International Partners Collaborate to End Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

Crew members from the Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) prepare to conduct a law enforcement boarding from the cutter's 35-foot Cutter Boat in the Central Pacific, Dec. 2, 2018. The cutter was conducting its first operational patrol and was enforcing conservation and management measures established by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew West*

The 2021 Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange was conducted virtually from Hawaii, with a focus on the global problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The event took place Sept. 8-9, and was moderated by retired Navy Capt. Larry Osborn, Navy League Pacific Region vice president, and hosted by the East West center, Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies and the Pacific Forum.

The Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange (IMSE) is produced annually by Navy League of the United States Honolulu Council. The enduring IMSE theme is "building partnerships for security, stability and prosperity. IMSE's purpose is to provide a forum for senior leaders, subject matter experts and interested members of the general public to engage in dialogue about maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.

The two-day event concentrated on the problems created by IIU fishing and the solutions available to counter the illegal fishing and the impacts on this vital global food resource.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, IUU fishing is a pervasive, far-reaching security threat.

“IUU fishing has replaced piracy as the leading global maritime security threat. If IUU fishing continues unchecked, we can expect deterioration of fragile coastal states and increased tension among foreign-fishing nations, threatening geo-political stability around the world,” said Commandant of the Coast Guard Adm. Karl Schultz in the service’s IUU Fishing Strategic Outlook, released in September 2020.

The IMSE conference examined new technologies to conduct all-domain sensing and gather information through satellite imagery and acoustic data, as well as methods to share and analyze huge amounts of data to deter illegal fishing.

Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, vice commandant of the Coast Guard, and Rear Adm. Blake Converse, deputy commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, both delivered keynote addresses that emphasized the importance of partnerships, especially between multi-national organizations, nations and agencies with the means to detect and interdict violators and those countries who rely on their fisheries. Rear Adm. Matthew W. Sibley, commander of USCG District 14, shared the Coast Guard’s support to the nations in Oceania, which have limited assets and resources, to help them combat IUU fishing.

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, IUU fishing is “a broad term that captures a wide variety of fishing activity. IUU fishing is found in all types and dimensions of fisheries; it occurs both on the high seas and in areas within national jurisdiction. It concerns all aspects and stages of the capture and utilization of fish, and it may sometimes be associated with organized crime.”

Capt. Holly Harrison, commanding officer USCG Kimball (WMSL 756), detailed the actual operations involved in approaching, boarding, inspecting and taking any necessary action aboard

fishing vessels on the high seas.

There is no one solution to the problem that affects both large and small nations in so many ways. "Combating IUU fishing has to be a whole of government and a whole of society approach," said retired Rear Adm. Pete Gumataotao, head of the East West Center at the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

Osborn said IUUF is a maritime security threat that has a destabilizing effect on the Indo-Pacific region.

"The war on IUUF is won through trust and international collaboration. Data from commercial SIGINT [signals intelligence], EO [electro-optical imagery] and SAR [synthetic aperture radar] satellite constellations, as well as commercial acoustic arrays attached to unmanned surface vehicles, will make it impossible for 'dark vessels' to conceal their locations and identities."

Osborn said the conference examined the application of artificial intelligence and machine language learning, which have become indispensable tools in creating actionable intelligence from disparate datasets.

"We found academics, NGOs, and small entrepreneurial companies with relevant technologies and solutions," he said. "I think this made our conference a success.

"The international stakeholders have done a commendable job in illuminating the problem and holding the violators accountable. The key has been collaboration and transparency," Osborn said. "Once you have that many of the other problems go away."

CNO Creating Unmanned Systems Task Force to Ensure Reliability, Command and Control

System technicians perform a safety test on a MANTAS T38 Devil Ray unmanned surface vehicle in San Diego Bay for an operational test run during U.S. Pacific Fleet's Unmanned Systems Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP) 21. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alex Perlman*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Getting the right mix of unmanned air, surface and undersea vehicles in the U.S. Navy's future fleet is so critical, the Chief of Naval Operations is creating an unmanned systems task force to sort out nagging issues like scalability, reliability, command, and control.

In a virtual appearance Sept. 8 at the Defense News online conference, Adm. Michael Gilday said he was unsatisfied with the Navy's pace of unmanned development, citing reservations about the reliability of unmanned vessels for long range, long duration missions, as well as command and control issues.

"Over the next few months, we'll be standing up an unmanned task force," similar in terms of scope and purpose to Project Overmatch, Gilday said. A group of technical experts, along with operators, will focus on problems "to move forward in all three domains, at speed, to make unmanned a reality by the end of this decade."

Gilday likened the new unmanned task force to Project Overmatch, the Navy's plan to develop a new fleet architecture using artificial intelligence (AI) and manned/unmanned teaming to enable distributed maritime operations. Highly mobile and widely distributed Navy and Marine Corps element are a basic

game plan for dealing with near-peer adversaries like China in contested areas of the vast Indo-Pacific region.

As the Navy plans future fleet battle problems, “One of the things I’ll be looking for is how we utilize unmanned [systems] at scale into the fleet, because we know that in the future. They’re going to be a significant part of distributed maritime operations,” Gilday said.

Gilday said the task force will include both Sailors and Navy civilians. “We have a lot of technical expertise in the Navy today that we can leverage,” including warfighting labs and systems commands, he said. Still in the early stages of planning, Gilday said he would be able to share more details about the task force “by early 2022.”

Gilday, and some key lawmakers, have expressed concern about the reliability of unmanned surface and undersea vessels deployed at sea for extended periods of time with little or no maintenance. The CNO said he’s seen progress in that area this year, noting three successful missions by unmanned surface vessels transiting more than 4,000 miles from the Gulf Coast, through the Panama Canal to California, while operating autonomously 98% of the time. However, “we’re not yet satisfied where we need to be with respect to reliability but we are quickly moving in that direction” although it’s still a few years before the Navy can go to the Pentagon and Congress with a plan to produce unmanned vessels at scale.

Concerns about command and control over unmanned systems was the genesis for Project Overmatch, Gilday said. With an initial plan to have a third of the fleet unmanned or minimally unmanned “we knew we couldn’t command and control, let’s say well over 100 vessels, without changing the way we were networked,” the CNO said.

“I do think as we look at AI applications for unmanned, it’s going to be a journey for us before we talk about an

autonomous, unmanned fleet," Gilday said. Initially, such platforms will be minimally manned or teamed with manned vessels. "The man in the loop is going to be an important piece for a while," he said.

The U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) also will establish a new task force to accelerate integration of unmanned systems of all domains and artificial intelligence, the NAVCENT commander said recently.

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet and commander, U.S. Naval Forces U.S. Central Command, speaking Sept. 8 to reporters by phone conference, said Task Force 59 (TF59) would be established on Sept. 9 in Manama, Bahrain.

Marine Corps' First MQ-9A Reaper Delivered to 3rd MAW

U.S. Marine Corps Captain Joshua Brooks, an unmanned aircraft system representative, and Master Sergeant Willie Cheeseboro Jr., an enlisted aircrew coordinator with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU) 1, prepare to launch and operate the first Marine Corps owned MQ-9A Reaper on Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, Aug. 30, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Gabrielle Sanders*

YUMA, Ariz. – Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron One (VMU-1), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing procured the Marine Corps' first MQ-9A Reaper remotely piloted aircraft after transitioning from contractor-owned, contractor-operated (COCO) to government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma on Aug. 30, said Cpl. Levi Voss, a spokesperson for the wing.

To achieve the commandant of the Marine Corps' vision of future force design, VMU-1 has transitioned from the RQ-21 Group 3 unmanned aircraft to the MQ-9A. Since 2018, flight operations of the MQ-9A have fallen under a COCO construct. However, the MQ-9A has since transitioned to a GOCO unmanned aerial system, signifying the Marine Corps' ownership of these assets and progressing toward an organically trained and qualified aircrew. This noteworthy flight is the culmination of three years of training, safety, and operational planning, contractor maintenance, process development, and staff analysis of risk management to ensure complete procedural adherence to Navy and Marine Corps aviation policies.

"VMU-1 is living the commandant's vision of Force Design 2030 and our unit is laying the groundwork for future squadrons to execute similar missions within INDOPACOM [U.S. Indo-Pacific Command] or anywhere else that we are needed," said Maj. Keenan Chirhart, executive officer of VMU-1.

VMU-1's procurement of the Marine Corps' first MQ-9A evolves the service as a force, making it capable of further integration of operations in naval, ground, air, and cyber domains. As the Marine Corps transitions to government-owned, government-operated employment of the MQ-9A, Force Design 2030 presents opportunities for similar implementation across the globe. This transition gives VMU-1 the capability of piloting the forward-deployed MQ-9A that aligns with the Commandant's directive for persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, which have supported daily combat operations around the world.

"The MQ-9A is a medium-altitude, long-endurance Group 5 remotely piloted aircraft capable of conducting multiple mission sets to include multi-sensor imagery reconnaissance, unmanned aerial escort, and electronic support," said Chirhart.

Aside from being the first Marine Corps-owned MQ-9A flight in

history, this flight is also a huge step toward verification of policies and procedures that have been developed by VMU-1. With this transition to the MQ-9A, VMU-1 is currently engaged in executing maritime domain awareness operations in highly-contested areas, providing friendly forces a multi-domain reconnaissance capability across the electromagnetic spectrum.

Moreover, it proves that VMU-1 is uniquely positioned to enable naval and joint force targeting from a remote location by a Marine aviator and sensor operator, while the aircraft is physically located within another combatant commander's area of operation.

The MQ-9A was developed by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems. The remotely piloted aircraft capability revolutionizes military operations by allowing the system operator to operate from ship and shore and employ both collection and lethal payloads while integrating with command and control centers, allowing the synchronization of remotely piloted aircraft with ground and air assets.

Carl Vinson CSG Enters South China Sea, Upholds Freedom of Seas

Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) transits the South China Sea with Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa (LCS 16), Sept. 7, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Haydn N. Smith*

SOUTH CHINA SEA – The Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group (VINCSG) is operating in the South China Sea for the first

time during the group's 2021 deployment, said Ens. Charina Camacho, a spokesperson for the Carl Vinson.

While in the South China Sea, the strike group is conducting maritime security operations, which include flight operations with fixed and rotary wing aircraft, maritime strike exercises, and coordinated tactical training between surface and air units. Carrier operations in the South China Sea are part of the U.S. Navy's routine presence in the Indo-Pacific.

"The freedom of all nations to navigate in international waters is important, and especially vital in the South China Sea, where nearly a third of global maritime trade transits each year," said Rear Adm. Dan Martin, commander, Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group. "As we've transited the Pacific from San Diego to the South China Sea, we have had the privilege and pleasure to work alongside our allies, partners, and joint service teammates in training, exercises, engagements and operations – all with a common goal to ensure peace and stability throughout the region. It is in all of our interest that the international community plays an active role in preserving the rules-based international order."

The carrier strike group is led by Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1 and includes aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70); embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2; embarked staffs of CSG 1 and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 1; Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain (CG 57); Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90); and Independence variant littoral combat ship USS Tulsa (LCS 16).

In the month prior to entering the South China Sea, the VINCSG participated in Large Scale Exercise 2021, conducted interoperability flights with U.K. Carrier Strike Group (CSG-21), and conducted a bilateral exercise with Joint Maritime Self Defense Forces units.

The strike group is committed to upholding a rules-based international order with regional allies and partners, demonstrating the capability of forward-deployed naval forces to quickly respond across the region.

The Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group is deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. U.S. 7th Fleet conducts forward-deployed naval operations in support of U.S. national interests in the Indo-Pacific area of operations. As the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet interacts with other maritime nations to build partnerships that foster maritime security, promote stability, and prevent conflict.

BAE Systems to Provide IFF Technology for E-2D Hawkeye

An E-2D Hawkeye aircraft assigned to the "Bluetails" of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 121 lands aboard USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77) during flight deck certification. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Bryan Valek*

GREENLAWN, N.Y. – The U.S. Navy has awarded BAE Systems a $26 million contract for Identification Friend-or-Foe (IFF) spares for the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye aircraft, the company said in a Sept.9 release. Under the contract, BAE Systems will provide Beamforming Networks (BFNs), an integral part of antenna control for the AN/APX-122A IFF Interrogator system, onboard the carrier-capable tactical aircraft.

"These sets will provide situational awareness and early warning for U.S. Navy sailors and warfighters," said Donna

Linke-Klein, director of Tactical Systems at BAE Systems. “The Advanced Hawkeye is essential for battle management command and control, and our interrogator systems enable operators to identify friendly forces and make informed decisions in a variety of threat environments.”

The AN/APX-122A IFF Interrogator system provides positive identification of friendly aircraft, giving E-2D Advanced Hawkeye operators the situational awareness they need to safely complete their missions. These missions include command and control, border security, search and rescue, and missile defense. The AN/APX-122A IFF Interrogator system is produced exclusively for the E-2D, due to the extraordinary requirements for this aircraft.

The Coast Guard and American Maritime: A Vital Post-9/11 Partnership

A Coast Guard rescue team from Sandy Hook, New Jersey, races to the scene of the World Trade Center terrorist attack. A subsequent call for “all available boats” led to the largest maritime evacuation in history. *U.S. COAST GUARD / PA2 Tom Sperduto*

Twenty years ago this week, al Qaeda carried out attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and perhaps would have succeeded in attacking a third target but for the bravery of the airline passengers who forced their plane down in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

These attacks would ultimately claim thousands of lives and

dramatically alter America's domestic security posture and the geopolitical landscape for years to come. But in the tense, chaotic hours that followed the unimaginable horror of commercial airliners striking the Twin Towers, amid the uncertainty of whether more was on the way, the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. maritime industry were focused on a single shared mission in New York: Get people to safety.

When the local Coast Guard commander put out the call for "all available boats" to make their way to lower Manhattan to help rescue people stranded due to the closure of bridges and tunnels, the response was widespread and immediate. An armada of tugboats, ferries and other vessels quickly arrived on the scene and, in a collective undertaking of tremendous skill and grit, safely evacuated 500,000 people. It was the largest maritime evacuation in history, even exceeding the heroic achievement at Dunkirk in 1940.

This kind of proactive collaboration to keep people safe has long defined the relationship between the Coast Guard and the U.S. maritime industry. And in the years since 9/11, they have continued their close partnership to keep our waterways and our nation secure – a partnership made possible by a mix of sound policy, focused coordination and shared commitment. The continued strength, agility and effectiveness of the partnership in the face of existing and emerging threats will depend on several key factors.

The Jones Act

First, the Jones Act, the law requiring that vessels moving cargo between two U.S. points be American built, owned and crewed, plays a foundational role in our maritime security and must remain sacrosanct. By keeping our domestic maritime industry in American hands, the law ensures a reliable pipeline of experienced American mariners for the long-term – the kind that works seamlessly with the Coast Guard and risks their own lives to evacuate half a million people from New

York, without hesitation. It also greatly reduces the potential for malign actors who might seek to use our waterways to carry out attacks, decreasing the operational burden on the Coast Guard and allowing the service to channel its limited resources where they are needed most.

The Jones Act is also instrumental to the durability of what the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments calls the Defense Maritime Industrial Base – the vast network of public and private sector maritime entities that collectively serve as a major component of our national security. The U.S. must be able to rely on American shipyards to build boats the Coast Guard needs to patrol and defend our territorial waters and that America's maritime industry needs to move the cargo that drives our economy and supports military readiness.

Cyber Risk Management

Second, cyber risk management must remain an urgent priority. The Coast Guard's latest alert discussing recent cyberattacks on South African ports and leaked Iranian documents describing research on how a cyberattack can be used to target the Maritime Transportation System (MTS) is a stark reminder that our adversaries don't have to be in our waters to attack our waterways. And as ever, with greater technology innovation comes greater cyber risk to the MTS as these threats continue to evolve.

The Coast Guard recently issued its 2021 Cyber Strategic Outlook, detailing its approach to this complex, high-stakes threat landscape. Notably, among the report's major Lines of Effort is to "Protect the Marine Transportation System," elements of which emphasize continued coordination with the maritime industry to manage cyber risks and "improve the ability for owners and operators to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to threats to maritime critical infrastructure." Recognizing the importance of its own role in safeguarding the MTS, the tugboat, towboat and barge industry has taken

proactive steps to improve that ability, including by developing Best Practices for the Towing Industry, a cyber risk management guide for use by marine towing companies of all sizes and sectors. This is important progress, but more surely remains to be done.

Finally, whether in response to threats of physical attacks, or attacks carried out in cyberspace, for the partnership to continue achieving results that keep the American people safe, the policies and practices guiding it into the future must be crafted with an eye toward facilitating the tracking and exchange of threat information in real time; ensuring that security regulations are informed by practical operational realities and risk management principles; and maintaining effective security for our waterways without impeding the waterborne commerce that is itself fundamental to our national security.

That worst of days 20 years ago summoned what is best in our Coast Guard and our mariners, whose actions helped prevent further loss of life. And while we hope and pray not to hear another call for "all available boats," we owe it to our nation to make sure this vital partnership is ready if we do.

Adm. James Loy, retired, served as the 21st commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard from 1998-2002 and subsequently as deputy secretary of homeland security. Jennifer Carpenter is president and CEO of The American Waterways Operators.

NAVCENT Establishes Task Force for Unmanned System Operations

An MQ-9 Sea Guardian unmanned maritime surveillance aircraft system flies over Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Coronado (LCS 4) during U.S. Pacific Fleet's Unmanned Systems Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP) 21, April 21. *U.S. NAVY / Chief Mass Communication Specialist Shannon Renfroe*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) will establish a new task force to accelerate integration of unmanned systems of all domains and artificial intelligence, the NAVCENT commander said.

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet and commander, U.S. Naval Forces U.S. Central Command, speaking Sept. 8 to reporters by phone conference, said Task Force 59 (TF59) would be established on Sept. 9 in Manama, Bahrain.

The first commodore of TF59 will be Capt. Michael Brasseur, who also spoke in the conference.

Cooper said TF59 "is designed to integrate unmanned systems and AI. Task Force 59 is the first U.S. Navy task force of its kind … taking efforts from across the Navy, concentrating them here in a forward operating environment — a forward fleet — to gradually move toward development and integration."

Cooper pointed out the testimony last spring before Congress of Vice Adm. Jim Kilby, then-deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities, who said the Navy needed to get unmanned systems out to the fleet and into the hands of operators. Cooper said TF59 is standing up to work out the systems and assess tactics, techniques and procedures in an operational environment.

“The bottom line on why we’re doing this is so that we can develop and integrate unmanned systems and AI as a means to do two things: enhance our maritime domain awareness and increase our deterrence,” he said.

“On the unmanned side, we anticipate putting more systems in the maritime domain above, on and below the sea,” he said. “We want more eyes on what’s happening out there in addition to where we see and generate through our manned platforms that continue to patrol the region today. It’s not enough to simply increase the amount of information, the raw data coming in. We’ve got to process and sort in real time to determine what’s relevant to the mission.”

The admiral said the allied and partner navies in his region have great interest in using unmanned systems, noting the launch of TF59 “really invigorates our partnerships around this particular region as we expand our common operating picture. The waterways here are ripe for real-world evaluation. It’s a very maritime region [with] 5,000 miles of coastline [and] three critical chokepoints,” the Straits of Hormuz, the Bab-el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal.

“Our belief is if the new systems can work here, they can probably work anywhere else and we can field them across other fleets,” he said.

“We’ve assembled quite an impressive team to get after this opportunity,” said Brasseur, speaking of his task force. Brasseur is the former skipper of a coastal patrol ship and a littoral combat ship. “I’m really looking forward to launching the task force tomorrow and getting these systems in the water and in the hands of the operator.”

Cooper said some systems used earlier this year in Integrated Battle Problem 21 “will be used in an operational context” by TF59 during IMX-22 exercise in January 2022, which will be focused on unmanned systems.

Cooper affirmed in the future the 5th Fleet could be augmented by unmanned underwater vehicles from UUV Squadron One.

U.S., Canadian Crews Conduct Exercise during CGC Healy's Northwest Passage Transit

An aircrew aboard a Canadian coast guard Bell 429 helicopter prepares to land aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) while near Resolute, Nunavut, Canada on Sept. 6, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer First Class Michael Underwood*

ALAMEDA – The Coast Guard Cutter Healy's (WAGB 20) crew conducted a search-and-rescue exercise and professional exchange with members of the Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Rangers near Resolute Bay in Nunavut, Canada, Sept. 6, 2021, during Healy's Northwest Passage transit, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Sept. 6 release.

The search-and-rescue exercise enhanced interoperability and effectiveness of response capabilities among the services.

U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz, Canadian Coast Guard Commissioner Mario Pelletier and Canadian Coast Guard Assistant Commissioner for the Arctic Region Neil O'Rourke were aboard Healy to meet with the crew and observe the joint training exercise.

"Training alongside our Canadian partners while underway in the Arctic during a historic circumnavigation of North America is a great example of enhancing our interoperability and mission capabilities," said Schultz. "Healy is supporting

oceanographic research with the science community during this deployment to the critically important Arctic region.”

The U.S. Coast Guard is the nation’s leader in Arctic surface operations and coordinates with international partners to maintain the region as safe, prosperous and cooperative by strengthening international and intergovernmental partnerships in the region through joint exercises and professional exchanges.

“Seeing the members of the Canadian Coast Guard work hand in hand with their counterparts from the Healy has been inspiring,” said Pelletier. “The vastness of the Arctic makes this a very difficult environment for emergency response making every opportunity for training valuable. These exercises ensure our two countries’ coast guards stand ready and able to assist should we be needed.”

Coast Guard icebreaker crews aboard Healy and the Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) deploy to conduct statutory Coast Guard missions in the Polar Regions such as search-and-rescue and the protection of marine resources. Additionally, the crews support oceanographic research in the Arctic and Antarctic.

The Healy crew is collaborating with the international science community and institutions from the U.S., Canada, Norway and Denmark to perform oceanographic projects throughout the Northwest Passage and within Baffin Bay to inform environmental change research.

The Healy, a 420-foot-long medium icebreaker, departed its Seattle homeport July 10 for a months-long Arctic deployment and circumnavigation of North America. Since departing, the crew has been executing Coast Guard missions, supporting oceanographic research and conducting training to develop the Coast Guard’s future Polar security cutter Sailors.

USCGC Escanaba Returns Home after Historic 50-Day Patrol

The crew of USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907) greet their families as they return home to Portsmouth on Sep. 7, 2021, following a historic 50-day patrol in support of Operation Nanook in the Arctic region and the Labrador Sea. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Senior Chief Petty Officer Sara Muir*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907) returned home to Portsmouth on Tuesday following a historic 50-day patrol in support of Operation Nanook in the Arctic region and the Labrador Sea, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Sept. 7 release.

Operation Nanook supports the Coast Guard Arctic strategy to develop international relations with like-minded Arctic states, enhance maritime domain awareness, and expand service capabilities within the region.

Escanaba deployed with the 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter Richard Snyder and an embarked members of the Maritime Security Response Team East. The operation expanded the logistical boundaries of the FRC fleet and further refined the modular capabilities of deployable special forces to enhance a cutter's organic law enforcement capabilities.

Operation Nanook was made up of two phases, Tuugaalik and Tatigiit. The Tuugaalik phase brought the crews of Escanaba, Richard Snyder, and the Royal Canadian navy together to exercise best practices and demonstrate responsive capabilities to potential terrorist or adversarial threats. The training exercises included were a live-fire surface gunnery exercise, close-quarters formation steaming,

towing, small boat approaches, and communication drills. In the following phase, Tatigiit, the Escanaba, and Richard Snyder teams participated in a mass casualty and pollution event along the shores of Baffin Island. Both cutters crews seamlessly supported the Royal Canadian navy in rescue and assistance procedures and creating search and rescue patterns.

In addition to conducting law enforcement operations, Escanaba's crew participated in Frontier Sentinel, a training event with the U.S. and Royal Canadian navies. The exercise simulated a multi-national response to a maritime threat and strengthened interoperability between all three services.

USCGC Escanaba is a 270-foot Famous-class medium-endurance cutter, previously known as "The Pride of Boston," now re-homeported to Portsmouth.

Maine Congressman: Shipyards like BIW Have Serious Workforce Challenges

Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. Kathleen H. Hicks, Sen. Angus King and Rep. Jared Golden visited the Bath Iron Works shipyard where they toured manufacturing facilities and met shipbuilders In Bath, Maine, July 7, 2021. *DOD / U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jack Sanders*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Shipyards are having challenges attracting or training skilled workers to build and maintain U.S. Navy ships, a Maine congressman said.

“We have serious workforce challenges similar to the rest of the country, both inside and outside the military industrial base,” said Rep. Jared Golden, D-Maine, speaking Sept. 2 in a Hudson Institute webinar. In general, manufacturing workforces are in decline.”

Maine is the home of two major shipyards that build or maintain U.S. Navy ships: General Dynamics Bath Iron Works in Bath and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery.

“We have seen in Maine a population decline accompanied with a change in how we directed youth to pursue work and studies, so an entire generation encouraged to go to four-year college degrees,” Golden said. “We saw a lot of people leaving the state of Maine for those types of opportunities, not necessarily coming back, while at the same time the best jobs we have in the state of Maine [are] at Bath Iron Works, or many of our paper mills. These are very blue-collar, hands-on jobs that historically have not required a four-year degree but require hard skill sets that have been allowed to go away and be lost.”

Golden said Bath Iron Works “not only has an aging workforce that is retiring or coming up on retirement at a pretty rapid rate, hiring thousands every year just to try and keep up. They are slowly growing, but they’re having to start from scratch with a lot of these young workers and teach them the very basics of shipbuilding, whether that be welding or whatever. It is a different workforce challenge than in other generations past.”

The congressman spoke of having Maine stand up programs at community colleges, apprenticeship programs or pre-apprenticeship programs “that are going to help people get a foot in the door of eventually getting a great job opportunity in a place like Bath Iron Works.”

Golden said it “takes on average seven years to get a fully

competent, specialized shipbuilder at place like Bath Iron Works. That’s a big investment you’re going to make.”