Cutter James returns Home from 82-day Patrol in Eastern Pacific Ocean



U.S. Coast Guard Ensign Arthur Wicke, a law enforcement officer aboard the Coast Guard Cutter James, wraps a pallet of illegal narcotics in Port Everglades, Florida, Aug. 5, 2021. The James is homeported in Charleston, South Carolina, and returned there Aug. 14. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Estrada*

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL- 754) and crew returned to Charleston, Aug. 14, following an 82-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Aug. 16 release.

The James crew offloaded nearly 51,000 pounds of cocaine and marijuana worth an estimated $1.4 billion, Aug. 5, 2021, at Port Everglades, Florida.

Working alongside other Coast Guard cutters, U.S. Navy ships and international allies, the James patrol efforts were in direct support of drug interdiction efforts in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean to put increased pressure on the drug trafficking organizations operating in Central and South America.

During their patrol, the James crew, augmented by an embarked armed helicopter aircrew from the Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON), successfully interdicted 11 drug smuggling vessels and seized or disrupted nearly 13,608 kilograms of cocaine. The James crew also successfully executed two search and rescue cases off the coast of Florida, saving eight distressed mariners over Memorial Day weekend.

“This patrol highlights our crew’s continued commitment to protecting the maritime border from our adversaries. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic,” said Capt. Todd Vance, James commanding officer. “The James crew demonstrated supreme resilience and the results of their exceptional performance are being showcased today.”

The Coast Guard Cutter James is one of three 418-foot National Security Cutters (NSC) homeported in North Charleston, South Carolina. With its robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment, the NSC is the most technologically advanced ship in the Coast Guard’s fleet. NSCs are equipped with three state-of-the-art small boats, a stern boat launch system, dual aviation facilities, and serve as an afloat command and control platform for complex law enforcement and national security missions involving the Coast Guard and numerous partner agencies.