Coast Guard Cutter Munro crew returns home after 119-day, multi-mission patrol; more than 20,000 pounds of cocaine seized



A Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) crew member observes the oil tanker Bella 1 in the North Atlantic Ocean, Jan. 6, 2026. Munro's crew monitored the vessel until it was seized by Coast Guard deployable specialized forces, with support from the Department of War, after Bella 1 violated U.S. sanctions and resisted initial boarding attempts off coastal Venezuela in late December. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, March 6, 2026

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Munro

(WMSL 755) **returned to their home port in Alameda**, on Sunday, following a historic 119-day multi-mission deployment spanning more than 26,000 miles from the Eastern Pacific Ocean to the Northern Atlantic.

Munro departed Alameda on November 3, 2025, to conduct training workups and participate in the Department of War's exercise Resolute Hunter offshore of San Diego, before sailing into the Eastern Pacific to execute a counternarcotics patrol in support of the U.S. Coast Guard's Operation Pacific Viper. Munro was diverted to the Atlantic Ocean in support of the Department of War's Operation Southern Spear.

While supporting U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force South and Coast Guard Southwest District, Munro detected and identified a heavily laden go-fast vessel transiting along a known smuggling route in the Eastern Pacific. With the help of its two cutter pursuit boats, Scan Eagle short-range unmanned aerial system, and an embarked MH-65 aircraft from the Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON), Munro successfully found, tracked and **interdicted the vessel using warning shots and disabling fire from the HITRON aircraft**. Munro subsequently **detained six suspected narco-terrorists and seized 22,052 pounds of cocaine** valued at over $250 million – the single largest maritime drug seizure in 18 years, and the largest ever in HITRON's history. This interdiction continued the Coast Guard's historic counter-drug operations through Operation Pacific Viper, including the seizure of over 200,000 pounds of cocaine along maritime smuggling routes from South and Central America since early August.

After transiting through the Panama Canal, Munro took station in the Caribbean Sea, ready to conduct new tasking in support of Operation Southern Spear. Munro located and identified the dark fleet Motor Tanker Bella 1, a U.S. sanctioned vessel determined to be without nationality and subject to

U.S. jurisdiction. Munro's crew continuously **pursued the non-compliant vessel across the North Atlantic Ocean** for 18-days and over 4,900-miles. The pursuit culminated with the boarding of Bella 1, where Munro worked in tandem with Department of War assets to seize control of the 333-meter crude oil carrier for further transfer to the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Homeland Security for disposition.

"The service, our nation and our families can be extremely proud of Munro," said Capt. Jim O'Mara, Munro's commanding officer. "This crew rose to every new challenge thrown at them with professionalism and persistence, and they achieved historic results. This was a one-of-a-kind deployment for us, but it is also just one part of a much broader campaign and U.S. national strategy."

"We could not have done this without support from partners, allies, and our families," said O'Mara. "Our families had to adapt to each new twist, just like all military families do across the Armed Forces. It is tough on them. But when they hold strong at home that keeps us motivated and focused on our mission. Now, we reunite with our loved ones, proud of what we accomplished and already preparing for the next mission."

Commissioned in 2017, Munro is one of four U.S. Coast Guard Legend-class National Security Cutters homeported in Alameda, California. The cutter is named in honor of Signalman First Class Douglas A. Munro – the only Coast Guardsman awarded the Medal of Honor – for his heroic actions on September 27th, 1942, when he gallantly sacrificed himself in the defense, rescue, and evacuation of 500 stranded U.S. Marines from Point Cruz, Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands.