

Keel Authenticated for Future LPD USS Harrisburg



The amphibious transport dock ships USS San Antonio (LPD 17) and USS New York (LPD 21) in 2011 off the coast of Virginia. They are sister ships to the future USS Harrisburg (LPD 30). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Edwin F. Bryan*

WASHINGTON – The keel for the future USS Harrisburg (LPD 30), the Navy's 14th San Antonio class-amphibious transport dock ship and the first Flight II ship, was laid at Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding, Jan. 28, Team Ships Public Affairs said in a release.

A keel laying is the recognition of the start of a ship's construction. It is the joining together of a ship's modular components and the authentication or etching of an honoree's initials into a ceremonial keel plate. The ship's sponsor,

Alexandra Curry, wife of Middletown, Pennsylvania, Mayor Jim Curry, had her initials etched into the keel plate by HII welders.

“LPD 30 marks the beginning of the LPD Flight II builds and the continuation of the superb capability that the San Antonio Class platform has brought to the Navy–Marine Corps team,” said Cedric McNeal, program manager, Amphibious Warfare Program Office, Program Executive Office Ships. “With its flexibility and adaptability, LPD Flight II ships are essential to projecting power and delivering the combat capability needed to shape the future fleet.”

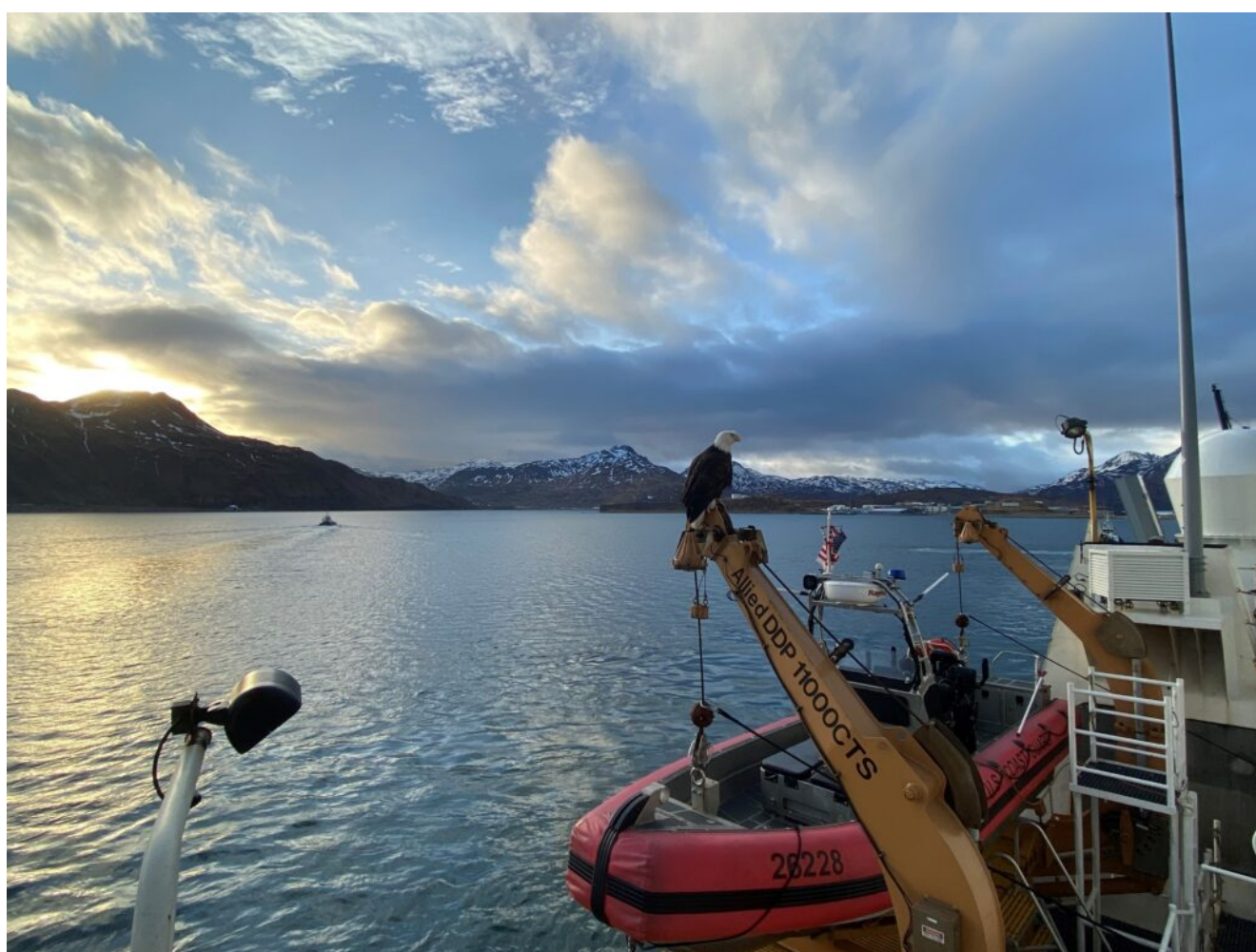
The city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and her surrounding region play a central role in our national defense infrastructure, hosting a myriad of defense logistics and naval supply support activities that bring support and sustenance to our Navy’s fleet and our forward deployed Sailors and Marines. This is the second U.S. Navy ship to be named after the city of Harrisburg. The first was a troopship acquired during World War I.

The LPD Flight II ships will be the functional replacement for the Whidbey Island-class (LSD 41/49) dock landing ships. The San Antonio-class is designed to support embarking, transporting, and landing Marines and their equipment by conventional or air-cushioned landing craft. The ship’s capabilities are further enhanced by its flight deck and hangar, enabling the ship to operate a variety of Marine Corps helicopters and the Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. Because of the ships inherent capabilities, they are able to support a variety of amphibious assault, special operations, expeditionary warfare, or disaster relief missions, operating independently or as part of amphibious ready groups, expeditionary strike groups, or joint task forces.

HII’s Ingalls Shipbuilding Division is currently in production of the future USS Richard S. McCool (LPD 29) and the future

USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 29). LPD 28 and 29 will serve as transition ships to LPD 30.

Coast Guard Cutter Waesche Completes Bering Sea Patrol



During a brief stop for logistics in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, a bald eagle made Coast Guard Cutter Waesche's dual point davit its home for the afternoon. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Waesche returned to homeport in Alameda Jan. 29 following a 77-day Bering Sea patrol, during which the cutter and crew served as the ready asset for homeland defense and search and rescue,

supporting the \$5.9 billion commercial fishing industry.

This was the Waesche's first deployment since a major machinery space fire left the cutter at the pier for 10 months for dockside repairs and planned system upgrades.

The Waesche provided presence amongst Bering Sea fishing fleets and enforced compliance with applicable fisheries regulations, monitored the U.S.-Russian Maritime Boundary Line, and conducted rigorous training exercises. Augmenting the cutter's own capabilities were an embarked MH-65 helicopter and aviation detachment from Air Station Kodiak, as well as a ScanEagle drone. The helicopter supported two medical evacuations from a remote town in the Aleutian Islands.

The cutter and crew traveled more than 12,000 miles since departing Alameda Nov. 13, spanning the U.S. West Coast, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska. Members honed essential competencies through extensive damage control drills, helicopter operations, major and minor caliber gunnery exercises, and small boat operations.

The drills culminated in the Tailored Ship's Training Availability in San Diego. There, crewmembers demonstrated their knowledge and abilities while being evaluated by the Coast Guard's Afloat Training Organization. For many members of the crew, their skills are not only rooted in the significant training conducted aboard over the course of the deployment, but also from experience gained while combatting actual damage sustained during the Waesche's machinery space fire.

Supplementing the Waesche's extensive suite of military communications was a prototype underway Wi-Fi network added prior to this patrol and championed by the Sea Duty Readiness Council and the Office of Cutter Forces.

"The addition of Wi-Fi underway has been a game changer for

family connectivity, where crew members are able to easily text or call home and participate in major life events such as buying a home or being there on video Christmas morning as kids open presents,” said Commanding Officer Capt. Jason Ryan.

**HII Names Chris Kastner
President and CEO**



HII's Christopher Kastner, who will become president and CEO on March 1. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries announced Jan. 27 its board of directors elected Chief Operating Officer Chris Kastner to become HII president and chief executive officer, consistent with the company's succession plan. The board also elected President and CEO Mike Petters to become executive vice chairman of the board for a transition period. Both changes are effective March 1.

Petters and Kastner, who has acted over the past decade as chief financial officer, head of corporate strategy and divisional financial officer, are credited with nurturing the company's current \$48 billion shipbuilding backlog. The pair also steered its recent technology-oriented acquisitions to strengthen and broaden the capabilities HII delivers to customers.

"We've spent the past 11 years building a company for the 21st century," said Petters, who took the helm of HII when Northrop Grumman spun off its shipbuilding business in 2011, after leading in various capacities for 24 years within HII's shipbuilding divisions. "HII is now that company, with a leadership team and portfolio to serve our nation's critical national security needs. I am proud of the work we have done together and excited to watch the company fulfill its promise. I have complete confidence in Chris and the senior leadership team in this next chapter."

Starting March 1, Petters will support the leadership transition as executive vice chairman and will remain an HII employee through 2022, during which time he will continue to represent HII. Succeeding Petters as CEO, Kastner brings extensive leadership and program management experience. Kastner was promoted to his current COO position in February 2021, after serving as HII's executive vice president and chief financial officer since March 2016. Kastner also served

as vice president and CFO for HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division based in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Prior to HII's spin-off from Northrop Grumman in 2011, he held increasingly responsible positions on the B-2, Joint STARS and Global Hawk programs, and served as corporate director of strategic transactions. His selection to succeed Petters is part of HII's multi-year succession planning process.

"Given HII's support for national security, the company takes business continuity extremely seriously," said Kirk Donald, chairman of the board of HII. "We are grateful to Mike for his immeasurable contribution to the nation, and for what is now a supremely responsible leadership hand-off. The entire board joins me in congratulating Chris as he takes the helm of HII. The company's workforce and customers can be confident that HII's work will carry on with the same great sense of mission and service to our customers and our country."

In addition to overseeing HII's growth during his leadership tenure, Petters has also become a leading voice in the business community on matters of ethics, pre-K education and workforce development. Petters will also continue to serve as chairman of the board of governors of the Aerospace Industry Association, an advocacy organization on behalf of aerospace and defense companies.

Members of Coast Guard Port Security Unit Return Home After Nine-Month Deployment



Family and friends greet members of PSU 313 on their return from extended deployment, Jan. 27. PSU 313 operations focused on seaward security and provided around-the-clock waterside and shore side anti-terrorism and force protection defense security to Department of Defense assets and personnel at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Tippets*

Everett, Wash. – Members from Coast Guard Port Security Unit 313 returned to Everett, Washington, Jan. 27 following a nine-month deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

During the deployment, unit operations focused on seaward security, providing more than 42,000 hours of around-the-clock waterside and shore side anti-terrorism and force protection defense security to Department of Defense assets and personnel at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

PSU 313's operations also consisted of escorting marine traffic in and out of port as well as enforcing the naval defense sea area security zone around the base. Unit personnel worked closely with service members from Joint Task Force,

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Harbor Patrol Unit, Marine Corps Security Forces Company, and Air Force and Army personnel conducting interagency operations and training at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and along adjoining waters.

“The success of this unit in its deployment, in the midst of a global pandemic, is testament to the resilience of the crew and the priority each places on shipmate support and mission excellence,” said Cmdr. James W. Fitzgerald, PSU 313’s commanding officer. “Our members excelled in this joint operating environment, expanding inter-service operability and capabilities, and exceeded every established metric for accomplishing our assigned tasking. Their devotion to duty and the support from their families at home during this deployment have been inspiring. With the mission now complete, we look forward to our members reintegrating with their families.”

As both a federal law enforcement agency and an armed force, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to conduct defense operations in support of combatant commanders on all seven continents. The service routinely provides forces in joint military operations worldwide, including the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft, and deployable specialized forces.

Commissioned in 1998, PSU 313 is one of eight U.S. Coast Guard port security units located across the United States. PSUs are Coast Guard Reserve-staffed units and deployable specialized forces assigned to the commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area. PSUs are capable of providing the Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and interagency operational and tactical commanders with equipped, trained, and organized expeditionary forces who are ready to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice to execute anti-terrorism and force protection operations within ports, harbors, littoral waters, or in the point defense of high value assets.

PSU 313’s previous overseas deployments include Korea (2000,

2007, 2013); Kuwait (2003, 2010); Haiti (2010); and Guantanamo Bay (2007, 2015). The unit also defended Naval Magazine Indian Island, Washington, in the months after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Navy Tweaks Guidance for COVID Shipboard Measures to Comply with Updated CDC Advice



A group of first class petty officers take the Navy-Wide Advancement Exam at Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo, Jan. 25. In alignment with Navy guidance, CFAS Sailors are taking the NWAEE over a three-day testing period allowing for smaller groups of test takers to maintain adequate social distancing as part of continued COVID-19 mitigations. *U.S. NAVY / Mass*

Communication Specialist 1st Class Jeremy Graham

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has updated guidance to commanders for keeping COVID-19 infections off ships, and what to do if prevention measures fail.

The latest Standardized Operation Guidance (5.0), issued by Vice Adm. William Merz, deputy chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy, makes changes to how long Sailors testing positive for the coronavirus must be isolated based on the latest recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The guidance, issued Jan. 15, includes information for commanders on restriction of movement, when to test and quarantine Sailors. It also streamlines health protection measures for ships.

After the massive COVID outbreak on the USS Theodore Roosevelt in 2020 that sidelined the carrier in Guam for months, Navy leadership determined “that our guidance to our commanding officers was insufficient, that we really needed to be much more detailed, that we had to consult with scientists and environmental experts” on how to operate effectively in a contained environment during a pandemic, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday told the Surface Navy Association symposium Jan. 11,

“It is my responsibility to deliver the most capable force and this guidance helps us maximize mission readiness,” Merz said in an Aug. 26 statement about the new guidance. “Vaccinations, vaccine boosters, command engagement, and personal accountability are the foundation of our success in fighting COVID.”

The announcement came the same day the Navy revealed it had dismissed another 23 Sailors for refusing vaccination, bringing the total to 45 kicked out since the vaccination deadline expired in late 2021.

The Navy's new guidance, which applies to all uniformed Navy personnel "at home and deployed," cuts isolation time for Sailors testing positive for COVID but showing no, or greatly improving, symptoms – such as no fever for 24 hours – to five days, although they must wear masks for another five days to minimize the risk of infecting others.

The CDC said the change "is motivated by science demonstrating that the majority of SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and the 2-3 days after." While vaccine booster shots are not yet required, the Navy guidance recommended them "because all studies are converging on the need for a vaccine booster to ensure enduring protection." The booster "has essentially become the next-shot in a series and will likely become mandatory in the near future," according to the guidance.

However, the guidance asserted that Navy Surgeon General Rear Adm. Bruce Gillingham is the authority for Navy COVID-19 measures. Changes in CDC guidance on virus behavior should first be evaluated by Gillingham "prior to fleet implementation."

Coast Guard Intercepts 191 Haitians near Bahamas



Coast Guard Kathleen Moore's crew located a green and blue sail freighter with 191 people aboard during a routine patrol about 40 miles southwest of Great Inagua, Bahamas, Jan 25. The crew provided life jackets and brought the Haitians aboard the Coast Guard Cutters Reliance and Kathleen Moore due to safety of life at sea concerns. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MIAMI – The Coast Guard intercepted 191 Haitians aboard an overloaded sail freighter Jan. 25, about 40 miles southwest of Great Inagua, Bahamas.

Coast Guard Kathleen Moore's crew located a green and blue sail freighter with 191 people aboard during a routine patrol at approximately 1 a.m. The crew provided life jackets and brought the people aboard Coast Guard Cutters Reliance and Kathleen Moore due to safety of life at sea concerns.

"The Coast Guard maintains a persistent presence patrolling the waters around Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas, to help prevent loss of life on the high seas," said Lt. David Steele, Coast Guard liaison officer,

U.S. Embassy Haiti. “These grossly overloaded vessels operate without proper safety equipment and are not built for these hazardous voyages.”

Since Oct. 1, 2021, Coast Guard crews have rescued 802 Haitians compared with:

- 1,527 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2021
- 418 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2020
- 932 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2019
- 609 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2018
- 419 Haitian Migrants in Fiscal Year 2017

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all persons receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crew members were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19.

Austal USA Celebrates Keel Laying for Navy's Future Flight II EPF Cody



Averil Spencer, sponsor of the future USNS Cody, speaks at the keel laying ceremony. *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA celebrated the Jan. 26 keel laying of the future USNS Cody (EPF 14) at its ship manufacturing facility in Mobile, Alabama, the company said in a release.

Cody is a Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport (EPF), one of 15 the Navy has contracted Austal to build. The ship is the first U.S. Navy ship named for the city of Cody in Wyoming.

A keel laying ceremony is the formal recognition of the start of a ship's construction. At Austal USA, the keel laying symbolically recognizes module erection in final assembly and the ceremonial beginning of a ship.

The ship's sponsor is Averil Spencer, founder and executive director of Launch gURLs, a nonprofit that aims to close the gender gap in economic opportunities through entrepreneurship programming for adolescent girls globally. In honor of the

U.S. Navy ship keel laying tradition, Spencer welded her initials onto a metal plate that will be installed in the ship. She was assisted by Austal USA A-class welder Amy Cunningham.

T-EPFs 14 and 15 will be built as Flight II variants. The Flight II Variant is an adaptive, modular package that can better host an embarked unit or be set up as a Role 2E medical facility, capable of performing primary surgery, resuscitative trauma surgery, critical care, oxygen generation, blood operations, laboratory functions, and associated ancillary services. The Flight II variant also incorporates an 11-meter workboat for mission use.

USCGC Thetis Returns Home from 68-day Counter-Narcotic Deployment



USCGC Thetis (WMEC 910) crew members conduct rescue hoist training with the crew of an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Miami on Jan. 12. The flight crew consisted of members from U.S. Coast Guard Air Stations Miami and Houston and Aviation Training Center Mobile, Alabama. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class John Hightower*

KEY WEST, Fla. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis's crew (WMEC 910) returned to homeport in Key West on Jan. 26 after a 68-day transit escorting the Coast Guard Cutters Emlen Tunnell (WPC 1145) and Glen Harris (WPC 1144) across the North Atlantic en route to their new homeport in Manama, Bahrain.

Thetis' crew worked alongside NATO Allies and interagency partners in the region while transiting in the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

During the patrol, Thetis's crew received a report from Spain's Las Palmas Rescue Coordination Center of two overloaded migrant rafts taking on water. Thetis, Glen Harris and Emlen Tunnell crews worked together to rescue 103 migrants from overloaded and unseaworthy vessels and recovered two

deceased migrants. The rescued individuals were provided food and medical care prior to being transferred to a Royal Moroccan Navy frigate.

“While escorting two new cutters across the Atlantic, we responded to a distress call and quickly transitioned to our service’s core mission of search and rescue,” said Cmdr. Justin Nadolny, the commanding officer of Thetis. “Working alongside a Moroccan ship, we were able to rapidly respond to those in distress. The case reinforced the importance of joint operations and reaffirmed the U.S. Coast Guard’s presence in the region to ensure the safety of life at sea. I am exceedingly proud of our professional and highly capable team. The crew of all three ships showed remarkable vigilance and adaptability. This case highlighted the Coast Guard’s ability to operate worldwide to protect and save those in distress on the ocean, along with our ability to work seamlessly with international partners to accomplish a shared mission.”

Thetis’ crew strengthened international partnerships in various ports, hosting military and Coast Guard leaders in Fortaleza, Brazil and Mindelo, Cape Verde. Thetis’s crew also embarked a Cape Verdean Coast Guard officer aboard for two weeks. The professional exchange was mutually beneficial, providing U.S. Coast Guard members with a deeper understanding of maritime activity in the region while passing on valuable lessons to our foreign allies.

Prior to departing Cape Verde, U.S. Ambassador Jeff Daigle visited Thetis. The ambassador’s visit showcased the importance of the maritime partnership between the U.S. and Cape Verde while demonstrating the commitment to the shared goal of global maritime security and stability on the African continent.

Thetis deployed with a MH-65 helicopter and aircrews from Air Station Miami and Houston to increase their capabilities. The aviation detachment and cutter crew worked together to conduct

day and night flight operations and practice rescue hoists.

Thetis is the first 270-foot medium-endurance cutter to escort fast response cutters across the Atlantic in support of the Coast Guard's Patrol Forces Southwest Asia mission. These cutters are the third and fourth to be deployed to the region, with the final two scheduled to be delivered to Bahrain in the spring of 2022.

Radar Integration Determined Deployment Timing of Navy's MQ-8C Fire Scout



Lt. Cmdr. Joe Johnson assigned to the "Sea Knights" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 22, Detachment 5, mans

the flight deck control tower during flight quarters aboard the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Milwaukee (LCS 5), Dec. 15, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Danielle Baker*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's MQ-8C Fire Scout unmanned helicopter reached initial operational capability more than 2.5 years ago but made its first operational deployment only last month. The reason, the Navy's program manager explained, centered on the integration of a radar into the new Fire Scout version.

Navy Capt. Eric Soderberg, the Navy's Fire Scout program manager, speaking to reporters Jan. 25, explained the MQ-8C as a platform reached initial operational capability in June 2019, but the service decided to wait until it could complete integration of the Leonardo ZPY-8 surface search radar on the MQ-8C, which has now been accomplished. The radar already was integrated on the older MQ-8B version, which the MQ-8C is scheduled to replace.

Soderberg said that "the fleet made a decision that a radar-equipped Bravo [MQ-8B] was more suitable to deploy than a non-radar-equipped Charlie [MQ-8C]. Now that we have that radar on the Charlie, it becomes a pretty clear answer that the Charlie is the superior platform, and that's why we're accelerating the transition from the 8B to the 8C."

An MQ-8C, built by Northrop Grumman, was deployed operationally on Dec. 14 on board the Freedom-class littoral combat ship USS Milwaukee (LCS 5), which is deployed in the U.S. 4th Fleet's area of operations in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South's mission, which includes counter-illicit drug trafficking missions in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, according to the caption.

Soderberg said the MQ-8C was "performing up to expectations" on the deployment.

The Leonardo ZPY-8 on the Fire Scout gives the host ship a far

greater ability to detect and track surface contacts and maintain over-the-horizon situational awareness.

The MQ-8C's larger airframe and greater fuel load gives it an endurance is 10 to 12 hours, far greater than the four to five hours of the MQ-8B.

The improved software on the MQ-8C system eases the workload on the controllers. The software integrates the radar, electro-optical sensor, and Automatic Information System in the MQ-8C.

The MQ-8C on the Milwaukee is teamed with an MH-60S Seahawk helicopter, which is not equipped with a radar. Both aircraft are operated by the "Sea Knights" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 22, Detachment 5.

Soderberg said although the detachment's officers all can control the Fire Scout, one officer is assigned as the main specialist for the system. The Navy also is qualifying MQ-8B and MQ-8C operators separately now, as opposed to personnel operating both types.

The program manager also said a data link designed to allow the MQ-8C to share sensor data with multiple platforms is being introduced, but some budget uncertainty is slowing that process.

He said there is a well-defined need for a mine-countermeasures sensor with both littoral surf zone and deeper water capabilities. The COBRA II sensor, equipped with lidar, is considered suitable.

A passive electronic warfare sensor for the platform is under discussion. Soderberg also said there is a "technical way forward" to arm the MQ-8C with weapons such as rockets, but there are "no funded efforts to implement" a weapons

He also said the MQ-8C is ready if needed for on the Lewis B.

Puller-class expeditionary sea base ship. The mobile mission-control station is ready and certified for the ship.

Northrop Grumman Delivers MYP-1's Final E-2D to U.S. Navy; Begins MYP-2



Northrop Grumman successfully delivered the 51st U.S. Navy E-2D Advanced Hawkeye production aircraft, AA-52. The aircraft represents the last to be delivered under the Multi-Year Procurement 1 contract. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Northrop Grumman has successfully delivered the 51st E-2D Advanced Hawkeye for the U.S. Navy. The aircraft is the final one of a Multi-Year Procurement-1, the company said Jan. 21.

The E-2D, numbered AA-52 in company production, is equipped with the Delta System/Software Configuration Build 3, which provides an additional leap in operational effectiveness and technology for the E-2D with the incorporation of aerial refueling and a dwell-based tracker, the release said.

MYP-1, awarded in June 2014, called for the production of 25 E-2Ds, later increased to 26.

The E-2D now equips six of the Navy's nine fleet airborne command and control squadrons and eventually will replace the E-2C in the remaining three squadrons.

Northrop will begin deliveries this year of E-2Ds through MYP-2, which was awarded in April 2019 for 24 E-2Ds.

The Navy's program of record is for 86 E-2Ds. Japan has ordered 13 E-2Ds, and France has ordered four.