

Forging the Future: Training Center Opens to Train Next Generation of Defense Manufacturers



Jim Hook, an Accelerated Training for Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) instructor, teaches a student how to use a Haas CNC machine at the newly opened National Training Center in Danville, Virginia. This state-of-the-art facility, which opened on January 13, 2025, expands the program's capacity to train skilled workers for submarine and surface ship manufacturing. (Courtesy photo from ATDM)

From The Maritime Industrial Base Program, Jan. 24, 2025

DANVILLE, Va. – The U.S. Navy strengthened its efforts to revitalize the nation's shipbuilding capability with the opening of a new training center in Danville, Virginia.

The Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) program, launched in 2021, has graduated more than 777

students from 45 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Australia. About 25% of participants are veterans, and the program boasts a 90% job placement rate within the defense industrial base. New cohorts begin every eight weeks, offering a fast track to meaningful careers across five trades.

The new National Training Center, a state-of-the-art, 100,000-square-foot facility on the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) campus, opened its doors on January 13. On that day, the center welcomed its first cohort of students, marking the beginning of an expanded operation that will train 1,000 students annually, creating a pipeline of skilled workers critical for building and maintaining the nation's submarines and warships.

"This facility helps address our immediate workforce needs," said Frederick "Jay" Stefany, the Direct Reporting Program Manager for the Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program. "It advances our efforts to restore our industrial base and ensure our industry partners have the skilled workforce they need to build and maintain the Navy's fleet."

ATDM's graduates are essential in addressing the maritime industry's expanding workforce needs. The Navy's shipbuilding plans include the construction of Columbia-class and Virginia-class submarines, along with more than 10 different classes of surface ships, including aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates, amphibious warships, and support vessels. This unprecedented scale of shipbuilding requires a comprehensive strategy to rebuild America's manufacturing capabilities. The establishment of the National Training Center marks a significant milestone in this endeavor.

A National Imperative

The MIB Program leads the Navy's workforce development initiatives while advancing shipbuilding and repair capabilities through industrial base development, supply chain

resilience, and advanced manufacturing technologies. With the U.S. manufacturing base having shrunk to a third of its size from 30 years ago, the program must overcome major challenges. One of these pressing challenges involves recruiting and training 140,000 new workers over the next decade for submarine production and sustainment, with an additional 110,000 workers needed for surface vessel construction and maintenance.

“The decline in American manufacturing has created a critical skills gap,” said Erica Logan, Workforce Director for the MIB Program. “But we’re not just filling jobs—we’re rebuilding America’s maritime manufacturing capability and offering meaningful careers for the next generation of workers. Every graduate represents another step toward restoring our nation’s industrial strength.”

This workforce development initiative is vital for both new construction and fleet maintenance, underscoring the strategic importance of programs like ATDM in maintaining America’s naval readiness. This national revitalization effort takes shape through individual success stories and community partnerships.

The IALR campus, which hosts the National Training Center, also houses another key MIB Program initiative: the Navy’s Additive Manufacturing Center of Excellence. This co-location creates a hub for maritime manufacturing innovation.

Transforming Lives, Strengthening Communities

Natasha Barnes, part of the inaugural class that began training January 13 in the new facility, represents a growing wave of skilled workers entering the defense manufacturing workforce.

“ATDM has done an excellent job adapting during the transition into the new facility,” said Barnes, a CNC student. “It’s been an uplifting experience to learn in such a clean and well-

maintained environment. I am very excited to see what the future holds for the program.”

For Telly Tucker, president of the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), the program’s impact goes beyond the classroom.

“This facility is about more than training—it’s about revitalizing southern Virginia,” Tucker said. “It’s creating jobs, fostering economic growth, and building a pipeline of skilled workers who will strengthen our nation’s security.”

To deliver on this promise of regional revitalization and support to national security, the National Training Center provides intensive, hands-on preparation.

Hands-On Training for Real-World Impact

ATDM’s intensive, 16-week accelerated training program provides students with 600 hours of hands-on experience in one of five trades critical to maritime manufacturing: welding, CNC machining, additive manufacturing, quality assurance, and non-destructive testing. Training runs on three shifts, mirroring the 24/7 operations of the defense industry.

“This program isn’t theoretical—it’s practical,” said Christa Reed, ATDM’s Interim Vice-President. “When our students graduate, they’re not just trained—they’re ready to hit the ground running.”

The curriculum, developed in collaboration with industry leaders, ensures students are equipped with the skills and certifications needed to meet the Navy’s rigorous standards. By

simulating real-world manufacturing environments, the program prepares graduates to succeed in high-demand roles. This focused training approach directly enhances America’s maritime security.

A Shared Mission

The opening of the National Training Center represents a milestone in the Navy's efforts to address workforce challenges and bolster the maritime industrial base. For Stefany, it's a reminder of how these efforts impact national security.

"Every ship we build, every submarine we launch, is a promise to the American people," Stefany said. "That promise begins here, with the people we train."

As the Navy ramps up its fleet expansion, programs like ATDM and the new National Training Center are creating a ripple effect—transforming communities, empowering individuals, and ensuring America's maritime superiority. The center highlights innovation, collaboration, and resilience, its impact extending beyond Danville to strengthen America's maritime future.

For more information about ATDM and its programs, visit www.atdm.org.

Kratos Receives \$34.8M Contract for Valkyrie Mission System Integration



From Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Jan. 21, 2025

SAN DIEGO, Jan. 21, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – [Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc.](#) (Nasdaq: KTOS), a Technology Company in Defense, National Security and Global Markets, announced today a \$34,856,449 award modification to a previously awarded cost-plus-fixed-fee contract from the U.S. Marine Corps. The expanded scope is to support the XQ-58A Unmanned Aerial Systems mission systems and subsystems integration for the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Unmanned Aerial System Expeditionary (MUX) Tactical Aircraft (TACAIR).

Since 2022, Kratos and its industry partner, Northrop Grumman, have been working with the U.S. Marine Corps to define operational requirements for the MQ-58 Valkyrie variant. The team recently demonstrated advanced collaborative capabilities during the Penetrating Affordable Autonomous Collaborative Killer Portfolio (PAACK-P) program, which is transitioning to MUX TACAIR in 2025. The modification contract provides the additional non-recurring engineering and material to support the planned spiral developmental efforts, as well as

additional flight tests for the continuing capability enhancement of the Valkyrie system.

Work under this contract will be performed in Sacramento, California, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, China Lake, California and Patuxent River, Maryland.

Col Derek Brannon, Director of the HQ USMC Cunningham Group, said, "The U.S. Marine Corps is at the vanguard of collaborative combat aircraft (CCA) development and intends to field an operational CCA squadron with a tactically relevant aircraft equipped with effective, affordable mission system payloads."

Steve Fendley, President of Kratos Unmanned Systems Division, said, "The Valkyrie is validating the thesis that uncrewed system development and evaluation can be executed at a fraction of the cost and schedule required for manned military jet aircraft systems. The immediate takeaway is recognizing that uncrewed systems can be teamed in the very near term with existing fielded manned aircraft—reducing risk and increasing effectiveness and life of the manned systems long before replacement or next generation manned systems can be fielded, not to mention afforded. It's an incredible opportunity."

The Kratos XQ-58A Valkyrie is a high-performance, runway-independent tactical unmanned aerial vehicle capable of long-range flights at high-subsonic speeds. Combining affordability, survivability, long-range, high-subsonic speeds, maneuverability and ability to carry flexible mission kit configurations and mix of lethal weapons from its internal weapons bay and wing stations, the XQ-58A provides unmatched operational flexibility at an affordable price for multiple DoD customers.

Shield AI V-BAT Selected as Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's First Maritime ISR Platform



From Shield AI, Jan. 22, 2025

WASHINGTON (January 22, 2025) – Shield AI, the defense technology company building an AI-powered autonomy software platform and tools for the world, announced today that its V-BAT unmanned aircraft system (UAS) has been selected by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) as the country's first-ever maritime-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platform. V-BAT will provide advanced ISR capabilities to JMSDF surface vessels, reinforcing Japan's defense posture and operational readiness in the Indo-Pacific

region.

This milestone deal represents the beginning of a planned multi-year stream of increasing V-BAT orders to support JMSDF operations. Under the agreement, the JMSDF will acquire multiple V-BAT UAS from Shield AI, enhancing the surveillance and intelligence-gathering capabilities of its surface vessels.

“Japan is a vital ally in the Indo-Pacific and critical to regional deterrence efforts, and this partnership strengthens Japan’s ability to respond effectively to crises and ensures they are equipped with a reliable and proven platform for maritime ISR missions,” said Brandon Tseng, Shield AI’s President, Co-founder, and former Navy SEAL. “The JMSDF’s selection of V-BAT reflects their understanding of the future of warfare—where operational success requires blending high-cost assets with intelligent, affordable unmanned systems like V-BAT. Every U.S. and allied maritime vessel should be equipped with V-BAT to provide shipborne ISR capabilities wherever and whenever they are needed, and it’s fantastic to be making that vision a reality with JMSDF.”

The [V-BAT](#) is the only single-engine ducted-fan vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) UAS operationally deployed in multiple regions globally. With its unique ducted fan design and the ability to launch and recover in confined spaces, it is ideally suited for shipborne and austere environments, ensuring flexibility and resilience in complex missions. V-BAT has earned its reputation for reliability, operating with impunity even in GPS- and comms-denied environments. Its proven performance in contested regions like Ukraine, the Black Sea, and the Indo-Pacific demonstrates its ability to withstand advanced electronic warfare threats that have grounded many traditional drones.

Delivering the strategic capabilities of much more expensive aircraft, V-BAT excels in missions ranging from ISR to

strategic targeting, search-and-rescue, and maritime interdiction. Its versatility and cutting-edge autonomous features make it a critical asset in modern defense operations.

DOD Orders 1,500 Troops, Additional Assets to Southern Border

Jan. 22, 2025 | By Matthew Olay, DoD News

The Defense Department is sending 1,500 active-duty service members and additional air and intelligence assets to the southern border to augment troops already conducting enforcement operations in that region, Acting Secretary of Defense Robert Salesses announced this afternoon via a statement to the media.

The announcement came roughly 36 hours after President Donald J. Trump issued an executive order directing DOD to address the situation at the border.

“On Monday, to protect the security and safety of United States citizens, President Trump declared that a national emergency exists at the southern border of the United States. The president directed me to take all appropriate action to support the activities of the secretary of homeland security in obtaining complete operational control of the southern border of the United States,” the statement reads.

The Pentagon has since established a task force to oversee the expedited implementation of border-related executive orders;

with U.S. Northern Command heading up the effort and being supported by U.S. Transportation Command, the National Guard Bureau, the military services and the Department of Homeland Security.

The 1,500 additional active-duty service members authorized by Salesses will initially be put to work on the placement of physical barriers and other border missions within the next 24 to 48 hours, a senior military official told the media.

The additional active-duty personnel includes 1,000 soldiers, as well as 500 Marines who had previously been on standby in Southern California to potentially help combat the Los Angeles County wildfires that broke out two weeks ago, the senior official said.

With 2,500 active-duty personnel already in the region, the additional 1,500 troops will represent a 60% increase in active-duty forces since Trump was sworn in on Monday, Salesses remarks in his statement.

“We anticipate that overall, on the southwest border, will provide real-time situational awareness of persons, vehicles, vessels and aircraft; and they’ll work with on operator-level maintenance, movement and staging of assets,” the senior military official said.

In addition to the additional active-duty ground personnel, DOD will provide airlift support for flights operated by DHS to implement the deportation of more than 5,000 individuals detained by CBP at the border sectors in San Diego and El Paso, Texas, Salesses’ statement reads.

Transcom is providing two C-130 Hercules and two C-17 Globemaster aircraft to assist in that support, the senior military official said.

Additionally, the official added that there are UH-72 Lakota military helicopters that began flying today in support of

CBP.

DOD is also coordinating with the State Department to obtain diplomatic visas and provide host-nation notification for those individuals who are deported, a senior defense official said.

DOD is also providing intelligence analyst support at the border.

“We’re in the process of sourcing those requirements right now,” the senior military official said.

“We also anticipate that there could be some additional airborne intelligence, surveillance and support assets that would move down to the border to increase situational awareness,” the official added.

Regarding DOD’s future activity on the border, the senior defense official said that – while there are no specifics to release at the moment – there will be a number of additional border enforcement missions developing.

“This is going to be a big priority for the department under the acting secretary and the secretary that will be coming on board,” the defense official said.

“In short order, will develop and execute additional missions in cooperation with DHS, federal agencies, and state partners to address the full range of threats outlined by the at our nation’s borders,” Salesses’ statement reads.

“President Trump directed action from on securing our nation’s borders and made clear he expects immediate results. That is exactly what our military is doing under his leadership,” the statement concludes.

SENEDIA Continues to Strengthen Defense Workforce

Real Jobs RI Grant Supports Rhode Island's \$7.6 Billion Defense Industry

From SENEDIA, Jan. 23, 2025

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – SENEDIA, the alliance for defense tech, talent, and innovation, announced today a \$200,000 grant to continue their highly-successful Defense Partnership Program. The program, administered through Real Jobs RI, connects job seekers with direct hire, internship, and training opportunities in the defense sector, which represents more than 34,000 jobs and \$7.6 billion in economic output in Rhode Island.

“Real Jobs is critical to our efforts to fortify national security and grow the defense industry, an essential part of the economy in Rhode Island and across the region,” said Molly Donohue Magee, chief executive officer of SENEDIA. “The meaningful skill-building, on-the-job experience, and job search support we foster through this program ensures a strong defense workforce for today and tomorrow.”

Real Jobs RI has supported the Defense Partnership Program since 2016, enabling training and job placements in high-wage, high-growth, high-demand careers in defense, including IT and cybersecurity, engineering/science, supply chain management, technology, and business support. In 2024, the program placed more than 60 applicants into good-paying jobs and facilitated employment support for more than 100 candidates, including resume and interview prep, direct outreach to employers, internship opportunities, and technical certifications.

“Defense is a key part of the Rhode Island economy, and its impact reverberates across many other industries,” said Matthew Weldon, director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training that oversees the Real Jobs RI program. “Connecting Rhode Island companies with talented and skilled workers – from recent high school graduates pursuing rewarding careers to mid-career professionals looking to leverage new skills – is a win for the employer, for the candidate, and for our state.”

The Defense Partnership Program builds on SENEDIA’s broader portfolio of workforce development and industry advocacy. Through the Department of Defense sponsored New England Submarine Shipbuilding Partnership, SENEDIA has facilitated the training of more than 5,100 people for employment opportunities in Rhode Island and has strengthened the talent pipeline across the K-12, higher education, and advanced training levels.

Building a strong workforce pipeline is essential to sustaining and growing the industry. According to [SENEDIA’s 2023 Economic Impact Report of the Defense Cluster in New England](#), defense represents more than 10 percent of the state’s economy and generates \$3 billion in labor income for Rhode Island workers. Across the region, the sector accounts for \$119.1 billion in economic output, more than 407,000 jobs, and more than \$40 billion in income.

To learn more about hosting an intern or pursuing an internship through SENEDIA, visit www.SENEDIA.org/internships. Candidates interested in direct hire opportunities can visit www.SENEDIA.org/defense-careers, or view defense-related job openings from SENEDIA member companies at members.SENEDIA.org/jobs.

General Dynamics Mission Systems To Provide Advanced Electronics In MK 54 Torpedoes For The U.S. Navy



Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) maneuver a Mark-54 torpedo to the flight deck. Photo Credit: U.S. Navy
From General Dynamics Mission Systems, Jan. 21, 2025

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Mission Systems announced today that it was [awarded](#) a fixed-price-incentive, firm-fixed-price, cost-plus-fixed-fee, and cost-only contract from the U.S. Navy in December for up to \$808.6 million to produce MK 54 MOD 1 Lightweight Torpedo Kits and related test equipment, spares, provisioned item orders, engineering support and hardware support for the MK 54 Lightweight Torpedo Program.

Work will be performed in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, and is expected to be completed by December 2032.

“Our Progeny Systems employees have been providing advanced torpedo electronics to the U.S. and allied Navies for 18 years. This contract ensures that our surface ships and aircraft will have the most modern and capable torpedoes in the world for many years to come,” said Laura Hooks, vice president and general manager of Maritime and Strategic Systems at General Dynamics Mission Systems.

Progeny Systems was acquired by General Dynamics Mission Systems in 2022. Headquartered in Manassas, Virginia, Progeny Systems provides a wide spectrum of capabilities and lifecycle support services for U.S. submarines and surface ships.

General Dynamics Mission Systems provides mission-critical solutions for defense, intelligence and cybersecurity customers across all domains. Headquartered in Fairfax, General Dynamics Mission Systems employs approximately 12,000 people worldwide. More information about General Dynamics Mission Systems is available at gdmissionsystems.com.

NAWCAD Lakehurst Hosts Groundbreaking Ceremony For New Test Site Capability



Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Lakehurst held a groundbreaking ceremony on Jan. 14 for an upgrade of the Runway Arrested Landing Site testing facility. The update will house a Joint Precision Approach and Landing System (JPALS) and an Unmanned Carrier Aviation Mission Control System for the MQ-25 and other aircraft programs. (U.S. Navy Photo)
From Naval Air Systems Command, Jan. 22, 2025

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. – On a day when the ground at Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Lakehurst was so cold it made digging into the dirt a challenge, a groundbreaking ceremony for an upgrade of the Runway Arrested Landing Site testing facility welcomed the start of a new chapter in the installation's testing capabilities.

The Jan. 14 event was attended by representatives of the Unmanned Carrier Aviation (PMA-268), Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment (ALRE) (PMA-251) program offices, and NAWCAD Lakehurst leadership, including Capts. Daniel Fucito and Mike Kline, as well as other stakeholders of the project.

When completed, the update will house a Joint Precision Approach and Landing System (JPALS) and an Unmanned Carrier

Aviation Mission Control System for the MQ-25 and other aircraft programs.

“This groundbreaking represents a significant step forward in Lakehurst’s ability to complete the initial carrier suitability testing for one of the Navy’s major North Star programs in the MQ-25,” said CDR. Adam Pawlak, NAWCAD Lakehurst Officer-in-Charge.

The JPALS update will allow compatibility testing for the MQ-25 on ALRE systems, starting with the TC-13 steam catapult and MK-7 arresting gear currently used on legacy aircraft carriers. Future testing will also be conducted using the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System and Advanced Arresting Gear found on the newer Ford-class carriers.

The update will also include a Mobile Integrated Telemetry System, which can be used to set up temporary aircraft data management telemetry systems during testing.

Pawlak added the groundbreaking ceremony lays the foundation for Lakehurst’s ability to test critical unmanned platforms of the future.

U.S. Seventh Fleet Opens New Navigation, Seamanship and Shiphandling Trainer (NSST)

Facility



Vice Adm. Fred Kacher, center, commander of U.S. 7th Fleet, opens the new Navigation, Seamanship, and Shiphandling Trainer (NSST) facility during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), Jan. 16, 2025. With Kacher are Rear Adm. Greg Newkirk, left, commander of Task Force 70, Capt. Dave Huljack, deputy commodore of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, Capt. Shockey Snyder, back, commander of Naval Surface Group Western Pacific, and NSST team members. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Caroline H. Lui)

From Destroyer Squadron 15, Jan. 21, 2025

YOKOSUKA, Japan – Adm. Fred Kacher, commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet, opened the new Navigation, Seamanship, and Shiphandling Trainer (NSST) facility at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Yokosuka, Japan, Jan. 16, 2024.

“I’ve seen how history and time bend to the winner who works hard and plans—this is what simulation allows us to do,” said Kacher. “It’s great to see the power of these trainers, and

we're thrilled to bring this capability to the fleet."

During the ceremony, Kacher received a tour of the new facility and observed Sailors and junior officers from the waterfront simulating harbor movements. Capt. Dave Huljack, deputy commodore of Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, also attended the ribbon cutting ceremony.

"Our teams are busy, and we're getting after it. We don't only use these facilities for certification, we practice close-quarters shiphandling, tactical maneuvering, and just getting better," said Huljack. "Building more trainers surges the volume of qualified and capable mariners that we're able to bring to the fight."

Members from the NSST staff Jesse Summerlin, Brad Stallings, and Bill Ault explained the capabilities of the new facility and spoke on the importance of the NSSTs as a whole.

"We're already booked at 95% capacity for the remainder of the calendar year," said Summerlin, an LB&B Associates NSST Instructor. "The demand from the ships has been overwhelming and our team stands ready to accept the challenge and continue to provide the best possible product to our customers on the Yokosuka waterfront."

DESRON 15 is the Navy's largest destroyer squadron and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force. It is forward deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of security and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

USS Philippine Sea Departs Naval Station Norfolk On Final Scheduled Deployment



NORFOLK, Va. (January 20, 2025) The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), departs from Naval Station Norfolk, January 20th, 2024. Philippine Sea will deploy to the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility (USSOUTHCOM AOR) to support maritime operations with partners in the region, conduct Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) port visits, and support Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) to deter illicit activity along Caribbean and Central American shipping routes. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Evan Thompson/Released)

From U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Jan. 20, 2025

NORFOLK, Va. - The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58) departed Naval Station Norfolk for a scheduled deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of

operations, Jan. 20.

Philippine Sea will deploy to the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility (USSOUTHCOM AOR) to support maritime operations with partners in the region, conduct Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) port visits, and support Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) to deter illicit activity along Caribbean and Central American shipping routes.

“The deployment of Philippine Sea to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility highlights the Navy’s ability to generate and certify out of cycle combat-ready forces in order to execute critical missions,” said Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command. “The ship and crew will play a pivotal role in enhancing regional security and supporting bilateral and multinational efforts to counter challenges unique to Fourth Fleet. This deployment also underscores our commitment to building a resilient and adaptable force that meets global demands while fostering trust and interoperability with our global maritime partners.”

This is scheduled to be Philippine Sea’s final deployment after more than 35 years in service.

The ship previously deployed on October 14, 2023 as part of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (IKECSG) to U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet area of operations in support of maritime security operations, theater security cooperation efforts, and enhanced vigilance activities operations with NATO Allies and Partners.

“My sailors have received the highest level of training and are fully prepared to meet the challenges of our deployment,” said Capt. Steven Liberty, commanding officer of Philippine Sea. “The vigilant and hard work of the War Dogs is a

testament to the level of pride, professionalism, and resiliency in all of them.”

U.S. 4th Fleet employs maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations in order to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships that foster regional security in the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

USSOUTHCOM AOR encompasses 31 countries and 16 dependencies and areas of special sovereignty, including the land mass of Latin America south of Mexico, waters adjacent to Central and South America, and the Caribbean Sea. The region represents about one-sixth of the landmass of the world assigned to regional unified commands.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command is responsible for manning, training, equipping, and providing combat-ready forces forward to numbered fleets and combatant commanders around the globe.

President Trump Removes Coast Guard Commandant



Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan salutes the national ensign while embarking U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun (WMSL 759), April 20, 2024, following the cutter's official commissioning in North Charleston, South Carolina. *Photo credit: U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Hillard*

President Trump's new administration has removed Admiral Linda L. Fagan as commandant of the Coast Guard, an early end to the tenure of the first female to head a U.S. military branch.

The removal, on Trump's first full day back in office, was first reported by Fox News, which said Acting Homeland Security Secretary Benjamin Huffman removed Fagan. Admiral Kevin Lunday, the vice commandant, is now the acting commandant.

"She was terminated because of her leadership deficiencies, operational failures, and inability to advance the strategic objectives of the U.S. Coast Guard," a senior Department of Homeland Security official told *Seapower* in a statement.

The list of reasons includes failure to address threats at the

southern border, “especially in interdicting fentanyl and other illicit substances” and “insufficient coordination with the Department of Homeland Security to prioritize operations along maritime borders.”

It also includes “inadequate leadership” in recruitment and retention; persistent cost overruns in icebreakers and helicopter programs; “inadequate accountability for acquisition failures highlighted during the Trump 45 Administration;” the “mishandling and coverup of Operation Fouled Anchor,” an investigation into sexual harassment at the Coast Guard Academy and in the service; and “excessive focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies including at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, diverting resources and attention from operational imperatives.”

Fagan was the Coast Guard’s first four-star admiral and was confirmed as commandant in 2022.

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Connecticut), ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee’s Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee, posted on X that Fagan’s dismissal “is an abuse of power that slanders her good name and outstanding record. Under Admiral Fagan, Coast Guard recruitment is up, not down, and drug interdictions too. Trump’s fecklessness harms morale and confidence in the chain of command.”

On Jan. 21, the Coast Guard released a statement attributed to Lunday, which said, “Per the president’s executive orders, I have directed my operational commanders to immediately surge assets – cutters, aircraft, boats and deployable specialized forces – to increase Coast Guard presence and focus starting with the following key areas:

- The southeast U.S. border approaching Florida to deter and prevent a maritime mass migration from Haiti and/or Cuba;
- The maritime border around Alaska, Hawai’i, the U.S.

territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands;

- The maritime border between the Bahamas and south Florida;
- The southwest maritime border between the U.S. and Mexico in the Pacific;
- The maritime border between Texas and Mexico in the Gulf of America; and
- Support to Customs and Border Protection on maritime portions of the southwest U.S. border.

Together, in coordination with our Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense teammates, we will detect, deter and interdict illegal migration, drug smuggling and other terrorist or hostile activity before it reaches our border.”