

Coast Guard Cutter Seneca Returns Home After 61-Day Patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean



The Coast Guard Cutter Seneca (WMEC-906) crew underway on the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Sept. 22, 2018. The cutter Seneca is the sixth of thirteen 270' Famous Class medium endurance cutters in the United States Coast Guard fleet. (Coast Guard Photo)

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PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Seneca (WMEC 906) returned to their home port of Portsmouth, Oct. 30, following a 61-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

During the deployment, Seneca's crew conducted law enforcement

operations on the high seas to disrupt illegal narcotics smuggling.

Patrolling in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South’s (JIATF-S) counter-drug mission, Seneca worked to counter illicit maritime activities, strengthen partner nation ties and facilitate the safety of life at sea. While deployed in the Coast Guard Eleventh District area of operations, Seneca’s crew worked alongside an embarked aviation unit from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron and law enforcement detachment (LEDET) personnel from the Tactical Law Enforcement Team – South (TACLET-S).

While at sea, Seneca’s crew provided assistance during a Costa Rican forces interdiction of a vessel carrying illegal drugs. The joint interdiction prevented approximately 3,376 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated street-value of over \$3.2 million, from illicit distribution.

This interdiction displayed how U.S. Coast Guard units work effectively with partner nations to combat illicit transnational activities. While on patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Seneca also operated alongside Coast Guard Cutters Munro (WMSL 755), Hamilton (WMSL 753), Vigorous (WMEC 627) and U.S. Navy Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis (LCS 19).

“Our deployment is representative of the combined efforts of U.S. and allied military units from a coalition of partners working together to deny drug trafficking organizations access to maritime smuggling routes,” said Cmdr. Lee Jones, commanding officer of Seneca. “The U.S. Coast Guard’s ability to forge strong and lasting international partnerships that further the national interest is what makes our service such a unique instrument of national security. I am proud of the hard work, resiliency, and dedication to duty exhibited by the crew of Seneca.”

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. JIATF-S based in Key West, Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Support from TACLET-S, which is based in Miami, improves mission capability.

Seneca is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. Commissioned in 1987, the cutter has called Portsmouth home for the past four years. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of laws and treaties, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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