Coast Guard Cutter James Returns Home after 75-Day Counter-Drug Patrol



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter James (front), fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie (middle) and U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Pinckney transit the Pacific Ocean during a replenishment-at-sea on May 3. U.S. Navy/Air Crewman (Helicopter) 2nd Class Aaron Malek

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter James returned home on June 12 to Charleston following a 75-day counter-drug patrol in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

During their patrol, the James' crew, augmented by an embarked armed helicopter capable of disabling drug smuggling vessels from the Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, interdicted four drug-smuggling vessels and seized more than 3,800 kilograms of cocaine and 3,300 pounds of marijuana bound for the United States.

The James' patrol efforts were in direct support of the president's enhanced counter-narcotics surge announced in early April. The U.S. Coast Guard, working cooperatively with U.S. Southern Command, began this surge effort in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific, putting increased pressure on the drug trafficking organizations operating in Central and South America.

Working alongside U.S. Navy crews aboard destroyers and littoral combat ships, the James crew, along with several other Coast Guard cutter crews, seized or disrupted more than 43,000 kilograms of cocaine and nearly 10,000 pounds of marijuana.

Before returning home, the crew conducted a narcotics offload in Port Everglades, Florida, on June 9. After collecting contraband from other vessels in the eastern Pacific and the Caribbean, the crew offloaded nearly 30,000 pounds of cocaine and marijuana, worth an estimated $400 million, representing seven additional interdictions events by Coast Guard and Navy vessels supporting this enhanced counter-narcotics surge.

“This patrol highlights our crew’s sincere commitment to protecting the American people from our adversaries amid all the uncertainty caused by COVID-19,” said Capt. Jeffrey Randall, the James’ commanding officer. “The James’ crew demonstrated supreme resilience and performed exceptionally as showcased by the results of this successful patrol.”

The James is one of two 418-foot national security cutters homeported in Charleston.