

Coast Guard Has No Personnel Retention Problem, But Recruiting Is Another Story



USCGC Richard Snyder (WPC 1127) navigates in the Labrador Sea on Aug. 13, 2021. Snyder worked alongside USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907), the Royal Canadian Navy's HMCS Harry Dewolf (A0PV 430), and HMCS Goose Bay (MM 707) in Operation Nanook to enhance collective abilities to respond to safety and security issues in the High North through air and maritime presence activities, maritime domain defense, and security exercises. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by USCGC Richard Snyder)

ARLINGTON, Va. – Retaining veteran personnel is not a problem for the U.S. Coast Guard says Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan, but recruiting the right people who want to go to sea remains “a challenge.”

From patrolling the Arctic, conducting counter-narcotics trafficking operations in the Caribbean Basin, helping vulnerable nations across Oceania protect their resources from illegal, [unreported and unregulated \(IUU\) fishing](#), to joining U.S. Navy ships in freedom of [navigation transits through the Taiwan Strait](#), “We have never been in greater demand around the world,” Fagan said.

However, the Coast Guard, like the [other armed services](#) and employers across the nation, “is facing the challenge of recruiting,” Fagan told attendees at the [Surface Navy Association’s annual national symposium](#) Jan. 11.

New USCG Recruiting Programs

The Coast Guard has several pilot programs to address the recruiting challenge, including one that would allow lateral entry for civilians with key skills, like culinary specialists and certified EMTs, to move more quickly into their chosen service job after basic training.

The Coast Guard’s first female commandant, Fagan said her number one priority is managing talent to keep a workforce “trained, ready and relevant for the work ahead.” The problem, she said, is getting young people to see the opportunity that service brings.

“We’re a sea-going service, and having a workforce that’s excited to go to sea on the state-of-the-art ships that we’re building is a priority,” Fagan said. The Coast Guard has set up sea duty readiness council to lead efforts to mitigate the challenges that go along with serving at sea.

That includes being responsive to the expectations of the generation that the Coast Guard wants to recruit, such as reliable internet service. To that end, the Coast Guard has made antenna upgrades and increased spending on satellite reception and bandwidth.

“Improved connectivity helps people stay in touch with their friends and family and eliminates some of the arduousness of sea duty,” Fagan said.

While the Coast Guard has used incentive pay and signing bonuses to encourage old hands to stay and new ones to join, “I don’t think we can buy our way out of this,” Fagan said. “If you get the system right, the structure, the conditions of employment, that bonus becomes just a cherry on top. You’ve already sold them on the work and the values.”

Marine Corps Replacing Fixed-Wing Small UAS with VTOL Types



ARLINGTON, Va. – The Marine Corps is divesting some types of its short-range, short-endurance small unmanned aerial systems (SUAS) in favor of vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) SUAS.

The Corps has retired its fixed-wing RQ-11B Raven and RQ-12A Wasp IV SUAS in favor of VTOL SUAS that are easier to launch and recover and can provide a hover-and-stare surveillance capability. They are being replaced by VTOL SUAS such as the SkyDio X2D (built by SkyDio), and the R80 SkyRaider (built by FLIR Systems).

“The Marine Corps’ future operating concepts emphasize the need for agile, distributed operations which require small UAS to be organically owned and operated by tactical units for situational awareness, force protection, target engagement, persistent command, control, communications, and electronic warfare,” said Maj. Joshua C. Benson, director of Communication Strategy & Operations for Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration, in response to a query

from Seapower. “These systems equip small unit commanders with these capabilities at the lowest tactical echelons, and the transition to Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) capability enables maneuver units to operate in challenging terrain and austere operational environments, as the systems do not rely on traditional launch and recovery space.”

A Necessary Innovation

Benson said the Corps is procuring the SkyDio X2D as the squad/platoon electro-optical/infrared/full motion video (FMV) sensor. The R80D SkyRaider is being procured to “provide company-level FMV and selectable payload usage for the Ground Combat Element.”

He said the evolution to VTOL SUAS from the successful RQ-11 and RQ-12 is a necessary innovation.

“Rapid technological advancement of uncrewed aerial systems necessitates an iterative approach to research, development, procurement, implementation, and re-evaluation of system capabilities,” he said. “This adaptive approach enables the service to transition to cutting-edge capabilities as industry and academia advance at the speed of innovation. Divestment of legacy systems and incorporation of new technologies is necessary to ensure our warfighters are equipped with the most capable systems and technology, in order to maintain pace with our peer and near peer adversaries.”

The Corps also operates other VTOL SUAS, including the Skyranger (FLIR Systems/Aeryon Labs); Indago 3 (Lockheed Martin); Instant Eye (Physical Sciences Inc.); PD-100 Black Hornet (FLIR Systems); and Scout (MITRE Corp.).

USCGC Spencer Completes Multinational Maritime Security Patrol off West Africa



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard](#)

DAKAR, Senegal – The Famous-class medium-endurance USCGC Spencer (WMEC 905) arrived in Dakar, Senegal for a scheduled port visit following a multinational maritime security patrol, Jan. 17, 2023, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet said in a Jan. 19 release.

Spencer's visit to Dakar included meetings with Capt. Karim Mara, Senegalese deputy chief of naval staff, as well as leaders from the Senegalese Navy and the U.S. Office of Security Cooperation. Prior to the port visit, Spencer embarked maritime counterparts from Cabo Verde, Senegal, and The Gambia for a security patrol to identify and deter illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as build living marine resource enforcement capacity with African partner nations.

"We were able to build maritime domain awareness with our partners by establishing an offshore law enforcement presence that demonstrated Cabo Verde's, Senegal's, and The Gambia's commitment to maritime security and living marine resource enforcement. We did this by conducting combined maritime law enforcement operations and effectively communicating and coordinating with each country's Maritime Operations Center," said Cmdr. Corey Kerns, Spencer's commanding officer.

This deployment demonstrates NAVAFA's [U.S. Naval Forces Africa's] and the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment and longstanding partnership to work with our African partners to counter illicit maritime activity in the Atlantic Ocean. The U.S. Coast Guard regularly integrates and operates within the NAVAFA area of operations. The U.S. Coast Guard's authorities and capabilities provide the Joint Force with unique tools that bridge the cooperation-to-conflict continuum.

Senegal and the United States share a proud history of promoting peace and security in Africa. Later this month, Senegal will participate in the NAVAFA-led exercise Obangame Express 2023, the largest annual maritime security exercise in Western Africa. These types of exercises strengthen partnerships and allow countries to work more closely on shared transnational maritime challenges.

"The United States and Senegal enjoy an exceptional security partnership that bolsters our shared efforts to promote peace

and security in West Africa, combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and protect marine resources,” said Mike Raynor, U.S. Ambassador to Senegal. “The arrival of USCGC Spencer to Dakar reflects that robust partnership.”

The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety, and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa’s prosperity and access to global markets.

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, headquartered in Portsmouth, Virginia, oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains.

Coast Guard, Partners Tracking Russian Vessel off Hawaiian Coast



In recent weeks, the U.S. Coast Guard has continued to monitor

a Russian vessel, believed to be an intelligence gathering ship, off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands. The Coast Guard continues to coordinate with Department of Defense partners, providing updates to foreign vessel movements and activities and to appropriately meet presence with presence to encourage international maritime norms. Source: [dvidshub](#)

[Release from U.S. Coast Guard](#)

HONOLULU – In recent weeks, the U.S. Coast Guard has continued to monitor a Russian vessel, believed to be an intelligence gathering ship, off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a release.

While foreign military vessels may transit freely through the U.S. economic exclusive zone (EEZ), as per customary international laws, foreign-flagged military vessels have often been observed operating and loitering within Coast Guard District Fourteen's area of response.

The Coast Guard continues to coordinate with Department of Defense partners, providing updates to foreign vessel movements and activities and to appropriately meet presence with presence to encourage international maritime norms.

"The U.S. Coast Guard is currently monitoring the Russian vessel operating in the vicinity of Hawaii," said Cmdr. Dave Milne, chief of External Affairs. "As part of our daily operations, we track all vessels in the Pacific area through surface and air assets and joint agency capabilities. The Coast Guard operates in accordance with international laws of the sea to ensure all nations can do the same without fear or contest. This is especially critical to secure freedom of movement and navigation throughout the Blue Pacific."

As a part of the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard is the lead federal agency for at-sea enforcement of

U.S. fisheries laws; additionally, the Coast Guard assists in the enforcement of laws on the high seas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States' exclusive economic zone. Law and treaty enforcement account for approximately 1/3 of the Coast Guard's annual budget.

USCGC Decisive Returns Home from Final Patrol



The Reliance-class medium endurance cutter USCGC Decisive (WMEC 629) conduct at sea engagements with the navy of Guatemala in the territorial seas of Guatemala on Oct. 25 – 26, 2021. The U.S. Coast Guard conducts routine deployments in the Southern Command area of responsibility, works alongside partners, builds maritime domain awareness, and shares best practices with partner nation navies and coast guards. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

[Release from U.S. Coast Guard](#)

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of the USCGC Decisive (WMEC 629) returned to their homeport in Pensacola, Jan. 13, following a 33-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, concluding 55 years of service to the Nation, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Jan. 18 release.

Decisive patrolled the Eastern Pacific Ocean in the Coast Guard Eleventh District's area of operations. While underway, the Decisive's crew supported the Coast Guard's drug interdiction and search and rescue missions to promote safety of life at sea and deter the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States.

While deployed, Decisive's crew collaborated with Coast Guard assets and foreign military aircraft to detect, deter, and interdict illegal narcotics voyages. At one point, Decisive disrupted two vessels suspected of drug trafficking in the same night. Decisive also collaborated with the USCGC Alert (WMEC 630) to safely transfer three suspected smugglers. While aboard Decisive, the detainees received food, water, shelter and medical attention.

"The crew's remarkable professionalism, competence and determination were on full display as we met the diverse challenges of operations at sea," said Cmdr. Aaron Delano-Johnson, commanding officer of Decisive. "Whether it was conducting simultaneous boardings or our skilled engineers conducting voyage repairs in Panama, the crew exceeded expectations at every turn. After a successful, final patrol for Decisive, we are looking forward to returning home to our family and friends on shore."

During the patrol, Decisive traveled more than 6,000 miles and traversed through the Panama Canal. By transiting the historic waterway, Decisive's crew earned their Order of the Ditch certificates, a time-honored nautical tradition recognizing

mariners who have crossed the Panama Canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Decisive is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter with a crew of 72. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Chaplain Admiral: Navy Growing Chaplain Force by 90 to Staff Destroyers



PEARL HARBOR (July 7, 2022) U.S. Navy Chief of Chaplains, Rear Adm. Gregory Todd speaks to partner-nation members during the

International Chaplaincy Symposium at Joint Base Pearl Harbor as part of Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2022. Twenty-six nations, 38 ships, four submarines, more than 170 aircraft and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC from June 29 to Aug. 4 in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships among participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. RIMPAC 2022 is the 28th exercise in the series that began in 1971. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Royal Australian Navy LSIS Kylie Jagiello)

ARLINGTON, Va. –The U.S. Navy's chief of chaplains said the service expects to increase the number of serving chaplains by 90 over the next five years in order to provide chaplains to the guided-missile destroyer (DDG) fleet as those ships deploy.

Two years ago the commander, Naval Surface Forces, requested that the Navy provide chaplains to DDGs. Previously, sea-going billets for chaplains were typically limited to ships – such as aircraft carriers and amphibious warfare ships – that had large crews.

Rear Adm. Gregory N. Todd, chief of chaplains, speaking in an online conversation with retired Rear Adm. Frank Thorp IV, President and CEO of the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington as one of the memorial's SITREP Speaker Series events, said the program to assign chaplains to deploying DDGs is in place and is showing good results.

“The data that is coming as a result of that is a reduction in a lot of the bad behavior–NJP [non-judicial punishment, low morale issues, retention issues,” Todd said. “It's apparent that the chaplains on board are change agents. Can we pinpoint exactly how that change happens? Not yet. But we do know that there is some sort of concurrent effect of attending to

people's spirituality or spiritual readiness within that [DDG's] command, creating a venue where it's okay and then its resultant impact on some of their negative behaviors."

First Increase in Chaplains Since Cold War

Todd oversees a force of about 1,100 chaplains – active and reserve – plus enlisted religion affairs specialists that provide service to 570,000 Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen and their families.

The increase in the number of chaplains is the first time the force has grown since the end of the Cold War, Todd said.

"The Navy is hiring, and I'm trying to beat the bushes to the religious organizations of America," the admiral said. "Send us your best. It's a great opportunity; it's a great place to work.

"If I were to hold up what's unique about this ministry, it's the interaction with 18-to-25-year-olds," he said. "We're just immersed in a world of leadership. ... It's operating in the public square, not confined to the church on the corner. Here we are, interacting with the whole Navy trying to impact the institution for the better."

Todd said the Coast Guard "has put us on notice that they intend to ask for more [chaplains], and the Marine Corps as well is looking at the question of adding more chaplains. So, right now, there is a realization that spiritual readiness does have an impact on the operational forces. If you attend to individual readiness in the aggregate, you'll also build the readiness of the unit and the team."

Earlier in his career, Todd served as Chaplain of the Coast Guard and Chaplain of the Marine Corps.

Marine Corps Adds KC-130J Squadron to Support Marine Littoral Regiment



A U.S. Marine Corps KC-130J aircraft assigned to Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 153 prepares to land on Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Jan. 6, 2023. Jan. 6, 2023. VMGR-153 will formally activate as a KC-130 squadron of Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, on Jan. 13, 2023. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Chandler Stacy)

ARLINGTON, Va. — A new Marine Corps squadron has been activated in Hawaii to enhance mobility of the Corps' first

Marine littoral regiment. Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squadron 153 (VMGR-153) was activated at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, in a Jan. 13 ceremony. The squadron is equipped with Lockheed Martin KC-130J Super Hercules tanker/transport aircraft.

The activation of VMGR-153 is one enactment of Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David H. Berger's Force Design 2030 concept, which is re-aligning the Corps to conduct expeditionary advance base operations inside an adversary's weapon engagement zone. The Corps is activating three self-deployable, multi-domain Marine littoral regiments (MLRs) to conduct such operations, the first of which – the 3rd MLR – was activated last March. The 12th MLR will be activated this year in Okinawa, Japan.

VMGR-153 brings to four the number of active-component VMGR squadrons in the Corps, three of which – including the new squadron – are positioned to support Marine Forces Pacific, the other two being VMGR-152, based at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, and VMGR-352, based at MCAS Miramar, California. The fourth squadron, VMGR-252, is based at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina.

Until last month, the Marine Corps Reserve also fielded two KC-130J squadrons. VMGR-452 was de-activated Dec. 2 at Stewart Air National Guard Base in New York. Remaining is VMGR-234 at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas.

T-6B Training Aircraft

Crashes in Alabama



ARLINGTON, Va. — A U.S. Navy T-6B Texan II training aircraft crashed near Foley, Alabama, Jan. 17. The instructor pilot and student naval aviator ejected successfully.

The T-6B crashed at approximately 10:50 CST in an unpopulated area near Barin Naval Outlying Field near Foley, the Chief of Naval Air Training Public Affairs Office [said in a release](#). The two flyers were treated for minor injuries.

The T-6B was assigned to Training Air Wing Five at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Milton, Florida. The T-6B is flown by three training squadrons at Whiting Field, VT-2, VT-3 and VT-6, to train naval aviators for the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and some foreign militaries. The aircraft also is flown by two training squadrons — VT-27 and VT-28 — assigned to Training Air Wing Four at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas.

The aircraft loss was the Navy's first in calendar 2023 and the first loss of a Navy T-6B since October 2020, when another – also assigned to Training Air Wing Five – crashed near Foley.

The cause of the incident is under investigation.

Marine Corps Activated Marine Corps Information Command



Marine Maj. Gen. Ryan P. Heritage, Commander of Marine Forces Cyber, speaks at the uncasing of the flag of the Marine Corps Information Command, in a ceremony held at Ft. George G. Meade on 13 January, 2023. The MCIC is comprised of a Headquarters, the Marine Cryptologic Office, and two Major Subordinate Commands; the Marine Corps Information Operations Center and

Marine Cryptologic Support Battalion.

[Release from U.S. Marine Corps](#)

FORT MEADE, Md. – The U.S. States Marine Corps continues operationalizing the Marine Corps' seventh warfighting function, information, by activating a service retained, two-star command poised to synchronize, coordinate, and integrate capabilities across the Fleet Marine Force, Jan. 17, said Ryan Lowcher of Marine Corps Forces Cyber Command.

Commanded by Maj. Gen. Ryan P. Heritage, the current commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Space Command, the Corps' newest unit will integrate, synchronize, and enable information activities that deter adversaries and set conditions for the Fleet Marine Force across the range of military operations.

"The activation of the MCIC is all about warfighting, integration and enabling the Joint Force to meet our national security objectives," said Lt. Gen. Brian Cavanaugh, the commanding general of Marine Corps Forces Command.

Serving as the primary integrator of information-related capabilities that support Service and Fleet Marine Force requirements with seamless coordination, the Marine Corps Information Command will also encompass units previously assigned to the deputy commandant for Information including the Marine Corps Information Operations Center, the Marine Corps Cryptologic Support Battalion, and the Marine Corps Cryptologic office.

Heritage added, "A single commander who can leverage the authorities and approvals needed to synchronize global cyber, space, influence, and intelligence effects creates unity of

support for the FMF and generates information advantages in support of commander's objectives."

The Marine Corps Information Command will now serve as the linkage across the commands that conduct operational level planning and will enable the commander to provide task organized detachments leveraging authorities across the range of military operations and in support of campaigning objectives.

USCGC Tahoma Returns Home after 50-day Caribbean Sea Patrol



Coast Guard, and Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations crews stop a grossly overloaded and unsafe Haitian sail freighter about 50 miles south of Cudjoe Key, Florida, Dec. 12, 2022. The people were repatriated to Haiti on Dec. 20, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Cutter Tahoma's crew*
[Release by U.S. Coast Guard](#)

NEWPORT, R.I. – The crew of the USCGC Tahoma (WMEC 908) returned to their home port in Newport, Rhode Island, Jan. 16, following a 50-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

Tahoma patrolled the south Florida Straits in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry in the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of operations. While underway, Tahoma's crew conducted maritime safety and security missions while working with a variety of Coast Guard and U.S. Customs and Border Protection assets, as

well as good Samaritan vessels, to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

Throughout the patrol, Tahoma intercepted, cared for and safely transferred more than 650 Cuban and Haitian nationals. Notably, Tahoma worked with partners to stop a highly unstable, overloaded sailboat with 93 Haitian nationals on board, many of whom were held below decks in unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

Tahoma's rescues highlight the Coast Guard's critical maritime law enforcement and lifesaving missions of maintaining safety at sea and preventing the potential for loss of life by deterring migrants from taking to the sea in dangerously overcrowded, unseaworthy vessels in an attempt to enter the United States illegally.

"I am very proud of Tahoma's crew for their hard work and dedication, carrying out this demanding mission while being away from family during the holiday season," said Cmdr. Piero Pecora, Tahoma's commanding officer. "Their focus and professionalism at all hours of the day and night saved hundreds of lives and reflects the Coast Guard's unwavering dedication to the safety of life at sea."

Tahoma is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter with a crew of 100. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.