

CG Cutter James offloads More Than \$411.3M in Cocaine, Marijuana at Port Everglades



Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Garret Byrd wraps bails at Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 16, 2020. Coast Guard Cutter James is homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Jose Hernandez

MIAMI—The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter James offloaded more than 23,000 pounds of cocaine and nearly 8,800 pounds of marijuana worth more than \$411.3 million Wednesday at Port Everglades, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Dec. 16 release.

The drugs were interdicted in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America, including contraband seized and recovered during 20 interdictions of suspected drug smuggling vessels by eight American and United Kingdom ships:

- [Coast Guard Cutter James](#)
- [Coast Guard Cutter Seneca](#)
- [Coast Guard Cutter Reliance](#)
- [Coast Guard Cutter Legare](#)
- [Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Doyle](#)
- [USS William P. Lawrence](#)
- [USS Gabrielle Giffords](#)
- [RFA Argus](#)

“This patrol highlights our crew’s continued commitment to protecting the American people from our adversaries,” said Capt. Todd Vance, James’ commanding officer. “Despite COVID, the James crew demonstrated supreme resilience, and the results of their exceptional performance are being showcased today.”

"I am honoured to be able to pay tribute to the successes of the team here today, and recognize the role the Royal Navy and UK National Crime Agency has played in this joint operation," said Commodore Phil Nash, Royal Attaché, United Kingdom Embassy. "Working seamlessly with U.S. and international colleagues, the presence of RFA Argus has prevented the \$54 million of drugs offloaded here from reaching the streets in the last few months; taken together with a wider effort this year by UK ships HMS Medway and RFA Mounts Bay, around \$650 million of drugs have been stopped. This has been a genuine team effort. The key to success continues to be the close working relationship and collaboration between our nations."

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 drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by U.S. Attorneys in districts across the nation.

During at-sea interdictions, 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 Coast Guard 11th District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal

prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 11th District](#), headquartered in Alameda, California, and the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean is conducted under the authority of the [Coast Guard 7th District](#), headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The cutter James is a 418-foot national security cutter home ported in Charleston, South Carolina. The cutter Legare is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter home ported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The cutter Seneca is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Boston, Massachusetts. The cutter Reliance is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola, Florida. The cutter Joseph Doyle is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The USS William P. Lawrence is a 509-foot Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer homeported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The USS Gabrielle Giffords is a 418-foot Independence-class littoral combat ship homeported in San Diego, California. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary Argus is a 574-foot ship homeported in Portsmouth, United Kingdom.