USS Gabrielle Giffords Interdicts More Than $100 Million in Drugs

The Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10) conducts routine operations in the South China Sea, June 16, 2020. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brenton Poyser

AT SEA – The Independence-class littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10) with embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 407 seized an estimated 2,810 kilograms of suspected cocaine, Dec. 5, the U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs Office said in a Dec. 11 release.

While on routine patrol, Gabrielle Giffords was diverted to intercept a low-profile vessel (LPV). Gabrielle Giffords deployed one of her helicopters, assigned to the "Wildcards" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23, to provide over watch and ensure compliance while the embarked LEDET and small boats were deployed to achieve positive control and begin boarding of the LPV.

Gabrielle Giffords and the embarked LEDET searched the vessel and recovered approximately 134 bales, for an estimated 2,810 kilograms of suspected cocaine worth over an estimated wholesale value of $106 million. Three suspected drug traffickers were also detained.

"Interdiction evolutions, no matter how often you conduct them, are different every time," said Chief Boatswains Mate Daniel Pike, of Gabrielle Giffords. "Our team is dedicated to exemplifying the qualities of safe, professional mariners during these operations from start to finish."

Gabrielle Giffords is deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations to support Joint Interagency Task Force South’s mission, which includes counter illicit drug trafficking in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.