Cutter Thetis Returns Home from a 43-day Drug-Busting Caribbean Patrol Sea



The Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC-910) underway in the West Caribbean, Jan. 14, 2021. The Coast Guard Cutter Thetis crew returned to Key West, Florida, on Feb. 21 after a 65-day Caribbean Sea patrol in support of Coast Guard 7th District. U.S. Coast Guard

KEY WEST, Fla. — The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC-910) returned home to Key West, Florida, on Feb. 21 after a 43-day patrol to the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Feb. 22 release.

The crew interdicted three drug vessels and seized close to 6,000 pounds of cocaine with a street value of approximately $82 million.

“By making our presence known in the Caribbean, we continue to disrupt the flow of illicit and dangerous drugs into the United States,” said Cmdr. Justin Nadolny, cutter Thetis commanding officer. “Despite strong winds and rough seas throughout the patrol, the crew persevered and did an outstanding job in executing the mission. I couldn’t be more proud to be part of such a fine team. This crew achieved superior results while maintaining positive attitudes and keeping morale high. I’m also thankful for the support of our Thetis family back in Key West. It’s not easy when your loved ones are deployed for long periods of time and their continued love and support kept us all motivated and focused.”

Working in support of U.S. Southern Command’s Joint Interagency Task Force South, the Thetis crew played a critical role in executing the nation’s counter drug mission. Thetis deployed with an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and aviation detachment capable of conducting airborne use of force from the Coast Guard’s Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron based in Jacksonville, Florida.

In one case, Thetis’ crew assumed tactical control of Port Canaveral-based Coast Guard Cutter Confidence’s (WMEC-619) pursuit boat and boarding team. Thetis’ crew launched an MH-65 helicopter, which stopped the go-fast vessel with disabling fire, and resulted in an estimated 1,100 pounds of cocaine disrupted and the apprehension of two suspected smugglers. Thetis’ crew also conducted a joint interdiction with its Key West sister ship, Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC-13) and crew. During this case, Thetis’ crew used an MH-65 helicopter and stopped a go-fast vessel with precision fire to the vessel’s outboard engine, resulting in an estimated 1,220 pounds of cocaine seized and the apprehension of three suspected smugglers.

The crew also conducted joint counter-narcotic operations with the Colombian navy. While patrolling with one of the partner nation’s ships, Thetis’ crew conducted communications

exercises, showcasing the teamwork and joint interoperability between the United States and Colombia.

“I am exceedingly proud to sail with the Thetis crew,” said Lt. Moriba George, cutter Thetis’ engineering officer. “The engineering department demonstrated their ability to improvise, adapt and overcome with the many challenges and rigors that being underway in turbulent seas can pose. Their continual positive energy and dedication to the mission in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic is incredibly admirable. We are looking forward to a productive maintenance period and spending some well-earned time at home with our loved ones.”

Counternarcotic interdictions were in support of Campaign Martillo, a multinational counter-narcotics collaboration to disrupt transnational criminal organizations that threaten global security and prosperity. Martillo is led by Joint Interagency Task Force South, a component of U.S. Southern Command, and supported by 15 U.S. and 21 international agencies.

Named for the famous Greek mythology sea nymph and mother of Achilles, Thetis is a 270-foot Famous-class cutter homeported in Key West with a crew of 104.