

New Chaplain Pin Making Waves Across the Surface Force



NAVAL BASE CORONADO (November 2, 2023) Lt. Ross Engel receives the Surface Chaplain Officer (SCO) warfare pin during a ceremony held at Commander, Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet. The Surface Chaplain Officer pin is a newly introduced warfare pin for members of the surface chaplain corps. The qualification insignia was approved this year and made available in Navy Exchanges around the world last week after being approved by the Navy Uniform Board. Nearly 70 Chaplains fleet-wide have earned the qualification to-date. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Mikal Chapman)

[Release from Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet](#)

[By Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet](#)

07 December 2023

SAN DIEGO – Chaplains have been working side by side with Sailors since 1775, keeping to their core principle “to promote the spiritual, religious, moral, and personal well-being of the members of the Department of the Navy.” Now, after close to 250 years of service, they are getting their own surface warfare device.

For the first time, chaplains who serve on a surface ship are eligible to receive the Surface Chaplain Officer (SCO) pin. Like every warfare pin in the Navy, chaplains have to complete a personal qualification standard (PQS) and pass multiple oral boards prior to earning the device.

According to Force Chaplain, Capt. Scott Cauble, and his deputy, Cmdr. Justin Bernard, the introduction of a surface warfare device for chaplains helps them integrate with their crews and gain trust that enables chaplains to better serve alongside Sailors.

This new qualification standard gives chaplains a better understanding of how ships operate and what sailors do professionally. Bernard is one of the chaplains that completed the PQS prior to the pins introduction, and it’s clear that the process granted him deeper insight into the technical aspects of being a Navy Sailor.

“I was going from space to space, not only counseling Sailors, but asking them pointed questions about the nuances of their job and equipment,” said Bernard. “This fostered a cooperative environment between myself and the sailors and broadened my perspective as to their lifestyle.”

The Navy will be giving more chaplains the chance to qualify for the SCO pin as they continue to integrate with individual ships rather than just at a squadron level. “As of December we

will have a chaplain on half of all destroyers. Our goal is to get a chaplain on every ship over the next few years," Cauble explains.

Having more chaplains dedicated to one ship will give them the chance to develop closer bonds with a single crew, rather than being stretched across up to 10 ships.

"Often times you connect with a group of Sailors, then leave and go support another crew. That can be incredibly difficult for the crew and chaplain alike," said Bernard. According to Bernard, it's immensely important for a ship to have the chaplain. For leadership, they use the chaplain as a confidant who can serve as a spiritual advisor when making challenging decisions. For Sailors, chaplains are the ones they can turn to during dark moments in their life and know that they will be supported.

The job of a chaplain is unique in its depth and breadth of reach—tasked with counseling junior enlisted to senior officers often in the same day. For Capt. Cauble, it was a moment on his first assignment with a destroyer squadron that helped solidify his desire to stay in the Chaplain Corps.

"I was sent out to ride a ship in the U.S. Fifth Fleet, and I remember going up to the bridge at 9:30 p.m. to give evening prayer thinking, "there is really nothing else I would rather be doing right now than being a chaplain on this warship." Those five minutes spent on the intercom can put a crew at ease in the midst of the chaos of ship life.

In contrast to the serenity of the evening prayer, surrounded by the inky blackness of the Atlantic Ocean, Bernard found himself in a position that all sailors dread—man overboard. Suddenly, the ship was thrust into the chaos of searching for the lost Sailor, ships rushing to lend help from the surrounding area.

“This went on for a few hours and I spent the majority of my time walking the deck plates and encouraging sailors that we would find their shipmate—their friend. I spent time in the pilot house with the commanding officer praying and hoping for the safe return of the service member,” said Bernard.

Around midnight, hours into the ordeal, Bernard began shifting from the mentality of lending encouragement to providing grief counsel—words of prayer swimming in his mind. Then, in the eleventh hour, a call came over the ship that a man was found in the water. He was loaded into the back of a helicopter to be transported to a hospital, in what can only be described as a miracle.

“The crew really bonded over the experience and the celebration of a life saved by their hard work. That is something you can’t get anywhere else.”

Spiritual readiness is key for every sailor to be ready for the high-stress moments that are inevitable in the armed forces, and chaplains are critical for fostering spiritual readiness on ships. As Cauble explains, spiritual readiness enhances readiness by strengthening the connection between warfighters and their purpose.

“We talk about spiritual readiness as a connection to divine participation in the community of faith, sacrifice for the greater good, and the pursuit of meaning, value and service,” says Cauble. “We as chaplains facilitate for others, we care for everyone, and all those capabilities work towards the development of spiritual readiness.”

The Chaplain Corps has a rich history built on a rock-solid foundation set by the example of members within its ranks. Chaplains like Cauble, Bernard, and even further back, Lt. Vincent Capodanno. Nicknamed “The Grunt Padre” because he was

so beloved by his Marines, Capodanno was awarded Medal of Honor on Jan. 7, 1969 for his actions during the Vietnam War. On a steamy September day in the Que Son Valley, Capodanno's battalion was ambushed by a large North Vietnamese Army force. The Navy chaplain ran through intense enemy gunfire to administer last rites and give medical aid.

Despite being struck by shrapnel in the upper arm, Capodanno came to the aid of five wounded Marines and even dragged one man, Sergeant Howard Manfra, to safety. As his last act, Capodanno raced to the side of a fallen corpsman, and was killed instantly by enemy machine gunfire. His legacy was not only celebrated with the Medal of Honor, but the warship USS Capodanno bore his name for over twenty years—a testament to his strong example.

The introduction of the SCO pin is both a recognition of the warfighting necessity of chaplains and a new era of closer integration with the Sailors whom they serve. The addition of chaplains on destroyers is hopefully just the start according to Cauble. He already envisions chaplains embarked on the newest frigate models when they hit the fleet, ready to bolster spiritual readiness for warfighters like they have for the past 248 years.

MULTIMEDIA RELEASE: Coast Guard crew offloads more than \$239 million worth of cocaine

in San Diego



[Release from U.S. Coast Guard District 11](#)

Dec. 6, 2023

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Woesche (WMSL 751) offloads approximately 18,219 pounds of cocaine, with an estimated street value of more than \$239 million, on Wednesday in San Diego.

The offload is a result of six separate suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions or events off the coasts of Mexico and Central and South America by the Coast Guard Cutters Woesche and Active in November.

- USCGC Woesche – 1,550 kg (3,417 lbs) cocaine (Nov. 7)
- USCGC Woesche – 1,309 kg (2,886 lbs) cocaine (Nov.

- 15)
- USCGC Waesche – 1,140 kg (2,513 lbs) cocaine (Nov. 16)
 - USCGC Waesche – 2,510 kg (5,534 lbs) cocaine (Nov. 20)
 - USCGC Active – 1,735 kg (3,825 lbs) cocaine (Nov. 23)
 - USCGC Active – 20 kg (44 lbs) cocaine (Nov. 24)

The biggest of the six interdictions was the most recent interdiction, occurring Nov. 20, which was an interdiction of a self-propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) carrying more than 5,500 pounds of cocaine. The interdiction of the SPSS was the first in the Eastern Pacific since 2020.

“All four of our interdictions on this patrol are crucial to the Coast Guard’s efforts to keep illicit drugs off the streets, but our last interdiction of a semi-submersible vessel was noteworthy since it was the first semi-submersible interdicted in the Eastern Pacific in over three years,” said Capt. Robert Mohr, commanding officer of the Waesche. “I am extremely impressed with the crew’s dedication throughout this dynamic patrol. They overcame multiple challenges with collective hard work, ingenuity, and positive attitudes to keep us in pursuit of these cartels and their dangerous drugs. A successful patrol like this one is rewarding and leads to better retention and recruiting efforts because everybody feels a sense of accomplishment.”

Multiple U.S. agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security, collaborate 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, all play a role in counternarcotic operations. The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases, from detection and monitoring to interdictions

and criminal prosecutions.

“I am proud of the unity of effort displayed by U.S. Coast Guard members aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche and our partners who stopped these narcotics from entering our Nation through the maritime domain,” said Vice Adm. Andrew Tiongson, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area. “Transnational Criminal Organizations threaten security, undermine human rights, erode governance, and result in public health crises throughout the world. The Coast Guard prides itself as a trusted partner, building and maintaining relationships throughout Central and South America that counter the flow of narcotics and save lives both in the United States and abroad.”

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases, from detection, monitoring and interdictions to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys’ Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

“The significance of keeping this much cocaine from reaching our shores and streets is, no doubt, life-changing. Without these 9 tons of cocaine on American streets, fewer people will have access to this toxic poison, and hundreds of millions of dollars will not make it into cartel coffers,” said U.S. Attorney Tara McGrath. “The crew of the Waesche and the entire U.S. Coast Guard is to be commended for protecting our nation from the devastation, violence, and addiction that cocaine brings to our communities.”

The Waesche is one of four Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda, California. National security

cutters can operate in the most demanding open ocean environments, including the hazardous fisheries of the North Pacific and the vast approaches of the Southern Pacific, where a large amount of narcotics traffic occurs. With robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, stern boat launch and aviation facilities, as well as long-endurance station keeping, the national security cutters are afloat operational-level headquarters for complex law enforcement and national security missions involving multiple Coast Guard and partner agency participation.

NAVAIR STATEMENT ON V-22 Osprey Grounding



[Release from Naval Air Systems Command](#)

06 December 2023

From NAVAIR Public Affairs

Out of an abundance of caution, following the AFSOC operational stand down, NAVAIR is instituting a grounding bulletin for all V-22 Osprey variants Dec. 6. This decision comes after the V-22 Osprey mishap on Nov. 29, off the shore of Yakushima, Japan.

Preliminary investigation information indicates a potential materiel failure caused the mishap, but the underlying cause of the failure is unknown at this time. While the mishap remains under investigation, we are implementing additional risk mitigation controls to ensure the safety of our service members.

The Joint Program Office continues to communicate and collaborate with all V-22 stakeholders and customers, including allied partners.

The safety of pilots and air crews is our number one priority. For more information, please contact, NAVAIR Public Affairs: marcia.t.hart3.civ@us.navy.mil.

NOAA, U.S. Navy award construction contract for new NOAA Marine Operations Center

Release from NOAA

BY Keeley Belva, Dec. 5, 2023

Today, the U.S. Navy, on behalf of NOAA, has awarded \$146,778,932 to Skanska USA, from New York, to design and build a new NOAA facility on Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island. This facility will eventually be the new home of NOAA's Marine Operations Center – Atlantic.

While the details of the facility's design are still being finalized, requirements include having a pier that will accommodate four large vessels, a floating dock for smaller vessels, space for vessel repairs and parking and a building to be used for shoreside support and as a warehouse. Construction is anticipated to be completed by 2027.

“The Biden-Harris Administration's Inflation Reduction Act, a key pillar of Bidenomics, has made it possible for NOAA to make more crucial investments in infrastructure over the coming decade,” said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. “As we work to combat the climate crisis, building climate resilient facilities, like this one in Rhode Island, is critical to ensuring our infrastructure stands the test of time.”

The design and construction of the facility is funded in part by the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) – a historic \$3.3 billion investment to help communities, including tribes and vulnerable populations, prepare, adapt and build resilience to weather and climate events in pursuit of a climate-ready nation. The act also supports improvements to weather and climate data and services, and strengthens NOAA's fleet of research airplanes and ships.

“By co-locating with Naval Station Newport, we are able to make our ship operations more efficient and increase long-term cost savings through sharing common capabilities,” said NOAA Corps Rear Admiral Nancy Hann, director of NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations and the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps.

“We are excited to take this step in creating a state-of-the-art marine operations center for NOAA in Rhode Island.”

“Naval Station Newport looks forward to continuing its support for the missions of NOAA from our installation waterfront,” stated Capt. Henry Roenke, the installation commander. “An expanded NOAA footprint here punctuates the value and diversity of the missions and partners at the base and makes the Naval Station a vital community and asset for military and non-military operations.”

The center and ships are an operational component of NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations. The ships in NOAA’s Atlantic fleet collect data essential to protecting marine mammals, coral reefs and historic shipwrecks, managing commercial fisheries, understanding climate change and producing nautical charts that help keep mariners safe. NOAA ships also deploy and help maintain buoys that gather oceanographic and weather information and warn of tsunamis.

“I’ve been proud to work with Secretary Raimondo and her predecessors over several years to secure the commitment and the funding to create this hub for ocean research at Naval Station Newport. This announcement marks another win for the Ocean State, for NOAA, and for local workers as we develop our Blue Economy. Soon we’ll be able to put steel in the ground and put Rhode Islanders to work,” said Senator Reed, who has worked with NOAA for over a decade to develop a permanent NOAA homeport and marine operations center in Rhode Island.”

“Thanks to Democrats’ Inflation Reduction Act and Senator Reed’s leadership, we’re bringing NOAA’s new Atlantic Marine Operations Center to beautiful Newport, Rhode Island,” said Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. “This new facility will support our Atlantic fleet in the collection of data that protects marine animals and ocean ecosystems, and advances our understanding of the effects of climate change on the oceans.”

“I am thrilled that a brand-new home for NOAA’s Atlantic Marine Operations Center is going to be right here in the First Congressional District on Naval Station Newport. This facility will be an economic boon to the Ocean State for years to come,” said Congressman Gabe Amo. “Due to the historic passage of the Inflation Reduction Act by Congressional Democrats, Rhode Island will accelerate its leadership in our nation’s efforts to combat climate change, build new climate resilient infrastructure, and improve our national security and non-military operations. I want to express my gratitude for the work of Senator Jack Reed and Secretary Gina Raimondo for helping to bring this new facility to our district. I am committed to continuing to work together to support this project as it moves forward.”

This contract was awarded following a request for proposals that was open from January to August 2023.

NOAA’s fleet of 15 research and survey ships are operated, managed and maintained by [NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations](#). Ranging from large oceanographic research vessels capable of exploring the world’s deepest ocean, to smaller ships responsible for charting the shallow bays and inlets of the U.S. The fleet supports a wide range of marine activities, including fisheries surveys, nautical charting and ocean and climate studies. NOAA ships are operated by NOAA Corps officers and civilian professional mariners.

Successful JAGM-MR Guided Flight Test Demonstrates Tri-

Mode Seeker, Multiple Target Discrimination



[Release from Lockheed Martin](#)

CHINA LAKE, Calif. (Dec. 5, 2023) – Lockheed Martin successfully conducted a JAGM-MR guided flight test on Dec. 2, 2023, at China Lake Test Range in California. The successful flight test demonstrated JAGM-MR’s tri-mode seeker and its ability to aid the missile to successfully discriminate between multiple targets.

“This next-generation weapon system offers greater accuracy in both target discrimination and recognition, delivering mission-focused capabilities that will provide our customers with an innovative 21st century security solution,” said Joey Drake, program management director of Air-to-Ground Missile Systems at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. “The enhanced tri-mode seeker provides a new level of precision guidance and defense capabilities, allowing JAGM-MR to lock

onto the selected target even when there's multiple targets in the field."

JAGM-MR's tri-mode seeker employs a near-infrared (NIR) sensor, which is a third sensor incorporated into the guidance system compared to JAGM, which utilizes a dual-mode sensor system. The NIR sensor enhances missile performance, allowing for improved target tracking and guidance over a range of conditions and target sets.

"We're investing in the future of our JAGM product line because not only will it help address much-needed capabilities by our customers, but it will provide them with a turnkey solution for the challenges that they face in today's complex threat environment," said Drake.

While last year's [successful live fire event](#) demonstrated JAGM-MR's 16 km increased range capability, this year's guided flight test demonstrated the maturity of the fully functioning tri-mode seeker while concurrently highlighting its ability to target engagement at an increased stand-off range.

JAGM is designed and developed in Orlando, Florida. The weapon system is manufactured across various Lockheed Martin facilities in Dallas; Orlando and Ocala, Florida.; Archibald, Pennsylvania.; and Troy, Alabama. With more than 125,000 HELLFIRE and JAGM missiles produced, JAGM and JAGM-MR are the next-generation systems of choice in critical, precision engagement opportunities.

Navy to complete rapid

delivery of new counter-UAS system to Ukraine



[Release from Naval Air Systems Command](#)

Dec 6, 2023

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md.—The Navy will complete the delivery of a new Counter-Unmanned Air System

(UAS) weapon system to Ukraine this month as part of the Department of Defense aid package.

Last year, the contingency operations team for the Direct and Time Sensitive Strike program office (PMA-242) began working an urgent requirement to deliver rocket-launching platforms, known as Vehicle Agnostic Modular Palletized ISR Rocket Equipment (VAMPIRE) systems, to support wartime efforts in Ukraine.

VAMPIRE is a compact, palletized rocket-launching platform that consists of a sensor ball and four-shot Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) launchers designed to mount to any truck with a flatbed. The U.S. Navy and Army have traditionally fought against air-to-ground targets. With VAMPIRE, the laser-guided rocket can defend against unmanned aerial threats.

“We delivered the first four systems in only six months by leveraging an innovative contracting strategy and working diligently to keep pace with the system’s rapid development,” said Cmdr. Kevin Raspet, PMA-242 foreign military sales deputy program manager.

PMA-242’s Contingency Operations Case Manager Robert Galan said the team had placed a heavy emphasis on speed to the warfighter and was able to explore several contracting authorities to streamline the process and focus on building and delivering an operationally effective system.

In coming weeks, the PMA-242 CO team also plans to deliver the first ever APKWS with proximity fuze warheads, a key enabling technology for the C-UAS mission, Galan said. The proximity fuze incorporates an RF sensor that enables APKWS to target Group 2 and Group 3 UAVs.

“Early reports indicate the weapon system is having an immediate impact in the ongoing Ukrainian wartime effort,” said Capt. Alex Dutko, PMA-242 program manager. “This activity

is another example of our team responding to urgent requirements with unprecedented speed and agility.”

PMA-242 will deliver 14 VAMPIRE systems to Ukraine’s ground forces for targeting and neutralizing UAVs and defending against ground threats.

U.S. Navy to start recovery operations for downed Army Blackhawk

[Release from U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs](#)

From U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs

MEDITERRANEAN SEA – The U.S. Navy contracted the multi-purpose support vessel, NG Worker, for search and recovery operations of an Army Blackhawk aircraft that crashed into the Mediterranean Sea, Nov. 10. The aircraft was conducting routine training when the crash occurred.

The NG Worker, equipped with the U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving team, is set to depart to the crash location from Augusta Bay, Sicily, in the coming days.

Once on station, salvage experts will deploy a shallow water intermediate search system (SWISS) and towed pinger locator (TPL) to search for the aircraft. The SWISS is a towed side-scan-sonar (SSS) and the TPL is used to locate emergency relocation pingers on downed military and commercial aircraft. The TPL will use passive sensors to “listen” for the aircraft

pinger's frequency.

Recovery of the aircraft will take place using the Deep Drone remote operated vehicle (ROV). Deep Drone is a 4,100 pound ROV designed to meet the Navy's mid-water salvage requirements to a maximum depth of 8,000 feet. Every effort will be made to recover the aircraft and the fallen Soldiers.

NG Worker is a 288-foot offshore supply vessel that is outfitted with advanced, state-of-the-art underwater survey and positioning equipment.

Assigned to U.S. Army Special Operations Command the Blackhawk was carrying five special operations aviation Soldiers when it crashed. All Soldiers on board were killed.

The cause of the crash is under investigation. For information regarding the incident, contact the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Public Affairs office at 910-432-6005, or by email at PAO-USASOC@socom.mil.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

**Seabee Memorial Scholarship
Association and CEC/Seabee**

Historical Foundation become Navy Seabee Foundation



Release from the Navy Seabee Foundation

On December 2, 2023, the boards of the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association and the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation signed an agreement to merge the two organizations and become the Navy Seabee Foundation. The agreement will take effect on December 31, 2023. This was the culmination of nearly two years of research, discussion and negotiations.

The purpose of the Navy Seabee Foundation is the preservation and protection of the history and heritage of the U.S. Navy Seabees and the U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps; the awarding of scholarships to deserving family members of Seabees, CEC Officers, and all who served with the Naval Construction force; supporting the U.S. Navy Seabee Museum, monuments, memorials, and other heritage sites dedicated to the U.S. Navy Seabees; and supporting current and former members of the Seabee/CEC Community and their families.

The board of directors of the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association and the board of trustees of the CEC/Seabee Historical Foundation will merge to lead the Navy Seabee Foundation. RADM Kevin Slates, CEC, USN, Ret., and RDML Lou Cariello, CEC, USN, Ret., will serve as chair and vice chair respectively and the new position of Vice Chair, Senior Enlisted Leader will be filled by CMDCM Doug Heiner, USN, Ret. Dan Miller, currently Executive Director of both organizations will continue as Executive Director. The Navy Seabee Foundation will be headquartered in Springfield, Virginia and have an office at the Seabee Heritage Center in Gulfport Mississippi.

From Kevin Slates, "I am thrilled about the combination of the Seabee Historical Foundation and the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association into a single Seabee nonprofit, and the opportunities it will bring to allow us to better support Seabees and their families. It's long overdue and a huge milestone for all Seabees (past, present, and future)."

From Lou Cariello, "This is a watershed moment in the history of non-profit organizations serving Navy Seabees. The merger of the Seabee Historical Foundation with the former Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association (now Navy Seabee Foundation) represents a golden opportunity to further unify all former and current Seabees and enhance the pride that we have, and future generations will have, for our wonderful Seabee community."

From Doug Heiner "This merger is very exciting because we are streamlining our operations to expand our capabilities and strengthens our commitment to serving Seabees and their families now and into the future."

From Dan Miller, "I look forward to continuing the events and activities around the country that bring Seabees and Seabee supporters together. I'm so excited to see what the future holds for the Navy Seabee Foundation."

For additional information contact Dan Miller at danmiller@seabee.org or 859-327-1830.

Sri Lanka Joins Combined Maritime Forces in Middle East as 39th Member



[Release from Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs](#)

December 05, 2023

MANAMA, Bahrain – Combined Maritime Forces welcomed Sri Lanka, Nov. 20th, as the 39th member of the world’s largest maritime security partnership.

“We are excited to have Sri Lanka as part of CMF,” said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, CMF commander. “We welcome them into a growing international naval coalition in the Middle East, which protects some of the world’s most important waterways.”

In accepting the invitation to join CMF, the country’s naval commander, Vice Adm. Priyantha Perera, said Sri Lanka “is eager to collaborate with the CMF and other partner nations in joint exercises, patrols and operations...to uphold the principles of the CMF and contribute to its success.”

CMF is comprised of a headquarters staff and five combined task forces focusing on defeating terrorism, preventing piracy, encouraging regional cooperation, and promoting a safe maritime environment. The naval partnership upholds the international rules-based order by supporting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

Navy Announces Completion of P-8A Poseidon Salvage Operation



[Release from Commander, 3rd Fleet Public Affairs](#)

KANEHOE BAY, Hawaii – The Navy completed salvage operations of the P-8A Poseidon in Kaneohe Bay on Dec. 3, the on-scene commander told reporters Dec. 4.

“The aircraft is out of the bay, and the salvage operation is complete,” said Rear Adm. Kevin P. Lenox, who is also commander of Carrier Strike Group 3. “The team worked smoothly through the weekend under ideal conditions and everything happened according to the plan.”

After staging all of the required equipment on Thursday, Nov. 30, and Friday, Dec. 1, Navy Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 1, working alongside local and off-island specialists, and Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Supervisor of Salvage (SUPSALV) arrived before sunrise on Saturday, Dec. 2, to begin inflating the salvage roller bags used to extract the aircraft from the water. Under the close observation of divers, the aircraft was lifted higher in the water and off any coral by 8:30 a.m. The aircraft was rotated and floated into position next to the runway by 10:30 a.m.

“The team spent a lot of time using bags of different sizes – inflating and deflating – to make small adjustments to the aircraft,” said Lenox. “Sometimes it took an hour to get everything right just to move the aircraft five feet.”

Once on land, the salvage crew reinforced the bags and wheels, locked down the gears on the pulling machines, and placed absorbent material between the aircraft and the bay as a precaution. They continued pulling the aircraft on bags up the ramp to a flat area on the runway. The team then lowered the plane onto jacks, swapped out all six tires, inspected the landing gear – assessed it as sound, and then towed the aircraft to the washrack for a freshwater rinse.

“I again want to thank Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH), Navy Supervisor of Salvage, SMIT Salvage, and Center Lift for their

safe and professional execution of the salvage operation," said Lenox.

Additionally, Dec. 3, divers from the Hawaii Dept. of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources conducted a preliminary dive to observe the site, and plan to continue their underwater assessment Dec. 4.

"Yesterday, we were able to get into the water with our federal partners for about two and a half hours," said Kim Fuller, aquatic biologist with the Hawaii Dept. of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Aquatic Resources, during the Dec. 4 joint press conference. "We were able to delineate the majority of what we believe is the primary impact of the airplane. Our assessment was just preliminary, so right now we're just working to understand the extent of the damage and spatial delineation of the impact."

The Navy and Marine Corps remain committed to working with appropriate local and federal authorities to ensure the correct actions are taken to understand, measure, and mitigate any impacts to the local habitat.

"We will continue the work that needs to be done to characterize the state of the coral and damage that was done in the area," said Col. Jeremy Beaven, commanding officer, MCBH. "In my role as the commanding officer, I have oversight responsibilities and obligations that I take on willingly. And, I will certainly be working with our state partners and agencies, again, in deference to their expertise."

The aircraft is in a parking spot where it will be available for the investigating teams and where Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing Ten will begin the reclamation and repair process.

"The Navy is conducting a thorough investigation of the mishap to determine the cause and prevent similar mishaps in the future," said Lenox.

The P-8A crew, assigned to Whidbey Island, Washington-based Patrol Squadron (VP) 4 "Skinny Dragons," was on a detachment in support of maritime homeland defense when the aircraft overshot the runway and ended up in Kaneohe Bay Nov. 20. There were nine crewmembers on board – three pilots and six crewmembers (two officer and four enlisted). All crewmembers safely evacuated the aircraft and no injuries were reported. The incident is under investigation.