

Coast Guard Offloads Over \$141M in Illicit Drugs Interdicted in Caribbean Sea



Crew members from USCGC Valiant (WMEC 621) stand at parade rest in front of interdicted narcotics at Base Miami Beach, Florida, Mar. 6, 2025. The Valiant's crew secured the illegal drugs from six interdictions in the international waters of the Caribbean. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Strasburg)

From U.S. Coast Guard District 7, March 6, 2025

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant's crew offloaded approximately 12,470 pounds of cocaine, Thursday, worth an estimated \$141.4 million at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach.

The seized contraband was the result of six interdictions in the Caribbean Sea, and 17 suspected smugglers were transferred ashore to face federal prosecution in U.S. courts.

“These seizures are a testament to the Coast Guard’s continued dedication to safeguard America by securing our maritime borders,” said Lt. j.g. Jesus Martinez Borges, a Seventh Coast Guard District enforcement officer. “The Coast Guard and our partners work tirelessly to deny drug trafficking organizations access to smuggling routes bound for the United States. Our efforts contribute to federal investigations and prosecutions that further seek to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal activity abroad, which threaten Americans here at home.”

On Feb. 2, a Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 30 miles north of Venezuela. The Netherlands Royal Navy ship HNLMS Groningen crew, with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment 105 crew, interdicted a go-fast vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 6,220 pounds of cocaine.

That same day, a forward-deployed HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Miami detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 35 miles southwest of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The aircrew vectored in U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle’s crew who interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehending three suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 2,200 pounds of cocaine.

“I am proud of the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the crew of Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle in securing our maritime border,” said Lt. Cmdr. David Radin, commanding officer of Joseph Doyle. “It was a smooth operation working with Air Station Miami’s forward-deployed aircraft to detect these traffickers, which enabled our crew to interdict and prevent these deadly narcotics from reaching our nation’s borders.”

On Feb. 14, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew located a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 18

miles north of Venezuela. The Groningen crew deployed two small boats with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 105 crew to interdict the vessel. The go-fast vessel jettisoned bales of contraband during the pursuit and fled into Venezuelan territorial waters. The Groningen crew recovered the approximate 571 pounds of cocaine.

On Feb. 17, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations aircrew detected a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 50 miles northeast of the Dominican Republic. The aircrew vectored in the Valiant crew who interdicted the go-fast vessel, apprehending five suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 1,280 pounds of cocaine.

“The Valiant crew’s interdiction is one of many law enforcement actions highlighting the time-tested partnership and outstanding coordination of the Seventh Coast Guard District, Coast Guard Sector San Juan, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch,” said Cmdr. Matthew Press, commanding officer of Valiant.

“AMO continues to predict, detect, identify, classify, track, deter and interdict threats through the coordinated application of aviation and maritime law enforcement resources within the air and sea,” said Christopher Hunter, director of CBP Air and Marine Operations in the Caribbean.

Tuesday, a Dutch maritime patrol aircrew notified the HNLMS Groningen crew of a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 120 miles northwest of Aruba. The Groningen crew launched a helicopter aircrew who signaled the non-compliant go-fast vessel and employed warning shots to compel the suspected smugglers to stop with no injuries reported. The Groningen crew apprehended two suspected smugglers and seized approximately 545 pounds of cocaine.

Saturday, a Caribbean maritime patrol aircrew notified the

Royal Canadian Navy ship HMCS Harry DeWolf's crew of a suspicious vessel in international waters approximately 176 miles north of Cabo De La Vela, Colombia. The Harry DeWolf crew and an embarked U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 402 crew intercepted the go-fast vessel, apprehending three suspected smugglers and seizing approximately 1,650 pounds of cocaine.

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

- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant \(WMEC 621\)](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle \(WPC 1133\)](#)
- [Royal Netherlands Navy HNLMS Groningen \(P 843\)](#)
- [Royal Canadian Navy HMCS Harry DeWolf \(430\)](#)
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team South
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific
- [U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations \(CBP-AMO\)](#)
- [Joint Interagency Task Force-South \(JIATF-South\)](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Juan](#)

- **Seventh Coast Guard District**

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.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' (OCDETF) Strike Force initiatives and designated investigations. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

USCGC Valiant is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported at U.S. Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville under [U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command](#).