

U.S., Egypt Enhance Maritime Partnership with Patrol Craft Transfer



ARABIAN GULF (March 9, 2020) The coastal patrol ship USS Monsoon (PC 4) transits the Arabian Gulf after completing a joint underway with Mark VI patrol boats attached to Commander, Task Force 56 March 9. This event highlights one of many core competencies that the Coastal Riverine Force provides in support of U.S. 5th Fleet operations. CTF 56 is responsible for the planning and execution of expeditionary missions including coastal riverine operations in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kory Alsberry)

[Release from U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs](#)

From U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs

MANAMA, Bahrain – U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) transferred three patrol craft to the Egyptian Navy, March 21, during a formal ceremony in Alexandria, Egypt.

The transfer ceremony represents the culmination of weeks of preparation, training and professional exchanges between Egyptian and U.S. Navy Sailors. The U.S. Navy turned over former patrol coastal ships USS Hurricane (PC 3), USS Sirocco (PC 6), and USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) after sailing from Bahrain to Egypt during a month-long journey around the Arabian Peninsula, January through February.

“The Egypt-U.S. maritime partnership has been a fundamental pillar of our bilateral defense cooperation for decades,” said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of NAVCENT, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. “This transfer is yet another major milestone in our strong relationship that will enhance regional maritime security for years to come.”

During the 4,000-mile transit to Alexandria, U.S. and Egyptian crewmembers worked side-by-side safely navigating the three ships on a voyage that included port visits to Jebel Ali in the United Arab Emirates; Duqm, Oman; Djibouti; and Berenice, Egypt.

U.S. and Egyptian service members continued training after the ships arrived in Alexandria, Feb. 12. Classroom lessons included discussions on engineering, search and rescue, damage control and weapons handling.

“This transfer process was an incredible opportunity for our crews. It enabled us to strengthen our bilateral ties while enhancing our interoperability with a highly capable regional maritime partner,” said Capt. Anthony Webber, commander of Task Force 55, which oversees operations for U.S. 5th Fleet’s surface forces.

The Egyptian Navy currently commands Combined Task Force 153, one of four multinational task forces organized under U.S.-led

Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). The task force coordinates multinational maritime security efforts in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden.

NAVCENT and CMF are headquartered in Manama, Bahrain. They include maritime forces operating in the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Suez Canal and Bab al-Mandeb.

AUKUS Deal Buys Submarine Suppliers



President Joe Biden greets British Prime Minister Rishi Surnak and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese the AUKUS bilateral meeting in San Diego, Calif, March 13, 2023. (DoD

photo by Chad J. McNeeley)

ARLINGTON, Va. – The suppliers of components and materials to the nation's submarine shipyards praised the AUKUS agreement's plan for building three or potentially five Virginia-class attack submarines (SSNs).

The AUKUS agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to provide nuclear-powered attack submarines for Australia will involve supplying three Virginia-class SSNs to Australia (with an option for two more) starting in the early 2030s, followed by a new class of SSNs – the SSN-AUKUS – built in the United Kingdom in the late 2030s, followed by further SSN-AUKUS submarines built in Australia in the early 1940s.

Steven Dobos, chairman of the Submarine Industrial Base Council, said in an interview with Seapower that the timing of when the three-to-five Virginia-class SSNs are slotted in the production presents a challenge and an opportunity.

"It's a good problem," Dobos said. "For years it was, are they going to fund a boat? Are they going to fund two boats? Are they going to put two Virginias in the same year? What are we going to do with Columbia? ... It comes with an extensive set of challenges, but they are all opportunities. The defense industry, and particularly the submarine industrial base, they have met the challenges of the past and I don't think there's anything in the future preventing it from doing it in the future with adequate planning."

Dobos said that Congress is "extremely" supportive of the submarine industrial base, "probably more than ever."

"I would expect to see some plus-ups put in there, but I think everybody would be happy if it went in at the president's budget [level]," he said.

“Everything is pie in the sky until the contract is awarded,” he said. “The supply chain now is being told that they’re going to go to a larger block buy for most of this, where they’re going to package five Columbias and seven Virginias gives you visibility as to what your cadence is going to be, and that allows you to accurately staff your work force and give you the time to build up what you need.”

As with the submarine-building shipyards, the submarine suppliers face the challenges of recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce.

“As fast as we can hire skill, we lose skill for varying reasons,” said Dobos, whose own company in Cameron, Texas. “Texas is in the middle of the oil field. You’re fighting with oil and gas [industry] for your welders, your fitters and your machinists.”

Dobos said the SIBC was pleased with the \$636 million proposed in the president’s 2023 budget for supplier and workforce development.

Dobos is the president and CEO of [Butler Weldments](#) in Cameron, Texas. His company produces components for the prime contractors that build submarines, [HII’s Newport News Shipbuilding](#) and [General Dynamics’ Electric Boat](#). The products include foundations for heavy machinery such as turbine sub-bases for the main propulsion unit for the Virginia-class, numerous components for the Columbia-class, large fixtures for Newport News and Electric Boat to support the Columbia construction, and large power-generation frames.

The SIBC’s membership includes approximately 2,000 suppliers.

Theodore Roosevelt completes maintenance, returns to San Diego



NAVAL BASE KITSAP-BREMERTON, Wash. (March 12, 2023) The hull number of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) is illuminated at sundown March 12, 2023. Theodore Roosevelt is in a docking planned incremental availability at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility where the ship is receiving scheduled maintenance and upgrades. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Andrew Benvie)

[Release from USS Theodore Roosevelt \(CVN 71\) Public Affairs](#)

17 March 2023

From USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Public Affairs

BREMERTON, Wash. – The Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) departed Bremerton,

Washington, March 17, after completing an 18-month docking planned incremental availability (DPIA) at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility. The ship is shifting its homeport back to San Diego, California, and will return to Naval Air Station North Island next week.

The Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) departed Bremerton, Washington, March 17, after completing an 18-month docking planned incremental availability (DPIA) at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility. The ship is shifting its homeport back to San Diego, California, and will return to Naval Air Station North Island next week.

Theodore Roosevelt began DPIA on Sep. 10, 2021.

The DPIA achieved significant modernization to the ship's combat efficiency while also ensuring sustained operational readiness throughout its 50-year lifespan. Upgrades included a flight deck systems retrofit, expanding the ship's air dominance capabilities to support the F-35C Lightning II, E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, and CMV-22B Osprey, as well as future platforms such as the MQ-25 Stingray unmanned aircraft system. Other combat systems modernization efforts included installation of the Mark 38 Mod III Machine Gun System and upgrades to the AN/SLQ-32 electronic warfare suite; Consolidated Afloat Networks and Enterprise Services (CANES); ship self-defense system (SSDS); surface search radar; and AN/SPQ-9 Fire Control System. The availability also involved a full restoration of crew habitability areas, including crew living quarters and onboard bathrooms; and preventative maintenance and restoration of the ship's hull, rudders and rudder shafts.

"I'm so grateful for the unrelenting work our crew and our shipyard teammates put into this milestone," said Commanding Officer Capt. Brian Schrum. "Their sacrifices have enabled us

to rejoin the Fleet and to get back to being a warship for our nation. Thanks as well to our Sailors and their families for their resiliency, and to the Puget Sound communities for their unwavering support.”

Prior to DPIA, Theodore Roosevelt was homeported in San Diego and was deployed from December 2020 to May 2021 in the Indo-Pacific region in support of maritime security operations.

HII Celebrates 200 Graduates of The Newport News Shipbuilding Apprentice School



[Release from HII](#)

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., March 18, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) hosted commencement exercises today, celebrating 200 graduates of the company's Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS). The ceremony was held at Liberty Live Church in Hampton.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin delivered the keynote commencement address.

"Newport News Shipbuilding graduates: You build America, you run America, you are the backbone of America, and we are so proud of you," Youngkin said. "As Governor of Virginia, it's never been clearer that the road to American exceptionalism runs right through your classrooms and dry docks. Congratulations on honing your skill and your relentless dedication, you are the pride and future of Virginia."

Photos accompanying this release are available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-celebrates-200-graduates-of-the-newport-news-shipbuilding-apprentice-school/>

Xavier Beale, NNS vice president of human resources and trades, addressed the graduates as the shipyard's newest leaders.

"You chose to answer the noble call to become a shipbuilder, to give of yourself to build the world's most powerful nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines," Beale said. "You completed thousands of hours of rigorous classroom and on-the-job training to become experts in your fields. You graduate today, armed with the craftsmanship, scholarship and leadership necessary to become our next generation of shipbuilding leaders."

Jasmine Tutt received the Homer L. Ferguson Award, which recognizes the apprentice graduating with the highest average in combined required academic and craft grades. Tutt is the first African American woman to receive the award. She is an electrical engineer at NNS and has supported a variety of

programs, including *Virginia*-class submarine and *Gerald R. Ford*-class aircraft carrier construction, since joining HII in 2014.

Tutt first graduated from William & Mary with a degree in chemistry. During her time at The Apprentice School, she earned an associate's degree in engineering from Tidewater Community College and a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Old Dominion University.

During her address, Tutt asked graduates to reflect on the experiences that have shaped their apprenticeships and set them up for success as shipyard leaders.

"We're stronger together than we are alone. Don't forget those feelings as you help guide the next generation of apprentices and shipbuilders, because we'll leave today as new members of a unique community of graduates unlike any other," Tutt shared. "Within this community exists a bond of hard work, dedication, and sheer grit that is unique to having been an apprentice."

Replay coverage of the ceremony is available at:
<https://hii.com/events/nns-as-graduation/>

The following is a profile of the graduating class:

Thirty-two completed an optional, advanced program, earning an associate's or bachelor's degree. The program includes coursework in subjects such as marine design, production planning, modeling and simulation, and marine engineering.

Seventy-nine earned honors, a combination of academic and craft grades that determine overall performance.

Two completed the Advanced Shipyard Operations Program, allowing them to continue their postsecondary education, expand their experience in waterfront operations and develop leadership skills to improve the quality and efficiency of

production, manufacturing and maintenance processes.

Forty-three completed Frontline FAST, an accelerated skills training program for potential foremen.

Thirty-three inducted into The National Society of Leadership Success.

Six completed the World Class Shipbuilder Curriculum and advance optional program with a perfect 4.0 GPA

Six are military veterans or are currently serving in the armed services as reservists and guardsmen, representing every branch of the military.

Twenty-two earned athletic awards.

The Apprentice School accepts more than 200 apprentices per year. The school offers four- to eight-year, tuition-free apprenticeships in 19 trades and eight optional advanced programs. Apprentices work a 40-hour week and are paid for all work, including time spent in academic classes.

Through partnerships with Virginia Peninsula Community College, Tidewater Community College and Old Dominion University, The Apprentice School's academic program provides the opportunity to earn associate degrees in business administration, engineering and engineering technology and bachelor's degrees in mechanical or electrical engineering.

About HII

HII is a global, all-domain defense provider. HII's mission is to deliver the world's most powerful ships and all-domain solutions in service of the nation, creating the advantage for our customers to protect peace and freedom around the world.

As the nation's largest military shipbuilder, and with a more than 135-year history of advancing U.S. national security, HII delivers critical capabilities extending from ships to

unmanned systems, cyber, ISR, AI/ML and synthetic training. Headquartered in Virginia, HII's workforce is 43,000 strong. For more information, visit:

General Outlines Transcom's Mission, Challenges



[Release from the Department of Defense](#)

March 16, 2023 | By David Vergun

Providing global logistics to sustain the force and provide humanitarian aid over air, land and sea is a capability the Defense Department enjoys, unmatched by any other nation,

said Air Force Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, commander, U.S. Transportation Command, who spoke yesterday at a McAleese-sponsored event in Washington, D.C.

“Mission success depends on the nation’s capacity and capability to transport and supply its forces,” she said.

In response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Transcom has delivered large quantities of munitions and weaponry to Ukraine from the U.S., allies and partners, she said.

[Spotlight: Support for Ukraine](#)

“The entire enterprise proudly continues to enable Ukraine’s national defense, and that in turn delivers success for our allies and partners,” she said.

Despite the significant demands of the European theater, Transcom continues to execute its global mission in support of joint and combined exercises with geographic combatant commands, she said.

Global power projection relies on accessible basing and overflights overseas, she said, requiring diplomatic alignment with allies and partners.

Within the United States, mobilization and logistical movement depends on a good network of highways, railways and pipelines, she said.

“The combination of our organic logistics and commercial capabilities must continue to present a credible deterrent for delivering,” she added.

Achieving this requires proactive effort, she said. “In 10 years, more than 50% of the U.S. government’s sealift ships will reach the end of service life. For this reason, Transcom supports the Navy’s strategy to recapitalize the fleet by acquiring used sealift vessels on the commercial market, and to provide the secretary of defense discretionary authority to

purchase new ships.”

Joint force global projection also relies on air refueling as the backbone of rapid global mobility, she said. To meet this requirement, Transcom supports modernization of the tanker fleet, along with upgrades to existing aircraft.

Transcom is also embracing secure artificial intelligence and machine learning tools to accelerate decision making in the transportation space, she said.

[Spotlight: Focus on Indo-Pacific](#)

Van Olost noted that the Indo-Pacific region is the most challenging theater, with vast ocean distances to be crossed and a scarcity of logistics hubs.

Navy receives final JPALS unit delivery



An F-35C Lightning II, from the “Rough Raiders” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 125, makes an arrested gear landing on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz. Joint Precision Approach and Landing Systems (JPALS) has been supporting F-35B deployments on U.S. Navy LH-class amphibious assault ships since 2016 and F-35C deployments on U.S. Navy aircraft carriers since 2021.

[Release from Naval Air Systems Command](#)

Mar 16, 2023

The U.S. Navy accepted delivery of the final Joint Precision Approach and Landing Systems (JPALS) unit March 16 marking another on-time or ahead of schedule delivery for increased capability at sea.

JPALS is a ship-relative GPS-based system that provides aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships with precision approach and landing capability, surveillance, and over-the-air inertial alignment in all weather and mission environments.

“This is a significant milestone for the JPALS team and

highlights the incredible efforts of hundreds of our teammates over the past decade who developed and now have fully delivered these critical systems that our Warfighters and International Partners need,” said Capt. Kevin Watkins, Naval Air Traffic Management Systems (PMA-213) program manager. “This team overcame many barriers over the past several years, successfully achieving the required outcome to deliver all of the capabilities needed, on time and affordably.”

JPALS is currently being deployed on all U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships, and is on the United Kingdom Royal Navy’s HMS Queen Elizabeth and the Italian Navy’s ITS Cavour. Japan became the third foreign military sale customer in December and is scheduled to be deployed on the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force’s JS Izumo in 2024.

JPALS has been supporting F-35B deployments on U.S. Navy LH-class amphibious assault ships since 2016 and F-35C deployments on U.S. Navy aircraft carriers since 2021. Initial operational capability was reached in May 2021 with full operational capability scheduled for fiscal year 2026.

Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast returns home following counternarcotics patrol



[Release from the United States Coast Guard](#)

March 16, 2023

ASTORIA, Ore. – The Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast (WMEC 623) and crew returned to their Astoria homeport, Tuesday, following a 69-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

Steadfast's crew disrupted the flow of illegal narcotics on three separate occasions during their patrol preventing a combined total of more than 7,500 pounds of cocaine, valued at \$85.6 million, from reaching the U.S. maritime borders.

The crew steamed more than 12,000 nautical miles conducting training, law enforcement missions, providing search-and-rescue coverage, and conducting helicopter operations while patrolling the waters from their Astoria homeport to international waters off the coast of Central America.

The Steadfast deployed with a Jacksonville, Florida, based Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and aircrew along with temporarily assigned crewmembers from the Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903), and soon-to-be-commissioned Coast Guard Cutter Argus (WMSM 915).

During nighttime patrol operations, Steadfast personnel were notified by a Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) of a suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel transiting international waters. Steadfast personnel launched an Over-the-Horizon (OTH) crew and boarding team who interdicted the vessel after a multi-hour pursuit. The suspected smugglers jettisoned contraband, resulting in the disruption of 2,260 pounds of cocaine, valued at \$25.6 million.

Additionally, Steadfast's crew tracked another suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel with the assistance of a Mexican Navy (SEMAR) surveillance aircraft and aircrew. Steadfast personnel launched an OTH boat crew and HITRON helicopter aircrew while the Mexican MPA tracked the vessel. Steadfast's small boat and helicopter crews interdicted the suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel and seized 3,300 pounds of cocaine valued at \$37.5 million.

"The successful coordination between a U.S. Coast Guard cutter and Mexican MPA was a significant step in advancing our strategic partnerships in combatting the flow of illicit narcotics in Eastern Pacific," said Cmdr. Brock S. Eckel, Steadfast's commanding officer.

The next day, Steadfast crew launched an OTH boat crew and HITRON aircrew to intercept another suspected smuggling vessel. The aircrew located the suspected smuggling vessel and worked with a nearby Mexican Naval vessel to vector in a Mexican Naval helicopter. This multi-national effort resulted

in the seizure of 1,984 pounds of cocaine valued at \$22.5 million.

“From battling heavy seas off the Oregon and California coasts, to overcoming equipment casualties, and multiple smuggling vessel interdictions in the darkest of nights, the determination, resilience, and professionalism of the Steadfast crew was simply exceptional,” said Eckel. “The crew’s operational success was matched only by the strengthening of international and inter-agency relationships along the way. Steadfast’s crew once again proved their proficiency in working with partner nations jointly executing the counternarcotics mission successfully.”

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring, and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions for these interdictions by United States Attorney’s Offices throughout the country.

Commissioned in 1968, Steadfast is one of two 210-foot medium endurance cutters homeported in Astoria. The cutter and crew deploy along the western seaboard of North and Central America enforcing living marine resource laws and regulations, detecting and interdicting narcotics and migrant smuggling, and conducting search-and-rescue operations.

General Officer Announcement

[Release from the Department of Defense](#)

MARCH 15, 2023

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

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. James W. Bierman, Jr., for reappointment to the grade of lieutenant general with assignment as deputy commandant for plans, policies, and operations, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. Bierman is currently serving as commanding general, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan.

PROFILES IN SERVICE – Chief Magda Fernandez

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Navy Concludes EOC Westpac Deployment of MQ-4C Triton UAV



ARLINGTON, Va.— The U.S. [Navy is concluding the first deployment](#) of a detachment of MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance maritime intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting (MISR&T) unmanned aerial vehicles, ending the Early Operational Capability deployment of the Triton, paving the way for the UAV's Initial Operational Capability.

Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19, home-based at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, deployed two MQ-4Cs to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam in 2020 to provide MISR&T for the U.S. 7th Fleet while developing the concept of operations and the tactics to refine the Triton's operations. The detachment operated from Guam; Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan; and Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, the Navy said in a March 16 release.

The two MQ-4Cs deployed from VUP-19's maintenance base in Naval Air Station Point Mugu, California. While deployed, the

maintenance detachment moved to Naval Station Mayport, Florida, which is near the squadron's operations center in Jacksonville. One of the two deployed Tritons arrived in Mayport in December to be used for training.

The two deployed Tritons were of the baseline Integrated Functional Capability (IFC) 3 configuration. The squadron has since received newer versions in the IFC 4 configuration, which are equipped with a more capable sensor suite that will allow them to replace the Navy's fleet of EP-3E Orion electronic reconnaissance aircraft. The MQ-4C will supplement the Navy's P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.

VUP-19 is scheduled to bring the Triton to Initial Operational Capability later in 2023 when it deploys a full "orbit" of Tritons to the 7th Fleet's Task Force 72. With a full orbit, a squadron detachment will be able to maintain a Triton on patrol 24/7.

Last October, [Seapower reported](#) that Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, said the fleet is working to build up an orbit "to learn our way through some of the capabilities that an EP-3 [Aries II Orion electronic reconnaissance aircraft] might bring back. It will be a different way of processing the information than we do with our EP-3s, so we're working as a Navy to see how we seamlessly transition."

"VUP-19 plans to introduce this capability to more fleet areas around the globe, paving the way for future Navy unmanned systems," the Navy release said.