

Coast Guard offloads more than \$160 million in illegal narcotics



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Coast Guard 7th District

MIAMI – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Confidence offloaded more than 12,100 pounds of cocaine worth more than \$160 million in Miami, Tuesday.

Coast Guard and partner agency crews interdicted the illegal drugs during nine separate cases in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea.

“Our team worked extremely hard, day-in and day-out, to stop illicit narcotics from reaching the United States,” said Cmdr. Thomas Martin, commanding officer of Confidence. “I am honored to serve with such a proficient crew and share in their success.”

The following assets and agencies were involved in the multiple interdictions:

- USCG Cutter Confidence (WMEC 619)
 - USCG Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621)
 - USCG Tactical Law Enforcement Team – Pacific
 - Royal Netherlands Navy Ship HNLMS Groningen (P843)
 - Royal British Navy Ship HMS Dauntless (D33)
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- U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine

Operations (AMO) aircrew

- Joint Interagency Task Force South

“Yesterday’s contraband offload represents what can be achieved when U.S. and international defense and law enforcement agencies work together to combat the entry of illicit drugs into the United States,” said Lt. Fernando Pla, duty enforcement officer for Coast Guard District Seven. “This teamwork continues to deter the illicit drug trafficking market and is a testament to the hard work of these crews.”

Along with the illicit narcotics, 17 suspected smugglers were apprehended and face prosecution in federal courts by the Department of Justice.

Detecting and interdicting illegal drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. The Joint Interagency Task Force South in Key West, Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard throughout the interdiction and apprehension. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard’s Seventh District, headquartered in Miami.