Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba Returns Home after $60 Million Drug Bust



A helicopter interdiction tactical squadron with the Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba pursues a drug-smuggling vessel in the Caribbean Sea in April. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Trees

BOSTON – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba returned home to Boston on May 23 following a 62-day patrol in support of Operation Martillo in the western Caribbean, the Coast Guard 1st District said in a release.

Escanaba's crew seized nearly 2,000 kilograms of cocaine, valued at $60 million, while working with an armed helicopter interdiction tactical squadron onboard and local Panamanian law enforcement.

Escanaba's crew also located a disabled boat 100 miles north of Colombia in 14-foot seas and 35 mph winds. The crew launched its small boat team and rescued the four crew members stranded aboard the boat. Escanaba's crew transferred the survivors to the Colombian navy.

"I am extremely proud of the crew for their extraordinary dedication and professionalism throughout this patrol during an unprecedented time," said Cmdr. Mike Nalli, commanding officer of the Escanaba. "We overcame numerous challenges to focus on mission execution and achieve excellent results in support of [U.S. Southern Command's] national objectives."

Operation Martillo is a multinational detection, monitoring and interdiction operation that consists of 20 participating nations working together to counter transnational organized crime networks and illicit trafficking in the waters along

Central America.

Escanaba is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter with a crew complement of 100. They conduct maritime enforcement and homeland security missions in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.