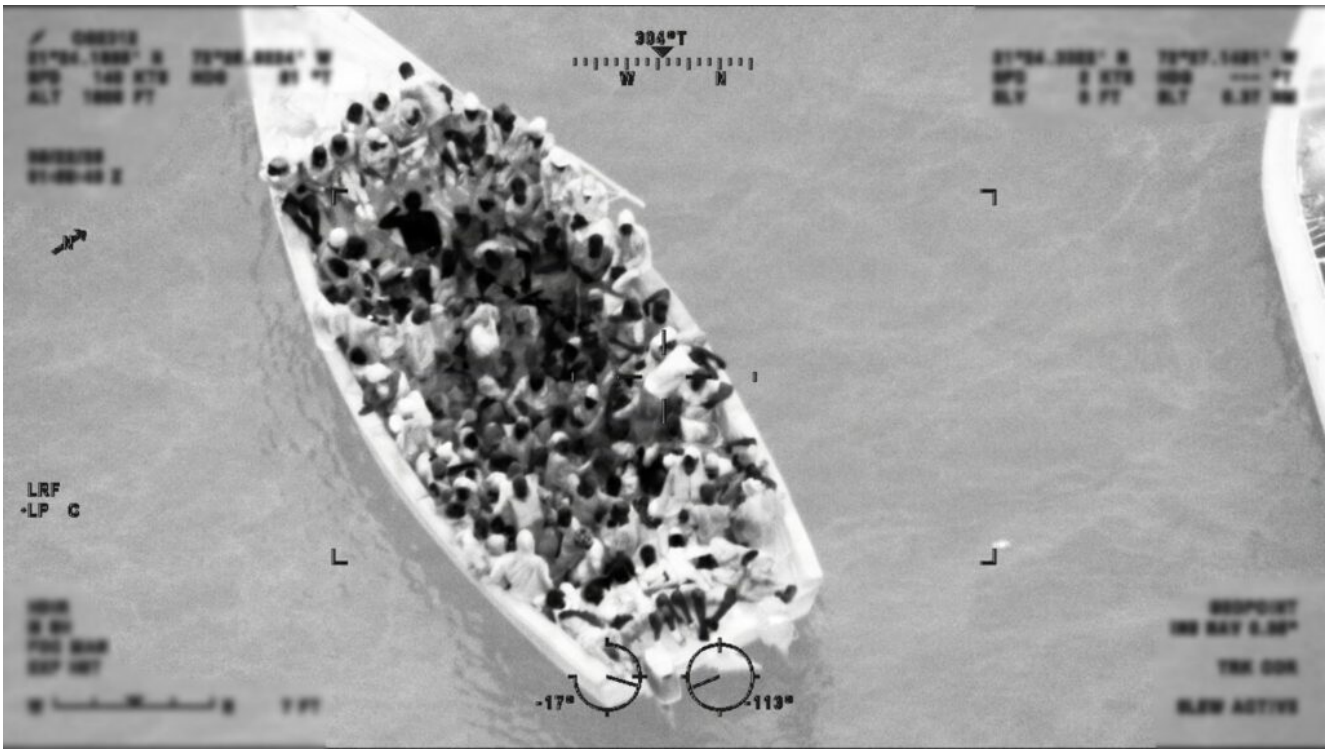
Coast Guard Cutter Campbell Returns Home After 54-Day Maritime Border Security Patrol



A overloaded Haitian sailing vessel underway approximately 40 miles east of Great Inagua, The Bahamas, September 21, 2025. A forward deployed U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Training Center HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew spotted the vessel during a routine surveillance flight along the Florida Straits. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Northeast District

NEWPORT, R.I. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC 909) returned to their homeport at U.S. Naval Station Newport, Monday, following a 54-day maritime border security patrol in the Windward Passage.

Campbell's crew deployed to the Coast Guard District Southeast area of responsibility in support of Operation Vigilant Sentry, where crews advanced the primary missions of

protecting the safety of life at sea while preventing unlawful maritime entry into the United States and its territories.

On Sept. 21, Campbell's crew coordinated with an HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew from Aviation Training Center Mobile to interdict an unsafe, overloaded Haitian sailing vessel with 103 aliens aboard approximately 15 miles from Turks and Caicos. After interdicting the vessel, Campbell's crew provided life jackets for the aliens and ensured their safety while coordinating with the Royal Turks and Caicos Police Force, who towed the vessel back to the island of Providenciales for further processing.

"This interdiction demonstrates the power of teamwork and international cooperation," said Cmdr. Krystyn Pecora, commanding officer of Campbell. "Our combined efforts helped to support the Coast Guard's ongoing mission of deterring illegal maritime migration and ensuring the safety of life at sea. I could not be prouder of this crew's hard work and dedication throughout this deployment in ensuring Campbell remained mission ready."

While underway, Campbell's crew served as the lead task unit in the Windward Passage, coordinating the tactical employment of additional Coast Guard assets to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal alien migration activity.

OVS is a Department of Homeland Security-led operation comprised of federal, state and local partners, responsible for preventing and responding to maritime migration. OVS, previously known as Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast, was established in 2003 and is comprised of more than 50 federal, state and local agencies.

CGD-SE is responsible for Coast Guard activities throughout a 1.7 million square mile area including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, as well as 34 foreign nations and territories.

Campbell is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter commissioned in 1988. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug, alien interdiction and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. The cutter falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area based in Portsmouth, Virginia.

HII, Shield AI Successfully Combine Proven Autonomy in USV Operations

Release From HII

SYDNEY, Nov. 03, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) and Shield AI announced today at the Indo Pacific International Maritime Exposition that they have successfully completed the first major test of their integrated autonomy solution aboard

HII’s ROMULUS unmanned surface vessel (USV), marking a key step toward operational deployment of the AI-enabled ROMULUS fleet.

The three-day test, conducted in late October in Virginia Beach, Virginia, integrated Shield AI’s combat-proven Hivemind autonomy software, using the Hivemind Enterprise software development kit (SDK), with HII’s Odyssey autonomy suite onboard a ROMULUS 20 USV. The test also marked the first maritime deployment of Hivemind, which enables AI-powered mission autonomy across domains.

This milestone was achieved less than six weeks after the companies announced their partnership, demonstrating rapid adaptability, advanced capabilities, and strong collaboration between the two defense technology leaders.

“This collaboration between HII and Shield AI showcases how adaptable autonomy frameworks can accelerate development,” said Andy Green, president of HII’s Mission Technologies division. “Using the Hivemind Enterprise SDK, our teams integrated capabilities quickly and effectively. The successful deployment on ROMULUS 20 validates the power of this partnership and paves the way for even greater autonomy across the ROMULUS fleet.”

ROMULUS is a modular, high-performance USV line built on commercial-standard hulls for fast production and operational flexibility. The lead vessel, ROMULUS 190, is currently under construction. Designed to exceed 25 knots and operate up to 2,500 nautical miles, ROMULUS 190 will carry four 40-foot ISO containers and feature both Odyssey and Hivemind for next-gen autonomous performance.

Hivemind enables unmanned systems to perform complex missions even in GPS- and communications-denied environments. Proven in aerial operations, Hivemind is now expanding into the maritime domain through this partnership with HII, supporting rapid

development and deployment of autonomous capabilities across domains. Under this partnership, Hivemind and Odyssey will integrate into the ROMULUS fleet to operate seamlessly alongside crewed strike groups and surface action groups, while also enabling multi-agent autonomy and intelligent operations.

“Delivering autonomy across domains is key to maintaining a credible deterrent posture in today’s complex geopolitical environment. Each integration strengthens Hivemind’s role as the leading autonomy solution for defense systems,” said Nathan Michael, Shield AI’s chief technology officer and head of the Hivemind business unit. “Through close collaboration with HII and the shared use of Shield AI’s modular, open architecture SDK, we integrated advanced maritime capabilities in less than six weeks – work that typically takes months or years. We look forward to continuing to expand multi-domain autonomy together.”

Shield AI’s Hivemind mission autonomy software and HII’s Odyssey suite will deliver next-generation autonomous solutions. By combining Shield AI’s advanced autonomy with HII’s decades of maritime expertise as America’s largest shipbuilder and leading global maritime unmanned vehicle provider, the two companies aim to accelerate autonomy across domains and platforms.

About ROMULUS and ODYSSEY

ROMULUS, developed with support from HII’s Dark Sea Labs Advanced Technology Group and powered by HII’s Odyssey autonomy software, is capable of manned-unmanned teaming and collaborative operations with unmanned vehicles across all domains. HII’s Odyssey autonomy software is deployed on over 35 USV platforms and over 750 REMUS unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), across 30 countries, including 14 NATO members, and enables rapid integration of sensors and payloads for flexible mission design, enhancing the capability and

effectiveness of today’s naval fleets.

New GA-ASI Gambit 6 UCAV Adds Air-to-Ground Operations for International CCA

Release From General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

SAN DIEGO – Nov. 4, 2025 – The latest iteration of the innovative Gambit Series of unmanned combat air vehicles (UCAV) from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) is Gambit 6, a collaborative combat aircraft (CCA) that adds air-to-ground operations to its already proven air-to-air capability. The multi-role platform is optimized for roles such as electronic warfare, suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD), and deep precision strike, making it a versatile option for evolving defense needs.

Air forces throughout the world are looking to air-to-ground-capable CCAs to enhance operational capabilities and address emerging threats in a denied environment. Gambit 6 is being developed to meet the corresponding need for adaptability, scalability, and mission-specific performance.

“These are real threats, and they require real solutions,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “The modular architecture and signature-reducing internal weapons bay of Gambit 6 allow for easy integration of advanced autonomy, sensors, and weapons systems, ensuring the aircraft can adapt to a wide range of operational scenarios.”

Airframes will be available for international procurement starting in 2027, with European missionized versions deliverable in 2029. GA-ASI is building industry partnerships throughout Europe with the aim of providing sovereign capabilities for all its platforms.

GA-ASI’s Gambit Series envisions multiple CCA variants rapidly reconfigured from a common core, enabling substantial commonality for rapid and affordable production at scale.

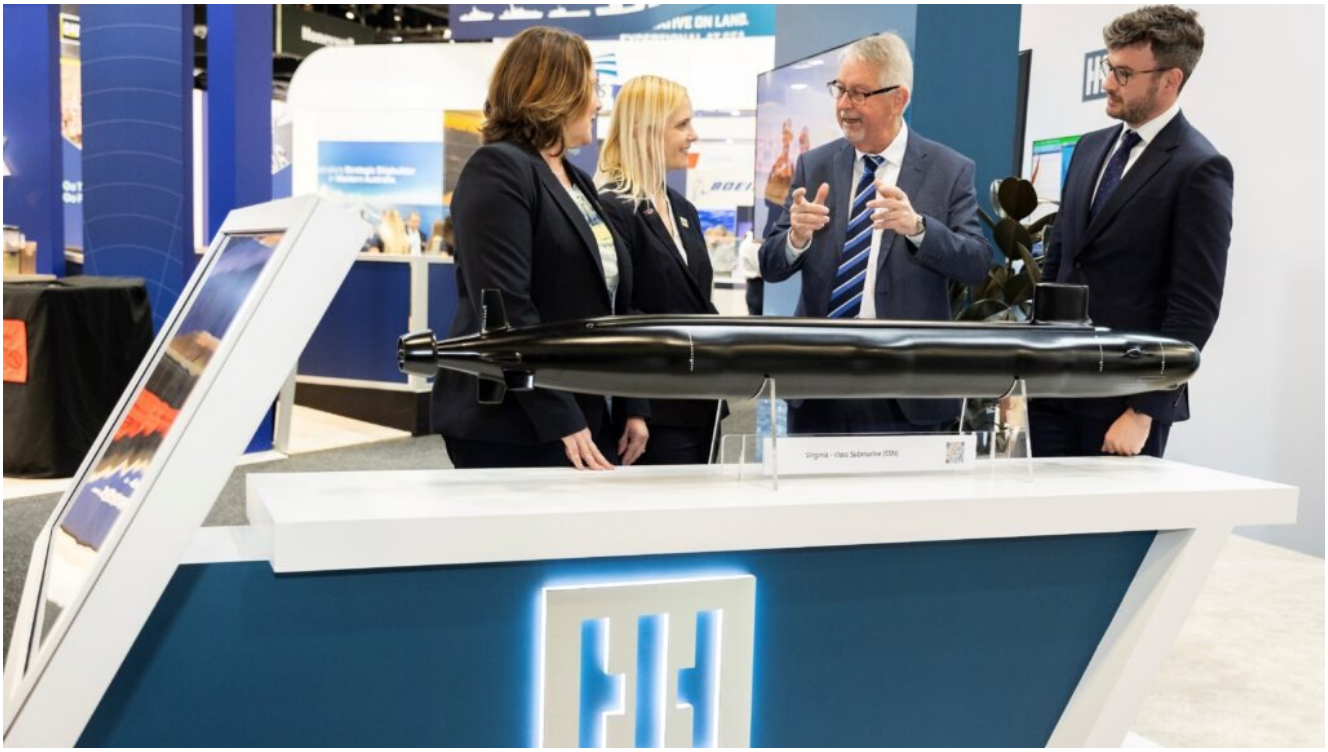
The Gambit Series is a modular family of unmanned aircraft designed to meet diverse mission requirements, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; multi-domain combat; advanced training; and stealth reconnaissance. It’s built around a common core platform that accounts for a significant proportion of the aircraft’s hardware, including the landing gear, baseline avionics, and chassis. This shared foundation reduces costs, increases interoperability, and accelerates the development of mission-specific variants like Gambit 6.

By leveraging specialized configurations and advanced autonomy, Gambit aircraft offer tailored capabilities that enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and improve survivability in contested environments. One Gambit derivative

is the U.S. Air Force's YFQ-42A, developed as part of that service's effort to field an AI-enabled uncrewed wingman. Based off the original Gambit 2 concept, the YFQ-42A is designed to complement human-crewed fighters like the F-35 and Next-Generation Air Dominance (NGAD) systems, expanding sensing, weapons capacity, and survivability in contested airspace.

The original concept for Gambit was announced three years ago and was based on four models. Gambit 1 is a nimble sensing platform optimized for long endurance; Gambit 2 adds the provision for air-to-air weapons; Gambit 3 looks much like Gambit 2 but is optimized for a complex adversary air role; Gambit 4 is a combat reconnaissance-focused model with no tail and swept wings. Then in 2024, GA-ASI announced Gambit 5 for ship-based CCA operations.

HII Welcomes UK's Westley Group as Strategic Supplier, Strengthening Submarine Supply Chain



Release From HII

SYDNEY, Nov. 04, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — At the Indo Pacific International Maritime Exposition in Sydney, HII (NYSE: HII) announced the addition of Westley Group, a leading United Kingdom-based manufacturer of high-integrity metal castings, as a strategic supplier supporting the U.S. Navy's submarine industrial base.

This milestone marks another step forward in advancing allied defense collaboration under the AUKUS trilateral partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Westley Group is now approved by HII's Newport News Shipbuilding division, builder of nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft carriers for the U.S. Navy, to deliver critical castings for U.S. Navy platforms.

"Consistent with the need to have a more integrated supply chain, creating this new supplier that builds essential components adds to the incremental volume required to construct more submarines to meet national security needs," said Matt Mulherin Jr., HII's Newport News Shipbuilding division vice president of supply chain and strategic

sourcing. “This benefits everyone in the partnership and is a key step toward strengthening and creating a more robust supplier network to meet the expanded need for nuclear-powered submarines.”

The partnership underscores HII’s commitment to expanding industrial integration across AUKUS nations and building a more resilient, globally connected supply chain to support submarine program execution.

This collaboration highlights deepening industrial integration under the AUKUS framework and strengthens collective readiness across the trilateral partnership.

Insitu Introduces PLEO SATCOM for ScanEagle UAS, Adds Laser Targeting Capability

A UAS Operator holds ScanEagle with PLEO SATCOM capability at Insitu HQ in Bingen, Washington.
Release From Insitu

BINGEN, Wash., November 3, 2025 – Insitu, a Boeing Company, is proud to announce the addition of Proliferated Low Earth Orbit (PLEO) Satellite Communication (SATCOM) datalinks and laser-targeting capabilities to its long-endurance, battle-tested ScanEagle Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS). These enhancements position ScanEagle as the premier choice for reliable over-the-horizon Beyond Line of Sight (BLOS) Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Targeting (ISR-T) missions, further solidifying its reputation as the most proven small UAS in operation today.

ScanEagle, recognized for its reliability with over 1.3 million flight hours logged across contested and combat conditions globally, now offers SATCOM datalinks leveraging PLEO satellite constellations. This capability will enable operators to achieve extended mission reach, even under the most challenging conditions, while controlling ScanEagle UAS

from anywhere in the world. Resilience features include visual-based navigation and autonomous RF-switching, ensuring confidence in dynamic and challenging operational scenarios.

“As the leading small UAS on the market, ScanEagle has continuously earned accolades for readiness, reliability, and innovation,” said Diane Rose, Insitu CEO. “The integration of PLEO SATCOM provides operators unparalleled BLOS capability, enabling real-time decision-making capability and operational success for land and maritime missions. The addition of laser targeting capability greatly expands ScanEagle’s reach and mission capability for the most demanding ISR-T missions.”

With Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) launch and recovery, ScanEagle is ready to fly both maritime and land-based sorties from small ship decks and other expeditionary locations, meeting mission requirements with unequaled flexibility. Its robust capability set includes EO and multi-spectral optics, AI-assisted wide-area and maritime search, communications relay, Signals Intelligence, Electronic Warfare, and laser-designator targeting.

These upgrades are the latest evolution in ScanEagle’s storied track record of innovation, ensuring mission-critical autonomy and resilience in the most demanding environments. Insitu announced PLEO SATCOM capability for Integrator in 2024, and Integrator ER has offered GEO SATCOM capability for years.

As Insitu continues to push the boundaries of UAS capability, ScanEagle and Integrator remain the trusted choice for global operators seeking unmatched reliability and operational excellence.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy Returns to Seattle After 129-Day Arctic Deployment

Crewmembers, researchers, and partner nation representatives sailing aboard U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) pose for a photo on the ice in the Arctic Ocean, Oct. 1, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Chris Sappey)

From U.S. Coast Guard Northwest District, Oct. 31, 2025

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) returned to its Seattle home port Sunday, following a 129-day patrol that concluded its annual Arctic deployment.

Healy, one of three Coast Guard polar icebreakers, steamed over 20,000 miles this deployment, supporting Operation Arctic West Summer and Operation Frontier Sentinel, protecting U.S.

sovereign rights and territory, and promoting national security in the Arctic.

“Healy’s unique and specialized capabilities allow us to operate in the most remote regions conducting the highest priority missions of the Coast Guard,” said Capt. Kristen Serumgard, commanding officer of Healy. “Healy’s dynamic crew of active duty and civilian personnel showcased tremendous adaptability, dedication and resilience, steaming over 20,000 miles through ice-covered waters to complete the mission.”

As a part of Operation Frontier Sentinel, Healy queried and monitored three foreign research vessels operating in ice-covered waters over the U.S. Extended Continental Shelf and U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, protecting the territorial integrity of the United States’ northernmost border.

Five China-affiliated research vessels operated in the Arctic region over the summer, and Healy was one of several Coast Guard assets deployed to control, secure, and defend U.S. sovereign interests. The Coast Guard works in conjunction with U.S. Northern Command and Alaskan Command to constantly monitor foreign vessels operating in and near U.S. waters.

Healy’s crew also supported two missions involving the deployment and recovery of subsurface oceanographic equipment throughout the U.S. Arctic, East Siberian Sea, and Laptev Sea. This work was performed in conjunction with the Office of Naval Research, the National Science Foundation, and other partner agencies. The data collected will help build a more cohesive picture of the physical, biological, and chemical properties of the Arctic Ocean, improving maritime domain awareness north of the Arctic Circle.

As part of the Arctic District’s multi-faceted response to a series of devastating storms that struck Western Alaska communities, Healy diverted to the affected region to respond

to Search and Rescue and disaster relief needs.

Homeported in Seattle, Healy is the largest cutter in the U.S. Coast Guard at 420-foot long and 16,000 tons. Healy is designed to break 4.5 feet of ice continuously at three knots and can operate in temperatures as low as -50 degrees Fahrenheit, enabling year-round access to the Arctic Ocean.

Advanced Navigation Unveils Compact Boreas 50 Series For High-Integrity Maritime and Naval Navigation

From Advanced Navigation, Nov. 3, 2025

Global, November 2025 - Advanced Navigation, a global leader in assured positioning, navigation and timing (APNT) and autonomous system, has announced the expansion of its Boreas range with the new 50 series – the company's most compact fiber-optic gyroscope (FOG) inertial navigation system (INS), delivering rapid North-seeking in challenging GNSS-denied maritime environments.

The 50 Series includes two high-performing variants:

- The A50 – an attitude and heading reference system (AHRS)

- The D50 – a strategic-grade INS

Each is equipped with a North-seeking gyrocompass capable of rapidly determining true North. Powered by Advanced Navigation's advanced sensor fusion, the series delivers intelligent, reliable navigation within a SWaP-optimized form factor.

Featuring all-band GNSS receivers, the D50 offers enhancements in signal availability, heading accuracy, and greater resilience in challenging environments. For defense missions operating in particularly high-threat scenarios, it also offers an extra layer of protection through optional Electronic Protection (EP) capabilities.

Maximilian Doemling, Head of Product at Advanced Navigation, said,

"Accurately determining position and heading remains a persistent challenge in maritime and naval operations. That's where the Boreas 50 Series comes in. It plugs straight into new and existing platforms and starts delivering fast, reliable positioning and North-seeking where traditional systems aren't able to.

For high-threat operational environments, the D50's advanced EP capabilities deliver uncompromising protection against nefarious attempts of GNSS jamming and spoofing. It is a powerful counter-Electronic Warfare solution built to operate under direct electronic attack, giving operators the resilience and reliability they need to stay on course against any adversary."

Compact North-Seeking in Tough Environments

Real-time North-seeking: The Boreas 50 series contains precise North-seeking gyrocompassing, capable of detecting Earth’s rotation to determine true North in real time, completely independent of GNSS signals or magnetic interference. This is housed in a compact form factor weighing 910 grams, enabling easy integration into space- and weight-constrained platforms.

Advanced sensor fusion: Advanced Navigation’s proprietary sensor fusion draws on sophisticated algorithms to interpret and filter sensor data. The software is designed to dynamically weigh the input from each sensor, adjusting in real time based on reliability scores, environmental conditions, and operational context. This ensures continuous, high-confidence state estimation even when GNSS signals are lost or degraded.

All-band GNSS capabilities: The D50 incorporates dual-antenna, all-band GNSS receivers, supporting access to the newer L6 band. This broad-spectrum support enables significantly faster convergence times to centimetre-level positioning accuracy.

Optional EP: The D50 is available with optional EP functionality. While adversaries create GNSS signal attacks, the D50 proactively detects and neutralises these attacks to maintain a reliable, uninterrupted positioning.

Confidence from Surface to Underwater

The Boreas 50 Series integrates effortlessly into both new and legacy defense and commercial platforms to streamline upgrades, reduce installation time, and lower overall costs.This flexibility enables rapid deployment across a wide range of applications.

Maritime vehicles: The denial of GNSS signals blinds a vessel’s precision capabilities, risking its ability to navigate effectively or accurately identify and track incoming threats. The 50 Series is engineered to endure GNSS denial,

navigate precisely, and deliver assets on target to maintain tactical advantage on the seas.

AUVs and ROVs: Accurate positioning is critical for AUVs and ROVs. The 50 series can find true North without magnetic sensors, eliminating magnetic interference. Advanced algorithms and integration with DVL and other sensors ensure long-endurance, high-accuracy underwater navigation.

Autonomous Surface Vessel: The 50 series combines North-seeking capability, precision sensors, and survey-grade fusion algorithms to deliver consistent performance for ASVs. With dual-antenna GNSS, DVL, and environmental sensor integration in a compact housing, it provides a robust navigation core that withstands GNSS outages, harsh weather, and violent vessel motion.

Boreas 50 Series Specifications

- Heading accuracy: Gyro compassing 0.5 degrees secant latitude
- Roll and pitch accuracy: 0.03 degrees
- Positional accuracy: 0.01 m CEP50
- Electronic Protection capabilities are available on the Boreas D50

Defense Veterans Continue to Drive Rapid Innovation

Beyond unmatched speed, Advanced Navigation’s defense team consists entirely of military veterans, a global force the company plans to more than double within the year to ensure its technologies are shaped by those who understand and have

experienced the battlespace.

The veterans partner closely with system integrators, program offices, and military end-users to deliver tailored APNT solutions that meet rigorous performance, compliance, and security standards. Their military experience enables seamless communication between technical teams and military operators, accelerating timelines and reducing the risk of misalignment.

The Ultimate Capability is Availability

Advanced Navigation’s products are developed and delivered on stringent timelines, supported by the company’s vertically integrated manufacturing. This sets a new standard by guaranteeing the shortest production lead times in the industry – ready in weeks, not years, and is backed by a three-year warranty.

With a deep understanding of the applications its products operate in, Advanced Navigation’s global field experts are dedicated to meeting the needs of maritime and naval customers with responsiveness, exceptional quality and genuine care. The team partners closely with system integrators, OEMs, and end-users to deliver tailored solutions that overcome commonplace industry concerns such as integration challenges, cost uncertainty and risk aversion. By leveraging engineering excellence, unmatched speed and quality customer support, Advanced Navigation is accelerating the path towards maritime autonomy.

From Shipyard to Smart Ship:

Austal and Greenroom Deliver Rapid AI Integration

Sam Abbott, Head of R&D, Austal and Harry Hubbert, co-founder and COO, Greenroom Robotics
From Greenroom Robotics, Nov. 2, 2025

At Indo Pac 2025, Greenroom Robotics and Austal Australia have announced that, following extensive trials and successful testing, future Austal vessels have the option to include Greenroom's GAMA and Lookout+ technology to transform them into fully autonomous vessels. Significantly, this unique collaboration aims to achieve rapid autonomy and AI integration, creating intelligent maritime systems in as little as five days, while competitor solutions on the market take weeks or months.

This is a major milestone in their Strategic Partnership Agreement (signed in September 2024), which brings together

Australia’s strategic shipbuilder and leading maritime autonomy company, to redefine the future of shipbuilding.

The ground-breaking technology is on demonstration for media to try via a simulation at Indo Pac at the Austal booth.

Austal has been working with Greenroom Robotics since 2023, with Austal providing a mentoring role as Greenroom scales up and grows globally. Both companies are headquartered in Western Australia. Greenroom has 32 employees, Austal has 4,479.

Greenroom Robotics’ GAMA and Lookout+ technologies turn any boat into an autonomous surface vessel using vision-based AI through the boat’s existing cameras and CCTV systems. These technologies will work seamlessly with Austal’s proven platform management system, MARINELINK Prime, to offer reliable and safe navigation of vessels, including collision avoidance.

During the Royal Australian Navy’s Patrol Boat Autonomy Trial (PBAT), the integrated software successfully executed 148 autonomous collision avoidance manoeuvres over a 705-nautical-mile trial. This formed a strong foundation for autonomy integration opportunities across Austal vessels.

Austal CEO, Patrick Gregg, said: “By bringing together Austal’s shipbuilding excellence and Greenroom’s advanced AI and autonomy software, we’re creating the best of both worlds for the future of Australian shipbuilding. It’s an example of how established industry and emerging innovation can work hand-in-hand to deliver real capability, quickly.

“We are delighted to be working with Greenroom Robotics to develop an integration package to offer to other companies so their clients can leverage the benefits of autonomy and AI now and into the future.”

Greenroom Robotics co-founder and COO, Harry Hubbert said:

“Our partnership with Austal is creating best in class capabilities for Australia’s shipbuilding future. Austal are very forward thinking and build great ships. Greenroom are a software company providing autonomous navigation and situational awareness software. What we do is hard, and what they do is hard. This partnership meshes the best of our skill sets to solve significant maritime problems together.

“Greenroom Robotics’ advanced maritime autonomy software and AI-powered optical radar reduces crewing requirements and enhances situational awareness. There’s no size limit for the technology. It works on any vessel.”

Cancer to Capricorn: A Maritime Showdown for the Global South

Coast Guard personnel observe the cloud-covered ocean from the ramp of an HC-130J Super Hercules maritime patrol aircraft in support of Operation Southern Shield 2023 in October 2023. The Coast Guard recently completed the first high-seas boardings and inspections off the coast of Peru under a newly adopted multi-lateral agreement to monitor fishing and transshipment operations within the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization Convention Area. *Photo credit: U.S. Coast Guard | Ensign Geoffrey Wittenberg*

On Sept. 2, the United States really stepped up its decades-long war on drugs by sinking a boat in international waters filled with narcotics, killing 11 members of the Tren de Aragua gang. This attack, which the current administration has been hinting at for a while, opens a chance for a fresh look at how America approaches Latin America and Africa and rolling back China’s dangerous march across the region.

Bounded by the two tropics, Cancer and Capricorn, is a region that faces similar threats and significant opportunity. In the same area, China has been waging a nearly 20-year campaign to win over the so-called “global south.” For China, the global south is a fancy way of saying former colonies in the southern hemisphere, with all sorts of different histories, national

interests and aspirations. By taking a maritime approach in a maritime corridor between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, the United States has a chance to beat China and unite the region around shared interests like security and trade.

Both African and Latin American countries are well aware of great power games and their not-so-distant colonial past. But unlike the wider global south, the nations of Latin America and Atlantic coastal Africa are connected by language, culture and shipping routes. That's why an offshore approach focusing on common maritime interests will work, providing real benefits for the people of this region and American citizens without triggering memories of the past.

On the other hand, China's strategy has centered around massive infrastructure projects, elite capture through graft and lopsided trade deals. But this approach alienates the local community, which too rarely benefits from Chinese presence, while local political leaders bow for short-term Chinese favors. As it stands, Africa has seen many such efforts fail, has suffered under debt diplomacy and seen its natural resources exploited. One notable example is Uganda's renegotiating the tough terms of a 2015 deal with China to expand and modernize its Entebbe Airport for $200 million.

Latin America is not far behind. In June 2025, China's state-owned COSCO started operations at Chancay Port in Peru, a $3 billion Chinese project to build a modern, highly automated shipping hub. Construction continues despite local concerns about labor and environmental impacts. These ports projects have long been suspected of being used for nefarious purposes. CSIS' Christopher Hernandez-Roy raises this concern in a September 2023 article titled, "Are Chinese Ports in Latin America Preferred by Organized Crime?"

China's influence in Africa goes beyond trade and big infrastructure projects. Their distant fishing fleets often poach in places like the Gulf of Guinea, around the Galapagos

Islands and recently off Argentina's coast. In June, Argentine forces blocked about 300 Chinese fishing boats from entering their exclusive economic zone, where coastal states retain the right to all natural resources within it, including the seabed. This ongoing standoff has become a regular occurrence, leading to the sinking of a Chinese trawler in 2016 and warning shots fired again in 2019 by Argentine forces. Africa has also faced challenges from a predatory Chinese fishing fleet in its waters.

To address lawlessness at sea, Gulf of Guinea countries have been working together since 2011 in an annual maritime security exercise called Obangame Express. Led by the U.S., it usually involves over 32 participating nations. This exercise has helped improve regional maritime security against piracy, illegal fishing and other crimes. The investment in regional maritime awareness contributed to the capture of a Chinese fishing vessel, Hai Lu Feng, in 2020. This uncovered some disturbing truths: Chinese fishing fleets used registration and location data for multiple ships to avoid paying licensing fees, duties and limits on fishing. This allowed them to overfish, harming local fishermen. The discovery of this activity was partly due to U.S. maritime capacity-building and skills practiced at Obangame Express. If these skills were applied on a transatlantic scale, they could potentially disrupt the activities of cartels as well – cartels that have been killing almost 100,000 Americans every year.

Africa and Latin America have also been hit hard by drug cartels, causing addiction and chaos. This point has repeatedly been made in United Nations World Drug Reports. The cartels make over $500 billion a year from illegal drugs trade. Cocaine is the cartels' fastest-growing product, which they sell in near equal volume to both North America and Europe. China helps the cartels by selling them precursor chemicals needed to make fentanyl. This makes the cartels more dangerous and weakens local governments in Latin America. In

turn, the cartels and Chinese criminal gangs, like the Bang Group, take advantage of this. Venezuela is a good example, where under economic pressure the Maduro regime has increasingly turned to China, Russia and the cartels.

How to Stop It

We can stop this by attacking the cartels' business model. We can do this by making it harder for them to ship chemicals and traffic in people, while also cracking down on illegal fishing and smuggling by China. We can also create new trade relationships between the United States and Latin America and Africa.
To start, we should focus on a few countries that are already fighting the cartels and illegal fishing and are seeking to grow their economies.

The Tren de Aragua incident shows the war on the cartels is starting, but America isn't alone in this fight. To win, we need to destroy the business model the cartels rely on. This will mean working with other countries who are on the same page, such as El Salvador, which has been really aggressive in stopping smugglers at sea. They've been coordinating with the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South). Likewise, we can enforce maritime rights targeting illegal Chinese fishing with Guinea, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

Sailors aboard guided-missile frigate USS Simpson’s rigid hull inflatable boat drive along side a Chinese vessel fishing in Senegal’s Exclusive Economic Zone after dropping off a joint-boarding team of U.S. Coast Guard and Senegalese navy members and an inspector from Senegal’s Department of Fisheries to conduct a routine inspection in 2012. *Photo credit: U.S. Navy | Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Mennuto*

Most pressing is fighting the cartels. To really hit the cartels’ bottom line, we need to stop both shipments of cocaine and the chemicals they use to make fentanyl. This is something many experts have been saying for a while now. In a December 2023 article for the National Interest, James DiPane and I explained the cartels rely on several sea routes to move 90% of their drugs. The most important routes cross the Pacific to Mexico and into the U.S., ferrying precursor chemicals from China to Mexican cartel fentanyl production sites and cocaine from South America. They also rely on stops in other countries before moving into the United States or through Europe’s most porous border, French Guiana. Smugglers are drawn to French Guiana because once they’re inside, they can use local drug mules to fly directly to Europe with fewer

customs and immigration checks. This reliance on international shipping or airfreight routes is a weakness for the cartels.

JIATF-S was established in 1989 and has had some success in stopping this illegal trade but haven't been able to end it completely. Right now, officials say they only stop about 10% of this trade because they don't have enough Coast Guard cutters and patrol aircraft. To make a real difference, we need to expand JIATF-S and change the law so they can focus on all of the cartels' illegal trade on the high seas. We also need to be more careful about China's fishing fleets, which are often suspected of smuggling things like counterfeit cigarettes and worse.

European countries such as the Netherlands, Italy France, and the United Kingdom are also affected by drug trafficking and human smuggling, but there's more to it than just a threat. There's also a chance for more economic growth and trade, especially when it comes to offshore energy exploration.

The war in Ukraine has shown that NATO, which is supposed to be a strong alliance, is actually pretty weak. And after three years of war in Ukraine, it's still relying on Russia for a lot of its energy, making it harder to get Russia to agree to a ceasefire. Erasing this dangerous reliance on Russian energy should lead Europe to look for alternate sources of energy, such as in Western Africa and Latin America. Italy is already looking to trade more energy with North African countries and are also trying to deal with the issue of illegal migration and drug trafficking. Europe needs more deals like this to meet its energy needs.

New Opportunities

There's a new hotspot for offshore energy reserves off the coast of Guyana, a country that's still under threat from its neighbor Venezuela. Just last March, a Venezuelan patrol boat threatened vessels working for ExxonMobil in Guyanese waters.

And after a years-long military build-up, the danger of war isn't over with Venezuela claiming Guyana's Essequibo region. This threat puts Guyana's estimated 11 billion barrels of untapped offshore crude oil at risk. Guyana is already the third-largest non-OPEC oil producer in the world. According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, these petroleum reserves offer an alternative to Russian energy.

There's more to this story than just oil between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. There are also opportunities to reduce our dependence on China, like finding new sources of rare earth minerals, expanding trade and developing new industries. For example, the U.S. helped Congo and Rwanda end a long and bloody war, and a minerals development deal brokered by the White House opens them to American investment in mining their mineral resources, especially copper and cobalt. Moreover, Latin America and Africa could be great alternatives to Chinese manufacturers. According to a July report by ISS Africa Futures, developing energy generation with American investment could unlock the potential of Africa's vast mineral reserves. In Latin America, Argentina is now shaking off years of currency controls and economic volatility, and it's booming at an estimated 5.5% GDP growth in 2025, according to the World Bank.

America already has an economic tool and framework that's proven to work: Prosper Africa. Established by the Trump Administration in late 2018, it has facilitated more than 800 deals with 45 African countries worth a whopping $50 billion. And guess what? This initiative helped connect small and medium enterprises, which create seven out of 10 new jobs, according to the World Bank. This approach is a stark contrast to China's elite-focused approach and benefits the widest populations in both markets, American and African. We should definitely expand this to include Latin America as a viable alternative to China's debt diplomacy.

Between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, our people have a

common interest in fighting the cartels, protecting our natural resources and making our economies more resilient. As such, it is time to forge a new transatlantic partnership to grow secure and resilient economies that stretch from the Galapagos Islands to the Gulf of Guinea.

China’s debt diplomacy strategy of resource extraction, poaching resources where it can, enabled by elite capture, is inherently flawed. China has teamed with the cartels and unleashed their worst behavior on those too weak to resist, but without any viable alternative. That is, until the U.S. can energize resistance and collaboration for common good.

A maritime Cancer-to-Capricorn strategic economic and security framework can deliver results that viable alternative partners in Africa, Latin America and Europe can support. Success will create a more free and prosperous future for everyone, not just Americans. The first step is to work with our partners in the Cancer-to-Capricorn corridor. Together, we can finally and effectively challenge China’s plan for the global south on terms that are fair and beneficial to everyone.

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Navy Pacific War Vet Attends Navy’s 250th Birthday Celebrations in Philadelphia

Edward Desmond, center, gets a VIP tour of the battleship USS New Jersey. *Photos courtesy of the Desmond family*

Soon to be 100-year-old Petty Officer 2nd Class Edward D. Desmond from Boston was invited by the Navy to attend the

Navy’s 250th Birthday Celebrations in Philadelphia in early October.

He spent four days in Philadelphia and enjoyed everything from attending the Navy’s Gala Birthday dinner wearing his tuxedo to enjoying a visit to the Battleship USS New Jersey and the Cruiser USS Olympia wearing his newly issued Navy pea coat to keep him warm in the unusually cold weather.

At the Navy 250 Gala birthday dinner held in the Great Hall of the National Constitution Center at Independence National Historical Park, within sight of the Liberty Bell, Desmond received recognition from Navy leaders as he was the oldest Navy Sailor in attendance.

He received a standing ovation from the more than 750 guests in attendance and was able to participate in the ceremonial cutting of the birthday cake alongside Admiral Daryl Caudle, 34th chief of naval operations.

As the oldest Sailor in attendance, 99-year-old Desmond was then presented the first slice, with the second slice presented to the youngest Sailor, just 22 years old. The moment captured the Navy’s enduring legacy honoring those who have served before while also celebrating the newest generation of Navy Sailors who will continue to carry its proud traditions forward.

Desmond swapped challenge coins with Admiral Daryl Caudle, the chief of naval operations.

Challenge Coins

On the following day, Desmon was given a VIP tour of the historic Battleship New Jersey where he again met CNO Caudle to share sea stories and where the admiral presented Desmond with a commemorative Navy 250 challenge coin.

Desmond had a surprise for the admiral as he countered by offering Caudle his own challenge coin, a unique coin representing and honoring the service of 10,000 landing craft support Sailors who served on LCS ships during the Pacific

war. The U.S. built 130 of those heavily armed gunboats in a hurry in 1944 and 1945 and sent them to the Pacific. They were designed to provide close-in gunfire support for the landing boats carrying Marines and Army troops ashore at such places as Iwo Jima, the Philippines and Okinawa.

Desmond was also the guest of the crew of a smaller, 21st century Navy LCS rafted alongside the battleship New Jersey: the USS Billings (LCS 15) a Freedom-class littoral combat ship.

Desmond noted with delight he had the privilege of being aboard the Billings two years earlier when the ship was at its homeport at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida. Desmond got a tour of the ship and had a front-row seat on the bow for observing Navy small boat forces performing a mock assault on a small ship on the Delaware River.

As Desmond was departing the Billings, the senior gunners mate presented him with a shell casing from the bow gun, a 57mm Mk 110 naval gun capable of a high rate of fire against air, surface, and shore-based threats.

Desmond told the gunners mate that his battle station assignment aboard LCS 128 eight decades ago was at a 20mm anti-aircraft gun and, with a twinkle in his eye, let the gunners mate know that “my 20mm gun had a firing rate of 300 rounds per minute” compared to the 220 rounds per minute firing rate of the MK 110.

That same evening, Desmond rallied and attended a 2.5 hour “Victory at Sea” concert which included performances by the U.S. Navy Band, the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps and a special performance from Patti LaBelle.

On the last day of Desmond’s trip, he was the guest of a different kind of Navy, the famous Schuylkill Navy, sponsor of all of the rowing clubs in Philadelphia. Desmond took a tour

of Boathouse Row, including the Saint Joseph's University Boathouse, and took a few minutes to try out one of the rowing machines.

He had worked up an appetite, so he asked if there was any place close by where he could get a Philly cheesesteak. His wish was granted and he gave the iconic Philly sandwich a big thumbs up.

The indefatigable 99-year-old then headed to his hotel to get ready for a second Navy birthday dinner hosted by the Navy Museum Development Foundation at the prestigious Union League Club.

Coming Up on 100

Desmond's daughter was his accomplice on his visit to Philadelphia and reported her father said the Navy's 250th birthday celebration weekend was a once-in-a-lifetime event and he would send a big thank you to the Navy for hosting him at such a prestigious event.

Desmond and his family are now looking to celebrate his 100th birthday on Nov. 10, which just happens to be the Marine Corps' 250th birthday.

Desmond again, with a twinkle in his eye, said maybe he should send one of his challenge coins to the commandant of the Marine Corps and see if he might get invited to come back to Philadelphia for the Marine's 250th birthday.