and Central America.

The Active's crew operated in a region comprising more than 42 million square miles of ocean, extending from the U.S. maritime boundary line between California and Mexico and reached latitudes south of Costa Rica. The crew detected and successfully interdicted three illegal narcotics shipments during their patrol.

On March 1, the Active and crew located and intercepted a target of interest go-fast vessel off the coast of central Mexico, utilizing aerial and surface tactics. The vessel's operators were detained by the Mexican Navy (SEMAR), who participated in the pursuit. The pursuit lasted more than 27 hours, resulting in Active's crew recovering over 960 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated \$28 million.

In international waters off southern Costa Rica, on March 7, Active's bridge crew detected a suspected vessel operating near the cutter. The crew quickly mobilized their resources and successfully intercepted a go-fast vessel operated by four individuals. Near the interdiction site, Active's crew discovered more than 100 packages of illegal narcotics, worth an estimated \$3.5 million.

On multiple occasions during the patrol, the Active and crew assisted the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) with operational and logistical support. This assistance allowed

Waesche to continue its operations and mission objectives with minimal interruption, amplifying presence, and coverage in the region with multiple Coast Guard platforms on patrol.

In keeping with its namesake, Active's crew demonstrated environmental stewardship, rescuing three sea turtles entangled in abandoned and adrift fishing tackle.

"I am extremely proud of how our crew performed throughout this patrol," said Lt. Erick Jackson, Active's operations officer. "No matter the time of day or type of mission, our teams worked together to achieve operational success."

Toward the end of the patrol, the cutter and crew made a port call in Manzanillo, Mexico, and participated in the [North American Maritime Security Initiative \(NAMSI\) exercises](#).

"Active's crew truly seized on the opportunity presented by the NAMSI event to strengthen our skills while building interoperability with partner nations," said Cmdr. Brian Tesson, Active's commanding officer. "I cannot be more impressed by the performance, professionalism and resilience of the Active crew throughout the entirety of this patrol."

Additionally, the Active and crew conducted eight days of joint operations with the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Benjamin Bottoms (WPC 1132) and HMCS Edmonton of the Royal Canadian Navy. The three vessels operated as a multi-national surface action group (SAG) to increase detection and interdiction capabilities. The joint operations allowed for extensive communication and coordination training for Active who functioned as the SAG commander. Highlights include Active conducting an astern refueling at sea of the Benjamin Bottoms, and a successful interdiction of a go-fast vessel operated by seven personnel over 200 miles off the coast of Mexico. Each asset in the SAG was critical to this successful multi-national effort which resulted in the seizure of an estimated \$22 million worth of cocaine.

The Active is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter commissioned in 1965. The cutter routinely conducts fishery patrols, counternarcotics operations, law enforcement patrols and search and rescue activities. Active has also participated in several high-profile missions, including the clean-up efforts in response to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989.