

Coast Guard Working Toward Recapitalizing WCC Fleet

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Coast Guard plans to release its fifth request for information (RFI) to industry in the coming months, as they continue to gather information on how best to recapitalize their dated waterways commerce cutter (WCC) fleet.

“This aging fleet, it is extremely important to our nation’s economy,” Aileen Sedmak, manager of the WCC program, said during a floor presentation at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space exposition May 7.

The 35-ship fleet consists of three cutter types, an inland construction tender, a river buoy tender and an inland buoy tender. They primarily operate along the Mississippi River and Great Lakes region. The ships average 50 years of age and are responsible to making sure \$4.6 trillion for the nation’s economy per year is able to move freely in the inland waters.

In February, the service released an RFI asking for industry to gather information about the state of the market and current industrial capabilities to support pile-driving systems for the WCC program.

Sedmark said the recapitalization program is currently in the analyze-select phase, which includes collaborating with the Navy’s Naval Sea Systems Command to analyze needs and requirements.

“We are doing our due diligence,” she said.

The acquisition program will cost over \$1 billion, and the exact number of cutters needed remains uncertain. Sedmark said they would like to have initial operational capability in fiscal 2024 and full operational capability by fiscal 2030.

“This is a very critical mission right now,” she said.

Issues with the cutters currently include additional maintenance requirements and lost operational time because of it.

Industry representatives at the presentation asked a series of questions on production timelines, how many cutters may be in the fleet and additional requirements that may be needed on the cutters.

Sedmark said she was uncertain when a request for proposal would be issued or how many exact ships would be requested.

Cybersecurity Sits at the Crux of Government, Industry, Commerce for Sea Services



The moderator of the May 7 panel discussion on cybersecurity at Sea-Air-Space, Navy Vice Adm. Matthew Kohler. Cyber defense is a top concern of all the sea services, panelists said. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Richard Rodgers

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – Citing recent high-profile comments by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson and Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller on cybersecurity's importance, panelists at a May 7 event at Sea-Air-Space agreed that it is a top issue for their services, regardless of external perceptions.

Coast Guard Rear Adm. David Dermanelian, assistant commandant for C4IT and commander of Coast Guard Cyber Command, said his branch is known for its drug interdictions and waterway management missions, but often perception does not equate that work with cybersecurity.

"All those missions are directly linked to the cyber domain," he said. "And I would posit that even within the Coast Guard, we're in contact with bad actors, or the enemy, every day. The Coast Guard's role is to defend our maritime transportation, our cyber domain."

Detailing how maritime commerce coming through U.S. waterways is valued at \$5.4 trillion and supports 31 million Americans, Dermanelian quantified the importance of cybersecurity for fellow panelist, Maritime Administration Director of the Office of Maritime Security Cameron Naron.

Naron said it's critical MARAD has cyber systems, as well as resilient measures, in place should anything under their purview be compromised. With MARAD sitting at the crux of defense, homeland security and commerce, his office is focusing on working with all its

stakeholders to maintain security.

“Our role is really to make sure that industry’s needs, industry’s equities, are represented in federal policy formulations,” Naron said.

Naron said commercial network monitoring and vulnerability remediation options are out there today, and there are also great government solutions, and those resources need to be in the hands of industry, not only because it’s good for business, but because it’s good for national security. MARAD also must ensure the security of the Ready Reserve Fleet, and Naron stressed that cyber concerns also extend to areas such as precision navigation and GPS vulnerability.

Gregg Kendrick, Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command executive director, addressed his service’s complex network of cybersecurity operations and how that information is critical to the Marines’ return to its roots.

“Just like the Coast Guard, we have a little of a unique mission as well. ... The commandant and the chief of naval operations are exceedingly ... bringing us out of the ground force and bringing us back to our naval heritage,” Kendrick said. That makes the fidelity of the information the Marines and Navy share when they go from sea and ashore critical so the services can make that gap as seamless as possible, he said.

Kendrick also addressed how the Marines are staffing up their cybersecurity teams, when industry hiring is so competitive. He said 40% of the Corps' cyber mission force is civilian, stating that Neller wanted to use best business practices from people that work for companies like Google or other software developers to ensure the Marines had cutting-edge tactics.

The moderator, Navy Vice Adm. Matthew Kohler, deputy chief of naval operations for information warfare and director of naval intelligence, summed up the vastness of the challenge of keeping up with cybersecurity needs, and how it's directly tied to the larger challenges the sea services face. "Technology is running at us at an unprecedented rate. ... It's not just the pace of the technology, it's the race for how quickly we can adopt that technology ... to how we fight and [it] gives us the 'Great Power Competition' that we find ourselves in today," he said.

Coast Guard Outlines Process for Filling Mission Gaps

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Coast Guard has a four-step process for setting and making requirements on missions to prevent and mitigate mission gaps.

"We look at a problem and find the best way to solve it," Capt. Michael MacMillan, chief of the office of requirements and analysis, said during a floor presentation here at Navy League's Sea-Air-Space 2019.

The service accomplishes this by publishing four different types of documents. The first is a capability and analysis report. The second, which marks the beginning stages of the acquisition process, is drawing up a mission needs statement. From there the service will put together a concept of operations document, the primary purpose of which is coming up with ideas for filling in capability. The final document produced is the operational requirements document, which outlines specific requirements, such as how fast a ship needs to go or how long an aircraft needs to stay airborne.

“We don’t get to make our own missions, but we make requirements on the ones we have,” MacMillan said.

The Department of Homeland Security agency has 13 core missions, with a bulk of those coming from search-and-rescue missions and drug interdiction.

The captain said that its important industry representatives understand the process to help themselves and the Coast Guard.

Rescue Swimmer Program Starts

After Tragedy at Sea

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Coast Guard rescue swimmer program was born after a deadly ship sinking in 1983 off the coast of Virginia that claimed the lives of 31 people.

During a stormy February night, the 605-foot SS Marine Electric, a bulk carrying ship, capsized about 30 miles off the coast of Chincoteague, Virginia.

The service sent a helicopter to assist in the rescue mission. At that time the Coast Guard did not have any rescue swimmers, and when they would respond to a distress call, they'd lower the basket and the person in the water would have to swim toward it to then be raised up inside the helicopter.

"Unfortunately, it didn't always work the best," Aviation Survival Technician Chief Petty Officer Eric Biehn said during a floor presentation.

The service spent two hours trying to rescue the 34 people in the water after the ship capsized, but with the weather conditions, and freezing water, was unable to lift anyone up. The Navy came, as they had rescues swimmers at the time, and was able to save three lives with their rescue swimmer.

The following year, the Coast Guard put funding in start a rescue swimmer program in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1984.

“That maritime disaster was enough to wake up Congress and the United States,” Biehn said.

By 1985, the first team of rescue swimmers was deployed to a base in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and by 1991 the program was fully deployed in 23 bases.

Unmanned Systems Cited as Key by Future of Aviation Panelists



The Navy has previously teamed the MQ-8 Fire Scout UAS and MH-60s helicopters in a squadron. Northrop Grumman.

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md.

– Future naval aviation will benefit from the fifth-generation F-35s,

manned-unmanned teaming and the possibility of greatly enhanced rotary wing

aircraft being developed under the Future Vertical Lift (FVL) program, a panel

of Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard officials said.

The naval

services also are focusing on improving the readiness of their existing

aircraft, and some types of aircraft are coming close to meeting the 80% readiness

goal set by former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, the officials told a forum on

the future of naval aviation at the Navy League’s annual Sea-

Air-Space
exposition May 6.

Lt. Gen. Steven
Rudder, deputy Marine Corps commandant for aviation, said the
Corps' legacy
FA-18 Hornets hit the 80% readiness mark last week and were
maintaining
availabilities in the high 70% rate. And the Corps' new F-35Bs
were operating
in the 70% range during their recent deployments in the
western Pacific, Rudder
said.

Angie
Knappenberger, deputy director for naval warfare, said the
Navy conducted a
study to determine what would be needed to improve readiness
and found that "we
wouldn't get there unless we changed our processes." They have
had to improve
their support infrastructure, which had suffered from the
years of reduced
funding under sequestration and on the spare parts supply
system, she said.

Looking to the
future, Rudder, Knappenberger and Vice Adm. Daniel Abel, the
Coast Guard deputy
commandant for operations and a veteran helicopter pilot, all
cited unmanned
systems they were looking to add.

"Autonomy is
really hard, but there are some things you can do," and they
are seeing a lot
of focus on manned-unmanned teaming, Knappenberger said. She
cited the Navy's

teaming of the MQ-8 Fire Scout UAS and MH-60s helicopters in a squadron and will do the same thing with the MQ-4C Triton long-range UAS and the P-8A patrol aircraft.

Rudder said the Marines were narrowing their focus on requirements for their primary unmanned aircraft program, the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Unmanned Expeditionary system, commonly called MUX, which is to be a large Group 5 rotary-wing UAS that can operate from amphibious ships. After initially looking at a wide range of capabilities, including strike, the Marines currently are leaning toward an early warning platform that could provide over-the-horizon surveillance and network communications for the expeditionary task forces.

Rudder said the Marines also are closely monitoring the Army-led FVL program, which is intended to produce a rotary-wing manned aircraft with much higher speed and range than current helicopters. Although the two prototypes being produced for the FVL program are a composite helicopter and a tilt-rotor, Rudder said the Marines' preference is a tilt-rotor because they know their tilt-rotor MV-22 Ospreys are fast and they want something that can keep up with them.

Abel said the Coast Guard has been testing contractor-operated Scan Eagle UAS on their national security cutters and are looking at other unmanned systems.

Indo-Pacific Policy More Complex Than Only China and Russia



Panelists discuss the complexities of a region dominated by two near-peer superpowers but also full of friendly nations. Seapower / Victoria Bottlick

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – As the nation grapples with striking a balance between competing with great power challenges and preparing for the possibility of conflict, the Indo-Pacific region poses perhaps the most significant challenge, Dr. Mara Karlin believes.

Karlin, director of strategic studies at the Johns Hopkins School of International Studies, made that observation as she introduced a panel of four military and civilian government experts, each of whom plays a key role in formulating related policies in the region.

It stands to reason that each panelist recognized the increasing threats posed by China and Russia. Still, they noted that the matrix is considerably more complicated.

Eyes cannot be focused on the two large superpowers at the expense of other friendly nations in the region. Also, while China and Russia loom as potential

adversaries, it is imperative that the U.S. and its partners work as closely together with them on areas of common interest.

Representing the Coast Guard and Marine Corps, Vice Adm. Linda Fagan and Gayle Von Eckartsburg discussed how each respective service shares a forward-deployed mission that makes their presence essential in the Pacific. Both Fagan and Von Eckartsburg emphasized that neither service is a "garrison force."

"The Coast Guard has never been more relevant," said Fagan, the service's Pacific Area commander. "The demand for the signal we bring into the region has never been higher."

Besides watching Chinese and Russian activities and fostering goodwill among allies, Fagan placed equal importance in "modeling legitimate behavior," so that "China can see what a responsible Coast Guard looks like."

If the Chinese can learn from the U.S. Coast Guard how to conduct, for example, more effective search-and-rescue operations, so be it.

Von Eckartsburg, director of the Marine Corps Pacific Division office of Plans, Policy and Operations, described a "persistent forward force." Of the roughly 40,000 Marines now deployed around the world, the vast majority is

west of the
International Dateline, she said.

“We’re in a constant state of motion, leveraging presence to maintain readiness at the same time,” Von Eckartsburg said.

Joel Szabat the
Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Aviation and International Affairs,
discussed the three most important “pillars” of stability in the region –
economy, governance and security.

“We need to remember that this is not about containing or encircling any one country,” Szabat said. “We want to help people, regardless of who our competitors are.”

Security commitments with U.S. allies would assure the free flow of commerce, Szabat said. The nation faces significant related challenges in this arena, he believes. U.S. sealift is old and needs to be recapitalized, he said. The size of the U.S. merchant fleet, which handles much of the military’s sealift capability, is good enough for small-to-medium operations.

“We don’t have enough mariners, or U.S.-flagged merchant marine,” Szabat said.

Walter Douglas, who heads the State Department Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, cited an Asian Development Bank statistic that states the region

needs an estimated \$1.7 trillion in investment to sustain healthy economic growth.

“There’s nowhere near that amount of money available in one state,” Szabat said.

The emphasis, then, would be to have “money centers” and corporations step in with “transparent” investments. The government and private sectors would ensure that such funding would not be subject to the troubles endemic to secret deals.

“That money gets spent in the wrong places,” Szabat said. “We can’t have that. We need open governance. We have to see [to it] that investment laws are transparent.”

Equally imperative, Douglas said, is working to ensure that investments are evenly distributed. While putting money into traditional stable partners like Japan, Australia and Singapore would remain important, more could be done to help open emerging economies. He said that Vietnam, for example, badly wants help developing its infrastructure – from anywhere but China.

SAS Panelists Express Full Support for Space Force; Warn of Personnel, Logistical Challenges of Standing Up New Military Branch



Sea services leaders at Sea-Air-Space – (from left) Navy Rear Adms. David Hahn and Christian Becker, Marine Brig. Gen. Lorna Mahlock and Coast Guard Capt. Greg Rothrock – showed support for the U.S. Space Force, but warned standing up a new military branch is a significant personnel and logistical challenge – and won't happen overnight. Lisa Nipp

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – Sea services leaders expressed unwavering support during a May 6 panel discussion for the nation's future ventures in space – no matter whether the effort is split among the nation's existing military branches or a new United States Space Force is created.

The panelists at Navy League's Sea-Air-Space 2019 reiterated the need to increase the nation's space initiatives as rival nations such as

China, Russia, India and Japan build their push toward the stars.



The panelists debate the U.S. Space Force. Lisa Nipp "Space is no longer an uncontested environment," said Rear Adm. Christian Becker, commander, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command.

As other countries stake their spots in space, the U.S. needs to hold its "ground," like when the maritime forces were first formed, Becker

explained.

“Space is very much akin to the maritime,” Becker said. “We first went to sea to trade, and then we went to sea when we realized other people could stop our trade. ... Made sure we can maintain freedom at sea.”

Don't expect the U.S. Space Force to appear overnight, however. Services like the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are still evaluating the personnel needed to staff an agency dedicated to the Final Frontier.

“Space is no longer an uncontested environment.”

Rear Adm. Christian Becker, commander, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command

“We are assessing as part of the [Navy Department] how we can meet the mission needs of the Space Force,” Becker said. “We're not there yet at our level of understanding, but that's what we have to pursue.”

Finding and retaining the talent necessary to develop a fully operational Space Force is a significant challenge, said Brig. Gen. Lorna Mahlock, the Marine Corps' chief information officer.

“It's exciting to think about space ... but we have to make sure we develop the skill [to maintain a Space Force] and do it right,” Mahlock said.

However, she emphasized that, no matter the obstacles, the Marine Corps “embraces building the Space Force” and will offer its full support.

Services Continue to Examine Challenges, Obstacles of Operating in Arctic



Panelists at a Sea-Air-Space discussion May 6 on the operational and logistical challenges for agencies that operate in the Arctic region. Lisa Nipp

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Arctic continues to present operational and logistical challenges for the agencies that operate there, but studies are providing a clearer picture of how they should be adjusting to climate change, service leaders said during a panel presentation at the Navy League’s annual Sea-Air-Space exposition here.

“We are working on how to better understand the Arctic,” said Rear Adm. John Okon, commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, and oceanographer and navigator of the Navy.

Noting that climate change is happening – and there are undeniable changes in sea ice over the last decade– Okon said the use of unmanned systems could be a force multiplier for missions in the Arctic.

“We know we are going to have to operate [in the Arctic] and protect the homeland,” he said.

Vice Adm. Daniel Abel, the U.S. Coast Guard’s deputy commandant for operations, said the risks presented in the polar region are growing each year.

“It is undeniable conditions are changing up there ... the change has happened, and the change is happening,” Abel said.

[climate



Panelists at “Arctic: Strategies for the Frozen Domain.” Lisa Nipp

The Coast Guard’s annual Operation Arctic Shield will once again take place this summer. Arctic Shield’s goal is to increase knowledge of operating in the region, as the service sends additional personnel and resources to the area to see how they react.

The Coast Guard has no full-time base in the Arctic, as the service operates there seasonally. Over the last several years, as sea ice has melted sooner and shipping lanes have been opened for longer periods of time as a result, the requirements for the Department of Homeland Security agency have been more plentiful in the polar region.

Communicating with the Defense Department and allied nations through automatic identification systems and other means has presented unique challenges for the Coast Guard, given the harsh climate conditions.

“We are making sure that our requirements work with U.S. Northern Command, and we have the abilities to communicate at the highest latitudes,” Abel said.

“We are working on how to better understand the Arctic.”

Rear Adm. John Okon, commander, Naval Meteorology and

Jeffrey Hutchinson, commissioner of the Canadian coast guard, said he hopes the service continues to work closely with its counterpart agency in the United States.

“We want to strengthen our partnership role,” he said.

Echoing comments from fellow panelist, Hutchinson said climate change is an issue for the Arctic, and Canada needs to communicate to get support from allies along with improving its relationship with other nations that have a stake in the region.

U.S. Air Force Gen. Terrence O’Shaughnessy, commander, U.S. Northern Command, said the department is working on a unified approach among all agencies that operate in the polar region.

Noting that they all face common challenges, he said new technology is important in the Arctic and that continuing to better study the region will be a focal point going forward.

“The [Arctic] is a critically important topic,” he said.

Coast Guard Foreign Military

Sales Boosting Standing With Partner Nations

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Coast Guard’s foreign military sales program is fostering good relations with partner nations, increasing maritime governance and saving money, according to the program’s director, Tod Reinert.

Speaking before a show floor audience on May 6 during Sea-Air-Space 2019 at National Harbor, Maryland, Reinert also described how foreign sales of aging Coast Guard vessels is keeping U.S. vendors busy with replenishment and refurbishment contracts – all necessary to ensure that the new owners have hale platforms with which to pursue their missions.

The foreign military sales program is “extending production lines, sharing overhead costs and [sustaining] a robust vendor base,” Reinert said.

The Coast Guard has delivered more than 540 “assets,” worth more than \$1 billion, to 75 partner nations during the past 20 years. The list of benefactors is long. Bangladesh, Vietnam, Yemen and Saudi Arabia got response boats. The Philippines received riverine boats, and Tunisia got near-shore patrol boats. U.S. Central Command stands to take possession of retired medium-response boats as well.

Recipient nations stand to take ownership of decommissioned high-endurance cutters, Island-class patrol boats, medium-endurance cutters and patrol boats – in a

time frame

generally beginning sometime next year and spanning into 2024, Reinert said.

These countries

must rely upon their acquisitions to conduct search-and-rescue, maritime

safety, law enforcement and national defense missions akin to those the Coast

Guard performs every day – the cornerstones of its mission to protect the

nation's 95,000 nautical miles of coastline, Reinert said.

Service Chiefs Tout Agility, but MARAD in Need of Funding to Flex Muscle



The sea services chiefs (from left) – U.S. Navy CNO Adm. John M. Richardson, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz and Rear Adm. Mark Buzby of the U.S. Maritime Administration – during their panel discussion May 6 at Sea-Air-Space 2019. Lisa Nipp

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The sudden order to send the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group to the U.S. Central Command theater in response to threats from Iran is a great example of the value of the Navy's dynamic deployment concept, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson said at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space 2019 exposition.

Although the

Lincoln's deployment into the Mediterranean had been planned, "this is a great demonstration of what we've been working on, dynamic deployment," Richardson said May 6. Naval maneuver forces are "dynamic by design," but Richardson said he found it encouraging that if the national command authority needed the Lincoln strike group to go to the Middle East it can do so immediately.

At the opening session of the Navy League's annual Sea-Air-Space exposition, Richardson responded to a question about National Security Advisor John Bolton's announcement that the administration had ordered the Lincoln and its escorts to cut short its planned Mediterranean exercise and sail to the Persian Gulf region after warnings that Iran may be planning attacks on U.S. forces. Bolton said an Air Force bomber unit also was being sent to the region.



The sea services chiefs at their panel discussion at SAS. Lisa Nipp Asked how the Navy would respond to President Donald Trump's decision to reverse the 2020 budget proposal to skip the mid-life refueling of the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman, Richardson noted that he had told Congress, which has opposed the decision, that the Truman's early retirement was reversible. "Now we will have to find the resources going forward," to invest in the new

technologies, such as unmanned systems, that were to be funded with money saved from retiring Truman.

Appearing on the same panel, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller agreed with Richardson that the challenge of effective leaders was to anticipate the need to change their organizations and policies, rather than waiting to respond to a disaster. Neller cited the changes the Marines are making to respond to the growing threats of cyber and electronic warfare attacks from peer competitors as an example. The first shot of a major conflict would be against the networks and the U.S. forces must prepare to operate without the assured communications they have become accustomed to, Neller said.

"This is a great demonstration of what we've been working on, dynamic deployment."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson

Also on the panel, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz said his service was engaging in more national security operations, such as the recent freedom of navigation transit of the Taiwan Straits, in addition to its heavy load of maritime security and safety missions. Schultz said the Coast Guard was looking forward to getting its first new Arctic icebreaker and hoped to get

initial funding for
a second one in the fiscal 2021 budget.

Retired Rear Adm.

Mark Busby, administrator of the Maritime Administration, said the materiel

readiness of his 46 sealift vessels, which have an average age of 44 years, had

gotten a bit worse since his warnings last year. Busby was hopeful Congress

would fund the three-part program MARAD and the Navy have urged to modernize

his fleet by updating some ships, buying some newer commercial ships and

building a small number of vessels. Asked about the threat to global

shipbuilding industry from China's rapidly growing ship production

capabilities, Busby said U.S. shipbuilding survived only due to Navy production

and commercial ships for the Jones Act, which required U.S. built ships for

commerce between U.S. ports.