

Coast Guard Cutter Forward Returns Home after Drug-Busting Patrol



Coast Guard Cutter Forward and Coast Guard Cutter Bear, homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, finish an at-sea transfer while underway on a two-month patrol. Coast Guard Cutter Forward returned to homeport on April 10, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC 911) returned to its homeport in Portsmouth April 12 after a two-month patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, working to suppress and eradicate the movement of illegal drugs in the region, the Coast Guard 5th District said in an April 13 release.

The crew of the Forward worked in conjunction with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO) and the Canadian Navy to execute the mission, resulting in the seizure of 6,800 pounds of cocaine, 5,300 pounds of

marijuana, two pounds of methamphetamine and the detainment of 14 suspected drug smugglers.

“These deployments highlight our successful interoperability with multiple domestic and international partners all committed to curbing the flow of illegal drugs to our borders,” said Lt. Vincent Zieser, the operations officer and lead coordinator aboard the Forward. “We certainly enjoyed their support and teamwork.”

U.S. Southern Command began what was then known as Enhanced Counter-Narcotics Operations in the Western Hemisphere to increase drug traffic disruption on April 1, 2020. This counter Transnational Criminal Organizations operational approach, which is now enduring, supports objectives to degrade the capabilities of TCOs and ultimately save lives. With increased presence, collaborative efforts have bolstered support to U.S. and partner nations’ law enforcement agencies by sharing information and intelligence. Key partners have been involved in over 60% of drug disruptions since April 2020, an increase of 50% from 2019. By strengthening partnerships, we maximize regional coverage and increase effectiveness.

There are numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated 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, play a role in counter-drug operations.

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 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard

The Forward is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth. The cutter's primary mission includes search and rescue, illegal drug interdictions, alien migrant interdictions, ensuring safety of life at sea and enforcing international and domestic maritime laws.

Bahrain Delegation Commemorates Production of Its First AH-1Z Helicopter



Brig. Gen. Faisal Al Kaabi, Bahrain Ambassador to the U.S. H.E. Shaikh Abdulla Al Khalifa, Bell Executive Vice President, Military Business, Vince Tobin, Bell Vice President and H-1 Program Director Michael Deslatte and Bahrain Defense Attaché to the U.S., Commodore Adm. Jasim Al Jowder, pose in front of an AH-1Z Viper during an aircraft frame signing ceremony at Bell's Amarillo assembly center on 31 March 2021. BELL

AMARILLO, Texas – Bell hosted a delegation from the Kingdom of Bahrain to mark the start of production of AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters built as part of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, the company said in an April 12 release. Delegates toured the Bell Amarillo production facility to observe the production line and ceremoniously sign the aircraft's frame destined to join the Bahrain Air Force.

"We are honored to host the Kingdom of Bahrain and share this milestone in production for the AH-1Z," said Mike Deslatte, Bell H-1 vice president and program director. "Today's ceremony marks a new milestone in bringing the advanced capabilities of the Viper a step closer to the Kingdom of Bahrain."

Bell designed the AH-1Z Viper to meet the modern battlefield's expeditionary requirements across the full spectrum of military operations. The Viper routinely maintains a high operational tempo from forward operating facilities by minimizing its logistical footprint without losing warfighting capabilities.

"Today also signifies the dedication of thousands of Bell and Team Viper employees around the world who are proud to support our international partner," said Deslatte.

The Department of Defense awarded Bell a contract to manufacture and deliver 12 Lot-16 AH-1Z aircraft to the Kingdom of Bahrain. Bell projects production deliveries to begin in late 2021.

Vigor Begins Work on USS William P. Lawrence



Sailors spray fresh water on the deck after testing aqueous film forming foam sprinklers on the foc'sle of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110) in this 2019 photo. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Caledon Rabbipal

PEARL HARBOR – USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110), an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, docked at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PHNSY & IMF) for the ship's docking selected restricted availability (DSRA). Vigor began work that is expected to continue into early January 2022, the company said in a release.

This is the second time Vigor, a Titan company, and Hawaii Regional Maintenance Center (HRMC), responsible for surface

ship maintenance at PHNSY & IMF, will partner to complete a surface ship DSRA, following the successful completion of USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108). Vigor's first partnership with HRMC concluded in January, completing the Wayne E. Meyer's DSRA 14 days ahead of schedule despite the challenges posed by COVID-19.

"Vigor is grateful for another opportunity to partner with HRMC and serve the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor," said Adam Beck, Vigor executive vice president, Ship Repair. "We are proud of the work to complete our first availability on the Wayne E. Meyer ahead of schedule, allowing an important Navy asset to return to service. Now our skilled workers are honored to be serving the Navy again on the William P. Lawrence. We look forward to a successful availability and the potential growth of our work in Hawaii in the future."

With its expansion into Hawaii in 2020, Vigor is now serving the U.S. Navy in ship repair across three states, including Oregon, Washington and Hawaii. USS Cape St. George (CG 71) recently arrived at Harbor Island in Seattle, alongside USS Chosin (CG 65), while work continues on USS McCampbell (DDG 85) at Swan Island in Portland, Oregon.

William P. Lawrence's availability will include routine maintenance, modernization and repair work to keep the ship operating at full technical capacity and mission capability for its entire service life. The contract for the DSRA totals nearly \$84 million, with options that could increase the value to more than \$85 million. Eighty direct employees supported Vigor's work on Wayne E. Meyer. A similar number of jobs are projected to be supporting Vigor's efforts for William P. Lawrence.

"We are thrilled to get underway with William P. Lawrence's availability and look forward to a successful partnership with ship's force and Vigor Marine," said Capt. Daniel Kidd, HRMC deputy commander, first shared by PHNSY & IMF. "The work the

team will complete during this scheduled maintenance period will help maintain and modernize this mighty warship so that she can get back to sea executing the Navy's mission."

"We all have a sense of excitement as we begin the availability knowing our work directly impacts the Navy's mission," said HRMC William P. Lawrence Project Manager J.C. "Harry" Herrera. "The HRMC and Vigor team is laser-focused on executing first-time quality work that will return the ship back to sea on time for her crew."

Exercise Arctic Guardian 2021 to Enhance Circumpolar Collaboration



Petty Officer 2nd Class Lauren Butnor, a crewmember aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10), climbs aboard Polar Star after participating in ice rescue training in the Bering Strait, Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2020. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 1st Class Cynthia Oldham*

WASHINGTON – The Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) Working Group of the Arctic Council and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) will hold a joint online emergency response exercise from April 12-14, hosted by the Environment Agency of Iceland, the Polar Institute of the Wilson center said in an April 12 release.

The goal of the exercise is to improve Arctic nations' capability to respond to maritime incidents requiring joint search and rescue (SAR) and marine environmental response operations.

The Arctic Guardian 2021 exercise is designed to improve collaboration between Arctic Council and ACGF member states who are signatories of the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (MOSPA) and the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic (Arctic SAR Agreement). The collaborative exercise will provide public and private operational and policy-oriented SAR and marine environmental response organizations with a means to discuss their communication and coordination processes in the event of a marine SAR and/or oil spill incident in the Arctic.

The Arctic Guardian 2021 exercise follows a scenario where an oil tanker and an expeditionary cruise vessel collide off the North coast of Iceland. Originally intended as a live exercise following a table-top exercise in fall 2020, the virtual format will ensure that all stakeholders can participate, and the global pandemic does not hinder Arctic emergency preparedness.

“As maritime activity in the Arctic increases, it elevates the risk of serious incidents and the need to plan and prepare for

emergency and pollution responses,” said Jens Peter Holst-Andersen, chair of EPPR. “It is crucial to test and better understand the challenges of a coordinated response that involves many different players in a safe environment. It allows us to not only test response activities, but also build and strengthen the relationships between these diverse players, which are incredibly important at the time of real emergency.”

“As we know, disasters can strike without any previous indication, anytime, anywhere. The Arctic and adjacent regions are incredibly challenging,” said RADM Georg Lárusson, chair of the ACGF and director general of the Icelandic Coast Guard. “Therefore, we have to exercise and prepare for major incidents, emphasizing harsh weather conditions, long distances involved and limited infrastructure. That is precisely the purpose of the Arctic Guardian exercise and workshop. We share and cooperate to battle these elements to make the area safer for the inhabitants and guests.”

The Arctic Guardian 2021 exercise will engage stakeholders in Iceland, representatives from other Arctic States, key non-government organizations and industry actors involved in search and rescue and marine environmental response. The Wilson Center’s Polar Institute will provide overarching facilitation support, panel moderation, and contribute to exercise outcomes. “The Polar Institute team is pleased and honored to participate in this important international effort in support of the ACGF, the Arctic Council, and EPPR as they address the shared challenges brought about by a changing Arctic,” said Dr. Mike Sfraga, director of the Polar Institute. The entities jointly designing and organizing the exercise include ACGF Combined Operations Working Group (COWG), EPPR MOSPA Joint Design Team and the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Following the exercise, an evaluation team will develop an after-action report to document lessons learned and possible

areas for improvement in regard to preparedness and response capabilities and processes across the Arctic States in relation to SAR and marine environmental response.

Norway's First P-8A Aircraft Moves into Assembly



Norway's first P-8A Poseidon aircraft is moved from a rail car through the air to the first step of the assembly process, the Fuselage Systems Installation tool, in Renton, Washington.

BOEING

RENTON, Wash. – The first P-8A Poseidon fuselage for Norway arrived April 12 at Boeing facilities in Renton, Washington, from Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Kansas, marking a major milestone in the production of the first of five Poseidons for the Royal Norwegian Air Force.

A derivative of the Boeing 737 Next-Generation commercial aircraft, the P-8 is first assembled at Boeing Commercial Airplanes' 737 production line, where the fuselage receives additional wiring and systems needed to support military components, equipment and operation. The aircraft is then delivered to Boeing's Defense, Space & Security unit for the installation of military systems, testing and delivery to military customers.

"Boeing uses a proven in-line production process to efficiently build the aircraft," said Christian Thomsen, P-8A Europe program manager. "Implementing established best practices and common, commercial production-system tools enables the team to reduce flow time and cost while ensuring quality and on-time delivery to our customers."

Norway is expected to receive its first P-8 later this year. In total, five P-8s will eventually replace Norway's current fleet of six P-3 Orions and three DA-20 Jet Falcons and will provide advanced capabilities to maintain situational awareness in neighboring waters on and below the surface of the ocean.

To date, Boeing has delivered 104 P-8 aircraft to the U.S. Navy and customers in Australia, India and the United Kingdom.

Cutter Kimball Returns Home from Expeditionary Patrol in

the Pacific



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) underway in the Pacific, April 4, 2021. The Kimball was conducting an expeditionary patrol supporting Operation Blue Pacific, Op Rai Balang, and Op Aloha Shield. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) returned to Honolulu April 9 after completing an expeditionary patrol supporting Operation Blue Pacific, Operation Rai Balang and Operation Aloha Shield in the Pacific, the Coast Guard 14th District said in an April 9 release.

During the 82-day patrol, the cutter's crew worked closely with partners and allied nations on numerous missions ranging from search and rescue to the prevention of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) while promoting stability and security throughout the region.

“I’m tremendously proud of my crew’s exceptional performance, especially considering how their dedication and teamwork allowed them to overcome the many challenges associated with operating by ourselves for long periods of time in remote locations and the difficulties created by the global pandemic,” said Capt. Holly Harrison, the Kimball’s commanding officer. “They adapted and overcame every obstacle and challenge put in their way with ease, exactly what you’d expect from our phenomenal Coast Guardsmen and women.”

One of the main goals of the 20,000 nautical-mile patrol was to assist the United States’ partners in the region with combating IUU.

Throughout the deployment the cutter’s crew worked closely with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) during Op Rai Balang, a coordinated effort between partners in the region to combat IUU, while also enforcing Western and Central Fisheries Commission regulations on the high seas to protect the region’s fish stocks.

Fish stocks are a vital renewable resource for many nations in the Pacific. Because of the migratory nature of fish, efforts towards their conservation requires teamwork between the partner nations.

The multi-million-dollar IUU fishing industry represents a direct threat to the partners efforts to ensure these resources remain sustainable for years to come and throughout the patrol the crew of the Kimball worked with the governments of the Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Papua New Guinea to strengthen domain awareness and resource security within the nation’s economic exclusive zones.

During the patrol, the crew queried 21 foreign fishing vessels and boarded six, generating vital information reports for the

partners in their efforts to combat IUU.

“The National Security Cutters bring a capacity and capability into the Coast Guard which are truly game changing when it comes to curbing IUU in the Pacific,” said Rear Adm. Matthew Sibley, commander, Coast Guard 14th District. “Patrols such as the Kimball’s display these cutters ability to cover large swaths of the Pacific and support our partners in joint conservation efforts while contributing to the overall stability of the region.”

The Kimball is one of the Coast Guard’s newer 420-foot Legend-class National Security Cutter and boasts a wide array of modern capabilities helping the crew to complete their varied missions.

Throughout the patrol, the crew used the cutter’s ability to deploy unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to collect observation reports on vessels of interest which were shared with Maritime Security Advisors and the FFA Regional Fisheries Surveillance Center.

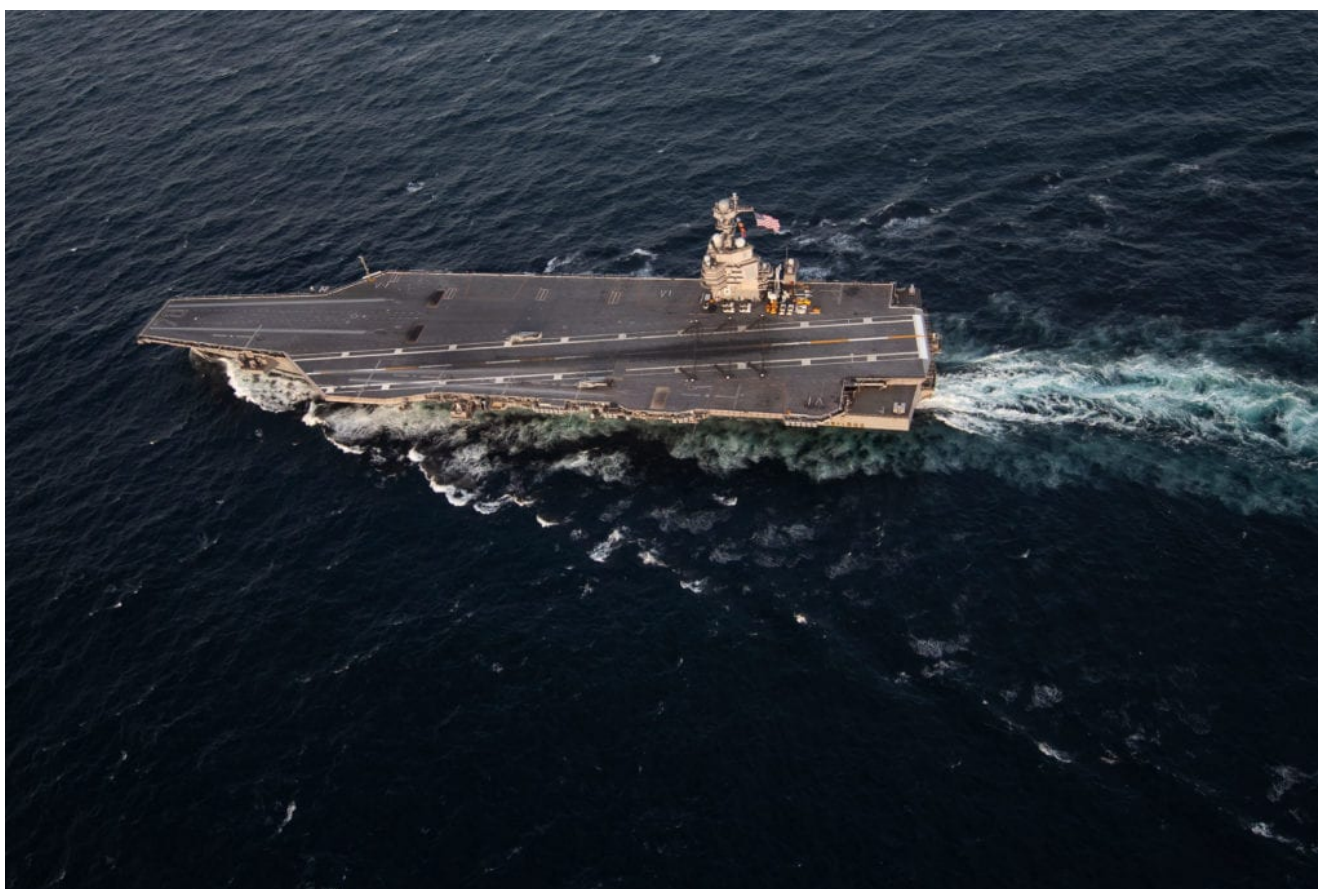
The UAS was also utilized during both day and night searches for a missing mariner southwest of Guam, displaying the versatility of the new technology and its potential in multiple types of missions.

Another key goal of the patrol was to increase interoperability between the Coast Guard and partners in the region.

The Kimball’s crew participated in a number of exercises with partners in the region, including training with a Royal Australian Navy Sea Dragon aircraft crew during the FFA Op Rai Balang, joint interdiction training with the Japan coast guard ship Akitsushima, and an exercise with the USS Tulsa.

“Over the past 82-days, Kimball’s crew conducted joint operations with the Japanese coast guard, Royal Australian Navy, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and U.S. Navy.” said Harrison. “In each operation, we were thoroughly impressed with our partners’ professionalism, skill, and commitment to Oceania and regional security.”

Curtiss-Wright Awarded Contract to Support Ford- Class CVN Elevators



USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) transits the Atlantic Ocean March 20, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Seaman Jackson Adkins*
SHELBY, N.C. – Curtiss-Wright Actuation Division has been

awarded a contract to provide Exlar Electro-Mechanical Actuators to Federal Equipment Co. (FEC) to support its weapons elevator systems for the Ford-class aircraft carrier program, the company said in a release.

Exlar actuators are used in several other mission critical areas on the Ford-class carriers, including the Jet Blast Defector, Integrated Catapult Control Station and Landing Signal Officer station actuation systems.

Exlar's field-proven, commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) actuation products are used in a variety of industries and applications providing robust, reliable and energy efficient solutions. These COTS and modified COTS products and technologies are used in numerous naval and ground defense applications, as well as offering alternatives to fluid power options while providing lower total cost of ownership through energy efficiency, lower maintenance costs and integration with automated control systems.

FEC also uses the Exlar GSM Series integrated products as lock actuators for the weapons elevator systems they provide to the Ford carrier program on their CVN-78 and CVN-79 ships.

"We are proud to be able to continue to support both FEC, the U.S. Navy and its shipbuilder as the Navy modernizes its carrier fleet," said Phil Bowker, Curtiss-Wright senior general manager, Actuation Division.

Exlar is a business unit of Curtiss-Wright's Actuation Division.

Cutter Returns Home following Eastern Pacific Law-Enforcement Patrol



The USCGC Alert (WMEC 127) and its crew return to homeport in Astoria, Oregon, Wednesday, April 7, 2021, following a 63-day patrol that began in early February. The cutter and crew patrolled off the coast of Mexico and in the vicinity of the United States-Mexico Maritime Boundary Line enforcing international laws and treaties to disrupt illegal narcotics and migrant smuggling. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Cynthia Oldham.

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) returned home to Astoria, Oregon, April 7 following a 63-day counterdrug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Working in conjunction with different Coast Guard and Mexican law enforcement agencies, Alert's crew disrupted more than 2,100 pounds of cocaine, valued at over \$41 million wholesale, from entering the United States.

The Oregon-based cutter and crew patrolled international waters off the coast of Mexico and the United States-Mexico Maritime Boundary Line, enforcing international laws and treaties throughout their deployment and disrupting the flow of illegal narcotics and migrant smuggling.

While on patrol, a maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected smuggling vessel. Alert's crews launched both cutter small boats and pursued the vessel until it ran out of fuel. The case was transferred to Mexican law enforcement officials from the Secretaría de Marina (SEMAR).

Through the collaborative and international team effort, the smugglers were successfully apprehended, and 1,600 pounds of illegal narcotics seized by Mexican Law Enforcement.

Within 48 hours, Alert's crew identified another law enforcement case for interdiction and changed course to intercept the suspected smuggling vessel. After a multi-hour pursuit, the crew successfully interdicted approximately 550 pounds of cocaine and apprehended six suspected narco-traffickers for prosecution in the United States.

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated 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, play a role in counter-drug operations.

Alert's crew transferred the seized narcotics and suspected drug traffickers to the Department of Justice, via Coast Guard Station San Diego March 1 before steaming north to complete

their three-week Tailored Ship Training Assessment, a bi-annual assessment designed to evaluate the cutter's training teams and operational readiness.

"Once again, the crew of Alert was able to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and equipment failures on a 50-year-old ship to execute a wide range of Coast Guard missions from the US-Canada Border to the Mexico-Guatemala border over a two-month period," said Cmdr. Tyson Scofield, Alert's commanding officer. "Overall, Coast Guard Cutter Alert successfully completed a variety of operations through the combined effort of every member of the crew."

While patrolling the Eastern Pacific, Alert's watchstanders identified a sea turtle entangled in fishing debris. The cutter maneuvered into position and launched its small boat to help the endangered sea animal, ultimately setting the sea turtle free from the entwined debris. Marine environmental protection is a statutory mission of the Coast Guard and every year approximately 300 sea turtles are saved by the Coast Guard.

"Marine life has always had a special place in my heart. When the opportunity to save a turtle arose, I was beyond excited to help," said Petty Officer Third Class Timothy Waters who was aboard the small board to help free the entangled sea turtle. "I am honored to have done something so small that contributes to something much larger than me."

Elbit Systems Completes the

Acquisition of Sonobouy Manufacturer Sparton Corp.



An artist's conception of a P-8A aircraft dropping Sparton-built sonobuoys. *ELBIT SYSTEMS OF AMERICA*

HAIFA, Israel – Elbit Systems announced April 6 its U.S. subsidiary, Elbit Systems of America, completed the acquisition of Sparton Corp. from an affiliate of Cerberus Capital Management for \$380 million. The closing follows receipt of all the required approvals, including U.S. government and regulatory approvals.

Headquartered in De Leon Springs, Florida, U.S., Sparton is a premier developer, producer and supplier of systems supporting

undersea warfare for the U.S. Navy and allied military forces. Sparton is well-known as a manufacturer of sonobuoys for anti-submarine search and tracking by aircraft.

“The growing importance of the maritime arena and the market position and technological strength of Sparton make this acquisition significant to our long-term growth strategy, with a particular focus on the U.S. We believe that the completion of this acquisition will be beneficial for both Elbit Systems’ and Sparton’s employees and customers,” said Bezahel “Butzi” Machlis, Elbit Systems president and chief executive officer.

Northrop Grumman’s Optionally Manned Firebird Demonstrates Operational Flexibility



Northrop Grumman's optionally manned Firebird, which flew to various locations around the United States to showcase its flexibility and ability to fly in national airspace. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

SAN DIEGO – Northrop Grumman Corp.'s Firebird multi-sensor aircraft showcased the versatility of the optionally manned autonomous system as it flew to various locations across the United States last month, the company said in an April 6 release.

The ability of Firebird to be flown manned through national airspace is a demonstration of its unique operational flexibility for self-deployment and its rapid relocation ability to adapt to specific user needs and operational requirements.

The company flew Firebird almost 9,000 miles around the US with stops in Dayton, Ohio, Washington D.C., Patuxent River, Maryland, as well as Tampa, Miami and Key West, Florida.

"Our flights showcased one of its key differentiators – the

ability to position the system in a manned configuration, then convert to autonomous operations for persistent ISR in under two hours," said Jane Bishop, vice president and general manager, autonomous systems, Northrop Grumman. "At each stop, plane-side briefings provided customers the opportunity to see first-hand the operational versatility of the platform, its large sensor bay, and rapid configurability for changing mission needs."

Firebird is a medium-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aircraft system designed for flexibility and affordability. Customers can install new payloads in as little as one day and swap payloads in 30 minutes, making the system suitable for numerous domains and missions.

The flights concluded in Key West, where the team conducted a series of manned maritime operational events that included a four-sensor package containing two high-definition electro-optical sensors, a maritime configured multi-spectral sensor for small target detection and an Automatic Information System receiver.