

Coast Guard Cutter James Returns Home from 62-Day Counter-Drug Patrol



An MH-65 Dolphin helicopter lands on the flight deck of the Coast Guard cutter James while conducting hurricane relief operations in the Caribbean on Sept. 6. U.S. Coast Guard CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Coast Guard cutter James returned to Charleston on Oct. 31 following a 62-day counter-drug patrol in support of Operation Martillo in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard’s 7th District said in a release.

During their patrol, the James’ crew, along with members from Tactical Law Enforcement Team-South, Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, and multiple partner agencies, contributed to the interdiction of seven drug-smuggling vessels and were responsible for the seizure of more than 9,000 pounds of cocaine and 4,085 pounds of marijuana bound for the United States.

The James’ crew offloaded more than 28,000 pounds of seized cocaine and 11,000 pounds of seized marijuana on Oct. 28 at Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The contraband was seized by multiple Coast Guard units in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean and has a wholesale value of more than \$377.1 million.

“The teamwork, dedication and bias for action exhibited by this crew and other Coast Guard vessel crews represent how the Coast Guard protects this nation from threats delivered by sea, and I could not be prouder of them,” said Capt. Jeffrey Randall, James’ commanding officer.



The Coast Guard cutter James conducts Hurricane Dorian relief

operations alongside the cutter Paul Clark in the Caribbean on Sept. 6. U.S. Coast Guard

In addition to interdicting drug-smuggling vessels, the James assumed the role of commander, Task Force Bahamas, in the wake of Hurricane Dorian, the strongest Category 5 hurricane to make landfall in the Bahamas. The James directed eight cutters and 12 helicopters in response to search-and-rescue and medevac calls by injured and stranded inhabitants and coordinated evaluations of 25 ports and their associated infrastructure.

The James is one of two 418-foot national security cutters (NSC) homeported in Charleston. With its command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, the NSC is the most technologically advanced ship in the Coast Guard's fleet. NSCs are equipped with state-of-the-art small assets to include a small unmanned aircraft system which can expand the surveillance range of a surface asset like the James.

"From mission planning to risk mitigation, the capability offered by a small shipboard based unmanned aerial system extends our visual range to enhance our ability to execute a diverse mission set," said Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Connell, operations officer for the James.

Icebreaker Returns Home After 3-Month Arctic Deployment



A crew member embraces a loved one after the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy returned to homeport in Seattle on Nov. 2. The icebreaker deployed to the Arctic for three months. U.S. Coast

Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Clark

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Healy returned home on Nov. 2 to Seattle following a three-month deployment to the Arctic in support of Coast Guard operations and multiple scientific research missions sponsored by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Office of Naval Research.

Healy is a high-latitude research vessel and is one of the only U.S. military surface vessels that operates in the ice-covered waters of the Arctic. Homeported in Seattle with a permanent crew of 87, Healy is the Coast Guard's largest cutter at 420 feet and a displacement of more than 16,000 tons.

“During our deployment, we successfully transited 14,000 nautical miles and spent 50 cumulative days above the Arctic Circle, reaching as far north as 81 degrees north latitude,” said Capt. MaryEllen Durley, Healy's commanding officer. “As the Coast Guard's sole Arctic icebreaker, we forged new relationships, trained new Arctic sailors and conducted high-latitude research that will help forecast the impact of seasonal ice formation critical to maintaining the Arctic maritime domain.”



Healy crew members and scientists pose for a photo during the icebreaker's first ice station Sept. 18 while in the Arctic. The crew and scientists deployed numerous scientific sensors to collect data for Arctic research. U.S. Coast Guard/Ensign Trevor Layman

As the nation's primary maritime presence in the Polar regions, the Coast Guard advances U.S. national interests through a blend of polar operational capability, regulatory authority and international leadership across the full spectrum of maritime governance.

Earlier this year the Coast Guard released the Arctic Strategic Outlook, reaffirming the service's commitment to

American leadership in the region through partnership, unity of effort and continuous innovation.

“While we focus our efforts on creating a peaceful and collaborative environment in the Arctic, we’re also responding to the impacts of increased competition in this strategically important region,” said Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz. “Our continued presence will enable us to reinforce positive opportunities and mitigate negative consequences today and tomorrow.”

The Coast Guard presently maintains two icebreakers – the Healy, a medium icebreaker, and the Polar Star, the only heavy U.S. icebreaker.

While the Healy deploys annually to the Arctic, the 43-year-old Polar Star is the only cutter capable of supporting Operation Deep Freeze, the annual mission to maintain U.S. presence in Antarctica.

If a catastrophic event, such as a shipboard fire or getting stuck in the ice, were to strand the Healy in the Arctic or the Polar Star near Antarctica, the Coast Guard is left without a self-rescue capability. By contrast, Russia currently operates more than 50 icebreakers – several of which are nuclear-powered.

The Coast Guard is seeking to increase its icebreaking fleet with six new polar security cutters. In April, the Coast Guard awarded VT Halter Marine Inc. of Pascagoula, Mississippi, a contract for the design and construction of the Coast Guard’s lead polar security cutter, which will be homeported in Seattle. The contract also includes options for the construction of two additional PSCs.

USS Detroit Departs on Maiden Deployment



The USS Detroit departs Naval Station Mayport on Oct. 31 for a scheduled deployment. Detroit is deployed in support of Campaign Martillo, a joint operation with the U.S. Coast Guard and partner nations. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Nathan T. Beard

MAYPORT, Fla. – The Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Detroit (LCS 7) departed its homeport of Mayport, Florida, for the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility on its maiden deployment on Oct. 31.

Detroit will conduct operations in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South's Campaign Martillo, a multinational effort launched in January 2012 targeting illicit trafficking routes in coastal waters along Central America.

Detroit's operations will involve practical exercises and exchanges with partner nations, supporting U.S. 4th Fleet interoperability and reinforce the U.S. position as the regional partner of choice.

"I expect this deployment to offer a great opportunity to work together with regional partners throughout Southern Command area of responsibility," said Capt. Cory Applebee, commander of Surface Warfare Division 21.

The deployment of Detroit is the first by an LCS in support of Martillo and the second deployment of the Freedom variant to the region. The first deployment was USS Freedom (LCS 1) in 2010.

Martillo includes 20 partner nations committed to a regional approach against targeting illicit trafficking routes. The

deployment of an LCS to the region demonstrates the U.S. commitment to regional cooperation and security. Detroit's shallow draft provides unparalleled opportunities for port access, making Freedom variant an ideal vessel for these types of engagements.

"We hope Detroit will build relationships with that region and show that LCS is a capable warfighting platform that is ready to safeguard access to international waterways and demonstrate operating capabilities," Applebee said.

Detroit also will demonstrate its operational capabilities and allow the U.S. Navy to evaluate crew rotation and maintenance plans. Detroit is manned by her Gold crew of more than 90 Sailors, which will include surface warfare mission package personnel, U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment and an aviation detachment to operate an embarked MH-60S Seahawk helicopter and two MQ-8B Fire Scout Vertical Takeoff Unmanned Vehicles.

Homeported in Mayport, Detroit will have Blue and Gold crew rotations during the deployment. The two crews will rotate on the same hull every four to five months, creating a "cycle of virtue" between the crews who consistently turn the same ship over to each other, which will allow continuous presence in the region.

Keel Laid for First-in-Class T-ATS



An artist rendering of the future USNS Navajo (T-TATS 6). U.S. Navy photo illustration

HOUMA, La. – Gulf Island Shipyard held a keel laying ceremony on Oct. 30 for the future USNS Navajo (T-ATS 6), the lead ship of the Navy's new class of towing, salvage and rescue vessels. The ceremony was held at the Houma Terrebonne Civic Center in Houma, Louisiana, Naval Sea Systems Command said in an Oct. 31 release.

A keel laying is the ceremonial recognition of the start of a ship's construction and the joining of the ship's modular components. The keel serves as the symbolic backbone of the ship and is said to be "truly and fairly laid" with the etching of an honoree's initials into the keel plate.

On hand to authenticate the keel were Jocelyn Billy, the ship's sponsor; Jonathan Nez, president of Navajo Nation; and Seth Damon, the speaker of the 24th Navajo Nation Council.

"We are honored to have so many members of Navajo Nation in attendance to celebrate this early milestone in the shipbuilding process," said Mike Kosar, support ships, boats and craft program manager, Program Executive Office Ships. "These ships are critical to the operations of our fleet and will soon sail with the resilience and determination of the Navajo people of which they honor."

The Navajo-class will provide ocean-going tug, salvage and rescue capabilities to support fleet operations. The current capabilities are provided by three T-ATF 166 and two T-ARS 50 class ships, which reach the end of their expected service lives starting in 2020.

Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems. The platform will be 263 feet long, have a beam of 59 feet and can carry a load of 1,796 tons.

In addition to T-ATS 6, Gulf Island Shipyard is under contract for the detail design and construction of the future USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7) and USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek

HII Finishes Acceptance Trials for Amphibious Assault Ship Tripoli



The amphibious assault ship Tripoli has completed its acceptance trials, Huntington Ingalls Industries announced Oct. 30. Huntington Ingalls Industries PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Huntington Ingalls Industries announced the successful completion of acceptance trials aboard the amphibious assault ship Tripoli (LHA 7) in an Oct. 30 release. The second ship in the America class spent three days at sea in the Gulf of Mexico with the U.S. Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey, performing test procedures that included a full power run of the main propulsion system.

"The success of these trials is the culmination of the hard work and determination from our shipbuilders and leadership team. We have worked closely with our Navy partners to ensure that LHA 7 will provide unparalleled sea basing capabilities for the Navy's amphibious ready groups and the Marine Corps Air-Ground Task Forces," said Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias.

Huntington Ingalls is the sole builder of large-deck amphibious warships for the Navy. The shipyard delivered its first amphibious assault ship, the Iwo Jima-class USS Tripoli (LPH 10), in 1966. Ingalls has since built five Tarawa-class ships, eight Wasp-class ships and the first in a new class of ships, USS America (LHA 6). The third ship in the America

class, Bougainville (LHA 8), is under construction at the shipyard and will be the 16th large-deck amphibious ship built at Ingalls.

“The LHA team at Ingalls is truly unmatched in their dedication to making these state-of-the-art warships for the Navy,” said George S. Jones, Ingalls’ vice president of operations. “That dedication really showed during this trial. Our shipbuilders, test and trials team and our partners at Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Gulf Coast take great pride in the work they do every day and I know they are ready to finish the job strong.”

Like the lead ship in the class, Tripoli is designed for survivability with increased aviation capacity, including an enlarged hangar deck, realignment and expansion of the aviation maintenance facilities, a significant increase in available stowage for parts and support equipment, and increased aviation fuel capacity. Like its predecessors, the ship will be able to operate as the flagship for an expeditionary strike group.

Tripoli will be the third ship to bear the name that commemorates the capture of Derna in 1805 by a small force of Marines and about 370 soldiers from 11 other nations. The battle, memorialized in the Marines’ Hymn with the line “to the shores of Tripoli,” brought about a successful conclusion to the combined operations of the First Barbary War.

Spencer

Lauds

Tight

Integration of Navy, Marine Forces in 'Great Power Competition'

Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer extolled the determination of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps uniformed leaders to tightly integrate their forces to prepare for the emerging great power competition and said that effort would start with integrating the budget preparation process.

Spencer also endorsed Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger's call for a larger and more diversified amphibious fleet, including the "lightning carrier" concept that would use amphibious assault ships with dozens of F-35Bs to augment the aircraft carrier force.

"The Marines will be solely and intricately aligned with the Navy, and that starts with the POM process," Spencer said Oct. 30, referring to the program objective memorandum, which are the armed services' proposals to the Pentagon for the programs and funding they need.

America depends on her mighty Navy to defend her and to ensure open access to the world's oceans & trade with other nations. We were honored to host [@secnav76](#) Spencer for a frank discussion on the future of US naval power with [@Heritage](#) and the media. pic.twitter.com/HQjoKAsuwc

– Kay C. James (@KayColesJames) [October 30, 2019](#)

"This is integrated funding," the secretary told a media roundtable hosted by the Heritage Foundation. "From the Navy

view point, the Marine Corps is to be considered a weapons platform for the U.S. Navy, in the maritime domain and the multidomain.”

“The Marines are going back into the riggings,” Spencer said, referring to the Marines’ historic role as riflemen in the “fighting tops” of sailing ships to help the Navy in close-in fighting against enemy warships. The Marines have been engaged in a land war for 18 years, but “we’re changing our major muscle movements to great power competition.”

The reason for naval integration, he said, was due to the National Defense Strategy and “the Pacific theater, where we’ll be primarily focused ... it’s a maritime theater.”

Asked about Berger’s warning in his commandant’s planning guidance that the existing amphibious force was too small and the large amphibs too vulnerable to operate alone in the highly contested littoral waters around China, Spencer noted that Naval Sea Systems Command and the Marine Corps “weighed in on what the commandant said and what the options might be. ... I applaud the fact that we are opening up the aperture to make sure we are looking at the full spectrum of what’s available.”

Asked about the legal issues of using unarmed and civilian-crewed support ships to augment traditional amphibs, Spencer noted the Navy already has changed some of those ships to the Navy designation, which

would add uniformed sailors. “That’s an option that we have. We have to get the cost per hull more manageable.” Although the traditional amphibs are “great ships,” he asked, “can we get more impact for the dollar? We have to explore that.”

The secretary embraced Berger’s proposal to use large-deck amphibious ships loaded with F-35B “Lightning II” strike fighters. He said: “Does it have the same strike capability as a carrier? No, it doesn’t. But if part of the mission of the carrier is presence and forward deployability ... lightning carriers [are] a great option to augment what the requirement might be.”

The secretary acknowledged that the Navy may not be able to reach its goal of a 355-ship battle fleet with the current and expected funding. “We will have 305 ships with the top-line funding we have, but that’s not what we want.” Addressing Congress, he added, “If you give us the funding we need, we’ll go to 355.”

Marine Corps Orders 30 More Amphibious Combat Vehicles



BAE Systems has received a \$120 million contract from the U.S. Marine Corps for additional Amphibious Combat Vehicles under a third order for Low-Rate Initial Production. BAE Systems STAFFORD, Va. – BAE Systems has received a \$120 million contract from the U.S. Marine Corps for additional Amphibious Combat Vehicles (ACVs) under a third order for Low-Rate

Initial Production (LRIP), the company said in a release. This award is a next step on the path to Full-Rate Production.

An Oct. 29 Pentagon announcement said the order was for 30 ACVs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QK7xUtzjA4>

This latest contract is for the ACV personnel carrier variant (ACV-P), an eight-wheeled amphibious assault vehicle capable of transporting Marines from open-ocean ship to shore and conducting land operations. Each vehicle embarks 13 Marines in addition to a crew of three.

“This award further validates the Marine Corps’ confidence in the vehicle’s proven capability in meeting their amphibious mission and represents an important step toward fielding the vehicle in the Fleet Marine Force. The ACV is a highly mobile, survivable and adaptable platform designed for growth to meet future mission role requirements while bringing enhanced combat power to the battlefield,” said John Swift, director of amphibious programs at BAE Systems.

Current low-rate production is focused on the ACV-P variant. More variants will be added under Full-Rate Production to include the command and control (ACV-C), 30 mm medium-caliber turret (ACV-30) and recovery variants (ACV-R) under the ACV Family of Vehicles program. BAE Systems previously received the Lot 1 and Lot 2 awards.

The Marine Corps selected BAE Systems along with teammate Iveco Defence Vehicles for the ACV program in 2018 to replace its legacy fleet of Assault Amphibious Vehicles, which have been in service for decades and were also built by BAE Systems.

ACV production and support is taking place at BAE Systems locations in Stafford, Virginia; San Jose, California; Sterling Heights, Michigan; Aiken, South Carolina; and York, Pennsylvania.

USS Gerald R. Ford Completes Post-Shakedown Availability



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford conducts high-speed turns in the Atlantic Ocean on Oct. 29 during sea trials. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Connor Loessin
WASHINGTON – The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford is back in its homeport at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, after successful completion on Oct. 30 of its post-shakedown availability/selected restricted availability, Program Executive Office (PEO) Aircraft Carriers announced.

Completion of the availability marks a significant milestone for the Ford, the first ship in a next-generation class that will serve for 50 years as a centerpiece of U.S. national defense.

“This is a warship like none other, and the process of returning her to fleet service reflects the great technical skill, professionalism and tenacity of the government/industry team,” said Rear Adm. James Downey, program executive officer for aircraft carriers.

A PSA is a typical period of construction availability in the early life of a ship during which the Navy and shipbuilder resolve issues that arise in initial at-sea periods and make any needed changes and upgrades.

CVN 78’s PSA began on July 15, 2018, and included work on Advanced Weapons Elevators (AWEs), repairs to the ship’s main reduction gear, improvements to the throttle control system, upgrades to the advanced arresting gear and numerous other maintenance tasks.

During the PSA, most discrepancies – known as “trial cards” – that had been identified during previous workups were addressed, with few remaining to address in future maintenance availabilities. As a first-of-class ship, such discrepancies are not unexpected, and the U.S. Navy is incorporating lessons learned from CVN 78 to inform design and actively improve oversight of future ships of the class.

The program manager for USS Gerald R. Ford, Capt. Ron Rutan, acknowledged that unique challenges accompany technological advances.

“The design and execution challenge in delivering a first-of-class warfighting platform is not only to make CVN 78 better, but also to enhance production on the next ships in the class – the future USS John F. Kennedy and future USS Enterprise,” Rutan said.

The Gerald R. Ford class incorporates 23 new technologies with advances in propulsion, power generation, ordnance handling and aircraft launch systems. These innovations will support a 30% higher sortie generation rate, executed with a 20% reduction in crew compared to Nimitz-class carriers. The Gerald R. Ford-class carrier offers a 17% reduction – about \$4 billion per ship – in life-cycle operations and support costs compared to the Nimitz class.

JFK Crew Marks Another Milestone – Flooding of

Newport News Dry Dock



The future John F. Kennedy reaches another construction milestone on Oct. 29 as its dry dock is flooded three months ahead of schedule. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Adam Ferrero

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The future John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) marked another milestone leading up to the christening of the second Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier as Huntington Ingalls Industries-Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) flooded the ship's dry dock on Oct. 29.

The John F. Kennedy has been under construction at NNS in Newport News since 2015 and continues to prepare for its christening, which is scheduled for Dec. 7.

The JFK's launching occurred about three months early, according to the original schedule for the carrier. Other milestones had been reached leading up to the dry dock flooding, including laying of the ship's keel on Aug. 22, 2015, and placement of the 588-metric-ton island superstructure on May 29.

Capt. Todd Marzano, JFK's commanding officer, and its crew participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 1 to officially establish the crew and designate the building where the Sailors will work during the carrier's continued construction.

Ensign Cheyenne Scarbrough, a John F. Kennedy crew member from San Francisco, brings a plethora of skillsets and experience to include the honor of being a double plank owner.

"CVN 79 has come a long way since I first observed initial construction in the dry dock back in 2015 following the keel laying."

Capt. Todd Marzano, JFK's commanding officer

“Being assigned to the future John F. Kennedy allows me another chance to start from ground zero, streamline processes and bring the ship to life,” said Scarbrough, who has served 17 years in the U.S. Navy and received her commission in March. Scarbrough has served on USS Enterprise (CVN 65), USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) and USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

While Scarbrough brings experience on both Nimitz and Ford-classes of aircraft carriers, Senior Chief Logistics Specialist David Adkins brings his experience serving on board the first USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67).

“I embarked on board USS John F. Kennedy while assigned to VFA-81 in 2004,” said Adkins, an 18-year veteran from Jacksonville, Florida. “For me being part of ship’s company now is definitely a point in my career where I have gone full circle.”

Marzano, who served on board USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) while it underwent maintenance at NNS as future John F. Kennedy’s keel was laid, emphasized his perspective in leading his crew throughout the ship’s construction.

“CVN 79 has come a long way since I first observed initial construction in the dry dock back in 2015 following the keel laying,” Marzano said. “At that point I had no idea I’d be fortunate enough to be the ship’s first commanding officer, and I’m incredibly honored, humbled and excited to be given the opportunity to lead such an amazing team of high-quality crew members.”

Pentagon, Lockheed Reach Deal to Reduce Cost of F-35A by 12.8%



Two U.S. Navy variant F-35C Lightning II aircraft from Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, fly in formation over the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range after completing a training mission. U.S. Navy/Lt. Cmdr. Darin Russell

FORT WORTH, Texas – The F-35 Joint Program Office and Lockheed Martin finalized a \$34 billion agreement for the production and delivery of 478 F-35s at the lowest price in the history of the program, according to a Lockheed release. The contract includes all U.S., international partners and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) aircraft in Lots 12, 13 and 14.

In the deal, the F-35 program exceeds its cost-reduction targets for each variant of the joint strike fighter – and the price per unit of the F-35A, the U.S. Air Force version, including aircraft and engine, is below \$80 million in both Lots 13 and 14.

The F-35A unit cost represents an estimated overall 12.8% reduction from Lot 11 costs for the F-35A conventional landing variant and an average of 12.7% savings across all three variants from Lot 11 to 14. The other variants are the vertical take-off and landing F-35B, the U.S. Marine Corps version, and the F-35C, equipped for U.S. Navy aircraft carrier operations.

“Driving down cost is critical to the success of this program. I am excited that the F-35 Joint Program Office and Lockheed Martin have agreed on this landmark three-lot deal,” said Air Force Lt. Gen. Eric Fick, F-35 program executive officer. “This \$34 billion agreement is a truly historic milestone for the F-35 Enterprise.”

The agreement includes 291 aircraft for the U.S. armed services, 127 for F-35 international partners and 60 for FMS customers.

“With smart acquisition strategies, strong government-industry partnership and a relentless focus on quality and cost reduction, the F-35 Enterprise has successfully reduced procurement costs of the fifth-generation F-35 to equal or less than fourth-generation legacy aircraft,” said Greg Ulmer, Lockheed Martin’s F-35 program vice president and general manager.

More than 450 F-35s operate from 19 bases around the globe. More than 910 pilots and 8,350 maintainers have been trained, and the F-35 fleet has surpassed more than 220,000 cumulative flight hours. Eight nations have F-35s operating from bases on their home soil and seven services have declared initial operating capability for the aircraft.