# Coast Guard Cutter Waesche Returns Following 95-day Counter-Narcotics Patrol



Petty Officer 2nd Class Raymond Hayden, a machinery technician aboard Coast Guard Cutter Waesche, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Daniel Russo, a boatswain's mate aboard Waesche, secure the deck of the cutter Friday prior to the crew offloading more than 7.1 tons of contraband at Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal in San Diego April 5, 2019. The drugs were seized during six separate interdictions off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America by the Coast Guard cutters Active (WMEC-618), Steadfast (WMEC-623) and Waesche (WMSL-751). (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joel Guzman/released)

ALAMEDA, California – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL-751) returned April 8 to the ship's homeport of Alameda following a 95-day counter-narcotics patrol in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said.

Waesche's deployment supported Joint Interagency Task Force-South, with the ship operating in international waters off the coast of Central and South America, resulting in the seizure of more than 14,000 pounds of cocaine with an estimated wholesale value of $193 million.

The drugs were seized during six separate interdictions by the Coast Guard Cutters Active (WMEC-618), Steadfast (WMEC-623) and Waesche, with the assistance of a helicopter interdiction squadron of pilots, aircrew and trained helicopter marksmen embarked aboard Waesche.

The contraband and 10 suspected drug traffickers were transferred April 5 from Waesche and turned over to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency in San Diego.

"This offload represents a successful example of the cycle of

justice," said Rear Adm. Nathan Moore, deputy commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area. "This cycle of justice disrupts the cycle of crime, which, left unchecked, fuels violence and instability that erodes our hemisphere's social and economic fabric and directly contributes to historically high numbers of drug-related deaths in North America."

As part of its Western Hemisphere Strategy, the Coast Guard increased its presence in known drug transit zones in the eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea. During at-sea interdictions in international waters, suspect vessels are initially located and tracked by military or law-enforcement personnel from the U.S. and its allies. The interdictions, including boardings, are conducted by U.S. Coast Guard members.

Waesche's commanding officer, Capt. Patrick Dougan, said the ship, among the Coast Guard's most sophisticated and technologically advanced assets, is well-suited to the task.

"[The ship] would be ineffective without the men and women who serve aboard," Dougan said. "Everyone on board plays an important role, and manning these ships requires everyone to contribute. This crew, as well as those of our other Coast Guard assets, are relentless in their pursuit of improving their professional excellence."

The Waesche is one of four 418-foot national security cutters homeported in Alameda. The ship and its normal compliment of 148 crew members perform deployments lasting about 100 days, carrying out missions such as law enforcement, search and rescue, fisheries management and drug interdictions from the Bering Sea to the eastern Pacific.