Cutter James Conducts Largest Offload of Illegal Narcotics in Coast Guard history

The crew of Coast Guard Cutter James offloaded nearly 60,000 pounds of cocaine and 1,430 pounds of marijuana Aug. 5, the largest offload in the service's history. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter James' crew offloaded approximately 59,700 pounds of cocaine and 1,430 pounds of marijuana worth more than $1.4 billion, Aug. 5, at Port Everglades, which is the largest offload in service history, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The Coast Guard's strong international relationships, with key partners like Canada and the Netherlands, along with specialized capabilities and unmatched authorities, allow for a unity of effort to disrupt transnational crime organizations, which threaten America and partner nations.

"Today's offload is a result of our combined efforts of our inter-agency partners and a dedicated international coalition," said Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, commander, Atlantic Area. "The Canadian government and Canadian Defence Forces brings an incredible capability in defeating transnational organized crime, and I'm grateful to HMCS Shawinigan to showcase Canada's commitment. Together we will disrupt, defeat and degrade transnational organized crime. We will strengthen our efforts and continue to build collaboration and capability."

"Canada and America are committed to expanding cooperation on defending North America against illicit trafficking and transnational crime and working together within our alliances," said Maj. Gen. Paul Ormsby, Canadian Defence Attache. "We know that no nation can do it

alone, and we know that we are stronger together. The kind of cooperation that we see on the pier today is one of the thousands of impressive examples of cooperation every day.”

During at-sea interdictions, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The drugs were interdicted in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean Sea including contraband seized and recovered during 27 interdictions of suspected drug smuggling vessels by 10 American, Dutch and Canadian ships:

Coast Guard Cutter James

Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk

Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless

Coast Guard Cutter Thetis

Coast Guard Cutter Confidence

USS Wichita

USS Sioux City

USS Billings

HNLMS Holland

HMCS Shawinigan

The cutter James is a 418-foot national security cutter home

ported in Charleston, South Carolina. The cutter Mohawk is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter home ported in Key West, Florida. The cutter Dauntless is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola, Florida. The cutter Thetis is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Key West, Florida. The cutter Confidence is a 210-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Port Canaveral, Florida. The USS Wichita is a 378-foot freedom-class littoral combat ship homeported in Naval Station Mayport, Florida. The USS Sioux City is a 378-foot Freedom-class littoral combat ship homeported in Naval Station Mayport, Florida. The USS Billings is a 378-foot Freedom-class littoral combat ship homeported in Naval Station Mayport, Florida. The Royal Netherlands Navy HNLMS Holland is a 356-foot Holland-class offshore patrol vessel homeported in Den Helder, Netherlands. The HMCS Shawinigan is a 181-foot Kingston-class coastal defense vessel homeported in Halifax, Canada.

BAE Systems Awarded Contract to Sustain F-35's Electronic Warfare System

An F-35C Lighting II assigned to the "Black Knights" from the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 154 performs a touch-and-go on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) in July. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jeremiah Bartelt*

NASHUA, N.H. – BAE Systems has received a $93 million Undefinitized Contract Action (UCA) to provide critical sustainment support for the F-35 electronic warfare

(EW) system, the company said in an Aug. 4 release.

BAE Systems has received a $93 million, five-year UCA from Lockheed Martin to provide critical sustainment support for the AN/ASQ-239 EW countermeasure system. The contract will ensure the mission readiness of the growing global fleet of F-35 aircraft.

“We have a strong track record of sustaining electronic warfare systems to support our customers’ mission readiness,” said Rob Dykema, F-35 Sustainment program director at BAE Systems. “This contract lays critical sustainment groundwork, establishing and optimizing the infrastructure to support the aircraft.”

Under the contract, BAE Systems will provide software maintenance, depot test equipment support, logistics analysis, obsolescence monitoring, technical field support, and reach-back support for the F-35 U.S. Reprogramming Laboratory.

The contract complements the BAE Systems F-35 performance-based logistics (PBL) program, through which BAE Systems ensures EW material availability. Under the EW PBL, BAE Systems has demonstrated a 60% improvement in supply support, delivering better than 85% EW material availability to the F-35 enterprise with reduced cost per flight hour using a cost-effective, outcome-based support strategy.

The AN/ASQ-239 electronic warfare suite provides real-time situational awareness and superior electronic warfare attack and countermeasure capabilities.

U.S. Navy Kicks Off Large-Scale Exercise 2021

The Large Scale Exercise logo. *U.S. FLEET FORCES COMMAND*

NORFOLK, Va. – Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and U.S. Naval Forces Europe commenced Large-Scale Exercise 2021 in the USFF, PACFLT, and NAVEUR areas of responsibility, Aug. 3, Fleet Forces Command said in a release.

LSE 2021 is a Chief of Naval Operations-directed live, virtual, and constructive, globally integrated exercise that spans multiple fleets. LSE 2021 is designed to refine how we synchronize maritime operations across multiple fleets in support of the joint force. The training is based on a progression of fleet battle problems and scenarios that will assess and refine modern warfare concepts, including distributed maritime operations, expeditionary advanced base operations, and littoral operations in a contested environment.

"We have shifted focus from the individual Carrier Strike Group to a larger fleet-centric approach, challenging fleet commanders' abilities to make decisions at a speed and accuracy that outpaces the adversaries," said Adm. Christopher W. Grady, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command. "LSE is more than just training; it is leveraging the integrated fighting power of multiple naval forces to share sensors, weapons, and platforms across all domains in contested environments, globally."

Evaluating and improving naval integration and the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps' ability to integrate all domains in a high-end global conflict is a necessary investment in the current and future readiness of our forces.

“LSE 2021 provides our Navy-Marine Corps team the opportunity to plan, direct and establish full spectrum naval operations. We must build naval readiness and advance the art and science of naval warfare to be ready to fight tonight – the stakes could not be higher,” said Adm. Samuel Paparo, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. “The international rules-based order is essential to our nation, and our partners and allies for peace, security and stability.”

Included in the exercise will be evaluations of experimental technology from a variety of warfare areas including unmanned technologies.

“LSE will test our commanders’ abilities to deliver coordinated effects, from all directions, any time or all the time. It will help us build the necessary muscle memory to do this routinely at the operational to strategic levels of war,” said Adm. Robert P. Burke, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe. “By exercising the full weight of our operational fleets, working together in a global mindset, we will truly harness the inherent flexibility of naval forces in controlling the sea and projecting power.”

LSE 2021 is part of an on-going series of exercises that demonstrates the U.S. Navy’s ability to employ precise, lethal, and overwhelming force globally across three naval component commands, five numbered fleets, and 17 time zones. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday discussed the Large-Scale Exercise during Sea-Air-Space 2021 this week.

DoD Announces Acquisition and Sustainment Leadership Transition

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Navy is only weeks away from its goal to achieve a mission-capable rate for its E-2D Advanced Hawkeye carrier-based command and control aircraft of 28 aircraft, a Navy program official said.

The Navy also is aiming for 22 of those 28 E-2Ds hitting and sustaining full mission capability by Sept. 1, said Capt. Pete Arrobio, the Navy's E-2D program manager, speaking Aug. 3 at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space Expo at National Harbor, Maryland.

Attaining full mission capability is no small task. Arrobio pointed out that the E-2D has 11 major mission systems to be maintained in operating condition for the aircraft to reach full mission capability.

Arrobio said the Navy has a detailed plan to add and improve capability to the E-2D fleet over time. He stressed the need in the future to move faster in upgrading the aircraft software and systems to keep them relevant to high-level warfare. Future needs include cyber hardening; connectivity to the joint all-domain command and control environment; sensor improvement; more space, weight and power capacity; improved reliability of components; and integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning where appropriate.

Northrop Grumman has delivered 48 E-2Ds to the Navy so far, out of 52 ordered so far. The U.S. Navy's program of record calls for 86 E-2Ds. The aircraft delivered so far equip five airborne command and control (VAW) squadrons and one fleet replacement squadron, with the fleet squadrons deploying with five aircraft each. Two of those VAW squadrons have completed

transition to an aerial refueling capability. Four fleet squadrons are still equipped with the E-2C Hawkeye.

Three of nine ordered by Japan have been delivered. France has signed a letter of agreement to procure three E-2Ds to replace its E-2Cs. Taiwan and Egypt, which operate E-2Cs, also are potential customers for the E-2D.

There are 26 E-2Cs remaining in the U.S. Navy's inventory and they are scheduled for phase out by 2026. Japan, France, Taiwan and Egypt operate a total of 28 E-2Cs, which Arrobio's office helps to sustain with program support.

Chebi Nominated for NAVAIR Commander, Bierman for III MEF

ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced Aug. 2 that the president has made the following nominations:

Navy Rear Adm. Carl P. Chebi for appointment to the rank of vice admiral, and assignment as commander, Naval Air Systems Command, Patuxent River, Maryland. Chebi is currently serving as deputy director, Joint Strike Fighter Program, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Arlington, Virginia.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. James W. Bierman Jr. for appointment to the rank of lieutenant general, and assignment as commanding general, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan. Bierman is currently serving as commanding general, 3d Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan.

Below is Chebi's official biography from the Navy's website:

Rear Adm. Carl Chebi, a native of Holliston, Massachusetts. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Computer Systems Engineering and a commission as an ensign from the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School and Navy Fighter Weapons School, and he holds an Executive Master in Business Administration from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Chebi served operationally as an F-14 pilot in Fighter Squadron (VF) 142 deployed with USS Eisenhower (CVN 69) and executive officer and commanding officer for Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 192 deployed with USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) to Atsugi, Japan. During these tours he participated in Operation Southern Watch and many Western Pacific deployments.

His shore tours include service as an aircraft and weapons test pilot in both Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23 and 30 and as deputy for Strike Aircraft Plans and Requirements for the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV). Chebi also completed numerous acquisition tours beginning with the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, where he was selected to fly the Mirage 2000 aircraft in France. His program management experience includes serving as a deputy program manager for the F/A-18 and EA-18G Program Office (PMA-265), program manager for the Precision Strike Weapons Program Office (PMA- 201), and program manager for Naval Integrated Fires Program (PMA-298). He also served as the vice commander of Naval Air Systems Command and as the Program Executive Officer Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence (C4I)/Program Executive Officer Space Systems.

In September 2019 he assumed duty as the deputy program executive officer, F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office.

Chebi has 3,700 plus flight hours and more than 700 carrier arrested landings. He has logged hours in the F/A- 18 A-F, Mirage 2000, F-14A-D, F-15, F-16, P-51 and numerous other aircraft.

Below is Bierman's official biography:

Maj. Gen. James W. Bierman Jr. was born in Camp Lejeune and is a graduate from the Virginia Military Institute. He commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1987.

As a company grade officer, Bierman served as a Rifle Platoon Commander, Anti-Armor Platoon Commander, Adjutant, Commanding Officer of Headquarters and Service Company, Intelligence Officer, and Company Commander of Charlie Company 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. He deployed in support of contingency operations in the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, participated in operations in Northern Iraq as part of Operation Provide Comfort, and supported operations in Somalia.

As a field grade officer, Bierman served as a battalion operations officer in 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, as the commanding officer of Recruiting Station Richmond, a planner for I Marine Expeditionary Force and Deputy G-3, Future Operations Officer. In 2003, he became the commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 3d Marines. He deployed numerous times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom II, and Operation Enduring Freedom VI-VII. In April 2009, Bierman assumed command of 3d Marine Regiment. From 2011 to 2013, he served as the military secretary to the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

As a general officer, Bierman commanded the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego and the Western Recruiting Region from 2013 to 2016. In September 2016 he assumed his duties as the deputy director for political-military affairs for the Middle East, Strategic Plans and Policy Direction (J5), on the

Joint Staff. In 2018 Bierman assumed his duties as the commanding general of Marine Corps Recruiting Command. He is a graduate of The Basic School, Infantry Officer Course, Amphibious Warfare School, Command and Staff College, School of Advanced Warfighting, and College of Naval Warfare.

Newport News Shipbuilding Progresses Construction Activities on John F. Kennedy

Newport News Shipbuilding division is progressing through construction of the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) turning over more than 500 of the total 2,615 compartments, including the machine room, which is one of the larger spaces. The completed spaces allow Sailors to begin training on the ship while final outfitting and testing continues. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries announced Aug. 2 that it is making significant progress in the compartment and systems construction of the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy (CVN 79).

Newport News Shipbuilding division recently eclipsed the 20% mark on compartment completion, turning over to the ship's crew more than 500 of the total 2,615 spaces. It also has installed more than 8 million feet of cable – or more than 1,500 miles – of the approximately 10.5 million feet of cable on Kennedy.

The most recently completed spaces include berthing, machinery and electrical. This allows Sailors assigned to the pre-

commissioning unit to continue training on the ship while final outfitting and testing progresses.

“We are pleased with the progress being made on Kennedy,” said Lucas Hicks, vice president of the Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) and John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) aircraft carrier programs. “We are in the very early stages of systems testing and look forward to successfully executing our work on equipment, systems and compartments that brings us closer to delivering the ship to the fleet.”

Kennedy is more than 80% complete overall and is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in 2024.

BAE Systems’ Next-Generation APKWS Guidance Kits Improve Rocket Range and Impact

BAE Systems has developed an advanced, hardened version of its APKWS guidance kit. *BAE SYSTEMS*

Hudson, N.H. – BAE Systems, Inc. has developed an advanced version of its combat-proven APKWS guidance kit that offers enhanced strike distance and precision strike lethality, the company said in an Aug. 2 release. The upgrade improves the effective range of APKWS guided rockets by up to 30%, allowing warfighters to engage targets from a greater standoff distance with improved survivability.

APKWS is the U.S. government’s only program of record for guiding 2.75-inch laser-guided rockets, providing an efficient, low-cost weapon in the U.S. arsenal of precision

munitions. Initial production of APKWS block upgrade guidance kits will start in the third quarter of 2021.

“Our customers’ precision strike needs are changing,” said John Watkins, vice president and general manager of Precision Strike & Sensing Solutions at BAE Systems. “We’re focused on evolving APKWS guidance kits to provide them with a more capable low-cost product that’s easy to use and known for its accuracy.”

APKWS block upgrade guidance kits create an optimized flight trajectory that enables the rocket to engage targets at a steeper angle of attack, providing improvements in range and lethality. The optimized attack trajectory improves first-shot success against stationary and moving targets.

The enhanced guidance kits also provide logistics and training benefits to customers. A single variant of the weapon is now qualified for rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircraft across the U.S. armed forces customers, easing stock management and reducing the cognitive load on pilots. An upgrade to the surface danger zone logic also provides better training range options in certain conditions, allowing crews to improve their proficiency at home stations.

BAE Systems’ APKWS guidance kits are manufactured at the company’s production facility in Hudson, New Hampshire.

Navy Conducts First MQ-4C Triton Test Flight with

Multi-Intelligence Upgrade

A Northrop Grumman Corp.-built MQ-4C Triton took to the skies for the first time in the highly upgraded multi-intelligence configuration known as integrated functional capability four (IFC-4). *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy conducted its first test flight of the MQ-4C Triton in its upgraded hardware and software configuration July 29 at NAS Patuxent River, beginning the next phase of the unmanned aircraft's development, the Naval Air Systems Command said in a July 29 release.

The MQ-4C Triton flew in its new configuration, known as Integrated Functional Capability (IFC)-4, which will bring an enhanced multi-mission sensor capability as part of the Navy's Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Targeting (MISR&T) transition plan.

Triton's Integrated Test Team (ITT) comprised of the U.S. Navy, Australian cooperative partners, and government/industry teams completed a functional check flight and initial aeromechanical test points, demonstrating stability and control of the MQ-4C after a 30-month modification period.

"Today's flight is a significant milestone for the program and a testament to the resolve of the entire ITT, their hard work, and passion for test execution and program success," said Capt. Dan Mackin, Persistent Maritime Unmanned Aircraft Systems program manager. "This flight proves that the program is making significant progress toward Triton's advanced multi-intelligence upgrade and it brings us closer to achieving the initial operational capability (IOC) milestone."

Multiple Triton assets have been modified into the IFC-4 configuration in support of IOC in 2023. A single test asset is in the current IFC-3 configuration to support sustainment of deployed systems as well as risk reduction for IFC-4.

Currently, two MQ-4C Triton aircraft in the baseline configuration known as IFC-3 are forward deployed to 7th Fleet in support of early operational capability (EOC) and Commander Task Force (CTF)-72 tasking. VUP-19 will operate Triton to further develop the concept of operations and fleet learning associated with operating a high-altitude, long-endurance system in the maritime domain.

“The MQ-4C Triton has already had a tremendous positive impact on operations in [U.S. Indo-Pacific Command] and will continue to provide unprecedented maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities which are especially critical to national interests with the increased focus in the Pacific,” Mackin said.

Triton is the first high-altitude, long-endurance aircraft that can conduct persistent Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions to complement the P-8 in the maritime domain. The Navy plans to deploy Triton to five orbits worldwide.

USS Independence First LCS to Be Decommissioned

The crew of USS Independence (LCS 2), the lead ship of the Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship, recognized more than a decade of naval service during a decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego, July 29. *U.S. NAVY*

SAN DIEGO – The crew of USS Independence (LCS 2), the lead ship of the Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship, recognized more than a decade of naval service during a decommissioning ceremony at Naval Base San Diego, July 29,

commander, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron One, said in a July 30 release.

Due to public health and safety restrictions on large public events resulting from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the ceremony was a private event celebrated alongside ship plankowners and former crew members.

During the ceremony, keynote speaker, Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, wished the crew of Independence fair winds and following seas as they said farewell to their ship.

“The Independence crew shouldered a heavy responsibility. Since the ship’s introduction into the fleet we asked her to serve for a specific purpose; to test emerging equipment and concepts,” said Kitchener. “The crew accomplished that and so much more. Without their efforts and experiences, the ship class would not be where it is today with six ships deployed throughout the world. Those improvements, made largely in part due to this crew’s experience and input, will continue to carry the LCS class into the future.”

The commissioning commanding officer of USS Independence gold crew, Capt. Michael Riley said it was the Sailors who rose to the occasion that made Independence prosperous.

“What made Independence successful wasn’t the program managers, industry professionals or even her two captains. It was the officers, chiefs and Sailors of the blue and gold crews that made it operational. They shouldered the burden of shifting programmatic guidance, incomplete documentation or one-of-a-kind systems, and got it to sea,” said Riley. “They were honest in pointing out when system performances or operational processes failed to live up to their expectations. At the same time, they discovered hidden capabilities in the ship, repurposing equipment and systems to suit the situation.”

Independence maintained a crew of nine officers and 41 enlisted Sailors. The ship was built in Mobile, Alabama, by Austal USA and commissioned Jan. 16, 2010.

Independence is the sixth ship to carry the name, recognizing the cornerstone of our nation's foundation for which so many Americans have fought and died. The first Independence was a 10-gun sloop that served during the American Revolution. The second Independence, the first ship of the line in the Navy, was launched in 1814 as a 74-gun ship, but later refitted to a 54-gun frigate. The third Independence served with the Naval Overseas Transportation Service (NOTS) following the end of World War I. The fourth Independence (CVL 22), a small aircraft carrier commissioned in 1943, earned eight battle stars during World War II. The fifth Independence (CV 62) was an aircraft carrier commissioned in 1959 and decommissioned in 1998.

Independence has been a test and training ship and was key in developing the operational concepts foundational to the current configuration and deployment of LCS today. The decommissioning of LCS 2 supports department-wide business process reform initiatives to free up time, resources, and manpower in support of increased lethality. The LCS remains a fast, agile, and networked surface combatant, designed to operate in near-shore environments, while capable of open-ocean tasking and winning against 21st-century coastal threats.

The LCS class consists of two variants, the Freedom variant and the Independence variant, designed and built by two industry teams. The Freedom variant team is led by Lockheed Martin and is a steel monohull design constructed in the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Corporation's shipyard in Marinette, Wisconsin. The Independence variant is an aluminum trimaran design originally built by an industry team led by General Dynamics Bath Iron Works for LCS 2 and LCS 4. Currently, Independence variant LCS are constructed by Austal

USA in the company’s Mobile, Alabama shipyard.

LCS are outfitted with mission packages (made up of mission systems and support equipment) that deploy manned and unmanned vehicles and sensors in support of mine countermeasures, anti-submarine warfare or surface warfare missions.

After the decommissioning of Independence, 22 littoral combat ships remain in service to the fleet.

Lockheed Martin’s HELIOS Shipboard Laser Being Tested at Wallops Island

Artist’s rendering of Lockheed Martin’s HELIOS system. *LOCKHEED MARTIN*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The shipboard laser weapon system built for the U. S. Navy by Lockheed Martin is being tested at Wallops Island, Virginia, a company official said.

The first High-Energy Laser with Integrated Optical-dazzler and Surveillance, or HELIOS, was delivered to the Navy in January 2021 and was shipped to the Navy’s test site at Wallops Island.

The HELIOS is being test-fired and real-world test data from the weapon is being collected to confirm the models, said Jon Rambeau, vice president and general manager for Integrated Warfare Systems & Sensors at Lockheed Martin.

The single 60-kilowatt HELIOS unit is scheduled to be installed on the Flight IIA Arleigh Burke-class guided missile

destroyer USS Preble in line with its deployment schedule, Rambeau said.

Lockheed Martin built one HELIOS under the Navy contract, which has options for multiple units.

Rambeau said the HELIOS, which is fully integrated into the Aegis Combat System, has the potential to be a significant counter to anti-ship cruise missiles. The weapon is scalable with additional of fiber-optic laser modules. The HELIOS is adaptable to the Ship Self-Defense System (SSDS) on aircraft carriers and most amphibious warfare ships.