

# Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant Returns Home after 68-day Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant (WMEC 617) small boat crewman approaches the cutter in the Caribbean Sea, July 22. The Vigilant crew repatriated 147 Haitian migrants interdicted in the high seas. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant's crew returned to Port Canaveral on July 22 after completing a 68-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said July 28.

The crew's deployment was focused on collaborating with other Coast Guard assets to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant voyages en route to the United States.

During the patrol, the crew interdicted 19 vessels with 460 Cuban and Haitian migrants attempting to illegally enter the United States, and aided a group of Cubans stranded on an island.

In support of Coast Guard Sector Key West, Vigilant's crew interdicted 18 vessels while patrolling in the Florida Straits. During the patrol, the crew approached a grossly overloaded sailing vessel with 147 Haitian migrants onboard. The cutter's crew provided care and medical attention to the migrants before repatriating them to Haiti.

As a tropical depression with 40 mph winds and 10 to 12-foot seas approached the Florida Straits, Vigilant's crew interdicted three overloaded and unseaworthy homemade vessels in a 12-hour period, saving 44 Cuban migrants.

The crew also supported the Coast Guard 7th District Operation Southeast Watch in the Windward Pass. Operation Southeast watch is an interagency effort to detect and deter vessels engaged in illegal maritime migration. While in the Windward Pass, the crew oversaw and coordinated patrol assignments for aircraft and seven other cutters off the coast of Haiti. Vigilant's crew worked with Coast Guard Cutter William Trump's crew to interdict an overloaded and unstable sailing vessel, rescuing 107 Haitian migrants.

"During this 68-day patrol, Vigilant's crew supported homeland security objectives by deterring illegal maritime migration," said Cmdr. Jay Guyer, commanding officer of the Vigilant. "Interdicting and rescuing nearly 500 people over a two-month patrol is a testament to the incredible professionalism of our crew."

Vigilant, a 210-foot Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter, patrols the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean, performing counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction operations, search and rescue, and fisheries enforcement.