Fleet Forces Commander Caudle: Navy Is Flexing Proficiency in Operational Level of War



ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's ability to plan and execute war at the operational level in a joint environment is one factor being tested in an upcoming large-scale exercise, with fleet commander staffs and their fleets set to be stressed in various scenarios. The Navy is leveraging the operational planning expertise of the Marine Corps officers integrated in its staffs.

Admiral Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, speaking July 24 to reporters during a briefing on the

upcoming Large-Scale Exercise 2023, was asked by Seapower to address the Navy's proficiency in the operational level of war, the lack of which was years ago a noted weakness.

"Our ships are fantastically engineered and built, they've got all the kit," Caudle said. "We embark on those, lean forward, and can sustain in operations ... so the ability for the Navy to think about how we actually plan and utilize those forces was somewhat dampened maybe by the fact that our ability to conduct warfare with those ships was so good. So, we found ourselves in a place where we needed to improve our ability to plan.

"We are — in a very prescribed and repeated manner — sending more of our Navy leaders to planning school," the admiral said. "We're building naval planners. We're getting them in position of fleet command staffs, combatant command staffs, to actually exercise that level of Navy planning required to conduct this global warfare more effectively.

"We integrate with the Marine Corps who are excellent at this, and we bring our Marine partners into our planning cells," he said. "Our future planning cells at all of our MOCs [Maritime Operations Centers] is part of that. Our future operations – where talk about that three-to-six-month time frame – where Marine Corps officers really bring a lot of knowledge and capability to Navy staffs. We're completely integrated there. Our targeting cells are completely integrated. The things that the Marines have a lot of expertise in this that the Navy is still learning how to do at that level. It's been a great success story."

Over the last two decades the Navy has established Maritime Operations Centers to support fleet staffs and other commanders in planning and executing operations.

Caudle described the MOCs as "really a maritime operational concept ... that informs the commander's decision cycle. When

you hear the word 'MOC,' what should really come to your mind is a battle rhythm. We can scale that level of battle rhythm to the conflict that it needs to scale to. So, we're going to test the different echelons of scale during Large-Scale Exercise 23 to enable a global battle rhythm between three fleet commanders, exercising that decision cycle.... So, that's part of this as well, testing out how that operational concept works."

Large-Scale Exercise 2023, scheduled for Aug. 9 through Aug. 18, is a global exercise that will involve 22 time zones, six combatant commanders, seven fleets, nine MOCs, six carrier strike groups (four virtually in Live Virtual Constructive (LVC)), three amphibious ready groups (two in LVC), 25 ships and submarines (plus another 50+ LVC), and 25,000 Sailors and Marines.

Navy Retires Its Last Special Operations Helicopter Squadron



SAN DIEGO, California (June 30, 2023) MH-60S Seahawks assigned to the "Firehawks" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 85 fly near San Diego during the squadron's final flight prior to its deactivation ceremony. Navy Reserve squadron HSC-85 is the Navy's last helicopter squadron dedicated to Naval Special Warfare (NSW) and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ryan LeCompte) *****

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy's only helicopter squadron dedicated to support of special operations forces has made its final flight.

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 85 (HSC-85), a reserve squadron based at Naval Air Station North Island, California, made its final flight on June 30, 2023, prior to its deactivation ceremony, according to a release from Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve.

HSC-85 was equipped with MH-60S Seahawk helicopters to support "Naval Special Warfare forces and other special operations forces training and readiness," according to the Department of the Navy's 2023 budget highlights book. The Navy proposed retirement of the squadron with the service's 2023 budget request. The Navy estimates the program savings would amount to \$312.5 million over the Future Years Defense Plan.

HSC-85 originally was established as Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 85 (HS-85) in 1970 at NAS Alameda, California, and equipped with the SH-3A Sea King helicopter, later upgrading to the SH-3D and SH-3H versions. The squadron moved to NAS North Island in 1993 and in October 1994 was redesignated Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 85 (HC-85), shifting to the roles of search and rescue, logistics and range support.

The squadron was redesignated HSC-85 in February 2006 and equipped with MH-60S helicopters. In 2011, special operations support became its primary role, and it was equipped with an older version of the Seahawk, the HH-60H. The Navy planned in 2016 to deactivate HSC-85 and its East Coast counterpart, HSC-84, but HSC-85 survived. The squadron in 2018 upgraded to the Block III version of the MH-60S.

Navy's I-Boss Aeschbach: Fleet Sees Greater Need for Information Warriors



ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's operational climate is generating a growing need for the Navy Information Forces, challenging the capacity of the forces to meet that need.

The Navy's information warfare forces include personnel specializing in intelligence, electronic warfare, cyber warfare, oceanography, nuclear command and control, and information warfare.

Vice Admiral Kelly Aeschbach, commander Naval Information Forces-known informally as the "I-Boss" — speaking July 18 with retired Rear Admiral Frank Thorp IV in the U.S. Naval Memorial's SITREP series, said the Navy's intelligence and cryptologic specialists were not as busy in the maritime environment during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as they have now become with the great power competition with China and Russia. "We were really not challenged in the maritime, and our global competitive environment has changed substantially, and we are now facing a near-peer competition — in some areas, we are being outpaced by our competitors — that I think demands now that you need information warriors to deliver our capability full-time," Aeschbach said.

The admiral cited the Navy's submarine force as an example where what is now information warfare was a collateral duty for a submarine officer, but now, with the increased demands of high-end warfare, the capabilities of information warfare specialists are needed to handle the flood of information and allow the other personnel to concentrate on the areas in which they excel.

"We're a better team for it, if we're there bringing the detailed information warfare capability," she said.

With the increasing demands on information warfare forces, the Navy is challenged to prevent burn-out of the force, which—unlike ship or aircraft crews—does not have a routine sustainment cycle.

"We are operating all the time, and so one of the challenges we have as a type commander is: how do you do the care and feeding and re-generation of a force that is always in demand," Aeschbach said. "So that has challenged us in terms of how we maintain an appropriate operational tempo for our personnel, effectively train them, and afford them enough time to re-charge and be most effective and most ready for the missions for the missions they're supporting."

Aeschbach is working to develop and use live virtual constructive technology to provide realistic training for information warfare forces, which, because of the nature of their capabilities, are more difficult to exercise realistically in a peacetime environment.

Canada Requests Up to 16 P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft



ARLINGTON, Va. — The government of Canada has requested the sale of up to 16 Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft and support equipment under the Foreign Military Sales program at an estimated cost of \$5.9 billion, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said in a June 27 release.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale," the DSCA said, noting that the agency had delivered the certification to Congress.

Once finalized, the sale would make Canada the seventh nation to procure the P-8A, the others being the United States, Australia, United Kingdom, Norway, New Zealand, South Korea, and Germany. India procured a modified version, the P-8I. In addition to the aircraft, the proposed procurement includes mission systems and "aircraft spares; spare engines; support equipment; operational support systems; training; training devices; maintenance trainer/classrooms; engineering technical assistance (ETA); logistics technical assistance (LTA); Country Liaison Officer (CLO) support; Contractor Engineering Technical Services (CETS); Contractor Logistics Support (CLS); repair and return; transportation; aircraft ferry; other associated training and support; and other related elements of logistics and program support," the DSCA said.

The major sensor and defensive systems included in the proposal are:

- APY-10 Radar
- AAQ-2 Acoustic System
- ALQ-240 Electronic Support Measures
- MX-20HD Electro-Optical/Infrared system
- ALE-47 Countermeasures Dispenser Systems
- NexGen Missile Warning Sensors
- AAQ-24(V)N Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures System

The Canadian Air Force currently flies the Lockheed CP-140 Aurora – a version of the P-3 Orion – first delivered in the 1980s.

Navy Establishes Cyber Warfare Enlisted Rating



ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's effort to expand its cyber warfare capabilities took another step with the establishment of the Cyber Warfare Technician (CWT) rating in its enlisted force.

The CTWs will conduct both offensive and defensive cyber warfare.

The action came only two days after the Navy established Maritime Cyber Warfare Officer designator for information warfare officers who focus on cyber warfare.

As announced in a June 29 directive from the chief of naval operations, all Sailors in the existing Cryptologic Technician-Networks (CTN) rating will convert to the CTW rating. In addition, the CTWs will no longer be formally associated with the family of cryptologic ratings.

The Navy currently had 2,288 Sailors rated as CTNs as of last week, most of whom were already working in cyber warfare, said

Naval Information Forces Force Master Chief Laura Nunley, speaking to reporters in a press conference last week. More than 93% of the CTNs already were working in cyber warfare.

"We are looking at further opportunities to expand that to some of the supporting roles and possibly cross-rate into there, and then we're also looking into recruiting aspects of bringing in more enlisted to the new cyber warfare technician [rating]." Nunley said.

"All CTNs will be required to change their rating badge to the new CWT rating badge within twelve months of release of this message," the directive said.

The new rating badge was designed by CTN2 Kelly Bullard.

Vice Admiral Kelly Aeschbach, commander, Naval Information Forces, told reporters in the press conference that most of the current Navy cyber forces are on in shore duty in the Navy's cyber mission force predominantly at Fort Meade, Maryland; Hawaii; Pensacola, Florida; Fort Gordon, Georgia; and San Antonio, Texas.

"Those are aligned with our big National Security Agency presence and the Navy Information Operations Command integrated in each of those locations," Aeschbach said, noting that most of the cyber warriors are organized in teams ashore.

The admiral said that she expects "over the next couple of years as we mature both the [Maritime Cyber Warfare Officer] and the [CWT] ratings and we deliver some new capabilities afloat, that we will likely see some new opportunities" for cyber warriors to serve afloat.

Aeschbach said that the Navy is trying to frontload training of CWTs so that they are "fully trained before they arrive at command, which was something that was not happening two years ago. We've made a lot of progress in that area, and we're also providing much more substantial mentoring," she said.

"When you talk about the substantial mentoring, and when you talk about the growth of the cyber mission force, and that's slowing down the growth of the teams, we did take some of the near-term operational growth to actually create dedicated training and mentoring teams, which is modeled on how we train in aviation and in the surface community where we always have a small component of the force focused on what we call force generation or training and keeping units and teams standard up to a certain level one our folks are inside a certain unit," the admiral said. "And we already are seeing some impact from that. We will put the operational growth back. It will still happen; it's just going to happen at a little bit slower pace as we get to the total number of teams over the two to four years."

HII's Ingalls Shipyard Has Capacity for More Navy Shipbuilding



An aerial image of HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding.

ARLINGTON, Va. – HII's Ingalls Shipyard is always looking for opportunities for more shipbuilding work and its yard has the capacity to take on more work, a senior company official said, including future awards of new classes of frigates and medium landing ships.

"We're looking at all of our opportunities, said George Nungesser, Ingalls' vice president for Program Management, speaking June 27 to reporters during the Modern Day Marine expo in Washington, noting that Ingalls is interested in being a second construction shipyard for the Constellation-class guided-missile frigates currently being built by Fincantieri's Marinette Marine shipyard in Wisconsin. "We know surface combatants!"

The Ingalls shipyard builds Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers (DDGs), San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ships, and America-class amphibious assault ships for the U.S.

Navy and Legend-class national security cutters (NSCs) for the Coast Guard.

The company delivered the first Flight III Arleigh Burke-class DDG, the future USS Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), June 27, and the 10th NSC, the future USCGC Calhoun (WMSL 759) began its first sea trials the same day.

Asked if Ingalls was interested in bidding on the Navy's future medium landing ship (LSM) program, Nungesser said, "We're always interested in future ship classes, future endeavors. With a legacy of over 85 years, we're pretty agile. We will continue to monitor the program development of that particular program and look forward to working with the Navy to see where this goes, when it something comes out as an RfP [Request for Proposals]."

Nungesser said the Ingalls shipyard currently has excess capacity, noting that the company has invested more than \$1 billion in Shipyard of the Future initiatives that were completed last year. He noted that hiring and retaining the work force is a more challenging aspect industry-wide, and that Ingalls has funded a number of initiatives with local educational institutions to attract young people toward the shipbuilding trades.

"We do not meet the needs of our customers without our work force, and we are pleas with the trends that we are seeing in terms of hiring, retention, and developing talent," he said.

"What we need — including our defense industry base — is a strong, consistent demand signal from the government to keep this shipbuilding industry healthy and responsive," he said. "A strong demand signal enables companies to plan for the future, to hire, to train, and retain a skilled work force, and also promote investment in new equipment, facilities, and technologies.

Textron Puts Its Cottonmouth ARV to the Test for the Marine Corps



ARLINGTON, Va. – Textron has been demonstrating the capabilities of its Cottonmouth candidate for the U.S. Marine Corps' Advanced Reconnaissance Vehicle (ARV) competition and has been granted funding to continue testing through calendar year 2023.

The ARV is to be an amphibious, wheeled armored vehicle to replace the Corps' current Light Armored Vehicle in its reconnaissance battalions. It is to be equipped as a node in the command-and-control network during expeditionary operations and is to be able to serve as a battlefield quarterback, deploying sophisticated full-spectrum sensors and unmanned systems — including unmanned aerial vehicles and unmanned surface vessels—and manned/unmanned teaming.

Textron built and demonstrated an earlier concept demonstrator vehicle, called Alpha, mainly to demonstrate its automotive performance in terrain. The company followed with a companyowned Cottonmouth prototype, in which integration of government-furnished systems was accomplished. The prototype Cottonmouth was mission delivered to the Nevada Automotive Test Center for testing by the Marine Corps in December 2022.

During 2020-2021, Textron built the Alpha prototype with company funding.

"We ran the same test profile that we believed the Marines were going to run on what became our prototype deliverable for their testing under the contract agreement," said David Phillips, Textron's senior vice president, Land and Sea Systems, in a June21 interview with Seapower. "We had derisked it from the standpoint of automotive, rugged, reliable, ran it through all of the cross-country, smoke testing, various different soil types, so that we could submit our proposal to the Marine Corps with actual data, not just paper."

In September 2021, Textron began fabrication of the deliverable prototype at its Slidell, Louisiana, facility, and began systems integration work at its Hunt Valley, Maryland facility, where "we were able to test out components before actually installing them in the vehicle. The biggest difference between the Alpha prototype – which was mainly automotive – and what delivered and are testing now is the integration of all the capability: all the government furnished radios, communications equipment, computers, cyber, all of the things that make the vehicle a system," Phillips

said.

In September 2022, Textron delivered a "replica systems integration lab" to the Naval Information Warfare Systems – Atlantic in Charleston, South Carolina.

The prototype Cottonmouth was mission delivered to the Nevada Automotive Test Center for testing by the Marine Corps in December 2022.

"The vehicles have performed very well with the Marines," Phillips said, of the automotive and durability testing it went through. "It accumulated a thousand miles across the variety of relevant Marine Corps mission profiles."

Phillips said that the prototype's electronic systems currently are being tested by the Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity, including "sensing and disseminating data across the battlefield, and beyond the battlefield to the fleet and higher headquarters."

The ARV prototype was able to operate and communicate with a Group 2 unmanned aerial system at a distance of 50 kilometers, he said, noting that the prototype has accrued 500 hours of testing of the electronic systems.

The vehicle's swim characteristics "in the plunging surf" were successfully tested at Camp Pendleton, California. In the water the ARV is propelled by waterjets geared to the vehicle's Cummings diesel engine, said Zach Bupp, Textron's program director, Land Systems.

The Textron ARV is a "clean-sheet design," Phillips said, saying that it was the best way for the Marine Corps to have its Tier 1 and 2 requirements met, as well as the "vast majority of their lower-tier requirements."

He characterized the Textron design as revolutionary rather than evolutionary.

Phillips said that size and weight are critical requirements because of transportability, noting that four Textron ARVs – at 37,00 pound each – could be carried on of the Navy's LCAC 100-class ship-to-shore connectors.

The Textron ARV rides on six wheels rather than eight, which Philips said reduced the weight and complexity of the vehicle and prosed no problems with operations in the terrain in which it was tested.

He also said his company is doing trade studies of subsystems that could be installed on the Cottonmouth to create a family of systems that could be deployed in an ARV-centric reconnaissance battalion.

Philips said the government's Milestone B decision for selection and to authorize low-rate initial production is expected during the first or second quarter of calendar year 2025.

Naval Air Warfare Rapid Capabilities Office Approved in HASC Chairman's NDAA Mark



ARLINGTON, Va.- A rapid capabilities office for U.S. naval aviation is included in the chairman's mark for the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act in order to speed up development and delivery of critical technologies and systems to naval aviation forces by using "alternative or rapid acquisition pathways for procurement."

The Naval Air Warfare Rapid Capabilities Office, to be colocated with the Naval Air Systems Command headquarters at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, would have the following missions, according to the draft legislation:

''(1) to contribute to the development and testing of lowcost, rapid reaction targeting and weapon systems, electronic warfare and other non-kinetic capabilities, and integrated targeting solutions to fulfill naval and joint military operational requirements;

(2) to contribute to the rapid development, testing, and fielding of new unclassified and classified naval air warfare capabilities.

The office would be led by a designee of the secretary of the Navy and would report to the chief of naval operations. The office would be overseen by a board of directors to include the secretary of the Navy, the chief of naval operations, the commander, Naval Air Systems Command, and the commander, Naval Air Forces.

''The Secretary of the Navy shall ensure that the head of the Office may use available alternative or rapid acquisition pathways for procurement," the draft said. "The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System process shall not apply to acquisitions by the Office."

Coast Guard Concludes 21 Years of Maritime Security Detachments to Gitmo



GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba (Feb. 4)-Patrolling the waters of Guantanamo Bay are members of Port Security Unit 305 from Fort Eustis, Va. PSU 305 deployed to the Cuba in late January in support of the global war on terrorism. USCG photo by PA3 Krystyna Johnson *****

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Coast Guard has closed its maritime security detachment in Guantanamo Bay (Gitmo), Cuba, concluding a 21-year presence of port security units that provided security to the naval base, the longest continuous deployment of the Coast Guard Reserve in its history.

As noted in a June 13 message from the Coast Guard commandant, the Maritime Security Detachment cased its colors that date.

Port Security Unit (PSU) 305, which provided the last detachment, also was the first to staff the Maritime Security Detachment in 2002, when prisoners seized by U.S. forces during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and elsewhere were imprisoned at Gitmo. "Since 2002, the Coast Guard has safeguarded critical assets and infrastructure for Joint Task Force Guantanamo in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM," the message said. "Through countless hours of rigorous training, relentless vigilance, and steadfast resilience, Coast Guard Port Security Units and Maritime Safety and Security Teams have upheld the highest standards of professionalism while executing this vital mission."

PSU 305 returned to Virgina on June 14 after its nine-month deployment, which was the unit's fifth such deployment over the 21 years.

With the closure of the detachment. Responsibility for maritime anti-terrorism/force protection of Gitmo was transferred to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, the message said.

CNO: 'We Need to be in the Way'



TAIWAN STRAIT (June 3, 2023) The Arleigh Burke-class guidedmissile developer destroyer USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) observes PLA(N) LUYANG III DDG 132 (PRC LY 132) execute maneuvers in an unsafe manner while conducting a routine south to north Taiwan Straight transit alongside the Halifax-class frigate HMCS Montral (FFG 336), June 3. USS Chung-Hoon is on a routine deployment to U.S. 7th Fleet and is assigned to Commander, Task Force (CTF 71)/Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. CTF 71/DESRON 15 is the largest forward-deployed DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Andre T. Richard) *****

ARLINGTON. Va. – The U.S. Navy needs a non-provocative but purposeful presence in the seas around China to deter challenges to international rules and the security interests of the United States, the chief of naval operations said.

CNO Admiral Michael Gilday, speaking June 7 to an audience at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank, remarked on the recent incidents in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, particularly the unsafe maneuvers of the PLAN(N) destroyer Luyang III last week in the vicinity of the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Chung-Hoon and Canadian frigate HMCS Montreal.

"We're handling that, I think, very well, very professionally," Gilday said.

"I am encouraged by the most recent turn in dialogue by senior leaders with the toning down of, I would say, militaristic tone," the CNO said. "I think that's been helpful. We need to continue to operate out there, and we need to continue to operate forward. We need to assure allies and partners. At the same time, we need to deter anybody, any nation that tends to challenge those international rules, challenge the security interests of not only the United States but our allies and partners and put our economic interests in jeopardy.

"So, I think we need to be out there, and we need to be in the way," the admiral said. We can't just be milling about. It has to be purposeful, and it has to be non-provocative. Let me just underscore that."

Gilday said he was concerned about the "lack of transparency" of the Chinese military and "their intentions with respect on how they intend to use their navy to reach President Xi's goals are concerning with respect on military expansion."

Gilday also noted the positive contribution of the Chinese PLAN Navy in anti-piracy operations in recent years off the coast of East Africa.

"They have been good partners with combating piracy, thwarting it, and keeping those sea lanes open for all," he said. "That should be a model for the behavior that we should expect from the PRC. I would encourage more of those types of collaborative operations at sea that benefit all of us."

Gilday noted that "mil-to-mil [military-to-military] relationships are intended to be a shock absorber. No matter

the political climate, those mil-to-mil relationships have to be steady, predictable, and they have to be very measured."

Also speaking in the seminar was Peter Levesque, president of CMA CGN shipping company and of American President Lines, who remarked on the tensions in the South China Sea.

"The major challenge for us is, obviously, what happens in the South China Sea," Levesque said. "Five trillion dollars of goods flow through the South China Sea every year. It's a major shipping lane, obviously, for CMA and for the other carriers. We're worried about what everybody's worried about, that two planes go bump in the night, or two ships go bump in the night accidentally and spiral into something bigger, and all of a sudden, we can't use those trade lanes or insurance companies won't insure our ships to go through those trade lanes.

"It's a real concern, and I don't think we fully comprehend how big of an impact that would be not only to the global supply chain but the U.S. supply chain in particular if tensions get to the point where that's an unusable space," he said.