

USCGC Oliver Henry returns to Guam after strengthening partnerships in Oceania during mission to combat illegal fishing in Pacific



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam](#)

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U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam – The crew of USCGC Oliver Henry (WPC 1140) returned to Guam on April 9, 2023, following a 30-day expeditionary patrol in support of the Pacific Islands Forum

Fisheries Agency's Operation 365 and Operation Rematau to stop illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the Pacific.

Among the significant elements of this expeditionary patrol:

- Patrolled 5,250 nautical miles over 30 days
- Dedicated 23 days on scene within exclusive economic zones of the partner nations of the Republic of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, with four days in the high seas pocket between FSM and Papua New Guinea, east of Palau, and one day within the high seas off the west side of Palau
- Completed nine boardings on foreign-flagged fishing vessels under the authority of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, with 12 potential violations discovered
- Completed five bilateral boardings on foreign-flagged fishing vessels under the authority of the embarked Palauan shiprider in Palau's domestic fishing zone; no violations discovered
- Executed four port visits in Yap, FSM, and Koror, Palau, exercising a hub and spoke model of operations with three of four port visits to Koror, allowing for increased time spent on the mission in the region rather than on transits to and from a patrol area
- Completed six shoreside engagements, including hosting 80 students from Palau schools, conducting a damage control subject matter exchange with the crew of the PSS Kedam, and visiting Satawal, FSM
- Completed one underway engagement, conducting a passenger exchange and joint sail with the crew of the FSM-based FSS Tosiwo Nakayama (P901)

"The return on investment for our partners and the nation through the use of the Fast Response Cutters and the U.S. Coast Guard in this region is undeniable, and we hear that demand signal loud and clear," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "We are continuing to adapt how we conduct these longer patrols, far from home, with a platform originally designed

for U.S. mainland near-coastal operations of a week to 10 days at sea. Basing out of a partner's port for multiple legs, rather than island hopping over a longer distance, gives us more time with fewer transit days in these harder-to-reach locations, more time spent building relationships in country, and better support and recovery for our crews."

A major highlight of the patrol was the engagement on the FSM island of Satawal. Home to about 500 inhabitants, the community hosted its first Pwo – Master Navigator Indoctrination Ceremony since 2007. The Oliver Henry crew, by invitation, held a dialogue and observed local customs with the Piailug family and other elders. A small team of the commanding officer, an engineer, an electronics technician, and a hospital corpsman joined local chiefs to discuss regional topics and challenges in such a remote and austere location.

In 1976, Pius Mau Piailug, a master navigator from Satawal, Yap State, Micronesia, navigated the famous traditional sailing canoe Hōkūle'a on its first voyage without navigation instruments in over 600 years on the ancestral Polynesian sea route from Hawai'i to Tahiti. Subsequently, he taught Hawaiians and other Polynesians the art of navigating guided only by the signs of land, stars, birds, and patterns of waves. He passed away in 2010. The Oliver Henry team spent time with his surviving family. The gathering included master navigators from Hawaii, Saipan, and FSM. Only a handful of master navigators are alive today.

In support of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's Operation 365 and Operation Rematau, which nests under the U.S. Coast Guard's Operation Blue Pacific, the crew patrolled through the seas off Palau, conducting bilateral shiprider boardings. They subsequently patrolled the high seas pocket south of the Federated States of Micronesia, discovering a dozen discrepancies and potential violations in the use of

vessel monitoring systems, required markings, exemption permits to transship fish, and logging of catch under the requirements set forth by the Western and Central Pacific Fishing Commission.

“It’s a good feeling for the boarding team to know we’re making an impact by documenting these potential violations and educating fishing crews on the requirements,” said Lt. Freddy Hofschneider, commanding officer of Oliver Henry. “On every vessel, the crews met us with respect, positive interest, and a desire to correct deficiencies. Several captains told us this was their first boarding by the U.S. Coast Guard.”

The crews of Oliver Henry and the Tosiwo Nakayama conducted a joint patrol near Yap State in support of Operation 365, part of the FFA’s ongoing regional monitoring control and surveillance operations to counter IUU fishing in the Pacific. OP365 requires the concerted and consistent effort of all 17 Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency member nations and the four members of the Pacific Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group countries, Australia, France, New Zealand, and the United States, to be successful.

“The crew enjoyed conducting a professional exchange, including navigation and seamanship training during a close-quarters formation steaming with our colleagues aboard the FSS Tosiwo Nakayama before they pulled into Yap,” said Hofschneider. “In Palau, we were glad to exchange best practices for damage control with our friends at the Division of Maritime Security ahead of their next underway period.”

In Palau, the Oliver Henry crew hosted over 80 students from Emmaus-Bethania High School and the Palau Community College for tours and demonstrations at the port. This visit followed presentations on the U.S. Coast Guard and IUU fishing by the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Compact of Free Association liaison officer and maritime advisor. The following day

members of the Oliver Henry engineering department worked through damage control drill administration and planning with personnel from the PSS Kedam. The Forces Micronesia team, joined by operations specialists from the Joint Rescue Sub-Center in Guam, subsequently conducted search and rescue training.

“U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia and our cutter crews are dedicated to serving our partners by providing valuable requested training and resources to meet their needs. The SAR training came at the request of Palau following a recent high-profile search and rescue case,” said Simmons. “Again, we appreciate the efforts of the U.S. embassies and our Australian Pacific Maritime Security Program partners to make these shared multilateral operations possible to increase regional security and prosperity.”

Operation Rematau is how U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam supports the overarching Coast Guard endeavor Operation Blue Pacific to promote security, safety, sovereignty, and economic prosperity in Oceania. Rematau means people of the deep sea, and the effort reaffirms the position shared by the Pacific Island Forum leaders that securing the future requires long-term vision and a carefully considered regional strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. The operation reinforces the U.S. commitment to working together to advance Pacific regionalism based on the Blue Pacific narrative. It supports U.S. national security objectives while bolstering maritime governance and security.

The Oliver Henry is the 40th 154-foot Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter named for Oliver T. Henry, Jr., an enlisted African American Coast Guard member first to break the color barrier of a then-segregated Service.

It homeports in Guam, working with U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, which comprises nearly 300 personnel

to provide a significant portion of the U.S. Coast Guard's enduring regional presence in Oceania.

For more U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam news, visit us on [DVIDS](#) or [subscribe](#)! You can also visit us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) at @USCGForcesMicronesia or [Twitter](#) @USCGFMSG.

Navy to Christen Future U.S. Navy Ship Cleveland

Release from the Department of Defense

The Navy will christen and launch the newest Freedom-variant Littoral Combat Ship, the future USS Cleveland (LCS 31), during a 10:00 a.m. CDT ceremony on Saturday, April 15, in Marinette, Wisconsin. This event marks the last planned side-launch of a ship at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine, Marinette, Wisconsin Shipyard. Follow-on ships are planned to be launched using a shiplift system.

The principal speaker Mr. Andrew Haeuptle, director of Navy staff, will deliver the ceremonial principal address. Remarks will also be provided by Rear Adm. Thomas Anderson, program executive officer, ships; Mr. Austin Davis, senior policy advisor, City of Cleveland, Ohio; Mr. Steve Allen, vice president, small combatants and ship systems, Lockheed Martin Integrated Warfare Systems and Sensors; and Mr. Mark Vandroff, chief executive officer, Fincantieri Marinette Marine. Mrs. Robyn Modly, wife of former Acting Secretary of the Navy and Cleveland native, the Honorable Thomas B. Modly, will break a

bottle of sparkling wine across the bow to symbolically christen the ship.

"This christening is a significant milestone for the future USS Cleveland, the ship's sponsor Mrs. Robyn Modly, and the prospective crew," said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. "LCS 31 will be another step closer to joining our fleet, sailing the open seas, continuing to defend our nation, and representing the strong connection our Navy has with the city of Cleveland."

Cleveland is the 16th and final Freedom-variant LCS and the fourth ship to be named in honor of the city of Cleveland, Ohio. Previous USS Cleveland's were the World War I cruiser (C 19), the World War II light cruiser (CL 55), and the Vietnam-era amphibious transport dock (LPD 7), decommissioned in 2011.

The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) class are fast, optimally-manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats. LCSs integrate with joint, combined, manned, and unmanned teams to support forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence missions around the globe.

The LCS class consists of two variants, Freedom and Independence, designed and built by two separate industry teams. The Freedom variant team is led by Lockheed Martin (for the odd-numbered hulls, e.g. LCS 1). It is a steel monohull design constructed by Lockheed Martin in the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Corporation's shipyard in Marinette, Wisconsin.

Media may direct queries to the Navy Office of Information at (703) 697-5342. More information on the Littoral Combat Ship Program can be found at: <https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Fact-Files/Display-FactFile>

CNO Gilday and Connecticut Congressman Visit General Dynamics Electric Boat



April 13, 2022

From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

GROTON, Conn. – Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday traveled to Groton, Connecticut, April 13, and visited General Dynamics Electric Boat with Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.).

During the visit, they met with Electric Boat leadership,

received program briefs, and toured shipyard facilities.

“We’re working side by side with Congress and industry to build the most ready and lethal fleet we can,” said Gilday. “Today’s visit is an important opportunity to see the progress and improvements being made by our industry partners in New England.”

Upon arrival, Gilday and Courtney were met by Mr. Kevin Graney, president of General Dynamics Electric Boat. Throughout the afternoon, the leaders discussed shipbuilding, talent management and workforce development, capacity, and capabilities.

General Dynamics Electric Boat designs, builds, repairs, and modernizes nuclear submarines for the Navy—to include work on the Navy’s new Columbia-class. These new ballistic missile submarines will replace the Ohio-class variant as the Navy’s contribution to the nuclear triad, which remains the most survivable leg of the U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent force.

“Whenever we talk about ‘the Arsenal of Democracy,’ our defense industrial base needs to be the centerpiece of that discussion,” said Gilday. “The work being done here in Connecticut is vitally important to our Navy, and I’m incredibly appreciative of the team’s collaborative efforts.”

Gilday last visited Groton in February 2022.

SECNAV Unveils Concepts for

Planned Navy Museum



Release from Navy History and Heritage Command

14 April 2023

From NHHC Public Affairs

WASHINGTON NAVY YARD - Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro unveiled conceptual renderings from five architecture firms at the National Museum of the U.S. Navy, finalizing the Navy's Artistic Ideas competition, an effort to explore the possibilities for the planned Navy museum.

Following the SECNAV's October announcement of the preferred location for the Navy's planned museum, Naval History and Heritage Command moved forward with its conceptual development phase and initiated the ideas competition in an effort to explore the full realm of artistic ideas that might be

incorporated into a new museum.

The competition sought concepts and ideas for the planned project from a broad range of individuals and architecture firms. Following the initial announcement in December, 80 firms expressed interest in participating; 37 firms then submitted qualifications, and finally, the Navy selected five architecture firms as finalists: Bjarke Ingels Group, DLR Group, Frank Gehry Partners, Perkins & Will and Quinn Evans.

Since January, the firms developed their unique submissions of conceptual ideas to include a museum entrance, an atrium, a ceremonial courtyard, and the incorporation of some of the Navy's larger artifacts, like a Corsair aircraft, a Swift Boat, and the sail of a submarine.

"We are pleased to display five visions for the future of the National Museum of the U.S. Navy," said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, "while each concept is different, all of them show how we might celebrate our Navy's accomplishments, honor our veterans and point the way toward the Navy's future."

The Navy envisions a future museum that would offer greater public access that could include a new building and the potential renovation of existing historical buildings. The planned museum campus would consist of approximately 270,000 square feet and include about 100,000 square feet of net gallery space.

"The concepts unveiled today are a crucial step in exploring what is possible for the new National Museum of the U.S. Navy," said NHHC Director Samuel J. Cox, U.S. Navy rear admiral (retired). "We'll tell the story of the Navy's history as it continues to unfold, and the ideas developed by our finalists herald a new way of honoring that history by inviting visitors to participate."

“These concepts mark an important step in the museum building process,” according to Charles Swift, Acting Director of the Museum of the United States Navy, who oversaw the competition.

“These ideas and concepts show what might be possible for a new museum,” said Swift. “We have a number of steps we need to complete before determining a final design, and that first step is having a conversation with America: our Navy, our veterans and our nation, about what we’ve presented today.”

The firms’ concepts are available here: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/news-photos/nmusn-concepts/nmusn-concepts.html>.

The final canvases from the competition will remain on display for public viewing at the Navy’s National Museum on the Washington Navy Yard. Access hours are limited because of museum’s consolidation. Visit <http://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn.html> for hours and access guidance. NHHC plans additional public showcases this summer.

Anyone wishing to share ideas or to comment on these Navy museum concepts can find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NMUSN>

or email: NHHC_NMUSNMuseumNews@us.navy.mil

NHHC, located at the Washington Navy Yard, is responsible for preserving, analyzing, and disseminating U.S. naval history and heritage. It provides the knowledge foundation for the Navy by maintaining historically relevant resources and products that reflect the Navy’s unique and enduring contributions through our nation’s history and supports the

fleet by assisting with and delivering professional research, analysis, and interpretive services. NHHHC comprises many activities, including the Navy Department Library, the Navy Operational Archives, the Navy art and artifact collections, underwater archeology, Navy histories, 10 museums, USS Constitution repair facility, and the historic ship Nautilus.

Coast Guard Cutter Waesche returns home following counternarcotics patrol; \$166M in contraband seized



Release from Coast Guard Pacific Area

Coast Guard Cutter Waesche returns home following counternarcotics patrol; \$166M in contraband seized

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) and crew returned to their Alameda homeport, Friday, following a 90-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

The 418-foot national security cutter and crew patrolled more than 15,000 nautical miles conducting law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations in international waters off Central America and South America.

During nighttime patrol operations, Waesche personnel were notified by a Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) and aircrew of a suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel transiting international waters. Waesche's personnel launched the cutter's small boat crews and boarding teams, who interdicted the vessel after a multi-hour pursuit. The interdiction resulted in the seizure of approximately 400 pounds of cocaine and 5,000 pounds of marijuana.

Waesche later received a separate report from an MPA aircrew of another suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel transiting international waters. Waesche directed the launch of the deployed Jacksonville, Florida, based Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) aircrew and MH-65 Dolphin helicopter to interdict the vessel. The seizure resulted in an additional estimated 400 pounds of cocaine and 4,500 pounds of marijuana.

"Counternarcotics is one of the Coast Guard's most tactically demanding missions, requiring the integration of multiple Coast Guard units, federal agencies and partner nations," said Capt. Robert S. Mohr, Waesche's commanding officer. "The crew's tenacity throughout the patrol and focus seizing drugs from suspected smugglers in international waters off the coast

of Central America is a testament to this crew's resiliency. They embody the best the Coast Guard has to offer with their determination and teamwork."

The Waesche deployed with the HITRON aircrew, the Coast Guard's Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team Detachment 108, and a civilian team responsible for operating the cutter's ScanEagle, an advanced unmanned aircraft system.

Additionally, the crew of the Waesche completed joint exercises with the Mexican Navy during the patrol. Waesche conducted formation operations with ARM Jalisco, a 280-foot Oaxaca-class offshore patrol vessel, executing maneuvers in close-quarters range to strengthen partner-nation relationships, interoperability, and operational proficiency between the sea services.

As part of the Coast Guard's living marine resources protection mission, Waesche's crew rescued an entangled sea turtle stuck in discarded fishing line. The crew cut the fishing line and released the turtle back to the ocean.

Waesche's crew offloaded approximately 6,325 pounds of cocaine and more than 13,220 pounds of marijuana worth a combined estimated wholesale total of more than \$166 million in San Diego. In addition to Waesche's two interdictions, they offloaded contraband interdicted by the Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast's (WMEC 623) crew who were responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 3,300 pounds of cocaine and the Coast Guard Cutter Active's (WMEC 618) crew who were responsible for two interdictions seizing approximately 2,116 pounds of cocaine and 3,716 pounds of marijuana.

The Waesche is one of four Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda, California. National security cutters are capable of operating in the most demanding open ocean environments, including the hazardous fisheries of the North Pacific and the vast approaches of the Southern Pacific

where a large amount of narcotics traffic occurs. With robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, stern boat launch and aviation facilities, as well as long-endurance station keeping, the national security cutters are afloat operational-level headquarters for complex law enforcement and national security missions involving multiple Coast Guard and partner agency participation.

Marine Corps to Activate Second F-35C Squadron



Caption: PHILIPPINE SEA (April 19, 2022) An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72),

April 19, 2022. VMFA-314 will be joined this month by VMFA-311, being re-activated to be the Marine Corps' second F-35C squadron. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes)

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Marine Corps is scheduled to activate its second F-35C Lightning II strike fighter squadron at the end of the week, Headquarters Marine Corps announced in a media announcement.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 311 (VMFA-311) will be re-activated from its former Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMA-311) identity in ceremonies on Friday, April 14, 2023, at [Marine Corps Air Station \(MCAS\) Miramar](#), California. The squadron will become the second operational Marine Corps squadron to operate the carrier-based F-35C version. VMFA-314, also based at Miramar, was the first, and has completed one deployment with the F-35C, on board USS Abraham Lincoln.

VMA-311 was an AV-8B Harrier II squadron that was deactivated in October 2020. It was based at MCAS Yuma, Arizona. It had operated the AV-8 since 1988.

VMA-311 was established on December 1, 1942, as Marine Fighter Squadron 311 (VMF-311) and deployed to the Pacific Theater in April 1943, equipped with F4U-1 Corsair fighters. The squadron eventually operated from Okinawa in March 1945 and conducted dive bombing and combat air patrol missions.

The squadron became the Marine Corps' first operational jet squadron in 1948, operating F9F Panther fighters, and during the Korean War flew the Corps' first jet combat mission. After the war, the squadron upgraded to the F9F-8 Cougar. The squadron was re-designated VMA-311 on June 1, 1957, and by 1958 was operating the A4D Skyhawk.

The squadron flew its A-4s in combat in the Vietnam War from April 1965 through January 1973.

After transition to the AV-8B, VMA-311 deployed to Saudi Arabia, and, in Operation Desert Storm, became the first squadron to fly the Harrier II in combat. In November 2001, the squadron also became the first Harrier squadron to fly in combat during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The squadron also flew combat missions in Iraq beginning in March 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lt. Col. Michael P. Fisher will be the first commanding officer of VMFA-311.

Business, state consortium kicks off BAE Systems' \$200 million ship repair facility upgrade in Jacksonville



[Release from BAE Systems](#)

Upgraded facility will support the repair of Mayport-based Navy ships and commercial vessels that call upon the Port of Jacksonville starting in 2025

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – April 12, 2023 – BAE Systems officially began construction of a modern Pearlson Shiplift and land-level repair complex at the company's Jacksonville, Florida shipyard with a groundbreaking ceremony yesterday. The company first revealed its plans to build the \$200 million complex in December 2022.

"As the chair of Space Florida's board of directors, I congratulate BAE Systems upon its groundbreaking ceremony," said Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez. "This critical investment will facilitate improved capacity to service U.S. military vessels and bring high wage jobs to Florida's First Coast. I look forward to seeing the impact the Jacksonville Ship Repair expansion project will have on our maritime capabilities."

Attending the groundbreaking ceremony were U.S. Representative Aaron Bean (R-Fla.), Pearlson's President and Chief Operating Officer Kelly Pearlson Fraind, and BAE Systems Platforms & Services President Jeremy Tondreault.

"BAE Systems Ship Repair is an economic engine of Florida's seacoast region, and since 1964, has brought great pride to our state by strengthening our role in national defense," said Rep. Bean. "The modern ship lift and land level repair facility will improve production efficiency, overall reliability and expand ship capacity to counter China's growing naval ambitions. In Congress, I will support Jacksonville's maritime industrial base to solidify our legacy as the most formidable naval force in the world for future generations."

The BAE Systems shipyard modernization project involves Pearlson Shiplift Corporation, Foth Engineering, and Kiewit Infrastructure South Co., in major construction roles. Foth along with Pearlson Shiplift are responsible for the overall facility design, construction management and engineering, and key equipment supply. Kiewit will serve as general contractor for the project. When complete in 2025, the new complex will expand the BAE Systems shipyard's docking capacity by 300 percent. The construction and operation of the repair facility is expected to generate approximately 1,000 new jobs.

The complex will feature a new state-of-the-art shiplift system built by Pearlson Shiplift Corporation. The lift's 492-foot by 110-foot articulated platform can easily accommodate a Flight III U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer or a commercial vessel displacing about 25,000 tons.

"Pearlson's team worked with BAE Systems personnel on the ground in Jacksonville to deliver a comprehensive, detailed design that meets the shipyard's needs and delivers unparalleled capability," said Fraind. "The new Pearlson Shiplift System and land level facility for BAE Systems Jacksonville Ship Repair, when commissioned, will be the largest in both North and South America and the most modern shiplift facility in the world."

Once out of the water, dry-docked ships will be moved from the shiplift platform to one of several repair berths inside the shipyard by a series of self-propelled modular transporters and a Pearlson designed cradle system. The land-level repair area in the shipyard will provide electrical, sewage, and water services to docked ships, as well as storm water containment. These services will permit repair work to occur onboard several ships simultaneously without encumbering the shiplift platform or other work in the shipyard.

In addition to supporting the Navy's surface fleet at Naval Station Mayport, BAE Systems expects to expand its offerings

within the commercial ship repair market. The port of Jacksonville is the 14th largest container port in the United States. Numerous workboats (e.g., tugs, barges, etc.) and commercial vessels operate in or pass through the port.

“The shiplift project is a significant investment by BAE Systems in the Jacksonville port, and we look forward to building this new complex to expand our shipyard’s capacity to meet commercial and government ship repair needs,” said Tondreault. “We also appreciate the support and contributions of the state and local leaders, and all of our partners, who helped to make this a reality.”

Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star returns home by Easter after 144-day Operation Deep Freeze 2023 mission



[Release from Coast Guard Pacific Area](#)

Editor's Note: Click [here](#) to view the U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area Polar Operations imagery page

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew returned to its homeport of Seattle, Saturday, following a 144-day deployment to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2023.

This deployment marks the Polar Star's 26th journey to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze, an annual joint military service mission to resupply the United States Antarctic stations, in support of the National Science Foundation (NSF) – the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP). This year also marks the 63rd iteration of the annual operation.

The Polar Star crew [departed Seattle](#) bound for Antarctica on

Nov. 14, 2022, traveling more than 25,000 miles through the North Pacific, South Pacific, Indian, Southern, and South Atlantic Oceans, including stops in four continents.

While en route to Antarctica, the Polar Star made two logistical stops in Australia in Chowder Bay, Sydney and Hobart. In Hobart, the cutter and crew hosted a reception on the cutter for guests from the Australian Antarctic Division, Australian Border Force, Tasmanian government representatives, and [local industry partners](#).

After arriving in Antarctica, the cutter broke a 15.3-mile channel through fast ice and conducted over 1,600 hours of ice breaking operations to create a navigable route for cargo vessels to reach McMurdo Station. The Polar Star and crew executed more than 60 hours of ice escorts for cargo vessels through difficult pack ice conditions. The cutter departed the Antarctic region on March 2, after 67 days of operations in support of [Operation Deep Freeze 2023](#).

On the return journey, the Polar Star crossed Drake Passage, rounded Cape Horn and transited the Strait of Magellan followed by stops in Punta Arenas and Valparaiso, Chile. The Polar Star's stop in [Valparaiso](#) consisted of a multi-day visit where the crew conducted professional exchanges with Chilean Navy and First Naval Zone members, as well as students from the Chilean-U.S. Binational Center.

"The completion of this mission is a testament to our crew's hard work, sacrifice and dedication," said Capt. Keith Ropella, Polar Star's commanding officer. "While this trip was incredibly rewarding and a once-in-a-lifetime experience, we are glad to be home and reunited with our friends and families again."

Operation Deep Freeze is the annual logistical support mission provided by the Department of Defense to the NSF managed by the USAP. This includes coordination of strategic intertheater

airlift, tactical intertheater airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation support, search and rescue response, sealift, seaport access, bulk fuel supply, port cargo handling, and transportation requirements supporting the NSF. This is a unique mission demonstrating U.S. commitment to the Antarctic Treaty and to research programs conducted for the betterment of all humanity. The Polar Star and crew contribute to this yearly effort through icebreaking to clear the channel for supply vessels.

The Polar Star will proceed to Vallejo, California, in May for Phase III of its five-year Service Life Extension Project (SLEP). SLEP was awarded to Mare Island Dry Dock LLC to recapitalize targeted systems such as the propulsion, communication and machinery control systems and conduct major maintenance to extend the cutter's service life by four years. By replacing obsolete, unsupportable or maintenance-intensive equipment, the Coast Guard will mitigate the risk of lost operational days due to unplanned maintenance or system failures. Each phase is coordinated so that operational commitments, such as Operation Deep Freeze missions in Antarctica will still be met.

The Polar Star is the United States' only asset capable of providing access to both Polar Regions. It is a 399-foot heavy polar icebreaker commissioned in 1976, weighing 13,500 tons and is 84-feet wide with a 34-foot draft. The six diesel and three gas turbine engines produce up to 75,000 horsepower.

US Navy awards BOLLINGER

SHIPYARDS contract to build sixth berthing barge



Caption: Berthing Barge APL 69 was one of five APL 67-class barges built by VT Halter Marine, acquired last year by Bollinger Shipyards, which will build the sixth of the class. (U.S. Navy photo)

[Release from Bollinger Shipyards](#)

LOCKPORT, La., – (April 11, 2023) – Bollinger Shipyards (“Bollinger”) today announced that the U.S. Navy has awarded the Lockport-based shipbuilder the detailed design and construction contract for the sixth Auxiliary Personnel Lighter–Small (APL(S)) 67 Class berthing and messing barge. Construction will take place at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi and is anticipated to begin in the second quarter of 2023.

“We are honored to be entrusted by the U.S. Navy to build the sixth APL berthing barge,” said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. “This contract is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team at Bollinger, and our commitment to delivering high-quality, reliable vessels that meet the Navy’s rigorous standards. We look forward to continuing to grow our partnership with the Navy and delivering this critical asset to support our national defense.”

The previous five APLs were built by VT Halter Marine, which Bollinger acquired in late 2022. Halter received the initial contract in 2018. APLs are used by the Navy to house crewmembers when ships are in port for availabilities and Inter-Deployment Training Cycles. The barges are mobile and can be towed to new bases or shipyards to support changing fleet requirements and also offer potential use for humanitarian missions and other temporary assignments.

APLs are 269 feet long, 69 feet wide and have a draft of 7 feet. Each vessel is equipped with offices, classrooms, washrooms, laundry facilities, medical treatment areas, a barber shop and fitness center. With mess seating for 224 enlisted personnel and 28 officers, each meal is served via five 20-minute shifts to allow food service for 1,130 personnel (three meals per day). The vessels are fitted with mixed gender berthing spaces for 74 officers and 537 enlisted personnel, for a total of 611 people.

Rite-Solutions Receives Next-Generation Attack Submarine Navy Contract



[Release from Rite-Solutions](#)

Middletown, RI (April 10, 2023) – Rite-Solutions has been awarded a new contract by the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWCDIVNPT) with a potential value of \$850,000 over the next two years.

The company will support the development, configuration, and delivery of a user-friendly interface software called the SSN(X) Sail Model Tool. The tool will enable sailors to evaluate current and future submarine sensors and antennas. The tool will allow proper assessment of the impacts of various submarine sail configurations with respect to overall

submarine capability and vulnerability.

Laura Deady, Rite-Solutions Sr. Vice President says, "Rite-Solutions is grateful for the opportunity to support NUWC Code 34 in developing the SSN(X) Sail Model Tool. Rite's greatest asset is the expertise of our workforce, which allows proficiency in our technical capabilities."

The contract will be performed in Newport, RI and areas where the Navy has indicated a significant need.

"We are proud to be part of the next generation of attack submarines for the Navy," adds Dennis McLaughlin, Rite-Solutions President, and CEO. "It's an honor to be recognized as an innovative company and to be invited to work on cutting-edge technology that will help keep our Navy #1 in the world for decades to come."