USCG, Partners Interdict 2 tons of Drugs throughout Caribbean in September



The Coast Guard and partner nations halted more than two tons of cocaine trafficking in the Caribbean in September. This image shows the result of a rain from late August in the Caribbean, where 225 kilograms of cocaine were seized. U.S. Coast Guard

MIAMI – The Coast Guard and partner nations halted more than 4,000 pounds of cocaine during September, worth almost $73 million, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 8 release.

These interdictions were a direct result of the partnerships with crews aboard Dutch, British and U.S. naval ships with embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment boarding teams who worked jointly with U.S. Southern Command and other Department of Defense agencies to detect and interdict illegal drugs and stopping the flow of drugs throughout the Caribbean.

“Coast Guard law enforcement detachments – or LEDETs – are highly specialized and play a vital role in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in the maritime domain,” said Rear Adm. Eric C. Jones, commander of Seventh Coast Guard District. “Our LEDETs deploy with the U.S. Navy and Allied navies supporting enhanced counter narcotics operations, bringing broad law enforcement authority critical to successful interdictions throughout the Caribbean Basin.”

The Coast Guard’s Western Hemisphere Strategy assigns three specific priorities of combatting networks, securing borders and safeguarding commerce. To achieve success in these priorities, the Coast Guard continuously strives for close

coordination between partnering naval assets as well as its own. Effective communication, persistence and teamwork are among many characteristics that contribute to mission success. The diversity of the assets that contributed to these interdictions demonstrates the effectiveness of the high level of cooperation between the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy, British Royal navy, and Dutch navy. The Coast Guard remains committed to the enhancement of counter-narcotic operations throughout the maritime domain to diminish transnational threats and maximize our country's security.

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, 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.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions for these 12 interdictions by Attorney's Offices from the District of Puerto Rico, the Middle District of Florida and the Southern District of Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District, headquartered in Alameda, California, and the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean Sea is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 7th District, headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the Coast Guard.

In 1986, Public Law 99-570 authorized Coast Guard personnel,

such as LEDETs, to conduct law enforcement operations from U.S. Navy ships, in addition to Coast Guard vessels. In 1988, Public Law 100-456 required all Navy surface units transiting drug interdiction areas to carry Coast Guard law enforcement personnel increasing the need for LEDETs. In addition, the 1989 National Defense Authorization Act tasked Department of Defense agencies with monitoring maritime and aerial importation of illegal drugs. The act named the Coast Guard as the lead agency for waterborne drug interdiction and apprehension of illegal drug traffickers.