

Coast Guard Cutter Bear Returns Home After 58-Day Operation Vigilant Sentry Patrol



A Coast Guard Cutter Bear (WMEC 901) small boat crew interdicts an overloaded vessel unlawfully bound for the United States by sea with over 100 migrants on board, Sept. 15, 2024, while underway north of Haiti. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Jeremy Wilbanks)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Oct. 22, 2024

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Bear (WPC 901) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Oct. 7, following a 58-day homeland security and counter-drug patrol in the Windward Passage.

Bear's crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, where crew members conducted maritime safety and security missions.

While on patrol, Bear crew members successfully deterred over 200 migrants aboard an overloaded vessel from reaching the United States unlawfully by sea, safely ensuring their return to Haiti. Bear's crew also intercepted 107 migrants in a joint operation with Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore (WPC 1109). And during two separate events, Bear's crew repatriated 169 migrants to Haiti.

Additionally, Bear's crew effectively disrupted a drug-smuggling venture by sea, preventing the suspected trafficker's illegal narcotics from reaching the United

States.

Bear conducted these missions alongside interagency and international partners including the U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations and the Haitian Coast Guard.

“This patrol was demanding and incredibly busy, and I couldn’t be prouder of how the crew supported each other during such challenging operations,” said Cmdr. Jorell Webb, commanding officer of Bear. “For many, this was their first experience with migrant interdiction operations. From the start to the end of the patrol, it was clear how the crew developed into a cohesive team.”

The Coast Guard, along with its HSTF-SE partners, maintains a continual presence with air, land, and sea assets in the Florida Straits, the Windward Passage, the Mona Passage, and the Caribbean Sea in support of OVS. The HSTF-SE combined, multi-layered approach is designed to protect the safety of life at sea while preventing unlawful maritime entry to the United States and its territories.

Bear is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. Bear’s primary missions are migrant interdiction and counter-narcotics operations, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of the U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go CoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).