

USCGC Vigilant Returns Home after 48-day Florida Straits Patrol



10.17.2022 Photo Courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of the USCGC Vigilant (WMEC 617) returned to their homeport in Cape Canaveral, Saturday following a 48-day patrol in the Atlantic Ocean and Florida Straits, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Nov. 12 release.

In support of the Coast Guard's Seventh District, Vigilant conducted search and rescue missions for Hurricane Ian off the Coast of Fort Lauderdale, and migrant interdiction operations in the South Florida Straits, working with multiple Coast Guard and joint interagency assets to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal maritime ventures bound for the United States.

During the patrol, Vigilant's crew interdicted 11 overloaded and unseaworthy vessels carrying 146 Cuban nationals. In one case, Vigilant's crew rescued 14 adults and one child who were at sea for six days without food and water. The migrants had been surviving on cooling water from the vessel's engine. Vigilant's crew provided critical first aid, food and water.

In another case, Vigilant's crew rescued 27 migrants from a sinking vessel during high winds and heavy seas. Overall, Vigilant's crew cared for 833 Cuban migrants interdicted by various Coast Guard and other Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast law enforcement entities working within the Florida Straits.

“This is an incredibly challenging and dynamic mission and I couldn't be more proud of the resiliency, tenacity and

professionalism of this crew," said Cmdr. Jay Guyer, commanding officer of Vigilant. "These maritime migrant voyages are extremely dangerous and we encourage everyone to not take to the sea on these illegal ventures."

Vigilant is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter with a crew of 76. The cutter's primary missions include counterdrug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.