

National Museum of the Surface Navy to Present 2022 “Freedom of the Seas” Awards

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – The [National Museum of the Surface Navy \(NMSN\)](#) is presenting its 2022 “Freedom of the Seas” awards at a gala on Saturday night, Oct. 22, aboard the historic battleship USS Iowa at San Pedro, California.

According to retired Rear Adm. Mike Shatynski, the chairman of the board of NMSN and the Battleship USS Iowa Museum, said “the Freedom of the Seas Awards honor those individuals and organizations that embody the core principles of the American Surface Navy’s mission to protect and defend our oceans for the benefit of the free world.”

Presented annually, the awards include the Freedom of the Seas award, Vice Adm. Samuel L. Gravely, Jr. Award, Humanitarian Award and the Commerce and Communications Award.

Secretary of Agriculture [Tom Vilsack](#) is being recognized with the 2022 Freedom of the Seas Award, which is presented to an accomplished individual who embodies the core principles of the American Surface Navy to protect and defend our oceans for the benefit of the free world.

Shatynski said Secretary Vilsack has been spearheading a transformation of the food system to ensure that the food system of today and the future is more resilient and more competitive globally. “Under his leadership, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine are working together to enhance coordination between the U.S. and Ukrainian agriculture and food sectors to build a strategic partnership to address food insecurity.”

The 2022 VADM Samuel L. Gravely, Jr. Award will be presented to Retired Rear Admiral [Sinclair Harris](#), vice president, Client Relations for LMI. The award, which was named in honor of the first African American in the U.S. Navy to command a Navy ship, command a fleet and become a flag officer, recognizes leaders who exemplify the trailblazing, courageous service of the late U.S. Surface Navy vice admiral.

“During Rear Adm. Harris’ distinguished 34-year Navy career, which culminated as vice director for operations to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he led joint, combined, multinational and interagency organizations across all aspects of defense; commanded the U.S. Fourth Fleet; and led U.S. naval forces assigned to the U.S. Southern Command,” Shatynski said.

Jim Zenner, Director of Los Angeles County Military and Veteran Affairs, is being recognized with the 2022 Freedom of the Seas Humanitarian Award, which represents the Surface Navy’s response to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Zenner created the [Los Angeles County Veterans Peer Access Network](#) (VPAN), a veteran-led, community-driven support network serving veterans and their families by providing resources in the areas of mental health, substance misuse support, housing, workforce development and employment, healthcare, education, legal services, social connections and more. According to Shatynski, VPAN has become the model program for integrated and effective veteran support for the country. “His contributions exemplifies the fearless bravery and tenacity necessary to sail through troubled waters to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, which are core principles of America’s Surface Navy.”

The 2022 Commerce and Communications Award is being presented to the [California Trucking Association](#) (CTA). This award recognizes leaders in commercial shipping and communications

that embody a core principle of the American Surface Navy in utilizing the ocean for the benefit of the free world.

Eric Sauer, Chief Executive Officer of CTA, will accept the award which recognizes the association's instrumental role in the movement of cargo, specifically on the front line of the goods-movement industry over the past couple of years. Shatynski said CTA's ongoing efforts to boost the economy, provide safe roads, protect the environment and lower emissions have ensured the safe and responsible movement of goods through the challenging times throughout and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Freedom of the Seas Awards are held in honor of the anniversary of the October 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf anniversary, the largest naval battle of World War II, to honor those individuals and organizations that embody the core principles of the American Surface Navy's mission to protect and defend our oceans for the benefit of the free world.

"As situations across the globe continue to emerge, change and get increasingly complex, the United States Surface Navy's roles in international relations, free trade, humanitarian assistance and technological innovation becomes even more important," Shatynski said. "The individuals and organizations that we are recognizing with this year's Freedom of the Seas Awards, are leaders whose incredible work and accomplishments exemplify the values and mission of our organization and the Surface Navy."

Major sponsors for the Freedom of the Seas Awards 2022 are Lockheed Martin, Marathon Petroleum, UPS, the Port of Los Angeles, Collier Walsh Nakazawa LLP and the Surface Navy Association.

Scheduled to open in 2025 aboard the historic Battleship USS Iowa Museum, the National Museum of the Surface Navy is the museum for America's Surface Navy. The museum's mission is to

raise America's awareness of the importance of the United States Surface Naval Forces' role in international relations, free trade, humanitarian assistance and technological innovation, not just in the past but today and into the future.

Navy Announces Two Flag Assignments

ARLINGTON, Va. – The secretary of the Navy and chief of naval operations announced Oct. 20 the following assignments:

Rear Adm. James A. Kirk will be assigned as commander, Expeditionary Strike Group Three, San Diego, California. Kirk most recently served as commander, Carrier Strike Group Fifteen, San Diego, California.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Michael W. Baze will be assigned as commander, Navy Personnel Command; and deputy chief of naval personnel, Millington, Tennessee. Baze is currently serving as commander, Expeditionary Strike Group Three, San Diego, California.

USS Jackson Deployment Used Manned/Unmanned Teaming with

Fire Scout, Seahawk



An MH-60S Sea Hawk and MQ-8C Fire Scout unmanned aerial vehicle, assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23, conduct concurrent flight operations as a manned-unmanned team (MUM-T) while embarked on the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Jackson (LCS 6). *U.S. NAVY / Lt. j.g. Alexandra Green*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The recently concluded Western Pacific of the Independence-class littoral combat ship USS Jackson (LCS 6) saw extensive use of the newest version of the Fire Scout unmanned helicopter, with the operations including manned/unmanned teaming (MUM-T) with an MH-60S Seahawk helicopter.

The USS Jackson, based in San Diego, deployed on July 11, 2021, to the Western Pacific for 15 months in support of the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI). Both the ship's Blue and Gold crews each participated in two on-hull patrols during the deployment, which took the LCS to the South China

Sea and Oceania. The Jackson, with a Coast Guard law-enforcement detachment embarked, operated with the armed forces of Brunei, France, Germany, Indonesia, Thailand and Japan, and made port calls to several island nations including Palau, Tahiti and Fiji. The ship returned to its homeport on Oct. 15, 2022.

The Jackson was armed with surface warfare mission modules, including the Naval Strike Missile, an MQ-8C Fire Scout and an MH-60S Seahawk. The aircraft were operated alternatively by detachments of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23. This marked the first Pacific deployment of the MQ-8C version of the Fire Scout.

“Jackson conducted multi-domain operations with our Fire Scout unmanned aerial vehicle and manned MH-60S Seahawk,” said Cmdr. Michael Winslow, commanding officer of the ship’s Gold Crew, during an Oct. 19 media roundtable. “We had a lot of success with the Fire Scout. We conducted about 20 hours of flight operations pushing out to distances in excess of 100 miles. Next year we have some NAVAIR operations scheduled to look at expanding the wind, pitch and roll restrictions that are currently on the Fire Scout. Absolutely a force multiplier in theater.”

Cmdr. Nick Van Wagoner, executive officer of the Jackson’s Blue Crew, said the Jackson “set the standard in 7th Fleet and really define what persistent operations with the MQ-8C looks like. As a result of that, I think our operational commanders are seeking new ways to employ that sensor alongside other manned and unmanned aircraft and surface vehicles.”

We did employ the manned/unmanned teaming tactic and concept with our aviation detachment from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23 Detachment 6. We executed that approximately one dozen times and we saw over 100 hours of MQ-8C operations while deployed to the 7th Fleet area. While conducting those manned/unmanned teaming operations what we found was that

having an unmanned aircraft that had many capable sensor payloads was really a force multiplier that we could use to develop our recognized air and maritime picture beyond the horizon while using the MH-60S to conduct positive identification of things that we detected with the MQ-8C.

The MQ-8C is equipped with the ZPY-8 search radar, the Brite Star II electro-optical/infrared sensor and the Automatic Information System.

CNO Holds Fast on Ship Decommissionings, Fleet Readiness



Sailors assigned to the USS Monterey (CG 61) man the rails

during its decommissioning ceremony. Monterey was commissioned on June 16, 1990, and was a U.S. Navy warship for 32 years. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Rodrigo Caldas*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy's top officer held fast when discussing the controversial subject of decommissioning older ships in order to sustain a ready, relevant fleet in a discussion at an event in Washington.

"For our last four budget cycles, readiness has been our number one priority, followed by modernization of the fleet that we have today – 70% of which we'll have a decade from now – and, finally, capacity at an affordable rate," said Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking Oct. 19 at the Atlantic Council. "My approach has been, commensurate with my responsibilities, to field the most lethal force we can now and into the future."

Gilday said that fielding a lethal force involves maintaining ships; "not taking maintenance holidays – as sometimes we we've been prone to do in the past, when we made capacity king; to ensure that our supply storerooms are filled with the proper parts so that our ships are self-sustaining at sea; to ensure that our magazines are actually filled with weapons."

Referring to the issue of capacity, Gilday said that "when we make decisions on which ships we're going to decommission, the entering argument is the size of the fleet that we can afford."

Citing the current high monetary inflation, the CNO noted that 60% of the Navy's budget rises at a rate above inflation and has to be taken into account.

"Maintaining the fleet we have is extremely expensive," he said.

Gilday said the Navy looks at stratifying lethality across its platforms, ranking those platforms from 1 to 20, helping to

inform decisions about which ships to decommission.

"It gets back to what we can afford," he said.

The CNO noted that some ships "haven't seen a dry dock since 2000" and that some ships have 125 departures from specifications.

One example he cited was an engineering directive not to put a tugboat against one side of the ship because it could result in a hole puncture in the ship because the steel hull is too thin.

The CNO said that some Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers are three years behind in completing maintenance at costs of \$80 million or more, and with a weapon system that is not going to be upgraded in time "to face the threat that the Chinese pose."

Gilday said that "when it comes down to making hard decisions on where to put your next dollar, those are decisions that need to be made and debated within the Pentagon."

The CNO pointed out that a few ships account for most of the delay days in maintenance.

The Navy has reduced maintenance delay days from 7,700 as of January down to a little over 3,000 today. Between 40% and 50% of the delay days can be attributed to six or seven ships that the Navy would like to decommission.

"They are old and not fit to fight against the current threat," he said. "They were designed in the 1970s for a fight of a bygone age, but we're still holding onto them."

U.S. Marine Corps successfully tests Rafael's TAMIR IRON DOME Interceptor



U.S. Marines at the White Sands facility in New Mexico test a new prototype system for Medium Range Intercept Capability using TAMIR IRON DOME interceptors. *Spokesperson Department at the Israeli Ministry of Defense*

HAIFA, Israel – The U.S. Marine Corps' latest live fire test of the TAMIR IRON DOME culminates a series of three trials carried out over the past year, and for the third time the system successfully intercepted a wide variety of targets, Rafael said in an Oct. 1 release. In this latest test, the ability to continuously launch TAMIR IRON DOME interceptors from a mobile launcher developed by the Marines was also tested.

The series of tests were conducted by the Marines at the White

Sands facility in New Mexico as part of the development program to test a new prototype system for Medium Range Intercept Capability (MRIC – Medium Range Intercept Capability).

“The three tests that took place this year proved that the performance of the MRIC system with IRON DOME interceptors is good and provides a dedicated launcher solution for the Marines,” said Don Kelly, project manager in the Air Defense Department (GBAD) of the Marine Corps’ Land Directorate (PEO Land Systems) at the end of the test.

“Once again, RAFAEL’s systems have proven that they are able to integrate into existing systems and create synergy between systems, providing optimal performance,” said Executive Vice President and Head of the Air and Missile Defense Directorate at RAFAEL Brigadier General (Ret.) Pini Yungman. “RAFAEL’s advanced systems are developed with an “open architecture” allowing seamless integration with other systems. In the latest test conducted by the Marines, a successful combination of the TAMIR interceptor launched from a new launcher developed under the leadership of the Marines, combined with the Marines’ radar system and the battle management system, which are systems developed by American industries, was demonstrated.”

Cutter Alert Returns to Astoria Following 68-Day Drug Interdiction Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) conducts an engagement coincidental to operations with members of the Guatemalan Navy August 23, 2022, five miles south of Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ASTORIA, Ore. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) crew returned to their homeport Saturday Oct. 8, following a 68-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 19 release.

The crew steamed over 13,700 nautical miles ranging from Oregon to Columbia and conducted counter-drug missions, search-and-rescue operations and international law enforcement training engagements.

While in theater, Alert's crew boarded three Costa Rican fishing vessels and successfully removed 1,440 pounds of marijuana valued at \$1.4 million. Furthermore, during the boarding of the fishing vessel *Mujer Gitana*, Alert's crew detected and articulated numerous factors of reasonable suspicion allowing Costa Rica to issue a return to port order.

Costa Rican Law Enforcement officials searched the vessel and located a hidden compartment under a reversible steel hydraulic door system, a smuggling technique that reportedly has never been seen before on a Costa Rican vessel. The search resulted in the seizure of 729 kilograms of cocaine worth \$21.1 million, and the apprehension of seven detainees by one of our top-priority partner nations.

Additionally, the Alert crew led a multinational training engagement with the Guatemalan Navy, conducted three joint boardings with the Costa Rican Coast Guard, and responded to one search and rescue case involving an American fisherman off the coast of Baja California.

The embarked helicopter aircrew flew more than 50 hours over 16 days and searched thousands of miles over the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

The ship also freed two sea turtles that were found entangled in fishing nets left drifting upon the ocean.

"I'm extremely proud of the crew's dedication, hard work, and sustained high levels of performance over the last two months," said Cmdr. Matthew R. Kolodica, Alert's commanding officer. "The Alert and crew truly epitomize the Coast Guard's motto 'Semper Paratus' – 'Always Ready' and had a direct positive impact on stemming the flow of illicit narcotics to America, and we helped counter its destabilizing effects in Central and South America. As each day passes, the crew continues to inspire me; I'm truly honored to lead such an outstanding crew."

Commissioned in 1969, Alert is one of three 210-foot medium-endurance cutters stationed on the West Coast. With a crew of 75, they regularly perform counter-drug, migrant interdiction, search and rescue and fisheries law enforcement missions throughout the Northern and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Rear Adm. Wettlaufer: Shortage of Ships, Mariners an Ongoing Problem for Military Sealift Command



Rear Adm. Michael A. Wettlaufer, commander of Military Sealift Command, answers questions from the audience after speaking about the needs of the organization at the Navy League hosted Special Topic Breakfast, Oct. 18, sponsored by General Dynamics. *NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES / James Peterson*
ARLINGTON, VA – Military Sealift Command (MSC) continues to face a shortage of both ships and sailors, and it will take a

“collective effort” from government and industry to turn the tide, Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, commander of MSC, said here during an event hosted by the Navy League of the United States.

Rear Adm. Wettlaufer noted that after the number of U.S. mariners reached their peak during World War II at 262,000, their population has plummeted to a fraction of that today – about 33,000 between 2018-2021. With recruitment and retention a problem across all of the services, MSC faces no easy solutions.

Specifically, the top challenges currently facing MSC in this area are an atrophied maritime industry, a reduced U.S. flag commercial fleet and a shortage of ocean-going mariners, he said.

To help the issue of a lack of vessels, Wettlaufer said MSC will seek to incentivize commercial participation.

“We’ve got to incentivize U.S. flagged shipping,” he said, noting that the number of U.S. flagged ships at their disposal had declined from 282 at the start of this century to 178 today. “On the production side, it’s great; we’re building ships. But we certainly need more.”

On the recruitment side, it is a multi-pronged problem. A lack of U.S. flagged ships causes a decrease in the mariner population naturally, but there are other issues that the command needs to address, Wettlaufer said.

“This ecosystem is under stress [and] this needs our nation’s focus,” Wettlaufer said. “Why does [this decline in mariner population] happen? Have people changed, or are we ignoring the problem? I think we’re ignoring the problem. I think we’re ignoring the engagement opportunity.”

To help fix this issue, MSC will seek to get mariners to sea through a vigorous recruiting campaign, incentives and

training. He also said MSC will be more aggressive in preventing sexual assault. Regardless, it will take a “collective effort” between government and industry to deal with this ongoing issue, the rear admiral said.

T-45 Fleet on Safety Pause



T-45C Goshawk. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) placed the Navy and Marine Corps’ fleet of T-45Cs on a safety pause Oct. 14 to review an engine blade fault, the Naval Air Systems Command said in an Oct. 18 release.

“Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the safety of our aviators, CNATRA made the decision to halt all T-45C Goshawk operations following the discovery of an engine blade failure,” said CNATRA Rear Adm. Richard Brophy. “We are working with our partners toward a swift resolution. Safety is at the core of our operations, and we must not expose our

pilots or aircraft to unnecessary risk.”

“The Naval Undergraduate Flight Training Systems Program Office, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Chief of Naval Air Training and Fleet Support Team have been working around the clock with industry partner Rolls Royce to identify the root cause of the recent T-45 engine blade failure,” said Rear Adm. John Lemmon, program executive officer for Tactical Aircraft Programs. “Engineering analysis has been underway and will continue until we can safely return the T-45 fleet to a flying status to support CNATRA’s training.”

U.S. Navy Awards BAE Systems \$143 million Contract to Continue Surface Combat Systems Center Support

MCLEAN, Va. – BAE Systems will continue to support the integration of various mission equipment, combat systems, and computer programs for the U.S. Navy’s Surface Combat Systems Center (SCSC) in Wallops Island, Virginia, with a new \$143 million, five-year contract. These mission-essential systems are used by sailors across the fleet for all current and future cruiser, destroyer and amphibious ship modernization initiatives.

“Our work at Wallops Island supports SCSC’s mission to provide increased readiness and improved capability to the fleet,” said Lisa Hand, vice president and general manager of BAE Systems Integrated Defense Solutions. “This effort is vital to our nation’s sailors in an increasingly challenging maritime

environment.”

BAE Systems’ technical, engineering and overall programmatic support for SCSC includes all major activities and engineering on the systems used for Surface Navy testing, training and support of deployed surface combat systems, advanced systems under development, warfare systems integration, interoperability and at-sea testing and exercises.

Coast Guard Cutter Willow Completes Aids-to-Navigation Mission in Puerto Rico



Petty Officer 3rd Class Vincent Wassylenko, Coast Guard Cutter Willow buoy deck supervisor (wearing yellow safety hardhat in

photo), prepares to set a relief hull in Mayaguez Bay, Puerto Rico Oct. 9, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Willow completed its scheduled aids to navigation service mission around Puerto Rico port and navigable waterways Oct. 17, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

During the eight-day mission, cutter Willow crewmembers serviced 23 aids to navigation and performed eight buoy hull reliefs around island ports and navigable waters in Arecibo, Culebra, Guanica, Guayanilla, Ponce, San Juan, Tallaboa and Vieques.

After the Coast Guard reopened all the ports in Puerto Rico following Hurricane Fiona, the cutter Willow moved up its itinerary to provide scheduled maintenance around the island and further inspect the status of the aids to navigation in the most affected areas from the hurricane.

“The crew and I were happy to be back in Puerto Rico, our second homeport, servicing aids to navigation to facilitate the movement of commerce into Puerto Rico and supporting safe navigation around the island,” said Cmdr. Erin H. Chlum, cutter Willow commanding officer. “We were especially grateful for the opportunity to work in areas affected by Hurricane Fiona to ensure necessary resources, fuel and supplies can reach the island and people in need.”

Cutter Willow is responsible for the maintenance of 246 aids to navigation throughout the Coast Guard’s 7th District, ranging from South Carolina to the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as well as Guantanamo Bay and Haiti.

Coast Guard Cutter Willow is a 225-foot sea-going buoy tender homeported in Charleston, South Carolina.