Cutter Steadfast Returns to Homeport After Interdicting $33 Million in Cocaine



Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) steaming in the Eastern Pacific Ocean on April 23, 2021. The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast seized more than 2,400 pounds of cocaine while patrolling in international waters. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ens. Grace Hodges*

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) returned to its Astoria, Oregon, homeport May 21 after completing a 10,000-mile, 49-day counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a May 26 release.

The cutter served as an on-scene law enforcement asset in support of U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force South and Coast Guard District 11, with primary missions of drug and migrant interdiction, search and rescue, and international relations.

While the cutter patrolling international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Steadfast intercepted a vessel suspected of smuggling illicit narcotics. The interdiction resulted in the seizure of over 2,400 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated $33 million, and the detainment of three suspected traffickers.

Coast Guard cutters operating in the Eastern Pacific push U.S. borders over 1,500 miles offshore which is critical to confronting drug cartels and enhancing national security.

Additionally, Steadfast completed biennial Aviation Standardization Training near the coast of Southern California

with a Coast Guard MH-65 helicopter. This training is designed to increase the operational proficiency of the ship and helicopter crews.

“This patrol reinforced the maxim that people, not platforms, are the most important key to operational success,” said Cmdr. Craig Allen, commanding officer of the Steadfast. “Despite encountering some significant equipment and logistics challenges, the Steadfast crew rose to the occasion time and again and achieved remarkable results. We were fortunate to sail with several members filling key positions from other Coast Guard units, including USCGC Waesche, Maritime Safety and Security Teams LA/LB and San Francisco, Sector Field Office Southwest Maine, and Coast Guard Headquarters. All were superb additions to the Steadfast team. Additionally, we had the opportunity to work with a fellow Pacific Northwest 210-foot cutter, CGC Active, who helped us out on multiple occasions with time-sensitive logistics support.”

To ensure the safety of Steadfast’s crew during the COVID-19 global pandemic, the crew conducted pre-deployment COVID-19 testing, followed by a seven-day monitoring period. Throughout their patrol, Steadfast’s crew maintained strict health precautions during all interactions with the public, including wearing N95 masks at all times and undergoing intensive health screenings prior to each boarding.

Steadfast is a 53-year-old Reliance-class 210-foot medium endurance cutter that has been homeported in Astoria since 1994. Steadfast’s primary missions include search and rescue, counter-drug, migration interdiction and homeland security operations.