

Coast Guard Offloads Over \$12M in Illicit Drugs Interdicted in Caribbean Sea



A USCGC Tampa (WMEC 902) crew member passes a bale of illicit drugs to another crew member during a drug offload at Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, April 30, 2025. The crew offloaded 59 bales of illicit drugs worth more than \$12 million resulting from two interdictions in the Caribbean Sea by the crew of USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul and their embarked Navy helicopter. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Diana Sherbs)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa’s crew ended Fleet Week Fort Lauderdale with the offload of approximately 3,750 pounds of cocaine and marijuana worth an estimated \$12.3 million, Wednesday, at Port Everglades.

The seized contraband was the result of two interdictions in

the Caribbean Sea by the crew of USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul and their embarked Navy helicopter and Coast Guard law enforcement detachments.

“We train diligently and stand ready to execute interdiction missions at moment’s notice,” said Cmdr. Steven Fresse, Minneapolis-Saint Paul commanding officer. “To be able to make an immediate impact so early on during our maiden deployment is a testament to the hard work and skills of the ship’s crew.”

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

- [USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul \(LCS 21\)](#)

- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET) South, LEDET 406

- U.S. Navy Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50, DET 3

- [Joint Interagency Task Force-South \(JIATF-South\)](#)

- Seventh Coast Guard District command center watchstanders

“Fleet Week Fort Lauderdale was a great opportunity for our Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps crews to showcase our sea services to communities here in South Florida,” said Cmdr. Walter Krolman, Tampa commanding officer. “Today’s offload demonstrates the value of our collaborative joint force operations far out to sea in protecting and defending Americans here at home from threats abroad.”

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard for the interdiction and apprehension phases. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Seventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami.

To read more about the USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul's interdictions, [click here](#).

[USCGC Tampa](#) is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, V.A. under [U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command](#).

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