

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant Returns Home After 46-Day Patrol in the Windward Passage



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) and French Navy Frigate FS Ventôse (F733) conduct joint exercises at sea, Sept. 29, 2024, while underway in the Windward Passage. The crew of Valiant conducted a 49-day migrant interdiction operations patrol in the region to protect life at sea and enforce U.S. maritime law. (Photo courtesy of FS Ventôse)

Nov. 22, 2024

From Coast Guard 7th District, Nov. 22, 2024

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) returned to their home port at Naval Station Mayport, Nov. 7, following a 49-day migrant interdiction operations patrol in the Windward Passage.

Valiant's crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while operating in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility. Throughout the patrol, the crew of Valiant conducted maritime safety and security missions to protect life at sea and enforce U.S. maritime law.

While at sea, Valiant rendezvoused with French Navy Frigate FS Ventôse (F733) during the vessels' independent patrols off coastal Haiti, where the two crews conducted North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) exercises. Valiant's crew applied cutter refueling at sea techniques and exercised NATO code signaling with their French counterparts. Valiant's small boat team received the unique opportunity to perform small-boat

operations with a French warship. And Ventôse embarked a team from Valiant for a simulated boarding, where Coast Guard members shared techniques, procedures and best practices with their French counterparts.

International professional exchanges at sea such as these are vital for strengthening partnerships between nations, clearing the path for joint operations where shared missions, such as search and rescue and maritime drug interdiction, overlap.

Additionally, the crew of Valiant provided care for 363 Haitian migrants and conducted their safe repatriation home. Valiant's crew also transferred nearly 1,000 pounds of illegal narcotics and 14 suspected drug traffickers to proper authorities.

HSTF-SE serves as the Department of Homeland Security lead for operational and tactical planning, command and control, and acts as a standing organization to interdict unlawful maritime migration attempts with federal, state and local partners. HSTF-SE continues to enhance enforcement efforts in support of OVS, which is the 2004 DHS plan to respond to mass maritime migration in the Caribbean Sea and the Florida Straits.

Valiant is a multi-mission, 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. Its primary missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.

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