

# Coast Guard Cutter Alert Returns After Counter-Drug Patrol, International Exercise



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert sails near Puerto Chiapas, Mexico, while participating in a three-day North American Maritime Security Initiative exercise on March 1. U.S. Coast Guard

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard Cutter Alert returned home to Astoria on March 15 following a 69-day eastern Pacific Ocean counter-drug deployment, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release. The crew patrolled international waters off the coast of Mexico to disrupt the flow of narcotics and illegal migrants.

Alert's crew also participated in the North American Maritime Security Initiative (NAMSI) Pacific Exercise in and around Puerto Chiapas, Mexico.

NAMSI is a trilateral effort by forces of the United States, Canada and Mexico to improve mutual capacity for operational coordination. The three-day exercise focused on enhancing information-sharing and integrating capabilities of Canadian, U.S. and Mexican maritime forces during at-sea counter-drug interdiction operations.

“It was a great experience to participate in and be a part of such a culturally diverse operational exercise,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Cristina Hickey, a Spanish translator and Alert crewmember. “I thoroughly enjoyed conversing in Spanish with my foreign counterparts and learning more about their missions.”

Crews from the Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento, Coast Guard Cutter Benjamin Bottoms, Pacific Strike Team, Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team, Pacific Area/D11 command center and Joint Interagency Task Force South also participated in the exercise alongside Canadian and Mexican maritime participants.

"I'm proud of the hard work that our crew put into our Eastern Pacific patrol," said Cdr. Tyson Scofield, Alert's commanding officer.

"I am especially proud of the professionalism that the crew showed during our joint exercises with the Canadian and Mexican navies. They displayed a high level of skill while demonstrating counter narcotics interdiction techniques and during the shipboard launch and recovering of a Mexican helicopter for the first time. Most importantly, our crew created personal and professional relationships with their North American peers which will help to counter the flow of illegal narcotics into all of our countries."