

Navy-Coast Guard Team: 4 Interdictions in 4 Days



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) with embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment team conducts enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean Sea, May 26, 2020. U.S. COAST GUARD

CARIBBEAN SEA – The Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82) and the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Detroit (LCS 7) with embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) teams disrupted a combined 112 bales of suspected contraband worth over \$79.6 million from May 24-27, the U.S. 4th Fleet/U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command Public Affairs said in a June 19 release.

While on routine patrol May 24 and 26, Lassen, along with embarked helicopters assigned to the “Proud Warriors” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 72, made two separate interdictions.

Lassen was able to intercept the vessels with coordination of the ship’s embarked LEDET and Lassen small boats. The embarked helicopters onboard were instrumental in ensuring the compliance of the go fast vessels (GFV) until the small boat teams arrived to achieve positive control of the vessels.

“It has been an absolute pleasure serving onboard USS Lassen,” said Lt. Kevin Painten, officer in charge, U.S. Coast Guard LEDET 403. “The crew is unmatched in professional expertise and combined with the LEDET and HSM-60 airborne use of force capability.”

“Lassen is making a large impact in the SOUTHCOM [area of responsibility],” Painten continued. “This most recent interdiction is just one of the many examples of how Lassen and the embarked LEDET are combating transnational organized

crime.”

Additionally, on May 24 and 27 Detroit made two separate interdictions:

A U.S. Navy maritime patrol aircraft, assigned to the “Tridents” of Patrol Squadron VP 26, spotted an additional GFV, Detroit was vectored for a long-range intercept. Upon intercept, Detroit employed one of its embarked helicopters, assigned to the “Sea Knights” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSC) 22, to provide over watch and ensure compliance while the embarked LEDET on Detroit small boats achieved positive control of the GFV.

Lassen and Detroit recovered 70 bales of suspected cocaine totaling an estimated 2,009 kilograms, worth over an estimated value of about \$76 million.

Additionally, Lassen recovered 42 bales of suspected marijuana totaling an estimated 2,086 pounds, worth over an estimated value of approximately \$3.6 million.

“I could not be more proud of the Sea Devils onboard Lassen. Lassen continues to excel day-in, day-out,” said Cmdr. Judson Mallory Lassen’s commanding officer. “This most recent success is a testament to my crew’s dedication, focus and self-sufficiency, supported by their seamless integration with our Air Detachment and the embarked USCG LEDET.”

USS Lassen and USS Detroit are deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations conducting U.S Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South’s enhanced counter drug operations in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of presidential national security objectives.

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.