

USCGC Mohawk Returns from Eastern Pacific Patrol, Conducts International Collaboration



The USCGC Mohawk (WMEC 913) hosts senior officials from the coast guard, navy, and marines of Ecuador for a professional exchange on Nov. 28, 2021, at sea off Ecuador. The Famous-class medium endurance cutter returned to homeport in Key West Sunday after completing a groundbreaking 45-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

KEY WEST, Florida – The Famous-class medium endurance cutter USCGC Mohawk (WMEC 913) returned to homeport in Key West Dec. 19 after completing a groundbreaking 45-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area said Dec. 20.

While on patrol, the Mohawk crew disrupted illegal narcotics smuggling, interdicting more than 3,200 pounds of cocaine. The team conducted joint training missions with crews from Panama and Ecuador to strengthen regional partnerships in the Western Hemisphere.

Patrolling in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South, the Mohawk team interdicted a low-profile drug smuggling vessel with approximately 3,200 pounds of cocaine aboard and apprehended three suspected narcotics smugglers. These low-profile vessels are purpose-built to evade detection and transport illicit contraband across thousand-mile stretches of ocean. The drugs, worth more than \$60 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coast of Ecuador. While in theater, Mohawk aided in stopping 17 suspected drug smugglers, contributing directly to U.S. Southern Command objectives to combat transnational criminal

organizations.

During the Mohawk's deployment, the crew took multiple opportunities to strengthen ties with partner nations in the region, including conducting joint rescue and assistance drills, exchanging law enforcement and boarding techniques, and practicing towing with Panamanian Servicio Nacional Aeronaval vessels. Mohawk's crew also completed a passing exercise with the Armada del Ecuador offshore patrol vessel LAE Isla San Cristobal (LG 30) and conducted a two-day joint counter-narcotics patrol through Ecuador's exclusive economic zone in the Galápagos Islands.

"International partnerships are critical to detecting and deterring illicit narcotics smuggling; engagements such as these with foreign partners enhance interoperability and interdiction capabilities," said Cmdr. Andrew Pate, commanding officer of the Mohawk.

Mohawk made history during its deployment as the first U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit and anchor in the Galápagos Islands. The islands are a province of Ecuador and a UNESCO World Heritage site, made famous for species diversity and unique terrain. While at anchor in San Cristobal, Galápagos, Mohawk conducted a professional exchange with senior ranking officials from Armada del Ecuador, held joint law enforcement training, enjoyed a cultural exchange ashore, and took part in a friendly U.S. versus Ecuador game of soccer.

"The U.S. Coast Guard's ability to forge strong and lasting international partnerships that further the national interest is what makes us such a unique instrument of national security. I am very proud of the Mohawk crew for their work as envoys of the U.S. Coast Guard. The opportunity to work alongside the maritime professionals of Ecuador and Panama during this deployment, as well as our interdiction success sends a strong signal to transnational criminal organizations that the United States values enduring commitments in the

region,” Pate said. “Our interactions with the Armada del Ecuador in Galápagos left a profound impression on my crew. Choosing to go to sea and serve on a U.S. Coast Guard cutter opens the door to experiences and camaraderie that you don’t get in a normal nine to five job.”

While underway, the cutter’s crew completed aviation, damage control, engineering, seamanship, navigation, and combat systems training to maintain operational readiness and prepare for future multi-mission deployments.

Commissioned in March of 1991, Mohawk is the 13th and final of the 270-foot Famous-class cutters built. The medium endurance cutters fall under the command of the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Based in Portsmouth, Virginia, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, they also allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.