

# Flag Officer Announcements

[Release from the Department of Defense](#)

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APRIL 24, 2023

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

Navy Vice Adm. Charles B. Cooper II for reappointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as deputy commander, U.S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. Cooper is currently serving as commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command; commander, Fifth Fleet; and commander, Combined Maritime Forces, Manama, Bahrain.

Navy Rear Adm. Yvette M. Davids for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. Davids is currently serving as director, Learning to Action Board, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Navy Rear Adm. Christopher S. Gray for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as commander, Navy Installations Command, Washington, D.C. Gray is currently serving as commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, Norfolk, Virginia.

Navy Rear Adm. John E. Gumbleton for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as deputy commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia. Gumbleton is currently serving as deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Budget; and director, Fiscal Management Division, N82, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Navy Rear Admiral Brendan R. McLane for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as commander, Naval

Surface Forces; and commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, San Diego, California. McLane is currently serving as commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic, Norfolk, Virginia.

Navy Rear Adm. James E. Pitts for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities, N9, Office of the Chief of Naval Operation, Washington, D.C. Pitts is currently serving as director, Warfighting Integration, N9I, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

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## **Vietnam War Commemoration to Host ‘Epic Event’**

Arlington, VA – The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration is set to host its [biggest event to date](#) to honor Vietnam veterans, said Major General Ed Chrystal and Commander Brian Wierzbicki, acting director and chief of public engagement, respectively, in a media roundtable held on April 25.

The “Welcome Home! A Nation Honors our Vietnam Veterans and their Families,” event will be held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. May 11-13. The Commemoration expects thousands to attend over the three-day event, featuring special guest speakers and concerts. The opening ceremony, concerts, and speaking events will also be streamed live for those who cannot attend in person.

“This national once-in-a-lifetime event will honor Vietnam veterans and their enduring legacy of service inspiring

Americans to thank them and their families for their service and sacrifice,” the Commemoration stated in a press release.

In 2008, Congress authorized the establishment of the Vietnam War Commemoration, signed into law by President George W. Bush in January of that year. President Obama inaugurated Commemoration at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 2012. Since that time, the Commemoration has worked to build partnerships to reach as many of the approximately 7 million Vietnam veterans both in the U.S. and abroad.

So far, the Commemoration has reached approximately 3.7 million Vietnam veterans, according to Wierzbicki. The Welcome Home event is designed to “serve as a catalyst” to reach others so that they may be recognized and thanked, he said. Both Wierzbicki and Chrystal talked about the importance of honoring our veterans, stating that, “how we treat those who fought our past wars will have a direct impact” on who will be willing to fight our wars in the future.

You can read more about the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration and the upcoming Welcome Home! event [at the organization's website](#).

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## **USCGC Resolute returns home following 63-day Caribbean patrol**



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

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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – The crew of the USCGC Resolute (WMEC 620) returned to their home port in St. Petersburg, Tuesday, following a 63-day patrol in the Gulf of Mexico, Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea.

Patrolling the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility in support of Operation Vigilant Sentry, Resolute's crew conducted migrant interdiction operations protecting the United States' southern maritime border. Working alongside Coast Guard and joint interagency assets, Resolute's primary mission was to detect, deter, and intercept unsafe and illegal maritime ventures bound for the United States.

Throughout the patrol, Resolute's crew interdicted three migrant vessels and rescued 40 migrants from unseaworthy vessels attempting to make the dangerous voyage across the

Florida Straits. Resolute's crew also supported and cared for an additional 190 migrants interdicted by other Coast Guard assets. Most notably, following Resolute's rescue of 17 migrants from Cay Sal Bank, a remote island near the Bahamas, the crew medically evacuated an unresponsive Cuban migrant by a Coast Guard MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter crew from Air Station Clearwater to a nearby medical facility.

"I could not be prouder of this crew and what they were able to accomplish during this patrol," said Cmdr. Michael Ross, the commanding officer of Resolute. "They answered the call and responded to every case with dignity, compassion and professionalism."

Resolute is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter. 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.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go CoastGuard.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](#).

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## **MQ-9B SEAGUARDIAN® FEATURED IN US NAVY'S GROUP SAIL EXERCISE**



[Release from General Atomics – Aeronautical Systems International](#)

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SAN DIEGO – 25 April 2023 – The U.S. Navy's Group Sail Exercise, held over a six-day period in Hawaiian military operating areas, featured one of the world's most advanced Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) – the MQ-9B SeaGuardian® supplied by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI). SeaGuardian conducted Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (MISR), Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Long Range Fires, and simulated Battle Damage Assessment as part of Group Sail, which supported Carrier Strike Groups FIFTEEN and ONE.

During the exercise, which ran April 12-17, 2023, SeaGuardian integrated with U.S. Navy ships (carriers, cruisers, and destroyers) and aircraft (F-35C, F/A-18, EA-18G, E-2D, MH-60, and P-8) to support various naval missions that included Maritime Domain Awareness, Surface Warfare, Information Warfare, and numerous time-sensitive targeting objectives and simulated Battle Damage Assessments.

“We were thrilled that the U.S. Navy requested SeaGuardian be part of the Group Sail training event,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “We know the many successes of SeaGuardian during the USN’s RIMPAC 2022 exercise was a big reason the SeaGuardian was invited back to Hawaii to support Group Sail.”

In addition to its contributions during Group Sail, the SeaGuardian self-deployed from GA-ASI’s Desert Horizons flight operations facility in El Mirage, Calif., to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, covering over 2,500 nautical miles in a single flight and demonstrating SeaGuardian’s unrivalled expeditionary attributes. The aircraft self-deployed back to El Mirage following the exercise.

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## **USCGC Forward returns home following counterdrug patrol in the Caribbean Sea**





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

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April 24, 2023

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the USCGC Forward (WMEC 911) returned to their home port in Portsmouth, Saturday, following a multi-week training exercise and counterdrug deployment in the central Caribbean Sea.

While underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility and in support of Joint Interagency Task Force–South, Forward traveled more than 6,000 miles conducting counterdrug operations as part of a multi-faceted approach to combatting illicit narcotics trafficking across maritime borders.

Part of this effort included international partnerships with the HNLMS Holland (P840) of the Royal Netherlands Navy and other U.S. military vessels, including USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909), USCGC Margaret Norvell (WPC 1105), and USS Little Rock



(CL 92).

Throughout the patrol, Forward held approximately 4,700 pounds of cocaine on deck worth an estimated \$81 million. Forward intercepted three suspected narcotics smugglers earlier this month and held nine others throughout the patrol. On Tuesday, the crew conducted a further offload to partner agencies in Port Everglades, Florida.

“The crew lived up to our namesake ‘Ever the Sentinel’ and was ready to take on any mission,” said Cmdr. Staci Rutsch, Forward’s commanding officer. “Forward’s crew demonstrated the Coast Guard’s resiliency and adaptability by maintaining proficiency in interagency and international operations while upholding the ability to meet the nation’s maritime demands. I am truly impressed and thankful for their devotion to duty.”

Forward is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter. The cutter’s list of mission sets include law enforcement, search and rescue, protection of living marine resources, homeland security and defense operations, international training and humanitarian operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [www.GoCoastGuard.com](http://www.GoCoastGuard.com) to learn more about active duty and reserve officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found at [www.uscga.edu](http://www.uscga.edu). For more, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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# CNO Travels to New England Shipyards with Congressional Delegation; Emphasizes Value of Shipyards to the Navy



[Release from the CNO Public Affairs](#)

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24 April 2023

PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD, Maine – Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday traveled to Bath, and Kittery, Maine, where he and congressional leaders visited General Dynamics Bath Iron Works (BIW) and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNS), April 24.

In Bath, Gilday met with Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King, and together they visited shipyard facilities, toured the

Orion Training Academy, and met with Sailors aboard the future USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120).

“Our partnership with industry is critical to our Navy and our national security... we must continue to build ships, submarines and aircraft to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow,” said Gilday. “I’m grateful for the work and the improvements being made at Bath Iron Works to ensure our warfighters continue to receive cutting edge capabilities and extraordinary ships.”

At the shipyard, Gilday and the congressional delegation met with Bath Iron Works President Mr. Chuck Krugh and other BIW executives. The leaders discussed challenges of the shipyard, as well as workforce and programmatic improvements across the company.

Aboard Levin, Gilday met with the ship’s command triad and presented awards to Sailors.

“It is a great opportunity to visit the crew of the future USS Carl M. Levin for a second time, and see how far the ship has come in a year,” said Gilday. “A ship is nothing without the crew, and I am confident the USS Carl M. Levin will do great things for our nation because of these incredible Sailors.”

Following his visit to BIW, Gilday traveled to Kittery to visit Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and was accompanied by Collins and Sen. Maggie Hassan. Throughout the visit, they spoke with personnel and toured one of the facilities the Navy uses to overhaul, repair, and modernize its submarine fleet.

CNO was met by PNS leadership, who accompanied him as he met with Sailors, received a Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP) overview, and toured the yard.

“SIOP is critically important to the future success of our shipyards and force; this once-in-a-century effort is essential to Navy readiness and our budget request reflects

that,” said Gilday. “Everyone here at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is a part of the Navy team and has an important role in making sure our nation maintains the strongest Navy in the world.”

After his briefs, CNO toured PNS’s reactor servicing complex and dry dock areas.

The visit marked Gilday’s third trip to Bath Iron Works and his second to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

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## **Reassure and Deter: George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group Completes Historic Deployment**



### [Release from U.S. Second Fleet](#)

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23 April 2023

NORFOLK – The George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group (CSG) – comprised of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 26, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), and the Information Warfare Commander – returned to Norfolk, April 23.

The strike group arrived in the European theater in August of last year, projecting U.S. and Allied power and deterring aggression by training and operating with allies and partners for nearly eight months.

Further showcasing the U.S.'s ironclad commitment to NATO, George H.W. Bush CSG hosted NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg while under NATO command for the vigilance activity Neptune Strike (NEST) 22.2.

“This carrier sends a powerful message of Allied deterrence every day,” Stoltenberg said during his visit. “A perfect example of the transatlantic bond – Europe and North America working together in NATO.”

Stoltenberg said the George H.W. Bush CSG’s participation in the vigilance activity demonstrated our ability to rapidly reinforce our Allies and project power across the Alliance.

He added, “NATO’s strength helps to prevent any miscalculation by sending a clear message: NATO will protect and defend every inch of Allied territory.”

In addition to NEST 22.2 and NEST 23.1, the strike group played a key role in major events with allies and partners throughout deployment including:

- dual and tri-carrier operations five times in theater with ESPS Juan Carlos I, ITS Cavour, and the French Carrier Strike Group with FS Charles de Gaulle;
- exercise Mare Aperto 22-2;
- exercise Juniper Oak, the largest U.S.-Israeli military exercise in history in support of U.S. Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet while assigned to U.S. 6th Fleet;
- exercise Hemex Orion;
- exercise Dynamic Manta;
  
- shipboard exercises and events with ITS Caio Duilio, HRV Dubrovnik, ALS Butrinti and ALS Lissus, ITS Carabiniere, ITS Virginio Fasan, and TCG Gungor Durmas;
- two iterations of the Spanish Tactical Leadership Program (TLP) for Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 7 personnel;
- the Athens International Air Show;
- the EURONAVAL Trade Show in Paris;
- Thirty-five key leader engagements, five major receptions and protocol events in Crete, Croatia, Italy, France, and Greece which included more approximately



1,536 visitors to the aircraft carrier alone;

- and multiple press conferences in NATO port visits to reassure host nation audiences and reinforce existing relationships for future maritime operations and international stability

Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, George H.W. Bush CSG, and his major commanders and subordinate units continuously engaged senior military and civilian leaders throughout the region to increase unity of effort within the Alliance through 21st Century Maritime Diplomacy.

“Since the beginning of our Navy, we have been seagoing diplomats. I have operated that way throughout my entire career, and our Sailors represented U.S. and Allied interests incredibly well throughout deployment,” Velez said. “The trust our strike group built with our Allies and partners is our competitive advantage as an Alliance. Our teamwork increased our collective capability and deterred our adversaries, which I believe helped prevent expansion of war into NATO territory.”

George H.W. Bush is the flagship of CSG-10, George H.W. Bush CSG. CSG-10 is comprised of George H.W. Bush, CVW-7, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 26, the Information Warfare Commander, and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55).

The ships of DESRON-26 completing deployment with CSG-10 are the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Nitze (DDG 94), USS Truxtun (DDG 103), and USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119).

The squadrons of CVW-7 embarked aboard the George H.W. Bush are the “Sidewinders” of VFA-86, the “Jolly Rogers” of VFA-103, the “Knighthawks” of VFA-136, the “Pukin Dogs” of

VFA-143, the “Bluetails” of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 121, the “Patriots” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 140, the “Nightdippers” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 5, and the “Grandmasters” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 46.

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## AUSTAL USA CHRISTENS FUTURE USS KINGSVILLE (LCS 36)



[Release from Austal USA](#)

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April 22, 2023

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA celebrated the christening of the

future USS Kingsville (LCS 36) Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship in a ceremony at the company's Gulf Coast shipyard today. Ship sponsor Katherine L. Kline performed the ceremonial bottle break over the bow of Kingsville, the 18th LCS designed and constructed by Austal USA.

Kline is a member of the sixth generation of the King Ranch Family, decedents of Captain Richard King who founded the King Ranch located in Kingsville, Texas in 1853. Her father, Lieutenant Commander Richard Sugden, was a Navy flight surgeon.

LCS 36 is the first U.S. Navy ship named for Kingsville. The town, born from the need for an efficient railroad service connecting Brownsville, Texas to St. Louis, Mo., was founded in 1904, after Captain King's wife, Henrietta, deeded 40,000 acres from the King Ranch to be available for the development of the Kingsville townsite. The Kingsville community remains vital to the agribusiness of south Texas and maintains a special relationship with Naval Air Station Kingsville.

"It is an honor and privilege to serve as the sponsor of the future USS Kingsville," stated Kline. "I am so proud of the significant role that the namesake city has played in our nation's security throughout its long history. I know the ship will carry that legacy of service forward as she and her crew enter the fleet to proudly serve our Navy and our Nation."

The ceremony was widely attended by community and Navy leaders, Austal USA shipbuilders, and the ship's commanding officer Cmdr. Ludwig Mann III.

"It is said that a ship's sponsor infuses her spirit into each new ship, providing her strength and inspiration to those who serve aboard her throughout the ship's service life," stated Austal USA President Rusty Murdaugh. "We know that Katherine will do a great job as sponsor of Kingsville but also know that the pride and values of those who worked so hard to build

her, have laid a solid foundation for her to build upon.”

Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ships are fast, optimally-manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats.

Kingsville is planned for delivery in early 2024 and will be homeported in San Diego, Calif., where Austal USA will have the capability to dry-dock and provide lifecycle sustainment support for the Independence-variant ship class and other similar sized ships at its waterfront repair facility.

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## **USCGC Stone returns home following 105-day multi-mission patrol**



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

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NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The crew of the USCGC Stone (WMSL 758) returned to their home port in North Charleston, Sunday, following a 105-day patrol in the South Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits.

Stone deployed in the Coast Guard's Seventh District area of operations in support of U.S. Southern Command for Operation Southern Cross and Coast Guard Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast for Operation Vigilant Sentry. While underway, Stone's crew worked to counter illicit maritime activities, strengthen regional maritime sovereignty and facilitate the safety of life at sea.

During Operation Southern Cross, Stone conducted operations to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU-F) by partnering with South American countries to provide maritime domain awareness and information sharing on potential IUU-F

vessels and other illicit maritime activity.

Stone embarked officers from the Brazilian Navy and provided real-time reports to their shoreside watch floor. Stone's crew also conducted at-sea exercises with Brazilian and Uruguayan naval forces. These operations involved law enforcement boarding demonstrations and a search and rescue exercise with a Uruguay Naval Air Force helicopter crew. An embarked unmanned aircraft system (UAS) bolstered Stone's capabilities and captured imagery of over 300 vessels.

During Operation Vigilant Sentry, Stone hosted an offshore Commander Task Unit (CTU) and facilitated the coordination and tasking of 10 cutters while conducting migrant interdiction operations. Working under CTU tasking, Stone interdicted 69 migrants at sea and facilitated safe repatriation to their country of origin.

"This patrol has been about partnerships, whether coordinating efforts with partner countries to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing within the Atlantic Ocean or the multi-agency response within the South Florida Straits for migrant interdiction," said Coast Guard Capt. Clinton Carlson, Stone's commanding officer. "Everyone displayed proficiency and excellence throughout the patrol during all evolutions, training drills, or operations. I am incredibly proud of the hardworking crew and their dedication over this 105-day deployment."

Stone's crew completed port visits in Montevideo, Uruguay, Suape and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The crew hosted multiple high-visibility events including maritime domain awareness round table discussions with senior government officials, key leader engagements and community relations events. The visits culminated in diplomatic receptions aboard Stone, including the U.S. Ambassadors to Brazil and Uruguay and senior government and military officials from the respective countries. These collaborative engagements supported U.S.



initiatives to enhance regional cooperation, strengthen and fortify effective governance and preserve the ocean as a healthy, sustainable and resilient resource for future generations.

Stone is the ninth Legend-class national security cutter (NSC) in the Coast Guard fleet and currently homeports in North Charleston, South Carolina. NSCs execute homeland security and defense missions throughout the maritime environment.

Information about the U.S. Coast Guard's efforts to combat IUU-F, including the Coast Guard's IUU-F Strategic Outlook, the National 5-Year Strategy for Combatting IUU-F, and other resources, can be found [here](#).

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go CoastGuard.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](#).

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