

Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba Returns to Boston after Counter-Narcotics Patrol



Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba's crew offload approximately 3,250 pounds of cocaine, 440 pounds of liquid cocaine, and 7,700 pounds of marijuana at Port Everglades, Florida, Oct. 16, 2020, in this video screen shot. U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicole J. Groll

BOSTON – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba (WMEC 907) returned home to Boston on Tuesday, following a 65-day counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 1st District said in an Oct. 20 release.

The crew supported Operation Martillo, a presidential initiative designed to disrupt transnational criminal organizations in Central and South America.

Escanaba's crew deployed with an embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron crew (HITRON) based out of Jacksonville, Florida, who augmented the cutter's organic law enforcement teams, with aerial use-of-force capabilities.

Following their arrival in the Pacific, Escanaba's crew coordinated with a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft crew and a U.S. Navy MH-60 helicopter crew embarked on the USS Pinckney, to interdict a vessel smuggling more than 3,000 pounds of suspected narcotics.

The 270-foot Escanaba's 100-person crew remained busy throughout their patrol, interdicting five vessels and detaining 15 suspected narcotics traffickers attempting to smuggle more than 1,700 pounds of cocaine, almost 500 gallons of liquid cocaine and approximately 6,500 pounds of marijuana with a total estimated street value of more than \$58 million.

“I am extremely proud of our results on this patrol,” said Cmdr. Mike Nalli, Escanaba’s commanding officer. “We capitalized on the extraordinary teamwork between JIATF-S and our partner nations to make five high-quality interdictions and apply pressure to the transnational criminal organizations in the region.”

In addition to law enforcement operations, Escanaba’s crew participated in a training event with the Costa Rican Coast Guard. The exercise focused on tactics, communications, and best practices for combatting transnational criminal organizations in Central and South America and strengthened a vital partnership in the region. Partner nations, such as Costa Rica, are involved in almost 70% of drug disruptions, a capability built through years of security cooperation.