NIWC Atlantic Team Develops Next-Generation Mobile ATC Towers

Medium mobile Air Traffic Control (ATC) towers are being developed by members of Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Atlantic's ATC Special Programs team. The smaller, trailer-sized, mobile towers are designed for rapid deployment during emergencies due to inclement weather, equipment failure or other disruptions. Despite its smaller size compared to traditional towers, these new mobile assets can provide the ATC systems necessary to keep an airfield up and operational.
By Kris Patterson, NIWC Atlantic Public Affairs Office, Nov. 6, 2024

CHARLESTON, S.C. – Members of Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Atlantic's Air Traffic Control (ATC) Engineering Division are engaged in developing a new generation of mobile ATC towers designed for rapid deployment.

The team's medium mobile ATC tower – a smaller, trailer-sized facility – can be quickly deployed to any airfield that requires emergency ATC support due to weather, equipment

failure or other disruptions.

“This tower is a visual facility that can be pulled onto an airfield, ensuring operations continue seamlessly even if the main facility is compromised,” said Jim Spivey, an electrical engineer with NIWC Atlantic’s ATC Special Programs team. “In other words, it’s a mobile asset that can provide the air traffic control systems necessary to keep an airfield up and operational.

Despite its smaller size compared to a traditional tower, it continues to offer air traffic controllers the capabilities they need to manage air traffic safely.

The new medium mobile tower is small enough to fit on a C-17 Globemaster III military aircraft, which allows for swift transport, and once delivered, the system can be up and operational within days, providing a crucial backup during emergencies.

The medium is particularly designed for smaller airfields such as executive airports and adjunct airfields like those on the West Coast used for firefighting efforts, highlighting their role in disaster response.

The idea for the medium mobile tower was born out of the partnership between the ATC Special Programs team and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The FAA created the Mobile Asset Sustainment Program (MASP), whose mission is to provide support, restore and maintain any ATC facility in the United States.

When the MASP team found out the NIWC Atlantic ATC Special Programs team was working on mobile ATC systems and towers for the Air Force, they asked the team for help.

“These mobile assets were created specifically to go out and support a brick-and-mortar air traffic control tower that has

been damaged or is getting a refurb," said Clayton Fronk, lead for the ATC Special Programs team.

Now that the country is in hurricane season, the need for easily transportable mobile towers can be particularly critical.

"Currently, we are still integrating the electronics in the medium mobile towers, but three large mobile towers were previously delivered to the FAA. They've been staged and positioned at FAA Mobile Asset Deployment Centers (MADCs) around the country, so that if a hurricane or tornado or other natural disaster takes out an airfield's tower, the FAA is quickly able to respond and get a mobile tower moved to that location for backup," Fronk said.

By enhancing this critical asset, the ATC Special Program team is able to support a broader spectrum of ATC needs worldwide. The military shares many airfields with the FAA and having these mobile assets available means that disruptions in air traffic control, whether civilian or military, can be mitigated, maintaining safety and operational continuity.

"A lot of the military sites in CONUS [stateside] are using our shared assets with civilian sectors," Fronk said. "They do a lot of testing, evaluation and training at sites and locations, and the military uses shared civilian airspace, so if a tower was damaged or destroyed and the FAA moved this in, it would directly affect the military aircraft in the air at those locations."

One of NIWC Atlantic's larger mobile ATC towers was recently deployed to Homestead Air Reserve Base, Homestead, Florida, where it was used to manage air traffic while permanent facilities were under reconstruction.

In 2020, the ATC Special Programs team built and installed transportable ATC facilities to address an existing flight safety risk at an air base in Southwest Asia.

This installation occurred during the heart of the pandemic and was completed primarily by NIWC Atlantic civilian personnel.

NIWC Atlantic's involvement with mobile ATC towers traces back to the early 2000s when the command, then known as Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center (SPAWARSYSCEN),provided mobile ATC systems for the Navy. The command expanded its services to provide ATC systems for the Marine Corps and Air Force during combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the ATC Special Programs team's work evolved and the FAA learned that the team was providing mobile and transportable assets for the Air Force, the team's expertise in this area became particularly relevant for the FAA, who sought to modernize its aging mobile tower fleet, Fronk said.

"The FAA's mobile fleet is decades old, and the systems we're building and integrating are kind of a next-generation, new capability system to replace the old antiquated towers that they have," Fronk said.

Delivered by the ATC Special Programs team, these new capabilities demonstrate the importance of the team's contributions to national safety and operational readiness. Fronk and Spivey both noted the feeling of immense pride they share for their team.

"We have outstanding young engineers at NIWC Atlantic, such as Beka Deason and Mike Thompson, integrating the electronics in the medium mobile towers," Spivey said. "They understand the importance of the work and you always know they're going to step up."

"We've got a great team that's very dedicated and very humble about the work that they do," said Fronk, echoing Spivey's sentiment. "They're a group that is going to do whatever it takes to help others out. I have a great working relationship

with the team, and I'm proud every day that the team does everything they do, both for the civilian sector as well as for the warfighter."

To learn more about the mobile ATC towers, you can hear Spivey and Fronk's interview on Episode 22 of NIWC Atlantic's podcast "Technically Speaking" at Technically Speaking Podcast – NIWC Atlantic (navy.mil).

About NIWC Atlantic

As a part of Naval Information Warfare Systems Command, formerly known as SPAWAR, NIWC Atlantic provides systems engineering and acquisition to deliver information warfare capabilities to the naval, joint and national warfighter through the acquisition, development, integration, production, test, deployment, and sustainment of interoperable command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, cyber and information technology capabilities.

Statement from CNO on Discovery of the Location of the Wreck of Destroyer USS Edsall (DD-219)

SEAPOWER
The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

11 November 2024

Chief of Naval Operations / Admiral

Lisa Franchetti

On behalf of the United States Navy, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Royal Australian Navy for locating the final resting place of the destroyer USS Edsall (DD 219), lost in a valiant battle against the Imperial Japanese Navy in the early days of World War II. The commanding officer of Edsall lived up to the U.S. Navy tenet, “Don’t give up the ship,” even when faced with overwhelming odds. The wreck of this ship is a hallowed site, serving as a marker for the 185 U.S. Navy personnel and 31 U.S. Army Air Force pilots aboard at the time, almost all of whom were lost when Edsall succumbed to her battle damage. This find gives us the opportunity for today’s generation of Sailors and Navy civilians to be inspired by their valor and sacrifice.

The U.S. Navy would also like to take this opportunity to salute the valor of the crew of the Australian sloop HMAS Yarra, lost two days after the Edsall, under similar circumstances in a heroic battle against overwhelming odds.

Finding the Edsall further cements the strong alliance that has existed between the United States and Australia since World War II, the relationship between the Royal Australian Navy and the U.S. Navy, further reinforced by the current Australia, United Kingdom, United States (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership. A key component of AUKUS is the development of the most cutting-edge underwater technologies of the type that enabled the discovery of Edsall in the vastness of the Indian Ocean, something not possible just a few years ago. These advanced technologies, enabled by interoperability between long-standing Indo-Pacific Allies and partners, ensure our collective capability to preserve the peace, respond in crisis, and win decisively in war, if called.

FRCE Inducts First Navy CMV-22B For Maintenance

The first U.S. Navy CMV-22B inducted for maintenance at Fleet Readiness Center East (FRCE) occupies a stall in the depot's Hangar 1. With receipt of this aircraft, the depot now services all three variants of the V-22 platform, which also include the Marine Corps MV-22B and the Air Force CV-22. (U.S. Navy photo)
12 November 2024

From Heather Wilburn, Fleet Readiness Center East

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. – Fleet Readiness Center East (FRCE) met a new milestone with the induction of its first Navy CMV-22B Osprey for maintenance Aug. 21. With receipt of this aircraft, the depot now services all three variants of the V-22 platform, which also include the Marine Corps MV-22B and the Air Force CV-22.

Fleet Readiness Center East (FRCE) met a new milestone with the induction of its first Navy CMV-22B Osprey for maintenance Aug. 21. With receipt of this aircraft, the depot now services all three variants of the V-22 platform, which also include the Marine Corps MV-22B and the Air Force CV-22.

The CMV-22B is the newest member of the Osprey family, entering service in June 2020 on the West Coast and April 2024 on the East Coast. In comparison, the Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey has been in use since achieving initial operational capability in 2007, and the Air Force CV-22 variant has been in operational use since 2009. FRCE will take on responsibility for the Navy's East Coast-based CMV-22B fleet.

FRCE Commanding Officer Capt. Randy J. Berti said the new workload comes in as a direct result of the quality workmanship the command is known for across the board.

"FRC East's maintenance of all three variants of the V-22 Osprey, for three different branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, really highlights the reputation for excellence our artisans, engineers and support staff have built," Berti said. "I

couldn’t be more proud that the Navy is entrusting us with this new mission. Every day, our workforce strives to provide high-quality service to the fleet at the best possible cost, and our success in that effort leads to the mutual trust and respect we have with our customers – our nation’s warfighters. The work we do here makes a real-world difference for them.”

The Navy is fielding the CMV-22B for long-range, medium-lift aerial logistics capabilities, including the carrier onboard delivery (COD) mission. Like all V-22 aircraft, the tiltrotor, vertical/short takeoff and landing aircraft can take off and land as a helicopter but transit as a turboprop aircraft, and is capable of shore-based, “expeditionary” or sea-based operations. Its features include an extended operational range compared to the MV-22B, and the aircraft offers increased mission flexibility over the Navy’s legacy C-2A Greyhound, which it is replacing.

FRCE V-22 Branch Head Allen Williamson said the depot will provide Planned Maintenance Interval (PMI) 1 service to the CMV-22B aircraft. He anticipates the work scope will closely mirror the PMI-1 evolutions already performed on the MV-22B, which the depot has serviced since 2009, at Marine Corps Air Stations Cherry Point and New River, and the Air Force CV-22 variant at FRCE’s detachment at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

“While the CMV-22B does have some additional capabilities, the maintenance specifications largely remain the same between the Navy and Marine Corps variants of the Osprey,” he said. “The CMV-22B aircraft is structurally identical to the MV-22B, with the exception of the stub wing fuel tanks. Those tanks on the Navy aircraft are actually quite a bit larger, to provide that extra flight range needed for carrier delivery operations.

“There are very, very low flight hours on these initial CMV-22 aircraft we’ll be receiving, so they’re essentially in new condition,” Williamson continued. “We presume the work scope is going to build in the future, based on the theater they’ll

be operating in. The Navy has indicated they plan to deploy the aircraft on ships, which is a harsh environment, and they will be high-use aircraft. With that in mind, I believe there will be a learning curve in regard to what condition we can expect to see these aircraft in as they come in for maintenance in the future, based on the environmental factors."

Williamson said his guidance to the artisans on the production line is to approach the CMV-22B maintenance as if it were a new capability, rather than an extension of the familiar workload. This will give the team the opportunity to look at the aircraft and its needs with fresh eyes, rather than with preexisting expectations, he added.

"Obviously, the instructions should marry over fairly well – everything, we presume, is the same," Williamson explained. "But especially with this first aircraft, we're emphasizing to the team that they should take their time and really explore whether there are any additional differences in the aircraft itself, of the way we work it versus how we would work an MV."

At the moment, Williamson said, the biggest difference in CMV-22B depot-level maintenance appears be the aircraft's paint job – the newer variant uses a different type of paint than the standard MV-22B and, as a Navy aircraft, has different markings than the Marine Corps version.

"The aircraft uses a high-gloss paint, so the prep and the application are going to be a little bit different than what we're used to with the standard MV-22B," said Paint and Clean Branch Head Matt Sinsel. "There will be some differences in the masking process, because the paint scheme is a little higher-profile than the standard grey Ospreys.

"Spraying high gloss is nothing new for the our team; we do it with the Marine Helicopter Squadron 1 Ospreys, and we do it

with the white-top H-1 helicopters for the Air Force, and the State Department H-46 helicopters," he added. "But there will be some differences, and there will be some learning involved."

Sinsel said the unique paint scheme of the CMV-22B also gives his team another opportunity to use the laser projection system the depot began using in January to streamline the final finish process, during which an aircraft's insignia and other markings are applied to the finished base paint. The system acts as a guide for the precise placement of the markings without having to use paper stencils.

Despite the anticipated challenges that come along with learning the ins and outs of maintaining a new aircraft – even one so similar to familiar products – leaders believe the new workload offers FRCE a chance to shine by rounding out its support of the entire V-22 family.

"The V-22 program at FRCE has received its accolades," Williamson said. "We're known for what we do, and not just within the brick-and-mortar site at Cherry Point. We have our detachment at New River, which is revered in its own light for the way they conduct a PMI. We have the In-Service Repair team down at New River that is making depot-level repairs while embedded with the Marine squadrons. And we have Hurlburt Field, where we support Air Force Special Operations Command. This isn't a totally new workload, but it adds a new capability.

"I don't think the Navy would have considered us for the CMV-22 workload if we didn't have that track record of superior performance with the products we return to the fleet, and didn't have the good rapport that we already have with our current customers," he continued. "I think this is a chance for us to succeed. This is an opportunity to show the Navy that we own the maintenance process on the MV-22s, now let us keep this CMV business for a while and show them our success

in providing the fleet with a quality product that we know is going to make that next flight window with no issues.”

FRCE is North Carolina’s largest maintenance, repair, overhaul and technical services provider, with more than 4,000 civilian, military and contract workers. Its annual revenue exceeds $1 billion. The depot provides service to the fleet while functioning as an integral part of the greater U.S. Navy; Naval Air Systems Command; and Commander, Fleet Readiness Centers.

USCGC Reliance Returns to Florida After 60-day Operation Vigilant Sentry Patrol

Coast Guard Cutter Reliance (WMEC 615) deck crew members handle line during towing operations with the cutter's small boat, Oct. 11, 2024, while at sea in the Windward Passage. Reliance's crew completed a 60-day patrol in the Seventh Coast Guard District area of responsibility to conduct maritime safety and security missions. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign Sarah Kaleta)

From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Nov. 7, 2024

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Reliance (WMEC 615) returned to their home port in Pensacola, Oct. 28, following a 60-day patrol in the Windward Passage.

Throughout their deployment in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, the crew's primary missions were to protect the safety of life at sea and deter dangerous and unlawful migrant ventures bound for the United States. Deployed in support of the Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) initiative Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS), Reliance's crew worked alongside additional Coast Guard and partner assets to dissuade maritime migration and enforce

immigration laws on the high seas.

While on patrol, Reliance's crew interdicted four overloaded and unsafe vessels, ultimately saving the lives of 441 Haitian and Dominican migrants, including many infants and children.

During two hazardous and similar cases, Reliance's crew located the unseaworthy migrant voyages in the dark of night and evacuated nearly 200 migrants from each vessel. Crew members moved the migrants to safety while preventing their grossly overloaded vessels from capsizing. After transferring the migrants from their unsafe vessels aboard the cutter, the crew provided humanitarian aid and care until the migrants could be safely repatriated to their countries of origin.

Of note, this was an historic patrol for the Coast Guard's oldest medium endurance cutter; after 60 years in service, this was Reliance's first patrol with a fully mixed-gender crew. Reliance recently completed a project to provide onboard accommodations for female enlisted crew members, increasing opportunities for female Coast Guard members to serve afloat.

"I am extremely proud of and have been continually impressed by our crew during my first deployment onboard Reliance," said Cmdr. Aaron Kowalczk, commanding officer of Reliance. "Their tireless effort and relentless compassion for the Coast Guard's humanitarian mission was inspiring and ultimately resulted in saving hundreds of lives while deterring illicit maritime migration. As Reliance enters her seventh decade of service, the ship and especially this crew remain 'Semper Paratus – Always Ready' for the next mission."

Established in 2003, HSTF-SE is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)-led interagency task force charged with directing operational and tactical planning, command and control, and functions as a standing organization to deter,

mitigate and respond to maritime mass migration in the Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits.

OVS is the 2004 DHS plan that provides the structure for deploying joint air and surface assets and personnel to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean corridor of the United States. Its primary objectives are to protect life at sea while deterring and dissuading mass maritime migration alongside our federal, state, and local partners.

Reliance is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 77. The cutter's primary missions are counter-narcotics and migrant interdiction operations, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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

Navy to Commission Future USS John Basilone

From the Navy Office of Information, Nov. 7, 2024

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS John Basilone (DDG 122) will be commissioned, Saturday, Nov. 9, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. EST in New York.

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy, will deliver the commissioning ceremony’s principal address. Remarks will also be provided by Admiral Daryl Caudle, Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Lieutenant General Roberta Shea, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic; Commander, United States Marine Corps Forces Command; and Commander, Marine Corps Forces Northern Command, The Honorable Zach Iscol, Commissioner of New York City Emergency Management, Ms. Diane Hawkins, Niece of Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, and Charles F. Krugh, President of General Dynamics Bath Iron Works. The ship’s sponsors are Ryan Manion and Amy Looney, the president and vice president of the Travis Manion Foundation, which empowers veterans and families of fallen heroes to develop character in future generations.

“Gunnery Sergeant Basilone’s relentless valor on the battlefields of Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima represented the best America has to offer and are exemplary of the Sailors and Marines serving today,” said Secretary Del Toro. “USS John Basilone (DDG 122) will be named after one of the most decorated Marines in our Nation’s history and will pay tribute to his legacy and the countless others who have served our country with distinction.”

The ship honors U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone, who received the Medal of Honor for his heroism during the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942. He was killed in action during the February 1945 invasion of Iwo Jima and was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. Basilone is the only enlisted Marine to be honored with both the Navy Cross and the Medal of Honor. DDG 122 will be the second ship named in honor of Basilone.

“Marines are known for their perseverance and loyalty to one another. Perhaps no Marine exemplified these traits better than Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, the only enlisted Marine in World War II to be awarded both the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross,” said 20th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Carlos Ruiz. “As a true Marine Corps legend, it is fitting that this highly capable warship, led by an equally exceptional crew, will bear his name.”

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy’s surface fleet. These highly capable, multi-mission ships conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence to national security. Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers provide a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air, surface, and subsurface environments.

Flight IIA DDGs host dual helicopter hangars, allowing for expanded anti-submarine, anti-surface, and anti-air warfare capabilities through integrated operations with helicopter squadrons.

The ceremony will be live-streamed at http://www.dvidshub.net/webcast/35147. The link becomes active approximately ten minutes prior to the event at 9:50 a.m. EST.

Media may direct queries to the Navy Office of Information at (703) 697-5342. More information on the littoral combat ship program can be found at: https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Fact-Files/Display-FactFiles/Article/2169871/destroyers-ddg-51/.

EP-3E Aries II Completes Final Flight in U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations

Photo By Petty Officer 1st Class Macadam Weissman
From Commander, Naval Air Forces, Oct. 29, 2024

U.S. 5TH FLEET AREA OF OPERATIONS – After nearly six decades of service, the EP-3E Aries II, a multi-intelligence reconnaissance aircraft, completed its final flight in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, Oct. 29.

A detachment from the "World Watchers" of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 1 completed their final mission with their EP-3E ahead of their redeployment from the region.

The EP-3E Aries II served as a key intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) asset in the maritime patrol and reconnaissance force (MPRF). The aircraft provided fleet and theater commanders near real-time tactical signals intelligence and full-motion video intelligence. The crew fused the collected intelligence along with other information for a variety of uses, including indications and warnings, information dominance, battle-space situational awareness,

suppression of enemy air defenses, destruction of enemy air-defense, anti-air warfare and anti-submarine warfare applications.

“It’s amazing to think of the number of folks who have been part of the EP-3 heritage over the last 55 years,” said Lt. Cmdr. Justin “Gump” Roberts, the VQ-1 detachment officer-in-charge. “Success in this platform has solely been because of our hard-working maintenance team while on deck and our aircrew’s superior ISR while on station. It’s an honor to be part of a legacy that’s bigger than sum of its parts.”

Lt. Bradford “Chad” Holcombe, the aircraft commander, said VQ-1’s history speaks for itself and that he is “tremendously grateful” to be part of that history.

“From my first day at VQ-1, it’s been obvious to see the pride each member has in the platform, the mission, and most importantly the effort it takes to execute wherever and whenever we’re asked,” he said. “Flying the last mission flight is a privilege.”

Capt. Dennis “Rudy” Jensen, Commodore of Task Force 57, has been around the P-3 since 1979.

“My father was a P-3 pilot during the Cold War, and I’ve flown the variants of the same aircraft since 2002. Few other airplanes are as ‘time-tested & mother approved’ as the P-3,” Jensen said. “Its longevity and ability to operate from remote locations in austere environments for over half a century is a testament to those who designed, built, maintained and operated it. Much like the ever changing platforms onboard the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, the mission systems inside the EP-3E have evolved over time. The ability to evolve has enabled the EP-3E to remain viable and effective through today.”

The transition from the EP-3E to the P-8A Poseidon and MQ-4C Triton platforms has been carefully planned to avoid capability gaps. These platforms offer enhanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, with greater range, endurance and the ability to operate in more complex environments.

The U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses approximately 2.5 million square miles of water space and includes the Arabian gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean, and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Suez Canal, and the Strait of Bab al-Mandeb.

Bollinger Shipyards Delivers FRC 1158 John Witherspoon to U.S. Coast Guard

Photo credit: Bollinger Shipyards
From Bollinger Shipyards

LOCKPORT, La., – (November 7, 2024) – Bollinger Shipyards ("Bollinger") today announced the delivery of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) John Witherspoon at Coast Guard Sector Key West. This is the 58th Fast Response Cutter (FRC) delivered under the U.S. Coast Guard's current program and the 184th vessel built by Bollinger for the U.S. Coast Guard over a 40-year partnership and will be homeported in Kodiak, Alaska.

"We are honored to deliver John Witherspoon to the U.S. Coast Guard, continuing our proud tradition of providing high-quality, mission-ready vessels," said Bollinger President & CEO Ben Bordelon. "The FRC platform has proven itself time and again as a cornerstone of the Coast Guard's fleet, excelling in a wide range of operational conditions. We're confident John Witherspoon will serve its crew well in their mission of

defending our nation’s national security interests over a vast and challenging area of responsibility.”

The John Witherspoon will be homeported in Kodiak, Alaska. This vessel is the fourth FRC to join the fleet in Alaskan waters, reinforcing maritime security and bolstering the U.S. Coast Guard’s ability to respond swiftly to emerging threats and protect vital infrastructure.

The Coast Guard’s Fiscal Year 2025 Budget to Congress includes procuring two more FRCs to provide increased Coast Guard presence and engagement with allied countries in the Indo-Pacific region. As negotiations on federal appropriations continue, the future of the FRC program holds significant weight for both national security and the economy. The House of Representatives has approved funding for four additional Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) in its defense appropriations bill, providing a boost to the U.S. Coast Guard’s fleet expansion. However, the Senate has yet to reach a consensus on future funding levels for the FRC program, leaving the long-term prospects for the program and the over 600 jobs that it supports in Lockport, La. uncertain.

Bordelon continued, “With over 600 jobs at our Lockport facility hanging in the balance, we’re not just building ships – we’re supporting families and communities throughout South Louisiana. Congress has long supported the FRC program for its essential role in defending our coastline, but also for the livelihoods it sustains in our community. We are hopeful that these efforts will continue to receive robust bipartisan, bicameral support as Congress finalizes appropriations.”

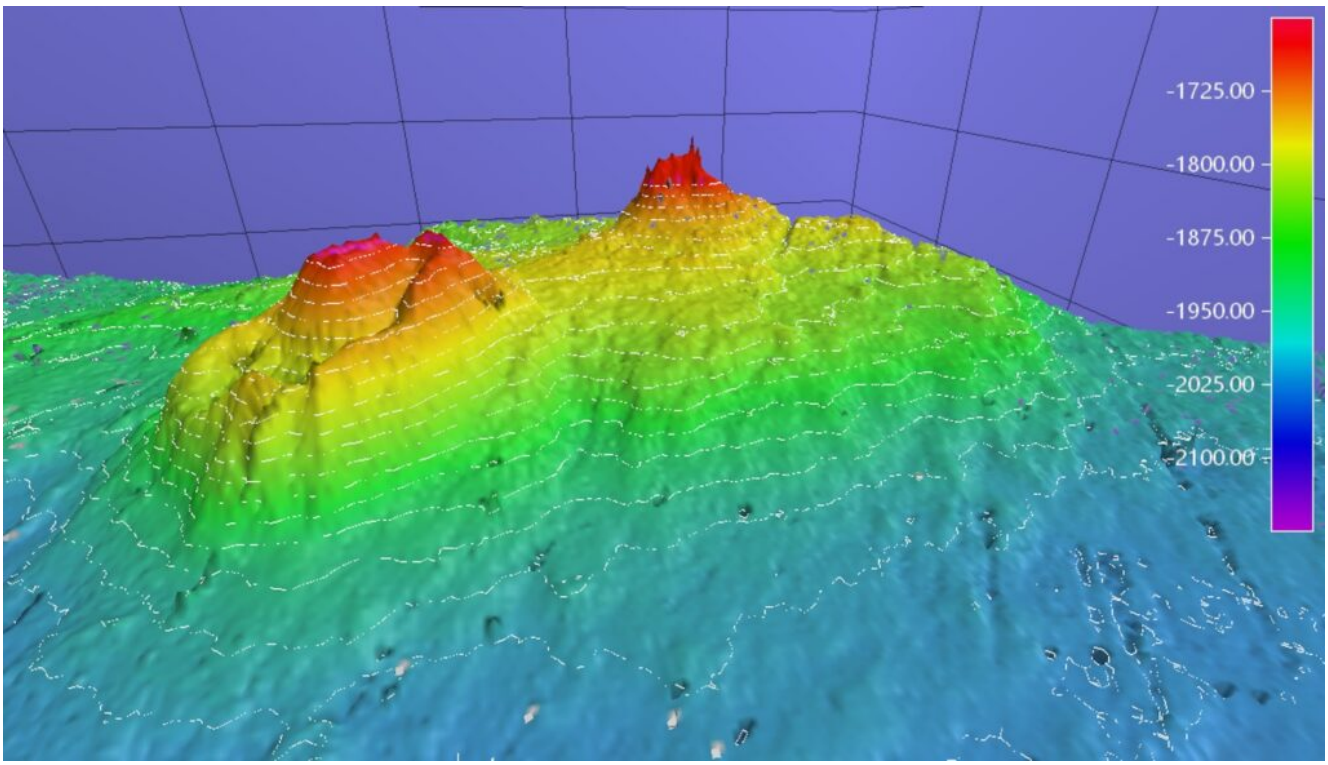
Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished themselves in the line of duty. This vessel is named after Captain John Witherspoon, who served as commanding officer of cutters Mallow, Valiant, and Dependable. Notably, he was the first African American officer to command a shore unit when he assumed command of the Houston/Galveston Vessel

Traffic Service. Upon taking command of Mallow in 1982, Witherspoon became the second ever African American officer to command a Coast Guard cutter. His legacy is further honored through the Captain John G. Witherspoon Inspirational Leadership Award, which recognizes officers who exemplify inspirational leadership, mentorship, and dedication to Coast Guard values. Captain Witherspoon upheld the highest traditions of the Coast Guard as an inspirational role model and mentor for Coast Guard men and women.

ABOUT THE FAST RESPONSE CUTTER PLATFORM

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

USCGC Healy Crew and Science Teams Discover Volcano-Like Underwater Feature



Bathymetric data of volcano-like feature discovered by science teams aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) on the continental slope along Northern Alaska during the Healy's Phase 1 Arctic 2024 Fall Deployment supporting Alaskan Arctic Coast Port Access Routing Study and Opportunistic Mapping Initiative (Image courtesy of NOAA)

From U.S. Coast Guard 17th District, Nov. 7, 2024

NOME, Alaska – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) and embarked science teams completed the first two phases of the icebreaker's 2024 Arctic Fall deployment Sunday and continue operations offshore of western and northern Alaska.

Healy's crew and the science teams conducted multiple scientific and seafloor mapping missions, which resulted in the discovery of a subsea volcano-like feature during the first phase.

The first two phases featured a collaboration between the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the University of New Hampshire.

The interagency science mission to the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas north of Alaska combined oceanographic buoy deployments with a coordinated mapping effort to survey uncharted waters and acquire depth data along a portion of the Alaskan Arctic Coast Port Access Route Study (AACPARS) corridor, a Coast Guard-proposed preferred vessel route from Utqiaġvik, Alaska, to the demarcation point of the border between U.S. and Canada.

During the mission's first phase, the science party discovered a volcano-like feature rising 500 meters from the seabed, approximately 1,600 meters below the surface at its shallowest depth. Upon further review of water column data collected at the site, the science team detected a potential gas plume rising from just above the feature to near the water's surface. The feature poses no risk to navigation as it is well below navigable draft of the largest modern vessels.

"Although data analysis is ongoing, these findings are exciting and offer insight into what may exist beneath the ocean's surface, much of which is unknown in this region," said Capt. Meghan McGovern, commanding officer of NOAA Ship Fairweather and currently embarked with the Healy mapping team. "The coordination and partnerships during this mission fill critical gaps in the region for all waterway users and provide a foundation for safe navigation in the Arctic."

McGovern and a NOAA team from the Fairweather, an Alaska-based hydrographic survey vessel, joined the science party aboard Healy to support mapping coastal waters using Healy's multibeam echo sounders for obtaining bathymetric data to provide highly accurate depths and detailed images of the sea floor and objects along the AACPARS corridor.

Healy hosted postdoctoral researchers and junior faculty members from a variety of institutions during the second phase

of the Arctic deployment supporting the U.S. NSF-funded Polar Early Career Scientist Training project, with contributions from NOAA and the Coast Guard providing training and research opportunities in the operational areas of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas and within the marginal ice zone.

The time underway provided ten early career polar scientists and their mentors with at-sea training and hands-on experience for the researchers to gain the knowledge and skills that will prepare them to plan, implement, and lead future interdisciplinary scientific expeditions on U.S. Arctic vessels.

These early career scientists conducted multidisciplinary research, including mapping to fill critical bathymetric gaps and scientific sampling across various disciplines. They also developed skills in shipboard leadership, coordination, and execution.

“It’s an honor supporting such diverse research missions in the northern high latitudes while working towards enhancing navigation safety in a region where soundings are sparse,” said Healy’s Commanding Officer Capt. Michele Schallip. “As scientific interest in the Arctic Ocean Basin grows, Healy is on the front-line providing access to the scientific community facilitating Arctic research opportunities while inspiring future chief scientists. Our crew remains committed to ensuring we are ready to meet the challenges unique to operating in the austere environment to see completion of these vital missions.”

Homeported in Seattle, Healy is the Coast Guard’s only icebreaker specifically designed to support research. It provides high-latitude U.S. presence and scientific access to areas too challenging for most research vessels to reach.

GA-ASI and US Navy Fly MQ-20 Avenger Using MD-5 GCS to Perform Command Autonomy Maneuvers

From General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

SAN DIEGO – 07 November 2024 – On November 5, 2024, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) used its MQ-20 Avenger Unmanned Aircraft System to perform commanded autonomy maneuvers as part of a demonstration with the U.S. Navy (USN). The USN used its MD-5 Ground Control Station (GCS) with Lockheed Martin's MDCX™ autonomy platform to command and control the jet-powered UAS. Working collaboratively with the USN and Lockheed Martin, the GA-ASI team successfully executed the flight demonstration over a Proliferated Low Earth Orbit (PLEO) datalink.

The USN's Unmanned Carrier Aviation program office PMA-268 used GA-ASI's MQ-20 as a surrogate to demonstrate how its Unmanned Carrier Aviation Mission Control Station (UMCS) can command a variety of unmanned aircraft. The MD-5 GCS was operated from the USN's test facility at Patuxent River, Maryland, while the MQ-20 was flown out of GA-ASI's Desert Horizon flight operations facility in El Mirage, California.

This flight was the first time a GA-ASI UAS completed bi-directional communications using the UMCS operation codes while performing autonomous behavior. The procedure was completed using the PLEO datalink.

"This effort was a prime example of industry partners and government agencies working together to perform important new capabilities," said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. "The team efficiently and safely demonstrated aircraft flight control from another government agency's control station. Using GA-ASI's Tactical Autonomy Core Ecosystem (TacACE) software, the team not only executed airborne commands, but did so in a safe, controlled environment."

The demonstration was part of an effort to advance technology for future Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA). GA-ASI initiated the demonstration between PMA-268 and Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works to demonstrate connectivity between the Navy's UMCS and GA-ASI's MQ-20 Avenger. MQ-20 is a jet-powered platform used extensively as a CCA surrogate test bed for autonomous UAS technology development. GA-ASI was recently selected for the U.S. Air Force's CCA program.

VCNO Visits Shipyards, Navy Leadership in Northeast Focused on Readiness

VCNO Adm. Jim Kilby tours General Dynamics Bath Iron Works. (General Dynamics Bath Iron Works)
From the Navy Office of Information, Nov. 6, 2024

WASHINGTON – Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby visited the Northeast with a focus on Navy readiness and maintenance, Oct. 29-Nov. 1, 2024.

Kilby spent time at General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, including time aboard USS Hartford (SSN 768), which is undergoing an engineering overhaul at the facility, engaging with the submarine's leadership and the crew.

Electric Boat is the prime contractor and lead design yard for the Navy's Virginia-class fast-attack submarines. Following

Electric Boat, Kilby toured Naval Submarine New London and participated in a ribbon cutting at a new AI & Machine Learning Lab for the Undersea Warfighting Development Center. UWDC leads undersea superiority and enables the combat lethality and desired effects generated from, and within, the Undersea Domain.

SUBASE New London supports 16 fast attack submarines and is home to more than 70 tenant commands and their 9,500 active duty, reserve and civilian personnel. Kilby spent time at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, with shipyard and labor leadership, civilian personnel and Sailors assigned to the base and submarine crews. Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is America's leader for attack submarine maintenance, repair, and modernization.

Kilby ended his Northeast visit in Bath, Maine, with General Dynamics Bath Iron Works. The shipyard specializes in the design, building and support of the Navy's surface combatants and is the lead designer and builder of the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers. Kilby reviewed operations with the leadership of Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Bath, the Navy's on-site technical, contractual and business authority overseeing the design and construction of six ship classes at three private shipyards including Bath Iron Works.

During his visits, Kilby discussed Quality of Service for the Sailors assigned to the base and shipyard workers; including childcare, parking, quality food options and unaccompanied housing. Kilby also discussed the important role shipyards play in executing the CNO's Navigation Plan 2024.

"We should all see ourselves, uniformed and civilian, in CNO's NAVPLAN," said Kilby. "Every one of us plays a part, large or small, in the execution – whether from taking care our people to getting our ships out of maintenance on time – we all have a role." While at Bath Iron Works, he addressed the crew of the future USS John Basilone (DDG 122) prior to the ship's

sail away.

“You should all be extraordinarily proud to be a part of the namesake John Basilone,” said Kilby. “He was a true American hero, a relentlessly brave Marine and warfighter and I’m looking forward to seeing this ship bear his name and welcome you into the fleet next month.”

A sail away is a ship’s final departure from the construction yard for its homeport or commissioning site. It signifies the end of the new construction period and the beginning of its life preparing to perform the mission it was designed to undertake.

The future USS John Basilone (DDG 122) is a Flight IIA Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer and named for Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone, who received the Medal of Honor for his heroism during the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942. He was killed in action during the February 1945 invasion of Iwo Jima and was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. Basilone is the only enlisted Marine to be honored with both the Navy Cross and the Medal of Honor. The ship is scheduled for commissioning in New York City, Nov. 9, 2024.