Coast Guard Cutter Spencer returns home to Portsmouth, Virginia after 83-day maritime border security patrol in the Caribbean Sea, Windward Passage



Coast Guard Cutter Spencer (WMEC 905) conducts flight operations with an Air Station Elizabeth City MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew while underway in Chesapeake Bay, June 26, 2025. These operations enhance mission readiness between surface and aviation assets. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Richard Stewart)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Sept. 18, 2025

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Spencer (WMEC

905) returned to their home port in Portsmouth, Wednesday, concluding an 83-day maritime border security patrol in the Caribbean Sea and Windward Passage.

Spencer’s crew deployed in support of Operation Vigilant Sentry while underway in the Coast Guard Southeast District area of responsibility. Crew members worked with interagency and international partners, conducting maritime safety and security operations to deter unlawful migration and protect America’s maritime borders.

While on patrol, Spencer watchstanders detected a dangerously overloaded and unlit vessel at night off the coast of Haiti. Spencer’s crew launched the cutter’s small boat to assess the situation. Recognizing an immediate risk to life, the boarding team provided life jackets and began transferring people to the cutter, safely embarking 191 aliens aboard Spencer. Crew members provided medical screening, food, water and shelter while conducting accountability procedures. All aliens were later repatriated to Haiti in accordance with U.S. law and policy.

“Spencer’s efforts over the last 83 days ensured the security of our nation’s Southeastern border and maritime approaches,” said Cmdr. Justin Strock, commanding officer of Spencer. “This crew, in coordination with our federal and international partners, reinforced the Coast Guard’s ability to prevent and deter illegal migration by sea. I am proud of this crew for their determination, dedication and teamwork throughout our patrol.”

OVS is the Department of Homeland Security-led operation comprised of federal, state and local partners responsible for preventing and responding to maritime migration. OVS, previously known as Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast, was established in 2003 and is comprised of more than 50 federal, state and local agencies.

Spencer is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth. Its missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection and homeland security operations. The cutter falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is based in Portsmouth.