VP-9 Returns from U.S. 4th Fleet Deployment



VP-9 deployed to Cooperative Security Location Comalapa, El Salvador, last October to support Joint Interagency Task Force South's mission, which includes counter illicit drug trafficking in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. *U.S. NAVY*

OAK HARBOR, Wash. – Sailors from Patrol Squadron Nine (VP-9) returned home to family and friends after a successful deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, the U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs said in a May 10 release.

VP-9 deployed to Cooperative Security Location Comalapa, El Salvador, last October to support Joint Interagency Task Force South's mission, which includes counter illicit drug trafficking in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific. Flying 1,060 mishap-free flight hours in the P-8A Poseidon multi-mission maritime aircraft, the Golden Eagles coordinated with U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and partner nation surface forces to disrupt more than 38,000 kilograms of cocaine and 18,000 pounds of marijuana worth a street value in excess of $2.7 billion dollars.

"The Golden Eagles lived up to their reputation of operational prowess and mission success," said Capt. Matthew Pottenburgh, commander of Task Force 47. "They flawlessly executed all the types of missions we train for as maritime patrol aviators which helped people in need and strengthened partnerships with our friends in the region."

Additionally, VP-9 provided support to two major hurricanes Eta and Iota off the coast of Honduras. Both hurricanes brought heavy rains, severe flooding, and landslides to many of the same areas. VP-9 flew reconnaissance missions in support of disaster response operations, providing real-time

information to decision makers to ensure the proper flow of aid to the most severely impacted regions of the country.

The Golden Eagles also participated in several training opportunities, specifically a tri-lateral anti-submarine warfare exercise with forces from Colombia and Peru. Planned in a pandemic environment with no face-to-face meetings, VP-9's performance enhanced interoperability with two of our key partners and increased the naval warfighting readiness for all three navies.

"The hallmark of VP-9's deployment was seamless coordination," said Rear Adm. Don Gabrielson, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet. The squadrons are vital to our mission and our partner nation relationships."

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American region.