Valiant Returns Home Following Counterdrug Patrol

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Valiant returned home Oct. 3 to Naval Station Mayport following a six-week counterdrug patrol in the Caribbean Sea, the 7th Coast Guard District said in an Oct. 3 release.

The Valiant crew patrolled over 7,000 nautical miles in the Caribbean in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South. During their patrol, the crew worked closely with partner nations such as the Netherlands.

After careful preparation and coordination, Valiant joined forces with the HNLMS Friesland, a Royal Netherlands Navy offshore patrol vessel, and the Coast Guard Cutter Richard Dixon to ensure the safe and expeditious transfer of four suspected drug smugglers to U.S. law enforcement officials. The Valiant crew also contributed to an interagency operation, which will support the dismantling of a transnational criminal organization.

A crew from Jacksonville's Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) joined the Valiant crew during their counterdrug patrol. HITRON is America's first airborne law enforcement unit trained and authorized to employ airborne use of force and intercept vessels suspected of transporting illicit narcotics into the United States.

"We had a very successful patrol this summer, ensuring the Caribbean remained a challenging and unwelcome place for drug smugglers to operate, combatting transnational organized crime networks, and keeping drugs off U.S. streets," said Cmdr. Matthew Waldron, Valiant's commanding officer. "My first patrol as commanding officer of Valiant, I couldn't be more proud of this crew. As always, we are excited and ready to

return to our families and friends back in our homeport of Mayport.”

The Valiant is a multimission 210-foot medium-endurance cutter. Missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security, and national defense operations.