Coast Guard Offloads More than $475M in Illegal Narcotics in Miami

Bales of illegal drugs, worth an estimated $475 million, are offloaded onto pallets, Sept. 15, at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach, Florida. The illegal narcotics were offloaded by the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Legare (WMEC 912). *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Stephen Lehmann*

MIAMI — The crew of the USCGC Legare (WMEC 912) offloaded approximately 24,700 pounds of cocaine and 3,892 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated $475 million, Sept. 15, at Base Miami Beach, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

The drugs were interdicted in the international waters of the Caribbean Sea and the Eastern Pacific Ocean by crews from:

- His Netherlands Majesty's Ship HNLMS Groningen (P843) of the Royal Netherlands Navy and embarked U.S. Coast Guard

Law Enforcement Detachment 101
- U.S. Navy ship USS Billings (LCS 15) and embarked USCG LEDET 401
- Coast Guard Cutter James (WMSL 754)
- Coast Guard Cutter Legare (WMEC 912)

“I am proud of the crew’s continued devotion to duty that made this offload possible,” said Cmdr. Jeremy M. Greenwood, commanding officer of Legare. “Through the coordinated efforts of the Legare, the LEDETs, HNLMS Groningen, CGC James, and the USS Billings crews, we significantly contributed to the counter-drug mission and the dismantling of transnational criminal organizations. The drugs seized through this coordinated effort will result in significantly fewer drug-related overdoses.”

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean, 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.

The Legare is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter stationed in Portsmouth, Virginia. Legare’s missions include Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, Protection of Living Marine Resources, Homeland Security and Defense Operations, international training, and humanitarian operations. Legare patrols the offshore waters from Maine to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the Eastern Pacific, and the Caribbean.

Ishee Assumes Command of U.S. 6th Fleet and Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO

Vice Adm. Thomas E. Ishee relieved Vice Adm. Gene Black III as commander, U.S. 6th Fleet and commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO in a change of command ceremony held onboard U.S. Naval Support Activity Naples, Italy, Sept. 15. *U.S. NAVY*

U.S. NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY NAPLES, Italy – Vice Adm. Thomas E. Ishee relieved Vice Adm. Gene Black III as commander, U.S. 6th Fleet and commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO) in a change of command ceremony held onboard U.S. Naval Support Activity Naples, Italy, Sept. 15.

Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) and commander, Allied Joint Forces Command Naples, presided over the ceremony. Munsch outlined Black's

extensive accomplishments as 6th Fleet commander and presented Black with the Distinguished Service Medal.

“Gene has sustained an unprecedented level of activity as the fleet commander for the Euro-Atlantic area, recalibrating our combined forces for dynamic operations, as the tenets of strategic competition dictate, to deter Russian aggression and stand ready to defend NATO,” said Munsch. “No one can look at the tenor you’ve set and argue that our adversaries haven’t factored your warfighting command of 6th Fleet and STRIKFORNATO into their calculus.”

As 6th Fleet commander and deputy commander of NAVEUR-NAVAF, Black provided regional, national and international leadership with credible Navy and NATO combat capabilities across the European and African areas of operations. He also spearheaded the establishment of a European Navy-Marine Corps task force (Task Force 61 Naval Amphibious Forces Europe/ 2d Marine Division (TF-61/2)). TF 61/2 is charged with command and control of high-end U.S. forces, including Amphibious Ready Groups and Marine Expeditionary Units; Reconnaissance and Counter-Reconnaissance Marines; and intelligence and collection units able to integrate with theater allies and partners.

“The establishment of Task Force 61/2 has brought an enhanced rapid response capability to the 6th Fleet area of operations and has displayed the strength and flexibility of the Navy-Marine Corps team,” said Brig. Gen. Andrew Priddy, commanding general of TF 61/2.

Additionally, Black’s leadership of STRIKFORNATO yielded the first transfer of authority of a U.S. Carrier Strike Group to NATO since the Cold War, setting a new standard in NATO cohesion and cooperation. 6th Fleet and STRIKFORNATO executed multiple phases of the Project Neptune series in 2021 and 2022, expanding transfer of authority of allied carrier strike groups and of the USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) ARG and 22nd MEU,

substantially increasing flexibility and cohesion throughout the alliance.

“Demonstrating and enhancing NATO’s high-end maritime warfare capabilities shows the world the true strength and teamwork of our alliance,” Black said of Neptune Shield, held in May 2022. “NATO’s capacity to conduct integrated operations in the maritime domain … validates more than seven decades of Alliance interoperability.”

Ishee, previously the Director of Global Operations for U.S. Strategic Command, spoke of his appreciation for the team he will lead, while outlining his vision and goals for the command.

“History is unfolding before our eyes, and our nation, the alliance, other allies and our partners around the world are relying on 6th Fleet and STRIKFORNATO to maintain freedom of navigation, defend our nations and the alliance, and support our partners,” said Ishee. “We will continue to build these enduring relationships through training and exercises, common values, and shared experiences and vision.”

Black has been selected for reappointment to the grade of vice admiral and assignment as deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans, and strategy, N3/N5, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

U.S. 6th Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

Fairbanks Morse Defense Advances Maritime Tech With Technology Center of Excellence

BELOIT, Wis. – Fairbanks Morse Defense announced Sept. 15 it is redefining the technological limits of national security with the establishment of its Technology Center of Excellence, an initiative designed to consolidate the company's extensive technology resources under a single platform to maximize its capabilities.

"Most of the companies acquired by FMD in recent years have technology development in their roadmap, but they're spread out among the individual businesses," said FMD CEO George Whittier. "By consolidating these initiatives within a specific center of excellence, we can fully leverage our wealth of expertise to benefit our customers in a way that will improve reliability, enhance performance and reduce their lifecycle costs."

FMD's technology portfolio focuses on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital defenses, smart engineering solutions, uncrewed mission management and FM onboard. While the company's short-term focus is on technology solutions that support autonomy, electrification, and augmented reality, it plans to round out its technology portfolio, through organic growth and future acquisitions, with artificial intelligence and uncrewed systems solutions.

The new division will be led by Keith Haasl, vice president and general manager of Fairbanks Morse Technology. Haasl, a U.S. Army veteran, joined Fairbanks Morse Defense in 1994 and has established a reputation as a solutions-focused adviser to

the defense contractor’s top naval customers, as well as domestic and international commercial customers.

“We’re in constant conversations with our customers, and all the trends point to a future in which their missions are completed autonomously and with reduced human interaction,” Haasl said. “Our Technology Center of Excellence positions us to provide our customers with advanced AI, augmented reality, autonomy, electrification and unmanned solutions to ensure mission readiness well into the future.”

Commandant: Long-Range USV Will Be Primarily an ISR Platform That Launches Unmanned Assets

The Long-Range Unmanned Surface Vessel, being developed for the U.S. Marine Corps. *METAL SHARK*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Long-Range Unmanned Surface Vessel (LRUSV) under development will primarily serve as an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platform for the U.S. Marine Corps once it is fielded, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David H. Berger said Thursday during a virtual event hosted by Defense One.

Berger said the Marines are keenly interested in the distance the platform can cover, as well as its ability to launch other unmanned assets.

“What does it allow us to do that we can’t do right now? One is range across the surface of the water,” he said. “The second is we’re going to use it primarily not as a kinetic platform, but as an unmanned vessel that can launch unmanned collection systems. Now you’re really doubling the reach of where you can collect, where you can inform yourself about what’s happening in front of you.”

He added that the platform can be used on the electromagnetic spectrum to deny adversaries from collecting information against U.S. Navy assets.

“So the long-range unmanned surface vessel, primarily for us we’re looking at it as an ISR platform on the surface of the water that allows us to stretch out, to see what’s in front of us at much greater depth,” Berger said, “and then launch unmanned platforms in the air or on the surface or subsurface even farther. If we had to do that by humans right now, it would be manned vessels, manned aerial platforms, limited by range and the fatigue level, the endurance level, of a human being.

“This allows us to generate a whole lot of tempo and keep a shield, keep a screen out in front of us much more persistently,” he said.

The platform is currently located in the Norfolk, Virginia, area and will soon be transported to Hawaii, Berger said.

Although the LRUSV may be focused on ISR missions, the vessel is likely to get some lethal capabilities as well. Multiple reports indicate the Marines plan to acquire loitering munitions that can be launched from autonomous boats like the LRUSV.

First Australian MQ-4C Triton to Arrive in Mid-2024,

Official Says

The Australian government's first MQ-4C Triton was unveiled Sept. 15 in Palmdale, California. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

PALMDALE, Calif. — The Australian government will receive its first MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft at Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Tindal in the Northern Territory in 2024, an official said at an unveiling ceremony here Sept. 15.

Air Vice-Marshal Robert Denney, the RAAF head of Air Force capability, said during the ceremony that when the RAAF receives the aircraft, it will be used for many capabilities beyond its core intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance functions.

"It will revolutionize the ways the Australian Defense Forces conduct operations with our allies," he said.

The aircraft was unveiled at manufacturer Northrop Grumman's high-altitude, long-endurance aircraft production site in Palmdale. Both Australian and U.S. government officials were

on hand to talk about the Triton and the ongoing cooperation between Australian and U.S. defense forces.

Australia was a cooperative program partner in the Triton program as it was being developed. As a result, they will be able to share data with the United States that is collected by both countries' Tritons.

Rear Adm. Stephen Tedford, program executive officer for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons for the U.S. Navy, said during the ceremony that continued partnership between Australia and the United States will "allow both of our nations to better project military power, maintain our competitive edge, and maintain peace and stability in the region."

He noted that Australian personnel had been embedded in the Triton program since 2009.

"Since that time, this platform has expanded its capabilities far beyond those it started with," he said. "I am confident that our dedicated team … will work tirelessly to deliver this aircraft and many more to come."

The MQ-4C provides persistent ISR capabilities in a maritime environment, making it useful as a long-endurance surveillance platform in the Asia-Pacific region.

Northrop Grumman started building the first Australian Triton in October 2020 at its facility in Moss Point, Miss. In December 2021, the fuselage and one-piece wing were joined together in Palmdale. Production completion is planned for 2023 ahead of delivery in 2024.

Littoral Combat Ship USS Coronado Decommissioned

Capt. Marc Crawford, center, commodore of Littoral Combat Ship Squadron ONE, gives the order to decommission Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Coronado (LCS 4) during a decommissioning ceremony Sept. 14. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Vance Hand*

SAN DIEGO – Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Coronado (LCS 4) was decommissioned in San Diego, Sept. 14, the Navy said in a release.

As on operational unit, Coronado and its crew played an important role in the defense of the nation and maritime freedom. As a test and training ship, Coronado and its Sailors were key to determine the operational configuration and deployment capabilities of today's LCS platform.

"Today we recognize the great contribution Coronado and its crew made in developing the operational concepts foundational

to the current configuration and deployment of littoral combat ships," said Rear Adm. Wayne Baze, the ceremony's guest speaker and commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 3. "Thanks to Coronado, the future of LCS looks bright."

Coronado and its Sailors contributed a tremendous amount of work and time to ensure the future success of the LCS program during the ship's time in naval service. The ship worked alongside allied and partner nations while on a 14-month rotational deployment to the Indo-Pacific in 2017, including inaugural port visits to Cam Ranh, Vietnam and Lamut, Malaysia. While deployed, Coronado supported presence operations and maritime security operations to include the advancement of the LCS manned-unmanned teaming concepts through successful targeting exercises with an embarked MQ-8B Fire Scout. The ship's successful operations demonstrated the relevance of LCS as a platform that provides flexible options and tactical advantages.

"Since April 5th, 2014, Coronado has been the vanguard for proving the capabilities of the LCS platform and establishing the mission sets," said Cmdr. Spike Lamson, Coronado's commanding officer. "The dedication of her crews and supporting teams have guaranteed the future success of this class of ship and the crews that will operate them over-the horizon. I am proud to have served alongside her Sailors, and I am grateful for the opportunity to give Coronado the farewell she deserves."

Built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama, Coronado was commissioned April 5, 2014, at Naval Air Station North Island. The ship deployed to U.S. 7th Fleet, integrated with a carrier strike group, performed exercises with partner navies and conducted joint maneuvers with other U.S. Navy warships. Upon decommissioning, Coronado will be designated as Out of Commission, In Reserve asset, and its Sailors will receive follow-on orders to new assignments.

The first USS Coronado (PF 38) served in World War II and was decommissioned in 1945. The second USS Coronado (AGF 11) served in U.S. 2nd, 5th and 6th Fleets and as the flagship for Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet. The second Coronado was decommissioned in 2006 and sunk during Exercise Valiant Shield in 2012.

AeroVironment Introduces Puma VNS, a Visual-Based Navigation System for Small UAS

An illustration of a Puma small UAS equipped with the new Puma VNS, which determines the precise location of an aircraft during flight without relying on GPS. *AEROVIRONMENT*

ARLINGTON, Va. – AeroVironment Inc. on Sept. 15 introduced

Puma VNS, a visual-based navigation system for Puma 2 AE and Puma 3 AE small unmanned aircraft systems that will enable GPS-denied navigation across increasingly GPS-contested environments.

The system will provide operators with continually advanced navigation capabilities, features and functionality through anticipated software and hardware updates, the company said in a release. The system will also enable the integration of future autonomy capabilities.

“Puma VNS gives operators an unprecedented advantage in the battlefield,” said Trace Stevenson, AeroVironment vice president and product line general manager for SUAS. “Operators now can execute missions with more confidence in GPS-contested environment with the system’s new navigational capabilities.”

The next-generation navigation system features a suite of down-looking sensors that gather imagery data and track features on the ground, as well as an embedded compute module to process and determine the precise location of an aircraft while it is in flight. Designed with the operator in mind, the system automatically transitions to and from GPS-denied navigation mode without any input from the operator.

Puma VNS is available as an add-on option for new Puma 3 AE system orders and as a retrofit kit for fielded Puma 2 AE and Puma 3 AE systems.

CNO: Navy Needs to Maintain

the Lead on Ship Design

An artist's conception of the future USS Constellation (FFG 62). *FINCANTIERI MARINETTE MARINE*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The chief of naval operations praised the trend of the Navy leading the teams developing its ship designs in a recent interview, citing a recent success, and looking forward to more with the next-generation frigate and destroyer designs.

"We're learning a lot, as we can see with FFG [the FFG 62 Constellation-class frigate program]," said Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking in a Sept. 14 interview with Deputy Editor Bradley Peniston during Defense One's State of Defense webinar, commenting on the subject of the Navy's DDG(X) next-generation destroyer program.

"We're beginning to make progress on that first ship [FFG 62]," Gilday said.

"I think it's important that the Navy maintain the lead on design," he said. "So, what we've done with DDG(X) is we've brought in the private shipbuilders so that they can help

inform the effort. So, it's a team, but it's Navy-led. So, both of the companies that produce DDGs are involved in that initial design. Our intent is to go into build with a mature design. So, that would mean at more than the 80% complete point when we actually start bending metal.

"We have seen great success of that, with Columbia [-class ballistic-missile submarine] as an example, where we were at more than 80% design that we began that first hull," Gilday said.

"So that's going to be something that we're going to play close attention to, because it actually drives down technical risk," he said. "Technical risk has been a challenge for us, whether it has been Zumwalt [DDG 1000], LCS [littoral combat ship] or Ford [aircraft carrier] in particular. [With] those three builds, we have accepted technical risk, and it has cost us in terms of keeping those ships not only on budget but also on schedule."

The CNO said the design plan for DDG(X) will be to migrate the Arleigh Burke-class DDG combat systems to the larger-hull DDG(X), much as with the successful migration of the combat systems of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser to the Arleigh Burke in the late 1980s. He said the DDG(X) also will have increased space, weight, and power to handle future capability growth over time, possibly to include hypersonic missiles, which require larger launchers than the current Mk41 and MK75 vertical launching systems.

New SMS Promotes Safety

Mindset, Focus, Across Navy, Marine Corps

NORFOLK, Va. – The Department of the Navy has released its new Safety Management System (SMS), signaling significant changes toward a safety focus and mindset that embraces critical self-assessment and self-correction from the deckplate on up, Naval Safety Command Safety Promotions-Public Affairs announced Sept. 14.

The Naval Safety Command is tasked with implementing the Navy Safety and Occupational Health Manual, OPNAV-M 5100.23 CH-2, which follows the release of the command's updated mission, functions and tasks (MFT), enhancing its authorities and assessment roles. The SMS applies to every Sailor, Marine and civilian employee and to all activities across the naval enterprise.

"This new SMS marks a fundamental shift in how the Safety Command will guide the Navy's efforts to identify and communicate risk aligning with the CNO's 'Get Real, Get Better' initiative," said Safety Command Commander, Rear Adm. Christopher M. Engdahl. "The SMS takes a systems approach to managing risk and assuring effective risk controls and accountability are in place."

Key takeaways from the new publication expound upon the four desired outcomes for a unified and resilient SMS:

1. Safe Place. Ensure a safe work environment and that emergency protocols and systems are operable and regularly tested.
2. Safe People. Personnel across all levels are trained, qualified and comply with established procedures and are risk aware and fit to work (general health and well-being).

3. Safe Property/Materiel. People have the right tools, equipment and infrastructure that are safe to operate and operate safely.
4. Safe Processes/Procedures. Current standard operating procedures, emergency and safety procedures and maintenance standards are accessible.

The new SMS is a formal, systems-based approach to managing risk and assuring the effectiveness of risk controls to meet these desired outcomes. The SMS provides a framework for risk resilience focusing on the behaviors of self-awareness, self-assessment, self-correction and continual learning. The new SMS was developed by benchmarking the best practices of high-performing organizations in both government and commercial sectors.

“We must all adopt a learning mindset,” said Engdahl. “A high level of rigor, discipline and transparency are critical. Leaders must share what they learn from not only best practices but also actions contrary to procedures or processes to help others succeed, find the best solution, and adjust plans and processes as needed.

“Our Navy needs everyone to be active in mitigating risks to their operational environment and that of their fellow Sailors and Marines,” he said.

Garmin G3000 Selected to Modernize Navy and Marine

Corps F-5 Aircraft

An F-5N Tiger-II from the "Sun Downers" of Fighter Squadron Composite 111 takes off from Naval Air Station Key West's Boca Chica Field in 2020. *U.S. NAVY / Danette Baso Silvers*

OLATHE, Kansas – Garmin International Inc. announced Sept. 13 the selection of the Garmin G3000 integrated flight deck by Tactical Air Support Inc. as part of a contract with the U.S. Department of Defense's F-5N+/F+ Avionics Reconfiguration and Tactical Enhancement/Modernization for Inventory Standardization (ARTEMIS) program.

Tactical Air first selected the Garmin G3000 for their F-5 adversary aircraft training fleet in 2018. This recent award builds upon Tactical Air and Garmin's strategic relationship now serving the DoD fleet of F-5 adversary aircraft. Garmin's commercial-off-the-shelf G3000 open architecture supports integration with a wide range of mission equipment including military sensors, helmet mounted displays and advanced electrically scanned radar systems.

"It is an honor to team with Tactical Air and have our versatile G3000 integrated flight deck chosen for the ARTEMIS

contract with the Department of Defense," said Carl Wolf, Garmin vice president of aviation sales and marketing. "Garmin is proud to see our integrated flight deck technologies, deployed now on over 25,000 aircraft, also being adopted by the U.S. military and enhancing the mission and safety capabilities of our nation's warfighters."

The F-5 is a supersonic, multi-role tactical fighter and attack aircraft that in this role will provide air-to-air combat training, close-air support training, tactical development and evaluation support. The upgraded F-5 Advanced Tiger will be used in an aggressor training role, and the G3000 will transform the cockpit with one large area display and two touchscreen controllers. These upgrades bring modern safety systems and new tactical capabilities to the older airframes while also solving parts obsolescence and reliability issues within the existing avionics system.

"Tactical Air is thrilled to have Garmin's cutting edge G3000 in the F-5 AT cockpit," said RC Thompson, Tactical Air CEO. "The Garmin integrated flight deck gave us an outstanding COTS solution to the Navy and Marine Corps' recently purchased fleet of F-5 aircraft to make them an even more capable adversary fighter for our aviators to train against."

The G3000 boasts a large and vibrant high-resolution flight display that seamlessly interfaces to the F-5's existing mission computer, enabling advanced mapping, tactical radio capabilities, radar display and more. The non-proprietary interface, software-based human-machine interface and mission integration will enable the DoD to rapidly deploy new technologies in the future, while providing access to the latest in commercial Communication, Navigation, Surveillance/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) capabilities. Tactical Air has integrated the L3Harris ForceX mission computer along with a wide range of military sensors, communications equipment, and weapons systems into the G3000 touchscreen HMI.

In addition to night vision goggle compatibility, the G3000 contains modern, state-of-the-art synthetic vision technology that blends an “out-the-window” view of surroundings on the large area, primary flight displays, which is particularly helpful during nighttime operations and during close air support missions. Additional features within the G3000 integrated flight deck on the F-5 include Terrain Awareness and Warning System, Traffic Collision Avoidance System and Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B IN) traffic.