

Coast Guard Cutter Diligence returns to Pensacola after interdicting \$20.3 million in illicit drugs, six smugglers



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PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616) returned to homeport in Pensacola on Thursday after a 52-day counterdrug patrol in the Caribbean Sea.

During the patrol, Diligence's crew worked in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) within the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of responsibility to interdict

and deter the smuggling of illicit narcotics. Diligence's crew disrupted approximately 700 kilograms of cocaine with an estimated street value of over \$20.3 million dollars and apprehended six suspected smugglers.

Diligence also conducted a joint training exercise with the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR). During the exercise, the Diligence crew and pilots from SOAR completed daytime and nighttime helicopter landing evolutions. This exercise strengthened the interoperability of the Coast Guard and the U.S. Army.

"Stopping the flow of drugs to the United States is a challenging mission that requires a significant amount of teamwork," said Cmdr. Nolan Cain, Diligence's commanding officer. "The Diligence crew had the opportunity to work alongside our Department of Defense and international partners in this unified effort. The dedication and hard work of the Diligence crew and our partners is incredibly inspiring."

Detecting and interdicting illegal drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. JIATF-South in Key West, Florida, conducts detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension process. 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.

Diligence is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter with 78 crewmembers. The cutter's primary missions are counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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