Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Returns Home from Western Pacific Deployment

Petty Officer 1st Class Kyle Buell stands with his wife after U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) returned to homeport in Honolulu, Hawaii, Oct. 31, 2022. The crew was deployed for nearly three months in the Western Pacific theatre. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer Steve Strohmaier*

HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) and crew returned to its homeport, Monday, following an 83-day, 16,000 nautical-mile deployment to the Western Pacific, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Nov. 1 release.

The Midgett and crew departed Honolulu in August to the Western Pacific to operate under the tactical control of U.S. Navy 7th Fleet to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

“The Coast Guard strives to be a trusted partner, and we play a vital role in ensuring safety, security and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific,” said Vice Adm. Andrew J. Tiongson, commander Pacific Area. “As the region faces challenges like climate change and Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing, we will join with our Pacific partners to face these common threats and challenges together.”

Midgett’s crew executed numerous cooperative engagements, professional exchanges and capacity building efforts with naval allies and partners, who included the Philippine Coast Guard, Singapore Maritime Security Response Flotilla, the Information Fusion Center, Police Coast Guard, Indian Coast Guard and Maldives National Defense Force.

“I am extremely proud of this crew and all they have accomplished over this deployment,” said Capt. Willie Carmichael, commanding officer of Midgett. “They engaged in meaningful and collaborative engagements with our partners that increased our interoperability to address shared maritime threats and challenges. This Western Pacific deployment highlights the critical role the Coast Guard plays in strengthening maritime governance around the world and how much our partners value our presence. Midgett’s ability and dedication to sail across two oceans and participate in purposeful engagements with our partners is a testament to the United States’ commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

The U.S. Coast Guard has a 150-year enduring role in the Indo-Pacific. The service’s ongoing deployment of resources to the region directly supports U.S. foreign policy. As both a federal law enforcement agency and a branch of the armed forces, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to conduct security cooperation in support of combatant commanders on all seven continents. The service routinely provides forces in joint military operations worldwide, including the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft and deployable specialized forces.

Since 2019, Coast Guard Cutters Bertholf (WMSL 750), Stratton (WMSL 752), Waesche (WMSL 751) and Munro (WMSL 755) have deployed to the Western Pacific.

Commissioned in 2019, Midgett is one of two Coast Guard legend-class national security cutters homeported in Honolulu. National security cutters are 418 feet long, 54 feet wide and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, endurance of up to 90 days and can hold a crew of up to 170.

Midgett is the second cutter named after the Midgett family, many of whom served in the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Life Saving Service and other predecessor life-saving services. Seven members of the Midgett family have been awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal, including John Allen Midgett Jr. and Rasmus Midgett.

National security cutters feature advanced command and control capabilities, aviation support facilities, stern cutter boat launch and increased endurance for long-range patrols to disrupt threats to national security further offshore.

Admiral: Guam Weather ‘Challenging’ for Navy’s Triton UAV Operations

A U.S. Navy MQ-4C Triton assigned to Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19 prepares to take off from the flightline at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Iwakuni, Japan, Oct. 5, 2022. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. David Getz*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The weather in Guam has proved to pose challenges to operations of the Navy's MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle, a Navy admiral said. He also praised the value of the Triton as a targeting platform.

In a situation report late last summer to the maritime patrol reconnaissance community, Rear Adm. Adam "Kujo" Kijek, commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group, said the "most impactful lesson" of the Early Operational Capability deployment of the Triton to Guam was one "delivered by mother nature."

Kijek said the "weather in Guam, and associated OP Areas [operations areas], can be very challenging for UAV operations. During 'monsoon' season, and with a stated goal of 16 missions per month, there were many days that Triton could

not get airborne or access required operating areas due to adverse weather. However, when weather permits Triton has proven its operational worth."

The admiral said that "to help combat these environmental anomalies, we executed a Seasonal Relocation Plan (SRP) to Misawa AB [Air Base] last summer, and Iwakuni [Marine Corps Air Station] this summer. Exercising these expeditionary muscles and harvesting lessons learned will pay huge dividends when Triton Multi-INT shows up in theater next year."

Kijek noted that "there is tremendous value in providing the persistent ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] that Triton brings by establishing pattern of life and building a real-time Common Operational Picture for Fleet and Combatant Commanders. However, from a tactical perspective, I have been most impressed when Triton works as a targeting platform in concert with other aircraft and surface units."

The admiral said he believed "the operational impact of Triton will grow exponentially" when the UAV's Multi-Intelligence Integrated Functional Capability-4 upgrade is deployed in 2023.

"The ability of Triton's SIGINT [signals intelligence] package to exploit the electromagnetic spectrum and the sheer volume of information harvested will present significant challenges to the Intel Community," he said. "Simply adding a SIGINT Coordinator (SC) to every Triton aircrew is not enough. We are working closely with the C10F [Commander, U.S. 10th Fleet and NAVIFOR [Navy Information Forces] to ensure that Triton is postured to take full advantage of Navy's Distributed SIGINT Operations architecture to realize its full potential. Achieving these linkages will be a primary focus during my tenure."

Major Pier Project Completed at Naval Base Kitsap Bangor

Mr. Peter Fleck, Submarine Development Group 5 facility operations manager, left, Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, Capt. Gary Montalvo, commodore, Submarine Development Group 5 and Capt. Kevin Pickard, chief of staff, Navy Region Northwest, cut a ribbon during a ceremony for a newly-completed service pier located on Naval Base Kitsap – Bangor, October 19, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brian G. Reynolds*

NAVAL BASE KITSAP, Wash. – Submarine Development Squadron (DEVRON) 5 held a ribbon cutting ceremony, Oct. 19, 2022, on a newly-completed service pier extension located on Naval Base Kitsap Bangor, Washington, Lt. Cmdr Christopher F. Donnelly of

Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in a Nov. 1 release.

The ceremony marked the completion of a major infrastructure project, nicknamed the “Olympic pier” due to its proximity to the Olympic Mountain Range, which will support the arrival of fast attack submarines, including the planned change of homeport for USS Seawolf (SSN 21) and USS Connecticut (SSN 22) from Naval Station Bremerton to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

The ceremony, which was led by Capt. Gary Montalvo, commodore of DEVRON 5, hosted the event which featured Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, as the keynote speaker.

The service pier extension project was more than a decade in the making. Originally envisioned in 2008 and supported by Munsch, who was the DEVRON 5 commodore at the time and knew it was a project that was needed to service all classes of SSNs. Construction began in 2020.

“Your efforts, and that of many others over the years, to build this pier and ready it to sustain our most advanced submarines, represents the best of the many organizations working together, fighting any and all obstacles to build capability to enhance our undersea dominance,” said Montalvo.

The service pier extension includes state-of-the-art technologies for security and pier services for moored submarines. The shore power configuration incorporates the latest technology to provide multiple fully redundant power sources, ensuring continuous safe in-port operations and minimizing the affects due to normal wear and tear or natural disasters. The pier boasts a first-of-its-kind captured mooring system that compensates for tidal changes, which will ensure all classes of submarines remain securely moored without need to frequently adjust mooring lines.

A full environmental assessment of the project was performed during the design phase in order to minimize the environmental impacts to the Hood Canal and its local fish and wildlife. Environmental considerations include a newly-designed, all-electric crane which will provide service on the pier, and the deliberate positioning of backup diesel generators located upland, away from the water.

Upland support infrastructure for the service pier extension include a newly constructed parking lot to provide safe and convenient access for submarine crews and support personnel. The pier has maintenance support facilities dedicated to units moored at the service pier extension.

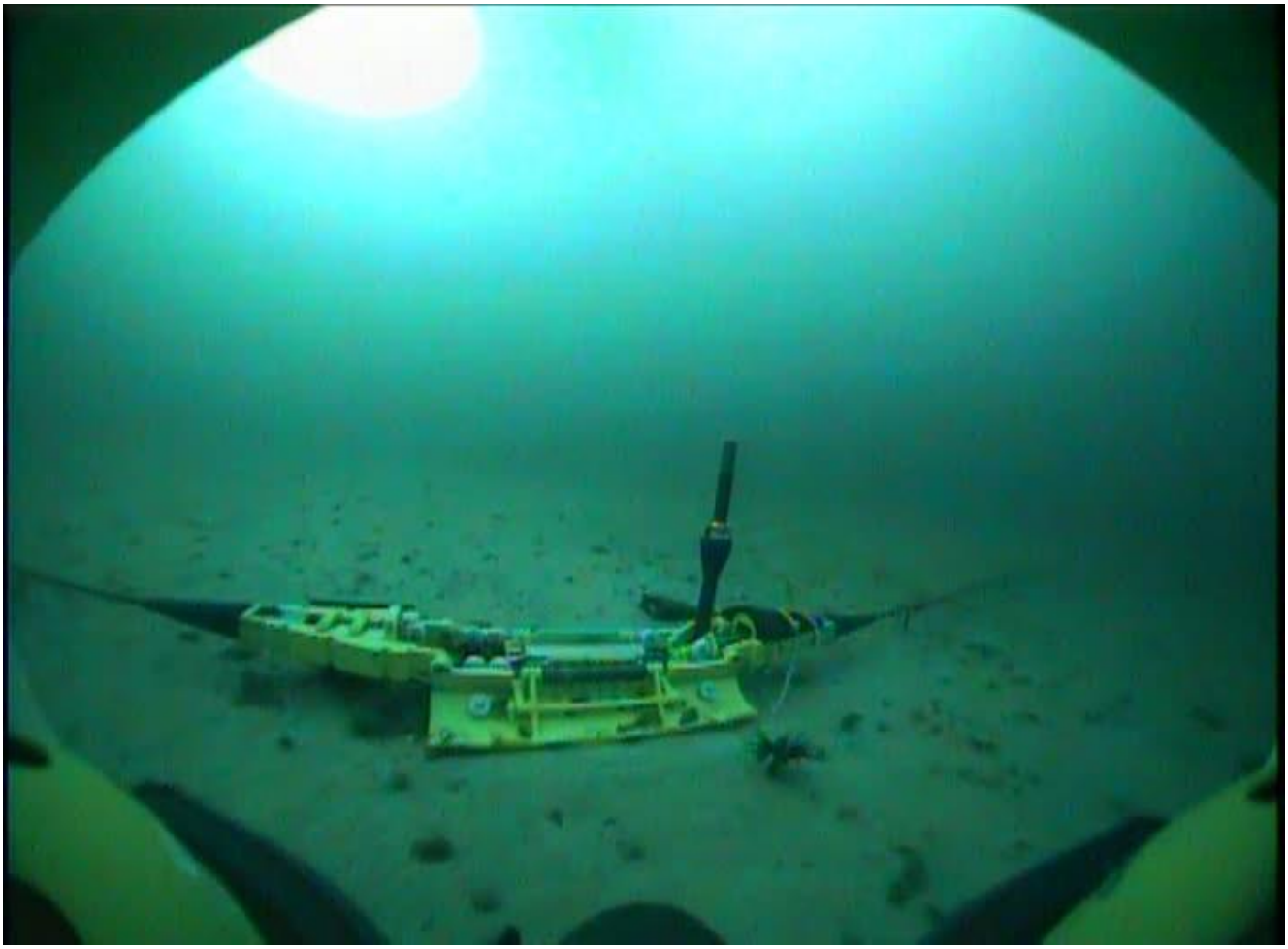
“The completion of Olympic Pier advances a visionary shore infrastructure plan designed to improve quality of work for our Sailors, increase operational availability of fast attack submarines in the Pacific Northwest, and advance the research, development, test and evaluation needed to deliver decisive warfighting advantage,” said Munsch. “Olympic Pier enables us to bring together intellectual and industrial partners with the Submarine Force’s most experienced operators of advanced undersea systems and, now, the right current and future submarines to test and field those decisive new capabilities.”

The service pier extension provides substantial immediate and long term benefits to the submarine force and the Navy. The planned change of homeport for Seawolf and Connecticut will improve the quality of service to the units while in port. Dedicated pier and maintenance facilities promote efficiency for maintenance.

Support, training and oversight provided by DEVRON 5, the Immediate Superior in Command, will be improved by the close physical proximity of the boats. Longer-term benefits include

the capability to maintain increased persistent presence of fast attack submarines in the northern Pacific region, and the continued development of future undersea warfare capabilities.

Navy Achieves Full Operational Capability on Critical Underwater Training Range



The Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office (PMA-205) recently achieved Full Operational Capability on their Undersea Warfare Training Ranges Increment I (USWTR INC

I) program. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office's (PMA-205) Ocean Systems Fixed Ranges team recently achieved full operational capability on the Undersea Warfare Training Ranges Increment I (USWTR INC I) program 13 months ahead of schedule, the Naval Air Systems Command said in a Nov. 1 release.

The Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office's (PMA-205) Ocean Systems Fixed Ranges team recently achieved full operational capability on the Undersea Warfare Training Ranges Increment I (USWTR INC I) program 13 months ahead of schedule. *U.S. NAVY*

The USWTR INC I training range supports fleet readiness through realistic training and the tactical development of submarine, surface ship, and aircraft undersea warfare capabilities.

"Since completing installation, the fleet has conducted four exercises on the Increment I range, to include critical anti-submarine warfare exercises, which shape future exercises and further advance the capabilities the Navy has to offer," said Brandi Payne-Tapponnier, the program's team lead. USWTR INC I allows for timely and accurate feedback of training performance to exercise participants and the ability to rapidly reconstruct the training event, enhancing the quality of complex training scenarios, she said.

The USWTR program consists of three increments. During USWTR INC I, the team managed the installation of the ocean sensor and shore electronics subsystems located off the coast of Florida. Under Increments II and III, the team is upgrading previously installed systems at the USWTR's other range locations in areas of the Pacific Ocean and international waters of the Caribbean Sea.

"These ranges are essential to our national security, and

provide critical support to the helicopter maritime strike, maritime patrol and reconnaissance, and Navy ship communities," said Capt. Kevin McGee, PMA-205 program manager. "They include a vast array of technology providing a realistic training environment that enables ships and aircraft to track targets for anti-submarine warfare training, which increases fleet capability and lethality."

The team acquired and installed an additional total of 500 nautical miles of instrumented undersea warfare training ranges in littoral waters in the Atlantic Ocean. Secondary missions of USWTR INC I include training in shallow water and conducting regional conflict operations training.

Navy Resumes Flight Operations for Some T-45 Aircraft

Chief of Naval Air Training Rear Adm. Richard Brophy (right) and Training Squadron 21 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Matthew Starr taxi in a T-45C Goshawk prior to a proficiency flight, Oct. 31. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) had resumed T-45C Goshawk aircraft flight operations Oct. 31, the Naval Air Systems Command said in a release.

The Navy and Marine Corps' fleet of T-45Cs have been on a safety pause since Oct. 14 following the discovery of an engine blade failure. Engineering analysis has revealed that a subset of T-45C engine blades do not meet the manufacturer's engine specifications; those aircraft remain grounded. The T-45Cs that have returned to flight contain engines that are compliant with these specifications.

"The process of returning to operations is based off engineering analysis by NAVAIR, with the most important decision being the safety of our aviators," said CNATRA Rear Adm. Richard Brophy. "The aircraft we are flying are verified and known-good. We have the highest confidence in the compliance of these aircraft."

Flight operations for the rest of the T-45C fleet will remain

paused as the Navy and its industry partner Rolls Royce continue to evaluate engineering data on the non-conforming parts and work to return additional T-45Cs to operational status. During this time, training air wings and squadrons are maximizing ground training, including classroom lectures, simulators and computer-based training.

The T-45C is a tandem-seat jet trainer whose mission is to train Navy and Marine Corps pilots.

“We sincerely thank the team at NAVAIR for their hard work and commitment to finding the best possible solution for the long-term safety of our aviators and aircraft. While the reintroduction of the T-45C fleet will be a staggered approach, it is not a process that will be rushed. It is essential that our maintenance partners analyze and diagnose this issue thoroughly so training operations can fully resume with the safety of each of our aviators as a top priority,” said Brophy.

“Safety of our student aviators and instructors is paramount,” said Rear Adm. John Lemmon, Program Executive Officer for Tactical Aircraft Programs (PEO(T)). “Our Navy teams and industry partner are diligently and thoroughly analyzing all facets of this issue to determine a safe and expeditious way forward for the rest of the T-45 fleet to return to flight.”

NATO Concludes Successful Vigilance Activity Neptune

Strike

Aircraft assigned to Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 1 and the Italian Navy fly over the Mediterranean Sea as ships from Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 8, Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG 2), the Italian Navy Cavour CSG and the Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) transit the Mediterranean Sea in support of Neptune Strike 2022, Feb. 2, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Bela Chambers*

OEIRAS, Portugal – Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO) and U.S. Sixth Fleet (SIXTHFLT) concluded Vigilance Activity Neptune Strike, the eighth phase of NATO's long-planned Project Neptune series of activities, from STRIKFORNATO headquarters in Oeiras, Portugal, Oct. 28, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO Public Affairs and U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

Neptune Strike demonstrated the combined capacity of the Alliance while underscoring allied and partner nations' commitments to deterrence and defense of sovereign Alliance

territory. This activity and NATO's wider strategy deters adversaries and terrorist groups from spreading destabilization, widening disorder or accruing decisive military advantage that would impact allies' security.

"Neptune Strike sits at the leading edge of NATO's vigilance activities, providing credible deterrence and demonstrating the inherent flexibility of the carrier strike group while building high-end interchangeability among our NATO allies and partners on a firm foundation of trust," said Vice Adm. Thomas Ishee, commander of both SIXTHFLT and STRIKFORNATO. "The energy across the entire Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO team was palpable as we pushed the bounds of allied integration in the land, air and on the seas."

Throughout the two-week long vigilance activity, NATO servicemembers from several allied nations planned, briefed, and executed a variety of specific evolutions, including air-to-land integration with allies including Hungary, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland and Slovakia, maritime and interdiction activities, and air-to-air refueling and air-to-air rehearsal events throughout allied airspace.

While allied and partner aircraft flew together in the skies, the ships of the George H. W. Bush carrier strike group (GHWBCSG) sailed alongside multiple allied ships in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. These included Albanian and Croatian ships, as well as members of Allied Maritime Command's Standing NATO Maritime Group (SNMG) 2 and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group (SNMCMG) 2 and the United Kingdom's Littoral Response Group (LRG).

"I could not be more proud of the teamwork, expertise and professionalism displayed by everyone in making Neptune Strike 22.2 a resounding success," said Ishee. "The evolution of Project Neptune is both a testament to the innovation of the NATO Alliance and a tangible demonstration that we truly are stronger together."

The diversity and complexity of evolutions conducted during Neptune Strike, through multiple domains and unique scenarios, continued to validate interoperability of a CSG within NATO command and control architectures to contend with a rapidly evolving security environment. The activity is proof of the warfighting advantage that characterizes allied interoperability and, ultimately, the strength of the most successful Alliance in history.

“Neptune Strike has again offered a perfect opportunity to fully integrate the combat power of a U.S. aircraft carrier into enhanced Vigilance Activity in direct support of NATO’s commitment to deter conflict and defend allies. It has offered the chance to combine capabilities from a large number of nations in all warfare domains – on land, at sea and in the air – as a clear demonstration of allied unity of purpose and cohesion,” said Royal Navy Rear Adm. James Morley, deputy commander, STRIKFORNATO. “It has further rehearsed STRIKFORNATO’s role as the primary integrator for U.S. maritime combat power. The George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group is now even better prepared to execute complex missions in concert with wider allied efforts to defend the Euro-Atlantic area.”

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg’s visit to the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77) on Oct. 25 served as a key highlight of the activity. While aboard the ship, Stoltenberg reflected on the carrier’s presence as a demonstration of U.S. capability and commitment to the Alliance, a general escalation of tension between European powers, and how the conclusion of Neptune Strike – and its inclusion of more than 70 aircraft, 20 ships and 5,000 personnel from 26 NATO allies and partners – demonstrates NATO’s capability on the world stage.

“[Neptune Strike 2022] is a perfect example of the transatlantic bond – Europe and North America working together in NATO,” Stoltenberg said. “[NATO’s] strength helps to

prevent any miscalculation by sending a clear message: NATO will protect and defend every inch of allied territory.”

Participating nations in Neptune Strike included Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, U.K. and the U.S.

Vigilance Activities are day-to-day activities, occurring in all domains and across SACEUR’s area of responsibility, to ensure appropriate strategic awareness and force readiness required to sustain peace.

For over 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

STRIKFORNATO, headquartered in Oeiras, Portugal, is Supreme Allied Commander Europe’s (SACEUR) premier, rapidly deployable and flexible, maritime power projection Headquarters, capable of planning and executing full spectrum joint maritime operations.

U.S. Navy Rescues Mariners Who Set Fire to Vessel Smuggling Drugs

Sailors aboard the coastal patrol ship USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) extinguish a fire aboard a fishing vessel in the Gulf of Oman, Oct. 29, 2022. The vessel, found to be smuggling illicit cargo, was set on fire by the fishing vessel's crew as U.S. forces approached. *U.S. NAVY*

MANAMA, Bahrain – U.S. Navy personnel rescued eight civilian mariners in the Gulf of Oman, Oct. 29, after they set their fishing vessel on fire prior to being boarded, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said in an Oct. 30 release..

U.S. Navy patrol coastal ship USS Sirocco (PC 6) was conducting a counter-smuggling patrol in international waters when the mariners set their fishing vessel ablaze. Sailors

from Sirocco rescued the mariners from the water and provided medical aide as USS Chinook (PC 9) and USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) extinguished the fire on the vessel.

“This was a superb effort by all of our crews,” said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. “I couldn’t be prouder of everyone involved in saving lives while carrying out our mission to disrupt destabilizing maritime activity.”

The mariners, who identified themselves as Iranian and Pakistani, admitted to smuggling hashish and methamphetamines. U.S. naval forces recovered 560 kilograms of hashish worth an estimated $1 million, about one-third of the total shipment. The remaining drugs were destroyed in the fire.

After the mariners received immediate medical care, all were transferred to a regional nation for additional treatment and repatriation. The fishing vessel, which sustained significant damage during the fire, sank.

The rescue comes three days after U.S. Navy personnel rescued three civilian mariners in the Gulf of Aden, Oct. 26, after their small motorboat caught fire while transiting international waters.

Guided-missile destroyer USS Nitze (DDG 94) and patrol coastal ship USS Monsoon (PC 4) responded after observing the mariners in distress and immediately rendered assistance. Sailors safely rescued the civilian mariners before their burning vessel sank approximately 50 miles off the coast of Yemen.

The U.S. 5th Fleet operating area includes 21 countries, the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb and Suez Canal.

EA-18G Growler Returns to the Skies Five Years After a Mid-Air Collision

EA-18G Growler 515, assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129, is refurbished at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI). The aircraft flew its functional check flight on Oct. 17, 2022 at NASWI and will be reentered into service with a forward-deployable squadron in the near future. *U.S. NAVY*

WHIDBEY ISLAND, Wash. – An EA-18G Growler attached to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129, successfully completed a functional check flight at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island, Oct. 17, marking the end of a complex transformation

process for an aircraft thought to be beyond repair, Commander Naval Air Forces Public Affairs said in an Oct. 2 release. This five-year effort demonstrates large-scale teamwork between multiple organizations over an extended timeline.

The aircraft, then attached to the “Wizards” of VAQ-133, was involved in a mid-air collision with another aircraft attached to Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2 at NAS Fallon during a training event on Sept. 14, 2017. Both aircraft landed safely and the aircrew were uninjured. The Growler remained at NAS Fallon for several years, as refurbishment of this nature had never been done before and there were no processes or procedures on exactly how the repairs could be completed.

Upon initial inspection, there was little hope the aircraft would be fit to fly due to the complexity of the repairs required following the mishap, as well as weather damage from years of sitting in a desert environment. However, after thorough analysis and continued coordination, the Growler’s road to recovery began when clearance for repair was granted in 2021. In February of that year, the aircraft was loaded onto a flatbed truck and transferred to the Fleet Replacement Squadron, VAQ-129, at NAS Whidbey Island.

Classified as a “special rework,” funding was approved and a long-term hangar space was identified for the unprecedented project. For more than a year, engineers, maintainers and artisans from facilities across the United States collaborated to develop processes, complete repairs and thoroughly inspect the recovered aircraft – more than 2,000 man hours in total.

“This was a team effort by personnel from Fleet Readiness Center (FRC) Southeast, FRC Southwest Engineering and my team from FRC Northwest,” said Tommy Moore, depot lead for FRC Northwest. “We reassembled the aircraft by replacing all major components and turned the aircraft back over to VAQ-129 as a ‘special rework’ complete on April 24, 2022.”

The Growler will soon be transferred to an operational squadron in order to deploy around the globe and be ready to conduct flight operations for decades to come. Capt. David Harris, commodore, Electronic Attack Wing Pacific, commended the efforts of the entire Naval Aviation Enterprise in the accomplishment of this first-of-its-kind mission.

“It was truly amazing to watch the entire Naval Aviation Enterprise team come together to get this much-needed asset back up to flight status,” said Harris. “From the engineers who developed the needed repair designs, to the artisans who accomplished the complex repairs, to the VAQ-129 Sailors who ultimately rebuilt the aircraft to a flight status; it was a true team effort.”

Coast Guard Cutter Returns Home after Encounter with Chinese, Russian Naval Ships

Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Nichols observes the sunset aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756), in the Bering Sea, during its patrol. The Kimball, homeported in Hawaii, completed a 19,000 mile deployment in the Chukchi and Bering Seas, operating as part of Operation Frontier Sentinel. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU — The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756), which encountered a formation of Russian and Chinese naval ships near Alaska in September, returned to its Honolulu homeport, Oct. 28, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in an Oct. 29 release.

The Kimball and its crew covered more than 22,000 miles in over 100 days, conducting search and rescue and fisheries enforcement patrols in the Bering and Chukchi Seas, earning the ship's first Coast Guard Arctic Service Medal.

While on routine patrol, the vessel encountered a group of Russian and Chinese naval ships in the Bering Sea. The

formation, which was transiting through the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, did not enter U.S. territorial waters. The Kimball came within about a mile of the naval ships, established and maintained radio contact and ultimately ensured their presence was in accordance with international rules and norms.

“As Arctic sea ice melts, Coast Guard presence in the region is vital to ensuring the safety of increased maritime traffic, protecting critical resources such as fish stocks, and upholding U.S. sovereign interests and international law,” said Capt. Thomas D’Arcy, Kimball’s commanding officer. “It was an honor to lead Kimball’s crew during this patrol, and we’re proud to contribute to a long legacy of essential Coast Guard presence in the Bering Sea and the Arctic.”

Kimball’s crew also monitored fishing vessel safety standards and preserved living marine resources within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone by enforcing applicable laws and regulations. Kimball’s crew patrolled both sides of the U.S. – Russia Maritime Boundary Line and conducted multiple boardings inspecting U.S. commercial fishing vessels, including one fishing vessel that has operated for 109 years.

Additionally, Kimball’s crew supported a long-range helicopter medical evacuation of an injured crewmember aboard a bulk carrier ship, and supported a proof-of-concept trial that involved operating larger helicopters on national security cutters. Air Station Kodiak aircrews coordinated efforts with Kimball’s crew, resulting in the first overnight deployment of a Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter on a national security cutter in the Arctic.

The Kimball’s ship and aircrews made multiple visits to remote island and coastal communities, where crew members performed community service and outreach events, reinforcing the Coast Guard’s commitment to the communities it serves.

“It was an extremely rewarding experience to serve aboard Kimball for this unique arctic patrol,” said Ens. Emma Simms, a Kimball junior officer. “I was able to participate in a variety of Coast Guard missions in a single patrol, ranging from conducting fisheries boardings to search and rescue to defending sovereign interests.”

Commissioned in 2019, Kimball is the Coast Guard’s seventh national security cutter. National security cutters are 418-feet-long, 54-feet-wide and have a displacement of 4,600 long-tons. With a range of 13,000 nautical miles, the advanced technologies of this class are designed to support the national objective to maintain the security of America’s maritime boundaries and provide long-range search and rescue capabilities.

HMS Medway, U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Seize Cocaine in Caribbean

HMS MEDWAY and her embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment team interdicted a vessel carrying over 400kg of cocaine in the Caribbean Sea, Sep. 29, 2022. *U.K. ROYAL NAVY*

LONDON – A Royal Navy ship and U.S. Coast Guard boarding team seized more than 400 kilograms of cocaine worth around £24m on Britain's streets from a boat in the Caribbean, the U.K. Ministry Of Defence said in an Oct. 28 release.

Caribbean-based patrol ship HMS Medway and her embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment spotted the vessel near the Dominican Republic with help from a patrol aircraft.

Following a tense chase, the vessel was boarded and the drugs discovered with three crew members detained.

"To secure an interdiction on our first day dedicated to this type of operation in this period has been tremendous," said Comdr. Chris Hollingworth, commanding officer of Medway. "Everyone involved demonstrated their professionalism during a challenging pursuit. It might be the first, but we're going to make sure that it won't be the last, and I speak on behalf of everyone here in saying this has galvanised our determination to succeed."

The boat contained several large packages which were quickly confirmed as being cocaine prior to being seized and brought aboard the warship.

It is believed the boat had come from South America, a common route taken by smugglers at this time of year.

After an overnight operation to secure the contraband – estimated by the National Crime Agency to be worth around £24m, had those drugs reached the streets of the United Kingdom – and detain the crew, the vessel was sunk by Medway's gunnery team.

The destruction of the drugs smuggling vessel, which is normal for this type of operation, ensures it is no longer used for illegal activity while also providing valuable gunnery training.

"Although we talk of these boats being commonplace in the Caribbean, that doesn't in any way diminish the achievement of landing a bust like this," said a member of the boarding team, U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 404, who wishes to remain anonymous.

"Together with our partners on board Medway and up in the skies above us, we're able to smash a hole in the supply chain and disrupt the movement of these harmful drugs before they have the chance to harm people at home and abroad."

Medway recently helped the people of the Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos in their recovery efforts following Hurricanes Ian and Fiona.

"It's a perfect example of Medway's versatility and demonstrates my team's ability to shift from Disaster Relief Operations to Counter Illicit Trafficking Operations without missing a beat," Hollingworth said.

"I'm exceptionally proud of the collective effort of my ship's

company and our colleagues from the U.S. Coast Guard for their proactive attitude and total commitment to the task.”