

Coast Guard Rescues 10 from Disabled Cargo Ship

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Confidence rescued 10 crew members, who had been stranded on a disabled cargo ship for almost 20 days, Oct. 8 approximately 1,380 miles southeast of Bermuda, the 5th Coast Guard District said in an Oct. 5 release.

“We were conducting a law enforcement patrol near Puerto Rico when we were assigned to assist the crew of the motor vessel Alta,” said Cmdr. Travis Emge, the commanding officer of the Confidence. “We traveled over 1,300 nautical miles to get to the disabled ship ahead of Hurricane Leslie’s forecasted track and brought the 10 crew members aboard. We are all proud of our part in this coordinated Coast Guard response to rescue this crew.”

The Coast Guard was notified Sept. 30 that the 250-foot Tanzanian-flagged cargo ship, Alta, became disabled Sept. 19, while transiting from Greece to Haiti, and was unable to make repairs. The crew reported that they had enough food for two days and water for 15 days, and that there were no injuries or immediate medical concerns.

An aircrew on an HC-130 Hercules airplane from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina, dropped about a week’s worth of food to the crew Oct. 2, helping sustain the men until help could arrive.

The Confidence is taking the 10 men to Puerto Rico and is scheduled to arrive there Oct. 12.

The Coast Guard’s Fifth District command center has been working to coordinate with the ship owner for a commercial tug to tow the vessel to shore.

Coast Guard Cutter returns to Homeport after Hurricane Response, Fisheries Patrol

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dependable returned to Little Creek, Virginia, after responding to Hurricane Florence and conducting a 42-day Mid-Atlantic fisheries patrol, Oct. 8, the 5th Coast Guard District said in a release.

During the patrol, Dependable was called to assist with the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Florence. Several dozen crew members volunteered to help Coast Guard units in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, rebuild critical infrastructure and restore habitability.

Over a three-day period, Dependable helped reopen waterways essential to facilitating commerce in the Port of Morehead City, North Carolina, provided needed supplies, and repaired damaged grounds to local Coast Guard units. The crew's work helped Coast Guard Sector Field Office and Station Fort Macon restore their operations and assist their local partners in re-establishing their community.

Prior to Hurricane Florence, from New Jersey to South Carolina, Dependable's boarding teams inspected U.S. fishing vessels' catch, gear and lifesaving equipment, ensuring that the vessels were operating safely and legally. The boarding teams identified a variety of lifesaving equipment concerns on board several fishing vessels. The teams helped fix issues on the spot and educated the crews on the importance of maintaining their equipment.

“Enforcement of fisheries regulations at sea is a vital part of ensuring our natural resources are around for future generations,” said Cmdr. Rula Deisher, commanding officer of Dependable. “When Hurricane Florence came through, we quickly shifted gears and responded to the devastation she left in her wake. The teamwork and enthusiasm displayed by the crew to help fellow Coast Guardsmen in need was fantastic. I am very proud of Coast Guard Cutter Dependable and the work they accomplished this patrol.”

Dependable is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter, which routinely deploys in support of counterdrug, alien migrant interdiction, living marine resources, and search and rescue missions.

Coast Guard Cutter Stratton Returns Home Following 104-day Patrol

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard Cutter Stratton returned home Oct. 4 to Coast Guard Island following a 104-day, 23,500-nautical-mile patrol that included enforcement of fisheries regulations in Alaska and interdicting more than 16,000 pounds of cocaine from known drug trafficking zones in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Stratton’s crew began their deployment in the Arctic Ocean supporting Coast Guard District Seventeen and Operation Arctic Shield. Deploying with a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and an aircrew from Air Station San Francisco, Stratton provided maritime domain awareness in waters off the north slope of Alaska, ensuring the sovereignty over U.S. waters in the

region. Stratton also served as a search and rescue platform and conducted living marine resource and commercial vessel safety regulation enforcement.

U.S. waters surrounding Alaska support significant renewable resources, including a robust fishing industry. More than 59 percent of fish caught in the United States are harvested from Alaskan waters, generating more than \$6.4 billion annually. The U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for conducting at-sea enforcement in direct support of both domestic and international fisheries management schemes to ensure the sustainability of these living marine resources.

Stratton additionally patrolled international waters off the coasts of Central and South America conducting counterdrug operations with an aircrew and a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron based in Jacksonville, Florida. Stratton partnered with units from multiple U.S. agencies in support of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, and the Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida.

The crew interdicted seven drug smuggling vessels in 26 days, including three low-profile go-fast vessels. The interdictions yielded more than 16,000 pounds of cocaine seized by Stratton's crew worth an estimated \$235 million wholesale and detained 23 suspected smugglers for prosecution in U.S. and partner nation courts.

Throughout the patrol, Stratton leveraged a Small Unmanned Aerial System (sUAS) for mission support in both operational theatres. The sUAS provided the crew real-time video footage through aerial surveillance and expanded Stratton's capabilities to support operations across all Coast Guard missions. The real-time video increases situational awareness enabling the crew to make more-informed decisions and assists with mission planning, efficiency and crew safety.

Stratton is a 418-foot-long national security cutter, one of four homeported in Alameda.

Coast Guard Offloads More Than 11 Tons of Cocaine in San Diego

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton offloaded more than 11 tons of cocaine seized in international waters off the Eastern Pacific Ocean from late August to mid-September on Oct. 3, the 11th Coast Guard District said in a release.

The drugs were seized during the interdiction of eight suspected smuggling vessels found off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America by the Coast Guard cutters Stratton, Seneca and Active.

Stratton was responsible for six cases, seizing an estimated 16,473 pounds of cocaine. Seneca was responsible for one case, seizing an estimated 2,954 pounds of cocaine. Active was responsible for one case, seizing an estimated 2,646 pounds of cocaine.

“This offload reflects the outstanding efforts of the Coast Guard and our partner agencies to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations,” said Capt. Craig J. Wieschhorster, Stratton’s commanding officer. “These interdiction results take hundreds of millions of dollars away from these criminal networks that work to undermine the rule of law in South and Central America, which increases migration pressures on the U.S. southern border. Keeping this product

off the streets of America saves lives, and I am very proud of the efforts of my crew.”

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 fight against transnational criminal organizations in the Eastern Pacific requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by U.S. Attorneys in districts across the nation.

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. The interdictions, including the actual boarding's, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Stratton is a 418-foot national security cutter homeported in Alameda. The Seneca is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Boston. The Active is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Port Angeles, Washington.

Coast Guard Airdrops Supplies to Disabled Cargo Ship off Bermuda

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard airdropped a large supply of MREs to a disabled cargo ship approximately 1,380 miles southeast of Bermuda Oct. 2, and continues to monitor the situation, the Fifth Coast guard District said in a release.

The Coast Guard was notified on the morning of Sept. 30 that the 250-foot Tanzanian-flagged cargo ship, Alta, with 10 people onboard, became disabled while transiting from Greece to Haiti, and was unable to make repairs. The crew reported that they had enough food for two days and water for 15 days, and that there were no injuries or immediate medical concerns.

The Coast Guard has been maintaining regular communications with the vessel and utilizing the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue System to find nearby vessels that may be able to assist.

An aircrew aboard an HC-130 Hercules airplane from Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina, was able to airdrop enough food for one week to the crew Oct. 2, which was retrieved by Alta's crew members. The crew was reported to be in high spirits.

The ship owner has contracted a commercial tug to tow the vessel to Saint Maarten, which is expected to arrive at the Alta's location next week.

The Coast Guard continues to monitor the Alta and coordinate rescue efforts.

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.

Coast Guard Updates North Carolina Hurricane Florence Response

GOLDSBORO, N.C. – The Coast Guard continues to coordinate with federal, state and local agencies to respond to flooding from Hurricane Florence in North Carolina, the Coast Guard Hurricane Response Media Operations Centers said in a Sept. 18 release.

The service provided the following update of its activities, which include:

- The Coast Guard has rescued 426 people and 234 pets since Hurricane Florence began.
- There are 26 shallow-water response boat teams deployed to North Carolina comprising 116 people.
- There are 191 Coast Guard members assigned to the North Carolina Incident Command Post in Goldsboro, North Carolina.
- There are four buoy tenders en route to Wanchese, Oak Island, and Atlantic City Beach to assess waterway and port conditions.

“Search and rescue remains the highest priority in the neighborhoods impacted by Hurricane Florence,” said Capt. Bion Stewart, leader of the Coast Guard’s response to Hurricane Florence in North Carolina. “We are also focusing on reopening the ports and waterways to support relief aid and resume commercial operations vital to North Carolina economy and national interesting, working alongside the North Carolina State Port Authority, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Army Corps of Engineers to open the Cape Fear River and Morehead City waterways with safety-focused restrictions this afternoon.”

Coast Guard Repatriates Migrants to the Dominican Republic

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier repatriated five of 12 migrants to the Dominican Republic Aug. 23 after Caribbean Border Interagency Group law enforcement authorities interdicted a boat just off the coast of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Six of the interdicted migrants, five Dominican and one of Mexican nationality, were brought ashore to Puerto Rico where they face potential federal criminal immigration charges for attempted illegal re-entry into the United States. One other Dominican migrant, also brought ashore, is undergoing further immigration processing.

“The coordination and swift response by the Caribbean Border Interagency Group law enforcement authorities involved in this

case led to a rapid interdiction and safe removal of all 12 migrants,” said Cmdr. Christopher Douglas, Sector San Juan chief of response. “Migrants should not take to the sea, they not only risk going to jail, but also endanger their lives by entrusting smugglers to bring them across the dangerous waters of the Mona Passage aboard grossly overloaded makeshift boats with little or no lifesaving equipment onboard.”

During a routine patrol in the Mona Passage Aug. 21, the crew of a Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected a 20-foot migrant boat just off Desecheo Island traveling without navigational lights toward the west coast of Puerto Rico. Coast Guard Sector San Juan watchstanders diverted Joseph Napier to interdict the vessel and alerted Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action of the situation. An MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Borinquen also responded to support the interdiction and provide any needed rescue assistance.

Shortly thereafter, the Puerto Rico Police marine unit came alongside and stopped the migrant vessel as Joseph Napier arrived on scene. The crew of Joseph Napier safely embarked all 12 migrants, 10 men and a woman of Dominican nationality and another man who was a Mexican national.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Ramey Sector Border Patrol Agents in Puerto Rico took custody of the migrants facing prosecution, while the Joseph Napier transported the remaining migrants to Dominican Republic waters, where they embarked a Dominican Republic Navy patrol boat.

Joseph Napier is 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan.

Coast Guard Icebreaker Healy Deploying to Arctic Ocean

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard Cutter Healy is scheduled to depart July 24 for a four-month deployment to the Arctic Ocean to carry out multiple scientific research missions, the 13th Coast Guard District announced in a release.

Healy will provide presence and access to the Arctic while conducting three major science research missions. In partnership with the National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Office of Naval Research, scientists will conduct physical and biological oceanographic research in the Arctic Ocean.

Healy's first mission is a NOAA-sponsored mission to increase understanding of biological processes along Alaska's Continental Shelf. This mission comprises three mission subsets: Distributed Biological Observatory, Northern Chukchi Integrated Study, and the Ecosystems and Fisheries-Oceanography Coordinated Investigations.

The second mission of Healy's Arctic deployment is sponsored by the Office of Naval Research and is focused on understanding how upper-level ocean stratification and sea ice in the Beaufort Sea is responding to inflow and surface forcing changes. The Stratified Ocean Dynamics of the Arctic project aims to increase understanding by deploying subsurface moorings and specialized on-ice instruments to observe the fluctuations across an annual cycle.

Healy's final mission is sponsored by the National Science Foundation and will examine the effects of the Pacific water inflow into the Arctic and its associated boundary current on

the ecosystem. This study is part of a multiyear endeavor that combines shipboard measurements taken in the spring and fall, with measurements from a subsea mooring deployed in the center of the boundary current.

Currently under the command of Capt. Greg Tlapa, Healy is the nation's premiere high-latitude research vessel and is one of the only U.S. military surface vessels that deploys to and is capable of operating in the ice-covered waters of the Arctic. In addition to science operations, Healy and the crew are capable of conducting a range of Coast Guard operations such as search and rescue, ship escorts, environmental protection and the enforcement of laws and treaties in the Polar Regions.

Healy provides access and presence throughout the Arctic region to protect U.S. maritime borders and to safeguard the maritime economy. Homeported in Seattle, Healy is the largest ship in the U.S. Coast Guard at 420 feet long with a displacement of over 16,000 tons and a permanent crew of 87.

Coast Guard Opens Forward Operating Location Kotzebue for Arctic Shield 2018

JUNEAU, Alaska – The Coast Guard opened forward operating location (FOL) Kotzebue, Alaska, in support of Arctic Shield 2018 operations throughout the Arctic region July 1, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a release.

As part of operation Arctic Shield 2018, Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak deployed two MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters and crews to Kotzebue to give the Coast Guard an opportunity to

leverage existing infrastructure and strategically position its crews to effectively respond to maritime emergencies in the Bering Strait and the Northern Slope.

In addition to FOL Kotzebue, the Coast Guard will have cutters Healy, Stratton and Douglas Munro engage in operations encompassing a variety of missions from Dutch Harbor through the Bering Strait and along the North Slope including the Northern Alaska Outer Continental Shelf.

Operation Arctic Guardian is also a part of Arctic Shield, and it is an exercise that will conduct outreach with community responders in the Arctic by teaching basic oil spill response tactics and sub-area planning. Several Coast Guard personnel and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation will conduct Operation Arctic Guardian in Bethel.

“The Forward Operating Location in Kotzebue helps mitigate several of the major challenges when operating in the Arctic including the environment, vast distances and limited infrastructure,” said Rear Adm. Matthew Bell, commander, Coast Guard 17th District. “Arctic Shield 2018 operations and activities will include performing multiple missions, leveraging partnerships and increasing maritime domain awareness to reduce risk and promote safe, secure and environmentally responsible maritime activity. “

Arctic Shield operations began in 2009 to support Coast Guard missions in response to increased maritime activity in the Arctic. Arctic Shield operations and activities include focusing on promoting national interests and sovereignty throughout the Arctic. Arctic Shield 2018 operations and activities will include performing multiple missions, leveraging partnerships and increasing maritime domain awareness to reduce risk and promote safe, secure and environmentally responsible maritime activity.

Arctic Shield 2018 focuses on understanding and responding to

the risks to the sea, risks to those on the sea, and risks from those who might use the sea to do us harm. Increasing maritime domain awareness, building and strengthening partnerships with both national and international Arctic stakeholders, and having an active presence in the region will enhance the safety, security and stewardship of the nation's Arctic waters.