

US Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless returns home after 61-day Operation Vigilant Sentry patrol



[U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, April 24, 2024](#)

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless (WMEC 624) returned to their home port in Pensacola, Wednesday, following a 61-day patrol in the Windward Passage and Florida Straits. While underway, crew members conducted maritime safety and security missions to protect life at sea and deter illegal migrant voyages bound for the United States.

Dauntless deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS)

while patrolling in the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of responsibility. While underway, Dauntless worked alongside other Coast Guard assets and units to dissuade unsafe maritime migration and enforce U.S. law on the high seas.

During the patrol, a good Samaritan on a sailboat reported a disabled vessel using VHF-FM channel 16. Dauntless' crew received notification and conducted a search and rescue mission over several hours on a moonless night while searching for the unlit boat. Eventually, the crew located the overloaded and disabled sail freighter with 65 Haitian migrants aboard, including several children. All 65 migrants were safely evacuated and transferred aboard Dauntless, where they received food, water and basic medical care. Dauntless worked with multiple surface and air assets to successfully carryout the search, rescue and repatriation of the migrants.

Migrants attempting to reach the United States through nonlegal channels, or who land on U.S. shores without authorization, are subject to removal and repatriation to their country of origin or departure. Consistent with U.S. policy, those who bypass or attempt to circumvent lawful immigration pathways face consequences including the potential of being barred from future lawful entry in addition to risking their lives unnecessarily.

"This case was a prime example of the humanitarian lifesaving mission we remain always ready for," said Cmdr. Aaron Kowalczyk, commanding officer of Dauntless. "The crew's ability to find the vessel and then safely complete the rescue in the dark of night is just another example of the utmost professionalism and skill they show every day and is indicative of 56 years of exemplary service by cutter Dauntless and her crews."

Established in 2003, HSTF-SE is the Department of Homeland Security-led interagency task force charged with directing operational and tactical planning, command and control, and

functions as a standing organization to deter, mitigate, and respond to maritime mass migration in the Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits.

OVS is the 2004 DHS plan that provides the structure for deploying joint air and surface assets and personnel to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean corridor of the United States. Its primary objectives are to protect life at sea while deterring and dissuading mass maritime migration alongside our federal, state, and local partners.

Dauntless is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter originally built in 1967 and commissioned in 1968. The cutter's primary missions are counter narcotics operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go CoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).