

HSL 60 Det 1 Raises Bar in Counter Drug Operations

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MAYPORT, Fla.—The “Jaguars” of Helicopter Antisubmarine Light Squadron (HSL) 60 Detachment 1, of Mayport, Fla., returned July 19 from their first extended deployment since the squadron’s inception a mere three years ago.

The Jaguars and their accompanying cruiser USS Ticonderoga (CG 47) set new records for both drug confiscation and prisoner apprehension during a single deployment.

The deployment paired the Jaguars’ first extended underway with the Ticonderoga’s last.

“We’re thrilled with the way the deployment went. Our hard work certainly paid off,” said LCDR Scott Gootee, Detachment 1’s officer-in-charge. “We are the U.S. Navy’s only Light Airborne Multipurpose System (LAMPS) MK III Seahawk helo Reserve squadron, and we’ve set the bar incredibly high for future counter-drug deployments.”

In only six months, the Jaguar-Ticonderoga team enacted 15 stops of suspected and illegal smugglers, which yielded over 10 tons of uncut cocaine and heroin, and the apprehension of 29 narco-terrorists. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration estimated the street value of the seized drugs at well over \$1 billion.

The mere presence of the Jaguar-Ticonderoga team interrupted countless proposed smuggling operations carrying drugs and fuel, while helping to secure U.S. borders. As a result, the team’s attentive vigilance contributed to the safety and well being of America’s citizens.

Many are aware the Navy has been sending counter-drug deployments to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific for years. However, this was the first time a Navy Reserve LAMPS MK III squadron stood at the helm of the air department—those men and women responsible for the initial detection, identification, and prosecution of narcotics smugglers.

The detachment met logistical challenges to successfully ferry both people and mechanical parts to and from the ship on a regular basis.

Crews remained fresh, invigorated, and alert, always eager to launch to detect another drug smuggler.

“Achieving full integration between Reserve and active duty forces is a priority in our theater of operations,” said RADM Vinson E. Smith, commander U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command. “HSL 60’s great performance will serve as model for future deployments.”

During their deployment the Jaguars flew over 400 hours in support of Ticonderoga and Joint Interagency Task Force South.

“Throughout the cruise, we all worked tirelessly to maintain high mission completion and fully mission capable rates,” said HSL 60’s Commanding Officer CDR Jamie Pierce. “In the end, our efforts paid off in record-setting numbers and recognition to match. We are proof positive the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) mandate for Active Reserve Integration (ARI) is alive and well. Everyone in the Jaguar-Ticonderoga team has made me extremely proud to be a member of the Reserve Navy. This is an example of what serving one’s country is all about.” ✦



Photo by PH2 Michael Sandberg

A pilot assigned to the “Proud Warriors” of Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light Four Two (HSL-42), Detachment Eight, approaches an SH-60B Seahawk helicopter on the flight deck of the guided missile cruiser USS Vicksburg (CG 69). Vicksburg is assigned to the John F. Kennedy Carrier Strike Group (CSG), currently participating in a Combined Joint Task Force Exercise (CJTFFEX). Kennedy is one of seven aircraft carriers involved in the Summer Pulse 2004 Exercise. Summer Pulse 2004 is the simultaneous deployment of seven aircraft strike groups (CSGs), demonstrating the ability of the Navy to provide credible combat across the globe, in five theaters with other U.S., allied, and coalition military forces. Summer Pulse is the Navy’s first deployment under its new Fleet Response Plan (FRP) U.S.



A narco-terrorist’s “go-fast” boat, off the coast of Costa Rica, is chased by Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light (HSL) 60 Det One. The smugglers were eventually captured and turned over to Costa Rican authorities. HSL 60 accompanied USS Ticonderoga (CG 47) during her final and most successful deployment, which netted over one billion dollars worth of cocaine.

Photo by AW2(AW) Ryan S. Grant