Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant Crew Back Home After 55-Day Counter-Drug Patrol



The Vigilant crew prepares to moor in Golfito, Costa Rica, while on their 55-day counter-drug patrol in January. U.S. Coast Guard

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant returned home here on Feb. 16 after a 55-day counter-drug patrol in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The Vigilant crew's efforts during their patrol led to the seizure of 2,155 kilograms of cocaine, 30 pounds of marijuana and one pound of amphetamine, together valued at $81.7 million, and the detention of 11 suspected traffickers.

While on patrol, the Vigilant crew interdicted three suspected drug smuggling vessels with two of the interdictions both occurring within a 24-hour span. The first interdiction occurred when the crew intercepted a 45-foot low profile vessel smuggling 810 kilograms of cocaine. The Vigilant crew resumed their patrol after the four suspected smugglers aboard were detained and evidence to facilitate prosecution was collected.

Eight hours later, the crew interdicted a second vessel, a 35-foot panga, on which Vigilant's boarding team seized 355 kilograms of cocaine, 30 pounds of marijuana, and one pound of amphetamine, and detained four suspected smugglers.

While in the Pacific, the Vigilant crew worked with several U.S. and partner nation assets, including a Military Sealift Command ship and three Coast Guard cutters. In Panama, the crew conducted a professional exchange and training with

officials from Panamanian law enforcement and military agencies to promote regional stability and security, economic prosperity and resiliency through collaboration.

The Vigilant also hosted Panama’s Tactical Unit of Drug Operations and the National Aeronaval Service to share the Coast Guard’s process for collecting and preserving evidence to support the prosecution of smuggling cases. During a brief stop in Ecuador, the crew liaised with the Ecuadorian navy and local government officials to coordinate a short-fused custodial transfer of an Ecuadorian national suspected of drug smuggling.

The Vigilant is a multimission 210-foot medium-endurance cutter whose missions include illegal drug and migrant interdiction and search and rescue. The cutter patrols throughout the Caribbean basin, Atlantic seaboard and periodically the eastern Pacific Ocean.