

U.S. Coast Guard Patrols Micronesian Waters in Support of Operation to Combat Illegal Fishing



HONOLULU – Crews of two U.S. Coast Guard cutters and a long-range HC-130 patrol aircraft recently completed combined operations to help combat illegal fishing across Oceania, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a release.

The crews teamed with shipriders from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) as part of Operation Rai Balang 2019, a Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) mission.

For three weeks, U.S. Coast Guard cutters Sequoia (WLB-215) and Kiska (WPB-1336) embarked FSM shipriders to patrol the FSM exclusive economic zone and on the high seas, supported by the HC-130.

In addition to the Coast Guard and FSM combined operations, Operation Rai Balang also involved ships and aircraft from the remaining Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Partners – Australia, New Zealand and France – in support of other Pacific Island countries across Oceania.

Illegal, unregulated and underreported fishing threatens resource security and sovereignty. Enforcing international fishing regulations on the high seas and helping Pacific island countries protect their waters from illegal fishing promotes maritime governance and reinforces a rules-based international order that is essential to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

“The U.S. Coast Guard and our Pacific Quadrilateral Defense

Partners have two decades of experience working together with Pacific Island countries to help ensure resource security and the viability of tuna stocks in the Pacific,” said Capt. Riley Gatewood, chief of enforcement for U.S. Coast Guard 14th District.

“Working with experts from these nations and regional leaders like the [FSM] is vital to ensuring food security and the rule of law in Oceania. Working together we are helping to sustain and increase a secure, free and open Indo-Pacific,” Gatewood added.

Estimates show that illegal fishing accounts for about 30 percent of all fishing activity worldwide, representing up to 26 million tons of fish illegally harvested each year, valued at between \$10 billion and \$23 billion.

“IUU fishing can act as a nexus for economic, social and political instability or unwanted influence of countries looking to gain a foothold in the region – all having direct economic and security implications for the United States if not effectively controlled,” said Lt. Cmdr. Conor Sullivan, of fisheries enforcement for the Coast Guard 14th District.

The U.S. bilateral shiprider arrangement with FSM is only one of 11 such agreements across Oceania. The Coast Guard regularly conducts bilateral fisheries law enforcement with these Pacific Island Countries, often as part of planned FFA operations across the region.

Coast Guard Interdicts

Suspected Smuggler, 11 Cuban Migrants 41 Miles South of Key West



KEY WEST, Florida – The Coast Guard interdicted 11 migrants and a suspected smuggler April 12 about 41 miles south of Key West attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Coast Guard 7th District watchstanders received a notification from Cuban border security reporting an illegal vessel departure with an unknown number of passengers aboard.

The Coast Guard Cutter Isaac Mayo (WPC-1112) crew arrived on scene after a Customs and Border Patrol Air and Marine Operations aircraft crew sighted the 30-foot center console with four adult Cuban males, five Cuban adult females, one Cuban minor aboard and embarked them with no medical concerns.

The 10 Cuban nationals were transferred to the Coast Guard Cutter Charles Sexton (WPC-1108) and will be transferred back to their home. The suspected smuggler and a male migrant were taken into custody.

“The waters of the Caribbean and Florida Straits are dangerous for migrants on illegal voyages, in vessels with little or no safety gear,” said Lt. Otis Leonard, duty enforcement officer at Coast Guard 7th District. “The Coast Guard and its partner agencies continue to maintain a strong presence along our maritime border and will continue to interdict and rescue those who embark on these illegal and ill-advised voyages.”

Coast Guard Cutters Charles Sexton and Isaac Mayo are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in Florida.

Coast Guard Interdicts 9 Cuban Migrants on Cay Sal

CAY SAL, Bahamas – The Coast Guard interdicted nine Cuban migrants April 12 on Cay Sal, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Coast Guard 7th District watchstanders received a notification from a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft crew reporting two people hiding in nearby bushes. The Coast Guard Cutter Charles Sexton (WPC-1108) crew arrived on scene and deployed a boarding team ashore to investigate the situation. The Charles Sexton boarding team was able to locate the nine Cuban nationals and embarked them with no medical concerns.

The nine Cuban nationals were transferred to Bahamian Immigration officials in Freeport, Bahamas, by the Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered (WPC-1104) crew and will be transferred back to their home.

“It’s the second time this month that we’ve seen a case like this and its why maintain our presence in the Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits,” said Lt. Patrick Leavitt, command duty officer at Coast Guard 7th District. “The Coast Guard will remain consistent with the missions of protecting the safety of life at sea and enforcing our federal laws.”

Coast Guard Cutters Robert Yered and Charles Sexton are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in Florida.

Coast Guard Interdicts 33 Haitian Migrants Near Tortuga



A migrant vessel is shown in the Caribbean after an interdiction, April 2019. The Coast Guard Cutter Spencer (WMEC-905) crew transferred 33 Haitian nationals back to their home of origin, April 12, 2019 after interdicting their 25-foot motor vessel April 10, 2019. (Coast Guard Photo)

MIAMI – The Coast Guard interdicted 33 migrants April 8 about 35 miles northeast of Tortuga, Haiti, attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

At about 7:30 a.m. April 8, the Coast Guard Cutter Spencer (WMEC-905) crew detected an overloaded 25-foot motor vessel and launched an over-the-horizon small boat crew.

While en route, the small boat crew recovered six softball-sized packages of marijuana floating about 100 yards from the vessel. The small boat crew then boarded the vessel and discovered 27 adult Haitian males, six adult Haitian females, three additional packages of marijuana and a package that tested positive for amphetamines.

The Spencer crew safely embarked the 33 migrants, transferred the interdicted drugs aboard the cutter and destroyed the vessel as a hazard to navigation.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

The Spencer crew transferred the 33 Haitian nationals back to their home of origin April 12 for possible prosecution.

“The Coast Guard diligently patrols the Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea to ensure the safety of life at sea and the security of the United States,” said Lt. Cmdr. James Hodges,

7th District response officer. “Neither illegal migration nor drug smuggling will be tolerated, and the Coast Guard will continue to enforce federal laws while maintaining a strong presence out on the water.”

The Coast Guard Cutter Spencer is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Boston.

Coast Guard Cutter Decisive Conducts Ops With Special Operations Helos



The crew of the Coast Guard cutter Decisive conducted helicopter operations with three Army H-6 helicopters in the Gulf of Mexico, March 9, 2019. The training is meant to help pilots land on a moving platform and for crewmembers to work with unfamiliar aircraft. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo/Released)

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of the Coast Guard cutter Cypress was to return home to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida on April 12, following a 58-day patrol, during which it conducted training with Army special operations helicopters, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release.

The 75-person crew departed to complete a three-week Tailored Ship’s Training Availability (TSTA) in Mayport, Florida, during which time the cutter’s material condition, administration and drills are assessed. During TSTA, the crew performed 110 drills with a 98.2% average score across all mission areas.

Following TSTA, Decisive became the first 210-foot cutter to

conduct ship-helicopter operations with three Army H-6 helicopters, "Little Birds," from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

The crew patrolled in support of the 7th Coast Guard District, focusing on protecting living marine resources through daily law-enforcement boarding of commercial fishing vessels along the southwest coast of Florida.

Decisive's crew embarked a rescue-and-assistance team to a fishing vessel taking on water, the Miss Winnie, with three people onboard. The team stabilized the vessel.

IMSAR's NSP-5 Radar Moving Into Production for RQ-21 Unmanned System

SPRINGVILLE, Utah – IMSAR's NSP-5 radar system, configured for unmanned aircraft systems, is in production to deliver mission kits to the RQ-21A Blackjack UAS operated by the U.S. Marine Corps, the company said in a release.

The payload project, named "Split Aces," is a synthetic aperture/ground moving target Indicator Radar Payload and has been given the prototype designation AN/DPY-2().

The NSP-5 is powered by Ku-band NanoSAR synthetic aperture radar (SAR) technology, which is housed in a pod with enclosed electronically scanned array antennas. The NSP-5 provides high-resolution SAR imagery, coherent change detection and ground moving target indication.

"IMSAR is excited to provide America's defense with a

genuinely tactical, high-performance radar solution enabling true multi-intelligence for expeditionary platforms at such a critical time,” said Ryan Smith, IMSAR’s president and CEO.

The NSP-5 delivers high-performance capabilities despite its small size, weight and power characteristics. Commercially, the NSP-5 is available in a standard pod configuration that measures 5.4 inches (13.7 centimeters) in diameter and 45.3 inches (115 centimeters) in length, weighs 16 pounds (7.3 kilograms) and consumes 150 watts of power.

Coast Guard Commandant: Some Cases of ‘Sanctuary’ Localities Inhibiting Cooperation

WASHINGTON – The Coast Guard’s top officer told Congress that there have been some cases of “sanctuary” localities failing to cooperate on a law-enforcement case, but that such events are “anomalous.”

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl L. Schultz testified April 9 before a joint hearing on Capitol Hill of the Transportation and Maritime Security subcommittee of the House Committee on Homeland Security.

“I have been told that some of the sanctuary state and city programs are actually inhibiting cooperation between local governments and the Coast Guard,” Rep. Debbie Lesko (R-Arizona), the ranking member, said, addressing Schultz. “Have you heard any of that and can you explain it?”

“The Coast Guard absolutely exists on partnerships,” Schultz replied. “We’re the lead law-enforcement agency in the maritime domain and we work with state and local folks.

“There have been some examples in Southern California,” Schulz said. “I would say they’re anomalous, not day to day. Day to day, we continue to work well, but I’ve talked to field commanders in recent visits who tell me we don’t have 100% predictability that a local sheriff or a local police marine unit is going to launch on a case to the degree that we had yesteryear. But we’re working across those things It’s not something that I think is a big inhibitor to our mission, but I have heard some of those stories.”

Coast Guard Interdicts 8 Cuban Migrants on Cay Sal

CAY SAL, Bahamas – The Coast Guard interdicted eight migrants on April 7 on Cay Sal attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Coast Guard 7th District watchstanders received a notification from a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft crew reporting two people hiding in nearby bushes. The Coast Guard Cutter Charles Sexton (WPC-1108) crew arrived on scene and deployed a boarding team ashore to investigate the situation. The Charles Sexton boarding team was able to locate the eight Cuban nationals and embarked them with no medical concerns.

The eight Cubans were transferred to Bahamian immigration officials in Freeport, Bahamas, by the Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered (WPC-1104) crew and will be transferred back to

their home.

“Illegal migration voyages are extremely dangerous when transporting human lives on these unseaworthy vessels and put the safety of those aboard in jeopardy,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jeffrey Swope, Command Center Watchstander, Sector Key West. “The Coast Guard remains consistent with the mission of protecting the safety of life at sea and interdicting these vessels in an effort to prevent the loss of life.”

Coast Guard Cutters Robert Yered and Charles Sexton are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in Florida.

Coast Guard Interdicts 11 Cuban Migrants 24 miles East of Cay Sal



CAY SAL, Bahamas – The Coast Guard interdicted 11 migrants on April 5 who were 24 miles east of Cay Sal and attempting to illegally enter the United States, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders received a notification from the Cuban border security reporting an illegal vessel departure with an unknown number of passengers aboard.

The Coast Guard Cutter Isaac Mayo (WPC-1112) crew arrived on scene after a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft crew sighted the vessel. The 11 adult Cuban males aboard were embarked with no medical concerns.

They were transferred to Bahamian authorities by the Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered (WPC-1104) crew and will be transferred back to their home.

“Illegal migration voyages are extremely dangerous when transporting human lives on these unseaworthy vessels and put the safety of those aboard in jeopardy,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Sharon Vela, Command Center Watchstander, Sector Miami. “The Coast Guard remains consistent with the mission of protecting the safety of life at sea and interdicting these vessels in an effort to prevent the loss of life.”

Coast Guard Cutters Robert Yered and Isaac Mayo are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in Florida.

Coast Guard Offloads More than 7.1 Tons of Cocaine in San Diego



SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Waesche offloaded in San Diego on April 5 more than 14,300 pounds of cocaine seized in international waters of the eastern Pacific Ocean from February to late March, the Coast Guard 11th District said in a release.

“The offload that you see behind me, the bales of cocaine, 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 a 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.”

The drugs were seized during six separate interdictions off the coasts of Mexico and Central and South America by the Coast Guard Cutters Active (WMEC-618), Steadfast (WMEC-623) and Waesche (WMSL-751):

- Active was responsible for two cases, seizing about 1,297 kilograms of cocaine.
- Steadfast was responsible for two cases, seizing an estimated 2,350 kilograms.
- Waesche was responsible for two cases, seizing about 2,874 kilograms.

“The national security cutter is the Coast Guard’s most sophisticated and technologically advanced asset,” said Capt. Patrick Dougan, Waesche’s commanding officer. “However, it would be ineffective without the men and women who serve aboard. Everyone on board plays an important role and manning these ships requires everyone to contribute. This crew and those of our other assets are relentless in their pursuit of professional excellence. This offload is just a small sample of our success.”

Numerous U.S. agencies from the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement along with allied and international partner agencies play a role in counter-drug operations.

The Coast Guard increased U.S. and allied presence in the eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Basin, which are known drug transit zones off Central and South America, as part of its Western Hemisphere Strategy. During at-sea interdictions

in international waters, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida. The law-enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boarding, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Waesche is a 418-foot national security cutter homeported in Alameda, California. The Active is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter and is homeported in Port Angeles, Washington. The Steadfast is also a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter and is homeported in Astoria, Oregon.