

Cutter Harriet Lane Returns Home after Interdicting \$72 Million in Drugs



Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane U.S. Coast Guard PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903) returned to its homeport in Portsmouth, after a 56-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a Sept. 23 release.

Harriet Lane's patrol began with a week-long intensive training period to evaluate the readiness of the cutter and the crew. After conducting storm avoidance for hurricane Isaias, Harriet Lane conducted operational testing of a prototype small unmanned aerial system (SUAS). The SUAS system is designed to extend the surveillance capability of the cutter and the purpose of the test was to verify the compatibility of the system with a medium endurance cutter platform.

Notably, in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the crew of Harriet Lane interdicted three go-fast vessels, carrying a combined total of approximately 3,882 pounds of suspected cocaine and 2,527 pounds of marijuana, with an estimated street value of \$72 million of illegal narcotics. One such interdiction involved airborne use of force executed by a trained Coast Guard crew member aboard a U.S. Navy helicopter, launched from USS Nitze. Harriet Lane's boarding team took control of the vessel after it was disabled.

"I am extremely proud of the hard work by the Harriet Lane crew during this very busy patrol," said Cmdr. Dorothy Hernaez, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane. "These operations are dangerous, often carried out at

night or in less than ideal conditions. COVID-19 has certainly added an additional layer of complexity that we must account for in order to keep our crew safe while conducting operations at sea. Our Coast Guard women and men are some of the bravest people I have met. I'm very thankful for their personal sacrifices that help keep our country safe."

The Harriet Lane is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth.