Fortem Ships New AI-Enabled DroneHunter F700

PLEASANT GROVE, Utah – Fortem Technologies Inc. announced the shipment of the new AI-enabled F700 DroneHunter unmanned aerial system.

“In a world where jamming drones and drone swarms from the ground is no longer effective, the F700 stands alone as a safe, effective deterrent against the rising number of careless and criminal drones,” the release said.

The F700 is being used by the Defense Department and other international government agencies and has seen nearly 400 test runs.

The company said the “ultimate advancements of the F700 are its new flexible undercarriage, which offers interchangeable countermeasures for single, multiple or swarm-based threats and its new lightweight carbon fiber frame, enabling greater athleticism and speed.”

The F700 can carry multiple types of anti-drone countermeasures and deploy them in real-time, based on the dynamic threat that is detected miles beyond the protected area. The undercarriage features pogo pins and payload snaps that are integrated with artificial intelligence-enabled firing and flight software, according to the company.

“The F700 offers significant payload capacity to handle situations over civilians where zero collateral damage is a requirement,” the release said. “AI decisions are now made in real-time to select the appropriate effectors for the detected threat.”

“We have advanced the DroneHunter F700 so that it can deliver any ordinance necessary to stop drones and to protect

stadiums, refineries, campuses and entire metro regions," Fortem CEO Timothy Bean said in the release. "It is the premier AI-enabled interceptor drone in the world."

Fortem is developing several DroneHunter mitigation types, including directed energy.

Bollinger Delivers 38th Fast-Response Cutter, Harold Miller, to Coast Guard

The fast-response cutter Harold Miller, delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida, on April 2. Bollinger Shipyards

LOCKPORT, La. — Bollinger Shipyards delivered the fast-response cutter (FRC) Harold Miller to the U.S. Coast Guard in Key West, Florida, on April 2, the company said in a release.

The cutter is the 161st vessel Bollinger has delivered to the U.S. Coast Guard over a 35-year period and the 38th FRC delivered on the current program. The Harold Miller is the third of three FRCs to be home-ported in Galveston, Texas.

“We are very proud to announce our latest FRC delivery,

especially given the unprecedented times and challenges which we're facing as a nation," said Ben Bordelon, Bollinger's president and CEO.

"For this reason, I want to commend the resilience and dedication of the 600-plus men and women who, despite the threat of global pandemic, continued to work safely and efficiently to build and deliver an exceptional, high-performance cutter to strengthen U.S. national security at a time when our nation needs us most."

"While providing the United States Coast Guard with an extremely capable and affordable asset, the Bollinger FRC program also provides tremendous benefits to the state of Louisiana, not only through highly skilled and well-paying jobs, but also through its direct and indirect spending, resulting in millions of dollars of economic benefits to the state," said Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.).

Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. Harold Miller, a boatswain's mate second class, piloted the first wave of landing craft on Tulagi Island in the Pacific Theater during World War II and made a landing against a Japanese force on Guadalcanal Island. Miller was awarded a Silver Star by Adm. Chester Nimitz for his heroic combat actions.

The FRC is an operational game-changer, according to senior Coast Guard officials. The class is consistently being considered and utilized for a broader mission within the Coast Guard and other branches of our armed services due to the success of the platform and the FRC's expanded operational reach and capabilities, including the 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 154 feet, FRCs have a flank speed of 28 knots,

state-of-the-
art command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance suite, and stern launch and recovery ramp for a 26-foot, over-the-horizon interceptor cutter boat.

Boeing Awarded Navy Contract Modification for Additional MQ-25 UAVs

The MQ-25 unmanned carrier-based test aircraft comes in for landing after its first flight in September at MidAmerica Airport in Mascoutah, Illinois. The Boeing-owned test asset, known as T1, flew two hours to validate the aircraft's basic flight functions and operations. U.S. Navy via Boeing

ST. LOUIS – The U.S. Navy has awarded Boeing a contract modification for three additional MQ-25 unmanned aerial refueling aircraft, bringing the total number of aircraft Boeing is manufacturing to seven, the company said in a release.

“We’re honored to have the Navy’s confidence in our system design and performance that is evident from this additional order,” said Dave Bujold, Boeing’s MQ-25 program director.

“This order establishes uninterrupted production of the first MQ-25 aircraft and lines up with the Navy’s MQ-25 test and training plans for fleet introduction. The MQ-25 program is vital in ensuring the Navy can deliver a critical unmanned aerial refueling capability to the carrier air wing.”

This $84.7 million modification exercises options for three MQ-25 system demonstration test articles and was an option identified in the original $805 million contract for four aircraft awarded in August 2018.

Early flight testing of Boeing’s MQ-25 test asset, T1, is contributing to program progress. The company recently concluded the first round of flight testing for T1, resulting in nearly 30 hours in the air at various speeds and altitudes.

The aircraft is undergoing a planned modification that includes installation of an aerial refueling store (ARS) under the left wing. Flight testing with the ARS will resume later this year.

Chao, Buzby Conference With Maritime Industry Leaders Over COVID-19

The Henry J. Kaiser-class underway replenishment oiler USNS Yukon prepares to conduct a loading with the commercial tanker MT Empire State. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Patrick W. Menah Jr.

WASHINGTON – Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao and Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby held a teleconference with maritime industry leaders on April 2 to discuss the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the industry, according to an April 2 MARAD release.

Chao and Buzby discussed the crisis with chief executive officers, presidents and other senior officials of the industry.

"During the call, Secretary Chao voiced her support for the maritime industry and the challenges they face at this time," the release said.

> *Did you know there are about 70 civilian mariners aboard the USNS Comfort supporting the Navy doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals. Andrew Chen, chief mate, helps guide the ship from the bridge as it arrives in New York City. pic.twitter.com/ED4Qu2IBJP*
>
> *— DOT Maritime Administration (@DOTMARAD) April 2, 2020*

"Secretary Chao and Administrator Buzby briefed maritime industry partners on departmental activities concerning COVID-19 and provided industry leaders the opportunity to share their insights, questions and concerns with the secretary, [Department of Transportation], MARAD and other government interagency Partners. Topics discussed included the overall status of maritime industry operations, including personnel [staff/contractors], any disruptions, and [the outbreak's] impact on the cargo movement in the U.S. and overseas."

Navy Picks HII to Provide Logistics Support for Surface Ships, Subs

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Technical Solutions division was selected by the U.S. Navy to provide integrated logistics support (ILS) for the hull, mechanical and electrical (HM&E) systems and equipment installed on surface ships and submarines, the company announced in an April 1 release.

The indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract

has a potential value of $41 million over five years, if all options are exercised.

“We take great pride in providing our customers around the globe with multiple logistics products and services to help them achieve their missions,” said Brad Mason, president of Technical Solutions’ Fleet Support business unit. “ILS development, maintenance and deployment to the warfighter is a critical part of how HII sustains our nation’s fleet.”

The IDIQ contract was awarded by the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Philadelphia Division, which is responsible for all ILS work related to the HM&E systems and equipment installed on Navy surface ships and submarines. Under the direction of the Life Cycle Logistics & Readiness Division, HII will execute services related to technical, process and programmatic support for integrated logistics and technical documentation.

Modly Announces First President of Naval Community College

WASHINGTON – Acting Navy Secretary Thomas B. Modly has selected Randi Cosentino as the first president of the new U.S. Naval Community College.

Cosentino comes to the Department of the Navy from Guild Education, where she served as the chief academic officer. Guild Education works with major Fortune 500 companies like Disney and Walmart to provide college-level education and training to their workforces. Cosentino received

her bachelor's degree and doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania and her master's in business from Harvard Business School.

"In today's complex global security environment, we need to provide world-class education to our enlisted force of Sailors and Marines," Modly said. "Dr. Cosentino's experience as an educator and administrator working with some of our nation's largest private-sector employers will help ensure that all of our personnel have access to a top-notch education while serving our nation."

The U.S. Naval Community College will partner with civilian universities and community colleges to provide enlisted Sailors and Marines an opportunity to earn an associate's degree online in high demand fields like cyber, IT and engineering.

The planned delivery model, which will rely primarily on high-quality civilian universities and community colleges with proven track records delivering strong positive outcomes, is very similar to that pioneered by Cosentino at Guild, which has been praised nationally for its cost-effectiveness and high return on investment.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to serve our nation's naval services and to lead this new institution, as it develops innovative and collaborative approaches to educating America's Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen," Cosentino said. "The need for critical thinking, analytical problem-solving, and effective communication skills that a college education provides has never been more important than it is in today's rapidly changing world.

"I look forward to enhancing naval readiness by developing the intellectual foundations of our enlisted force."

As president, Cosentino will be responsible for overseeing the daily operations for the Naval Community College, which will

begin teaching its first cohort of students in a pilot program scheduled for January 2021. The pilot will focus on degree programs in IT, engineering and data science. The first cohort will consist of 500 to 600 enlisted service members from the Navy, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard.

“The U. S. Coast Guard is excited to partner with the Navy and Marine Corps in establishing the United States Naval Community College,” said Rear Adm. Brian K. Penoyer, the Coast Guard’s force readiness commander. “Our people are the key to providing a ready, relevant and responsive Coast Guard.”

“The Naval Community College will help us meet the strategic goal to sharpen the skills of the mission ready total workforce and will help position the Coast Guard to recruit and retain an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects the American public we serve,” Penoyer continued. “We see the Naval Community College as the first step in building our Mission Ready Workforce for 2040 and beyond.”

Establishing the new community college is one of the primary objectives of Education for Seapower Strategy 2020, released earlier this year. The strategy called for creation of the community college because of the growing demand for technical skills and creative problem solving in the Navy and Marine Corps.

The U.S. Naval Community College will be part of the newly formed Naval University System, which includes the Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School, Marine Corps University, and the U.S. Naval Academy.

Cosentino will report to John Kroger, the Navy’s chief learning officer. Joining Cosentino as chief of staff is Robert Kozloski, currently acting deputy chief learning officer for the Navy. Kozloski, who served as an enlisted Sailor and Marine Corps officer, has been one of the primary architects of the Naval Community College concept.

Navy Surface Forces, Army Attack Helicopters Conduct Ops in Arabian Gulf

AH-64 Apache helicopters operate with the expeditionary sea base USS Lewis B. Puller during a joint naval and air integration operation on March 27. U.S. Army/Spc. Cody Rich

PERSIAN GULF – U.S. Navy expeditionary landing base ship USS Lewis B. Puller has been conducting joint naval and air integration operations with U.S. Army AH-64E Apache attack helicopters assigned to Army Central Command's Task Force Saber throughout March, according to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (USNAVCENT) public affairs.

The operations, which are designed to enhance the capabilities

of U.S. forces to respond to surface threats, have involved Puller performing as a landing base platform for the Apaches, while Cyclone class Patrol Coastal ships select simulated targets for them to engage. The guided-missile destroyer USS Paul Hamilton also participated in the joint operations.

“The integration of U.S. Army air weapons teams with other joint fires into the maritime environment greatly enhances our ability to expand reconnaissance and attack capability,” said Capt. Peter Mirisola, commander of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 50/Commander, Combined Task Force (CTF) 55. “The Apaches, in coordination with our surface ships, allow us to hold an adversary at high risk at extended ranges. Combined with other joint fires, these aircraft significantly increase the precision lethality of our joint maritime forces.”

Similar integration operations with Special Operations assets were conducted in the Arabian Gulf between U.S. naval forces and MH-6M Little Bird helicopters during Operation Earnest Will from 1987 to 1988.

More recently, USNAVCENT surface forces also conducted joint naval and air integration operations with AC-130W Stinger II gunships, assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command Central, on March 8 and March 9.

“Working with USARCENT forces represents another key capability in our ongoing integration of naval and air assets across our joint and coalition force to ensure maritime superiority,” said Vice Adm. Jim Malloy, commander of USNAVCENT/U.S. 5th Fleet. “This kind of cross-domain integration allows us to maintain highly lethal and effective defensive capabilities, regardless of what platforms are operating in theater.”

DESRON 50/CTF 55 conducts maritime security operations in support of regional security and stability. Its responsibilities include planning and executing a robust

regional engagement program with coalition forces from regional partners and allied navies who operate and deploy to the Arabian Gulf.

The U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse is comprised of 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait at the southern tip of Yemen.

New NOAA Program to Support, Expand Agency's Use of Unmanned Systems

SILVER SPRING, Md. – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is establishing a new Unmanned Systems Operations Program to support the rapidly expanding use of these systems across the agency, according to a NOAA release.

The new program will promote the safe, efficient and economical operation of unmanned systems (UxS) that NOAA uses to collect high-quality environmental data for the agency's science, products and services.

"Unmanned airborne and maritime systems are transforming how we conduct earth science at NOAA," said retired Navy Rear Adm. Timothy Gallaudet, NOAA's deputy administrator. "Our new unmanned systems operations program will help us dramatically increase the application and use of these

technologies in every NOAA mission area.”

Unmanned systems are sensor-equipped vehicles that operate autonomously or are remotely piloted. NOAA uses them for seafloor and habitat mapping, ocean exploration, marine mammal and fishery stock assessments, emergency response and at-sea observations that improve forecasting of extreme events, such as harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.

While the use of UxS is not new to NOAA – agency scientists have been experimenting with and using unmanned systems for decades – the recent increase in the availability of highly capable UxS has brought a corresponding increase in their innovative use as a force multiplier for many NOAA programs. NOAA’s use of small unmanned aircraft for science missions has increased more than tenfold since 2012.

The Unmanned Systems Operations Program is being established within NOAA’s Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO), which operates, manages and maintains the agency’s fleet of ships and aircraft and oversees NOAA’s diving and small boat safety programs. Its services will include training, cybersecurity, acquisition and other expert support to ensure safe, cost-effective operations across the agency.

“With the creation of this new program, we will be better positioned to transition these technologies into operational platforms that will gather critical environmental data every American relies upon,” said Rear Adm. Michael J. Silah, director of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and OMAO.

The new program will be housed at two locations. The NOAA Aircraft Operations Center in Lakeland, Florida, will continue to support the agency’s unmanned aircraft activities. A new facility being built by the Mississippi State Port Authority in partnership with the University of Southern Mississippi in Gulfport, Mississippi, will support unmanned maritime systems.

NOAA received $12.7 million from Congress in fiscal year 2020 to improve and expand UxS operations across the agency, including the creation of the new program – a key goal of NOAA's recently released Unmanned Systems Strategy. The program will also help meet the objectives of the Commercial Engagement Through Ocean Technology Act of 2018, which requires NOAA to coordinate research, assess and acquire unmanned marine systems with the U.S. Navy, other federal agencies, industry and academia.

NOAA is partnering with the Navy this year to evaluate new UxS technologies for ocean science applications through the Advanced Naval Technology Exercise (ANTX) program. Now in its fifth year, ANTX enables scientists and engineers to participate in the testing and assessment of experimental technologies that can support missions of both agencies. During the exercise, dozens of new systems are tested and demonstrated to help inform government and private sector investment decisions.

NOAA is also exploring the use of artificial intelligence in combination with UxS to collect and analyze large volumes of scientific data. NOAA recently released the NOAA Artificial Intelligence Strategy in conjunction with the Unmanned Systems Strategy.

Cutter Stratton Departs for Eastern Pacific Counter-Narcotic Patrol

The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton lines the

rails of the flight deck as the cutter moors last November following a 162-day patrol in the western Pacific Ocean. The crew left again March 28 on a months-long deployment to the eastern Pacific. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 1st Class Matthew S. Masaschi

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton got underway from Coast Guard Island on March 28 for a months-long deployment to the eastern Pacific Ocean, where the crew will patrol international waters off Central and South America to intercept and deter drug-trafficking efforts.

The cutter is currently conducting training and an at-sea health evaluation to ensure the crew is COVID-19-free and fully ready for operations.

“Times of crisis are when the nation counts on the U.S. Coast Guard and other military services to perform,” said Capt. Bob Little, Stratton’s commanding officer. “Cutter Stratton is capable of a wide range of homeland and national-security missions that are vital during a national emergency. Our crew understands the importance of sustaining these missions now, more than ever. It’s never easy to leave your families behind, and this deployment is no exception. Our families will be carrying a particularly large burden while we are away, but their resilience is at the center of our ability to provide maritime security for the nation.”

In fiscal year 2019, the Coast Guard conducted 236 separate drug events, detained 611 suspected smugglers and removed more than 458,000 pounds of cocaine worth more than $6.1 billion.

One in five global drug-related deaths occur in the United States, and drugs have since 2000 cost the U.S. $193 billion in crime, health, safety and lost productivity annually. The drug trade also funds cartels’ illegal activities in their home countries, spreading corruption and instability throughout the region.

The Stratton will be deployed in support of Campaign Martillo, The U.S.’s whole-of-government effort to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, which includes efforts of 16 U.S. agency partners, including the Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, DEA, HSI, and U.S Attorneys in California, Florida and Puerto Rico, New York, Texas, Alabama and Ohio.

Campaign Martillo also includes the participation of 21 nations who work together to counter cartels and illicit trafficking traveling via air or waters of the Western Hemisphere.

The campaign is led by Joint Interagency Task Force South, a component of U.S. Southern Command, which oversees the detection and monitoring of illicit traffickers traveling via air and seas and supports U.S. and multi-national law enforcement agencies with interdictions.

The actual U.S.-led at-sea law enforcement boardings are conducted by trained Coast Guard members under the tactical control of the Coast Guard’s 11th District, which is headquartered in Alameda.

“It is critically important the Coast Guard continues our lifesaving work during this national emergency,” said Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, commander, Pacific Area.

“Our missions ensure the safety of Americans and the security of our maritime borders, and they enable the safe flow of commerce into U.S. ports. In this challenging COVID-19 environment, we have armed our members, like the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton, with the necessary training and equipment to prevent exposure to the virus, and we made sure their families back home are supported.”

Raytheon, MDA Sign $2 Billion Standard Missile-3 Contract

TUCSON, Ariz. – Raytheon Co. will produce and deliver SM-3 Block IB interceptors under a $2.1 billion, multiyear U.S. Missile Defense Agency contract, the company said in a release. The deal is the first multiyear contract for the SM-3 program and covers fiscal years 2019–2023.

SM-3 is the only ballistic missile interceptor that can be launched on land and at sea. It is deployed worldwide and has achieved more than 30 exo-atmospheric intercepts against ballistic missile targets.

“This procurement deal is a win-win for government and industry,” said Mitch Stevison, Raytheon Strategic and Naval Systems’ vice president. “Efficiencies gained from this contract will allow us to reduce costs, continue to improve the SM-3 and deliver an important capability to our military.”

The Block IB variant achieved full-rate production in 2017. The company has delivered more than 400 SM-3 rounds over the lifetime of the program.