

Coast Guard Cutter Crew Offloads 18,000 Pounds of Cocaine in San Diego



Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf crew members offload more than 18,000 pounds of cocaine in San Diego on Dec. 18. The \$312 million worth of seized cocaine was the result of seven separate suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions and disruptions by Bertholf and four other Coast Guard cutter crews. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Alexander Gray SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf offloaded about 18,000 pounds of cocaine on Dec. 18 seized from known drug-transit zones of the eastern Pacific Ocean worth approximately \$312 million.

The interdictions were made between mid-October and early December by the joint efforts of the following five separate Coast Guard cutter crews:

- Northland was responsible for one case, or 3,328 pounds
- James was responsible for one case, or 1,609 pounds
- Harriet Lane was responsible for one case, or 5,037 pounds
- Thetis was responsible for one case, or 2,394 pounds
- Bertholf was responsible for three cases, or 5,851 pounds

“This offload demonstrates another successful example of the ‘cycle of justice,’ said Vice Adm. Linda L. Fagan, Coast Guard Pacific Area commander.

“This cycle begins with intelligence-driven detection and monitoring of illicit activities that then cue the interdiction and apprehension of smugglers and contraband, and ultimately leads to criminal prosecution. This ‘cycle of justice’ disrupts a ‘cycle of crime,’ which left unchecked, fuels violence and instability that corrodes our Hemisphere’s social and economic fabric, and directly contributes to historically high drug-related deaths in neighborhoods across North America.”

Also in attendance for the offload was Preston Grubbs, the principal deputy administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and Robert Brewer, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of California.

“One of our key missions is stopping dangerous drugs before they reach our shores,” Brewer said. “Succeeding in that mission would not be possible without the tireless efforts of the United States Coast Guard.”

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