

Cutter Steadfast Returns Home after 55-day Counter-Narcotics Patrol



The crew aboard U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC-623) stands in formation on the ship's flight deck while underway off the coast of Central America Memorial Day, 2022. An embarked MH-65 Dolphin helicopter detachment crew from Air Station Port Angeles hovered overhead for the photo in recognition of the day of remembrance. *U.S. Coast Guard / Seaman Brad O'Brien*

ASTORIA, Ore. – United States Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC-623) returned to homeport in Astoria on Saturday, June 18, following a 55-day counter narcotics deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 13th District said in a release.

The 210-foot medium-endurance cutter and crew covered more than 11,000 miles conducting law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations in international waters off Central America from Mexico to Costa Rica.

The Steadfast deployed with an MH-65E Dolphin helicopter and aviation crew from Air Station Port Angeles, Washington, and with additional Coast Guard members from the Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific, Electronics Support Detachment Detroit, Base Galveston and three Coast Guard Academy cadets.

The crew of the Steadfast also worked with Mexican law enforcement assets on two occasions, to locate, track, and interdict fast-moving drug smuggling vessels, resulting in the seizure of 2,747 kilograms of cocaine by Mexican authorities, valued at \$109 million.

While transiting south of Mexico, Steadfast's bridge team

sighted a disabled and adrift open-hull vessel with two Mexican adult males waving life jackets. Steadfast approached the vessel to investigate and determine the nature of distress. The imperiled mariners stated that they were fishermen who had been adrift for 23 days after their vessel had been beset by weather. Steadfast embarked both persons, provided meals and medical care, and returned them safely back to Mexico.

This was the last patrol for Cmdr. Craig Allen Jr., who has served as the Steadfast's commanding officer since July 2020. A change-of-command ceremony is scheduled to take place on July 22 in front of the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

Steadfast is a 54-year-old Reliance-class cutter that has been homeported in Astoria since 1994. Previously, Steadfast was homeported in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she earned the nickname "El Tiburon Blanco" ('the White Shark'), from drug smugglers for her notoriety in counter-narcotics operations in the Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea.