

Coast Guard Cutter Thetis Returns to Key West from Drug-Interdiction Patrol



A suspected cocaine smuggling vessel drifts in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean after being intercepted by the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis Nov. 21, 2019. U.S. Coast Guard

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Thetis returned home Dec. 5 to Key West, Florida, after completing a 79-day patrol throughout the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of U.S. Southern Command Joint Interagency Task Force South and the Coast Guard 11th District, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release of the same date.

The Thetis crew interdicted four suspected drug smuggling vessels seizing an estimated 9,300 pounds of cocaine and preventing more than a ton of additional drugs dumped by suspected smugglers from reaching the United States. The interdictions, which included two low-profile vessels in one week and resulted in the apprehension of 13 suspected smugglers and seizure of drugs with an estimated value of \$165-million, were accomplished by working with multiple interagency partners to counter transnational criminal organizations and hinder the illicit flow of drugs, people and other dangerous shipments bound for the United States.

“These interdictions were an all-hands effort working with Joint Interagency Task Force South, interagency partners and partner nations in the region,” said Cmdr. Randall Chong, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Thetis. “I could not be prouder of my crew for stepping up and successfully completing our mission.”

During a port call in Huatulco, Mexico, Thetis crewmembers

volunteered for a community relations event and built a playground at a school located in the mountains of the Oaxaca province. The Thetis crew provided children with a new, safe playground that will last them many years to come.

In addition to its operational success, the Thetis crew completed damage control, seamanship, and navigation and shipboard helicopter operations and training with an embarked Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron MH-65 Dolphin from Jacksonville, Florida.

Named for the famous Greek mythology sea nymph and mother of Achilles, the Thetis is a 270-foot Famous-class cutter, homeported in Key West and has a crew of 100.