

USCGC Seneca Returns to Homeport after Conducting Joint Maritime Operations



Coast Guard Cutter Seneca, shown here in a 2007 photo, has returned to its Portsmouth homeport after a 57-day counter-drug and humanitarian assistance patrol. U.S. Coast Guard PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Seneca returned to its homeport in Portsmouth, Virginia, after a 57-day patrol conducting counter-drug and humanitarian assistance operations in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, Nov. 20, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a Nov. 30 release.

The Seneca crew deployed with an embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron in Jacksonville, Florida. The embarked helicopter provided the cutter with aerial use of force capabilities to supplement onboard law enforcement teams.

Upon their arrival in the Pacific, Seneca crewmembers conducted joint maritime operations with the Colombian Naval vessel A.R.C. Punta Ardita. The joint operation focused on interoperability, communications, and counter-narcotics efforts.

Surface and air crews seized more than 2,750 kilograms of cocaine and 1,235 pounds of marijuana, for an estimated street value of over \$124 million. Three vessels were interdicted and a fourth disrupted through joint efforts with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Navy. These efforts resulted in the detainment of nine suspected narcotics traffickers.

“I continue to be impressed with what the crew of Seneca can accomplish,” said Cmdr. Matthew Rooney, commanding officer of the Seneca. “Operating in a pandemic environment is a

challenge and the crew rose to it. We accomplished a lot in a short time. Counter-narcotics interdictions, international cooperation, hurricane assistance, and refueling at sea. This patrol encompassed many of our core missions and improved our proficiency. The crew can return home with their head held high with pride.”

Additionally, Seneca crewmembers completed three underway replenishments with the Chilean Navy Oiler Almirante Montt. The process brings two ships in close proximity to each other while at sea to transfer fuel and supplies. The Almirante Montt crew provided logistical services in a COVID-19 free and contactless environment, extending Seneca’s time on patrol.

After transiting from the Eastern Pacific to the Caribbean, the Seneca crew was tasked to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Eta on the Mosquito Coast of Honduras. The embarked helicopter crew also assisted in conducting multiple missions, which included medical evacuation, critical infrastructure reconnaissance, and identifying stranded populations and individuals in need.

The Seneca is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth and routinely deploys in support of counter-drug, migrant interdiction, fisheries, search and rescue, and homeland security missions.