USCGC Vigilant returns from Eastern Pacific patrol, conducts international collaboration

Release from U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area

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June 27, 2023

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The USCGC Vigilant (WMEC 617) returned home to Cape Canaveral, Sunday, following a 50-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Florida Straits.

Patrolling in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South, Vigilant worked alongside other Coast Guard cutters, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security units, and international partners to conduct counter drug operations with the assistance of an aviation detachment from a Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron.

During the patrol, Vigilant's crew disrupted illegal narcotics smuggling, interdicting more than 2,000 pounds of illicit drugs. While in theater, Vigilant interdicted two drug-smuggling vessels and apprehended five suspected traffickers, contributing directly to U.S. Coast Guard objectives to combat transnational criminal organizations.

In addition, Vigilant led a two-day engagement and joint training exercise with the Ecuadorian Coast Guard in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. The purpose of the exercise was to strengthen ties with international partners and promote regional stability and security.

“I’m extraordinarily proud of this crew and continually impressed by their professionalism and tenacity,” said Cmdr. Jay Guyer, Vigilant’s commanding officer. “Drug trafficking generates violence and instability in the region. Interdicting these shipments and working with an important partner like Ecuador, helps bring security and stability to our nation and to our partners.”

Vigilant is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutter’s primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations. The medium endurance cutters fall under the command of the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Based in Portsmouth, Virginia, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, Atlantic Area also allocates ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit GoCoastGuard.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.