

Coast Guard Cutter Stratton Returns Home Following 104-day Patrol

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard Cutter Stratton returned home Oct. 4 to Coast Guard Island following a 104-day, 23,500-nautical-mile patrol that included enforcement of fisheries regulations in Alaska and interdicting more than 16,000 pounds of cocaine from known drug trafficking zones in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Stratton's crew began their deployment in the Arctic Ocean supporting Coast Guard District Seventeen and Operation Arctic Shield. Deploying with a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and an aircrew from Air Station San Francisco, Stratton provided maritime domain awareness in waters off the north slope of Alaska, ensuring the sovereignty over U.S. waters in the region. Stratton also served as a search and rescue platform and conducted living marine resource and commercial vessel safety regulation enforcement.

U.S. waters surrounding Alaska support significant renewable resources, including a robust fishing industry. More than 59 percent of fish caught in the United States are harvested from Alaskan waters, generating more than \$6.4 billion annually. The U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for conducting at-sea enforcement in direct support of both domestic and international fisheries management schemes to ensure the sustainability of these living marine resources.

Stratton additionally patrolled international waters off the coasts of Central and South America conducting counterdrug operations with an aircrew and a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron based in Jacksonville, Florida. Stratton partnered with units from

multiple U.S. agencies in support of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, and the Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida.

The crew interdicted seven drug smuggling vessels in 26 days, including three low-profile go-fast vessels. The interdictions yielded more than 16,000 pounds of cocaine seized by Stratton's crew worth an estimated \$235 million wholesale and detained 23 suspected smugglers for prosecution in U.S. and partner nation courts.

Throughout the patrol, Stratton leveraged a Small Unmanned Aerial System (sUAS) for mission support in both operational theatres. The sUAS provided the crew real-time video footage through aerial surveillance and expanded Stratton's capabilities to support operations across all Coast Guard missions. The real-time video increases situational awareness enabling the crew to make more-informed decisions and assists with mission planning, efficiency and crew safety.

Stratton is a 418-foot-long national security cutter, one of four homeported in Alameda.