

USS Wichita Busts \$12 Million Drugs in Caribbean Sea



The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Wichita (LCS 13) fires at the floating training target during the bi-lateral live fire exercise with the Jamaica Defense Force Coast Guard patrol vessel HMJS Cornwall, April 9, 2021. Wichita is deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet of operations to support Joint Interagency Task Force South's mission, which include counter illicit drug trafficking in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean. *U.S. NAVY / Aerographer's Mate 1st Class Keith E. Mitchell*

CARIBBEAN SEA – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Wichita (LCS 13) with embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 402 has seized an estimated \$12 million in suspected drugs, the U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

While on routine patrol, Wichita's embarked helicopter, assigned to the "Sea Knights" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 22, Detachment 8, located a go-fast vessel (GFV) in the central Caribbean. Upon intercepting the vessel, Wichita launched her small boat and subsequently fired warning shots from the helicopter to achieve control of the vessel. The vessel was searched and three suspected drug traffickers were detained.

Wichita and the embarked LEDET recovered an estimated 289 kilograms of suspected cocaine and one pound of suspected marijuana worth an estimated wholesale value of \$12 million.

"Once again the Wichita team performed exceptionally well in a challenging situation." said Cmdr. Eric Rolfs, Wichita's executive officer. "Working together, along with our partners and allies to keep these waters safe is what our mission out here is all about."

USS Wichita is deployed to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations to support Joint Interagency Task Force South's mission, which includes counter-illicit drug trafficking missions in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.