

Cutter Harriet Lane Returns Home following Interdiction of \$40M Worth of Drugs



An MH-65 Dolphin Helicopter rests on the deck of the Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane during their 71-day patrol. The Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane is home-ported in Portsmouth, Virginia. U.S. Coast Guard

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane returned to its homeport in Portsmouth, Virginia, after a 71-day counter-drug patrol Feb. 12, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a Feb. 18 release.

In support of the Coast Guard's 11th District and Joint Interagency Task Force South, the Harriet Lane crew worked throughout the duration of the patrol in conjunction with a deployed aviation detachment from the Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) based in Jacksonville, Fla. HITRON specializes in the execution of airborne use of force for the purpose of disabling non-compliant vessels suspected of illicit drug smuggling.

Harriet Lane joined forces with the Colombian navy to conduct joint maritime operations in the Caribbean, focusing on interoperability, communications, and counter-narcotics efforts. Upon crossing into the Pacific via the Panama Canal, the Harriet Lane crew and her embarked aviation detachment interdicted two non-compliant vessels suspected of illicit drug smuggling.

These interdictions included the seizure of 980 kilograms of cocaine and 1,600 pounds of marijuana, an estimated street value of \$40 million. Harriet Lane also detained seven suspected drug smugglers associated with the interdictions. Between operational tasking, the cutter crew completed

aviation, damage control, seamanship and navigation training to maintain operational readiness and prepare for future multi-mission deployments.

“I could not be more proud of the crew of Harriet Lane for their perseverance and operational success amid the continued pandemic,” said Cmdr. Dorothy Hernaez, commanding officer of the Harriet Lane. “The crew flawlessly executed COVID-19 mitigation protocols leading up to and during the deployment to remain healthy and operationally ready throughout. The success we had during this deployment would not have been possible without the continued support of our families and friends, who we are looking forward to seeing again upon our return to port.”

Prior to returning home, Harriet Lane stopped in Port Everglades, Florida, to transfer 17 suspected drug smugglers and \$206 million of illicit drugs to partner agencies for prosecution. In addition to the interdictions by Harriet Lane, people and drug evidence transferred in this evolution came from interdictions in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean by Coast Guard Cutters Bertholf, Munro, and Mohawk, as well as the USS William P. Lawrence with Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Team 101 and USS Comstock with Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Team 403.

Harriet Lane is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter responsible for a variety of Coast Guard missions, including search and rescue, enforcement of laws and treaties, maritime defense, and protection of the marine environment.