

Coast Guard Cutter Tampa Returns Home After 55-Day Counter-Drug Patrol

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard cutter Tampa returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Virginia, after a 55-day counter-drug patrol in the eastern Pacific Ocean on July 26, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

The crew of the Tampa interdicted more than 5,200 pounds of cocaine, of which 1,950 pounds was successfully recovered, and 3,600 pounds of marijuana worth a total of \$96 million dollars. The crew also detained eight suspected drug smugglers who were transferred to the Department of Justice officials in Port Everglades, Florida, for prosecution.

The Tampa crew executed the counter-narcotics mission in the eastern Pacific, interdicting two low profile vessels as well as contraband jettisoned by a third vessel.

Prior to entering the primary patrol area, the crew conducted a joint operation with the Honduran navy as part of Operation Dominion. The operation involved exercising communications with the Honduras Joint Information Operations Center, operations with a Honduran patrol boat, and providing a law enforcement presence in Honduran territorial seas.

The crew conducted a training assessment with subject matter experts from Afloat Training Organization Norfolk, Virginia, and completed over 55 drills in less than a week to assess the crew's mission readiness.

To protect the public and service members and preserve operational readiness during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coast Guard has implemented strict safety measures. All service members are required to follow enhanced sanitation and spacing

procedures and wear proper personal protective equipment. Prior to deployment in theater, all Coast Guard cutters conduct a 14-day at-sea quarantine, during which the crew is medically evaluated.

"I am exceptionally proud of what our crew was able to accomplish during this challenging patrol," said Capt. Michael Cilenti, Tampa's commanding officer. "Executing a counter-narcotics patrol in the eastern Pacific always comes with a set of unique challenges, and this patrol, in a COVID environment, was no exception. The men and women of the Tampa took these unique difficulties head-on, exceeding all expectations by keeping themselves and each other healthy while rigorously executing the assigned mission. Of course, the exceptional resilience our crew displayed would not be possible without the continued support of our loved ones back home. Their devotion and sacrifices form the foundation for our success, and we could not be more thankful."