

# SECNAV awards Navy Cross to retired Korean War veteran



SAN DIEGO (Jan. 20, 2023) – (from left) Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, retired U.S. Navy Capt. E. Royce Williams, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, and Vice Adm. Kenneth Whitesell render honors during a ceremony awarding Williams with a Navy Cross Jan. 20. Del Toro was in San Diego for various fleet engagements, awards ceremonies and ship events.

[Release from U.S. Navy](#)

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[By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Aleksandr Freutel, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 23 January 2023](#)

SAN DIEGO – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro awarded the Navy Cross to retired Navy Capt. Royce Williams for his exploits during the Korean War at a ceremony at the San Diego Air and Space Museum, Jan. 20.

The Navy Cross is an upgrade of the Silver Star Medal previously awarded to then-Lt. Williams on May 7, 1953, while assigned to the "Pacemakers" of Fighter Squadron (VF) 781, for combat action against seven Soviet Mikoyan Gurevich (MiG) 15 aircraft.

"Royce Williams was a Lieutenant in the United States Navy when he took the lead of an incredibly critical mission during the Korean War, resulting in the protection of Task Force 77 from enemy attack," said Secretary Del Toro. "His actions almost 70 years ago earned him recognition, and he was awarded the Silver Star Medal. However, as the Secretary of the Navy, I have the authority to consider proposals to upgrade awards. Among the many cases I have reviewed, Captain Williams' case stood out. It was very clear to me that his actions were extraordinary, and more closely aligned with the criteria describing a higher award...and sir, what a tremendous honor it was to tell you in person, that after all these years, your courageous actions would finally get the recognition they deserve."

On Nov. 18, 1952, Williams was flying with two other members of VF-781 from Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Oriskany (CVA 34) when they encountered seven MiG-15 aircraft. Before they could engage, the team's flight leader had to return to Oriskany due to a fuel pump issue, leaving only Williams and his wingman. After Williams downed the first MiG, his wingman chased the falling aircraft, and Williams found himself alone in air-to-air combat with the remaining MiGs.

"In the moment I was a fighter pilot doing my job...I was only shooting what I had," said Williams in a previous account of the fight. "They had me cold on maneuverability and acceleration – the MiG was vastly superior on those counts to the F9F. The only thing I could do was out-turn them."

Out-manned and piloting what was considered an inferior

aircraft to the MiG-15, Williams engaged the enemy for 35 minutes, shooting down four of them in the longest dogfight in U.S. military history. Additionally, no other American fighter pilot has ever shot down four MiG-15s in one fight.

The Navy Cross is only awarded to service members who distinguish themselves for extraordinary heroism in combat with an armed enemy force, and is the U.S. Navy's second-highest military decoration. Williams retired from the Navy in 1980, and his medals include the Navy Cross and two Distinguished Flying Crosses.

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## **Sikorsky Delivers 5,000th “Hawk” Helicopter**



Sikorsky marks the delivery of the 5,000th “Hawk” helicopter, a UH-60M (pictured), at its headquarters in Stratford, Conn.,

Jan. 20, 2023. Photo courtesy Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company.

[Release from Lockheed Martin/Sikorsky](#)

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STRATFORD, Conn., Jan. 20, 2023 – Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company (NYSE: LMT), today delivered its 5,000<sup>th</sup> "Hawk" variant helicopter, a U.S. Army UH-60M Black Hawk. The iconic aircraft will continue to support medium-lift requirements for the U.S. military and international operators for decades into the future.

Sikorsky celebrates its [100th anniversary](#) this year.

"Sikorsky, as a company, has been forged by the Black Hawk," said Sikorsky President Paul Lemmo. "The Black Hawk and its variants deliver when reliability and performance are nonnegotiable. Hawk aircraft continue to demonstrate their versatility and readiness with the latest technological advancements and ongoing U.S. and global investment in the aircraft."

View the latest Hawk [video](#).

Customers worldwide depend on the Black Hawk platform and its derivatives, including MH-60R/S maritime operations helicopters, MH-60T multi-mission helicopters, HH-60W rescue helicopters and internationally built S-70 Black Hawks to include the baseline FIREHAWK, which have all proven their versatility and capability across a spectrum of challenging mission sets.

Sikorsky's highly skilled and experienced workforce manufactures the latest generation of Hawk aircraft built in Stratford, and there is high international demand for the Sikorsky S-70 Black Hawk, manufactured by Lockheed Martin's PZL Mielec facility in Poland. More than 35 international customers operate the Black Hawk thanks to its global support

network and continued modernization.

The U.S. Army, the largest Black Hawk operator, noted the key role the aircraft continues to fulfill during military and civil operations around the world, in addition to its significant contribution towards Joint All Domain Operations.

“For more than 40 years the Black Hawk has remarkably supported Soldiers in every major contingency operation the Army has executed,” said Col. Calvin Lane, the utility helicopter project manager for the Program Executive Office Aviation. “Even though the helicopter has been around longer than most of the Soldiers it now supports, the Army plans for it to be in front line service another 40 years and beyond. And everyone who contributes to the delivery of this aircraft in any way, contributes directly to providing combat capability that protects Soldiers and helps the Army accomplish its mission.”

## **The Future of the Black Hawk**

As U.S. Army Future Vertical Lift aircraft are fielded, the Black Hawk will remain the foundational tactical air assault and utility aircraft for the U.S. Army. Modernization efforts that improve Black Hawk availability and reliability by lowering direct operating costs include:

- A Modular Open Systems Approach allowing rapid integration of emerging technologies to maintain relevance in future operations by increasing reach, survivability, lethality and sustainment;
- Improved Turbine Engine to increase lift capability and range;
- Advanced Digital Vehicle Management Systems supporting Degraded Visual Environment and automated operations; and
- Digital tools including predictive analytics that reduce

aircraft downtime and maintenance costs.

In February 2022, Lockheed Martin flew its first uninhabited [Optionally Piloted Vehicle \(OPV\)](#) Sikorsky UH-60A/S-70 Black Hawk testbed helicopter powered by Sikorsky's MATRIX™ autonomy technology in collaboration with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. [Subsequent flights](#) at U.S. Army's Project Convergence 2022 demonstrated future utility missions for the platform, which shows no signs of relinquishing its preeminent medium-lift capability through continuous innovation and investment.

"We are committed to all H-60 and S-70 operators and look forward to enduring partnerships on the Hawk program in the years to come," added Nathalie Previte, vice president of Army and Air Force Systems at Sikorsky. "It remains our priority to fulfill our customers' requirements and meet the needs of current and future operational units. With unmatched versatility and global interoperability, Hawk aircraft continue to advance 21st century security."

For more information about the Black Hawk, visit our website: [www.lockheedmartin.com/blackhawk](http://www.lockheedmartin.com/blackhawk).

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**Marine Corps, Navy Cease  
Administrative Actions to  
Dismiss COVID Vaccine  
Refusers**



5/12/22: Covid Vaccine – Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Mark Forrey administers a COVID-19 vaccine to Navy Seaman Micah Dayoub aboard the USS Ronald Reagan, in Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 9, 2022. The Ronald Reagan, Carrier Strike Group 5’s flagship, is the Navy’s only forward-deployed aircraft carrier. (Photo By: Navy Seaman Natasha Chevalier Losada)

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps have halted administrative actions to discharge Sailors and Marines for refusing mandatory vaccination against the COVID-19 coronavirus variant.

In accordance with updated guidance from Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III, “Commanders will immediately discontinue administrative separation processing of Marines solely for declining to receive the COVID-19 vaccine,” Capt. Ryan Bruce, a Marine Corps spokesperson, told Seapower in a Jan. 20 email.

A [Marine administrative message](#) (MARADMIN) signed Jan. 18 by Lt. Gen. D.J. Furness, the Marine Corps deputy commandant for

Plans, Policies and Operations directed commanders to, “immediately suspend any new or ongoing adverse administrative actions associated with declining the COVID-19 vaccine.”

The MARADMIN also instructed commanders to cease any ongoing reviews of requests by current service members for a religious, administrative, or medical exemption, including pending appeals.

Furness’s directive came a week after similar guidance for Navy commanders issued by Vice Adm. Richard J. Cheeseman, Jr., deputy chief of naval operations for Personnel, Manpower, and Training, N1.

Cheeseman told all commands to discontinue administrative separation processing of vaccine-refusing Sailors and, “suspend immediately any new adverse administrative actions associated with refusing the COVID-19 vaccine.”

Thousands of Sailors and Marines have been separated from the sea services for vaccination refusal, following Austin’s Aug. 24, 2021 memo making COVID vaccination mandatory for all active duty and Reserve members of the armed services and the National Guard.

Austin said the vaccination mandate was necessary to protect the force and maintain readiness. However, language in the fiscal 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), enacted in late December, [required the defense secretary to rescind the mandate](#), which had sparked complaints from lawmakers and lawsuits from service members.

The legislation stopped short of requiring the Pentagon to reinstate troops who were dismissed for refusing the shot. It also did not mention giving them back pay.

However, on Jan. 17, Pentagon Press Secretary Brigadier Gen. Pat Ryder told reporters, “Right now, we are not currently pursuing back-pay to service members who were dismissed for

refusing to take the COVID vaccination.”

As of Dec. 20, 2022, the latest [Defense Department COVID-19 statistics](#), almost 2 million service members have been fully vaccinated, including 389,177 in the Navy and 200,186 Marines.

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# General Dynamics NASSCO Christens the Third Ship in the T-AO Fleet Oiler Program for the U.S. Navy



[Release from General Dynamics NASSCO](#)

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SAN DIEGO – General Dynamics NASSCO christened the future USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), the third ship for the U.S. Navy’s John Lewis-class fleet oiler program, today. Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Carlos Del Toro, served as the principal speaker at the ceremony, in addition to remarks from NASSCO and U.S. Navy representatives. Following brief remarks, the ship’s sponsor, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan, christened the ship with the traditional champagne bottle break alongside the hull.

“Along with its namesake, this majestic vessel will be instrumental in shaping the future of our nation. The shipbuilders of NASSCO are proud to have ensured Earl Warren’s legacy will live on in this ship,” said David Carver, president of General Dynamics NASSCO. “On behalf of the 48-hundred employees of General Dynamics NASSCO, I am proud to present the USNS Earl Warren for christening to our sponsor the Supreme Court Justice, Elena Kagan.”

The ship honors Earl Warren, 14th Chief Justice of the United States of the Supreme Court. During his 16 years as Chief Justice, a period of time when the Supreme Court was known as the “Warren Court”, civil rights and civil liberties were dramatically expanded, marking this period as one of the most important periods in the history of American constitutional law.

“Indeed, the ship’s motto could not be more appropriate: ‘I Will Find a Way or I Will Make One,’” said Del Toro. “That’s exactly what a young Earl Warren did when he overcame obstacles to joining the Army during the First World War, and that’s what he continued to do in the fight for equality, democracy, and social justice throughout his life.”

General Dynamics NASSCO was awarded with a contract to design and build the first six ships, T-AO 205 – T-AO 210, by the U.S. Navy for the next generation of fleet oilers, the John Lewis-class in 2016. In 2022, the Navy awarded NASSCO with a

contract modification for the construction of two additional John Lewis-class fleet oilers (T-AO 211 and 212), with the option for the Navy to procure an additional oiler, T-AO 213 which was included in the 2023 defense budget.

In addition to the christening of this ship, two ships in the T-AO class fleet oiler program for the U.S. Navy – the future USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208) and the future USNS Lucy Stone (T-AO 209), – are currently under construction. The second ship, the future USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206) will be delivered to the Navy later this year. The lead ship, the USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) was delivered to the Navy in 2022.

The 742-foot-long oilers are designed to transfer fuel to U.S. Navy carrier strike group ships operating at sea and have the capacity to carry 157,000 barrels of oil, a significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and up to a speed of 20 knots.

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## **Coast Guard Has No Personnel Retention Problem, But Recruiting Is Another Story**



USCGC Richard Snyder (WPC 1127) navigates in the Labrador Sea on Aug. 13, 2021. Snyder worked alongside USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907), the Royal Canadian Navy's HMCS Harry Dewolf (AOPV 430), and HMCS Goose Bay (MM 707) in Operation Nanook to enhance collective abilities to respond to safety and security issues in the High North through air and maritime presence activities, maritime domain defense, and security exercises. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by USCGC Richard Snyder)

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ARLINGTON, Va. – Retaining veteran personnel is not a problem for the U.S. Coast Guard says Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan, but recruiting the right people who want to go to sea remains “a challenge.”

From patrolling the Arctic, conducting counter-narcotics trafficking operations in the Caribbean Basin, helping vulnerable nations across Oceania protect their resources from illegal, [unreported and unregulated \(IUU\) fishing](#), to joining U.S. Navy ships in freedom of [navigation transits through the Taiwan Strait](#), “We have never been in greater demand around

the world,” Fagan said.

However, the Coast Guard, like the [other armed services](#) and employers across the nation, “is facing the challenge of recruiting,” Fagan told attendees at the [Surface Navy Association’s annual national symposium](#) Jan. 11.

## **New USCG Recruiting Programs**

The Coast Guard has several pilot programs to address the recruiting challenge, including one that would allow lateral entry for civilians with key skills, like culinary specialists and certified EMTs, to move more quickly into their chosen service job after basic training.

The Coast Guard’s first female commandant, Fagan said her number one priority is managing talent to keep a workforce “trained, ready and relevant for the work ahead.” The problem, she said, is getting young people to see the opportunity that service brings.

“We’re a sea-going service, and having a workforce that’s excited to go to sea on the state-of-the-art ships that we’re building is a priority,” Fagan said. The Coast Guard has set up sea duty readiness council to lead efforts to mitigate the challenges that go along with serving at sea.

That includes being responsive to the expectations of the generation that the Coast Guard wants to recruit, such as reliable internet service. To that end, the Coast Guard has made antenna upgrades and increased spending on satellite reception and bandwidth.

“Improved connectivity helps people stay in touch with their friends and family and eliminates some of the arduousness of sea duty,” Fagan said.

While the Coast Guard has used incentive pay and signing bonuses to encourage old hands to stay and new ones to join,

“I don’t think we can buy our way out of this,” Fagan said. “If you get the system right, the structure, the conditions of employment, that bonus becomes just a cherry on top. You’ve already sold them on the work and the values.”

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## Marine Corps Replacing Fixed-Wing Small UAS with VTOL Types



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ARLINGTON, Va. – The Marine Corps is divesting some types of its short-range, short-endurance small unmanned aerial systems (SUAS) in favor of vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) SUAS.

The Corps has retired its fixed-wing RQ-11B Raven and RQ-12A Wasp IV SUAS in favor of VTOL SUAS that are easier to launch and recover and can provide a hover-and-stare surveillance capability. They are being replaced by VTOL SUAS such as the SkyDio X2D (built by SkyDio), and the R80 SkyRaider (built by FLIR Systems).

“The Marine Corps’ future operating concepts emphasize the need for agile, distributed operations which require small UAS to be organically owned and operated by tactical units for situational awareness, force protection, target engagement, persistent command, control, communications, and electronic warfare,” said Maj. Joshua C. Benson, director of Communication Strategy & Operations for Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration, in response to a query from Seapower. “These systems equip small unit commanders with these capabilities at the lowest tactical echelons, and the transition to Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) capability enables maneuver units to operate in challenging terrain and austere operational environments, as the systems do not rely on traditional launch and recovery space.”

## **A Necessary Innovation**

Benson said the Corps is procuring the SkyDio X2D as the squad/platoon electro-optical/infrared/full motion video (FMV) sensor. The R80D SkyRaider is being procured to “provide company-level FMV and selectable payload usage for the Ground Combat Element.”

He said the evolution to VTOL SUAS from the successful RQ-11 and RQ-12 is a necessary innovation.

“Rapid technological advancement of uncrewed aerial systems necessitates an iterative approach to research, development, procurement, implementation, and re-evaluation of system capabilities,” he said. “This adaptive approach enables the service to

transition to cutting-edge capabilities as industry and academia advance at the speed of innovation. Divestment of legacy systems and incorporation of new technologies is necessary to ensure our warfighters are equipped with the most capable systems and technology, in order to maintain pace with our peer and near peer adversaries.”

The Corps also operates other VTOL SUAS, including the Skyranger (FLIR Systems/Aeryon Labs); Indago 3 (Lockheed Martin); Instant Eye (Physical Sciences Inc.); PD-100 Black Hornet (FLIR Systems); and Scout (MITRE Corp.).

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**USCGC Spencer Completes  
Multinational Maritime  
Security Patrol off West  
Africa**



### [Release from U.S. Coast Guard](#)

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DAKAR, Senegal – The Famous-class medium-endurance USCGC Spencer (WMEC 905) arrived in Dakar, Senegal for a scheduled port visit following a multinational maritime security patrol, Jan. 17, 2023, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet said in a Jan. 19 release.

Spencer’s visit to Dakar included meetings with Capt. Karim Mara, Senegalese deputy chief of naval staff, as well as leaders from the Senegalese Navy and the U.S. Office of Security Cooperation. Prior to the port visit, Spencer embarked maritime counterparts from Cabo Verde, Senegal, and The Gambia for a security patrol to identify and deter illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as build living marine resource enforcement capacity with African partner nations.

“We were able to build maritime domain awareness with our

partners by establishing an offshore law enforcement presence that demonstrated Cabo Verde's, Senegal's, and The Gambia's commitment to maritime security and living marine resource enforcement. We did this by conducting combined maritime law enforcement operations and effectively communicating and coordinating with each country's Maritime Operations Center," said Cmdr. Corey Kerns, Spencer's commanding officer.

This deployment demonstrates NAVAF's [U.S. Naval Forces Africa's] and the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment and longstanding partnership to work with our African partners to counter illicit maritime activity in the Atlantic Ocean. The U.S. Coast Guard regularly integrates and operates within the NAVAF area of operations. The U.S. Coast Guard's authorities and capabilities provide the Joint Force with unique tools that bridge the cooperation-to-conflict continuum.

Senegal and the United States share a proud history of promoting peace and security in Africa. Later this month, Senegal will participate in the NAVAF-led exercise Obangame Express 2023, the largest annual maritime security exercise in Western Africa. These types of exercises strengthen partnerships and allow countries to work more closely on shared transnational maritime challenges.

"The United States and Senegal enjoy an exceptional security partnership that bolsters our shared efforts to promote peace and security in West Africa, combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and protect marine resources," said Mike Raynor, U.S. Ambassador to Senegal. "The arrival of USCGC Spencer to Dakar reflects that robust partnership."

The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety, and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa's prosperity and access to global markets.

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, headquartered in Portsmouth,

Virginia, oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains.

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## Coast Guard, Partners Tracking Russian Vessel off Hawaiian Coast



In recent weeks, the U.S. Coast Guard has continued to monitor a Russian vessel, believed to be an intelligence gathering ship, off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands. The Coast Guard continues to coordinate with Department of Defense partners, providing updates to foreign vessel movements and activities and to appropriately meet presence with presence to encourage international maritime norms. Source: [dvidshub](#)

[Release from U.S. Coast Guard](#)

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HONOLULU – In recent weeks, the U.S. Coast Guard has continued

to monitor a Russian vessel, believed to be an intelligence gathering ship, off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands, the Coast Guard 14th District said in a release.

While foreign military vessels may transit freely through the U.S. economic exclusive zone (EEZ), as per customary international laws, foreign-flagged military vessels have often been observed operating and loitering within Coast Guard District Fourteen's area of response.

The Coast Guard continues to coordinate with Department of Defense partners, providing updates to foreign vessel movements and activities and to appropriately meet presence with presence to encourage international maritime norms.

"The U.S. Coast Guard is currently monitoring the Russian vessel operating in the vicinity of Hawaii," said Cmdr. Dave Milne, chief of External Affairs. "As part of our daily operations, we track all vessels in the Pacific area through surface and air assets and joint agency capabilities. The Coast Guard operates in accordance with international laws of the sea to ensure all nations can do the same without fear or contest. This is especially critical to secure freedom of movement and navigation throughout the Blue Pacific."

As a part of the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard is the lead federal agency for at-sea enforcement of U.S. fisheries laws; additionally, the Coast Guard assists in the enforcement of laws on the high seas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States' exclusive economic zone. Law and treaty enforcement account for approximately 1/3 of the Coast Guard's annual budget.

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# USCGC Decisive Returns Home from Final Patrol



The Reliance-class medium endurance cutter USCGC Decisive (WMEC 629) conduct at sea engagements with the navy of Guatemala in the territorial seas of Guatemala on Oct. 25 – 26, 2021. The U.S. Coast Guard conducts routine deployments in the Southern Command area of responsibility, works alongside partners, builds maritime domain awareness, and shares best practices with partner nation navies and coast guards. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

[Release from U.S. Coast Guard](#)

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PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of the USCGC Decisive (WMEC 629) returned to their homeport in Pensacola, Jan. 13, following a 33-day patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, concluding 55 years of service to the Nation, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a Jan. 18 release.

Decisive patrolled the Eastern Pacific Ocean in the Coast Guard Eleventh District's area of operations. While underway,

the Decisive's crew supported the Coast Guard's drug interdiction and search and rescue missions to promote safety of life at sea and deter the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States.

While deployed, Decisive's crew collaborated with Coast Guard assets and foreign military aircraft to detect, deter, and interdict illegal narcotics voyages. At one point, Decisive disrupted two vessels suspected of drug trafficking in the same night. Decisive also collaborated with the USCGC Alert (WMEC 630) to safely transfer three suspected smugglers. While aboard Decisive, the detainees received food, water, shelter and medical attention.

"The crew's remarkable professionalism, competence and determination were on full display as we met the diverse challenges of operations at sea," said Cmdr. Aaron Delano-Johnson, commanding officer of Decisive. "Whether it was conducting simultaneous boardings or our skilled engineers conducting voyage repairs in Panama, the crew exceeded expectations at every turn. After a successful, final patrol for Decisive, we are looking forward to returning home to our family and friends on shore."

During the patrol, Decisive traveled more than 6,000 miles and traversed through the Panama Canal. By transiting the historic waterway, Decisive's crew earned their Order of the Ditch certificates, a time-honored nautical tradition recognizing mariners who have crossed the Panama Canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Decisive is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter with a crew of 72. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

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# Chaplain Admiral: Navy Growing Chaplain Force by 90 to Staff Destroyers



PEARL HARBOR (July 7, 2022) U.S. Navy Chief of Chaplains, Rear Adm. Gregory Todd speaks to partner-nation members during the International Chaplaincy Symposium at Joint Base Pearl Harbor as part of Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2022. Twenty-six nations, 38 ships, four submarines, more than 170 aircraft and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC from June 29 to Aug. 4 in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships among participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. RIMPAC 2022 is the 28th

exercise in the series that began in 1971. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Royal Australian Navy LSIS Kylie Jagiello)

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ARLINGTON, Va. –The U.S. Navy’s chief of chaplains said the service expects to increase the number of serving chaplains by 90 over the next five years in order to provide chaplains to the guided-missile destroyer (DDG) fleet as those ships deploy.

Two years ago the commander, Naval Surface Forces, requested that the Navy provide chaplains to DDGs. Previously, sea-going billets for chaplains were typically limited to ships – such as aircraft carriers and amphibious warfare ships – that had large crews.

Rear Adm. Gregory N. Todd, chief of chaplains, speaking in an online conversation with retired Rear Adm. Frank Thorp IV, President and CEO of the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington as one of the memorial’s SITREP Speaker Series events, said the program to assign chaplains to deploying DDGs is in place and is showing good results.

“The data that is coming as a result of that is a reduction in a lot of the bad behavior–NJP [non-judicial punishment, low morale issues, retention issues,” Todd said. “It’s apparent that the chaplains on board are change agents. Can we pinpoint exactly how that change happens? Not yet. But we do know that there is some sort of concurrent effect of attending to people’s spirituality or spiritual readiness within that [DDG’s] command, creating a venue where it’s okay and then its resultant impact on some of their negative behaviors.”

## **First Increase in Chaplains Since Cold War**

Todd oversees a force of about 1,100 chaplains – active and reserve – plus enlisted religion affairs specialists that

provide service to 570,000 Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen and their families.

The increase in the number of chaplains is the first time the force has grown since the end of the Cold War, Todd said.

“The Navy is hiring, and I’m trying to beat the bushes to the religious organizations of America,” the admiral said. “Send us your best. It’s a great opportunity; it’s a great place to work.

“If I were to hold up what’s unique about this ministry, it’s the interaction with 18-to-25-year-olds,” he said. “We’re just immersed in a world of leadership. ... It’s operating in the public square, not confined to the church on the corner. Here we are, interacting with the whole Navy trying to impact the institution for the better.”

Todd said the Coast Guard “has put us on notice that they intend to ask for more [chaplains], and the Marine Corps as well is looking at the question of adding more chaplains. So, right now, there is a realization that spiritual readiness does have an impact on the operational forces. If you attend to individual readiness in the aggregate, you’ll also build the readiness of the unit and the team.”

Earlier in his career, Todd served as Chaplain of the Coast Guard and Chaplain of the Marine Corps.