

USCGC Venturous Returns Home After Supporting Maritime Border Operations



Coast Guard Cutter Venturous conducts small boat operations in Canal De Tortue, Haiti July 19, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Alvin Cruz)

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC 625) returned to their homeport of St. Petersburg, Fla., Thursday after a 60-day Caribbean patrol.

During the patrol, Venturous' crew supported Operation Vigilant Sentry, a joint operation combining air and surface assets and personnel to address illegal maritime migration in the Caribbean corridor of the United States. The primary objective is to protect the safety of life at sea, and to deter maritime mass migration.

The Venturous and its crew of more than 70 Coast Guard men and women spent the first half of the deployment in the South Florida Straits patrolling off the Florida Keys and acting as the last line of defense against illegal maritime migration. As the largest cutter in the area, Venturous held seven rescued migrants before they were repatriated to their home country, while also providing much-needed first aid to those who suffered injuries from being at sea for multiple days. Additionally, Venturous assisted in the controlled transfer of nine suspected drug smugglers and approximately 1,378 pounds of illicit narcotics, ultimately leading to the prosecution of multiple narco-trafficking cases.

“This mission is inherently difficult; we see people on their worst day,” said Cmdr. Karen Kutkiewicz, commanding officer of Venturous. “Our crew embodies our core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty every day. We take care of each

other, and the detainees and migrants who cross our deck before their prosecution or repatriation.”

Halfway through the patrol, the ship’s engineers exhibited outstanding motivation, coordinating complex logistics to replace the Emergency Diesel Generator (EDG) in just 96 hours. This generator is essential for powering the critical switchboard during outages, ensuring that key systems remain operational when primary power sources fail. Replacing such crucial equipment typically requires extensive preparation and coordination over several months, followed by weeks of detailed repair work. However, through effective teamwork the process was greatly expedited, allowing Venturous to continue operations in the threat vector.

From offshore Florida, the Venturous transited south to patrol the Windward Pass between Cuba and Haiti to overtly deter those wanting to take to the seas and migrate north working with other Coast Guard and CBP assets. In most cases, migrant vessels in this area are homemade, unseaworthy, and overcrowded requiring the Coast Guard to conduct at-sea rescues. While in the area, the cutter utilized its Creole interpreter to conduct dozens of consent-based interviews with the local population of Haiti to gather critical information on the state of their government and life in their country.

During the patrol, Venturous’ senior members trained new members, guiding them through rigorous exercises and simulated scenarios, ensuring the crew is ready to safely navigate the ship, respond to emergencies, operate weapons systems, and handle the cutter’s intricate machinery.

Between training and operations, the crew still managed to find time for morale events including fitness challenges, underway fish-calls, skeet-shooting competitions, port-call sporting events, and mess deck trivia. Additionally, recent upgrades in the ship’s satellite communications have revolutionized the crew’s ability to employ internet

applications, including the ability to video-call loved ones back home.

Venturous is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction, and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The [Venturous](#) was commissioned in 1968. The Reliance class of cutters will be replaced by the new Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) over the next several years. The OPC will provide a capability bridge between the national security cutter, which patrols the open ocean in the most demanding maritime environments, and the fast response cutter, which serves closer to shore. The ships will feature state-of-the-market technology and will replace the service's 270-foot and 210-foot medium endurance cutters, which are becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and operate.