

U.S. Coast Guard, Royal Canadian Navy Offload More than 5,100 Pounds of Seized Cocaine

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Coast Guard and Royal Canadian Navy crews offloaded more than 5,100 pounds of seized cocaine on Dec. 7, worth nearly \$70 million wholesale, in San Diego following a 49-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific aboard Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Edmonton with an embedded U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release of the same date.

The cocaine was seized in international waters off the coast of Central and South America in support of Operation Carribe.

The crew of Edmonton with their embedded U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment stopped two go-fast boats, resulting in the seizure of more than 3,500 pounds of cocaine worth almost \$50 million. The crews also recovered an additional 1,600 pounds of cocaine from the Eastern Pacific Ocean during the patrol.

"This 'cycle of justice' disrupts a 'cycle of crime,' which left unchecked, fuels violence and instability that corrodes our hemisphere's social and economic fabric," said Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area commander. "I stand here today, alongside our Royal Canadian Navy partners, resolved in a shared commitment to protect those threatened by criminals and bring to justice those engaging in these nefarious acts."

The Canadian Armed Forces are an international partner in the fight against transnational crime. Canadian-U.S. crews were responsible for seizing more than 31,000 pounds of cocaine

from suspected drug smugglers in the Eastern Pacific since 2015 – taking an estimated \$417 million out of the hands of the transnational organized crime networks.

Go-fast boats, traditionally open-hulled boats with multiple outboard engines, are used to outrun military and law enforcement officials. This offload showcases the variety of tactics and methods of conveyance transnational organized crime groups use to evade military and law enforcement detection.

The multinational effort to combat criminal networks in the region includes more than 19 partner nations operating with Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF South) a component of U.S. Southern Command. JIATF South partner nations, including Canadian forces, removed approximately 113 of the 283 tons of cocaine seized or disrupted for fiscal year 2017. JIATF South detects and monitors illicit trafficking in the air and maritime domains to facilitate international and interagency interdiction and apprehension of suspected illicit traffickers.

Operation Caribe takes place in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Under this operation, Canada sends Canadian Armed Forces ships and aircraft to assist Operation Martillo. This U.S.-led effort involves multiple countries cooperating to thwart the flow of drug trafficking.