

Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton Offloads \$182.8M In Counternarcotics At Port Everglades



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton pose with more than 16,100 pounds of cocaine worth an assessed street value of approximately \$182.8 million in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 2, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Rodriguez)

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MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton’s crew offloaded more than 16,100 pounds of cocaine worth an assessed street value of approximately \$182.8 million in Port Everglades, Monday.

The crew worked alongside interagency and international

partners to interdict the illicit narcotics in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off South and Central America.

Coast Guard crews often deploy to the U.S. Southern Command joint operating area, which includes the Caribbean Sea and the Eastern Pacific Ocean, to conduct counter drug missions in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South. Deployments for cutters assigned to the Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command include Panama Canal transits to deny transnational criminal organizations access to maritime trafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

“I’m proud of our accomplishments during this three-and-a-half-month deployment,” said Capt. Justin Carter, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton. “The exceptional crew of Hamilton, with the support of an aircrew from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Squadron, demonstrated the greatest professionalism, seamanship and airmanship while executing this important and challenging mission at sea in service to nation.”

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdictions:

- Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton
- Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron
- Joint Interagency Task Force-South
- Eleventh Coast Guard District

Six suspected smugglers were also transferred to federal custody and face prosecution by the U.S. Department of

Justice.

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. The Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West conducts the 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. Interdictions in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard's Eleventh District, headquartered in Alameda, California.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' Strike Force Initiatives and designated investigations. OCDEF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDEF program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDEF>.

The Coast Guard is the United States' lead federal maritime law enforcement agency with authority to enforce national and international laws on the high seas and waters within U.S. jurisdiction. Coast Guard HITRON aircrews are uniquely qualified to conduct airborne use of force for non-compliant vessels, enhancing the Coast Guard's ability to react to maritime security threats and to better secure our maritime borders since the program's inception in 1999. For 25 years, HITRON crews have forward deployed aboard Coast Guard cutters and U.S. Navy ships or foreign allied warships to conduct drug interdiction operations.

Hamilton is one of four 418-foot National Security Cutters homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. NSCs are a world-wide deployable asset that supports Department of Homeland

Security, Department of Defense, and national objectives through drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, national defense, search and rescue, fisheries enforcement, and national intelligence collection. The ship's crew of approximately 150 personnel leverage robust sensor, electronic, engineering, weapons systems, pursuit boats and aircraft to complete their missions anywhere.

For more information, follow U.S. Coast Guard Southeast on ["X" \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and find U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Southwest on ["X" \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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