

USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul Scores Another Bust



The littoral combat ship USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21) interdicted a suspected drug smuggling vessel May 1 while supporting Joint Interagency Task Force South. This is the ship's third successful interdiction during its maiden deployment. In mid-April, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul interdicted two vessels, confiscating 580 kilograms (1,279 pounds) of cocaine valued at \$9,463,860 and 1,125 kilograms (2,480 pounds) of marijuana valued at \$2,807,360. The Minneapolis-Saint Paul is assigned to Commander, Task Force 45, the 4th Fleet surface task force responsible for combined naval operations, building partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean, and supporting Joint Interagency Task Force South's counter-drug trafficking operations. LEDETs are deployable specialized Coast Guard forces that enforce U.S. laws and treaties at sea. U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command by employing maritime forces in cooperative security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build

partnerships to promote regional security and stability in the Caribbean and Central and South America.

[By U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs](#), 13 May 2025

CARIBBEAN SEA – The littoral combat ship USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21) interdicted a suspected drug smuggling vessel May 1 while supporting Joint Interagency Task Force South.

Alerted to suspected drug smuggling from maritime patrol aircraft operating in the region, the Minneapolis-Saint Paul proceeded to the target location and launched a helicopter from the embarked Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50. The helicopter crew observed the suspect drug smuggling vessel jettisoning packages. The Minneapolis-Saint Paul then launched its rigid-hull inflatable boat with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) to intercept the vessel. The boarding team recovered 22 bales of suspected cocaine.

“The USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul is delivering decisive blows against transnational criminal organizations,” said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet. “These interdictions send a clear message: We are vigilant, and illicit trafficking will be interdicted to protect our homeland as well as our regional partners from this threat.”

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“I’m consistently impressed by the speed and precision of our joint team,” said Cmdr. Steven Fresse, Commanding Officer of USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul. “The professionalism and expertise

of the Aviation and Law Enforcement Detachments in concert with ship's crew continue to be instrumental in these successful interdictions."

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