Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Returns Home from 3-Month Alaskan Patrol

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) moors at its new homeport at Base Honolulu Aug. 16, 2019. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Sherri Eng*

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Midgett returned to homeport in Honolulu, Hawaii, Friday after a three-month long Bering Sea patrol, the Coast Guard 14th District said March 4.

The crew of the Midgett enforced federal laws and regulations in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone near Alaska's Aleutian Islands chain.

They played a strategic role in protecting the nation's critical marine resources, enforcing fisheries and safety

regulations, and were forward positioned to safeguard the U.S. commercial fishing fleet.

The crew of the Midgett also acted as a search and rescue platform while providing support to helicopter crews operating out of Dutch Harbor and Cold Bay, Alaska. This increased operational range for the aircrews and provided them with fuel for high-endurance missions.

The crew also conducted training and emergency response drills.

“Navigating Alaskan waters was extremely exciting and rewarding,” said the Midgett’s commanding officer, Capt. Willie Carmichael. “I’m proud and impressed by my crew’s service and commitment to promote safety and security in Alaskan fisheries that are so vital to the U.S. economy.”

SCO Transfers Overlord Unmanned Surface Vessels to U.S. Navy

Vice Adm. Stephen Koehler, Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, gives remarks during the Ghost Fleet Overlord Transition Ceremony on Naval Base San Diego. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin C. Leitner*

SAN DIEGO – The Defense Department's Strategic Capabilities Office officially transitioned the Ghost Fleet Overlord Program to the Navy Program Executive Office, Unmanned and Small Combatants during a ceremony at Naval Base San Diego on March 3, 2022, the PEO's public affairs office said in a release.

Navy Vice Adm. Stephen T. Koehler, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, was the keynote speaker.

"The future of our fleet is a formidable manned and unmanned team," said Koehler. "Where unmanned systems work in concert with, and enable enhanced capability of manned platforms; driving to an even more distributed and more lethal force."

SCO initiated the Ghost Fleet Overlord Program in 2018 to

accelerate the Navy's adoption of unmanned and autonomous systems.

In partnership with the Navy, the objective of SCO's Overlord Program was to convert large, commercially available vessels to autonomous operation. Designers installed perception and autonomy systems, automated and improved ship system reliability for extended missions and developed the command control and communications architecture.

"The Strategic Capabilities Office partnered with the Navy, Unmanned Maritime Systems [PMS 406] specifically, from the beginning of the Ghost Fleet Overlord Program," said Jay Dryer, director, Strategic Capabilities Office. "At transition, this enables PMS 406 and the larger team of operators, warfare centers and industry to not miss a beat, continue advancing this technology, and provide a real capability sooner. This is what SCO does best: Integrate mature technologies to accelerate service priorities and create new capabilities for the warfighter."

The program's objective was achieved through long endurance transits and participation in fleet exercises. The fleet exercises demonstrated the feasibility of unmanned surface vessels. Specifically, the ability to host and employ modular payloads through a realistic set of concepts of operations.

SCO was well positioned to mature unmanned systems using Other Transaction Authority agreements with industry-led development teams given the increasing commercial use of autonomous technology.

SCO developed two prototype surface vessels to serve as test beds for the Navy's Medium and Large Unmanned Surface Vessel programs of record.

During the program, Overlord USV Prototypes 1 (Nomad) and 2 (Ranger) took part in multiple fleet level exercises and

demonstrations, traveled 28,982 nautical miles in autonomous mode and tested numerous payloads.

The advances achieved in autonomy, communications and payload integration by Nomad and Ranger are a catalyst for developing the Navy’s future USV programs of record, and in the acquisition of two additional Overlord USV prototypes for continued Navy experimentation and development.

The SCO-led phase of this development culminates with the transfer of Nomad and Ranger to the Navy for follow-on development and fleet experimentation. The next phase will inform the Navy’s unmanned concept development and directly support the Department’s autonomy modernization priorities and Unmanned Campaign Framework.

Navy Selects Northrop Grumman to Sustain and Modernize E-6B Mercury Aircraft

Northrop Grumman has been selected by U.S. Navy for sustainment and modernization of E-6B Mercury aircraft. *U.S. AIR FORCE / Staff Sgt. Jacob Skovo*

LAKE CHARLES, La. – Northrop Grumman Corp. was recently awarded the Integrated Modification and Maintenance Contract for the U.S. Navy's E-6B Mercury aircraft, the company said March 3. The work will be performed at Northrop Grumman's Aircraft Maintenance and Fabrication Center in Lake Charles.

"We are laser focused on providing the most relevant capabilities while improving mission readiness," said Mary Petryszyn, corporate vice president and president of Defense Systems at Northrop Grumman. "As leaders in aircraft sustainment and modernization, the U.S. Navy's E-6B Mercury fleet is another example of our strong partnership with the Navy in achieving those goals."

Over the next five years, Northrop Grumman will perform modifications to the Navy's E-6B aircraft improving command, control and communications functions that connect the national command authority with the United States' Nuclear Triad. The company will establish a consolidated production line for core

modifications required under the $111 million contract. Northrop Grumman may also take on additional, smaller modifications and select depot maintenance tasks as required.

As part of the critical Take Charge and Move Out strategic communications mission, the E-6B operates across a wide frequency spectrum to transmit and receive secure and non-secure voice and data information. The aircraft provides survivable, endurable, reliable airborne command, control, and communications in support of the president, secretary of defense, and United States Strategic Command.

CNO Gilday Honors Former CNO Adm. Thomas Hayward

Former chief of naval operations, Adm. Thomas B. Hayward. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Former chief of naval operations Adm. Thomas B. Hayward died March 3.

CNO Adm. Mike Gilday issued the following statement on Hayward, the 21st CNO:

"Today, the Navy grieves alongside the family and friends of Adm. Thomas B. Hayward as we celebrate his legacy and service to our nation. He was a Sailor, a warfighter, a man of honor and integrity, who served as the chief of naval operations from 1978 to 1982. As CNO, he expertly led the Navy during challenging times after the end of the Vietnam War and the transition to an all-volunteer force. Facing both the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis and renewed Soviet competition in the midst of the Cold War, he rebuilt the combat readiness of the Navy through significant personnel and material investments

and restored ‘Pride in the Navy.’ Focused on operational superiority, he prioritized building sophisticated capabilities to support a global, offensive-minded maritime strategy. He enlisted in the Navy during World War II and as a naval aviator flew combat missions in Korea and Vietnam. We truly lost a great leader and shipmate. We are grateful for your leadership, mentorship and commitment to our Navy and nation. Fair winds and following seas, Sir.”

Below is the biography of Hayward:

Hayward was born in Glendale, California, on May 3, 1924, the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Payson Hayward. A native Californian, Admiral Hayward attended Glendale Junior College and Occidental College at Los Angeles, and in 1943 was appointed a Naval Aviation Cadet in the V-5 Program of the U. S. Naval Reserve. He entered the U.S. Naval Academy in 1944 on appointment from the State of California and upon graduation was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy on June 6, 1947.

Following graduation from the U. S. Naval Academy, he served in the aircraft carrier USS Antietam until detached in September 1948 for flight training at Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Designated a Naval Aviator on July 26, 1950, he was assigned to Fighter Squadron 51. While with that squadron, he participated in combat operations in Korea, embarked in the carrier USS Essex (CV 9), and later in USS Valley Forge (CVA 45).

In January 1954, he reported for test pilot training at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland, and upon completion of training remained there as a test pilot and project coordinator. He next attended the Aviation Safety Officers School at tile University o£ Southern California at Los Angeles, after which he served with All-Weather Fighter Squadron Three. In August 1958 he reported for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and in December 1959, joined Fighter Squadron 211 as executive officer. In

July 1961, he became administrative aide to the secretary of the Navy. He was next attached to Fighter Squadron 103 in December 1963, serving as executive officer and later as commanding officer. In July 1965, he assumed command of Attack Carrier Air Wing 10 which was deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the carrier USS Shangri-La (CVA 38), and later to Southeast Asia in the Vietnam conflict aboard the carrier USS Intrepid. (CVS 11).

From August 1966 to August 1967, he was a student at the National War College in Washington, D.C., and in 1967 he received a Master of Science degree in international affairs from George Washington University. He was next commanding officer of the USS Graffias (AF 29) operating off the coast of Vietnam. In August 1968, he reported as executive assistant and aide to the under secretary of the Navy.

In December 1969, he assumed command of the attack carrier USS America (CVA 66), deploying to the 7th Fleet as the flagship of commander Task Force 77. Promoted to rear admiral in November 1970, he reported to Hawaii as commander, Sea Frontier and commandant of the 14th Naval District. He was assigned additional duty as commander Fleet Air, Hawaii, and commander Manned Spacecraft Recovery Forces, Pacific. He became director of the Office of Program Appraisal, Navy Department in December 1971, and on April 26, 1973, was promoted to vice admiral and reported as director, Navy Program Planning in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. On June 14, 1975, he assumed command of the U.S. 7th Fleet in the Western Pacific and was embarked in the guided-missile cruiser USS Oklahoma City. Promoted to the rank of admiral, he assumed duties as commander in chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet on August 12, 1976.

Hayward became the 21st chief of naval operations on July 1, 1978 and continued in this assignment until 30 June 1982. He retired from active duty on 1 July 1982.

Coast Guard Academy Cadets Prepare to Join the Fleet

Cadets from the Class of 2022 at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy receive their first duty assignments during Billet Night, March 3, 2022. *U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew Abban*

NEW LONDON, Conn. – Cadets from the Class of 2022 received their first duty assignments during Billet Night at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, March 3, the Academy said.

One of the most anticipated events of the 200-week cadet program, Billet Night is a night of energy and excitement as the cadets are less than three months away from commencement when they commission as officers in the U.S. Coast Guard on May 18, 2022.

This year’s class is made up of 257 cadets, including nine international cadets. After graduation, more than 200 newly commissioned officers will report to cutters as near as Coast Guard Cutter Eagle homeported near the Academy in New London, Connecticut, to the Coast Guard Cutter Sequoia, homeported nearly 8,000 miles away in Apra Harbor, Guam.

Twenty others will report to flight school in Pensacola, Florida, to begin pilot training before reporting to Coast Guard Air Stations across the country.

Cadets will engage in a variety of Coast Guard operations at their new units upon graduation. Coast Guard units throughout the nation routinely conduct domestic missions as well as joint exercises with partner nations in which the Coast Guard assists fellow coast guards and navies to adapt or expand their maritime security capabilities.

The remaining graduates will report to various shore units, including the first graduates of the Academy’s Cyber Systems program. The newly established Cyber Systems degree provides graduates with the skills and ability to defend cyberspace, enable operations, and protect critical maritime infrastructure.

The Coast Guard protects America’s vast Maritime Transportation System as a ready, relevant, and responsive force engaging in defense operations, maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, marine safety, and environmental protection operations.

“Every day our graduates are leading vital missions across the globe,” said Rear Adm. Bill Kelly, Coast Guard Academy superintendent. “I’m excited that the members of the class of 2022 will soon take their places in the Coast Guard fleet and join our service’s efforts to address the nation’s complex maritime challenges.”

Founded in 1876, the Coast Guard Academy is one of the five

U.S. service academies that emphasizes leadership, physical fitness and professional development leading to a guaranteed job upon graduation as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Coast Guard.

Rear Adm. Todd Assigned Chief of Navy Chaplains

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today the president has made the following nomination:

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) Gregory N. Todd for appointment to the grade of rear admiral, with assignment as the chief of chaplains of the Navy, Washington, D.C. Todd is currently serving as chaplain of the Marine Corps and deputy chief of chaplains of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Navy Recovers F-35C from South China Sea

An F-35C Lightning II that crashed in the South China Sea earlier this year has been recovered. *U.S. NAVY*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – U.S. 7th Fleet's Task Force 75 and Naval Sea Systems Command on March 2 successfully retrieved the F-35C Lightning II aircraft which crashed earlier this year in the South China Sea, 7th Fleet Public Affairs said March 3.

The F-35C Lightning II, assigned to Carrier Air Wing 2, crashed while USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) was conducting routine flight operations in the South China Sea on Jan. 24.

The wreckage was recovered from a depth of approximately 12,400 feet by a team from CTF 75 and the NAVSEA's Supervisor of Salvage and Diving embarked on the diving support construction vessel Picasso.

"The task force's expertise in rapid, scalable command, control, and communications, agile logistics, organic security, and explosive ordnance disposal was the most flexible choice for the fleet commander to respond in a timely manner," said CTF 75 Commodore Capt. Gareth Healy.

“Ultimately, this deliberate approach resulted in the correct capabilities conducting recovery operations within 37 days of the incident. Given the unique challenges of this problem and the unique technical capabilities that NAVSEA delivered, this was an aggressive and achievable timeline.”

The aircraft was recovered using a CURV-21 remotely operated vehicle, which attached specialized rigging and lift lines to the aircraft. The ship’s crane lifting hook was then lowered to the seafloor and connected to the rigging, and then lifted the aircraft to the surface and hoisted it onboard Picasso.

The aircraft will be delivered to a nearby military installation to aid in the ongoing investigation and evaluated for potential transport to the United States.

Future Attack Submarine USS Oregon Delivered to U.S. Navy

The Virginia-class submarine USS Indiana (SSN 789), a sister ship to the future USS Oregon, departs Submarine Base New London in Connecticut on Jan. 7. The future USS Oregon was delivered to the Navy on Feb. 26. *U.S. NAVY / John Narewski*

GROTON, Conn. – The submarine force's newest attack submarine, the future USS Oregon (SSN 793), was delivered to the U.S. Navy on Feb. 26, Team Ships Public Affairs said Feb. 28.

PCU Oregon is the 20th Virginia-class submarine that are co-produced at General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries – Newport News Shipbuilding through a long-standing teaming agreement. Oregon is the 11th Virginia Class delivered by GDEB and the second Block IV configured submarine.

"Oregon is in excellent condition and the captain and crew have expertly taken the ship through her paces," said Capt. Todd Weeks, the Virginia-class program manager who rode the boat during its sea trials. Delivery of a Virginia-class submarine is the culmination of almost 10 million work hours by the shipbuilders under the exacting standards imposed by

Naval Sea Systems Command and Naval Reactors under the direct oversight of the Supervisors of Shipbuilding at both company locations. “Each organization works tirelessly with the others focused on getting ships to sea as the first step in ultimately arriving at its squadron and homeport where it becomes a vital asset to the Nation.”

Virginia-class submarines are built to operate in the world’s littoral and deep waters while conducting antisubmarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations forces support, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare missions. Their inherent stealth, endurance, mobility and firepower directly enable them to support five of the six maritime strategy core capabilities — sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security and deterrence.

The submarine’s sponsor is Dana Richardson, wife of former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson.

Oregon is the third U.S. Navy ship to honor the state. The first USS Oregon was a brigantine ship purchased in 1841 and used for exploration until 1845. The second Oregon (BB 3) was commissioned on July 15, 1896. While decommissioned in 1906, she was later recommissioned in 1911 and remained in the reserve until stricken from the Navy list in 1942.

Navy to Demo New Mine Countermeasure System on MQ-8

Fire Scout

The MQ-8 Fire Scout, with mass shapes attached, conducts low airspeed flying qualities testing in February at Webster Field, Maryland, to prepare for upcoming the Single System Multi-Mission Airborne Mine Detection demonstration. *U.S. NAVY*
PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy is working to develop a new mine countermeasure sensor suite for the MQ-8C Fire Scout that that will enable the unmanned helicopter to detect and localize mines and obstacles on land and at-sea, Naval Air Systems Command said March 2.

The Fire Scout program office, in conjunction with the Office of Naval Research and Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants, have partnered with the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's AIRWorks, Aircraft Prototype Systems Division, Webster Outlying Field and Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two Four (UX-24) to execute the final phase of the Single System Multi-Mission Airborne Mine Detection Future Naval Capability Program, or SMAMD.

SMAMD will be the first mine countermeasure system flown onboard the MQ-8C Fire Scout as well as the airframe's

heaviest payload carried to date. The SMAMD system, developed by BAE Systems, uses an airborne optical sensor suite that will have the ability to have real-time onboard processing coupled with low false alarm rates, enabling the warfighter to respond swiftly to detected threats. Current mine countermeasure technologies require post-mission analysis that lengthens the threat detection and mitigation timeline.

“This capability is extremely important as we see future fights occurring in the littoral waters where mine warfare is prevalent,” said Capt. Thomas Lansley, Fire Scout program director. “A mine warfare capability will greatly reduce risk for LCS and other vessels in the littoral.”

In February, UX-24 conducted flying qualities and performance testing with the MQ-8C using mass equivalency models in place of the prototype system pods, which mimic the size and weight of the SMAMD System. The testing is performed to collect data to allow for the evaluation of air vehicle performance and handling to assess safety of flight assessment and airworthiness.

This spring, the joint team will hold a land-based demonstration of the mine countermeasure prototype at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Panama City, Florida. The demo will stretch from the beach zone, drifting mines and moored mines both in shallow water and deep water up to 10 kilometers offshore. The objective of the demonstration is to gather performance data for both the MQ-8C Fire Scout and SMAMD to inform future integration efforts.

The SMAMD will prove that a podded MCM system can operate as intended on the MQ-8C without causing adverse effects to the vehicle or significantly diminish its time on station.

“The program office will continue to gather information to inform future integration efforts of the COBRA Block II System onto the MQ-8C,” said Lansley.

The MQ-8C Fire Scout is currently deployed aboard USS Milwaukee (LCS-5) to support operations in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of responsibility.

Rep. Wittman Responds to CNO's 500-Ship Fleet Aspirations

U.S. Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Virginia) has lunch with Sailors aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) on Aug. 10, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Nick Boris*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Virginia), ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee's Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee, released the following

statement in response to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday's recent assertion the Navy needs a 500-ship Navy to meet the Biden Administration's forthcoming National Defense Strategy:

"We are at a critical junction in our nation's history: We must decide if the United States will retain its global primacy or concede to the Chinese. Presently, China has the largest navy in the world and if we do nothing to change our fleet trajectory, China will fully modernize its military and outpace the United States militarily.

"I am supportive of Chief of Naval Operations Gilday's affirmation of the previous administration's force structure objectives, and I am incredibly supportive of a larger, more robust naval fleet that will position the United States to maintain presence necessary to dissuade conflict and if necessary, win in war. However, we have heard these calls for a larger fleet before without any substantive follow through. CNO Gilday's call for a 500-fleet navy is a welcomed aspiration, but it must be backed by President Biden's budget request to ensure our Navy and entire military has what it needs to maintain readiness, improve our systems, and outpace our competitors. In my estimation, real world dynamics require at least 5% real growth in our national security in fiscal year 2023.

"I continue to be concerned as to how CNO Gilday's plan aligns with the Biden Administration's forthcoming National Defense Strategy. Last year, this administration did not even provide Congress with a five-year investment vision. Without a credible 30-year shipbuilding plan, the industrial base has no real map to invest for the future. Additionally, the 'divest to invest' approach of this administration presumes a benign China response in the short term. We need to be ready for conflict in five years, not in some fairy tale Battle Force 2045. The administration needs to be forthright with Congress in the fiscal year 2023 budget request and their intent to

dissuade future conflict now.”