USS Michael Murphy Conducts Maritime Interdiction Operation



Senior Chief Fire Controlman Ryan Patricio, part of the USS Michael Murphy's interceptor team, boards the ship's rigid-hull inflatable boat for a mission to help interdict a drug-smuggling craft on July 25. (U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Justin R. Pacheco

PACIFIC OCEAN – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Michael Murphy aided the U.S. Coast Guard in the interdiction of a drug-smuggling craft, the U.S. 4th Fleet said in a release.

While conducting routine operations in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, an MH-60R Sea Hawk, assigned to the "Easyriders" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 37, embarked aboard the Michael Murphy, sighted a low-profile vessel on July 25.

As the helicopter approached the craft, a hatch opened on the top of the vessel and three passengers were seen jettisoning objects from the boat. Assisted by vectoring from helicopter, Michael Murphy's interceptor boat collected the jettisoned items and approached alongside the low-profile vessel.

Michael
Murphy was able to communicate with the vessel, informing them to remain in sight,
and remained alongside the suspicious vessel until Coast Guard Cutter Midgett arrived.

The Coast Guard boarding team determined the jettisoned material was cocaine. About 2,100 pounds of the drug – some that was jettisoned and retrieved by Michael Murphy's crew and some found aboard by the Coast Guard – was seized. The Coast Guard took the three suspected smugglers into custody.

"From our air detachment and interceptor boat team to the men and women aboard the ship, everything came together to conduct the identification, interception and approach," said Cmdr. Christopher Forch, commanding officer aboard USS Michael Murphy. "The handoff to USCGC Midgett was smooth and successful – a true team effort by two agencies."