

Coast Guard Offloads \$5.6 Million in Seized Cocaine in Puerto Rico



A Coast Guard cutter Donald Horsley crew member helps offload about 150 kilograms of seized cocaine that was subsequently transferred to federal law enforcement officials, who also took custody of three suspected smugglers on June 13. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard cutter Donald Horsley offloaded about 150 kilograms of seized cocaine and transferred custody of three suspected smugglers to federal law enforcement authorities on June 13, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The seized drug shipment has an estimated value of more than \$5.6 million. The three men apprehended remain in U.S. custody facing criminal charges for drug smuggling.

The interdiction was the result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF). Prosecution is being led by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico.

"COVID-19 has presented us with tremendous operational and personal challenges over these past few months and yet the great women and men of the United States Coast Guard continue to do an outstanding job safeguarding this great nation," said Lt. Joel Wyman, commanding officer of the cutter Winslow Griesser, which carried out the interdiction.

The interdiction and seizure occurred during a patrol the night of June 8, where the crew of a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) maritime patrol aircraft detected a

suspected go-fast vessel with three people aboard about 50 nautical miles southwest of Isla Saona, Dominican Republic. Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan directed the launch of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft to acquire the location of the vessel and diverted the Winslow Griesser.

Once on scene, Winslow Griesser's over-the-horizon cutter boat stopped the vessel and recovered three bales from the water near it. The recovered bales tested positive for cocaine and weighed about 150 kilograms.

The detainees and contraband were transferred to the Donald Horsley for transport to Sector San Juan. The cutter's crew offloaded the contraband and disembarked the suspected smugglers in coordination with CBP officers, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, DEA and CCSF special agents in San Juan.