

Coast Guard Cutter Finback Shifts Homeport to Portland, Maine



The Coast Guard Cutter Finback (WPB 87314) officially arrives at its new homeport in Portland, Maine, August 11, 2021. Mooring alongside the Coast Guard Cutter Sitkinak (WPB 1329), the Finback is a coastal patrol boat with a crew of 11 men and women whose area of operations ranges from Sandy Hook, New Jersey to the Maine/Canadian Border. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Lt. j.g. Patrick Lachey*

PORTLAND, Maine – The Coast Guard Cutter Finback (WPB 87314) officially arrived at its new homeport in Portland, Maine, Aug. 11, the Coast Guard 1st District said in a release.

Mooring alongside the Coast Guard Cutter Sitkinak (WPB 1329), the Finback is a coastal patrol boat with a crew of 11 men and women whose area of operations ranges from Sandy Hook, New Jersey to the Maine/Canadian Border.

“We are excited to see the Coast Guard Cutter Finback relocate to Portland,” said Capt. Amy Florentino, commander, Sector Northern New England. “As a service with a big mission and limited resources, we are constantly seeking ways to be more efficient and effective. Portland is central location for the cutter to suppler both law enforcement and search and rescue operations. The change of homeport will also allow our team to provide better mission support for cutter maintenance and personnel needs. While the cutter’s homeport is changing, its mission and service to the public aren’t. As one of the only two patrol boats in our fleet, Finback and the crew will continue to operate throughout Sector New England’s area of responsibility.”

The crew will significantly increase the Coast Guard’s

operational presence and maximize logistical support in Portland, and will continue to aid in maritime law enforcement, ports and waterways, coastal security, marine environmental protection and commercial vessel safety mission-sets.

Bollinger Shipyards Inc. of Lockport, Louisiana, built USCGC Finback in December 1999. This vessel employs the latest in technology. A fully integrated electronics suite coordinates radar, satellite navigation, gyrocompass, autopilot and computer-generated charts to form a compact, but user-friendly command-and-control system for all ship's missions. A unique stern launch/recovery system is vastly superior in safety, speed, and manning requirements. Even during inclement weather, the small boat can be launched and recovered with a minimal crew on deck. It also allows for safe deployment in a much larger sea state than previous systems. The engine room incorporates electronic control and monitoring system with video readouts that can be monitored from the engine room or the bridge. For the first time, the crew onboard can be a combination of male and female resulting from the multiple staterooms throughout the cutter.

The Finback is one of the most advanced coastal patrol boats in the world and will help the Coast Guard remain the world's premier maritime organization for many years to come.

New SECNAV Messages the Fleet



Carlos Del Toro, confirmed by the U.S. Senate as 78th secretary of the Navy. *SBG TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS*
ARLINGTON, Va. – Carlos Del Toro, the 78th secretary of the Navy, was sworn in on Aug. 9. He issued the following message

to the fleet on Aug. 10:

Today, together, we again embrace the most sacred duty – defending our nation and working to build a world more defined by peace than conflict.

I join you as someone who loves the Navy – who spent twenty-six years in uniform and another seventeen striving to make sure you had the capabilities you needed to fulfill your mission effectively and safely. Serving you as your 78th Secretary of the Navy is a high honor. It also carries grave responsibilities to which I will dedicate all my skill and devotion.

You should also know I have a bias for action.

Our Navy and our nation face critical challenges on multiple fronts.

Like Secretary Austin, I view our most pressing challenges as the four Cs – China, culture, climate and COVID, and we need the resources and capabilities to address each now.

China is determined to reduce our military superiority. We will not let this happen. We will deter China's aggression, protect our national security, and preserve the peace. Our determination, our skill, and our courage will demonstrate our strength and conviction.

Culture comes down to one goal. Every Sailor and Marine – of all races, genders, religions, and ethnicities – must treat one another with dignity and respect. This is not just about doing the right thing. It is about ensuring our Navy and Marine Corps will be the most talented, most combat ready, most committed force possible.

Climate change exacerbates every challenge we face, from naval installations to frequent deployments. It is also a global struggle for resources that demands ingenuity and innovation.

It demands solutions that mitigate climate damage while ensuring our operational success and competitive edge.

Lastly, we must combat COVID. This means we must continue to vaccinate our naval forces with expedience. If we are not vaccinated, we are neither deployable nor combat ready. Immediately, the Navy and Marine Corps will make every effort to vaccinate and care for our force and defeat the scourge COVID has inflicted on our troops.

Both our nation's security and your success as Sailors and Marines require your enthusiastic, unwavering commitment. We will succeed or fail together. Accordingly, with a leadership ethos forged as a destroyer captain, I will strive to be direct and transparent with you about what we need to accomplish together.

Please know your safety and welfare will always be paramount to me, and I will work tirelessly with you to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

To do this, we must possess the resources needed to expand our capabilities. I will make that my top priority. I am committed to ensuring you have the tools and training you need to succeed. Just as I am committed to confronting our maintenance backlog, managing our operational requirements, and building our Navy of the future.

When I began my Navy career over 40 years ago, as a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy, I looked up to then-Secretary of the Navy Edward Hidalgo. Like me, he was an immigrant to this nation and, like me, his experience taught him why the world needs a strong United States Navy. Most of all, I understood that while I served our nation, he also served me.

The same is true today. I am *your* secretary of the Navy-Marine Corps Team focused on your and our collective promise to our Constitution and nation.

We will succeed together. It has never been more important that we do.

Finally, a personal note. My wife Betty and I well understand the sacrifices your loved ones make and how crucial they are to our success. We are both honored to be back once again working shoulder-to-shoulder with you. We look forward to getting out to the fleet and meeting you all soon.

Full Speed Ahead.

Very
Respectfully,

Carlos Del Toro

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant Returns Home after 53-Day Patrol



The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) returned to Naval Station Mayport, July 20, after completing a 53-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea. The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant crew patrolled over 7,800 nautical miles in the Caribbean Sea, conducting a variety of operations in support of Coast Guard District 7. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC 621) returned to Naval Station Mayport, July 20, after completing a 53-day patrol in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Aug. 11 release.

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant crew patrolled over 7,800 nautical miles in the Caribbean Sea, conducting a variety of operations in support of Coast Guard District 7.

The Valiant crew then executed five interdiction cases involving 70 migrants and supported the safe interdiction and repatriation of over 100 migrants. The Valiant crew rescued four Cuban migrants at night in heavy seas who were clinging to the side of a stopped merchant vessel that had spotted their sinking raft in a shipping lane northwest of Cay Sal Bank.

The Valiant crew partnered with the USS Wichita (LCS-13) and Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903), to safely transfer three suspected narcotics traffickers and 1,900 kilograms of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$72.7 million for prosecution in the United States. The Valiant crew then conducted storm avoidance from Hurricane Elsa while maintaining offshore search and rescue and disaster response presence north of Hispaniola.

While refueling and resupplying in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Valiant's crew showed their adaptability by conducting an emergency sortie with just a few hours' notice to support international interests off the coast of Haiti following the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. While conducting response operations off Haiti, Valiant also partnered with the Coast Guard Cutter Confidence (WMEC 619) to safely transfer an additional 370 kilograms of cocaine with a street value of over \$10.1 million for disposition in the United States.

"I could not be more proud of the women and men of the Valiant," said Cmdr. Jeff Payne, Valiant's commanding officer. "From protecting our nation's borders, executing counter-narcotics operations, search and rescue and finally responding to an international crisis, Valiant crew overcame every challenge and continuously flexed to meet the next mission.

From the most junior Coast Guard Academy cadets experiencing their first time at sea to “Old Salts” finishing their last days underway, every single person stepped up and leaned in to achieve operational success and safeguard our nation. We pride ourselves on being a true multi-mission asset and the entire Valiant crew showcased that over the last 53 days.”

The Valiant is a multi-mission 210-foot medium-endurance cutter. Missions include search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, homeland security and national defense operations.

Coast Guard Completes Study of Underrepresented Minorities



Lt. Darrina Willis, chief of Incident Management Division for the U.S. Coast Guard, who appeared in a “Portraits of Diversity” photo series in 2019. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class David Micallef*

WASHINGTON – The Coast Guard completed the “Holistic Study and Analysis for Recruiting and Retention of Underrepresented Minorities” (URM) as part of its commitment to create and retain a more inclusive workforce, the service’s headquarters said in an Aug. 11 release.

The service initiated the study with researchers at RAND’s Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) to produce a report that was released on Wednesday titled “Improving the Representation of Women and Racial/Ethnic Minorities Among United States Coast Guard Active-Duty

Members.”

The report analyzed the policies, programs, and practices that create potential barriers in attracting and retaining Underrepresented Minorities into Coast Guard ranks. The report also included recommendations to help the Coast Guard achieve its goal of creating a more inclusive workforce.

“The Coast Guard continues to seek out opportunities to foster a more inclusive, respectful Coast Guard that produces a mission-ready workforce that reflects the public we serve,” said Adm. Linda Fagan, vice commandant of the Coast Guard. “This study builds on the findings in the 2019 RAND Women’s Retention Report and Holistic Analysis, establishes benchmarks, and gathers feedback from the workforce to help ensure all members can reach their full potential.”

The findings and recommendations of the URM study focus in five key areas: diversity outreach and recruiting; career development; advancement and promotion; retention; and workforce climate.

The Coast Guard’s internal personnel readiness task force is taking immediate action on the recommendations of the URM study. Additionally, the Coast Guard is implementing the recommendations of both the URM and Women’s Retention Studies and will continue to execute the 2019-2023 Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan, which outlines 36-actions to measure outcomes, hold leadership accountable, and equip unit commanders with a standard set of resources to improve diversity and inclusion throughout the service.

Additional information on Coast Guard diversity and inclusion efforts can be found [here](#).

Coast Guard Orders 4 More Fast Response Cutters from Bollinger Shipyards



Bollinger Shipyards will build four additional Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutters for the U.S. Coast Guard. *BOLLINGER SHIPYARDS*

LOCKPORT, La. – The U.S. Coast Guard has exercised a contract option to award Bollinger Shipyards LLC four additional Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutters (FRCs), the company announced in an Aug. 10 release. This announcement brings the total number of FRCs awarded to Bollinger up to 64 vessels since the program’s inception. To date, the U.S. Coast Guard has commissioned 43 FRCs into operational service.

“We’re incredibly proud of the work we do at Bollinger, and we’re especially proud of our long history supporting the U.S. Coast Guard that stretches nearly four decades,” said Bollinger Shipyards President and CEO Ben Bordelon. “Our unique experience building for the Coast Guard is unparalleled and has shown time and time again that we can successfully deliver the highest quality vessels on a reliable, aggressive production schedule and cost, even in the most challenging circumstances, including the global pandemic and record hurricane season experienced over the past year. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Coast Guard.”

All four FRCs will be built at Bollinger’s Lockport, Louisiana, facility and are scheduled for delivery to the Coast Guard between fall 2024 and summer 2025.

The FRC program has had a total economic impact of \$1.7 billion since inception in material spending and directly supports more than 650 jobs in Southeast Louisiana. The program has indirectly created 1,690 new jobs from operations

and capital investment and has an annual economic impact on GDP of \$202 million, according to the most recent data from the U.S. Maritime Administration on the economic importance of the U.S. shipbuilding and repair industry. Bollinger sources over 271,000 different items for the FRC consisting of 282 million components and parts from 965 suppliers in 37 states.

U.S. Navy's First TH-73A 'Thrasher' Arrives at NAS Whiting Field



The Navy's first TH-73A Thrasher arrives at Naval Air Station Whiting Field in Milton, Florida, Aug. 6, 2021. The TH-73A will be assigned to Training Air Wing 5 on base and will replace the TH-57B/C Sea Ranger as the undergraduate rotary and tilt-rotor helicopter trainer for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason Isaacs*

MILTON, Fla. The first operational TH-73A "Thrasher" training helicopter landed at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whiting Field in Milton, Aug. 6, the Navy said in a release.

The helicopter will be assigned to Training Air Wing (TW) 5 and will replace chief of Naval Air Training's (CNATRA) TH-57B/C Sea Ranger as the undergraduate training helicopter for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

The helicopter made the two-day transit to the base from the Leonardo Helicopters facility in Philadelphia, where the aircraft was manufactured. CNATRA leadership welcomed the aircraft alongside representatives from Leonardo Helicopters,

Vertex Aerospace, who will provide maintenance support for the TH-73A, in addition to local community leaders.

Leonardo Helicopters is contracted to deliver 31 additional Thrashers this calendar year for a total of 130 through 2024 before the Sea Ranger's scheduled sundown in 2025 and will provide the Navy the capacity to train several hundred aviation students per year.

The TH-73A incorporates a modern avionics suite with a fully integrated flight management system, automatic flight control system, and independent, digital cockpit displays to both pilot stations. It boasts increased performance in power, speed, payload, and endurance over the Sea Ranger, making it comparable to fleet aircraft. These upgrades will help bridge capability and capacity gaps to better prepare newly winged naval aviators as they transition to fleet replacement squadrons for postgraduate training.

In addition to new helicopters, the full Advanced Helicopter Training System (AHTS) includes aircrew training services that provide availability on new simulators, a modernized curriculum, and a new contractor logistics support contract for Thrasher maintenance and flight line support.

"Using current cockpit technologies and a new training curriculum, AHTS will improve pilot training and skills and ensure rotary wing and tilt-rotor aviators are produced more efficiently at a higher quality and are ready to meet the fleet's challenges," CNATRA Rear Adm. Robert Westendorff said. "AHTS will meet our advanced rotary wing and intermediate tilt-rotor training requirements through 2050."

The TH-73As will be housed in a temporary hangar at NAS Whiting Field, while construction of a new helicopter maintenance hangar on base is slated to begin in 2023. Leonardo Helicopters also recently established a TH-73A maintenance support team at Santa Rosa County's new aviation

customer service hangar at Peter Prince Airport in Milton.

“This delivery signifies a new era for Naval Aviation training,” said Capt. Holly Shoger, Naval Undergraduate Flight Training Systems Program Office (PMA-273) program manager. “The combined government and contractor team set new standards to meet much needed requirements in the fleet. We are proud to develop and provide these new capabilities that will improve pilot training for many years to come.”

The TH-73A Helicopter Instructor Training Unit (HITU) team under TW-5 at NAS Whiting Field will use the first Thrasher to validate the modernized curriculum efforts, which is a requirement prior to training student naval aviators with the new curriculum in the new system.

“The simple cockpit design and layout, pushbutton and toggle switch interface, advanced navigation and communication capabilities, and rapid control response make it the ideal training aircraft and the perfect stepping stone to any service rotary wing platform,” said Cmdr. Dustin Robbins, TW-5 AHTS Fleet Integration Team (FIT) officer in charge. “With its all-digital cockpit and fully integrated Flight Management System coupled with superior power and speed margins, the TH-73A is a lot of fun to fly.”

PMA-273 at Naval Air Systems in Patuxent River, Maryland, oversees the AHTS and TH-73A, and will determine the final disposition of the 35-year-old TH-57 Sea Ranger, which is scheduled to sundown in fiscal years 2022 through 2025.

The TH-73A Thrasher is named for the brown thrasher, a bird common to the skies over the Southeastern United States including Northwest Florida. The inconspicuous, yet territorial, bird is a fearless defender known for its low-level flying prowess.

TW-5 is comprised of three primary fixed-wing and three advanced helicopter squadrons and trains aviators from the Navy, Marine

Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force, and allied nations.

Norway's First P-8A Poseidon Performs First Flight



The first of five P-8A Poseidon aircraft bound for Norway had its first flight Aug. 9. *THE BOEING CO.*

RENTON, Wash. – The first of five Boeing P-8A Poseidon aircraft for Norway performed its first flight Aug. 9, the company said in a release. The aircraft took off at 10:03 a.m. Pacific time and flew for 2 hours, 24 minutes, reaching a maximum altitude of 41,000 feet during the flight from Renton Municipal Airport to Boeing Field in Seattle.

The first flight marks the next phase of the production cycle of this aircraft as it is moved to the Installation and Checkout facility, where mission systems will be installed and additional testing will take place before final delivery to the Norwegian Defence Materiel Agency (NDMA) later this year.

“This inaugural flight is an important milestone for Norway, and the Boeing team remains committed to delivering the P-8 fleet to the NDMA on schedule,” said Christian Thomsen, P-8 Europe program manager. “The P-8 is a capability that will help Norway improve anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and search-and-rescue missions, in addition to fostering valuable regional collaboration and interoperability with NATO nations.”

The five P-8As will eventually replace Norway's current fleet of six P-3 Orions and three DA-20 Jet Falcons. The Royal

Norwegian Air Force currently operates its P-3s from Andoya Air Station. With the introduction of the P-8s, flight operations will move to new facilities at Evenes Air Station.

To date, Boeing has delivered 136 P-8 aircraft to the U.S. Navy, the Royal Australian Air Force, the Indian navy and the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force. Norway is one of eight nations that have selected the P-8A as their maritime patrol aircraft, along with the United States, India, Australia, the United Kingdom, Korea, New Zealand and Germany.

Navy E-6B Program Office Purchases RAF E-3D for E-6B Trainer Aircraft



Members of Airborne Strategic Command, Control, and Communications Program Office (PMA-271) conduct a material inspection of a Royal Air Force E-3D, Feb. 6, 2021 in Lake Charles, Louisiana. The program recently purchased the E-3D and will modify it to be a pilot training aircraft for the E-6B Mercury. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Airborne Strategic Command, Control, and Communications Program Office (PMA-271) purchased a retired Royal Air Force E-3D for \$15 million that will be used as an E-6B Mercury pilot training aircraft, the Naval Air Systems Command said in an Aug. 4 release.

The program office had been looking to acquire a dedicated training aircraft for the fleet to take the strain off using the current mission-capable E-6 aircraft.

“The training flights expose mission aircraft to significant wear-and-tear and impact their readiness and availability,” said Capt. Adam Scott, PMA-271 program manager. “This is a great chance to work with the United Kingdom and bring a much-needed aircraft to the fleet.”

Since the E-6’s inception over three decades ago, the Navy has looked for ways to train pilots and keep them up to date on the airframe. Those options have included leasing several different commercial aircraft as well as using the mission-capable aircraft.

For the past several years, the program has been looking for a dedicated trainer and found one when the Royal Air Force decided to retire their fleet of E-3Ds.

Both the E-3 and E-6 are militarized versions of the Boeing 707.

When the funds became available in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, the team moved fast.

Members of the program office went to Louisiana at the end of February to inspect the condition of the aircraft as they moved closer to acquiring it.

“This team has done a great job of moving quickly and capitalizing on this opportunity,” Scott said. “It’s a big win for the entire E-6 community.”

Once the aircraft comes to NAVAIR, a modification will begin with a goal to get it out to the fleet by October 2023.

The aircraft will help reduce an estimated 600 flight hours and 2,400 landings/cycles per year from the E-6 mission aircraft.

The E-6B is a communications relay and strategic airborne command post aircraft. It provides survivable, reliable, and enduring airborne command, control and communications between

the National Command Authority and U.S. strategic and non-strategic forces.

HII Awarded \$273 Million Navy Aircraft Carrier, Surface Ship Maintenance Contract



Under the maintenance contract, HII will continue to support U.S. Navy fleet ships, including aircraft carriers and West Coast surface ships. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kaila V. Peters*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Technical Solutions division announced Aug. 10 it has been awarded a five-year contract with a total value of \$273 million to support the U.S. Navy's carrier engineering maintenance assist team, surface engineering maintenance assist team for West Coast surface ships, and other maintenance and material readiness programs.

"Continuous modernization and sustainment of our nation's fleet is essential to our national security," said Garry Schwartz, president of Technical Solutions' Defense and Federal Solutions business group. "HII is honored to extend our 40-year partnership with the U.S. Navy in support of these critical defense assets, and to continue leveraging our expertise to maximize efficiency and cost-savings in the future."

Work performed on the contract will support maintenance and planning for the overhaul and repair of equipment and systems including hull, mechanical and electrical; aviation equipment

and systems; command, control, communications, computer and intelligence; and combat support systems. The programs follow a “find, fix and train” philosophy with assessments, maintenance, and training to enhance sailor self-sufficiency and maintenance capabilities while ensuring platforms remain mission capable. Work will be performed within the U.S. and internationally during operational deployments.

Schiebel Camcopter S-100 Successfully Completes Trials for U.S. NAVY



A Camcopter S-100 demonstrates hydrographic mapping off of Pensacola, Florida, in the recent demonstration. *SCHIEBEL AIRCRAFT*

FAIRFAX, Va. – Schiebel Aircraft and Areté Associates successfully showcased the Camcopter S-100 unmanned aircraft system combined with Areté’s Pushbroom Imaging Lidar for Littoral Surveillance (PILLS) sensor to the U.S. Navy’s Office of Naval Research, Schiebel said in an Aug. 9 release.

In a combined demonstration sponsored by ONR on a commercial vessel off the coast of Pensacola, Florida, Schiebel and Areté demonstrated the combination’s ability to conduct hydrographic mapping of ocean littoral spaces with a low size, weight, and power sensor that easily integrates into the small S-100. PILLS has multiple military and commercial applications.

“We are proud that we could successfully showcase the outstanding capabilities and data-gathering features of our

Camcopter S-100 to the U.S. Navy,” said Hans Georg Schiebel, chairman of the Schiebel Group. “Globally, we operate extensively on land and at sea and we are confident that our unmanned solution is also the right fit for the U.S. Navy.”