

USCGC Forward Offloads \$176 Million Worth of Cocaine in Port Everglades



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Forward pose with approximately 13,375 pounds of cocaine in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 15, 2022. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Rodriguez*

PORT EVERGLADES, Fla. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Forward (WMEC 911) offloaded approximately 13,375 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$176 million in Port Everglades, Florida, Dec. 15, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a Dec. 19 release.

The drugs were interdicted in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea by crews from Forward, Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron and Coast Guard Law Enforcement

Detachment 408 on the HNLMS Holland (P840).

Throughout the patrol, Forward held approximately 18,500 pounds of cocaine on deck worth an estimated \$244 million. Earlier this month, Forward transferred approximately 4,365 pounds of cocaine to USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909) and 1,654 pounds of cocaine to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration. Forward also intercepted three suspected narcotics smugglers and held 12 others.

“Working with the Dutch to support multi-national interests in the Caribbean is greatly rewarding,” said Cmdr. Staci K. Rutsch, Forward’s commanding officer. “Coupled with our ship’s organic law enforcement capabilities, this patrol led to a significant removal of illicit narcotics from the maritime domain. Opposing transnational criminal organizations is important in maintaining our partnerships and keeping our partners in the central Caribbean safe. I could not be more proud of the crew’s hard work in supporting this mission.”

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea and the transnational criminal organizations they are associated with requires a unity of effort in all phases; from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, and on to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in districts across the nation.

Forward is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, with a crew of 97. The cutter’s primary missions include law enforcement, search and rescue, protection of living marine resources, homeland security and defense operations, international training and humanitarian operations throughout the Western hemisphere.

Sea Machines and Coast Guard Partner to Bring Computer Vision Domain Awareness to Critical Missions

BOSTON – Sea Machines Robotics Inc. has installed its new [AI-ris computer vision](#) product onboard a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter ahead of the vessel's upcoming deployment. AI-ris uses artificial intelligence to identify and track visual targets of interest.

This installation was made possible under an ongoing Cooperative Research and Development Agreement between Sea Machines Robotics and the USCG Research and Development Center in an effort to evaluate how computer vision systems can be utilized for autonomous navigation, collision avoidance and target detection. The deployment of AI-ris provides the USCG a new tool for maritime domain awareness and allows Sea Machines to refine its computer vision technology with feedback from the USCG across diverse environmental conditions and operational scenarios.

The collaboration between Sea Machines and the U.S. Coast Guard began in 2020 following the USCG Research and Development Center selecting the Sea Machines' SM300 remote command and autonomy product for their 29-foot research vessel.

Sea Machines CEO Michael G. Johnson stated, "The close collaboration between Sea Machines and the United States Coast Guard Research and Development Center extends deeply into their mission-oriented service. The USCG is a branch of the armed forces, a law enforcement agency, a regulator, a member

of the U.S. Intelligence community, and a first responder. Sea Machines' goal is to lead with new technologies that advance on-water operations and support the Coast Guard in the many missions they serve."

USS Shoup Forward Deploys to Japan



Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 86) moor the ship as it arrives at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Dec. 19, as the newest addition to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 71/Destroyer Squadron 15. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zachary Grooman*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 86) arrived in its new forward-deployed

location of Yokosuka, Japan, Dec. 19, joining Commander, Task Force (CTF 71)/Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the squadron's Public Affairs said in a release.

The forward presence of USS Shoup enhances the national security of the United States and improves its ability to protect strategic interests. USS Shoup is a multi-mission ship with air warfare, submarine warfare and surface warfare capabilities. It is designed to operate independently or with carrier strike groups, surface action groups and amphibious ready groups.

"We are looking forward to having USS Shoup join our forward-deployed team," said Capt. Walter Mainor, commander, Task Force 71. "USS Shoup will be instrumental to U.S. 7th Fleet's ability to strengthen bonds with our Allies and partners, and our continued commitment to regional maritime security and ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The United States values Japan's contributions to the peace, security and stability of the Indo-Pacific and its long-term commitment and hospitality in hosting U.S. forces forward deployed there. These forces, along with their counterparts in the Japan Self-Defense Forces, make up the core capabilities needed by the alliance to meet our common strategic objectives.

Maintaining the most advanced ships and a forward-deployed naval force (FDF) capability supports the United States' commitment to the defense of Japan and the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region. This allows the most rapid response times possible for maritime and joint forces, and brings our most capable ships with the greatest amount of striking power and operational capability to bear in the timeliest manner.

"Shoup is excited for the opportunity to join 7th Fleet and

the FDNF ships in Yokosuka, Japan” said Cmdr. Dale Tourtelotte, USS Shoup commanding officer. “Our Sailors have trained diligently over the past few years in preparation for this transition. We are ready to support our allies and partners in the region in maintaining maritime security. Additionally, we are appreciative of the hospitality shown to our families who have been living in Japan for the past few months. We are eager to arrive in Yokosuka.”

Shoup is a Flight IIA Arleigh Burke Class Aegis guided missile destroyer that can deploy with two MH-60 variant helicopters. It also has improved ballistic missile defense, anti-air and surface warfare capabilities. The ship is 155 meters in length; displacing approximately 9,200 tons, with a crew size of approximately 270 Sailors. The ship was commissioned June 22, 2002.

CTF 71/DESRON 15 is the Navy’s largest forward-deployed DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet’s principal surface force. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with 35 maritime nations in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Future Flight III DDG USS Jack H. Lucas Embarks on First Sea Trials



HII announced the successful completion of Builder's Trials for the future USS Jack H. Lucas, Dec. 15. *HII*

WASHINGTON – The Navy's first Flight III Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, future USS Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125) completed Builder's Trials on Dec. 15, 2022, Team Ships Public Affairs said in a release.

Builder's trials consist of a series of in-port and at-sea demonstrations that allow the shipbuilder to assess the ship's systems. For DDG 125, these trials also mark the first opportunity to test the new Flight III systems while underway. The trials are conducted by the shipbuilder, Huntington Ingalls Industries' (HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

"Embarking on Builder's Sea Trials is a significant accomplishment for the DDG 51 program," said Capt. Seth Miller, DDG 51 class program manager, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. "As the first Flight III ship, DDG 125 is the culmination of years of dedication and perseverance to design, build, and integrate the Flight III capability of BL 10, AMDR and the supporting systems such as the new Electric Plant and associated upgrade to the Machinery Control System."

The future USS Jack H. Lucas will be the 75th Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) class destroyer, and the first of the DDG 51 Flight III ships. The Flight III upgrade is centered on the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar and incorporates upgrades to the electrical power and cooling capacity. Flight III is the fourth Flight upgrade in the proud history of the class, and the largest upgrade to date.

The DDG 51 Arleigh Burke-class Guided Missile Destroyer (DDG 51) is a multi-mission guided missile destroyer able to operate offensively and defensively, independently, or as units of Carrier Strike Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups and Surface Action Groups. These ships respond to the full range of military operations including Low Intensity Conflict/Coastal and Littoral Offshore Warfare scenarios and open ocean conflict, providing or augmenting power projection. Flight III ships will fill the critical need for enhanced surface combatant Integrated Air and Missile Defense.

HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division is also under construction on the future Ted Stevens (DDG 128), Jeremiah Denton (DDG 129), George M. Neal (DDG 131) and Sam Nunn (DDG 133).

Thai Navy Corvette Sinks in Heavy Seas



The HTMS Sukhothai is seen from the deck of HTMS Kraburi (FFG-457) just prior to sinking. ROYAL THAI NAVY ARLINGTON, Va. – The Royal Thai Navy (RTN) corvette HTMS Sukhothai (FS 442) has sunk in the Gulf of Thailand after foundering in heavy seas Dec. 1.

Of the crew of 106 personnel, 75 have been reportedly rescued as the search continues for the remaining 31 crewmembers.

According to Thai Navy statements, the corvette encountering rough seas which caused flooding of the propulsion and electrical spaces. The loss of power prevented the ship from pumping out water to regain stability.

The RTN dispatched ships to assist the Sukhothai, and HTMS Kraburi (FFG 457) arrived just before the ship sank. Other ships and aircraft arrived on the scene to rescue crew members.

The 251-foot, 960-ton Sukhothai was commissioned in 1987.

Other Thai Navy ships are assisting in the search for survivors, including the frigate HTMS Bhumibol Adulyadej (FFG-471) and landing platform dock HTMS Angthong (LPD-791).

Future Littoral Combat Ship Augusta to Be Christened



The future USS Augusta (LCS 34) will soon be christened by the ship's sponsor, the Honorable Leigh I. Saufley. *AUSTAL USA* ARLINGTON, Va. – In a time-honored Navy tradition, the Honorable Leigh I. Saufley, sponsor of the Navy's newest Independence-variant littoral combat ship the future USS Augusta (LCS 34), will christen the ship during a 10:00 a.m. CDT ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 17, in Mobile, Alabama, the Defense Department said in a Dec. 16 release.

Saufley, president and dean of the University of Maine School of Law and the former chief justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court, will break a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow to symbolically christen the ship at the Austal USA shipyard. Augusta's commanding officer, Cmdr. Christopher Polnaszek, will represent the ship's crew in the ceremony.

The principal speaker will be the Honorable Jerry Carl, U.S. House of Representatives (R-Alabama). Remarks will also be provided by the Honorable Mark O'Brien, mayor of Augusta; Vice Adm. John Mustin, chief of Navy reserve; Ms. E. Anne Sandel, acting principal civilian deputy to the assistant secretary of

the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition; Mr. Rusty Murdaugh, president, Austal USA; and Mr. Stan Kordana, vice president of Surface Systems, General Dynamics Mission Systems.

“The future USS Augusta will honor the beautiful, capital city of the pine tree state,” said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. “The Honorable Saufley and the ship’s crew will forge a special connection with the fine people of Augusta. This future ship’s Sailors will stand the watch with pride and represent Augusta with the honor, courage, and commitment they deserve.”

Augusta’s motto, “Protecting the frontier”, continues the legacy of the first USS Augusta (SSN 710), a Los Angeles-class submarine that was in active service for 24 years and decommissioned on Feb. 11, 2009. Augusta is the 17th Independence-variant LCS and 33rd in the LCS class. It is the second ship named in honor of the city of Augusta, Maine.

Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ships are fast, optimally-manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats. LCS integrate with joint, combined, manned and unmanned teams to support forward-presence, maritime security, sea control and deterrence missions around the globe. Currently, Independence-variants USS Charleston (LCS 18) and USS Oakland (LCS 24) are on deployment in the Indo-Pacific.

The LCS class consists of two variants, Freedom and Independence, designed and built by two separate industry teams. Austal USA, which leads the Independence-variant industry team for even-numbered hulls, is a ship manufacturer headquartered in Mobile, Alabama, with service centers in San Diego and Singapore, and a technology center in Charlottesville, Va. Austal USA has earned 21 safety excellence awards.

USS Ronald Reagan Returns to Yokosuka Following 2022 7th Fleet Deployment



Sailors man the rails as the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), returns to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, following its deployment to the western Pacific ocean, Dec. 16. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Oswald Felix Jr.*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – The U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) returned to Yokosuka, Japan Dec. 16, following a seven-month strike group deployment across 7th Fleet, the ship's public affairs department said in a Dec. 1 release.

During Ronald Reagan's deployment, the embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 flew more than 17,635 flight hours, and the ship transited nearly 57,000 nautical miles. The strike group departed Yokosuka May 20 and worked closely with Allies and partners in supporting the rules-based international order while maintaining presence and combat flexibility through participation in Carrier Strike Group (CSG) Exercise with Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy, Exercise Valiant Shield 2022 around Guam with more than 13,000 joint force personnel in a U.S.-only biennial field training exercise in June, and operations in the South China Sea in July and August. In August, the ship returned to Yokosuka for a brief maintenance period.

The strike group returned to sea on Sept. 12 and participated in Maritime Counter Special Operations Exercise with ROK forces near South Korea in September, trilateral and bilateral operations in the Sea of Japan in October, as well as Japan's International Fleet Review, Malabar 2022, and Keen Sword 2023 in the Philippine Sea in November.

"Every step of Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group's 2022 patrol was marked by critical and highly valuable coordination with our allies," said Rear Adm. Michael Donnelly, commander of Task Force (CTF) 70/Carrier Strike Group (CCSG) 5. "We enjoyed the opportunity to conduct extensive, integrated operations and exercises with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Republic of Korea Navy and Royal Australian Navy, sailing side-by-side and integrating liaison officers onto our ships and amongst our crews. As well as the chance to work and exercise with the navies from Canada, India, Republic of Philippines and United Kingdom. Combined with our visits to ports around the Pacific, our patrol demonstrated the combined resolve, common values and credible capability of like-minded nations that is necessary to meet any challenge in ensuring regional stability and security in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The strike group conducted its first port visit since 2020, stopping in Guam in June, and during the deployment conducted four successful port visits, making additional stops in Singapore, Busan, Republic of Korea and Manila, Republic of the Philippines, focusing on relationship-building with Allies and partners and conducting numerous community relations events.

“The crew is incredibly excited to return home to family and friends after more than 6 months at sea,” said Capt. Daryle Cardone, commanding officer, USS Ronald Reagan. “Each USS Ronald Reagan Sailor contributed to building the credible combat power inherent in our ship’s motto of ‘Peace through Strength,’ and it is that strength which further enhanced our integration with regional allies and partners. I am especially proud of the resilience and toughness our crew displayed throughout this deployment, and for the strengthened relationships with allied maritime forces.”

On the 2022 deployment, the carrier strike group included the Navy’s forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, and embarked staffs of Task Force 70 and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers USS Antietam (CG 54), USS Chancellorsville (CG 67), USS Shiloh (CG 62) and guided-missile destroyers assigned from Task Force 71.

While in port, Ronald Reagan will remain in sustainment and ready to immediately redeploy in response to a crisis or other tasking. The crew maintains a high level of training, forward-presence, warfighting proficiency, quick-response posture and readiness to respond to any regional contingency.

The Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group is forward-deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with 35 maritime nations in preserving a free and

open Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. Navy Awards Metron Contract for Algorithm and Simulation R&D in Applied Undersea Mission Autonomy

RESTON, Va. – Metron Inc. has been awarded a \$7.8 million cost-plus-fixed-fee Office of Naval Research (ONR) contract for “Advanced Algorithm Development for Autonomous Marine Systems,” the company announced in a Dec. 15 release.

The contract award will leverage Metron’s expertise in mission and path planning, object detection, tracking and data fusion, autonomous behaviors and Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) simulation. Under the terms, Metron will provide applied research investigations and software development for undersea mission autonomy. Research and technical elements will include model development, algorithm research and development, mission simulation, objective planning, system-level performance assessments and at sea demonstrations. The improved capabilities developed under the contract terms will have broad applicability across current and emerging Navy UUV systems and programs and will enhance performance across the undersea mission space.

Over the past 12 years, Metron has contributed significantly to ONR initiatives through next-generation unmanned systems, data fusion, simulation and remote sensing to improve the realized utility of undersea vehicles. Metron’s “Resilient Mission Autonomy” is platform, sensor and payload agnostic

delivering advanced executive autonomy across a wide range of DoD, civilian and commercial applications.

“We are honored to have been awarded this contract to advance innovation for critical defense technologies used by the U.S. Navy,” stated Christine Judd, vice president, Metron Inc., Unmanned Systems. “ With our culture of innovation, Metron has established a consistent track record of designing, developing and implementing autonomous mission solutions at every stage from R&D through field deployments. Over the years, the Company has played an important role in the development and adoption of LD-UUV and XL-UUV class vehicles across the maritime and defense sectors, and it’s great to see the progress toward a new level of executive autonomy.”

Metron’s other government agency customers include DARPA, NASA, NAVAIR, NAVSEA and NAVWAR.

Muslim Civil Rights Group Protests Name ‘Fallujah’ for U.S. Navy Ship



The amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LHA 7) sails with the amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) during a photo exercise in the Philippine Sea, Sept. 17, 2022. The future USS Fallujah (LHA 9) will be similar to these ships but equipped with a well deck. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Christopher Lape*

ARLINGTON, Va. – A Muslim civil rights group is protesting the U.S. Navy’s selection of the name “Fallujah” as the name of a future amphibious assault ship.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), self-described as the nation’s largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, “called on the U.S. Navy to change the name of the future America-class amphibious assault ship ‘USS Fallujah,’” in a Dec. 15 press release.

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced Dec. 14 that a future America-class amphibious assault ship, LHA 9, will be named USS Fallujah. The ship “will commemorate the First and Second Battles of Fallujah, American-led offensives during the Iraq War. The name selection follows the tradition of naming amphibious assault ships after U.S. Marine Corps battles, early U.S. sailing ships or legacy names of earlier carriers from World War II,” the Navy release said.

The First Battle of Fallujah occurred in April 2004 in an effort to capture or kill insurgents responsible for the killing of four U.S. contractors, according to the Navy Department release. The Second Battle of Fallujah, fought between Nov. 7 and Dec. 23, 2004, was a major U.S. led offensive to retake control of the city from insurgents and foreign fighters. With over 100 coalition forces killed and over 600 wounded, Operation Phantom Fury is considered the bloodiest engagement of the Iraq War and the fiercest urban combat involving U.S. Marines since the Vietnam War's Battle of Hue City.

CAIR has a different regard for the battles.

"The two battles fought in Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004, were the bloodiest fighting of the Iraq War. [Hundreds of civilians – including women and children – were killed](#) during the battles," CAIR said in the release. "To this day, the civilian population is reportedly being negatively impacted by the weapons used in those battles."

"Just as our nation would never name a ship the 'USS Abu Ghraib,' the Navy should not name a vessel after notorious battles in Fallujah that left hundreds of civilians dead, and countless children suffering from birth defects for years afterward," said CAIR National Deputy Director Edward Ahmed Mitchell, in the CAIR release. "There must be a better name for this ship – one that does not evoke horrific scenes from an illegal and unjust war."

The secretary of the Navy selected the name of the battles "to memorialize the Marines, Soldiers and coalition partners that fought valiantly and those that sacrificed their lives during both battles of Fallujah. This namesake deserves to be in the pantheon of iconic Marine Corps battles and the LHA's unique capabilities will serve as a stark reminder to everyone around the world of the bravery, courage and commitment to freedom displayed by those who fought in the battle."

“Under extraordinary odds, the Marines prevailed against a determined enemy who enjoyed all the advantages of defending in an urban area,” said Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger, in the announcement. “The Battle of Fallujah is, and will remain, imprinted in the minds of all Marines and serves as a reminder to our Nation, and its foes, why our Marines call themselves the world’s finest.”

Navy Leadership Must Have Balance of Expertise from Civilian, Military and Industry Backgrounds:

Analysts



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday, center,

participates in a panel discussion, Restoring Strength at Home: Toward a Robust and Resilient Industrial Base, at the Reagan National Defense Forum (RNDF), Simi Valley, Calif., Dec. 3, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Lt. Michael Valania*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – To have a successful future, the U.S. Navy needs to have a proper balance of expertise within its leadership of those with military, civilian and industry backgrounds, analysts with the Center for Strategic and International Studies said during a Dec. 14 event at CSIS headquarters.

Rear Adm. David Oliver (Ret.) and Associate Professor Anand Toprani made the arguments while unveiling their latest book, “American Defense Reform: Lessons from Failures and Successes in the Navy.” The book analyzes the service over “four key periods of disruptive transformation,” such as the Cold War and the fallout from the Vietnam War. In the book, they argue that a collaborative effort between civilians, the military and industry is key to setting the Navy on a course for success in the future.

“When it becomes time to reshape and rebalance defense, process is more important than personalities,” read one slide presented by Oliver. “The military – our country’s subject matter experts – must be integrally involved while civilian leaders provide leadership but not direction.”

Toprani argued that often, civilian leaders step in to provide direction on military matters when they are not qualified to do so, and civilian leaders should trust military leaders to handle those aspects.

“Just because you have the statutory power to direct, doesn’t mean they should direct it in matters they don’t have competency too,” he said.

Also, the military is often reluctant to accept innovation, and so the commercial world should become more involved in the

defense industry to stem the “explosive” weapons cost growth, they argued.

To address this imbalance, Oliver and Toprani say the Navy should establish a representative team of senior subject matter experts; gather information on past, present and future trends from the trusted sources of each of the services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense; regularly review advancements in commercial technology; audit existing programs to determine opportunity costs; and review major defense acquisition programs.

People from both civilian and military backgrounds have something to offer, and the Navy should be doing a better job at leveraging their expertise, Toprani argued.

“Both sides should seek to leverage each other’s strengths,” he said.