SECDEF Directs Flag and General Billet Reductions

From the Department of Defense, May 5, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. — The following memorandum was issued by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth:

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP SUBJECT:

General/Flag Officer Reductions

The Department of Defense is committed to ensuring the lethality of U.S. Military Forces to deter threats and, when necessary, achieve decisive victory. To accomplish this mission, we must cultivate exceptional senior leaders who drive innovation and operational excellence, unencumbered by unnecessary bureaucratic layers that hinder their growth and effectiveness.

A critical step in this process is removing redundant force structure to optimize and streamline leadership by reducing excess general and flag officer positions.

Therefore, I direct the following actions:

• A minimum 20% reduction of 4-star positions across the Active Component;

• A minimum 20% reduction of general officers in the National Guard; and

• An additional minimum 10% reduction in general and flag officers with the realignment of the Unified Command Plan.

Through these measures, we will uphold our position as the most lethal fighting force in the world, achieving peace through strength and ensuring greater efficiency, innovation,

and preparedness for any challenge that lies ahead.

Interdisciplinary Engineering Major Now Offered at CGA

U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) cadets observe Boston Dynamic's robot, Spot, controlled by a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Lincoln Laboratory researcher (left) at USCGA, New London, Connecticut, Nov. 27, 2023. (Photo by U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Third Class Matthew Thieme.)
From the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, May 5, 2025

NEW LONDON, Conn. – The **U.S. Coast Guard Academy** has launched a new academic major. **Interdisciplinary Engineering** (IDE) prepares future officers for careers across a wide spectrum of Coast Guard missions. IDE is open to cadets beginning with the

Class of 2028.

The new academic major advances an interdisciplinary approach to prepare cadets to serve in a wide variety of Coast Guard careers. Interdisciplinary Engineering students will be able to customize their plan of study to suit their interests and be well prepared to pursue a Professional Engineer license and graduate school in engineering or other disciplines.

In addition to the core curriculum for all cadets, IDE students will complete required engineering, math, and science courses to meet accreditation criteria in ABET's Engineering Accreditation Commission. The IDE curriculum also leaves room for a series of engineering and free electives, making it much more flexible compared with CGA's other engineering programs. This flexibility allows students to take courses in areas of interest related to **Coast Guard missions** and sub-disciplines. Potential areas of focus include (but are not limited to): Aviation/Aerospace Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Marine Safety Engineering, Cybersecurity, Engineering Management, Industrial Engineering, Ocean Engineering, Power Systems & Control Engineering, and Systems Engineering.

"The Interdisciplinary Engineering major equips cadets with the ability to tackle complex, real-world challenges that don't fit neatly into a single discipline. By blending foundational engineering principles with systems thinking and innovation, our graduates will be uniquely prepared to support the Coast Guard's evolving missions and lead in dynamic, mission-critical environments."

Housed in the School of Engineering and Cyber Systems, the IDE program will give cadets a hands-on educational experience. IDE students will have access to the Academy's power lab, circulating water channel, wind tunnel, towing tank, 3-D printers, and other engineering lab facilities.

The announcement of the new major comes after recent

recognition from the Carnegie Foundation on the **Academy's second Carnegie Classification** for continued leadership in providing high-impact, STEM-focused academic programs to prepare cadets for future service.

USS Miguel Keith Completes Overhaul at MHI

From U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility Japan RMC (SRF-JRMC), May 2, 2025

YOKOHAMA, KANAGAWA, Japan – The U.S. Navy's Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary mobile base USS Miguel Keith (ESB-5) completed a five-month Regular Overhaul (ROH) availability at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), Yokohama, Japan, April 15, 2025.

The ROH marks the first time a Japanese shipyard has bid on and won an ROH contract of this scale for a U.S. Navy Vessel. The ROH is much larger work vice voyage repairs (VRs), which have been conducted at the shipyard previously. 10 U.S.C. § 863 prohibits overhauling, repairing, or maintaining U.S. naval vessels in foreign-owned and operated shipyards outside the United States, except for VRs. Still, since the USS Miguel Keith's availability was under 6 months and the ship was not due to return to the U.S. within 15 months, this statute did not apply.

U.S. Ship Repair Facility and Regional Maintenance Center's (SRF-JRMC) Singapore Detachment, which usually supports the ship's maintenance availabilities, planned the $12 million project executed by MHI. During the availability, 56,000

square feet of nonskid decking was replaced on the flight deck and mission deck. In twenty-nine spaces, including the galley, scullery, laundry, and berthing areas, deck replacement and preservation were accomplished. Over 10,000 square feet of the forward deckhouse superstructure and MOGAS deck and associated equipment were also preserved. MHI also fabricated, welded, and replaced over 300 feet of flight deck catwalk safety handrails. Additionally, four galley ovens were replaced, and the entire exterior of the ship was painted bow to stern.

This was the first ROH for the Singapore Detachment, according to Douglas Cabacungan, the Project Manager. “Usually, we provide shorter emergent and continuous maintenance repairs outside of Japan,” said Cabacungan. “So, we were able to expand our skill set, work outside of our comfort zone, and work with a contractor we normally do not work with which will pay dividends when we need to start operating in places we aren’t currently.”

“The ability to use Mitsubishi Heavy Industry’s shipyard to conduct this level of maintenance availability has allowed SRF-JRMC’s organic workforce in Yokosuka to focus their efforts on the three other warship maintenance availabilities being conducted simultaneously,” said Capt. Wendel Penetrante, Commander of SRF-JRMC. “We were even able to complete one of those availabilities 3 days early and respond to two unplanned voyage repairs.”

The USS Miguel Keith is a 240-meter-long vessel designed to be a customizable floating command base that can launch helicopters and small boats, provide living quarters for troops, and command-and-control facilities. Her large open decks can accommodate a variety of other capabilities, including berthing for special operations troops, laundry facilities, or cold storage. The ship has been operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations since September 2020 with a mixed crew of Sailors and civilian mariners from

Military Sealift Command (MSC).

For over 75-years, U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) has been the linchpin of U.S. naval operations in the Indo-Pacific region, providing intermediate-level and depot-level repair for the ships of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

Department of Defense Demonstrates Reusability of Hypersonic Test Vehicle

From the U.S. Department of Defense, May 5, 2025

The U.S. Department of Defense Test Resource Management Center (TRMC), in partnership with Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane Division (NSWC Crane), conducted a second successful flight of a fully recoverable uncrewed hypersonic test vehicle in March 2025, within three months of the first test in December 2024. This test campaign marks the Nation's first return to reusable hypersonic flight testing since the manned X-15 program ended in 1968.

In both tests, the Stratolaunch Talon-A hypersonic vehicle launched from the Roc carrier aircraft, flew over the Pacific Ocean and achieved speeds greater than Mach 5 before landing at Vandenberg Space Force Base. The landmark tests supported the ongoing TRMC Multi-Service Advanced Capability Hypersonics Test Bed (MACH-TB) project.

George Rumford, Director of the TRMC, stated, "Demonstrating the reuse of fully recoverable hypersonic test vehicles is an

important milestone for MACH-TB. Lessons learned from this test campaign will help us reduce vehicle turnaround time from months down to weeks.”

MACH-TB accelerates delivery of advanced hypersonic capabilities to the warfighter by providing DoD, other Federal agencies, industry, and academia the capability to affordably and rapidly conduct hypersonic experiments and test hypersonic system components.

NSWC Crane awarded the MACH-TB contract to Leidos through the Strategic and Spectrum Missions Advanced Resilient Trusted Systems (S2MARTS) Other Transaction Authority (OTA) vehicle on behalf of the TRMC. As the prime contractor for MACH-TB, Leidos awarded Stratolaunch, LLC a competitive contract to provide flight test services for the program.

About TRMC

The U.S. Department of Defense Test Resource Management Center (TRMC) is a DoD Field Activity that reports directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The mission of the TRMC is to ensure the readiness of DoD to experiment and test.

Maritime Program Previews Talent Pipeline Program, Future of Maritime Careers

Matt Sermon, Direct Reporting Program Manager, Maritime Industrial Base Program, participates in the 2024 Philadelphia Signing Day event in June 2024.
By Maritime Industrial Base Program, May 6, 2025

WASHINGTON – Across shipyards and classrooms, welding booths and engineering labs, a new wave of talent prepares to step into critical roles shaping America's defense future.

In May and June, the U.S. Navy's Talent Pipeline Program (TPP) will recognize the individuals, employers, and training partners driving this workforce initiative, kicking off the third year of a program now aligned under the Navy's expanded Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program.

The 2025 TPP Signing Day season begins this month with a series of regional celebrations hosted across seven pipelines serving key maritime hubs and national employers. These events will honor thousands of new hires entering the Defense Industrial Base and highlight the growing collaboration among local industry, academia, and Navy leadership. The season will

culminate with a national Signing Day event in late June that will bring all regions together for a shared celebration of purpose and progress.

The newest program, known as the Enterprise Plus pipeline, applies the same proven approach to companies that have a national presence and multiple facilities, which are suppliers located outside of one of the six regional pipelines. This addition ensures that TPP remains accessible to employers and workers across the country, regardless of geography.

“This isn’t just a hiring effort,” said Matt Sermon, Direct Reporting Program Manager of the MIB Program. “The young men and women preparing to join this workforce are answering a national call. Each of them plays a role in securing the American way of life.”

The TPP provides the training and tools needed to create and sustain a talent pipeline that empowers employers to recruit, hire, train and retain a skilled workforce.

A Strategic Evolution: TPP Now part of the MIB Program

The MIB Program leads the Navy’s effort to revitalize America’s shipbuilding and repair capabilities. Established in September 2024, it strengthens and expands the industrial base that builds and maintains surface ships, aircraft carriers, and submarines vital to national defense.

Originally part of the Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) Program, TPP is now a cornerstone of the MIB Program’s workforce strategy. This realignment allows the program to expand beyond submarines to include careers tied to the full range of naval shipbuilding—opening new pathways for skilled tradespeople across the country.

Six Regions, One Mission

The 2025 regional Signing Day events will take place across

six strategic locations: Virginia, two locations in Pennsylvania, Southern California, New York, and Massachusetts. Each site represents a unique collaboration among regional employers, workforce boards, academic institutions, and Navy partners, all focused on cultivating talent pipelines tailored to local industry needs.

From first-time participants to returning employers, the momentum is strong. New training partners, expanded industry participation, and rising student interest point to a banner year for TPP.

“The US Navy Talent Pipeline Program trains, coaches, encourages, and recognizes Small/Medium sized Defense Industrial Base Employers for improving the performance of their Talent Acquisition and Retention systems, running a better business and providing more industrial base capacity to support the Navy demand,” said Joe Barto, Talent Pipeline Program Manager. “The 2025 Signing Days across all the Regional Flags and culminating with the National Signing Days are all about recognizing the 452 Employer Partners for their work in recruiting, hiring, onboarding and retaining new teammates.”

A Growing Legacy of Opportunity

Now entering its third year, TPP has helped facilitate hiring more than 9550 individuals since its launch. In 2025 alone, over 4,200 new hires are expected to be recognized through the Signing Day events.

The program’s network has expanded to include more than 450 employers this year.

“To those embarking on a career in national security, what you do is vital to defending the American way of life,” Sermon said. “The only way America will keep pace with the industrial might of our competitors is with American workers, American innovation, and technical excellence.”

Looking Ahead: A National Celebration of Service and Skill

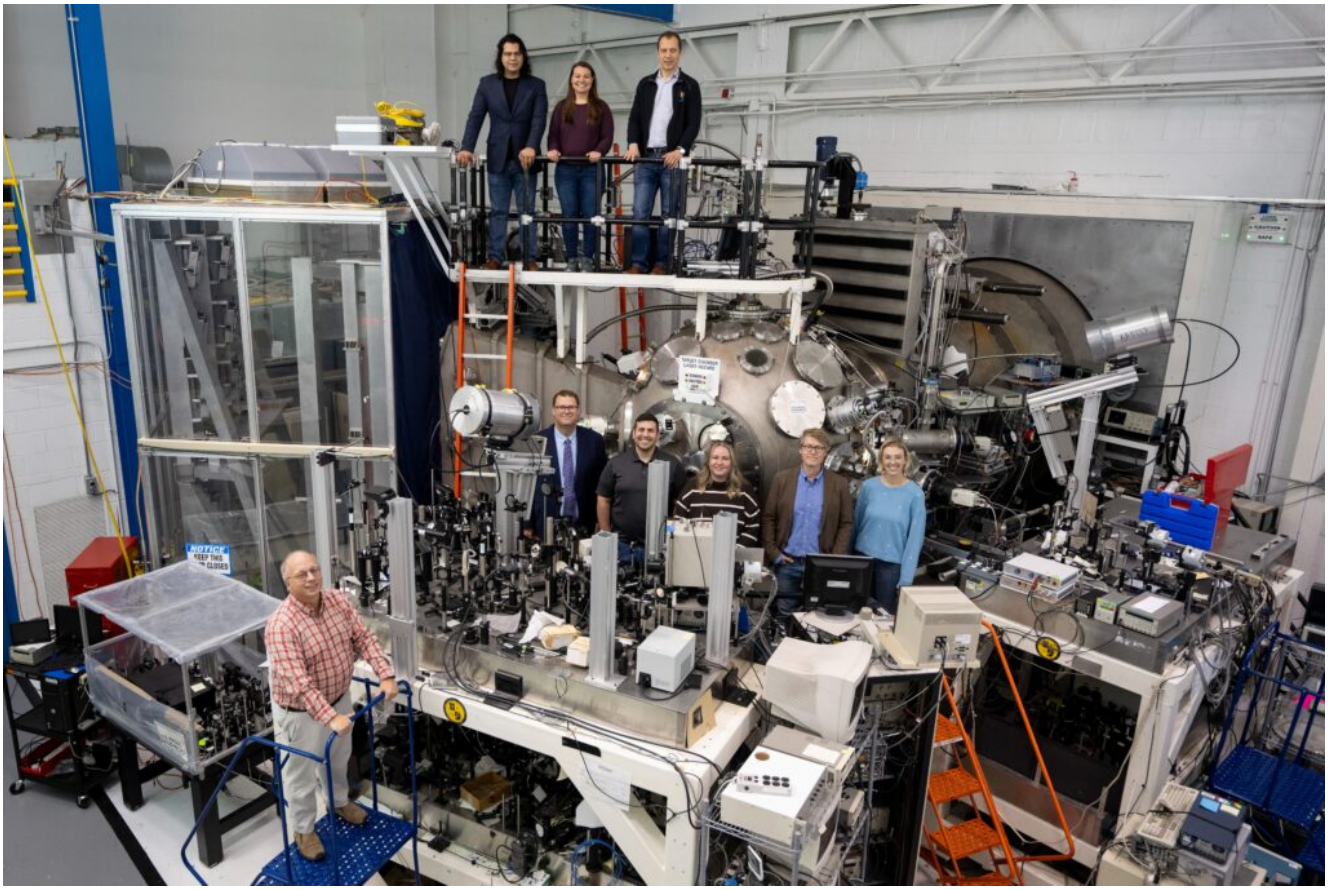
This year’s regional events will build toward a culminating national Signing Day in late June, where leaders from across the Navy, industry, and education will gather to celebrate this new generation of maritime professionals.

“These events aren’t about the numbers—they’re about the people,” Sermon added. “These men and women are the foundation of our national defense. With every submarine and surface ship we build, their impact is clear.”

With more than 250,000 skilled workers needed over the next decade to meet the Navy’s construction and maintenance goals, the stakes are high—but so is the energy behind this mission.

The TPP’s upcoming Signing Day events are more than ceremonies. They’re a signal to the nation that the workforce behind the fleet is strong, growing, and ready.

U.S. Naval Research Laboratory’s NIKE Laser-Target Facility Helps to Advance DoD Nuclear Mission



06 May 2025

From U.S. Naval Research Laboratory Corporate Communications, May 6, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) has announced a new strategic direction for its NIKE laser-target facility to align its world-class capabilities with the Department of Defense's (DoD) nuclear strategic priorities.

The new strategic direction marks a shift from the facility's historical focus on Department of Energy (DoE) missions, specifically those related to the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). The initiative emphasizes NRL's commitment to advancing national security through cutting-edge science and technology.

Originally constructed in 1995 with support from the NNSA, the NIKE (pronounced nai-kee) laser was designed to explore the physics of direct-drive inertial confinement fusion in support of the Nation's nuclear stockpile stewardship mission.

“NIKE is the world’s most energetic krypton-fluoride excimer laser, delivering ultrasmooth pulsed beams at a wavelength of 248 nanometers with 2-3 kilojoules of energy,” said Jason Bates, Ph.D., head of NRL’s Laser Plasma Branch. “These unique capabilities enable researchers to generate strong, stable shock waves and create exceptionally clean experimental conditions for studying extreme physical states of matter.”

For decades, the NIKE facility and its scientific team have contributed to NNSA’s flagship laser program at the National Ignition Facility (NIF), which recently achieved its landmark goal of ignition where the fusion of hydrogen nuclei produces more energy than the laser energy used to drive the reaction.

Over the years, NRL researchers have pioneered several critical innovations that have transitioned to other NNSA programs including monochromatic x-ray radiography, the Virgil gold M-band spectrometer, and the flashlamp-pumped disk amplifiers for neodymium-doped glass (Nd:glass) lasers. Nd:glass is a material used in certain high-powered laser systems.

Through the creative work of its research team, and a strategic partnership with the Air Force, NIKE’s capabilities are now being harnessed to address the central science and technology needs of the DoD nuclear deterrence mission.

“This partnership between NRL and the Air Force Research Laboratory represents a vital leap forward in our ability to simulate and understand the extreme environments that nuclear assets must navigate,” Bates said. “NIKE’s unique laser and diagnostic capabilities are unmatched, enabling us to close critical gaps in assessing the survivability of our platforms.”

With adversaries such as China and Russia racing to build

similar excimer-laser technologies, maintaining and safeguarding the NIKE facility is essential. A recapitalization and reinvestment strategy is underway to secure NIKE's future and support the revitalization of the Nation's nuclear deterrence capability.

"NRL's NIKE facility is an important national asset with unique capabilities that allow it to serve a broad range of missions supporting stockpile stewardship, fusion energy research, directed energy, hypersonics, and fundamental studies of materials at extreme conditions. Its continued operation for the good of the Nation remains our goal through its new focus," said Joe Peñano, Ph.D., superintendent of NRL's Plasma Physics Division.

The Plasma Physics Division conducts broad theoretical and experimental programs of basic and applied research in plasma physics, laboratory discharge, and space plasmas, intense electron and ion beams and photon sources, atomic physics, pulsed power sources, laser physics, advanced spectral diagnostics, and nonlinear systems.

The effort of the Division is concentrated on closely coordinated theoretical and experimental programs in key areas. Considerable emphasis is placed on large-scale numerical simulations related to plasma dynamics; ionospheric, magnetospheric, and atmospheric dynamics; nuclear weapons effects; inertial confinement fusion; atomic physics; plasma processing; nonlinear dynamics and chaos; free electron lasers and other advanced radiation sources; advanced accelerator concepts; and atmospheric laser propagation.

The NRL Laser Fusion Program traces its origins to the late 1960s, when laser-produced plasmas were first used to investigate the effects of high-altitude nuclear explosions. The program was formally established in 1972 by the Atomic Energy Commission, the predecessor to today's NNSA.

About the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory

NRL is a scientific and engineering command dedicated to research that drives innovative advances for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps from the seafloor to space and in the information domain. NRL, located in Washington, D.C. with major field sites in Stennis Space Center, Mississippi; Key West, Florida; Monterey, California, and employs approximately 3,000 civilian scientists, engineers and support personnel.

Coast Guard Offloads More Than $14M In Illicit Drugs

The crew members from Coast Guard Cutter Venturous pose before preparing to offload a pallet of illegal narcotics at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach, May 2, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jessica Walker)
From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, May 2, 2025

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Venturous' crew offloaded approximately 5,300 pounds of cocaine and marijuana worth an estimated $14.1 million, Friday, at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach.

The seized contraband was the result of four interdictions in the Caribbean Sea by the crews of USCGC Diligence and HNLMS Groningen with an embarked Coast Guard law enforcement detachment.

"Stopping harmful and illicit narcotics from reaching our shores and entering our communities is a team effort," said Cmdr. Karen Kutkiewicz, Venturous' commanding officer. "It takes the combined efforts of our joint force DoD, DHS, and international partners to combat transnational criminal

organizations.”

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdiction operations:

- **U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC 616)**
- **Royal Netherlands Navy ship HNLMS Groningen (P-843)**
- U.S. Coast Guard Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET) Pacific, LEDET 105
- **Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S)**
- Seventh Coast Guard District command center watchstanders

Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard for the interdiction and apprehension phases. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Seventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami.

Read more about the Groningen crew’s interdictions: **Royal Netherlands Navy intercepts 3 drug shipments in one week**.

USCGC Venturous is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg under **U.S. Coast Guard**

Atlantic Area Command.

For breaking news, follow us on **X (formerly Twitter)**. For additional information, find us on **Facebook** and follow us on **Instagram**.

Make a difference on land, at sea or in the air with the Coast Guard. Visit **GoCoastGuard.com** to learn more about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be **found here**.

Coast Guard Cutter Alert Returns Home After 55-Day Patrol

Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) approaches Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida, March 28, 2025. Alert's crew conducted a 55-day maritime border security patrol to counter illegal fishing in the Gulf of America. (Copyright-free photo courtesy of Shane Dye)
From the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, May 2, 2025

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC 630) returned to their home port in Cape Canaveral, Friday, following a 55-day deployment in the Gulf of America.

Alert's crew deployed under tactical command of the Eighth Coast Guard District to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the region. During patrol, the crew enforced federal law at sea and defended the United States' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by interdicting illegal fishing in U.S. territorial waters.

While underway, crew members conducted law enforcement boardings, which ranged from routine safety inspections to

federal fisheries enforcement in order to deter illicit activity such as illegal maritime migration, fishing and smuggling.

On April 20, Alert’s crew coordinated with the Coast Guard Cutter Jacob Poroo (WPC 1125) and Coast Guard Station South Padre Island to interdict a lancha with three Mexican fishermen aboard. The fishermen were engaged in illegal fishing north of the U.S. maritime boundary line in the Gulf of America.

Alert’s crew also detained four additional Mexican fishermen suspected of illegal fishing after they were transferred aboard the cutter from Jacob Poroo. All seven apprehended Mexican fisherman were later transferred to U.S. Customs and Border Protection for processing.

“I am proud of our crew guarding America’s southeastern maritime border, a mission set maintained by the Coast Guard for over 200 years,” said Cmdr. Lee Crusius, commanding officer of Alert. “The protection of U.S. sovereign interests throughout the maritime domain has been the staple of our service and this patrol was no exception.”

A lancha is a fishing boat used by Mexican fishermen that is approximately 20-30 feet long, with a slender profile, one outboard motor, and capable of traveling at speeds exceeding 30 mph. Lanchas are frequently used to illegally fish in the EEZ near the U.S. – Mexico border in the Gulf of America. The illegal harvest and trade of red snapper and other fish species is often a revenue stream for criminal organizations. Apart from their use for illegal seafood harvesting in U.S. waters, lanchas may also be used to move illicit drugs and aliens into the United States.

Headquartered in New Orleans, the Eighth Coast Guard District is responsible for U.S. Coast Guard operations spanning 26

states, including the Gulf of America coastline from Florida to Mexico, the adjacent offshore waters and outer continental shelf, as well as the inland waterways of the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois and Tennessee River systems.

Alert is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations, alien interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Alert falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia. U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf. In addition to surge operations, they also allocate ships to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific to combat transnational organized crime and illicit maritime activity.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit **Go Coast Guard.com** to learn about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found **here**.

Bollinger Shipyards to Commence Full Production on U.S. Coast Guard Polar

Security Cutter

From Bollinger Shipyards, May 1, 2025

PASCAGOULA, Miss.—Bollinger Shipyards today announced it has received approval from the U.S. Coast Guard to begin full production activities on the U.S. Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter (PSC) program. This milestone builds upon Bollinger's recent award of a $951.6 million Fixed-Price-Incentive-Firm Target (FPIF) contract modification, advancing the Detail Design and Construction phase of the PSC Program. The decision significantly enhances America's strategic maritime

capabilities, especially in the increasingly competitive Arctic regions.

“Today’s announcement is a historic achievement not only for Bollinger Shipyards but also for American shipbuilding,” said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. “Securing the green light for full production underscores the confidence the U.S. Government places in Bollinger to deliver the nation’s first heavy polar icebreaker in nearly fifty years. Our team at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding has worked tirelessly to put the PSC program on a solid path forward, ensuring this vital national security asset will be built by American hands.”

The PSC program has already significantly contributed to regional economic growth and job creation. Since acquiring Singaporean-owned VT Halter in November 2022, Bollinger has invested over $76 million into its Mississippi facilities and increased its Mississippi workforce by over 61%. Production roles at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding alone have risen by more than 178%, driven in part by Bollinger’s industry-leading Bootcamp workforce development programs.

“Our investment in developing the next generation of skilled American workers not only strengthens our competitive edge in the shipbuilding industry but also underscores our commitment to fostering economic growth and American innovation,” added Bordelon. “We are committed to providing high-quality careers that positively impact the families and communities we support across America.”

The Polar Security Cutter will substantially enhance U.S. operational capability in polar regions, critical for safeguarding national security, economic stability, and maritime interests. Completion of the first PSC is anticipated by May 2030, marking a new chapter in American maritime dominance.

U.S. Navy Proves Sea-Based Hypersonic Launch Approach

From the Department of Defense, May 2, 2025

The U.S. Navy's Strategic Systems Programs is continuing on the path toward the nation's first sea-based hypersonic fielding with a successful end-to-end flight test of a conventional hypersonic missile from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida. This test marked the first launch of the Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS) capability utilizing the Navy's cold-gas launch approach that will be used in Navy sea-based platform fielding.

"The speed, range, and survivability of hypersonic weapons are key to integrated deterrence for America," Secretary of the Navy John Phelan said. "When fielded, Conventional Prompt Strike will deliver unmatched capabilities to our warfighters."This test was the next step in the Navy's flight testing program of the common All Up Round (AUR) that is being developed in partnership with the Army's Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office. In 2024, the programs completed two additional end-to-end flight tests of the AUR that will be fielded to both the Navy and Army.

“The cold-gas approach allows the Navy to eject the missile from the platform and achieve a safe distance above the ship prior to first stage ignition. This technical achievement brings SSP one step closer to fulfilling our role of providing a safe and reliable hypersonic capability to our Navy,” said Vice Adm. Johnny R. Wolfe Jr, Director, Navy’s Strategic Systems Programs, which is the lead designer of the common hypersonic missile.

The CPS Program has been diligently planning and executing engineering and test efforts to prepare for the first Navy fielding aboard the USS ZUMWALT. Utilizing an In-Air Launch test facility, the Program conducted an extensive test campaign to validate the launch approach prior to the completion of this flight test. Information gathered from this test will inform the continued development and production of the AUR and the first use of this cold-gas launch approach on

a surface ship platform.

The rapid development and demonstration of conventional sea-based hypersonic strike weapon systems supports the U.S.’s ability to deter, and if necessary, defeat potential strategic competitors. The range, accuracy, lethality, and survivability of hypersonics is a significant leap-ahead in U.S. conventional strike capabilities, complementing existing capabilities and enabling the U.S. to defeat adversary high-end capabilities.