

# Boeing Inducts First EA-18G Growler for U.S. Navy Modification Program



A U.S. Navy EA-18G Growler assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 139, deployed aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), flies over the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, Sept. 30, 2020. U.S. AIR FORCE / Staff Sgt. James Merriman

WHIDBEY ISLAND, Wash. – Boeing has started a five-year modification program for the U.S. Navy's EA-18G Growler fleet with the induction of the first jet at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, the company said in a March 19 release.

The modifications are focused on updating the jets' structural and mission systems architecture, enabling future capability growth for the Navy's 160 Growler aircraft. Growlers serve a critical role in jamming radar and communications signals of

threat forces, disabling their ability to detect and track U.S. and allied military forces.

“We’re excited to have the Growler industry team here working on capabilities that will bring the fleet enhanced electronic surveillance, enhanced data link and the ability to carry the Next-Generation Jammer pod,” said Capt. Chris “Needles” Bahner, commander, Electronic Attack Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet. “We look forward to being a cooperative partner with PMA-265 and PMA-234 at Naval Air Systems Command and the Growler industry team on this exciting work.”

Following contract awards in October 2020 and February 2021 for materials and labor, the modification work includes various upgrades for Growler mission systems. The aircraft’s ALQ-218 receiver system will receive the Airborne Electronic Attack System Enhancements modification, enabling the Growler to operate in increasingly complex electromagnetic environments.

Additional modifications will expand the Growler’s information pipeline for more rapid and secure data transfer to other aircraft and platforms as well as substantially improve the speed of data processing. Boeing also will prepare the Growler for the Next Generation Jammer, which greatly improves the Growler’s electronic attack capability.

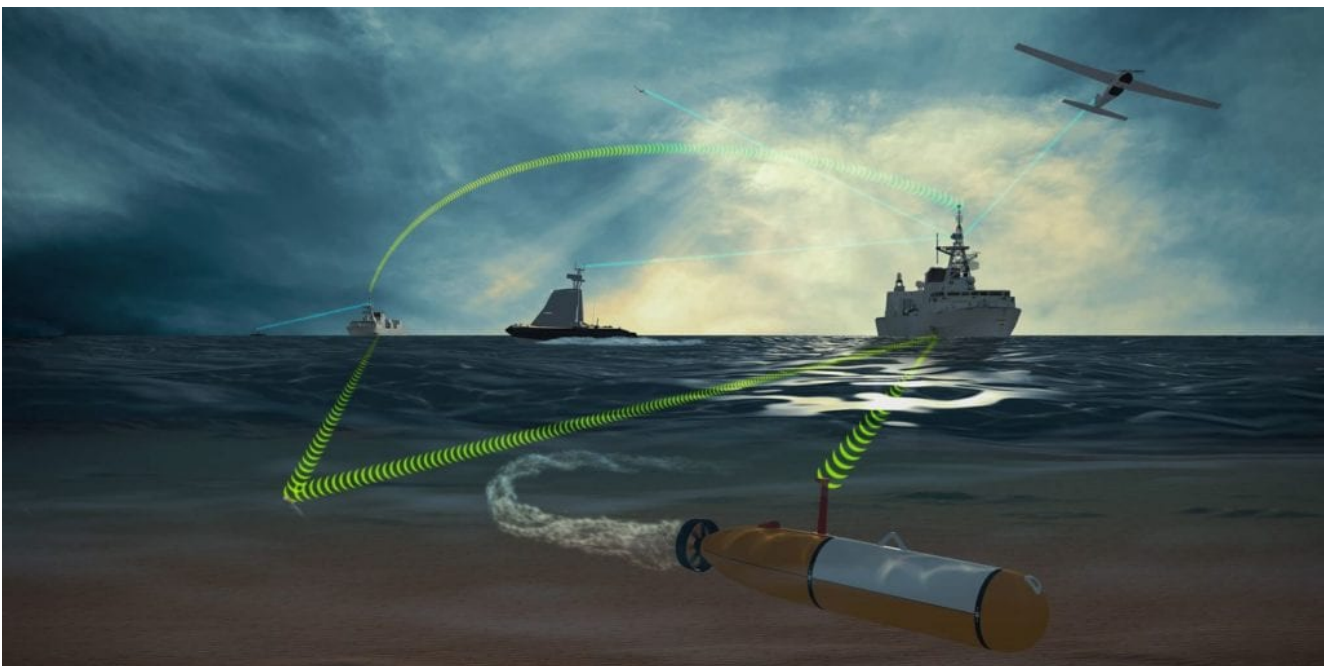
“As the world’s premier electronic attack platform, we’re starting this program for the EA-18G Growler in solid partnership with the Navy,” said Mark Sears, Boeing vice president of Fighters and Strike Product Support. “These modifications will position it to meet the threats of today and those in the future.”

The program schedule forecasts that all Navy Growlers will be modified in five years. Full rate modification is expected to start in June 2021. Boeing has positioned people onsite at Whidbey, following state, local, customer and corporate

COVID-19 protocols, to ensure the program is fully staffed to support the workflow.

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# Team Cohort to Develop Multi-Domain, Multi-Autonomous Vehicle Control System for Canadian Warships



Team Cohort has been awarded a contract to develop a Multi-Domain, Multi-Autonomous Vehicle Control System for Canadian warships, as illustrated here. *Kongsberg Geospatial*

OTTAWA, Ontario – Team Cohort, a team of autonomous industry experts comprising Kongsberg Geospatial, Four DRobotics Corp and SeeByte, has been awarded a contract from Weir Marine Engineering to develop and test a Maritime Multi-Domain Control System (MMDCS), Kongsberg Geospatial said in a March 18 release. The system will allow operators to simultaneously operate multiple autonomous vehicles in the air, on the water,

and underwater – all from a single shipboard control station.

The system could allow Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) warships to effectively extend their sensor range using autonomous vehicles, while providing protection from seaborne threats such as mines or hostile unmanned craft.

The MMDCS is a challenging project that requires experience with the deployment of autonomous unmanned vehicles, and operations of maritime control stations, as well as existing and emerging NATO standards including Stanag 4586 and 4817. This specialized knowledge and expertise is provided by the team of Kongsberg Geospatial and Four DRobotics Corp of Ottawa, Canada, and SeeByte of Edinburgh, Scotland.

For this project, Kongsberg Geospatial will provide operator control stations based on its IRIS UxS vehicle command and control software product, which provides an overall real-time picture of the terrain, airspace, and underwater environment where the ships and their supporting UxV (Unmanned [X] Vehicle) teams are operating.

Four DRobotics Corp and SeeByte will provide goal-based mission planning and reasoning (AI-supported) software systems to support autonomous mission development and execution for a UxV team consisting of an unmanned aerial vehicle, an unmanned surface vehicle, and an unmanned underwater vehicle.

The MMDCS will provide a tactical capability for the command and control and information management required to simultaneously support unmanned vehicles in all three naval operations domains, including air, surface, and subsurface.

The final objective of the project is to provide real-time or near-real-time situational awareness for warships in all three domains: underwater, on the water, and in the air, allowing improved threat assessment and target engagement.

The development and testing of the prototype MMDCS is expected

to be completed by mid-2021.

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# Coast Guard Commissions Newest National Security Cutter



Fellow Aviators pay tribute to the USCGC Stone (WMSL- 758) during the commissioning ceremony at Coast Guard Base Charleston, S.C., Mar. 19, 2021. The cutter's namesake is the late Cmdr. Elmer "Archie" Fowler Stone, who in 1917 became the Coast Guard's first aviator and, two years later, was one of two pilots to successfully make a transatlantic flight in a Navy seaplane landing in Portugal. *U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Vincent Moreno*

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C., – The USCGC Stone (WMSL 758) became

the Coast Guard's newest national security cutter during a commissioning ceremony March 19 at Coast Guard Base Charleston, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

Adm. Karl Schultz, commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, presided over the ceremony. Laura Cavallo, the grandniece of the ship's namesake and ship's sponsor, was also in attendance.

The cutter's name comes from Cmdr. Elmer "Archie" Fowler Stone, who in 1917 became the Coast Guard's first aviator and, two years later, was the pilot of the NC-4, a Navy airplane, which in 1919 was the first aircraft to accomplish a transatlantic flight, landing in Portugal.

The Stone is the ninth legend-class national security cutter in the Coast Guard's fleet. The Legend class national security cutters can execute the most challenging national security missions, including support to U.S. combatant commanders.

They are 418 feet in length, 54 feet in beam, and 4,600 long tons in displacement. They have a top speed of more than 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, an endurance of up to 90 days, and can hold a crew of up to 150. These new cutters are replacing the high-endurance Hamilton-class cutters in service since the 1960s.

The Stone launched Oct. 4, 2019, for sea trials. Following sea trials, the crew conducted its first voyage, Operation Southern Cross, a patrol to the South Atlantic supporting counter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Taking the newly accepted cutter on its shakedown cruise, Stone's crew covered over 21,000 miles (18,250 nautical miles) over 68 days. A mutual interest in combating IUUF activities offered an opportunity to collaborate for Stone's crew. They interacted with partners in Guyana, Brazil, Uruguay and Portugal, strengthening relationships and laying the

foundation for increased partnerships to counter illicit maritime activity.

Ship commissioning is the act or ceremony of placing a ship in active service.

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## **Winston S. Churchill Returns to Homeport after 9-Month Deployment**



The guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) steams in the Arabian Sea. Winston S. Churchill is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean Sea and Pacific Ocean through the western Indian Ocean and three critical

chokepoints to the free flow of global commerce. *U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Philip Wagner, Jr* NORFOLK, Va. – The guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) returned to homeport in Naval Station Norfolk March 19, after nearly nine months deployed in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation, U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs said in a March 19 release.

Winston S. Churchill participated in important training exercises with international partners to foster positive relationships while encouraging freedom of navigation and maritime security.

“I’m so proud of the Churchill Team, the crew and their families are the most resilient people I have ever come across,” said Capt. Timothy F. Stanley, commanding officer of Winston S. Churchill. “Returning today is almost nine months since the crew was last with their friends and family.”

Winston S. Churchill, along with the embarked Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) detachment, traveled nearly 60,000 miles during the deployment and completed 26 strategic choke point transits, escorting a total of 23 vessels over 14 of those transits. She transited the Strait of Gibraltar twice, the Suez Canal twice, the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb 14 times (nine transits with escort duties), and the Strait of Hormuz eight times (five transits with escort duties).

“Churchill has nearly completed the equivalent of three laps around the Earth meeting important fleet tasking, all the while consistently meeting mission requirements, and keeping sea lines of communication open through the majority of the world’s key straits,” Stanley said.

Winston S. Churchill participated in a 14-Day Restriction of Movement on June 22, 2020, prior to getting underway for pre-deployment exercises and training in order to combat the effect of COVID-19 on ship’s readiness. It officially deployed

on Aug. 10, 2020.

Winston S. Churchill conducted a landmark port visit in Port Sudan, Sudan, the first U.S. Navy warship to do so in over 30 years. The visit served to build a foundation of military cooperation between the U.S. and Sudan. Additionally, Winston S. Churchill visited Souda Bay, Djibouti, and Bahrain, where the crew was restricted to the pier.

“Amongst a global pandemic, these sailors have met their personal and professional goals, making themselves and the Navy better,” Stanley said. “This team onboard has been galvanized through this deployment, and I’d argue is the best, most synergized, and resilient tactical-level force in the Navy.”

Churchill conducted counter-smuggling operations with embarked Advanced Interdiction Team, comprised of U.S. Coast Guardsmen, U.S. Army Soldiers and U.S. Navy Sailors. AIT boarded two stateless dhows flying no flags in international waters off the coast of Somalia in accordance with international law. A large cache of weapons was discovered while conducting maritime security operations in the U.S. Central Command area of operations. The weapons disposed of included thousands of AK-47 assault rifles, light machine guns, heavy sniper rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and crew served weapons. Other weapon components disposed of include barrels, stocks, optical scopes and weapon systems.

The only U.S. warship named after a Briton, Winston S. Churchill worked with the Royal Navy HMS Trent in the Eastern Mediterranean. The cooperation demonstrates the long-standing high-end warfare capabilities of the Alliance, which will culminate in the deployment of the international Queen Elizabeth Strike Group this summer.

While in the Mediterranean, Winston S. Churchill also sailed with the Tunisian navy, reinforcing the commitment to African

Maritime security.

After disembarking the HSM-70 detachment to its homeport at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, Churchill will return to homeport in Naval Station Norfolk.

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## **ATI, NAC Partner with Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head to Tackle Energetics Challenges**

SUMMERVILLE, S.C. – Advanced Technology International (ATI), in partnership with the National Armaments Consortium (NAC), has signed an agreement to develop the Naval Energetic Systems and Technologies (NEST) Program. The NEST Program is a collaboration executed under an Other Transaction Agreement (OTA) with the Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division (NSWC IHD) to address the most significant energetics-related challenges facing the Navy and Marine Corps.

This effort is critical in enabling the Navy, Marine Corps and the entire Department of Defense to address current and future threats in the surface, subsurface, air, ground, littoral and expeditionary environments. The partner organizations will foster a collaboration among the engineers, researchers, and technologists at NSWC IHD and NAC's 900+ members from industry and academia. The OTA has a term of six years with a four-year option.

“ATI is delighted to continue its longstanding partnership

with the National Armaments Consortium in executing this important Naval Energetics Systems and Technologies Program," said Chris Van Metre, CEO and president of ATI. "NAC members have a proven history of delivering innovative energetics technology solutions and eagerly anticipate the opportunity to continuing doing so in support of NSWC IHD."

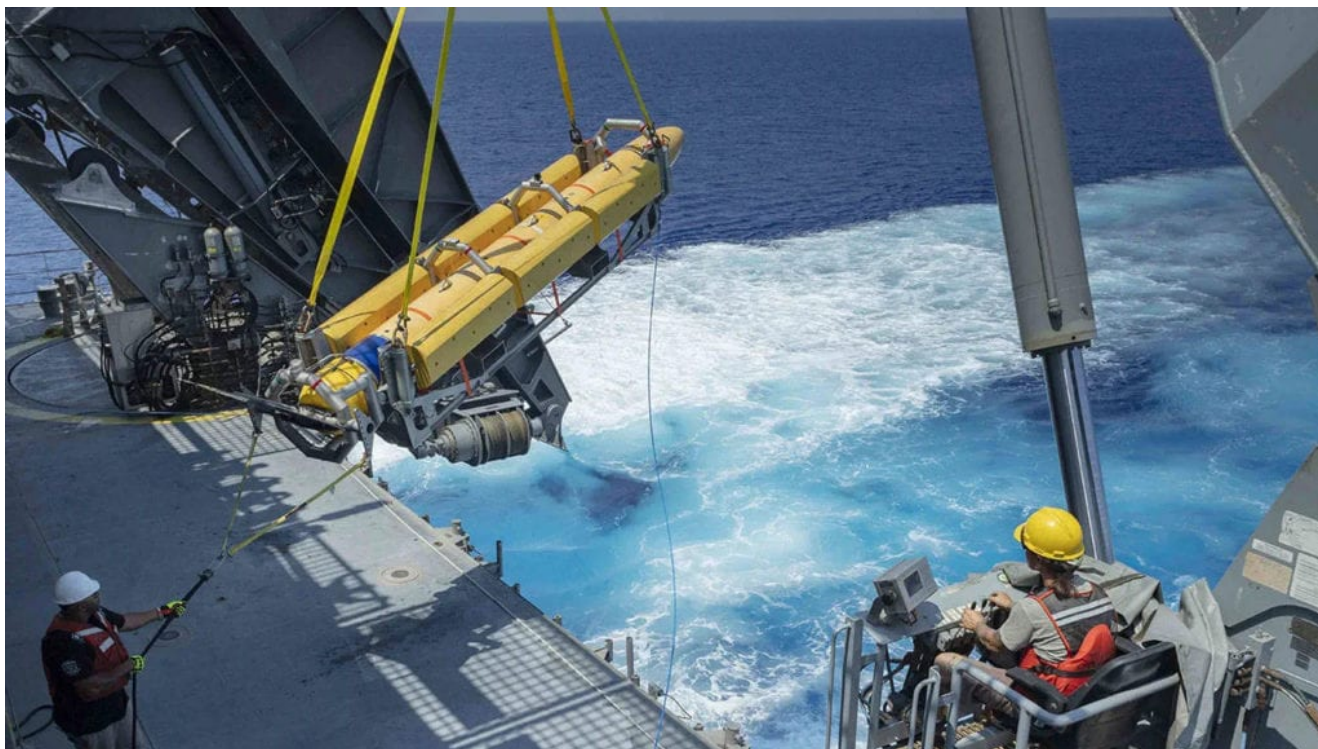
"The NAC is honored to partner with ATI and the Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division to develop a collaborative partnership focused on solving the biggest energetics challenges facing our nation," said Charlie Zisette, NAC executive director. "Our members look forward to working with the incredible workforce at Indian Head to accelerate the development, adoption, and deployment of energetics-related technologies to provide our warfighters the decisive edge on the battlefield."

The NSWC IHD is the Navy's premier organization for ordnance, energetics and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) solutions. Its workforce provides energetics R&D, manufacturing technology, engineering, testing, manufacturing and fleet support. Energetics are used in propulsion systems and ordnance, and include explosives, propellants, pyrotechnics, reactive materials, related chemicals and fuels.

NSWC IHD's capabilities address all aspects of the energetics technical discipline including basic research, applied technology, technology demonstration and prototyping, engineering development, acquisition, low-rate production, in-service engineering/mishaps, failure investigations, surveillance, EOD technology/information and demilitarization.

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# General Dynamics Delivers First Knifefish Surface MCM UUV to U.S. Navy



The first Knifefish surface mine countermeasure UUV system has been delivered to U.S. Navy six months after final acceptance tests were completed. *General Dynamics Mission Systems* QUINCY, Mass. – General Dynamics Mission Systems recently delivered the first Knifefish surface mine countermeasure unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) system under a contract awarded by the U.S. Navy on Aug. 26, 2019, the company said in a March 18 release.

The contract, awarded immediately after a successful Milestone C decision and approval to enter low-rate initial production, calls for the procurement of five Knifefish systems (10 total UUVs) and support equipment.

Knifefish is a medium class mine countermeasure UUV intended for deployment from the Navy's littoral combat ship and other Navy vessels of opportunity. Knifefish will reduce risk to

personnel by operating within minefields as an off-board sensor while the host ship stays outside the minefield boundaries.

“Together with the U.S. Navy’s Program Executive Office for Unmanned and Small Combatants, our Knifefish team has worked to deliver critical mine countermeasure mission capabilities to protect our Sailors,” said Carlo Zaffanella, vice president and general manager at General Dynamics Mission Systems. “We designed Knifefish using an open architecture concept that can be quickly and efficiently modified to accommodate a wide range of missions.”

General Dynamics Mission Systems is the prime contractor for the Knifefish program. The company designed the tactical UUV using an open architecture concept that can be quickly and efficiently modified to accommodate a wide range of missions. The Knifefish SMCM UUV is based on the General Dynamics Bluefin Robotics Bluefin-21 deep-water autonomous undersea vehicle.

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## **Navy MQ-25A Basing Assessment Finds No Significant Environmental Impact**



The MQ-25A Stingray carrier-based unmanned aircraft system, which will be home based at Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu, California. *Boeing*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has released a final environmental assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact for home-basing the MQ-25A Stingray carrier-based unmanned aircraft system at Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu, California, the Navy said in a March 17 release.

The proposed action is to establish facilities and functions at NBVC Point Mugu to support home basing and operations of the MQ-25A Stingray. Under the proposed action, the Navy would home base 20 Stingray systems, construct a hangar, training facilities, and supporting infrastructure, perform air vehicle maintenance, provide training for operators and maintainers, conduct approximately 960 Stingray annual flight operations and station about 730 personnel, plus their family members.

The Stingray will enhance aircraft carrier capability and versatility through the integration of a persistent, sea-

based, multi-mission aerial refueling and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance UAS into the carrier air wing, the Navy said. The Stingray will extend the range and reach of carrier air wings on the West Coast to meet current and future threats and enhance refueling and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities in support of national defense objectives and policies.

Based on analysis presented in the environmental assessment, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, and in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Coastal Commission, the Navy finds implementation of the proposed action will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

The assessment prepared by the Navy is on file and interested parties may obtain a copy by downloading it from the project website: <https://www.nepa.navy.mil/stingray>.

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## **Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Munro Returns Home from Final patrol**



The Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Munro (WHEC 724) is pictured during their last Bering Sea patrol, in which the crew conducted boarding evolutions of the fishing fleet and were available to respond to search and rescue cases in March 2021. The Douglas Munro is the last operational 378-foot Secretary class cutter and will officially be decommissioned on April 24, 2021. U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo.

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew aboard Coast Guard Cutter Douglas Munro, the service's last operational 378-foot, high endurance cutter, returned home to Kodiak, Alaska, on March 13, following a 49-day deployment in the Bering Sea, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a March 17 release.

While deployed, the crew of the Douglas Munro and its embarked MH-65 helicopter aviation detachment from Air Station Kodiak safeguarded the \$13.9 billion Alaskan fishing industry and provided search and rescue coverage in an area spanning 890,000 square miles. The crew conducted multiple fisheries boardings, ensuring compliance with commercial

fishing vessel regulations that ensure crew safety and the sustainability of fish stocks.

In addition to the operational challenges the crew faced in the Bering Sea, the COVID-19 pandemic required the crew to abide by strict health protection precautions and COVID testing regimens prior to the start of their deployment. While making a logistics stop in Dutch Harbor the crew received their first doses of the COVID-19 vaccinations.

“This has been an extremely exciting and rewarding patrol as it is the end of an era for not only this cutter, but also for all the 378s that have served the Coast Guard since 1967,” said Capt. Riley Gatewood, the Douglas Munro’s commanding officer. “The legacy of Signalman First Class Douglas Munro lives on due to the hard work put forth by the many crew members who spent time away from loved ones to accomplish Coast Guard missions aboard Douglas Munro. It is a great honor and privilege to serve as Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard’s last 378-foot, high endurance cutter.”

Commissioned Sept. 27, 1971, Douglas Munro was named in honor of Signalman First Class Douglas A. Munro, the U.S. Coast Guard’s only Medal of Honor recipient, killed during the Guadalcanal Campaign of World War II on that same date in 1942. The ship is scheduled to be decommissioned later this year. Douglas Munro’s legacy will continue with the National Security Class Cutter, Coast Guard Cutter Munro, homeported in Alameda, California.

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## **Cutter Valiant Returns Home**

# after 26-Day Law-Enforcement Patrol



The Coast Guard Cutter Valiant crew returns to homeport Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018, at Naval Station Mayport, Florida. The Valiant crew returned to homeport after a six-week counter-drug patrol in the Caribbean. *U.S. Coast Guard / Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Dickinson*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.— The USCGC Valiant (WMEC-621) crew returned home to Naval Station Mayport March 16 after completing a 26-day patrol conducting law enforcement operations in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard 7<sup>th</sup> District said in a release.

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant patrolled over 4,600 nautical miles in the Caribbean Sea, conducting counter-narcotics operations in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S), Coast Guard District 7 and Coast Guard Sector San Juan, Puerto Rico.

While preparing for flight operations training with Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, Valiant received information about a potential target of interest in the Mona Pass from a maritime patrol aircraft. Valiant shifted gears from training to law enforcement and interdicted a 16-foot go-fast style vessel, seizing over 520 pounds of cocaine, valued at over \$8.8 million, and apprehending three suspected narcotics traffickers.

Valiant also partnered with the USS Wichita (LCS 13), to safely transfer nine suspected narcotics traffickers and 132 additional pounds of cocaine for prosecution in the United States. The joint team ensured the safe transfer of all suspected traffickers, evidence, and narcotics to the United States for future prosecution.

Valiant's patrol started with a training availability cycle. However, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to present challenges including limited port calls and the need to completely isolate for 14 days to ensure the crew's health and safety before getting underway after several COVID-19 positive cases. Additionally, Valiant had to overcome a variety of mechanical issues. However, by partnering with Coast Guard maintenance support teams stationed in San Juan, Puerto Rico and deployable technical experts, Valiant's team of technical experts was able to execute repairs and continue on the mission.

"This was an extremely challenging patrol for team Valiant and I could not be more proud of the entire crew to overcome every obstacle and ultimately have several operational successes," said Cmdr. Jeff Payne, Valiant's commanding officer. "Our friends and families back home also deserve much of the credit for our success. While only underway for 26 days, Valiant's patrol truly started on 25 January when we began the training cycle. That was followed by a variety of mechanical and pandemic issues requiring both the crew and our families to constantly adjust and find solutions. However, we overcame

each challenge, teamed with our Department of Defense counterparts, and ultimately executed textbook missions protecting our shores and nation.”

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.

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## **Navy, Marine Corps Release Unmanned Campaign Plan**



An autonomous vehicle dubbed Blue Water Maritime Logistics UAS flies over Unmanned Air Test and Evaluation (UX) 24 during a demonstration flight at Naval Air Station Patuxent River November 4, 2020. *U.S. Navy*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps released on March 16 the Unmanned Campaign framework, which presents their strategy for making unmanned systems a trusted and integral part of warfighting.

Through a capabilities-based approach, the services seek to build a future where unmanned systems are at the front lines of U.S. competitive advantage.

The framework has five goals: Advance manned-unmanned teaming effects within the full range of naval and joint operations; build a digital infrastructure that integrates and adopts unmanned capabilities at speed and scale; incentivize rapid incremental development and testing cycles for unmanned systems; disaggregate common problems, solve once, and scale solutions across platforms and domains; create a capability-centric approach for unmanned contributions (platforms, systems, subsystems) to the force.

The framework provides a strategy for integrating these systems to provide lethal, survivable, and scalable effects supporting the future maritime mission. The Navy and Marine Corps are developing detailed technology maturation and acquisition roadmaps within a separate classified plan of action and milestones. The objective is to innovate quickly to provide solutions for complex problems of current and future conflicts.

The path forward requires a holistic approach to developing and deploying unmanned systems, ensuring individual technologies can operate within a broader architecture of networked warfighting systems, supported by the right people, policies, operational concepts, and other enablers.

The campaign framework focuses on how the Navy and Marine Corps will reduce risk and identify performance requirements. Using dedicated prototypes for each unmanned system and developing capability in this manner standardizes autonomy,

command and control, payload interfaces, and networks.

“The Navy and Marine Corps unmanned campaign plan serves as a roadmap for how we will realize a future where unmanned systems serve as an integral part of the Navy’s warfighting team in support of distributed maritime operations,” said Vice Adm. Jim Kilby, deputy chief of naval operations for warfighting requirements and capabilities. “The plan lays out how we will scale tested and proven systems as well as develop the core technologies required to successfully integrate unmanned systems into the fleet.”

The framework provides guidance for the services to pursue an agile and aggressive approach to develop the core technologies required to successfully integrate unmanned systems into the Navy’s future force structure. The services must invest in the networks, control systems, infrastructure, interfaces, artificial intelligence, and data required to support unmanned systems to succeed.

“The Navy and Marine Corps unmanned campaign plan will guide our naval research and development investments, and through the acquisition process, we will collaborate with our industry partners to design, build, field and sustain manned and unmanned teaming throughout the fleet,” said Frederick J. Stefany, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. “It also sets the framework to enable the Department of the Navy to accelerate, deliver and scale valuable manned and unmanned capabilities.”

Today’s global security environment has seen a return to great power competition. This shift has placed the Navy at an inflection point where a traditional force structure will not be enough in the face of new warfighting demands. Autonomous systems are not a replacement, but provide additional capacity and capability to the combatant force and allow commanders to accept risk where they couldn’t before.

“A family of unmanned systems is critical to the employment of our force during distributed maritime operations. The goal is for us to be able to persist inside the weapons engagement zone of any adversary, to create problems and challenges, to make that adversary change their behavior or course of action they intend to pursue. These systems will be prevalent in all mediums: surface, subsurface, ground and air. Manned/unmanned teaming increases our lethality while allowing us to accept less risk in certain situations. Coordinating our efforts as a naval force will expedite the concept development and material solutions for our Marines and Sailors,” said Lt. Gen. Eric Smith, commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command and deputy commandant for combat development and integration.

The Unmanned Campaign Plan is comprised of the Unmanned Campaign Framework and a classified Unmanned Plan of Actions and Milestones.

The Unmanned Campaign framework can be found at: [Department of the Navy Unmanned Campaign Framework.](#)