USCGC Hamilton Concludes Black Sea Operations



USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) and a Ukrainian coast guard vessel conduct underway maneuvers in the Black Sea, May 8, 2021. Hamilton is on a routine deployment in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national interests and security in Europe and Africa. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

BLACK SEA – The Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) transited from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, concluding the crew's recent Black Sea operations and engagements, May 14, 2021, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a May 15 release.

Hamilton entered the Black Sea on April 27, 2021, in support of NATO Allies and partners. Hamilton is the first U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit the Black Sea since 2008. The last U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit the Black Sea, USCGC Dallas (WHEC 716), sailed to the Black Sea twice, in 2008 and 1995.

"Operating in the Black Sea these last few weeks has strengthened our enduring partnerships with regional maritime forces," said Capt. Timothy Cronin, commanding officer of Hamilton. "Our time in this critical waterway also reinforced our commitment to maintaining freedom of movement in international waters for all nations. The Black Sea is not owned by any one nation; it belongs to the world."

While in the Black Sea, the crew of Hamilton operated with Black Sea partner navies and coast guards and made two port visits.

Within the first week of arriving in the Black Sea, Hamilton's operations with the Turkish navy Yavuz-class TCG Turgutreis (F 241) included passing exercises and cross-platform helicopter

operations with a Turkish Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopter and their embarked U.S. Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter.

Hamilton conducted exercises with the Georgian coast guard. Hamilton crewmembers executed search and rescue patterns, simulated survivor rescue training, helicopter hoisting evolutions, approaches for towing, and ship communications with the Georgian coast guard vessels Dioskuria (P 25) and Ochamchire (P 23), May 2-3. These maneuvers and operations enhanced the proficiency in specific mission areas familiar to both coast guards.

On May 4, the Hamilton team called on Batumi, Georgia, for engagements with Georgian coast guard leadership and local Georgian representatives. Upon arrival, the crew was greeted with a Georgian demonstration of dancing and singing after conducting the U.S. and Georgian national anthems. The Georgian coast guard and Hamilton also conducted several tours, a dinner, and a five-kilometer run to foster camaraderie.

Hamilton conducted maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and ship handling operations with Ukrainian navy vessel Island-class patrol boat Starobilsk (P 241) and Ukrainian border guard vessel Kuropiatnikov (BG 50), May 9-10.

These operations increased interoperability as a part of a regional effort to bolster maritime partnerships with NATO Allies and partners. The next day, Hamilton conducted a port visit in Odesa, Ukraine, where the crew conducted maritime law enforcement training with the maritime border guard and exchanged damage control and firefighting expertise with the Ukrainian navy. Hamilton also served as the training platform for the Ukrainian 73rd Special Force Unit to conduct maritime law enforcement training.

The Hamilton crew conducted its final operations in the Black Sea with Romanian Navy Frigate Mărășești (F111) and Bulgarian corvette Bodri (BGS 14) on May 13, 2021. The vessels executed passing and communications exercises and flight operations with the Hamilton’s MH-65 Dolphin helicopter detachment aircrew.

The U.S. Coast Guard is conducting a routine deployment in U.S. Sixth Fleet, working alongside Allies, building maritime domain awareness, and sharing best practices with partner nation navies and coast guards.

Hamilton is the fourth national security cutter and is the fifth named for the father of the U.S. Coast Guard, Alexander Hamilton, the first secretary of the treasury and advocate for creating the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service.