FRCSW Inducts Its First CMV-22 to Suffer Mishap

The VRM-30 CMV-22 Osprey inducted by FRCSW on January 13 is pictured in Building 333. The inner composite skin of the aircraft suffered a four-foot by two-foot crack during a mishap. FRCSW, FST, PMA-275 and industry partners developed a repair plan to return the aircraft to its squadron. *U.S. NAVY*

NAVAL AIR STATION NORTH ISLAND, Calif. – Fleet Readiness Center Southwest artisans and the Fleet Support Team recently joined industry partners and the V-22 Joint Program Office (PMA-275) to prevent the loss of an CMV-22 Osprey aircraft which had suffered damage during a mishap, the center said March 8.

The right-hand inner composite skin of the $75 million aircraft sustained a four-foot by two-foot crack with other, but minor, composite damage.

“A lot of people would have said, `Hey, we need to strike this

aircraft,’ but the engineers at the FST and our industry partners decided to figure out a way to keep this asset in the fleet,” said Col. Brian Taylor, PMA-275 program manager.

John Sandoval, sheet metal mechanic work lead, said the repair required replacing the inner skin panel.

“We’ve removed over 1,200 fasteners separated by over 42 feet of composite inner skin to composite outer skin,” he said. “This proved to be difficult because this is the first of its kind repair.”

The V-22 is unique to other airframes serviced by the command because of its aluminum, carbon/epoxy composite fuselage and empennage. Its wings and nacelles are also composite and fiberglass.

The aircraft, assigned to Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron 30 (VRM-30), was inducted by FRCSW on Jan. 13 as an in-service repair, or repairs outside of scheduled maintenance.

“This is the first major ISR and first mishap aircraft my team has performed on a CMV-22,” said Michael Dixon, FRCSW V-22 production manager.

He said the labor-intense repair would require about 70 days and more than 2,800 man-hours to complete, with sheet metal work taking most of those hours.

In addition to four sheet metal mechanics, other artisans needed to ensure a successful repair include electricians, mechanics, quality assurance and planner and estimator personnel. All will work in conjunction with engineering departments from the FST and Boeing.

“These capabilities are what really makes Naval Air Systems Command, the FST and the PMA-275 program so incredibly important to this community because we have the ability to

take care of our own stuff and keep these assets in the fight," Col. Taylor said.

"The planning department estimated the repair will cost $390,500. Currently, we are tracking to complete the repair on schedule and under budget," Dixon added.

The Osprey will be returned to VRM-30 when complete. In the meantime, a safety investigation relating to the mishap is underway.

Cutter Steadfast Returns Home Following Migrant-Interdiction, Counter-Narcotics Patrol

The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast crew conducts cutter boat pursuit training with a crew from the Coast Guard Cutter Forrest Rednour on Feb. 8. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ASTORIA, Oregon. – The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) and crew returned to the cutter's homeport in Astoria March 7 after a 48-day patrol of the California coast, the cutter's crew said in a release.

The 54-year-old cutter and crew conducted drug and migrant interdiction, living marine resource protection and search and rescue operations along the U.S.-Mexico maritime border.

The Steadfast crew coordinated with Customs and Border Protection, Coast Guard aircraft and Mexican Navy vessels to interdict three boats suspected of attempting to illegally transport migrants into the United States, resulting in the safe recovery and repatriation of 75 people.

Additionally, the crew boarded 23 U.S. vessels operating in the area and participated in a multi-asset search operation following a flare sighting.

“This was a challenging yet successful patrol for the crew of Steadfast, highlighting the important interagency effort required to secure our maritime borders,” said Cmdr. Craig Allen, commanding officer of the Steadfast. “It was rewarding to work alongside our many partners during the patrol, including Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Border Patrol, and both Mexican and U.S. Navy assets.”

The Steadfast’s permanent crew makeup is 63 enlisted personnel and 12 officers. To aid in this patrol, the permanent party welcomed multiple temporary duty members from across the nation, including: Petty Officer 1st Class Bradley Kwasny and Petty Officer 2nd Class Christian Matranca, both from Maritime Safety and Security Team San Francisco; Petty Officer 2nd Class Aaron Holroyd from Training Center Yorktown,Virginia; and Lt. Ryan Guinee from the Surface Forces Logistic Center – Patrol Boat Product Line in Seattle.

“We had a top-notch team on this patrol, and I’m especially proud of them for overcoming some difficult equipment casualties that were necessary to keep the 54-year-old cutter mission capable,” Allen said. “The crew achieved noteworthy results due to superb skill and professionalism. We’re also thankful to the men and women at Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles for the excellent support they provided during multiple port visits.”

Commissioned in 1968, the Steadfast is a 210-foot Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter homeported in Astoria and routinely deploys in support of counter-drug, migrant interdiction, fisheries, and search and rescue and homeland security missions.

Patrol Ship USS Tempest Decommissioned in Bahrain

Patrol coastal ship USS Tempest (PC 2) transits the Arabian Gulf, July 20, 2021. *U.S. ARMY / Spc. Joseph DeLuco*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The coastal patrol ship USS Tempest (PC 2) was decommissioned in ceremonies held March 7 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain after 29 years of service.

The Tempest, the oldest serving PC, is the third PC of the U.S. 5th Fleet to be decommissioned this year. Its retirement was preceded in February by USS Firebolt and USS Typhoon. Lt. Cmdr. Matthew J. Intoccia was Tempest's last commanding officer. Seven PCs remain in service in the 5th Fleet.

The 179-foot-long Tempest was built by Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana, and was commissioned Aug. 21, 1993. After serving off Haiti in 1994 in support of Operations Uphold Democracy and Restore Democracy. After 9/11, the Tempest

patrolled the coast of the United States in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

With the Coast Guard needing more capacity for maritime security patrols, the Navy transferred five PCs to the Coast Guard, first in an “in commission, special” status, then decommissioned for full transfer to the Coast Guard. Tempest became WPC 2 on 1 October 2004. The ship was returned to the Navy on Aug. 22, 2008, and recommissioned into the Navy’s fleet as PC 2 on Aug. 23. 2008. The Tempest had been assigned to the 5th Fleet since 2013.

In an interview published on the 5th Fleet website, Intoccia said the “capstone of my time on Tempest is undoubtedly our last patrol. I consider it a culmination of all the hard work and dedication over our past 18 months. Together, with our battle buddy USS Typhoon and our embarked U.S. Coast Guard team, we conducted multiple interdictions with a high seizure yield. In my opinion, we reached the apex of the ship’s capability during that patrol, and I could not be more proud of my crew’s performance.

“I hope Tempest is remembered as a capable bastion of our nation’s commitment to free and unimpeded navigation in the maritime domain, and for her rich legacy of joint and multinational cooperation,” he said. “Small in stature and crew but mighty in deed, Tempest has been operated by our country’s best during 29 years of U.S. Navy service.”

Coast Guard, Partner Agencies

Respond to Haitian Migration Venture off Florida Keys

Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and partner agencies crews respond to a suspected Haitian migrant venture, March 6, approximately 200 yards off Ocean Reef, Florida. The vessel grounded Sunday with no injuries reported. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection and partner agencies responded to a grounded Haitian vessel on March 6, approximately 200 yards off Ocean Reef in Key Largo, Florida, the Coast Guard 7th District said March 7.

Coast Guard, CBP and partner agencies rescued 356 Haitians from the vessel and no injuries were reported. A good Samaritan notified Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders March 6, at approximately 1 p.m., of a blue Haitian vessel

grounded off Ocean Reef.

“We worked seamlessly with our state and federal partners to safely remove all the persons from this vessel.” said Capt. Jeffrey Randall, chief of Staff, Coast Guard 7th District. “The Coast Guard and partner agencies are continuously patrolling the Mona Passage, Windward Passage, Caribbean Sea and the approaches to the United States to stop these dangerous and unsafe voyages.”

“The coordinated and timely response of the U.S. Border Patrol and our federal, state, and local partners potentially saved the lives of these migrants today,” said Walter N. Slosar, chief patrol agent, U.S. Border Patrol, Miami Sector.

U.S. Naval Aviation No Stranger to Southeast Europe Operations

A German air force A400M tanker, left, and an F/A-18E Super Hornet, attached to the "Sunliners" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 81, fly over the north Aegean Sea March 4. *ELECTRONIC ATTACK SQUADRON 137*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The skies over southeast Europe are not normally associated with the history of U.S. naval aviation, but the current patrols being flown over the region by Navy aircraft from the aircraft carrier U.S Harry S. Truman are just the latest of at least three operations conducted by U.S. naval aviation in the region since the end of the Cold War. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered the latest operations.

The USS Harry S. Truman carrier strike group, with Carrier Air Wing One (CVW-1) embarked in the carrier, is deployed to the Mediterranean, operating in support of NATO operations. The CSG has operated in the restrictive waters of the Adriatic Sea and the Aegean Sea on this deployment as well. The routine deployment also is showing the value of forward-deployed naval forces, available on short notice to respond to international crises.

“Conducting enhanced Air Policing from North Aegean waters further illustrates NATO’s continued ability to share and pool existing capabilities,” said Rear Adm. Curt Renshaw, commander, Carrier Strike Group Eight, in a March 7 release from the U.S. 6th Fleet. “We set out to prove that this dynamic employment of an aircraft carrier – in pretty restrictive waters – could be done, and in doing so, we have demonstrated the enduring U.S. commitment to Allies.”

U.S. carriers in the region provided air cover and close air support in the early-to-mid-1990s during Operations Deliberate Force and Deny Flight during the civil wars that broke out as Yugoslavia splintered eventually into seven separate nations.

In 1999, during Operation Allied Force, U.S. carriers in the Adriatic Sea launched strikes into Serbia and Kosovo to protect the Kosovars from Serbian action. Navy P-3C Orion patrol aircraft also launched Standoff Land-Attack Missiles against Serbian targets. Navy and Marine Corps EA-6B and F/A-18 aircraft operated from bases in Italy as well.

In recent years, Navy P-3, P-8, and EP-3 maritime patrol reconnaissance aircraft expanded patrols over the Black Sea region.

This week, CVW-1 aircraft, including F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters and EA-18G Growler electronic attack aircraft, have flown patrols in the region to defend NATO nations’ airspace as part of the NATO Response Force. The squadrons conducting the patrols include strike fighter squadrons VFA-11, VFA-34, VFA-81 and VFA-211 as well as electronic attack squadron VAQ-137.

In recent weeks, CVW-1’s squadrons also have flown in training exercises with the Romanian and Italian air forces.

SECDEF Orders Closure of Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in Hawaii

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro receives a brief on well operation and recovery initiatives from Capt. Burt Hornyak, commanding officer, Fleet Logistics Center Pearl Harbor during a tour of the Red Hill Well in Aiea, Hawaii, in February. Secretary Del Toro was in Hawaii to meet with families and see the progress that has been made in restoring and protecting the island's safe drinking water. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chelsea D. Meiller*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III made the following statement March 7 announcing the decision to close a Navy petroleum storage facility near Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which recently leaked and affected the Navy's drinking water

system for the area:

“After close consultation with senior civilian and military leaders, I have decided to defuel and permanently close the Red Hill bulk fuel storage facility in Hawaii.

“This is a multi-step process. Throughout the process, we will work closely with the Hawaii Department of Health and with the Environmental Protection Agency to safely defuel the Red Hill facility. No later than May 31, the Secretary of the Navy and Director of the Defense Logistics Agency will provide an action plan for safe and expeditious defueling of the facility, with a completion date target of 12 months. Then, as soon as we have made corrective actions to ensure that defueling will be safe, we will begin defueling. Then we will move to permanently close the Red Hill facility, including conducting any and all necessary environmental remediation around the facility.

“This is the right thing to do.

“Centrally located bulk fuel storage of this magnitude likely made sense in 1943, when Red Hill was built. And Red Hill has served our armed forces well for many decades. But it makes a lot less sense now. The distributed and dynamic nature of our force posture in the Indo-Pacific, the sophisticated threats we face, and the technology available to us demand an equally advanced and resilient fueling capability. To a large degree, we already avail ourselves of dispersed fueling at sea and ashore, permanent and rotational. We will now expand and accelerate that strategic distribution.

“Moreover, when we use land for military purposes, at home or abroad, we commit to being good stewards of that resource. Closing Red Hill meets that commitment.

“We will continue our work with the Hawaii Department of Health, national and local elected officials, and other community leaders, to clean up the water at the Red Hill well.

And we will develop an environmental mitigation plan to address any future contamination concerns. When we begin to consider land-use options for the property after the fueling facility is closed, we will stay in lockstep with communities in Hawaii. Nothing will be decided without careful and thorough consultation with our partners.

“The same goes for our workforce and their families. Your health has been impacted, your lives and livelihoods have been disrupted, and in many cases, your very homes have been rendered unavailable to you. We owe you the very best health care we can provide, answers to your many questions, and clean, safe drinking water. Quite frankly, we owe you a return to normal. And you have my commitment to that end.”

Throughout this process, and moving forward, we have remained grateful for the partnership and guidance of our federal, congressional, state, and community stakeholders. These consultations, which will continue, have both informed and strengthened our planning, and we are deeply appreciative of this support.

I set about achieving three priorities when I took this office: defend the nation, take care of our people, and succeed through teamwork. I believe my decision to shut down the Red Hill bulk fuel storage facility aligns with all three of these priorities.

Marine Corps Joint Air-to-Ground Missile achieves

Initial Operational Capability

Marines pilot an AH-1Z Viper during a joint air-to-ground missile operational test at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, Dec. 6, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. Gabrielle Sanders*

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Marine Corps declared initial operating capability for the AGM-179A Joint Air-to-Ground Missile on the AH-1Z Viper effective 1 March 2022, the Naval Air Systems Command said March 4.

JAGM, a joint program with the Army, is a precision-guided missile that combines semi-active laser guidance and millimeter-wave radar. It is an air-to-surface precision-guided munition used on joint rotary-wing, unmanned aircraft systems, and fixed-wing platforms to destroy high-value, stationary and moving, land and maritime targets.

“IOC marks a major milestone for the JAGM program and significant increase in capability for the AH-1Z,” said Cmdr. J. Reid Adams, deputy program manager for precision-guided

missiles. “This accomplishment is a true testament of the tireless efforts made by so many across DoD and our industry partners to support the warfighter.”

The JAGM program successfully completed a thorough initial operational test and evaluation period with a recommendation to field the missile. AH-1Z pilots tested JAGM off the coast of Florida in November 2021 and conducted land-based testing in Arizona in December 2021.

IOC was achieved with missiles, training, and support equipment delivered to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267 to support an upcoming deployment with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

“Incorporating systems such as JAGM on the AH-1Z is essential in keeping the platform at the forefront of warfighting capabilities,” said Col. Vasilios Pappas, USMC H-1 light/attack helicopter program manager.

JAGM provides improved lethality, operational flexibility, and a reduced logistics footprint to the H-1 platform. It is part of an effort to upgrade the AH-1Z and UH-1Y aircraft in alignment with the Commandant’s vision of force modernization to maintain a competitive edge against potential adversaries.

Navy launches Ice Exercise 2022 in the Arctic Ocean

Virginia-class attack submarine USS Illinois (SSN 786) surfaces in the Beaufort Sea, kicking off Ice Exercise (ICEX) 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mike Demello*

U.S. NAVY ICE CAMP QUEENFISH – Commander, Submarine Forces officially kicked off Ice Exercise 2022 in the Arctic Ocean on Friday, March 4, after the building of Ice Camp Queenfish and arrival of two U.S. Navy fast attack submarines, Submarine Force Atlantic Public Affairs said March 6.

ICEX 2022 is a three-week exercise designed to research, test and evaluate operational capabilities in the Arctic region.

“The Arctic region can be unforgiving and challenging like no other place on Earth,” said Rear Adm. Richard Seif, commander of the Navy’s Undersea Warfighting Development Center in Groton, Connecticut, and the ranking officer of ICEX 2022. “It’s also changing and becoming more active with maritime activity. ICEX 2022 provides the Navy an opportunity to increase capability and readiness in this unique environment,

and to continue establishing best practices we can share with partners and allies who share the U.S.’s goal of a free and peaceful Arctic.”

The Arctic is experiencing a trend of diminishing sea ice extent and thickness creating the likelihood of increased maritime activity in the region, including trans-oceanic shipping and resource extraction.

The Navy’s Arctic Submarine Laboratory, based in San Diego, serves as the lead organization for coordinating, planning and executing the exercise involving representatives from four nations and more than 200 participants over the five weeks of operations.

In addition to the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel who are participating in the exercise, personnel from the Royal Canadian Air Force, Royal Canadian Navy and United Kingdom Royal Navy are participating.

U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Dave Swensen is leading a team of six from the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Center to assist in ICEX 2022.

“Any opportunities we can get to provide our personnel access to experience in extreme cold conditions will be force multipliers to our institution and ultimately to the Marine Corps,” said Swensen, who added that five of the center’s personnel taking part in ICEX are instructors at the Bridgeport, California, cold weather center for excellence. “We will come back among the most cold weather-experienced personnel at the base.”

A temporary ice camp is being established on a sheet of ice in the Arctic Ocean, known as an ice floe, to support testing submarine systems and other arctic research initiatives.

The camp, named Ice Camp Queenfish, will serve as a temporary command center for conducting operations and research in the

Arctic region. The camp consists of shelters, a command center, and infrastructure to safely house and support more than 60 personnel at any one time.

“At Ice Camp Queenfish, our teams can test equipment in a very harsh and demanding environment,” said Howard Reese, director of the Arctic Submarine Laboratory. “It’s important that all the technology we’re testing can perform in all of the oceans of the world, including the Arctic. Here, we can learn what works well in the Arctic and what doesn’t work as well, and we can make changes and improvements.”

The camp gets its namesake from USS Queenfish (SSN 651), the first Sturgeon-class submarine to operate under ice and the fourth submarine to reach the North Pole when it surfaced there on Aug. 6, 1970.

Submarines have conducted under-ice operations in the Arctic regions in support of inter-fleet transit, training, cooperative allied engagements and operations for more than 60 years. USS Nautilus (SSN 571) made the first transit in 1958. USS Skate (SSN 578) was the first U.S. submarine to surface through arctic ice at the North Pole in March, 1959.

Since those events, the U.S. Submarine Force has completed 97 Ice Exercises – ICEX 2022 is the 98th – the last being conducted in 2020.

Essex ARG, 11th MEU Return from Indo-Pac Deployment

Amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) arrives pierside at Naval Base San Diego. Essex, a part of the Essex Amphibious Ready Group, returned to Naval Base San Diego, March 4, after a deployment to U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th in support of regional stability and a free and open Info-Pacific. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Melvin Fatimehin*

SAN DIEGO – The Essex Amphibious Ready Group returned to port at Naval Base San Diego March 4, concluding a seven-month deployment to U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation, U.S. 3rd Fleet said in a release.

Essex ARG is comprised of the multi-purpose amphibious assault carrier USS Essex (LHD 2), amphibious transport dock USS Portland (LPD 27), and dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) led by Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 1.

Marines with the 11th MEU, embarked aboard the ships of the ready group, arrived off the coast of Southern California March 2 to disembark to Camp Pendleton, California, with a small contingent of MEU personnel remaining aboard the ships for the pierside arrival.

“It is a great honor to welcome the Essex ARG and the 11th MEU back to San Diego,” said Rear Adm. Wayne Baze, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 3. “I’m excited to have them home after a successful deployment. Their integrated operations while at sea are a testament to the Navy-Marine Corps team’s ability to face any challenge to accomplish the mission. I could not be more proud of the Sailors and Marines and am incredibly thankful for the families and friends they rejoin today who supported them.”

The Essex ARG and 11th MEU provided numbered fleet and combatant commanders with a responsive, flexible and forward-deployed asset capable of maritime power projection, contingency operations, and crisis response. Their capabilities enabled shaping of the operational environment to protect the United States and allied interests in any threat environment.

“Throughout the ARG-MEU’s 212-day deployment, I have been most humbled to have served alongside a highly skilled team of Sailors and Marines,” said Capt. Karrey Sanders, commander, PHIBRON 1. “Our integration as a combined blue-green team was nothing short of exceptional, and I am thankful to have not only showcased our amphibious capabilities throughout three Navy fleets together but to have created and shared countless memories that will last a lifetime.”

During deployment, Sailors and Marines supported Operation Freedom Sentinel and Operation Inherent Resolve. The ARG-MEU team also supported Large Scale Exercise 21, Exercise Indigo Defender 21, Red Sea Maritime Security Operations, Marine Exercise Philippines 22, and Noble Fusion 22.

In U.S. 5th Fleet, from September 2021 to January 2022, the ARG-MEU team operated in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, and Indian Ocean. The team conducted theater amphibious combat rehearsals in Kuwait, sustaining their readiness and proficiency in multiple full

mission profiles. During Exercise Indigo Defender, the Marines and Sailors spent two weeks with Saudi Naval Forces Western Fleet conducting bilateral training in amphibious operations, a mass casualty drill and integrated fires training to enhance proficiency and readiness while maintaining a tiered crisis response posture in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

While operating in U.S. 7th Fleet supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command from January to February 2022, the ARG conducted expeditionary strike force operations with the Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group in the South China Sea. ESF operations demonstrate U.S. capability to quickly aggregate an integrated naval force to operate all-domain warfare anywhere international law allows.

Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Returns Home from 3-Month Alaskan Patrol

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) moors at its new homeport at Base Honolulu Aug. 16, 2019. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Sherri Eng*

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Midgett returned to homeport in Honolulu, Hawaii, Friday after a three-month long Bering Sea patrol, the Coast Guard 14th District said March 4.

The crew of the Midgett enforced federal laws and regulations in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone near Alaska's Aleutian Islands chain.

They played a strategic role in protecting the nation's critical marine resources, enforcing fisheries and safety regulations, and were forward positioned to safeguard the U.S. commercial fishing fleet.

The crew of the Midgett also acted as a search and rescue platform while providing support to helicopter crews operating out of Dutch Harbor and Cold Bay, Alaska. This increased operational range for the aircrews and provided them with fuel

for high-endurance missions.

The crew also conducted training and emergency response drills.

“Navigating Alaskan waters was extremely exciting and rewarding,” said the Midgett’s commanding officer, Capt. Willie Carmichael. “I’m proud and impressed by my crew’s service and commitment to promote safety and security in Alaskan fisheries that are so vital to the U.S. economy.”