Cutter Valiant Returns Home after 26-Day Law-Enforcement Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant crew returns to homeport Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018, at Naval Station Mayport, Florida. The Valiant crew returned to homeport after a six-week counter-drug patrol in the Caribbean. *U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Dickinson*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.– The USCGC Valiant (WMEC-621) crew returned home to Naval Station Mayport March 16 after completing a 26-day patrol conducting law enforcement operations in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant patrolled over 4,600 nautical miles in the Caribbean Sea, conducting counter-narcotics operations in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S),

Coast Guard District 7 and Coast Guard Sector San Juan, Puerto Rico.

While preparing for flight operations training with Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, Valiant received information about a potential target of interest in the Mona Pass from a maritime patrol aircraft. Valiant shifted gears from training to law enforcement and interdicted a 16-foot go-fast style vessel, seizing over 520 pounds of cocaine, valued at over $8.8 million, and apprehending three suspected narcotics traffickers.

Valiant also partnered with the USS Wichita (LCS 13), to safely transfer nine suspected narcotics traffickers and 132 additional pounds of cocaine for prosecution in the United States. The joint team ensured the safe transfer of all suspected traffickers, evidence, and narcotics to the United States for future prosecution.

Valiant’s patrol started with a training availability cycle. However, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to present challenges including limited port calls and the need to completely isolate for 14 days to ensure the crew’s health and safety before getting underway after several COVID-19 positive cases. Additionally, Valiant had to overcome a variety of mechanical issues. However, by partnering with Coast Guard maintenance support teams stationed in San Juan, Puerto Rico and deployable technical experts, Valiant’s team of technical experts was able to execute repairs and continue on the mission.

“This was an extremely challenging patrol for team Valiant and I could not be more proud of the entire crew to overcome every obstacle and ultimately have several operational successes,” said Cmdr. Jeff Payne, Valiant’s commanding officer. “Our friends and families back home also deserve much of the credit for our success. While only underway for 26 days, Valiant’s patrol truly started on 25 January when we began the training

cycle. That was followed by a variety of mechanical and pandemic issues requiring both the crew and our families to constantly adjust and find solutions. However, we overcame each challenge, teamed with our Department of Defense counterparts, and ultimately executed textbook missions protecting our shores and nation.”

The Valiant is a multi-mission 210-foot medium-endurance cutter. Missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.