Coast Guard Intercepts Semi-Submersible, Seizes 5,000 Pounds of Cocaine

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane intercepted a suspected semi-submersible smuggling vessel in the eastern Pacific Ocean on Oct. 23 and seized about 5,000 pounds of cocaine, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

The crew was alerted to the presence of the vessel by the crew of a maritime patrol aircraft on patrol in the region. Boarding teams from the cutter deployed in interceptor boats and stopped the vessel just before midnight.

The boarding teams took control of the vessel before the four suspected smugglers aboard could sink the craft using installed scuttling valves. Cocaine valued at about $69 million was later removed from the semi-submersible.

“I am really proud of our crew and the precision and professionalism with which they conducted this interdiction,” said Cmdr. Dorothy Hernaez, commanding officer of the Harriet Lane. “It was an all-hands-on-deck effort to properly position the cutter and to safely make the seizure. This interdiction was made possible by great teamwork, including excellent air support provided by Joint Interagency Task Force South and assistance from Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf’s crew in off-loading the bulk contraband from the vessel.”

Coast Guard assets deployed in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean increase the U.S. and allied presence in these known drug transit zones off the coasts of Central and South America, in support of the Coast Guard’s Western Hemisphere Strategy. Interdictions are in support of Campaign Martillo, a regional initiative targeting illicit trafficking that

threatens security and prosperity at the national, regional and international levels.

The interdictions are facilitated by detection and monitoring information from Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South, located in Key West, Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District headquartered in Alameda. Interdictions, including the actual boarding, are led and conducted by Coast Guard law enforcement personnel.

F-35 Operational Evaluation May Resume in Mid-2020, Pentagon Tester Says

WASHINGTON – The Pentagon's head of operational test and evaluation said the earliest the F-35 Lightning II strike fighter's Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) could resume is mid-2020, when the Joint Simulation Environment is ready. That evaluation, paused earlier this year, must be completed before full-rate production of the F-35 can be approved.

The full-rate production decision likely will be delayed until early fiscal 2021. The Defense Department is planning for low-rate initial production through Lot 14 of the F-35. Under low-rate production, more than 458 F-35s of all three variants have been fielded so far. The F-35A and F-35B have flown in combat.

"So far the JOTT [Joint Operational Test Team] has conducted

91% of the open air test missions, actual weapons employment, cybersecurity testing, deployments and comparison testing with fourth-generation fighters, including the congressionally directed comparison test of the F-35A and the A-10C," said Robert Behler, the Pentagon's director of operational test and evaluation, testifying Nov. 13 before a joint hearing of the Readiness and Tactical Air and Land Force subcommittees of the House Armed Services Committee. "IOT&E events have assessed the F-35 across a variety of offensive and defensive roles.

"Operational suitability of the F-35 fleet remains below service expectations," Behler said. "In particular, no F-35 variant meets the specified reliability or maintainability metrics. In short, [for] all variants, the aircraft are breaking more often and are taking longer to fix. However, there are several suitability metrics that are showing signs of improvement this year.

"There are two phases of IOT&E remaining," he said. "The first is electronic warfare testing against robust surface-to-air threats at the Point Mugu [California] Sea Range. The other is testing against dense surface and air threats in the Joint Simulation Environment [JSE] at the Naval Air Station Patuxent River [Maryland]. I would approve the start of these tests when the necessary test infrastructure is ready.

"The Joint Simulation Environment is essential," he said. "The JSE is a man-in-the-loop synthetic environment that uses actual [F-35] aircraft software. It is designed to provide scalable, high-fidelity, operationally realistic simulation. I would like to emphasize that the JSE will be the only venue available other than actual combat against peer adversaries. To adequately evaluate the F-35, due to the inherent limitations of open-air testing, these limitations do not permit a full and adequate test of the aircraft against the required types and density of modern threat systems, including weapons, aircraft, and electronic warfare that are currently

fielded by our near-peer adversaries. Integrating the F-35 into the JSE is a very complex challenge, but is required to complete IOT&E, which will lead to my final IOTE report."

The current schedule indicates that the JSE will not be ready to start final phase of operational testing until July [2020], he said.

Behler said that his organization has been closely with the F-35 Joint Program Office and the Naval Air Systems Command at Patuxent River to determine when the JSE will be ready. There are enormous challenges and there are a lot of unknown unknows still out there.

"I do believe the JSE development – the "F-35 in a Box" integration into JSE – is on track," said Lt. Gen. Eric T. Fick, program executive officer for the F-35, who also testified at the hearing.

The F-35 in a Box is the simulation of the aircraft and its sensors that fits in the JSE.

"To put it in context, we're not only integrating the F-35 in a Box into this environment, we're also integrating all of the blue and red threat vehicles – ground systems, airborne systems, weapons, electronic warfare – and all of the things that you need to bring a full 8-on-8 [aircraft] or greater scenario to life in a synthetic environment," Fick said. "We're trying to come as close to a combat environment without putting iron in the sky."

Senior NATO Commander Says Alliance Is Responding to Russian Expansion With Exercises, New Command

NATO has seen the effects of a modernized Russia's navy and its increased activities in all the waters around Europe, and the alliance is responding with multinational exercises and new organizations, including a command focused on ensuring the flow of forces and supplies across the Atlantic during a conflict, a senior NATO commander said.

"We see the consequence of modernization of Russian naval forces. We've seen increased activity" in the Mediterranean, Black Sea, Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, said British Air Chief Marshall Peach Stuart, chairman of the NATO Military Committee. "NATO takes its maritime security very seriously. The way we make that real is through a series of patrols, and multinational groupings of ships, in standing naval groups," Stuart told a Defense Writers' breakfast on Nov. 13.

"We have to take a balanced approach to that presence and to reassure our allies. And the way we conduct our naval operations is, of course, coordinated with allies and partners" and conducting international exercises, Stuart said. He cited Trident Juncture, a massive exercise involving nearly

50,000 personnel from 31 nations in and around Norway in October and November 2018. Stuart called that "a very impressive grouping of capabilities, including maritime."

Asked about the concerns expressed by U.S. commanders of the potential challenge to getting reinforcements and supplies across the Atlantic due to the updated and expanded Russian submarine fleet, Stuart said: "Our role is to deter. All our naval operations I just described are part of that deterrent posture. Of course, the Atlantic Ocean is vital to the economic well-being of the whole of Europe as well as North America. Therefore, we continue to take everything that might affect that very seriously."

"The exact response is to create a new headquarters, called Joint Forces Command in Norfolk," which is co-located with the headquarters of the recently re-established U.S. Navy 2nd Fleet, both of which are commanded by U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis, he said. Disbanded after the end of the Cold War, the 2nd Fleet was reactivated in August 2018 by then Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson, who cited the increased tensions between Russia and NATO. Joint Forces "is forming actively as a NATO headquarters as we speak," Stuart said.

"Yes, we do observe the increased [Russian] activity, and we are responding to that increased activity with the formation of an additional

headquarters, which its primarily focus would be, should it be necessary to provide the ability to reinforce across the Atlantic Ocean."

Stuart also noted there was "more tension" in the eastern Mediterranean, where Russia has deployed some of its newest ships and demonstrated the capabilities of its latest ship-launched land-attack missiles in support of the Syrian regime. "NATO continues to operate in accordance with international law," he said, adding that "freedom of navigation is important everywhere, not just in Asia."

Despite Russia's increasingly aggressive behavior, Stuart said the alliance has continued its dialog with Moscow through the NATO-Russia Council based at NATO headquarters in Brussels. "That dialog is an important structure, but it is not business as usual. NATO does not recognize [Russian] occupation of Crimea."

Asked about the status of Turkey in NATO after its increased ties with Russia, including buying the S-400 advanced air defense system, Stuart said: "Turkey has been an important ally since the 1950s. That has not changed. … The capabilities Turkey brings to the alliance are very important," and NATO's relations with the Turkish military "continues very close." As for the S-400, he said, "procurement is a sovereign issue." But, he added, "interoperability is important to the alliance." U.S.

officials have
said the S-400 cannot be interoperable with NATO systems.

HII Begins Fabrication of Legend-Class Cutter Calhoun

Paul Bosarge, a burner work leaderman at Ingalls Shipbuilding, starts fabrication of steel for the newest Legend-class national security cutter, Calhoun. Also pictured (from left) are Cmdr. Jason Dunn, U.S. Coast Guard program manager representative, Braxton Collins, Ingalls' NSC hull superintendent, and Amanda Whitaker, Ingalls' NSC ship integration manager. Derek Fountain/Huntington Ingalls Industries

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding division marked the start of fabrication of the U.S. Coast Guard's newest Legend-class national security cutter, Calhoun, on Nov. 12, according to a company release. The start of fabrication signifies that the first 100 tons of steel for a ship have been cut.

"Each new ship in this class has been an exciting opportunity to build on our legacy," said Jay Boyd, Ingalls' NSC program manager. "This is the 10th cutter in the class and a steady production line has allowed our shipbuilders to continually improve on how we build and deliver these technologically advanced cutters to the nation."

NSC 10 is named for Master Chief Petty Officer Charles L. Calhoun, who was the first MCPOCG. He served in the U.S. Navy for three years during World War II and was honorably discharged in February 1946 as

a torpedoman second class but enlisted in the Coast Guard that September. Over the course of 14 years he held various Coast Guard leadership positions, serving as MCPOCG from August 1969 until August 1973.

Crew members from two new NSCs, Kimball (foreground), and Midgett line their rails during a dual commissioning ceremony in August. The ships are the seventh and eighth Legend-class NSCs. Calhoun will be the 10th. U.S. Coast Guard/Chief Petty Officer John Masson

Ingalls has delivered eight Legend–class NSCs, two more are under construction and one additional is under contract. Stone, the ninth NSC, is scheduled for delivery in 2020.

NSCs can meet all maritime security mission needs required of the high-endurance cutter. They include an aft launch and recovery area for two rigid-hull inflatable boats and a flight deck to accommodate a range of manned and unmanned rotary wing aircraft.

The Legend class is the largest and most technologically advanced class of cutter in the Coast Guard, with maritime homeland security, law enforcement, marine safety, environmental protection and national defense capabilities. NSCs enhance the Coast Guard’s operational readiness, capacity and effectiveness at a time when the demand for their services has never been greater.

Coast Guard Names New Cutters

After 9/11 Heroes

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz is joined on stage by Lisa Palazzo and Angela Danz-Donahue during a Nov. 12 ceremony naming two new cutters after their late husbands, Port Security Specialist 2nd Class Vincent Danz and Machinery Technician 1st Class Jeffrey Palazzo. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 2nd Class Cory Mendenhall

NEW YORK – The U.S. Coast Guard will name two of its new Sentinel-class fast-response cutters in honor of two public servants and Coast Guardsmen who lost their lives responding to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City, the Coast Guard 1st District announced in a Nov. 12 release.

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz made the announcement in New York's Battery Park flanked by Mayor Bill de Blasio, Police Commissioner James O'Neill and Fire Chief John Sudnik.

The two new cutters will be named for Vincent Danz and Jeffrey Palazzo.

Palazzo served as a Coast Guard reservist and New York firefighter at Rescue 5 in Staten Island. He died while helping others at the World Trade Center. Danz, also a Coast Guard reservist, was a police officer with the emergency services unit in the Bronx and was helping victims at Ground Zero when the Trade Center collapsed.

A fast-response cutter (FRC) in New York Harbor on Nov. 12, when Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz announced that two new FRCs will be named in honor of 9/11 heroes Vincent Danz and Jeffrey Palazzo. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class John Hightower

"We are humbled and grateful for the opportunity to honor these brave men whose service and sacrifice spanned three great first-responder organizations," Schultz said. "Their

broad military and public service to both the nation and City of New York demonstrated their incredible dedication and character. When the call came, they answered. We are certain that the men and women who serve aboard Coast Guard Cutter Vincent Danz and Coast Guard Cutter Jeffrey Palazzo … will proudly carry on their sense of honor, respect and devotion to duty."

"On the day we needed them most, our city's brave first responders ran toward danger without hesitation," de Blasio said. "Officer Vincent Danz and Firefighter Jeffrey Palazzo lived and died in service to our city and our country, and I join the U.S. Coast Guard, NYPD and FDNY in remembering the sacrifices they made to keep us safe. They were heroes, plain and simple, and their spirit will live on through these vessels as they continue to protect our city and nation from harm."

The new cutters are scheduled for delivery starting in 2023. FRCs are the mainstay of the Coast Guard's coastal patrol fleet, providing multimission capabilities and interagency interoperability.

They feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment to reach vessels of interest; and improved habitability and sea-keeping. They are replacing 1980s-era Island-class 110-foot patrol boats.

Northrop Grumman Delivers

500th APG-81 Radar for F-35 Fighter

Northrop Grumman delivered its 500th AN/APG-81 radar for the F-35 Lightning II strike fighter. Northrop Grumman Corp.
BALTIMORE – Northrop Grumman Corp. has delivered its 500th APG-81 fire control radar for the F-35 Lightning II strike fighter, the company said in a release.

The APG-81 active electronically scanned array is the cornerstone of the F-35's advanced sensor suite, providing unparalleled battlespace situational awareness that translates into platform lethality, effectiveness and survivability.

"As a principal member of the Lockheed Martin-led F-35 industry team, our continued investment in facilities and equipment, production enhancements in process and design and expanded supply chain capability through second sourcing helped reach this milestone," said Chris Fitzpatrick, director of F-35 programs for Northrop Grumman.

The APG-81 radar has long-range active and passive air-to-air and air-to-ground modes that support a wide range of demanding missions. These modes are enhanced by an array of stealth features as well as electronic warfare and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance functions.

Northrop Grumman plays a key role in the development, modernization, sustainment and production of the F-35. The company also manufactures the center fuselage and wing skins for the aircraft, produces and maintains several sensor systems, avionics, mission systems and mission-planning software, pilot and maintainer training systems courseware, electronic warfare simulation test capability and low-observable technologies.

Boeing Delivers First P-8A Poseidon to United Kingdom's Royal Air Force

The first P-8A Poseidon for the U.K. lifts off on Nov. 7 from Boeing Field in Seattle, Wash., after the formal delivery ceremony. Paul Gordon/Boeing

SEATTLE – Boeing has delivered the first of nine P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft to the United Kingdom Royal Air Force, the company said in a release.

The U.K. is acquiring the multimission aircraft through the foreign military sales process with the U.S. Navy. The P-8A Poseidon replaces the U.K.'s retired Nimrod aircraft.

Speaking to attendees at the delivery ceremony, Air Marshal Andrew Turner, deputy commander of capability for the Royal Air Force, spoke of the "profound challenge" of enemy submarines threatening the U.K. and other nations.

"P-8 is the key to solving this challenge on the surface, the sub-surface and in the waters of the North Atlantic. There is no place [for our enemies] to hide. We will make the oceans transparent and we will prevail."

Boeing formally delivered the aircraft on Oct. 29 to the U.S. Navy during a ceremony at the Boeing Military Delivery Center in Tukwila, Wash. From Tukwila, the aircraft flew to the Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, where Navy leaders officially are to turn the aircraft over to the U.K. At JAX, Royal Air Force crew will work with the aircraft before flying it to the U.K. in January. All nine P-8A aircraft will be

based at Lossiemouth, Scotland.

As part of a collaborative program with the U.S. Navy, pilots and maintainers from the RAF have been stationed at NAS Jacksonville since 2012. Called “Project Seedcorn,” the arrangement has allowed RAF members to fly the P-8A with Patrol Squadron Thirty (VP-30), the Navy’s maritime patrol and reconnaissance fleet replacement squadron, to maintain their maritime patrol skills in advance of receiving the P-8A.

The P-8 is a long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. In addition, the P-8 performs humanitarian and search and rescue missions around the globe.

Keel Authenticated for First Flight III Arleigh Burke-Class Destroyer

Ship’s sponsors (from left) Catherine B. Reynolds and Ruby Lucas trace their initials onto a steel plate that will be welded inside the USS Jack H. Lucas, the first Flight III Arleigh Burke-class destroyer. Looking on is Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant, who spoke at the Nov. 7 ceremony. Derek Fountain/Huntington Ingalls Industries

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – In a milestone for the DDG 51 program, the keel of the first Flight III destroyer, the future USS Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), was ceremoniously laid and authenticated at Huntington Ingalls Shipyard on Nov. 7.

Ruby Lucas and Catherine B. Reynolds, the ship's sponsors, authenticated the keel by etching their initials into the keel plate. Although the official start of fabrication for the Lucas began in May 2018, authenticating the ship's keel symbolically recognizes the joining of modular components and represents the ceremonial beginning of the ship.

"This destroyer was named after an American hero, Medal of Honor recipient Jack Lucas, and I am humbled and honored to be here today as we authenticate the keel on his namesake ship," said Capt. Seth Miller, DDG 51 class program manager, PEO Ships. "The Flight III ships will bring increased lethality and warfighting capacity to our warfighters, and today's milestone is the first of many to come as we work to deliver this highly capable ship to the Fleet."

> *US Navy's first Flight III Arleigh Burke destroyer's keel laid by @HIIndustries @USNavy @CavasShips https://t.co/iSU1vZ2KM7*
>
> *— Naval Post (@naval_post) November 11, 2019*

DDG 125 will be the first Arleigh Burke-class destroyer built in the Flight III configuration with improved capability and capacity to perform anti-air warfare and ballistic-missile defense in support of the integrated air and missile defense mission.

The Flight III design contains modifications from the earlier DDG 51 class, enabling the SPY-6 radar, in association with Aegis Baseline 10, which includes larger electronically scanned arrays and the power generation and cooling equipment required to operate the powerful new radar.

These multimission surface combatants serve as integral assets in global maritime security, engaging in air, undersea, surface, strike and ballistic missile defense as well as

providing increased capabilities in anti-submarine warfare, command and control and anti-surface warfare.

HII's Pascagoula shipyard also is building the guided missile destroyers Delbert D. Black (DDG 119), Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) and Lenah H. Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123), amphibious assault ships Tripoli (LHA 7) and Bougainville (LHA 8) and amphibious transport dock ships Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) and Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29).

Subs Will Get Harpoon Missiles Next Year, Navy Undersea Warfare Director Says

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of undersea warfare requirements said the Harpoon anti-ship missile will be returning to the submarine force next year, restoring more lethality to the sub force.

"I am happy to report that we will have the first refurbished [Harpoon] missiles delivered to the fleet in FY21," said Rear Adm. Thomas Ishee, director of undersea warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, speaking Nov. 7 at the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium in Arlington.

In a demonstration in the 2018 Rim of the Pacific exercise, a Harpoon was fired from the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Olympia at a target ship, the first time one was fired from a U.S. Navy submarine since the UGM-84A Harpoons were withdrawn from the force in 1997.

The UGM-84A is encapsulated to be fired from a torpedo tube and has a rocket booster to propel it above the surface of the water and into flight.

Next-Gen Attack Sub Will Be Revolutionary, Navy Undersea Warfare Director Says

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of undersea warfare requirements said the U.S. Navy's next-generation attack submarine (SSNX) will be revolutionary, not evolutionary.

"We run up against the design margin of the Virginia class, and we will need a new submarine capable of carrying [payloads] and is capable of pacing the threat," said Rear Adm. Thomas Ishee, director of undersea warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, speaking Nov. 7 at the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium in Arlington.

See: Admiral in charge of procuring sub missiles praises Trident's motor.

The NSSN "will have improved mobility – think speed and stealth, both not 'or,'" Ishee said. "It will have improved lethality – think magazine size and payload integration. It will have some levels of artificial intelligence to increase the warfighter decision space. It will have improved survivability, able to take a punch and still carry out the mission."

The admiral said the Navy has studies – "two starting now – to really inform our requirements process," noting that the top-

level requirements will be determined over the next year.

Ishee said the timetable for the SSNX is not clear yet.

“Since the end of the Cold War we have been making evolutionary changes to our SSNs,” he said. “The theme for SSNX is to look at revolutionary changes, so we are accelerating in the direction of a new class of fast-attack submarine.”

In an earlier briefing, Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, the Navy’s program executive officer for the new Columbia-class ballistic-missile submarine, said that the SSNX, not the Columbia, will be the class that will feature automation that will significantly affect crew size of a submarine.