

USCGC VALIANT Returns to Miami Beach

MIAMI, Fl. – On Saturday, May 28th, US Coast Guard Cutter VALIANT returns to her homeport of Miami Beach after a 50 day deployment. VALIANT conducted a counter-narcotics deployment in the Caribbean and a 21 day shipboard training period focusing on shipboard damage response and cutter navigation out of Naval Station Mayport, Florida.

Immediately upon departing Miami on April 9th, VALIANT conducted a series of drills with her embarked Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) asset. The HITRON crew is a highly specialized crew trained to interdict “go-fast” drug smuggling vessels by employing Airborne Use of Force. Prior to arriving in their assigned patrol area, VALIANT completed drills and certified the aircrew and ship to conduct Airborne Use of Force on “go-fast” vessels.

On April 11th, en route to the patrol area, VALIANT intercepted a raft adrift 35 miles south of Key West with six Cuban migrants embarked. VALIANT’s lookout spotted the raft and its occupants waving their arms in distress. VALIANT rescued the people onboard the unseaworthy raft and transferred them to a patrol boat for eventual repatriation.

On April 16th, VALIANT received a report of a vessel in distress 25 miles west of Cuba. VALIANT made best speed to the position and located the disabled fishing vessel, CAPT NEPHI. CAPT NEPHI experienced an engine casualty, and due to a split seam in her hull, was taking on water. VALIANT took the vessel in tow and deployed a Rescue and Assistance team to dewater the vessel. Dewatering the vessel throughout the night, VALIANT towed the vessel eighty miles to Cancun, Mexico. The following morning, VALIANT’s Rescue and Assistance team made temporary repairs to CAPT NEPHI’s split seam and transferred the vessel to the Mexican Navy.

After arriving in the patrol area on April 18th, VALIANT detected a northbound go-fast off the coast of Honduras. VALIANT launched the HITRON aircrew and both small boats, stopping the vessel after a twenty minute pursuit. After interdicting the vessel, VALIANT’s law enforcement team boarded the vessel and identified several narco-smuggling indicators. The following morning VALIANT transferred the vessel and crew to Honduran authorities.

On May 8th, VALIANT arrived at Naval Station Mayport to commence a rigorous three week training cycle. During this period, Coast Guard cutters are evaluated on navigation, seamanship, communications, and damage control proficiency. VALIANT performed exceptionally well and, due to the crew’s exemplary efforts, qualified for the Coast Guard’s “Excellence” award for shipboard operational readiness.

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The U.S. Coast Guard is a military, maritime, multi-mission service within the Department of Homeland Security dedicated to protecting the safety and security of America.