

Coast Guard Offloads More than \$3 Million in Illegal Narcotics in Miami



The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous (WMEC 627) offloads approximately 22 pounds of cocaine and 1,256 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated \$3 million, Aug. 30 at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach, Florida. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Stephen Lehmann*

MIAMI – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous offloaded approximately 22 pounds of cocaine and 1,256 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated \$3 million, on Aug. 30, at Base Miami Beach, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said Sept. 2.

The drugs were interdicted in the international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean by crews from the cutters Vigorous (WMEC 627) and Legare (WMEC 912).

"Vigorous is glad to have been able to make an important contribution to the Coast Guard's counterdrug mission," said Cmdr. Ryan A. Waters, commanding officer of Vigorous. "I'm incredibly proud of the hardworking Vigorous crew's proficiency teamwork and devotion to duty that enabled the detection, interdiction and boarding of a vessel suspected of drug smuggling."

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean, and the transnational criminal organizations they are associated with, requires a unity of effort in all phases, from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, and on to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. attorneys' offices in districts across the nation.

Detecting and interdicting illegal drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. The Joint Interagency Task Force South in Key West, Florida, conducts detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Maritime interdiction of illicit maritime activity in the Caribbean Sea is coordinated by the 7th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami, Florida, and the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California, coordinates interdiction of illicit maritime activity in the Eastern Pacific.

Cutter Vigorous, a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter, was commissioned in May 1969 and is homeported in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Vigorous generally deploys 185 days a year for patrols lasting 45 to 60 days to a variety of operating areas, extending from the Gulf of Maine to the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the Eastern Pacific Ocean. The Vigorous' primary mission areas include homeland security, law enforcement, counterdrug operations, search and rescue, migrant operations, and fisheries enforcement.