

Coast Guard Cutter Interdicts Semi-Submersible in the Eastern Pacific



U.S. Coast Guard boarding team members climb aboard a suspected smuggling vessel. U.S. Coast Guard JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant crew intercepted a drug-laden semi-submersible in the eastern Pacific, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

While on routine patrol in the eastern Pacific, Valiant's crew interdicted a self-propelled semi-submersible in international waters carrying about 12,000 pounds of cocaine, worth more than \$165 million, and apprehended four suspected drug smugglers.

The semi-submersible was originally detected and monitored by maritime patrol aircraft, and the Valiant crew was diverted by Joint Interagency Task Force South to interdict the semi-submersible, arriving after sunset.

The Valiant crew launched two small boats with boarding teams made up of Valiant crew and two members of the Coast Guard Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team, successfully interdicting the semi-submersible in the early morning hours. They then led and conducted a full law enforcement boarding with the assistance of Colombian naval assets that arrived on scene shortly after.

About 1,100 pounds of cocaine were recovered and offloaded to the Valiant during the operations. The remaining cocaine on the semi-submersible could not be safely extracted due to stability concerns of the vessel.

According to Valiant's commanding officer, the interdiction

coincided with a time-honored mariner's milestone and tradition of crossing the equator, which made both events even more meaningful part of the ship's patrol.

"There are no words to describe the feeling Valiant crew is experiencing right now," said Cmdr. Matthew Waldron, Valiant's commanding officer. "In a 24-hour period, the crew both crossed the equator and intercepted a drug-laden self-propelled semi-submersible vessel. Each in and of themselves is momentous events in any cutterman's career. Taken together, however, it is truly remarkably unprecedented This interdiction was an all-hands-on-deck evolution, and each crew member performed above and beyond the call of duty."