Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant Returns Home After Counter-Drug Patrol



Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant crew members package bales of cocaine to be offloaded at Port Everglades, Florida, on June 23. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon Murray

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant crew returned home to Cape Canaveral on June 24 following a 40-day counter-drug patrol in the western Caribbean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

During their patrol, the Vigilant's crew participated in a four-day multinational counter narcotics joint operation with the Honduran armed forces and later worked with the Colombian navy in the interdictions of three suspected drug-smuggling vessels around the Colombian Basin.

The cutter was augmented by a Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron armed helicopter crew capable of disabling drug-smuggling vessels. The aircrew assisted in the interdiction of two suspected drug-smuggling vessels in a period of less than 24 hours, which resulted in interdiction of about 6,800 pounds of cocaine with an estimated wholesale value of $118.3 million.

The Vigilant's patrol efforts were in direct support of the president's enhanced counter-narcotics surge announced in early April. The U.S. Coast Guard, working with U.S. Southern Command, began this surge effort in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean, putting increased pressure on the drug trafficking organizations operating in Central and South

America.

Before returning home, the crew conducted the narcotics offload in Port Everglades, Florida, on June 23.

The Vigilant is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter. The cutter crew’s primary missions include search and rescue, illegal drug interdictions, alien migrant interdictions ensuring safety of life at sea and enforcing international and domestic maritime laws.