USS Preble Returns After Successful Counter-Narcotics Deployment



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Preble returns to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on June 25. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jaimar Carson Bondurant

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Preble returned June 25 to its homeport of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam following the ship's surge deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, the U.S. 3rd Fleet said in a release.

Preble, along with a detachment from "Easyriders" from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 37, deployed in March to conduct U.S. Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South's enhanced counter-narcotics operations missions in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

During their deployment, Preble, with their embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment, recovered 100 bales of suspected cocaine totaling an estimated 2,000 kilograms, with an estimated wholesale value of $40 million.

"The success of this deployment was due to our Sailors and embarked Coast Guardsmen working together daily for a common cause – enhanced counter-narcotics operations," said Cmdr. Leonardo Giovannelli, Preble's commanding officer. "We thank our Preble families and friends whose unwavering support made it possible for their loved ones, our Sailors, to succeed at sea and complete our mission."

With the deployment conducted in a COVID-19 environment, the primary focus of ship's leadership was crew safety.

“We took all available precautions before the start of the deployment,” said Cmdr. Peter Lesaca, Preble’s executive officer. “I credit our Sailors for understanding the gravity of the pandemic, keeping themselves in good health, and taking care of their shipmates to keep the ship safe.”

Preble joined other Navy warships, numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperating in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, are all playing a role in counter-drug operations.