Coast Guard Delivers Water to Drought-Stricken Kiribati at Critical Juncture

The Coast Guard Cutter Oliver Berry crew conducts a potable water offload while moored up at Kiritimati Island, Kiribati, July 8. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU — The island nation of Kiribati is surrounded by water. Too much of it, actually, because climate change and rising sea levels are endangering the 33 scattered small, sparsely populated and low-lying islands in the Gilbert, Phoenix and Line chain islands of Micronesia. And, safe drinking water is in short supply.

The government of the Republic of Kiribati recently declared a state of disaster last month due to lasting drought conditions caused by below normal rainfall.

Kiribati is 2,400 miles due south of Hawaii, about half way to

Australia, and straddles the equator. It has a population of about 119,000, most of whom live on the island of Tarawa. The country's highest elevation is 266 feet above sea level on the island of Banaba.

The Pacific Humanitarian Air Service, operated by the United Nations World Food Programme and UNICEF, transported emergency supplies to Kiribati on July 7, to help with the emergency.

According to the World Food Programme, the delivery included essential supplies, including "water, sanitation, hygiene" and dignity kits with collapsible water containers, buckets with lids, water purification tablets and soap. The shipment also delivered portable water field testing kits to help Kiribati authorities monitor water quality at both source and household levels.

A 2018 declaration by the Pacific Islands Forum nations said climate change is the "single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific."

Melting polar ice and glaciers are causing the sea level to rise, endangering low-lying countries like Kiribati. In fact, the islands may become inhabitable in a matter of decades. Many small islands rely on rain catchment systems for drinking water, so severe drought has a negative impact on the population.

Honolulu-based Coast Fast Response Cutter USCGC Oliver Berry (WPC 1124) delivered potable drinking water to the island of Kiritimati, working with U.N. representatives to support the local residents amid the national state of emergency.

In addition to providing humanitarian assistance, the Oliver Berry crew supported Kiribati maritime law enforcement efforts, providing patrol coverage in Kiribati's exclusive economic zone to deter illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, support Kiribati resource security and strengthen

maritime governance in Oceania.

“The Oliver Berry’s patrol demonstrates the United States Coast Guard’s enduring commitment to our partner nations throughout Oceania,” said Howell. “Instances like these pave the way for future Coast Guard assets to support The Republic of Kiribati and its citizens.”

Amid the natural disaster is a political storm, too. Kiribati withdrew from a July 11-14 summit of Pacific Islands Forum leaders at the last minute, citing a lack of concern over issues important to the country.

The withdrawal coincides with efforts by China to have greater influence in Oceania.

The positive presence of a U.S. Coast Guard cutter and crew sends a reassuring message of support at a critical time.

HII Hits Milestone on Aircraft Carrier John F. Kennedy

Machinist Mate Second Class Allington Scotland, left, and New New Shipbuilding Construction Supervisor Keith Wright inspect the 1,000th compartment space turned over to the crew of John F. Kennedy (CVN 79). *HII*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – HII, America's only builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, announced July 11 that its Newport News Shipbuilding division reached a significant milestone in the compartment and systems construction of aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CVN 79).

Newport News recently turned over to the ship's crew the 1,000th compartment of the 2,615 total spaces. The milestone reflects the shipyard's steady progress toward delivery of the ship to the Navy. Newport News has also installed more than 9.8 million feet of cable, or more than 1,800 miles, of the approximately 10.5 million feet of cable on John F. Kennedy.

The most recently completed spaces include electrical and engineering. This allows sailors assigned to the pre-commissioning unit to increase training on the ship while final outfitting and testing progresses.

“Our shipbuilders are highly skilled, determined and working incredibly hard to bring Kennedy to life,” said Lucas Hicks, vice president, New Construction Aircraft Carrier Programs CVN 78 and CVN 79. “This is about equipping our Sailors with the most advanced aircraft carrier ever built for the U.S. Navy. We are proud to execute for the customer, and finalize the remaining equipment, systems and compartments that will bring us closer to delivering the ship to the Navy.”

John F. Kennedy, the second ship in the Ford class, is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in 2024. Two other Ford-class aircraft carriers are currently under construction at Newport News, Enterprise (CVN 80) and Doris Miller (CVN 81).

The Ford-class aircraft carriers are the first to be designed 100% digitally. Although the ships were designed in a digital environment, paper drawings are still used during the construction process. John F. Kennedy represents a transition to a new digital construction process, with shipbuilders beginning to use visual work instructions on laptops and tablets rather than paper drawings. Enterprise will be the first carrier totally built using the digital tools.

Ford-class enhancements incorporated into the design include flight deck changes, improved weapons handling systems and a redesigned island, all resulting in increased aircraft sortie generation rates. The Ford class also features new nuclear power plants, increased electrical power-generation capacity, allowance for future technologies, and reduced workload for Sailors, translating to a smaller crew size and reduced operating costs for the Navy. Construction processes on Ford–class carriers are enabled by workforce learning that took place on USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) and those lessons are being applied throughout the Ford class, HII said.

F/A-18 Super Hornet Blown Overboard from USS Harry S. Truman

Aircraft, attached to Carrier Air Wing One, fly alongside USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), left, and USS San Jacinto (CG 56) during an air and sea power demonstration, July 3. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Crayton Agnew*

NAPLES, Italy – An F/A-18 Super Hornet assigned to Carrier Air Wing 1, embarked aboard USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), blew overboard on July 8 due to unexpected heavy weather in the Mediterranean Sea, U.S. Naval Forces Europe said July 10.

According to a source, the Super Hornet was a two-seat F/A-81F and was assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron 211, based at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

The carrier was conducting a replenishment at sea, which was safely terminated through established procedures. All personnel aboard the ship are accounted for.

One Sailor received minor injuries while conducting operations during the unexpected heavy weather. The Sailor is in stable condition and expected to make a full recovery.

USS Harry S. Truman and embarked aircraft remain full mission capable. Details and the cause of the incident are under investigation.

Navy Demos New Mine Countermeasure Prototype on MQ-8C Fire Scout

An MQ-8C Fire Scout demonstrates a new mine countermeasure prototype technology in May 2022 at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, proving a capability that could allow the warfighter to rapidly detect and respond to threats. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy recently demonstrated a mine countermeasure prototype technology aboard the MQ-8C Fire Scout UAS at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, proving a capability that could allow the warfighter to rapidly detect and respond to threats, Naval Air Systems Command said July 7.

The objective of the demonstration was to gather performance data for both the MQ-8C Fire Scout and Single-system Multi-mission Airborne Mine Detection (SMAMD) System to inform future MCM integration efforts.

"The team successfully demonstrated that the prototype SMAMD System effectively operates as designed aboard the MQ-8C Fire Scout unmanned helicopter in relevant real-world environments," said Capt. Thomas Lansley, Fire Scout program

director. “This cutting-edge technology could really enhance Fire Scout’s capability going forward.”

The team conducted operations from the Naval Surface Warfare Center using drifting, tethered and moored mines throughout beach zone to deep waters. They gathered data day and night, across all water depths and in mild to difficult weather conditions.

The demonstration also proved the reliable and repeatable high performance of the MQ-8C Fire Scout. The air vehicle handled the dual podded system with ease, being the first MCM capability flown on the MQ-8C as well as the heaviest payload carried to date. Fire Scout successfully operated in restricted and unrestricted air space alongside other aircraft platforms.

The SMAMD System, developed by BAE Systems under a Future Naval Capability Program sponsored by the Office of Naval Research, is an airborne optical sensor suite that, in a single pass, detects and localizes mines and obstacles on land and at sea. With a low false alarm rate, SMAMD provides real-time detection sent via data link enabling warfighters to respond much quicker to threats than the current MCM technologies allow as post-mission analysis is required.

This effort, led by ONR, included support from multiple organizations across the Navy and industry including the MQ-8 Fire Scout program office, the Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Aircraft Prototype Systems Division, Webster Outlying Field, the Digital Analytics Infrastructure and Technology Advancement Group Prototyping, Instrumentation and Experimentation Department, and Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two Four (UX-24).

ONR and PMA-266 engaged NAWCAD AIRWorks to manage the demonstration taking advantage of AIRWorks’ project execution

expertise and ability to connect warfare center resources.

“The AIRWorks SMAMD Team was proud to be a part of demonstrating a future naval capability which provides real-time threat detection to the warfighter,” said AIRWorks’ project lead Kristina Hewitt-Thompson. “Through this effort, we were able to assist in risk reduction and provide critical data for future integration.”

Throughout the project, the team facilitated execution of a complex demonstration including airworthiness and cyber certifications, design, fabrication and hardware integration along with flying qualities testing prior to the final demonstration at Eglin, she said. They assured close coordination between the U.S. Air Force, ONR, NAVAIR, NAVSEA and other stakeholder organizations to successfully achieve their objectives in less than 24 months and at a reduced cost.

Marine Corps successfully tests Medium Range Intercept Capability Prototype

Program Executive Officer Land Systems Ground-Based Air Defense Program Manager Don Kelley shows the expeditionary launcher of the Medium-Range Intercept Capability prototype to Marine Corps senior leaders following a successful test demonstration of the system at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, June 30. *U.S. ARMY / John Hamilton*

White Sands Missile Range, N.M. – The Marine Corps' Medium-Range Intercept Capability prototype successfully hit several simultaneously-launched cruise missile representative targets during the live-fire test at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico on June 30., Program Executive Officer Land Systems announced July 8.

The MRIC prototype provides Marine Corps point defense in an expeditionary package. The system is one of several initiatives critical to Force Design 2030, addressing an emergent capability gap for the Marine Corps. PEO Land System's Ground-Based Air Defense program oversees the system.

"This demonstration proves that we do now have a relevant capability," said Don Kelley, program manager for GBAD at PEO

Land Systems, immediately following the successful test.

MRIC, which counts the Corps' Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar and Common Aviation Command and Control System among its primary subsystems, also incorporates technology from Israel's proven Iron Dome system. The live-fire test was designed to validate the primary subsystems' integrations and the system's overall capability to provide critical information to senior Marine Corps leadership as they decide the path forward for the MRIC prototype.

During the test, the G/ATOR successfully tracked each target, from immediately after launch and passed the tracks through the CAC2S to the Israeli Iron Dome components. This allowed the MRIC system to simultaneously neutralize multiple missiles encircling the system from various angles. At its peak, numerous in-air targets, each with its own unique flight trajectory and velocity, surrounded the MRIC prototype. Upon firing, MRIC successfully hit each target using the Tamir missile.

The June event built upon the previous live-fire test in December, during which the program office launched multiple targets in sequence, with MRIC intercepting each target before the next one launched. This time around, multiple targets were launched simultaneously. Prior to the event, Kelley said engineers at Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren ran independent simulations of what would happen during the live-fire test. The results, Kelley said, correlated closely to the modeled simulations.

Berger: Marine Corps Reinforcements to NATO Good Example of Stand-In Force Concept

U.S. Marines with Golf Company, Battalion Landing Team 2/6, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, participate in a live-fire range in Setermoen, Norway, April 26. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. Yvonna Guyette*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The rapid deployment of Marine Corps forces exercising in Norway to a real-world situation in eastern Europe to shore up NATO presence was a good example of a stand-in force operating inside a weapons engagement zone, the Marine Corps commandant said.

Speaking July 7 in a webinar of the Hudson Institute, a Washington think tank, Gen. David H. Berger, commandant of the

Marine Corps, said the 2,000-plus Marines sent from the U.S. East Coast to Norway for a scheduled major exercise, as well as others to an unrelated reconnaissance/counter exercise, were able to rapidly redeploy deeper in Europe in support of NATO forces when Russia invaded Ukraine in February.

The Marine Corps forces Europe at the time included a squadron of F/A-18C Hornet strike fighters and an air control squadrons detachment with a Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar, plus information and intelligence units. KC-130J tanker/transport aircraft also were dispatched to the area.

The Marine units were in a "very forward posture inside the collection and weapons engagement zone, operating persistently all the time, not trying to hide, showing them that we're there," Berger said.

"The creativity of them [the deployed Marines] in terms of mobility and also understanding things like satellite vulnerability windows, the basics of camouflage – in other words, knowing when they can see me and how do I use that from an information perspective effectively," he said. "How do I confuse them [the adversary], how do I convince them that they're seeing is what they want to see but it's not really accurate?"

Berger praised the deployed Marines, noting their "just marvelous, magnificent, creative work by a bunch of Marines, all as stand-in force, all withing the range of weapons systems."

He noted that a similar demonstration from the Indo-Pacific region, where Marines were moving around between the first and second island chains by ship and ashore "constantly making sure the adversary knew we were there, constantly moving small elements, constantly repeating closing kill chains over and over – constructive ones – trying to cut the timeline down, down, down. Once you get it down and you're comfortable, start

interdicting [our] different communications paths to make it harder on ourselves.

“The idea is just ‘give it to the operating forces, the fleet, and let them run with it,’” he said. “They will inform us what worked best in their neighborhood. I’m very comfortable what’s working in the Middle East may be a little bit different flavor and what’s happening in Europe may be different than what’s happening in the Pacific. We need to be flexible enough to allow for that, and we can.

“This isn’t a ‘go there for exercise and come home’,” the commandant said. “It’s ‘stay in their face the whole time.’”

Royal Navy, Assisted by US Navy’s 5th Fleet, Seizes Smuggled Iranian Missiles

HMS Montrose seized Iranian weapons from speedboats earlier this year, including surface-to-air missiles and engines for land-attack cruise missiles. *ROYAL NAVY*

LONDON — In early 2022, while on routine maritime security operations, Royal Navy ship HMS Montrose seized Iranian weapons from speedboats being operated by smugglers in international waters south of Iran, the U.K Ministry of Defence said July 7. The weapons seized included surface-to-air-missiles and engines for land attack cruise missiles, in contravention of UN Security Council resolution 2216 (2015).

This is the first time a British naval warship has interdicted a vessel carrying such sophisticated weapons from Iran.

The seizures, which occurred on Jan. 28 and Feb. 25, took place in the early hours of the morning. HMS Montrose's Wildcat helicopter was scanning for vessels smuggling illicit goods. The helicopter crew spotted small vessels moving at speed away from the Iranian coast.

During the February interdiction, U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-

class guided-missile destroyer USS Gridley supported efforts by deploying a Seahawk helicopter to provide critical overwatch during the operation. On both occasions, the Wildcat helicopter pursued the vessels and reported back to HMS Montrose that they could see suspicious cargo on deck.

A team of Royal Marines approached the vessels on two rigid-hulled inflatable boats before securing and searching the vessel. Dozens of packages containing advanced weaponry were discovered, confiscated and brought back to HMS Montrose.

“The U.K. is committed to upholding international law, from standing up to aggression in Europe to interdicting illegal shipments of weaponry that perpetuates instability in the Middle East,” said Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey. “The U.K. will continue to work in support of an enduring peace in Yemen and is committed to international maritime security so that commercial shipping can transit safely without threat of disruption.”

The seized packages were returned to the U.K. for technical analysis, which revealed the shipment contained multiple rocket engines for the Iranian-produced 351 land-attack cruise missile and a batch of 358 surface-to-air missiles.

The 351 is a cruise missile with a range of 1,000 kilometers, regularly used by the Houthis to strike targets in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and was also the type of weapon used to attack Abu Dhabi on Jan. 17, which killed three civilians.

On June 24, the Ministry of Defence hosted a panel of experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2140 (2014), which concerns the conflict in Yemen. The panel inspected the seized weapons and received a technical brief by the U.K.’s defense intelligence analysts.

“These interdictions demonstrate the professionalism and commitment of the Royal Navy to promoting stability in this region,” said Cmdr. Claire Thompson, commanding Officer of HMS

Montrose. “I am extremely proud of my crew – the Royal Navy Sailors, aircrew and Royal Marines involved in these endeavors and the significant positive impact they are having in maintaining the international rules-based order at sea.”

The U.K. retains a permanent presence in the Middle East, with HMS Montrose having been deployed to the region since early 2019, actively supporting multinational maritime security operations and protecting the interests of the United Kingdom and its allies. The ship operates under the control and direction of the UK Maritime Component Command, based in Bahrain.

Boeing Delivers 150th P-8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft

The newest Boeing P-8 maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft takes to the skies over Puget Sound, Washington. *BOEING*

SEATTLE – The newest Boeing P-8 maritime patrol, reconnaissance aircraft took to the skies over Puget Sound bringing the total number of P-8s delivered to 150, the company said July 7. The 150th multi-mission P-8 will be operated by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron One (VX-1) based at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland.

“There are now 150 P-8s around the world delivering confidence and an unmatched capability to our global customers,” said Stu Voboril, vice president and program manager of P-8 Programs. “Our focus has been, and will be, on delivering the world’s best maritime patrol aircraft.”

Amassing more than 450,000 mishap-free flight hours, the global P-8 fleet includes 112 aircraft delivered to the U.S. Navy, 12 to Australia, 12 to India, nine to the United Kingdom and five to Norway. First deliveries to New Zealand, Korea and Germany are scheduled for 2022, 2023 and 2024 respectively.

The aircraft are designed for antisubmarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and search and rescue.

The 150 P-8s in service do not include six test aircraft provided to the U.S. Navy during the initial stages of the program. Boeing tested those aircraft during development to assess capabilities and performance. As development of system enhancements and new technology continues, the test aircraft perform a critical role in ensuring Boeing provides state-of-the-art capabilities to global P-8 customers.

Coyote Aerial Target has 100th Launch

Northrop Grumman's GQM 163-A Coyote, a target vehicle used to simulate advanced anti-ship cruise missile threats. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

CHANDLER, Ariz. – Northrop Grumman Corp. is celebrating the

100th launch of its GQM-163A Coyote target vehicle, which continues to support testing ship anti-cruise missile defenses for U.S. and allied navies, the company said July 7.

The Coyote is a threat-representative target the U.S. Navy uses to prepare, train and qualify systems and crews aboard naval vessels. Northrop Grumman originally designed the target as a Mach 2.5+ sea-skimming target and later added the capability to attain Mach 3.5+ as a diving target from an altitude of over 50,000 feet.

“The unique speed, performance and versatility of this target has enabled us to meet multiple mission scenarios for our customer for over two decades,” said Rich Straka, vice president of launch vehicles at Northrop Grumman. “As the only supersonic sea-skimming target produced in the United States, the Coyote is part of a family of tactical targets that ensures U.S. Navy systems are ready and capable to defend against threats.”

Naval Air Systems Command awarded Northrop Grumman this program in 2000 with its initial launch in 2003. The total contract value is over $329 million. Along with this successful launch, the team has delivered more than 145 targets to the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Navy has ordered 218 targets to date with more options in the years ahead.

Northrop Grumman Begins Building New Missile

Integration Facility

The Navy’s Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile-Extended Range (AARGM-ER) completes its first live fire event July 19 off the coast of Point Mugu Sea Test Range in California. *U.S. NAVY*

ROCKET CITY, W.Va. – Northrop Grumman Corporation announced July 6 the construction of a new 113,000 square foot facility in West Virginia that will increase the company’s capacity within the defense industrial base to ensure delivery of current and future weapons to meet warfighter needs.

“Our new missile integration facility is a factory of the future, designed to affordably produce high quantities of missiles to meet increasing customer demand,” said Mary Petryszyn, corporate vice president and president of Northrop Grumman Defense Systems. “Northrop Grumman’s investments in manufacturing capacity, digital processes and emerging technologies translates into the rapid deployment of capability into the field.”

Once completed in 2024, the missile integration facility will have the capacity to support production of up to 600 strike missiles per year. The facility’s production operations will commence with the second lot of the Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile – Extended Range low-rate initial production. Unlike traditional missile integration facilities, Northrop Grumman’s facility is not limited to producing one type of missile but is easily modified to manage the integration of current and new missile programs.

Northrop Grumman will incorporate the latest in digital manufacturing including automation and the use of smart manufacturing equipment and modular work cells. These manufacturing approaches will allow the company to optimize quality, reduce costs, and maximize production capacity and production times to deliver missiles to the warfighter quickly.

The facility is expected to include expanded manufacturing workforce skillsets, adding engineering and manufacturing jobs to the area, reinforcing Northrop Grumman’s leadership as one of West Virginia’s largest manufacturing employers.