GE Celebrates LM2500 Gas Turbine Composite Module for DDG

The new composite module design for the LM2500 marine gas turbine. GE Marine

EVENDALE, OHIO (October 26, 2020) – GE Marine recently hosted a virtual meeting that drew more than 60 attendees from the United States Navy, Bath Iron Works, Huntington Ingalls and other strategic partners, to celebrate the teams involved in the Module Modernization Program (MMP). The event also lauded those individuals who participated in the manufacturing and assembly of this first new module for the Arleigh Burke destroyer USS Ted Stevens (DDG 128).

This four-year collaborative U.S. Navy program resulted in the design, development, qualification and manufacture of a new lightweight composite module design for GE's LM2500 marine gas turbine. GE currently has orders for 52 new composite enclosures for U.S. and international navy applications.

"This new module design provides significant weight reduction, improved sensors, along with reduced noise transmission and thermal heat rejection," said Lee Fuglestad, U.S. Navy Technical Director of the AEGIS Destroyer Program Office (PEO Ships PMS 400). Fuglestad was the sponsor and leader of the MMP. "The lightweight enclosure is especially important since the U.S. Navy has more than 370 GE LM2500 engines in service as the backbone of the DDG fleet, logging over 6 million operating hours."

"The MMP team is an excellent model of how the U.S. Navy and industry can partner on state-of-the-art fleet improvements. With delivery of DDG Flight III destroyers planned through 2028, GE's LM2500 gas turbines will power these U.S Navy

surface combatants until the 2070s," Fuglestad concluded.

In addition to representatives from GE Marine, attendees included the U.S. Navy; Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine, the lead design services shipyard; Huntington Ingalls, Pascagoula, Mississippi, construction lead on DDG 128; RL Industries, Fairfield, Ohio, composite fiber enclosure development and production; and Leonardo DRS Power Technology, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, gas turbine package integration.

According to Tony Mathis, Vice President, GE Military Systems, "GE appreciates the U.S. Navy's leadership that brought the MMP team together. During this time of COVID, we are especially grateful for the opportunity to say thank you to our employees and our great partners that developed and produced this game-changing product."

The virtual meeting included a summation by the U.S. Navy and GE team members of the improvements to the LM2500 including the composite module and components that yielded a 6,000-pound weight savings. In fact, GE recently delivered the first lightweight LM2500 composite module to Austal USA, Mobile, Alabama, for the future USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32). The future USS Ted Stevens (DDG 128), expected to be delivered in 2024, is under construction at Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard.

MMP improvements include fewer shock mounts for weight reduction all while leveraging the experience and loadings from previous LM2500 shock tests with running units. The lightweight composite module wall temperatures are 25 F to 50 F degrees cooler so there is less heat rejected into the engine room.

USS America Conducts Integrated Operations with Japanese F-35s

The amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) transits the Pacific Ocean Feb. 15, 2020. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Nicholas V. Huynh

USS AMERICA—The first-in-class amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) participated in advanced combined operations with Japan this week in the western Pacific Ocean, the ship's public affairs office said in an Oct. 25 release.

America conducted integrated air defense operations on Oct. 20 with F-35A Lightning II aircraft from the Japan Air Defense Command. The advanced training operations were designed to increase the tactical proficiency, lethality, and interoperability of the amphibious forces of the America Expeditionary Strike Group and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) in the maritime domain.

"The U.S.-Japan alliance has been the cornerstone of stability and security in the Indo-Pacific for more than sixty years," said Capt. Luke Frost, America's commanding officer. "We have no more capable partner in the world than the Japan Self Defense Force. Every opportunity we have to continue to train and exercise together improves our interoperability and strengthens our joint integrated capabilities."

Our alliance will continue to play that role in the future. Operations included advanced tactics, techniques, and procedures to exercise command and control in employing the F-35A Lightning II in air defense and sea control.

"These are the most advanced capabilities to ever sail or fly. America is a fifth-generation amphibious assault platform,

built from the keel up to optimize the most advanced capability of the fifth-generation F-35 platform. We are forward-deployed to integrate exactly these advanced capabilities with Japan, recognizing the importance of our alliance and working together to maintain regional peace and stability," said Frost.

"The training proved to be a very significant opportunity for us," said Col. Shinichi Nomura, flight group commander, 3rd Wing, Japan Air Self-Defense Force. "Training with assets of other services is essential to improve interoperability and joint operations capability."

USS America and the Japan Self Defense Forces operate routinely together in the Indo-Pacific to strengthen a shared commitment to regional stability and a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"I am assured that our participation not only contributed to improving tactical skills but also confirming the robust Japan-U.S. alliance and commitment to the Indo-Pacific region," said Nomura. "We will continue moving forward and further strengthen the Japan-US alliance and partnership."

America, the flagship of the America Amphibious Ready Group, is forward-deployed in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility to support stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

Bollinger Praises Study on

Basing FRCs in Samoa to Counter Chinese Encroachment

Coast Guard Cutter Myrtle Hazard (WPC 1139) steams through Apra Harbor before arriving at its new homeport in Santa Rita, Guam. The new Fast Response Cutter (FRC) is the first of three scheduled to be stationed on Guam and is replacing the 30-year old 110-foot Island-class patrol boats. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class MacAdam Kane Weissman

LOCKPORT, La. – U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien recently announced plans to conduct a feasibility study on whether to base U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel Class Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) in American Samoa to counter "destabilizing and malign actions" by China in the Indo-Pacific region. Together with the FRCs currently based in Apra Harbor, Guam, these Cutters will help the United States challenge Chinese aggression, maintain the United States' commitment to peace and prosperity, and ensure that America remains the partner of choice in the region, Bollinger Shipyards announced in an Oct 22 release.

"As the Coast Guard continues to evolve to meet the most pressing maritime and national security threats of the day – be it IUU fishing, piracy, drug or human trafficking – a larger fleet and expanded presence of American-made white hulls with red racing stripes around the globe will help further the regional partnerships and alliances necessary to curb the creeping influence of America's strategic competitors and adversaries and reaffirm its continued leadership and commitment to rules-based order and maritime governance around the world," said Ben Bordelon, president and chief executive officer of Bollinger Shipyards and chairman of the Shipbuilders Council of America.

"Should the proposed feasibility study demonstrate a need for additional FRCs, Bollinger Shipyards and the maritime defense

industrial base stand ready to construct and deliver the high-quality and high-endurance vessels necessary to carry out and perform the mission at hand."

Earlier this year, Bollinger Shipyards delivered the USCGC Oliver Henry to the U.S. Coast Guard, which is the second of three FRCs to be home-ported in Apra Harbor, Guam, in support of Operation Aiga, which is an effort to strengthen island nations in Oceania, including through fishery patrols and enforcement. This USCGC marked the 163rd vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard in its 35-year period and the 40th FRC delivered under the current program. Commandant of the Coast Guard Adm. Karl Schultz has acknowledged the importance of the Guam homeporting, saying, "by placing an ocean-going Coast Guard buoy tender and FRCs, we will promote 'rules-based order,' build capacity and affirm the United States' positive and enduring role in the region."

In the feasibility study announcement, National Security Advisor O'Brien explained the rationale for the study's launch by saying, "The USCG continues to modernize and enhance the capabilities of its fleet of major cutters, which play a prominent role in protecting our vital national interests, and where appropriate, those of our partners in the region. To that end, the USCG is strategically homeporting significantly enhanced Fast Response Cutters, built in a proven Louisiana-based shipyard, in the western Pacific."

O'Brien states that the new generation of Fast Response Cutters will "conduct maritime security missions, such as fisheries patrols, enhance maritime domain awareness and enforcement efforts in collaboration with regional partners who have limited offshore surveillance and enforcement capacity, and ensure freedom of navigation. … Enhancing the presence of the USCG in the Indo-Pacific ensures the United States will remain the maritime partner of choice in the region."

Bordelon continued, “Bollinger is honored to support and enhance the Coast Guard’s operational presence and mission in the Indo-Pacific region. Building quality vessels for the U.S. Coast Guard provides critical assets to bolster our national security interests, both domestic and abroad. We are proud and humbled to be partners in the FRC program.”

The FRC program has had a total economic impact of $1.2 billion since inception in material spending and directly supports more than 650 jobs in south 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 (MARAD) 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.

The FRC is one of many U.S. Government shipbuilding programs that Bollinger is proud to support. In addition to the design and construction of the FRC, Bollinger is participating in Industry Studies for five Government programs, including the U.S. Coast Guard’s Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) program, the U.S. Navy’s Common Hull Auxiliary Multi-Mission Platform (CHAMP) program, the U.S. Navy’s Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance (T-AGOS(X)) program, the U.S. Navy’s Large Unmanned Surface Vehicle (LUSV) program and the U.S. Navy’s Light Amphibious Warship (LAW) program.

The FRC is an operational “game changer,” according to senior Coast Guard officials. FRCs are consistently being deployed in support of the full range of missions within the United States Coast Guard and other branches of our armed services. This is due to its exceptional performance, expanded operational reach and capabilities, and ability to transform and adapt to the mission. FRCs have conducted operations as far as the Marshall Islands – a 4,400 nautical mile trip from their homeport.

Measuring in at 154 feet, FRCs have a flank speed of 28 knots, state of the art C4ISR suite (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance), and stern launch and recovery ramp for a 26-foot, over-the-horizon interceptor cutter boat.

Navy Identifies Aircrew in Southern Alabama T-6B Crash

Garrett, top, and Ross, below, have been identified as the two-person aircrew killed in a crash Friday in Foley, Alabama. U.S. Navy

SAN DIEGO – The U.S. Navy has identified the two-person aircrew killed in a crash Friday in Foley, Alabama, as U.S. Navy Lt. Rhiannon Ross, 30 years old, from Wixom, Michigan, and U.S. Coast Guard Ens. Morgan Garrett, 24 years old, from Weddington, North Carolina, commander, Naval Air Forces, said in an Oct. 25 release.

A U.S. Navy T-6B Texan II trainer aircraft crashed in a residential area of Foley at approximately 5 p.m. CDT Oct. 23. No civilians were injured as a result of the crash.

Local and Navy emergency personnel responded to the scene to secure the area and ensure the safety of the local community. The Navy is working with local authorities to investigate the incident.

Ross, an instructor pilot, and Garrett, a student aviator, took off from Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Milton, Florida, on a routine training flight.

State Dept. Approves Possible Sale of SLAM-ER Cruise Missiles to Taiwan

A Boeing-built SLAM-ER missile. Shown here is the AGM-84K variant. Navair

WASHINGTON – The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States (TECRO) of 135 AGM-84H Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) Missiles and related equipment for an estimated cost of $1.008 billion, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in an Oct. 21 release.

In addition, TECRO has requested to buy four ATM-84H SLAM-ER Telemetry Missiles and 12 CATM-84H Captive Air Training Missiles (CATM). Also included are 151 containers, spare and repair parts, support and test equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, U.S. Government and contractor representatives' technical assistance, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support. The total estimated program cost is $1.008 billion.

This proposed sale will improve the recipient's capability to meet current and future threats as it provides all-weather, day and night, precision attack capabilities against both moving and stationary targets. The recipient will be able to employ a highly reliable and effective system to increase their warfighting effectiveness as needed, which can counter or deter aggressions by demonstrated precision against surface

targets. This capability will easily integrate into existing force infrastructure as it will only improve defense against opposing threats. The recipient will have no difficulty absorbing these systems into its armed forces.

The principal contractor will be the Boeing Company, St. Louis, Missouri.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require the assignment of two U.S. contractor representatives to the recipient for a duration of eight years to support technical reviews, support, and oversight.

First Harvest Navigation Selects Sea Machines to Launch Hybrid Cargo Vessel

First Harvest Navigation's Captain Ben Moore, powered by Sea Machines' SM300 autonomous command and remote-helm control system. First Harvest Navigation

NORWALK, Conn. – Norwalk-based First Harvest Navigation, a marine transportation company that connects family farms to urban and suburban neighborhoods, has selected Boston-based Sea Machines' technology to launch the first autonomous hybrid cargo vessel in the U.S. Powered by Sea Machines' SM300 autonomous command and remote-helm control system, the U.S.-built, electric-powered *Captain Ben Moore* will also be the first hybrid cargo vessel to feature remote crew-assist technology and to generate zero emissions.

Installation of Sea Machines' SM300 aboard the *Captain Ben*

Moore, a 63-foot x 21.3-foot aluminum catamaran, will take place in November 2020. Once complete, vessel's intelligent capabilities will offer First Harvest Navigation redundancy and flexibility for crew shifts, with the capability to autonomously command *Captain Ben Moore* from the company's land-based control station. In addition to autonomous control and remote vessel monitoring tools, the SM300 system also features obstacle detection and collision avoidance technology for added operational safety.

Captain Ben Moore will enter service between Norwalk and Huntington, New York, to deliver food and other cargo faster, more reliably and more affordably than truck transportation to East Norwalk's Harbor Harvest food market, while also reducing regional highway congestion. Comparable trucking services require a near nine-hour round trip to deliver within this location. First Harvest Navigation completes the terminal-to-terminal voyage in approximately 35 to 45 minutes.

"Part of our transportation goals are to develop autonomous, hybrid catamarans to move farm products across Long Island Sound. The Sea Machines SM300 autonomous navigation system will help us achieve many of our goals because it enables shipping movements to be completed very reliably and efficiently in a seamless and sustainable delivery system," said Bob Kunkel, president, First Harvest Navigation. "Shifting cargo from streets and highways also alleviates the growing congestion, lower emissions and reestablishes our waterways as a viable and cost-efficient alternative to land-based transport."

"Sea Machines and First Harvest Navigation are aligned in our commitments to innovation to bolster the U.S. marine highway system and in our support of family farms," said Michael G. Jonson, founder and CEO of Sea Machines. "The SM300 ensures predictable and performance-based vessel operations while providing a 24/7 crew support system that is always on watch.

It often takes determined entrepreneurial leaders like First Harvest Navigation to move an industry into new waters and Sea Machines is pleased to support the achievement of their goals.”

The hybrid vessel can carry approximately 28 pallets, 10 of which are positioned in a fully refrigerated and protected walk-in space. The remaining cargo spaces are open and covered according to customer requirements. It is powered by a pair of Cummins QSB 6.7 diesels, generating 104 kW each at 2,400 kW, and lithium batteries connected to a pair of BAE Systems HybriDrive electric motors.

New NAVFAC Directorate to Manage Navy, Marine Corps Property Interests

WASHINGTON – The Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) announced Oct. 23 that it is standing up a new Real Estate directorate, responsible acquiring, managing, and disposing of real property interests for the Department of the Navy.

The new directorate will explore and implement emerging methodologies for use at Navy and Marine Corps installations using diverse business arrangements such as Enhanced Use Lease, Intergovernmental Support Agreements, and Other Transactional Authority Pilot Projects.

“By making this move, we are enabling NAVFAC’s real estate

subject matter experts to develop and deliver projects with greater speed, agility, and relevance," said Rear Adm. John Korka, Commander of NAVFAC. "Real estate authorities that the Secretary of the Navy has delegated must be optimally aligned to facilitate increased performance, and real estate will become a stronger mission enabler and force multiplier for our Fleet and Marine Corps."

One goal is to leverage innovative financing models with the private sector to allow the Navy to more rapidly address critical, unfunded installation requirements while preserving congressional appropriations for direct support of warfighting efforts.

"Realigning the NAVFAC real estate organization into a new directorate is paramount to both recapitalizing Navy and Marine Corps infrastructure and reducing facility sustainment, restoration, and modernization burden," said Joe Calcara, director, NAVFAC Real Estate.

"In the next several months, we will be conducting feasibility analyses of potential opportunities across the Navy and Marine Corps domains for projects that enhance energy and water resilience, leverage capital investment, and optimize efficiencies in facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization, with the goal to execute in streamlined processes within the next 12-18 months." Calcara said.

Calcara returned to NAVFAC last month, bringing with him more than 35 years' experience in managing public infrastructure, facilities engineering, integrated water resources, and asset management programs at NAVFAC, US Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Army, and other private sector entities.

The new directorate is planned to reach full operating capability on June 30, 2021.

CG Cutter Thetis Returns Home after Interdicting $8.8M in Narcotics

Coast Guard Cutter Thetis' small boat crew trains in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Sept. 20, 2020. The Thetis is homeported in Key West, Florida. U.S. Coast Guard / Ensign Patrick David Jackson

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Thetis' crew returned home on Oct. 23 to Key West, after completing a 42-day patrol to the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

During its patrol, the crew interdicted more than 4,500 pounds of illicit narcotics bound for the maritime domain. In total, the crew prevented more than $8.8 million worth of narcotics from reaching American streets while working in support of U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force-South, Thetis' crew played a critical role in executing the nation's counter drug mission.

"By remaining active in the Eastern Pacific, we continue to disrupt the flow of illicit and dangerous narcotics into the United States," said Cmdr. Justin Nadolny, Thetis' commanding officer. "The high operational tempo of the mission was demanding, and I am extremely proud of what this outstanding crew accomplished."

Thetis' crew deployed with an MH-65 helicopter aircrew capable of conducting airborne use of force from the Coast Guard's Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron based in Jacksonville, Florida. The detachment assisted in the interdiction of a go-fast vessel and a low-profile vessel

suspected of smuggling illicit cargo.

Thetis – named for the mother of Achilles from Greek mythology – is a 270-foot famous-class cutter homeported in Key West, with a crew complement of 104.

Navy EOD Releases Strategic Guidance for Next 10 Years

The U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal 2020-2030 Strategic Plan marks the first update to the Navy EOD mission since 1997. It is born out of the Force's need to adapt towards a changing national security environment characterized by great power competition and rogue nations following nearly two decades of combating terrorism and non-state actors. U.S. Navy / Lt. John Mike

CORONADO, Calif. – Navy EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) released its force-shaping blueprint for the next 10 years as its leadership looks to mold the military's maritime EOD force into one that best supports the U.S., its allies and partner nations to compete and win in an era of great power competition, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group One Public Affairs said in a release.

The force's first major strategic mission update since 1997, the plan was developed to meet the challenges of a changing national security environment and position Navy EOD to best serve its clear, secure, build and protect role within the Navy Expeditionary Combat Force (NECF), said Rear Adm. Joseph DiGuardo, commander of Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC).

"The NECF clears the explosive, security, and physical hazards

emplaced by our adversaries; secures battlespace for the naval force; builds the critical infrastructure, domain awareness, and logistic capacity to rearm, resupply, and refuel the fleet; protects the critical assets the Navy and the nation need to achieve victory and reinforce blue-water lethality," said DiGuardo, who oversees the NECF, which is comprised of Navy EOD, the Maritime Expeditionary Security Force, the Naval Construction Force, and diving and salvage units.

"As part of the NECF, our EOD forces play a pivotal role clearing the explosive hazards in any environment to protect the fleet and Joint Force – from the simplest impediment to the most complex weapon of mass destruction – and build an understanding of our adversary capabilities by exploiting those hazards. Navy EOD is the key to our nation being undeterred by explosive threats," said DiGuardo.

"The strategic plan ensures Navy EOD supports the NECF by eliminating explosive threats so the fleet, Navy and nation can fight and win whenever, wherever and however it chooses," said Capt. Oscar Rojas, commodore of the Coronado, California-based EOD Group (EODGRU) 1.

Rojas said this will be accomplished through the strategic plans' five core objectives: develop the Navy EOD force to win against near-peer competitors and empowered non-state actors; expand Navy EOD's advantage against competitors' undersea threats; capitalize on Navy EOD's ability to counter WMDs; grow Navy EOD's expertise in its ability to counter, neutralize and understand next-generation weapons systems; and enhance the EOD capabilities of allies and partner nations.

"Our strategic plan was designed to guide us in creating a force that can deter adversaries and win in a complex security environment," said Capt. Rick Hayes, commodore of EODGRU-2, which operates out of Virginia Beach, Virginia. "That is why we dedicated an objective to specifically focus on developing and caring for our Sailors. Our people are our most important

asset—they are our weapons system."

The plan lays out how Navy EOD will grow its ability to recruit and retain the best talent, develop strong leaders of character, and use its force resiliency program, STRIKE, to improve the physical and mental care Navy EOD personnel receive throughout their careers.

"Navy EOD's unique mission requires us to be fit in mind, body and spirit. We want our current and future operators to have access to the best facilities with the most qualified staff, so they are ready to deploy when called upon," said Hayes, adding STRIKE's holistic approach includes giving EOD operators access to athletic trainers, physical therapists and mental health professionals.

The force's 1,800 operators can also expect an increased emphasis on building their knowledge and capabilities in areas critical to succeeding in a GPC environment, according to the plan.

This includes Navy EOD enhancing its expeditionary undersea capabilities by working in cyberspace. The force will pursue using unmanned maritime systems (UMS) to access adversary communication networks to disrupt, delay or destroy weapons systems.

EOD operators will see initiatives expanding exploitation training – the understanding of a weapons systems' assembly, capabilities and weaknesses – throughout their careers along with educational opportunities to develop their expertise to counter WMDs (CWMD). They will also work with leaders in industry, research and development, and academia to stay at forefront of unmanned systems, explosives detection, and forensic science.

Additionally, the plan calls for Expeditionary Mine Countermeasures (ExMCM) companies to be a testbed for these new systems and software.

“The operators using emerging UMS technology are the closest to the challenges. Our strategic plan will empower them to provide us feedback from the tactical level during the capability development process to help accelerate solutions to the ever-evolving threats,” said Rojas.

ExMCM companies provide military commanders a flexible, scalable and rapidly-deployable capability that ships and aircraft do not offer. They are capable of operating in theater from a variety of craft within days of tasking.

“ExMCM will be instrumental in bolstering the capabilities of our allies and partner nations as we look to better interoperate with them and define shared responsibilities during GPC in the maritime environment,” said Rojas.

The 10-year plan has ExMCM companies working with allies and partner nations to expand initiatives, such as subject matter expert exchanges and multinational exercises designed to deter peer and near-peer adversaries.

All the objectives put forward in the 2030 plan are essential to delivering a lethal, resilient and sustainable Navy EOD force that can be called upon during contingency and crisis operations, said Hayes.

“Realizing this vision will be impossible without the support of everyone in the Navy EOD community. By leveraging their creativity, discipline and leadership, we will develop a force for 2030 that continues to protect the security and future of the American people,” said Hayes.

Bollinger Shipyards Delivers 41st Fast Response Cutter to the Coast Guard

Bollinger Shipyards has delivered the Fast Response Cutter Charles Moulthrope to the U.S. Coast Guard, the first of six FRCs to be homeported in Manama, Bahrain. Bollinger Shipyards LOCKPORT, La. – Bollinger Shipyards LLC today delivered the USCGC Charles Moulthrope to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida. This is the 164th vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 41st Fast Response Cutter (FRC) delivered under the current program.

The USCGC Charles Moulthrope is the first of six FRCs to be homeported in Manama, Bahrain, which will replace the aging 110-foot Island Class Patrol Boats, built by Bollinger Shipyards 30 years ago, supporting the Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA), the U.S. Coast Guard's largest overseas presence outside the United States.

"Bollinger is proud to continue enhancing and supporting the U.S. Coast Guard's operational presence around the world by delivering the USCGC Charles Moulthrope," said Bollinger President and CEO Ben Bordelon. "It is our top priority to ensure that the brave men and women of the Coast Guard stationed in PATFORSWA have the most state-of-the-art, advanced vessels as they work to build and maintain the necessary regional alliances to ensure maritime security in the region. Building ships for the Coast Guard provides critical assets to bolster our national security and advance America's interests, both at home and abroad."

At a PATFORSWA change of command ceremony earlier in the summer, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Commander Vice Adm. Steven D. Poulin emphasized the importance of the unit,

saying, “During these historical times it is important, now more than ever, that we maintain maritime security operations throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. [PATFORSWA is] pushing forward into the unknown to protect American interests in the region.”

PATFORSWA Commander Capt. Willie L. Carmichael echoed Poulin’s comments, saying PATFORSWA “plays a key role in maritime security, maritime infrastructure protection, theater security cooperation, and counter-smuggling operations.”

PATFORSWA is composed of six cutters, shoreside support personnel, and the Maritime Engagement Team. The unit’s mission is to train, organize, equip, support and deploy combat-ready Coast Guard Forces in support of U.S. Central Command and national security objectives. PATFORSWA works with Naval Forces Central Command in furthering their goals to conduct persistent maritime operations to forward U.S. interests, deter and counter disruptive countries, defeat violent extremism and strengthen partner nations’ maritime capabilities in order to promote a secure maritime environment.

“The FRC hot production line continues to produce and provide stability in the industrial base for the U.S. Government and our Bollinger workforce, assuring economic benefit for our region, our vendor partners in the 40-plus states that support the FRC program, and our country,” Bordelon said.

The last 20 weeks of the USCGC Charles Moulthrope build occurred despite the COVID-19 global pandemic and six named storms impacting the Gulf region, all of which affected Louisiana and two of which made landfall in the state as hurricanes, including Hurricane Laura, a Category 4 storm and the strongest to hit the state since the Great Storm of 1856. Bollinger undertook precautions to ensure the health and safety of employees and maintain its delivery schedule. For the COVID-19 pandemic, Bollinger increased and enhanced

sanitization practices across the shipyard, and enacted more liberal leave and remote work policies as well as altered shift schedules to promote social distancing.

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished himself or herself in the line of duty. Born in Massachusetts in 1873, Charles Moulthrope was a member of the crew of Revenue Cutter Commodore Perry. Seaman Moulthrope gave his life in the performance of duties in 1896. Moulthrope had previously performed a heroic deed while serving on the Perry. Moulthrope rescued four of his shipmates who had fallen into the sea from the cutter's launch after they had gone to rescue another crewman, Boatswain Alfred Halfell who had fallen overboard. He grabbed a line and leaped over the side into the freezing water to rescue the four who were rapidly succumbing to hypothermia.Moulthrope worked the line around all four of the sailors and those on board the cutter then pulled the men aboard the Perry.

The FRC is an operational "game changer," according to senior Coast Guard officials. FRCs are consistently being deployed in support of the full range of missions within the United States Coast Guard and other branches of our armed services.This is due to its exceptional performance, expanded operational reach and capabilities, and ability to transform and adapt to the mission. FRCs have conducted operations as far as the Marshall Islands – a 4,400 nautical mile trip from their homeport. Measuring in at 154-feet, FRCs have a flank speed of 28 knots, state of the art C4ISR suite (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance), and stern launch and recovery ramp for a 26-foot, over-the-horizon interceptor cutter boat.