IMSC Stakeholder Conference Yields Greater Alliance with Maritime Industry

The Royal Saudi Naval Force frigate Makkah (814), back, and the guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), not pictured, provide overwatch as the Royal Bahrain Naval Force patrol warship Al Zubara transits the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Nov. 20, 2020. The International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) maintains the freedom of navigation, international law and free flow of commerce to support regional stability and security of the maritime commons. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Louis Thompson Staats IV*

NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY BAHRAIN – The International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) held its third Stakeholders Conference for maritime industry professionals virtually from Naval Support Activity Bahrain, Sept. 30, Coalition Task Force Sentinel said in an Oct. 4 release.

During the conference, industry stakeholders considered topics such as regional security and IMSC's mission directives. The forum gave participants an opportunity to discuss current maritime challenges from an industry perspective with IMSC's leadership.

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces opened the conference by highlighting the role of IMSC's operational task force in promoting security and freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf.

"Ships under Coalition Task Force Sentinel have been busy conducting countless overwatch transits through critical chokepoints because this is important work," said Cooper.

“Successfully preventing aggression against member-nation merchant traffic is critical to maintaining regional security and stability.”

The industry-focused conference, with a theme of partnering for better outcomes, featured speakers from the United States Maritime Administration (MARAD) and INTERTANKO, an organization that aims to promote safe transport for merchant tankers, cleaner seas, and free competition.

Royal Navy Commodore Gordon Ruddock, the commander of IMSC, moderated the conference and introduced both Cameron Naron, the director of the Office of Maritime Security at MARAD and INTERTANKO’s Marine Director Dr. Phillip Belcher.

Naron began his remarks with a high-level overview the MARAD’s maritime alerts and advisories system, the Maritime Security Communications with Industry (MSCI). He detailed how the alerts and advisories were established through a partnership between a number of U.S. Government agencies and the U.S. maritime industry. The system – while designed to more efficiently communicate information on threats in the maritime domain to U.S. maritime industry stakeholders and U.S. mariners – is today used by mariners and shipping companies from across the world, and closely aligned with various regional navigation and safety at sea constructs from across the globe.

“Our primary audience and the guidance in these is targeted toward U.S. maritime stakeholders, but we publish all alerts and advisories publicly and many are picked up in the maritime press.” he said.

He explained that MSCI replaced the legacy State Department “Special Warning” and Department of Transportation “MARAD Advisory” system, as well as international maritime-security related information previously published under the U.S. Coast Guard’s Marine Safety Information Bulletin system.

“The alerts are meant to go out to the maritime community very quickly, we usually aim to send them out within two hours,” said Naron, who noted that the last advisory from MSCI detailed how tanker crews could address the recent threat of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles at sea.

As government agencies continue to explore ways for alerting mariners to threats, industry must continue to manage the wide-ranging impacts of maritime incidents. During his brief, Belcher talked about significant challenges the tanker industry faces in the Arabian Gulf and offered his assessment of how to address threats, vulnerabilities, and risks.

“The tanker industry is a service industry; we go where our customers need but service doesn’t mean subservient, and we have to look at how we manage and own the risk but it needs to take an intelligent approach to risk,” he said, noting that most threats are external to the industry but that vulnerabilities are still directly owned by tanker companies.

Types of threats, Belcher explained, could include state actors, rebel forces in Yemen, piracy, the so-called tanker war, and even refugee or migrant crises.

Belcher added that the coronavirus pandemic had significant impacts on crew morale, shipping of goods, and fuel availability. On a positive note, he mentioned that vaccination rates continue to increase among ships’ crews, which is helping mitigate risks posed by the pandemic. Finally, he noted how critical it was for industry and constructs like IMSC to remain in constant communication and partnership to help counter these threats and risks.

Ruddock closed the conference with an assurance that IMSC would continue its vital work with industry partners to promote and protect the free flow of commerce; reassure the merchant shipping community through regular communication and

response as required; and, through continued partnership, cultivate an understanding of risks and challenges posed to the shipping community.

“IMSC is committed to refining industry and coalition relationships, cultivating new partnerships, and forging ahead with its maritime security operations,” said Ruddock. “I ask for your commitment to help our task force units identify, document, and respond to activity you may consider to be out of place or a physical threat to normal business.”

U.S. Coast Guard, Canadian Navy Crews Conduct Joint Exercise Near Dutch Harbor

The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball crew and a Royal Canadian Navy crew, aboard the military vessel Harry DeWolf, transit alongside one another off the coast of Dutch Harbor, on Sept. 23, 2021. The crews exchanged radio communications after rendering honors along the ship railings. *U.S. COAST GUARD*
JUNEAU, Alaska – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kimball and Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) crews conducted a joint exercise off the coast of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, on Sept. 23, the Coast Guard 17th District said in an Oct. 5 release.

The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball crew and an RCN crew, aboard the military vessel Harry DeWolf, operated alongside one another to exchange radio communications after both crews lined their respective ship’s port railings to properly salute in formation, rendering honors.

The joint exercise was a significant opportunity that allowed the crews to demonstrate international operability and reaffirms the longstanding relationship between the U.S. and Canada. The mutually beneficial alliance between the two Arctic nations continues to contribute to maritime security in this increasingly critical region.

“Our exercise with the Harry DeWolf is just the latest in a long history of maintaining a strong bond with our close friend, Canada, as well as our commitment to work with all the Arctic nations,” said Capt. Thomas D’Arcy, the Kimball’s commanding officer. “The maritime partnership between the United States and Canada enhances each nation’s regional stability, while providing mutually beneficial economic opportunities. With the increased importance of the Arctic and activity in the region, our trust and partnership in the maritime domain will promote each nation’s interests and provide opportunities to protect the environment.”

The Coast Guard provides a continuous physical presence in the Bering Sea and throughout Alaska to carry out search and rescue and law enforcement missions and to conduct interagency and international cooperation, building on current regional partnerships.

The Bering Sea, considered the gateway to the Arctic, encompasses 900,000 square miles of the U.S. exclusive zone off the Alaskan coast. The joint operations conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Royal Canadian Navy bolster the ability to operate in this critical region at a time when the Arctic is becoming increasingly accessible.

The Kimball, homeported in Honolulu, Hawaii, is one of the Coast Guard’s newer 420-foot Legend-class National Security Cutters and boasts a wide array of modern capabilities helping the crew to complete their varied missions.

U.S. Navy Super Hornet Crashes in Death Valley National Park

An F/A-18F Super Hornet, attached to the Diamondbacks of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 102, transits across the flight deck of the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) in this Oct. 5 photo. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Gray Gibson*

SAN DIEGO – An F/A-18F Super Hornet crashed in Death Valley National Park, California, at approximately 3 p.m. (PDT), Oct. 4, the Navy said in a release. The pilot was treated for minor injuries at Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center in Las Vegas and released later that night.

The aircraft was assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 9 based at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake.

Search and rescue units from NAWS China Lake, Fort Irwin Army Base, and Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron (MAWTS) 1 from Marine Corps Air Station Yuma responded to the scene and rescued the pilot.

No civilians were harmed as a result of this incident. The aircraft crashed in a remote area in southern Death Valley National Park. The National Park Service and Navy will work together to coordinate cleanup of this Wilderness area.

This incident is currently under investigation and the U.S. Navy is cooperating fully with local authorities.

USS Ralph Johnson Joins Forward-Deployed Naval Forces in Japan

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114) arrives at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka as one of the newest additions to Commander, Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15. *U.S. NAVY / Tetsuya Morita*
YOKOSUKA, Japan – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114), arrived Oct. 4 to its new forward-deployed location in Yokosuka, Japan, Commander, Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15 Public Affairs, said in a release.

Ralph Johnson is a Flight IIA multi-mission destroyer, capable of embarking two MH-60 variant helicopters with air warfare, submarine warfare, and surface warfare capabilities; designed to operate independently or with carrier strike groups, surface action groups, or amphibious ready groups.

“Ralph Johnson and her crew look forward to joining the forward-deployed team in Yokosuka and to building relationships with our allies and partners in the region,” said Cmdr. Colin Roberts, commanding officer of USS Ralph Johnson. “It’s an honor to join the DESRON 15 team and an honor to know that Ralph Johnson will play a role in ensuring the future of a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

The United States values Japan’s long-term hospitality and contributions in hosting U.S. forward-deployed forces. Along with their counterparts in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, U.S. forces frequently operate together in the Indo-

Pacific Region.

“Ralph Johnson comes over as one of the newest and most capable destroyers in the U.S. Navy,” said Capt. Chase Sargeant, commander, Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15. “The addition of Ralph Johnson demonstrates our unwavering commitment to maintain maritime security in the Indo-Pacific alongside our alliances and partnerships.”

Future USS Daniel Inouye Sails for Homeport

1The Navy’s newest guided missile destroyer, the future USS Daniel Inouye (DDG 118) sailed away from General Dynamics Bath Iron Works shipyard, Oct. 4. *BATH IRON WORKS*

WASHINGTON – The Navy’s newest guided missile destroyer, the future USS Daniel Inouye (DDG 118), sailed from General Dynamics Bath Iron Works shipyard Oct. 4 en route to its homeport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for its scheduled commissioning in December.

“Following delivery to the Navy in March 2021, the entire team has continued to prepare DDG 118 for this important readiness milestone,” Capt. Seth Miller, DDG 51 program manager, Arleigh Burke-class program office, Program Executive Office-Ships, said in a Team Ships release. “The fleet will soon be receiving an advanced warship capable of performing the core roles of sea control and power projection.”

The future USS Daniel Inouye is named in honor of Daniel Inouye, who served as a United States Senator for Hawaii from 1963 until his death in 2012. He received the Medal of Honor

on June 21, 2000, for his extraordinary heroism in action while serving with the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team in Italy during World War II.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are multi-mission ships able to hold targets on land, at sea, in the air and underwater at risk with a suite of sophisticated weapons and sensors.

The other Arleigh Burke-class destroyers currently under construction at Bath Iron Works include Carl M. Levin (DDG 120), John Basilone (DDG 122), Harvey C. Barnum Jr. (DDG 124), Patrick Gallagher (DDG 127), Louis H. Wilson Jr. (DDG 126) and William Charette (DDG 130), as well as the Zumwalt-class destroyer Lyndon B. Johnson (DDG 1002).

Navy Orders Advanced Off-Board Electronic Warfare System into Production

An artist's conception of the AOEWS at work. *LOCKHEED MARTIN*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded Lockheed Martin a production order for a new helicopter-borne electronic warfare system.

The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded to Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems, Liverpool, New York, a $17.8 million firm-fixed-price contract modifications exercise options for Advanced Off-Board Electronic Warfare (AOEW) System low-rate initial production units, according to a Sept. 29 Defense Department release.

The AOEW pod is designed to be taken aloft by an MH-60R or MH-60S Seahawk helicopter and serve as an offboard electronic attack system to counter anti-ship cruise missiles. The pod can be attached to either side of the helicopter. The helicopter provides power and mobility for the pod, but the pod's operation is independent of the helicopter crew and linked to the SLQ-32(V)6/7 shipboard electronic warfare system.

The Navy initially ordered four Engineering and Manufacturing Development models for evaluation that were delivered by early 2020.

U.S. Marine Corps Awards Production Contract to Kongsberg for C-UAS Capability

Kongsberg's RS6 remote weapon system for the Marine Air Defense Integrated System program. *KONGSBERG*

JOHNSTOWN, Penn. — The U.S. Marine Corps has awarded a production contract to Kongsberg Protech Systems USA to deliver remote weapon systems (RWS) as part of the Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS) program, the company said Oct. 5.

The indefinite delivery / indefinite quantity contract has a ceiling of $94 million and includes a series of low-rate initial production systems and full-rate production units. This production contract award follows a September 2020

contract award from the Marine Corps to Kongsberg for test articles and activities, which included design verification testing.

The Kongsberg RS6 RWS for MADIS leverages technology and competence drawn from multiple counter-unmanned aircraft systems and air defense programs. The system leverages commonality with the family of Protector RWS delivered and fielded with the U.S. Army and Marine Corps and will be integrated on the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle together with external sensors and effectors.

The first 30mm remote weapon system to be qualified on the JLTV platform, the Kongsberg RS6 RWS for MADIS RWS includes the XM914E1 30mmx113mm DC driven cannon with a co-axial M240 (7.62mm) machine gun, an integration kit for the Stinger Air-To-Air Launcher and provisions for future C-UAS defeat systems.

“The MADIS program with Kongsberg’s RS6 30mm remote weapon system signifies a powerful lethality capability for the Marine Corps, initiating a new era in U.S. Marine Corps ground-based air defense operations,” said Pål E Bratlie, executive vice president, Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace.

Kongsberg has delivered more than 20,000 RWS units to more than 20 countries worldwide. The company also is the sole provider of RWS and remote turrets to the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. All RWS and remote turrets delivered to U.S. customers are manufactured in the Kongsberg Johnstown, Pennsylvania, facility.

Marine Corps F-35Bs Conduct First Landing Aboard JS Izumo

A U.S. Sailor directs a Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II aircraft with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 242 aboard the Japanese Ship Izumo off the coast of Japan, Oct. 3, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Tyler Harmon*

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan – At the request of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 242 successfully conducted the first landing of two F-35B Lightning II aircraft aboard the Japanese Ship Izumo on Oct. 3, Marine Aircraft Group 12 said in a release.

Following a series of modifications to the JS Izumo to enable short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) operations, a capability that the "B" variant of the F-35 specializes in, U.S. Marines embarked aboard the JS Izumo and worked directly with JMSDF personnel as part of a bilateral effort to ensure the capability test was both effective and safe.

"This trial has proved that the JS Izumo has the capability to support takeoffs and landings of STOVL aircraft at sea, which will allow us to provide an additional option for air defense in the Pacific Ocean in the near future," said JMSDF Rear Adm. Komuta Shukaku, commander of Escort Flotilla One.

Japan is one of 14 nations that participate in the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program and announced in August 2019 it would purchase 42 F-35B aircraft from the United States.

"We have work to do until the day the JSDF can regularly employ STOVL aircraft at sea, but I am confident that the strong partnership and mutual trust between our two counties will result in its realization," said Komuta.

The F-35 includes the latest stealth technology and has an advanced suite of sensors that enables it to create a dynamic awareness of the battlespace. The F-35 is then able to rapidly share this information with other aircraft platforms and command centers, including those operated by multinational allies and partners, creating greater situational awareness for commanders.

“We have the utmost confidence in the Joint Strike Fighter and are eager for our Japanese allies to have the same capabilities in their hands, which ultimately contributes to our shared goal of maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific,” said Maj. Gen. Brian W. Cavanaugh, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general.

VMFA-242 is one of two F-35B squadrons permanently stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, and is one of the many forward-stationed units that routinely train with Japan Self-Defense Forces. The F-35B represents the United States’ rebalance to the Indo-Pacific and its commitment to the defense of Japan and regional security with the most capable and modern equipment in the U.S. inventory.

LCS Fleet Introduction and Sustainment Program Office Realigned to NAVSEA 21

The LCS Fleet Introduction and Sustainment Program Office (PMS 505) realigned to Naval Sea System Command’s Surface Ship Maintenance, Modernization and Sustainment (NAVSEA 21) directorate during a small ceremony, Oct. 1. Participants

included (left to right): Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage, commander, Navy Regional Maintenance Center and Director, Surface Ship Maintenance, Modernization and Sustainment, Vice Adm. William Galinis, commander, Naval Sea Systems Command , Frederick J. Stefany III, assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition (Acting), Rear Adm. Casey Moton, program executive officer, Unmanned and Small Combatants, Capt. Stephen Marino, program manager, Littoral Combat Ship Fleet Introduction and Sustainment and Capt. Matthew Lehmann, master of ceremony. *U.S. NAVY / Dave Ferraris*

WASHINGTON – As part of the U.S. Navy's continuing efforts to integrate the littoral combat ship (LCS) with all other surface ship classes, the LCS Fleet Introduction and Sustainment Program Office (PMS 505) realigned to Naval Sea System Command's Surface Ship Maintenance, Modernization and Sustainment (NAVSEA 21) directorate during a small ceremony, Oct. 1, Team Ships Public Affairs and PEO USC Public Affairs said in a release.

PMS 505 was established in 2011 under the purview of PEO Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) to ensure the unique aspects of LCS sustainment were fully aligned under a single Program Executive Office.

"We are excited to have PMS 505 join our team of world class maintainers and sustainers," said Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage, director, NAVSEA 21. "This transition will ensure LCS sustainment plans remain aligned with all other surface ship classes as we serve the fleet."

Under PEO USC, more than half of the 35-ship LCS class has been delivered, LCS ships are routinely deploying to combatant commands, and training facilities are successfully executing the Train-to-Qualify/Certify plan for the crews.

The move does not impact or affect the work of LCS ship construction or LCS Mission Modules.

"With 20 LCS in the fleet today, PMS 505 has accomplished the

mission that it was created to perform," said Rear Adm. Casey Moton, program executive officer, Unmanned and Small Combatants. "Fleet introduction and sustainment of LCS is on a solid pathway, thanks to this team, and PMS 505 will continue supporting the Navy's efforts to mainstream LCS by joining SEA 21, the Surface Navy's premier maintenance and modernization organization."

As NAVSEA's Directorate for Surface Ship Maintenance, Modernization and Sustainment, SEA 21 is the dedicated life cycle management organization for the Navy's in-service surface ships and is responsible for managing critical maintenance, sustainment, modernization, training and inactivation programs.

Navy Establishes New MH-60R Helicopter Squadron

U.S. Navy Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Jonathan Shaffer, left, and Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Devante Sims remove chocks from an MH-60R Seahawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike (HSM) 74, on the flight deck of the guided missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64) Nov. 24, 2013, in the Gulf of Oman. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Lorenzo J. Burleson/Released*

NORFOLK, Va. – The U.S. Navy establishes a new helicopter squadron, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50, onboard Naval Air Station (NAS) Mayport, Florida, Oct. 1, the commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic Public Affairs said in a release.

Primarily, HSM-50 "Valkyries" will be fully equipped with

MH-60R Seahawks and will provide expeditionary aviation detachments in support of littoral combat ships and expeditionary independent deployers to meet global force management missions.

“I’m honored and humbled to have the opportunity to serve as HSM-50’s first commanding officer,” said Cmdr. Carolyn Peterson. “Every member of Valkyries will have a major impact as we establish this squadron from the ground floor and create a strong, resilient, combat-ready unit prepared to deploy MH-60R detachments to fight and win at sea. I am excited and encouraged as we move forward as a team, face challenges head-on, and continue to serve in the defense of our nation.”

Peterson, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, served in a number of assignments including tours as an instructor pilot, a helicopter initial shore assignments officer, a Carrier Air Wing MH-60R operational squadron department head, and a joint planning officer in Anchorage, Alaska. She is a graduate of Air Force Air Command and Staff College Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) Phase One, and earned a Master’s of Science in Aeronautics: Safety Systems.

The MH-60R Seahawk, a versatile multi-mission platform, is used to support a number of operations spanning: anti-submarine warfare, electronic warfare, surface warfare, command and control, non-combat operations, and fleet support for operations and logistics. It can also integrate mission systems with other ships to provide early warning indications of surface contacts and longer-range pursuit of subsurface contacts.

HSM-50 is expected to conduct a formal establishment ceremony in the summer of 2022 and the squadron will fall under Helicopter Maritime Strike Wing Atlantic.