

# Deployment Summary

## Counter Drug Operations 2004 Deployment Highlights

The Pascagoula, Mississippi based Guided Missile Cruiser, USS TICONDEROGA (CG 47), returned home August 3<sup>rd</sup> following a highly successful Counter Drug Operations deployment. During her five-month deployment in the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean, TICONDEROGA intercepted five drug smuggling 'Go-Fasts' and one fishing boat netting over 14,000 pounds of cocaine and detaining 25 suspects in the process.

In addition to the hard work and dedication of TICONDEROGA's crew, credit must also be given to her two embarked assets: Helicopter Squadron (HSL) 60 with Jaguar 605 from Mayport, Florida and Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDET) 401 and 409, from Miami, Florida. HSL 60 logged over four hundred hours in 140 sorties during the deployment. Despite TICONDEROGA's considerable power and maneuverability, the speed of the helicopter and the skills of her pilots and crew were vital in the pursuit and capture of 'Go-Fasts'. LEDETs 408 and 409 were the acting law enforcement officials onboard and conducted all search and seizure operations onboard suspect vessels. Their finely tuned investigative skills led them to discover hidden compartments and concealed contraband onboard numerous vessels.

On April 10<sup>th</sup> 2004 while conducting law enforcement patrol, TICONDEROGA'S helicopter, Jaguar 605, located a migrant sailing vessel headed towards Florida. The vessel was identified by the LEDET 408 boarding team as an 18-foot homemade sailing vessel with eight Cuban nationals aboard. Because the sailing vessel was continuously taking on water, it was determined to be unseaworthy and TICONDEROGA was directed to take all persons aboard due to safety of life at sea. After receiving a medical screening, TICONDEROGA rendezvoused with Coast Guard Cutter Kingfisher and transferred all Cuban migrants.

TICONDEROGA, in conjunction with Colombian military authorities successfully located, tracked, and pursued a 'Go-Fast' on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2004. With use of surface and air interdiction tactics, TICONDEROGA quickly responded and effectively demonstrated exceptional tactical coordination in the boarding and eventual seizure of one Logistics Support Vessel (LSV). With careful scrutiny, LEDET 408 and TICONDEROGA Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) members meticulously combed the vessel and questioned the crew eventually leading to the discovery of approximately 5,808 pounds of cocaine and also the apprehension of seven crewmembers.

TICONDEROGA conducted a Right of Visit boarding of a suspect 'Go-Fast' vessel in the Eastern Pacific on May 9, 2004. The 'Go-Fast' visually spotted TICONDEROGA and immediately commenced evasive maneuvers. During the ensuing 2.5-hour chase, the 'Go-Fast' made sporadic course and speed changes and ignored all verbal and visual commands to stop. TICONDEROGA launched embarked helicopter, Jaguar 605, and the 'Go-Fast' began to jettison approximately 30 packages. Jaguar 605 marked the debris fields with sonobuoys and smoke floats, allowing TICONDEROGA to later pick-up the packages. The 'Go-Fast' finally surrendered and TICONDEROGA brought the detainees onboard. The vessel was scuttled with small arms fire and ships deck guns as a hazard to navigation. TICONDEROGA returned to the debris fields to recover contraband. Sixteen bales of cocaine were seized totaling 833 lbs.

