

# USCGC Forward Offloads \$176 Million Worth of Cocaine in Port Everglades



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Forward pose with approximately 13,375 pounds of cocaine in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 15, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Rodriguez*

PORT EVERGLADES, Fla. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Forward (WMEC 911) offloaded approximately 13,375 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$176 million in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 15, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Dec. 19 release.

The drugs were interdicted in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea by crews from Forward, Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron and Coast Guard Law Enforcement

Detachment 408 on the HNLMS Holland (P840).

Throughout the patrol, Forward held approximately 18,500 pounds of cocaine on deck worth an estimated \$244 million. Earlier this month, Forward transferred approximately 4,365 pounds of cocaine to USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909) and 1,654 pounds of cocaine to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration. Forward also intercepted three suspected narcotics smugglers and held 12 others.

"Working with the Dutch to support multi-national interests in the Caribbean is greatly rewarding," said Cmdr. Staci K. Rutsch, Forward's commanding officer. "Coupled with our ship's organic law enforcement capabilities, this patrol led to a significant removal of illicit narcotics from the maritime domain. Opposing transnational criminal organizations is important in maintaining our partnerships and keeping our partners in the central Caribbean safe. I could not be more proud of the crew's hard work in supporting this mission."

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea and the transnational criminal organizations they are associated with requires a unity of effort in all phases; from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, and on to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation.

Forward is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, with a crew of 97. The cutter's primary missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, protection of living marine resources, homeland security and defense operations, international training and humanitarian operations throughout the Western hemisphere.