# Coast Guard Offloads Nearly $65M in Illicit Narcotics Interdicted in Western Caribbean Sea




The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616) poses for a group photo during a drug offload at Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg, Florida, Sept. 22, 2025. Diligence's crew offloaded nearly $65 million in illicit narcotics interdicted in the Western Caribbean Sea. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Riley Perkofski)

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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616) offloaded approximately 8,700 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated $64.5 million, Monday, at Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg.

Diligence deployed in support of Joint Interagency Task Force – South to the Coast Guard District Southeast area of responsibility, where crew members interdicted more than 10,000 pounds of illicit narcotics.

“I am remarkably proud of the crew and appreciative of the efforts of JIATF-S and Coast Guard District Southeast,” said Cmdr. Colin McKee, commanding officer Diligence. “This joint effort helped us prevent more than four tons of illegal drugs from entering the United States. While this offload marks another milestone in our efforts to counter narco-terrorism, the Coast Guard remains relentless in our operations to control, secure, and defend U.S. borders and maritime approaches.”

The seized contraband was a result of two interdictions in international waters of the Caribbean Sea.

On Aug. 7, Diligence’s crew detected and boarded a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 136 miles southwest of Negril, Jamaica. Diligence’s boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing 1,500 pounds of marijuana. The contraband was transferred to and offloaded by Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL 753), as part of the **largest quantity of drugs offloaded in Coast Guard history**, in Port Everglades, on Aug. 25.

On Sep. 6, a maritime patrol craft spotted a suspicious go-fast vessel approximately 240 miles north of Panama. Diligence’s boarding team interdicted the vessel, seizing more than 8,700 pounds of cocaine. The cocaine was offloaded by Diligence’s crew and transferred to case agents in St. Petersburg, Monday.

The following assets and crews were involved with the interdiction operations:

- **U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence**

- **Joint Interagency Task Force – South (JIATF-S)**

- **Coast Guard District Southeast**

Detecting and interdicting narco-terrorism on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination because 80% of U.S.-bound drugs are interdicted on the high seas. U.S. Southern Command's JIATF-S, based in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of Coast Guard District Southeast, headquartered in Miami.

The Coast Guard continues increased operations to interdict, seize and disrupt transshipments of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs by sea. These drugs fuel and enable foreign terrorist organizations and transnational criminal organizations to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl, threatening the United States.

Diligence is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug and alien interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. The cutter falls under the command of **U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area**, based in Portsmouth, Virginia.