Sidelined Ice Breaker Healy Means Loss of U.S. Presence in the Arctic, Coast Guard Official Says

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy returns to port Sept. 11, 2014. On Aug. 18, 2020, an electrical fire broke out in one of the ship's main propulsion motors, leading the icebreaker to return to port in Seattle for repairs. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Jordan Akiyama

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Coast Guard's Pacific Area commander says she does not know yet how long it will take, or how much it will cost, to repair fire damage to the only U.S. ice breaker patrolling the Arctic.

The temporary loss of the Coast Guard Cutter Healy underscores the need for more ice breaking capability in the waters of the "high latitudes," where "presence equals influence," Vice Adm. Linda Fagan said Aug. 27 at the Surface Navy Association's First Virtual Waterfront Symposium.

The Healy was 60 nautical miles off Seward, Alaska, heading into the second half of its deployment to the Arctic, when an electrical fire broke out in one of the ship's main propulsion motors on Aug. 18. No injuries were reported, and the blaze was extinguished quickly. With the starboard propulsion motor and shaft no longer operational, the Healy returned to its homeport in Seattle for repairs and the Coast Guard canceled further Arctic operations with no indication when they will resume. That leaves just one sea-going U.S. icebreaker, the 44-year-old Polar Star, to serve both the Arctic and Antarctic.

The Healy had completed 103 days in the Arctic, Fagan said,

and was heading back to continue a combined mission of supporting scientific research and patrolling the maritime boundary with Russia in the Far North. The Healy's absence in the Arctic emphasized the Coast Guard's need for the polar security cutter (PSC) program.

The planned 460-foot PSCs will serve as heavy ice breakers as well as performing other Coast Guard missions in the Arctic such as maritime safety and search and rescue operations.

"The United States is an Arctic nation," Fagan said, "and polar capability is the cornerstone of a whole of government approach and strengthens our interoperability with [the Defense Department]." Construction is slated to begin on the first PSC early next year and "we hope to have the first one in the 2024 timeframe," Fagan said, adding "This is a critical investment for the nation."

In her live streamed appearance at the symposium, Fagan praised another Coast Guard investment: small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS). She said the Boeing Insitu ScanEagle drone, deployed with five of the National Security Cutters (NSCs), Stratton, James, Munro, Kimball and Waesche, has been a "key enabler" in the Western Pacific and the High Latitudes. In addition to adding ScanEagles to three more of the 418-foot NSCs, Bertholf, Hamilton and Midgett, Fagan said the Coast Guard is exploring the need for a land-based UAS, on the U.S. southwest border, possibly in partnership with Customs and Border Protection.

Expeditionary Warfare

Director: Marines Will Be Sinking Ships in Future War

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Marine general assigned to the Navy as its director of expeditionary warfare says that Marine Corps forces will be more in support of the Navy than being the supported force.

“We’re going to have Marines out there sinking ships,” said Maj. Gen. Tracy W. King, director, Expeditionary Warfare, speaking Aug. 27 in the Surface Navy Association’s First Waterfront Symposium webinar.

King was referring to the Marine Corps’ plans to acquire anti-ship missiles such as the Naval Strike Missile to stage at expeditionary bases and engage enemy naval vessels with those precision weapons in what the Corps calls Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations.

“Per the commandant’s [Gen. David Berger’s] guidance, we need to be an extension of the fleet,” King said. “It’s not, ‘What can the Navy do for the Marine Corps?’ It’s the exact opposite. If you just think of some of the missions that the Navy is going to have to do when she gets in close: fast FIAC [fast inshore attack craft] comes to mind. The Marine Corps can really help with [countering] that. If you get a Cobra [attack helicopter] on you, you are not getting away.

“Our examination of the coming fight is that it is going to begin in a very distributed fashion,” King said. “If we do come to blows with China, it’s going to be very confused for the first 30 or 45 days, but we must fight in a distributed fashion. … It’s simply harder.”

King said that “one of the things the American joint force does much better than its potential adversaries is that we don’t culminate … because of our logistic tails. If we have

to distribute across an archipelago or wherever, that's going to become increasingly difficult, as is command and control.

"The Marine Corps' ability to project power over the shore stems directly from its relationship with the Navy," he said. "That's our center of gravity. What the Navy and Marine Corps team provides the Joint Force is the ability to do it at a time and place of our choosing, to use the oceans as maneuver space."

King said that distributed maritime operations "have all the benefits of mass absent the risks of concentration. … That is going to be extremely difficult for our adversary to counter. We have to mess up the calculus of our adversaries. Being able to distribute and maintain the lethality that comes with the U.S. Joint Force is something we have not done normally. We normally concentrate to do that, and we don't want to do that in the coming fight with China."

King pointed to the Light Amphibious Warship (LAW) being developed by the Navy as a key tool in achieving distributed maritime operations. He said the LAW is not meant to replace the large amphibious warfare ships currently in the fleet but is meant to enhance the ability of the fleet to conduct distributed operations.

"The LAW is going to be a lily pad that carries excess fuel, that can make water, that Marines can actually live on," he said. "I see them as part of the crew."

Regarding the larger amphibious warfare ships in the fleet, King said they need increased lethality, particularly the San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ships.

"We owe that to our Sailors and to our Marines. We're working on that as well."

King said the Navy and Marine Corps will continue to deploy amphibious ready groups with Marine expeditionary units

embarked as a “force of presence, not a force to take into high-end combat.”

CGC Hamilton Offloads More Than $228 M in Cocaine, Marijuana

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Jonathan Ayers guards approximately 11,500 pounds of interdicted cocaine and approximately 17,000 pounds of interdicted marijuana, Aug. 27, 2020, Port Everglades, Florida. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon Murray

MIAMI –The Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL 753) crew offloaded approximately 11,500 pounds of cocaine and approximately 17,000 pounds of marijuana, worth more than $228 million, on Aug. 27, in Port Eveglades, Florida.

The drugs were interdicted in the international waters off the coasts of Mexico, Central, and South America and in the Caribbean Sea. Coast Guard cutters and U.S. Navy ships seized and recovered contraband during 13 interdictions of suspected drug smuggling vessels:

- The cutter Hamilton crew was responsible for nine interdictions, seizing approximately 9,700 pounds of cocaine and 9,000 pounds of marijuana.
- The cutter Resolute (WMEC 620) crew was responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 1,100 pounds of marijuana.
- The USS Nitze (DDG 94) crew with embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Team 406 was responsible for

two interdictions seizing approximately 1,700 pounds of cocaine and approximately 6,100 pounds of marijuana.
- The USS Shamal crew with an embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment Team 109 was responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 800 pounds of marijuana.

“We are proud to support the president’s national security strategy by keeping illegal drugs off American streets,” said Capt. Timothy Cronin, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter (CGC) Hamilton. “I am extremely proud of this crew as they sailed short-handed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and delivered tremendous results.”

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of presidential national security objectives. Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The Hamilton is a 418-foot national security cutter homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. The Resolute is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter home-ported in St. Petersburg, Florida. The USS Nitze is a 510-foot Arleigh Burke-class destroyer homeported in Norfolk, Virginia. The USS Shamal is 179-foot coastal patrol ship homeported in Jacksonville, Florida.

Royal Canadian Navy Adopts More Inclusive Rank Designation

Shown here in February 2017 Able Seaman (AB) Josie Simson dry starts the engine on the Zodiac rescue boat with assistance from Master Seaman (MS) John Parsons on the bridge wings on HMCS Moncton during the departure on Neptune Trident. Due to a change in rank names, able seaman will now be called a Sailor 2nd Class. ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY/ Crpl. Ryan Moulton

OTTAWA – Following a survey with over 18,000 respondents, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) has chosen a new English rank designation for its junior ranks that will result in more gender-neutral terms than the current titles, which are not reflective of the modern, progressive service that is the RCN today, according to an Aug. 27 release. The RCN is continuing to work to create a more inclusive environment within the workplaces, whether that is at sea or at home, the Canadian Armed Forces release continues.

The RCN's junior ranks will soon be known as Sailor erd Class (formerly Ordinary Seaman), Sailor 2nd Class (formerly Able Seaman), Sailor 1st Class (formerly Leading Seaman) and Master Sailor (formerly Master Seaman).

These changes help retain the history of these roles and align the English rank designation with the existing ranks in French. These new rank designations will be effective upon the issuance of a CANFORGEN in early September. At that point, the junior ranks will begin referring to shipmates using the new rank designations.

"By adopting gender-neutral designation for junior members of the Royal Canadian Navy, we demonstrate to all Canadians that the Canadian Armed Forces will welcome anybody who wants to

serve their country and uphold the values of inclusion and diversity," said Harjit S. Sajjan, minister of National Defence. "We will continue to work to build a diverse force that is representative of the Canadians they protect."

In an effort to ensure that this new rank designation reflects the thoughts and ideals of the Royal Canadian Navy, and Canadians, a survey was completed internally and externally, the results of which helped to inform decision-making for this new designation.

"The Royal Canadian Navy, our senior service, continues to adapt to better reflect Canadian society," said Gen. Jonathan Vance, chief of the Defence staff. "Today's announcement of changes to junior ranks nomenclature is just one example of how we continue to work to remove barriers to a more inclusive Canadian Armed Forces."

COVID-19 Shows Importance of Ship Self-Sufficiency at Sea, Surface Force Chief Says

Sailors aboard the guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto handle line as the ship moors in Naval Station Norfolk after a regularly scheduled deployment. The ship was away from port for more than 200 days. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Colbey Livingston

ARLINGTON, Va. – One lesson learned from the challenge of the novel coronavirus pandemic is that U.S. Navy ships and their crews need to be self-reliant and work with the equipment and skills on hand, the commander of Naval Surface Force Atlantic

said, noting the unexpected 200-plus days the guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto spent at sea.

“From an equipment perspective, if there’s any silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s Sailor self-sufficiency in our ability to maintain our equipment at a higher level,” Rear Adm. Brad Cooper told the Surface Navy Association’s 1st Virtual Waterfront Symposium.

He noted the 32-year-old San Jacinto, escort to the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, was away from port for more than 200 days. “That’s an unimaginable number,” Cooper said during a live-streamed question-and-answer session on Aug. 25. COVID-19 “has forced us to be a lot more self-sufficient,” he said, adding “and boy were they self-sufficient.”

Both ships left Norfolk Naval Station on Jan. 17 for the carrier strike group’s composite training unit exercise and follow-on deployment. They did not return to Norfolk until Aug. 9, partly to escape the spread of COVID-19 – which sidelined the carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt for months – but also to maintain maritime stability and security, deter aggression and defend U.S. and allies’ interests in the 5th and 6th Fleets’ areas of operations.

> *“If there’s any silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s Sailor self-sufficiency in our ability to maintain our equipment at a higher level.”*
>
> *Rear Adm. Brad Cooper*

Uncertainty posed by COVID-19 also showed the need to change from a Monday through Friday initial training schedule, Cooper said. Earlier this year, Surface Naval Force Atlantic shifted to a pilot program, Afloat Training Groups (ATG) Rodeo, where three ships stayed out at sea conducting drills, planning exercises, executing them and debriefing for three uninterrupted weeks, instead of coming back to on the

weekends.

“As we look to the future, that’s the model we’re going to use in the Surface Force in both [Atlantic and Pacific] fleets,” Cooper said. Six ships coming out of maintenance and going into basic phase in the next few months are going to follow that training procedure, Cooper said.

He said leaders in the fleet must have “exquisite knowledge” of the condition of their equipment to meet Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday’s top priority: operational readiness. But they also need to know their crew members even better to meet their No. 1 priority: People. A key component to that is training, he said.

A day after the massive July fire that seriously damaged the assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard pier-side in San Diego, Cooper explained, he sent guidance to his commanders to do “a gut check” that their firefighting kill chain is “fully intact and you know how to exercise it down to the weakest link.”

When something happens, Cooper said, every single member of a ship’s fire party “has to know, where do they go, what’s the status of the equipment and what’s their responsibility.”

Navy Taps FlightSafety Services Corp. for New Training Helicopters

Instruction

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has selected a Denver-based aviation training company to provide ground instruction for the Navy's new TH-73A training helicopter.

The Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division in Orlando, Florida, awarded FlightSafety Services Corp. a $221 million firm, fixed-price, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract for "aircrew training services for the TH-73A Advanced Helicopter Training System to include flight training devices (FTDs) and classroom instruction to train student naval aviators (SNAs) to the standards necessary to meet an annual pilot production rate of over 600 advanced rotary wing and intermediate tilt-rotor SNAs," the Aug. 25 Defense Department contract said.

The contract also provides for the operation and maintenance of the flight training devices for the TH-73A.

In January, the Navy selected the Leonardo TH-73A helicopter to replace its TH-57B/C Sea Ranger training helicopters. The TH-73A is based on the company's TH-119 design. Leonardo has been awarded a $176.5 million contract to build 32 TH-73As for the initial batch and also to provide initial spares, support and dedicated equipment and specific pilot and maintenance training services, Leonardo said in a release.

FlightSafety's work will be performed in Milton, Florida, site of the Navy's helicopter training base. The work is expected to be completed in June 2026.

General Atomics Awarded Developmental Contract for Naval Propulsor Hardware

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) has been awarded a developmental contract by Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division (NSWCCD) to provide manufacturing design drawings, engineering, fabrication, inspection, and assembly of prototype propulsor, shafting and bearing components as well as the equipment needed to support propulsor research and development, testing and evaluation, the company announced in a release.

“This is another exciting opportunity for GA-EMS to demonstrate our capability to support significant Naval engineering and developmental programs,” stated Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS.

“Because of our proven track record in technical design, manufacturing expertise, and superb facilities, we are becoming the principal source for taking new technologies from concept, to prototype, and through to full production. We are proud to continue to support critical Navy programs that deliver the most advanced, safe, and reliable technologies to our warfighters.”

GA-EMS will work with NSWCCD to develop new propulsor components for both surface ships and submarines. Design and analysis work will be done primarily at GA-EMS’ facilities in San Diego and manufacturing engineering and fabrication will be done at the company’s manufacturing facility in Tupelo, Mississippi.

This effort supports the NSWCCD Advanced Propulsor Management Office requirement for the design and development for prototype propulsors, shafting and bearing components,

mechanical design specification, and manufacturing plans to support the Columbia-class Submarine Program Office, the Virginia-class Submarine Program Office, and future R&D activities towards the next generation of propulsor and shafting systems.

RMC Admiral: Not Enough Ship Repair Capacity for Peacetime, Let Alone Wartime

The USS Bonhomme Richard sits pierside at Naval Base San Diego on July 16 after four days of fire that devastated the amphibious assault ship. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communications Specialist 3rd Class Jason Waite

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of the U.S. Navy's regional maintenance centers said the Navy, as currently resourced, is not able to keep up with the ship repair demands of the current fleet and would have greater challenges in keeping up in wartime.

"We don't have enough capacity for peacetime," said Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage, commander, regional maintenance centers, and director of surface ship maintenance and modernization for Naval Sea Systems Command, speaking at an Aug. 25 webinar conducted by the Navy League of the United States and sponsored by L3Harris Corp. and Tri-Tec.

"We have so much to be proud of, but we're not as effective or efficient," Ver Hage said. "We can't get ships delivered on time with the predictability we need today."

“Think about how long it took [the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers] Fitzgerald and McCain to get back in operation,” he said, referring to their respective collisions at sea in 2017. “We’ll see what we do with the [Wasp-class amphibious assault ship] Bonhomme Richard [which was devastated by fire in July], but that would be a massive effort to repair her, if that’s the decision. I’m talking years.”

The admiral said that developing the workforce needed to repair ships in both the public and private shipyards is critical to the repair industrial base.

He also stressed more discipline is needed in maintenance planning. He said that 50% to 55% of every ship repair availability should be planned in advance and that port loading projection needs to be scrutinized constantly to optimize the flow of ships in and out of maintenance. A positive development is that the fleets are increasingly cognizant of the importance of level-loading the maintenance ports for the ship availabilities.

The admiral said that the increased use of distant support in the COVID-19 era has improved the resilience of the ship-repair efforts.

Ver Hage said that public-private investment is needed to have the industrial base needed to repair ships on time.

He said his command is trying to buy materials and components more deliberately and proactively.

The admiral said he is trying to simplify and reduce the diversity of systems, for example, steering and navigation systems, so as to reduce the parts support and repair expertise needed. He also noted that software is increasingly more central to the testing of a component.

Also speaking in the webinar were Rear Adm. Tom J. Anderson, program executive officer-ships, and John Rhatigan,

chairman of the Maritime Machinists Association. Bryan Clark, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, served as moderator.

PEO-Ships: 'No Shortage of Challenges' in Shipbuilding, Sustainment

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of U.S. Navy shipbuilding said there is no shortage of challenges in building the fleet and keeping it in fighting condition.

Speaking at an Aug. 25 webinar conducted by the Navy League of the United States and sponsored by L3Harris Corp. and Tri-Tec, Rear Adm. Tom J. Anderson, program executive officer-ships, listed the top challenges the Navy faced in optimizing the procurement and sustainment of ships.

At the top of his list are the capacity and capability of the industrial base in a time of change.

"What do we have today, what do we need for tomorrow, and how do we efficiently and effectively transition between the two," Anderson listed. "It's not an easy process to change, and we need to do it mindfully."

Shipyard workers watch last July as the upper bow unit of the future aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy is fitted to the primary structure of the ship at Huntington Ingalls Industries Newport News Shipbuilding. U.S. NAVY / Huntington Ingalls Industries by Matt Hildreth

Anderson for one mentioned the supply chain, noting that "any plans we have going forward need to take into account their

health and avoid the whipsaw that we do … to provide stable work to the industrial base."

Design technology maturity was the second concern that Anderson mentioned during the webinar.

"We need to use what's on the shelf and figure how best to apply to the requirements that we have," he said. "That's our fastest path to success. Where there is a requirement that can't be met today, we need to think through how we develop and mature it in a way that allows it to be produced efficiently without the need for going back and making significant changes while we are constructing [a ship]."

"For ships and ship systems which are a little unique, that can mean some form of land-based testing," he said. "How do we get the risk out of that platform before going into the production run and we get to that smooth and efficient production that we need?"

Timing of new starts in ship construction is another consideration, Anderson said, interspersed with stable production lines.

"We can't go change the entire force structure at one time," he said. "We don't have the capability, so what is our programmatic and production bandwidth for new starts? How much can we do concurrently? We need to take into account the expertise both in the Navy and in industry when it comes to new starts, and at the same time we need to account for transition between the production."

Anderson also stressed that stability in the Navy's shipbuilding plan is important, noting that "uncertainty has multiple negative impacts to cost and schedule."

"Significant production runs are more cost-effective in the acquisition of a vessel," he added. "We need to be looking at what the long game is with regard to when we determine we're

going to build a platform, how long we're going to build it for. Efficiency comes as a result of repetition."

Also speaking in the webinar were Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage, commander of the Regional Maintenance Centers, and director, surface ship maintenance and modernization, and John Rhatigan, chairman of the Maritime Machinists Association. Bryan Clark, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, served as moderator.

Coast Guard Auxiliary to Stand Up Unit to Support Research, Experimentation and Public Affairs

NEW LONDON, Conn. – The Coast Guard Auxiliary is scheduled to stand up its first unit dedicated to supporting the Coast Guard Research and Development Center on Aug. 26 at the RDC, the center said in an Aug. 24 release. Rear Adm. Tom Allan, commander of the First Coast Guard District, and Commodore William Bowen of Coast Guard Auxiliary District One (Southern Region) will preside.

The new auxiliary unit will support the RDC mission by coordinating requests for assets and skills in three focus areas: subject matter expertise, field research activities and public affairs. The new auxiliary unit coordinator, Bruce Buckley, will develop a skills bank that matches Coast Guard research priorities to Auxiliary skill sets across the nation. The unit is expected to become a major force multiplier for Coast Guard research.

The RDC has been executing Coast Guard research priorities in southeastern Connecticut since 1972. RDC reduces the risk and raises the value of introducing new technology into the Coast Guard by evaluating how it can be applied to Coast Guard missions. Its small research staff of military and civilian scientists and engineers has been partnering with operational commanders and research partners to facilitate these evaluations.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary has a long history of supporting large-scale field testing, through voluntary dedication of their time and personal assets, to improve the performance of Coast Guard aviation and surface assets.

In the last few years, the auxiliary has become a key RDC partner in the execution of an array of diverse research projects:

- Worked side-by-side with RDC in field-testing alternatives to pyrotechnic signaling devices that resulted in a new hand-held electronic visual distress signaling device standard.
- Helped with public prize competition challenges that included serving as technical judges and providing test assets to evaluate person-in-the-water detection technologies.
- Assisted RDC personnel with constructing a ground control station in Fairbanks, Alaska, for a U.S. Department of Homeland Security-sponsored project on CubeSats.
- Created a documentary of large-scale oil burn research on Little Sand Island in Mobile Bay, Alabama.

The RDC will host an outdoor exhibit including an unmanned response boat and other technology to highlight its autonomous technology research in conjunction with the unit stand-up.