

USCGC Hamilton Returns Home after 72-day Patrol, Drug Offload



Two Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL 753) small boats repatriates Haitian migrants on the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Sept. 18. The Cutter Hamilton repatriated 199 migrants during its 72-day patrol. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) crew returned home Nov. 24 to Charleston after completing a 72-day patrol throughout the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The crew offloaded 26,250 pounds (11,907 kilograms) of cocaine and 3,700 pounds of marijuana worth \$504 million Monday at Port Everglades.

Hamilton's crew interdicted five drug-laden vessels while patrolling the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Hamilton's law enforcement team detained all 14 suspects, stopped 199 Haitian migrants, and rescued two people.

Hamilton's crew, along with an aviation detachment from the Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, began the deployment in early September anticipating a counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

With changes in the Haitian political climate, Hamilton's crew transitioned to alien migration interdiction operations in the Windward Pass. Hamilton's crew focused on dangerous maritime migration voyages, then interdicting 199 Haitian migrants. They also managed tactical control of seven U.S. Coast Guard cutters, which reduced Haitian migration by 93% with no loss of life.

"We are thrilled to be back in the low country in time for the holidays. The past 72 days have taken us from deterring illegal migration off Haiti to combatting drug trafficking organizations in the Eastern Pacific," said Capt. Matthew Brown, commanding officer of Hamilton. "Every day brought new challenges but also new opportunities for this crew to come together and solve complex problems. The product of their hard work was the successful deterrence of unsafe migrant ventures from the claw of Haiti and the seizure of nearly 12 tons of illegal drugs destined for North America."

Hamilton is one of three 418-foot national security cutters homeported in Charleston under U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command with two more anticipated by 2025. With its robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance equipment, they are the most technologically advanced ship in the U.S. Coast Guard's fleet. These crews regularly work cooperatively under U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, district commanders and combatant commands.

NSCs are a worldwide deployable asset that supports the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense and national objectives through drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, national defense, SAR, fisheries enforcement and national intelligence collection.

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area command, based in Portsmouth, Virginia, oversees all U.S. Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. Also, they allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.