



# CASE STUDY: MIST—SEA SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

**TCOM'S SEA-BASED AEROSTAT SYSTEMS HELP THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD MONITOR AND DETER THE FLOW OF NARCOTICS AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS INTO THE SOUTHEAST REGION OF THE COUNTRY**



## THE CHALLENGE

One of the main duties of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) is to monitor and deter the illegal trafficking of drugs and aliens into the country. Along the southeastern shores of United States, the Gulf Coast and Caribbean Sea are particularly difficult regions to monitor due to the proximity with territorial waters of Cuba, Mexico, Honduras and Columbia. USCG required high-performance radar technology, and an elevated perspective in order to provide continuous, maritime surveillance to fulfill 90% on scene and operational requirements.

## THE SOLUTION

With the support of Florida Senator Paula Hawkins, the United States Coast Guard, under the Department of Transportation, turned to trusted partner TCOM for two sea-based aerostat platforms to assist in the surveillance and monitoring of the maritime domain. TCOM's sea-based aerostat systems were ideal for meeting the Coast Guard's needs, providing them with an effective and affordable system that delivered continuous, wide-area maritime surveillance and allowed for timely provisions of target information.

The Coast Guard established Mobile Interdiction and Surveillance Teams (MIST), which consisted of the Mobile Aerostat Platform (MAP) with a tethered 25M aerostat bearing an advanced radar payload. The first Coast Guard Mobile Aerostat Platform Detachment (MAPDET ONE) was commissioned on July 1985 and implemented in Key West, Florida. Flying at an altitude of 2,500 feet, the radar range of the surveillance teams was dramatically increased, improving the effectiveness of the USCG's surveillance efforts. Once the Coast Guard aboard the MAP detected a possible threat, the information was passed on to other patrolling cutters that could identify, intercept and engage the target if needed.

## THE RESULT

With the use of the MIST concept, the United States Coast Guard was able to better utilize its maritime assets and extend surveillance capabilities, enabling authorities to more accurately locate and interdict illegal activity. Based upon data collected by the MAPDETs aboard the MAPs, over a 30-day period, illegal maritime traffic dropped off significantly while a MIST was operating in the area. The early detection and direct communication affords the critical window of time to evaluate the situation, coordinate forces and engage, if necessary. The capabilities and implementation of TCOM's sea-based aerostat systems allowed the Coast Guard to effectively monitor and deter the illegal trafficking of drugs and aliens, ultimately keeping our nation safe and our borders more secure.

## QUICK FACTS:

- ▶ The United States Coast Guard (USCG) faced difficult challenge of deterring the flow of narcotics and illegal immigrants into the southeast region of the country
- ▶ USCG turned to trusted partner TCOM to provide two sea-based aerostat platforms
- ▶ USCG established Mobile Interdiction and Surveillance Teams (MIST), which consisted of the Mobile Aerostat Platform (MAP) and a tethered 25-meter aerostat
- ▶ With the use of the MIST concept, the Coast Guard was able to better utilize its maritime assets and extend its surveillance capabilities
- ▶ The USCG improved its ability to monitor both legal and illegal maritime traffic and combat illegal drug trafficking