Coast Guard Cutter Dependable Returns to Homeport After 62-Day Patrol

PORTSMOUTH, Va. — The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Dependable returned on June 22 to Little Creek, Virginia, after completing a 62-day Mid-Atlantic fisheries patrol, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

From New Jersey to South Carolina, the Dependable's boarding teams conducted 39 boardings and inspected the catch, gear and lifesaving equipment of U.S. fishing vessels to ensure they met all required federal laws and regulations.

During the patrol, the Dependable's boarding team members identified a variety of lifesaving equipment concerns on board several commercial and recreational fishing vessels. The boarding team members helped those mariners fix their issues on the spot and educated them on the importance of maintaining their equipment.

"Living marine resource patrols are vital to ensuring the continued stability of the multibillion-dollar U.S. seafood industry as well as the stewardship and

sustainability of living marine resources, such as fish, turtles and marine
protected species," said Cmdr. Rula Deisher, commanding officer of Coast Guard
Cutter Dependable.

"Our boarding
team members ensured that the mariners' safety and fishing gear were fully
operational and that they were operating within U.S. fishing regulations. We
enjoyed the opportunity to serve the public so close to our homeport."

The
Dependable is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Little Creek and
routinely deploys in support of counter-drug and alien migrant interdiction,
living marine resources and search-and-rescue missions.

Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant Crew Returns Home After Caribbean Patrol

A Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered small boat crew gives life jackets to 50 migrants about 46 miles north of Cap Haïtien, Haiti, on May 20. The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant crew transferred the migrants back to their country of origin. U.S. Coast Guard
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter

Vigilant returned home June 23 to Cape Canaveral after a two-month Caribbean patrol, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The crew's patrol focused on enforcing U.S. federal laws by conducting boardings of U.S. and international vessels throughout the Caribbean basin while working with other government agencies and international partners to maintain national security.

While on patrol, the crew ensured the safe return of 50 Haitian migrants to their home country after their illegal and dangerous voyage was disrupted by the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Robert Yered, a fast-response cutter homeported in Miami. The crew was also involved in a search for a person reported to be in the water after falling overboard from his sailing vessel.

The Vigilant crew interdicted a go-fast vessel illegally smuggling 7,800 pounds of garlic from Haiti to the Dominican Republic. Garlic smuggling is a global issue on the rise and has had negative impacts on the agricultural industry in the Dominican Republic in the last few years.

Upon hearing of the interdiction, the Dominican navy sent a ship to meet the Vigilant to take over the case for the prosecution. The contraband was valued at about

$30,000 and was the largest Coast Guard seizure of its kind.

During their 59-day patrol, the crew worked with agencies such as the Jamaican Defense Force, Royal Bahamian Defense Force, Dominican navy, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and the U.S. Navy.

The Vigilant is a multimission 210-foot medium-endurance cutter whose missions include illegal drug and migrant interdiction as well as search and rescue. The Vigilant patrols throughout the Caribbean basin and Atlantic seaboard to ensure safety of life at sea and enforce international and domestic laws.

Marine Corps Awards Lightweight Body Armor Insert Contract to Point Blank Enterprises

POMPANO BEACH, Fla. – Point Blank Enterprises Inc. has been awarded a $215.9 million body armor contract by the Marine Corps Systems Command, the company announced in a June 24 release.

The Marine Corps Low Intensity Threat Environment (LITE) body armor insert is a new small-arms protective insert that is designed to improve the survivability and mobility of Marines by maximizing ballistic protection at a reduced weight.

“Reducing Marine burden by providing innovative and lightweight armor solutions along with our high-quality manufacturing capabilities is our expertise,” said Brian Kopan, Point Blank’s senior vice president of engineering and technology. “Whether we are designing armor systems for vehicles or individual protection equipment, our mission is always focused on saving the life of those that protect us.”

For more than 43 years, Point Blank Enterprises has provided products and designs engineered to maximize ballistic protection. Point Blank has shipped body armor solutions to U.S. servicemen and women, law enforcement, corrections officers, federal agents and other national and international customers.

Navy Frigate Manager:

Practices Reducing Acquisition Timeline By 6 Years

WASHINGTON –
A disciplined set of practices by the U.S. Navy's frigate program office
enabled the planned acquisition timeline for the new ship to be shortened by
six years over what a new warship normally might have taken.

Regan Campbell, program manager for the FFG(X) guided-missile frigate
program, speaking June 20 in Washington at the Technology, Systems and Ships
Symposium of the American Society of Naval Engineers (ASNE), said the practices
wouldn't necessarily work in all acquisitions but the frigate program became a
proving ground for early engagement with industry and setting clear
requirements.

Campbell said the program office leveraged previous analyses of
alternatives to accelerate the process and set the stage for clear shipbuilder
requirements. The requirement for bidders to use a parent ship design as a
basis for their proposals greatly shortened the timeline, avoiding the need for
a "clean-sheet" design. A parallel requirements evaluation process instead of a
serial process also saved some time.

By design, the frigate will make use of command mature government-furnished equipment (GFE), particularly weapons, sensors and combat systems that already have been developed but will contribute to cost savings by being common with systems on other classes of ships.

Use of GFE, Campbell said, “allows us to shorten our combat systems integration time.”

Early engagement with industry also saved time and produced ideas for the program. Campbell said the Frigate Affordability Board received more than 350 ideas to modify the ship specifications and the Capabilities Definition Document.

“We accepted over 60% of the industry ideas,” Campbell said.

The Navy released the Request for Proposals for the FFG(X) on June 20.

Four companies are expected to submit bids for the FFG(X) program: Huntington Ingalls, Fincantieri Marine, General Dynamics Bath Iron Works and Austal USA. The builder of the Freedom-class littoral combat ship, Lockheed Martin, participated in the program until recently but dropped out. The competition is open to other bidders that can meet the requirements.

Navy Secretary Names Newest Towing, Salvage and Rescue Ship Cherokee Nation

An artist rendering of the future USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7). U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Paul L. Archer

WASHINGTON — Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer has announced the newest towing, salvage and rescue ship will be named Cherokee Nation in honor of the service and contributions the Cherokee people have made to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, the secretary's public affairs office said in a June 21 release.

"It is my privilege to announce that the many Cherokee Nation citizens who've served throughout the years will be remembered with the highest honor a secretary of the Navy can bestow, the naming of a ship," Spencer said.

This is the fifth U.S. ship to be named in honor of the Cherokee people.

"The Cherokee Nation is extremely honored that the U.S. Navy is recognizing our tribal nation and the generations of Cherokee men and women who have bravely and humbly sacrificed for our freedom today," Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker said.

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is recognizing our tribal nation and the generations of Cherokee men and women who have bravely and humbly sacrificed for our freedom today.”

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker

“Our Cherokee people have contributed in every major battle and war ever fought in this country and continue to serve in the armed forces in some of the highest rates per ethnicity. Cherokees are a strong, resilient people, and we are privileged to have a U.S. ship at sea that reflects both our country and tribe’s history and values.”

Gulf Island Shipyards was awarded a $64.8 million contract option for the detail design and construction of the new Ship, which will be based on existing commercial towing offshore vessel designs and will replace the current T-ATF 166 and T-ARS 50 class ships in service with the U.S. Military Sealift Command.
The Cherokee Nation is the second ship in the new class of towing, salvage and rescue ships and will be designated T-ATS 7.

The contract includes options for potentially six additional vessels, and each additional ship will be named in honor of prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.

The T-ATS

will serve as open ocean towing vessels and will additionally support salvage operations and submarine rescue missions. The ship will be
built at the company’s shipyard in Houma, Louisiana, and is expected to be
completed in July 2021.

Marine Corps Awards BAE Systems Contract to Develop ACV Mission Variants

Marine Corps Systems Command awarded a contract to BAE Systems to produce and deliver the Amphibious Combat Vehicle.
ARLINGTON,
Va. — The U.S. Marine Corps has awarded BAE Systems a contract to develop two
variants of the Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) and manufacture one of them.

Marine Corps
Systems Command has awarded “a not-to-exceed [$67 million] modification for
firm-fixed-price, cost-plus-fixed-fee contract for the development of
engineering drawings, manufacture and test support for three [ACV] command-and-control
Mission Role Variants (MRVs) and the development of engineering drawings for
the ACV medium-caliber-cannon MRV,” according to a Defense Department release.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzPcMB_9Ic0
BAE Systems
is building the ACV for the Marine Corps as an amphibious troop carrier to
replace the four-decade-old Assault Amphibious Vehicle. The AAV7 is fielded in
several variants, and the Corps plans to field the ACV in variants as well.

The
command-and-control (C2) MRV will be the first variant of the ACV. The C2
variant will be designed for a commander and staff and equipped with computer
displays and communications systems to enable the commander to maintain
situational awareness of the battlefield.

A variant
with a medium-caliber gun atop the ACV will follow.

Work is
expected to be completed by Sept. 30, 2022.

JLTV Approved for Full-Rate Production for Marine Corps, Army

A Joint Light Tactical Vehicle during a live demonstration at School of Infantry-West, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, in February. U.S. Marine Corps/Sgt. Timothy

Smithers
WASHINGTON
– Bruce Jette, assistant secretary of the U.S. Army for acquisition, logistics
and technology, on June 20 approved the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV)
program's transition into full-rate production, the Army Program Executive
Office for Combat Support and Combat Service Support announced in a release.

The
approval follows an Army decision in December to begin fielding the new
platform with the Army's 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart,
Georgia, in April. The 1-3 ID became the Army's first unit equipped with JLTVs
in April after receiving more than 300 vehicles.

Fieldings
to the Ordnance School, Fort Lee, Virginia, the 84th Training Command, Fort
McCoy, Wisconsin, the Marine Corps' School of Infantry-West at Camp Pendleton,
California, as well as the Marine School of Infantry-East, Camp Lejeune, North
Carolina, have also been completed.

"Thanks
to tremendous teamwork across two services on requirements, resources, program
management, testing and other areas, this is a great modernization success story.
JLTV shows how teams focused on stable requirements, mature technologies and
the right incentives can deliver meaningful capability advancements in a

cost-conscious way," said Jeffrey White, Jette's principal deputy.

The JLTV family of vehicles is designed to restore payload and performance that were traded from light tactical vehicles to add protection in recent conflict, giving commanders an improved protected mobility solution and the first vehicle purpose-built for modern battlefield networks.

"Getting an improved capability into the hands of Soldiers and Marines has been our team's driving focus throughout this program," said Michael Sprang, project manager, Joint Program Office, Joint Light Tactical Vehicles.

"We are also grateful for Soldier feedback on new features and enhancements," Sprang continued. "The Soldiers of the 1st ABCT, 3rd Infantry Division provided valuable input on enhancements such as increased situational awareness, reduction of system noise, a troop seat kit, and a companion JLTV trailer. Their assessments helped bring us all to a successful Full-Rate Production decision."

The JLTV program remains on schedule and on budget to replace a significant portion of the Army's High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle fleet. The JLTV comes in two variants and four mission package configurations: general

purpose, close combat
weapons carrier, heavy guns carrier and a utility vehicle. The U.S. Navy and
Air Force also plan to field JLTVs in much smaller quantities.

“The full-rate production decision is a key
milestone for the JLTV program, closing out the low-rate initial production
(LRIP) phase, which began in 2015, George
Mansfield, vice president and general manager of joint programs for Oshkosh
Defense, said in a June 21 statement. “Important insights from manufacturing and rigorous developmental and operational test during LRIP
contributed to shaping the vehicle’s current configuration. The program remains
on schedule and on budget and ensures our troops have the protection,
connection and extreme off-road mobility they need today for current and future
battlefields. The JLTV is the only light tactical vehicle being fielded today
that can maneuver within combat formations.”

CNO: Technological Readiness for War ‘Not a Pick-Up Thing’

WASHINGTON –
The Navy’s top officer told a gathering of naval engineers and industry
officials that being technologically ready for war is not something that can be

achieved overnight but is the result of diligent experimentation and keeping
pace with one's adversary.

"The technological landscape is changing so fast, across all of
technology, really fueled by this information revolution that we're in the
middle of right now," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson said,
speaking June 20 in Washington at the Technology, Systems and Ships Symposium
of the American Society of Naval Engineers (ASNE).

"We really do
need to move apace, but what we rely on – groups like naval engineers and ASNE
– is to make sure that as we do that we move forward not on hope, not on
magazine articles, not on predictions, but move forward based on solid
engineering.

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>
> *Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson*

"This is the
challenge. We've got to move forward on an evidence-based approach."

Technological agility was a quality Richardson stressed as necessary to
keep up with evolving threats.

Richardson said that the supremacy of U.S. naval aviation after the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor crippled the U.S. battleships was not a rapid development but the result of 20 years of innovation and hard work by the fleet and such visionaries as Rear Adm. William Moffett and Adm. Joseph Mason Reeves.

“This was not something we did as a pick-up team on Dec. 8,” Richardson said. “We had evidence, a lot of experimentation, a lot of engineering going into that, so that force [naval aviation] was truly ready to take on that new mission, that new role, and it wasn’t just a pick-up thing overnight.”

“This is the way we have to move forward,” he said. “We have to continue to get out there, experiment, prototype, get that evidence that these new technologies are ready to carry on and take on the responsibility for the security of our nation.

“And we have to do that at pace. We do not want to be the second Navy armed with these decisive technologies – directed energy, unmanned, machine learning, artificial intelligence, etc. … This is a human challenge at the end of the day.”

Missile That Brought Down Navy Global Hawk UAV Shot From Iranian Surface-to-Air System

A RQ-4A Block 10 Global Hawk UAV similar to the one that was shot down June 19 by Iranian forces. Northrup Grumman

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy RQ-4A Block 10 Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) shot down June 19 by Iranian forces was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile of indigenous Iranian design and manufacture.

The Global Hawk was downed by a missile system the Iranians call the Third of Khordad, which was first unveiled in Iran in 2014. The system's missile has a range of 75 kilometers and can intercept targets at an altitude of up to 81,000 feet, higher than the 60,000-foot ceiling of the Global Hawk.

One former Navy electronic countermeasures officer described the Third of Khordad as a knock-off of the Russian-designed BUK-M1 (NATO code name SA-11 Gadfly) missile system.

> *The incident occurred a few days after Iranian forces fired a missile at a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper UAV near the Strait of Hormuz and damaged two oil tankers with limpet mines.*

In a June 20 release, U.S. Central Command spokesman Cmdr. Bill Urban said the RQ-4A was shot down “while operating in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz at approximately 11:35 p.m. GMT on June 19, 2019. Iranian reports that the aircraft was over Iran are false. This was an unprovoked attack on a U.S. surveillance asset in international airspace.”

Iran claimed the UAV had violated Iranian airspace.

The incident occurred a few days after Iranian forces fired a missile at a U.S. MQ-9 Reaper UAV near the Strait of Hormuz and damaged two oil tankers with limpet mines. Last month, four tankers were damaged by explosives believed to be limpet mines.

The Northrop Grumman RQ-4A Block 10 Global Hawk high-altitude long-endurance (HALE) UAV also is known as the BAMS-D (Broad-Area Maritime Surveillance-Demonstration) system. Urban said the RQ-4A “provides real-time intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions over vast ocean and coastal regions.”

The Navy has deployed the RQ-4A to Southwest Asia since 2009 as a component of the Broad-Area Maritime Surveillance-Demonstration (BAMS-D) program. Five RQ-4As were acquired from the U.S. Air Force and were based at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, and operated by a detachment of Patrol Reconnaissance Wing 11. The detachment keeps at least one RQ-4A in the rotation to a base in the Persian Gulf region. One was lost in

a mishap in
Maryland in June 2012.

The Navy and Northrop Grumman have been developing a
Global Hawk derivative, the MQ-4C Triton, to meet the Navy's HALE requirements.
Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19 is scheduled to send a two-aircraft detachment to
Guam this year for the Triton's Early Operational Capability deployment. The
deployment had been delayed a year following the gear-up landing of one of the
squadron's MQ-4Cs in September 2018.

According to news reports, one MQ-4C recently had been
deployed to Southwest Asia as part of the U.S. buildup of forces in response to
Iranian hostile acts. The deployment initially led to some erroneous reports
that the downed UAV was an MQ-4C.

Sea Service Panel Gets Serious in Talk on Budget, Climate Change

U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard panelists participate in the Sea Service Update panel June 20 at the Navy League National Convention. David Livingston
NORFOLK, Va. – The U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard panelists that participated in the Sea Service Update panel June 20 at the Navy

League National Convention prepared remarks focused on a multitude of recent document releases such as the National Defense Strategy, the National Military Strategy and the Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook.

Remarks also focused on readiness; the importance of remaining forward-deployed; and many other probable talking points, but it was a host of questions fielded by longtime local defense reporter Mike Gooding that elicited perhaps the most interesting insights into how the services are preparing for the future.

Gooding touched on the government shutdown early this year, which saw the unprecedented scenario of the Coast Guard working without pay. He also asked panelists their thoughts on the Budget Control Act of 2011 that many expected would be short-lived but instead has brought with it sequestration threats for nearly a decade. Gooding wondered how the services were preparing to weather the upcoming storm of another likely continuing resolution in September – a process where the services would remain funded at their current levels regardless of shifting program needs.

> *A budget's a budget. Congress appropriates money and … you have a problem trying to push dollars around. I've had to cancel exercises this year because we don't have the funds to complete the schedule.*
>
> *Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Mark Brilakis, commander of Forces Command*

Coast Guard Adm. Scott Buschman, the Atlantic Area commander, conveyed how many organizations, including the Navy League, stepped up to ensure the Coast Guard had extra support during the shutdown, but panelists made clear how untenable that situation would be in the future.

“I hope that doesn’t happen again because it was a very stressful time for our women and men,” Buschman said, a sentiment echoed by Navy Vice Adm. Bruce Lindsey, deputy commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. “We should never, ever do that again,” Lindsey added.

As for dealing with continuing resolutions, Lindsey said he wanted to see more flexibility.

U.S. Fleet Forces manages a $12 billion annual budget. “It would be really nice if [Fleet Forces Commander] Adm. Grady had the authority to move less than 5% of the total operating budget without having to approach Congress,” he said. That would amount to $480 million – a substantial amount to make a difference. Grady “needs that authority,” Lindsey said.

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Mark Brilakis, commander of Forces Command, said stability in resources is critical to managing programs in the pipeline.

“A budget’s a budget. Congress appropriates money and … you have a problem trying to push dollars around. I’ve had to cancel exercises this year because we don’t have the funds to complete the schedule,” Brilakis said.

He predicted there would be a continuing resolution this fall based on his years of experience.

“The sequester was a bad law, and everyone thought it’d get fixed,” Brilakis said.

Gooding also brought up a recent Government Accountability Office report that came out this week, identifying that 46 of 79 Defense Department installations are at risk to a rise in sea levels.

Brilakis said there’s a reason so much DoD land is under threat – the Pentagon bought marginal land on purpose because it was inexpensive. When Hurricane Florence hit Camp Lejeune, North Carolina last summer, it dumped 36 inches of rain, and many buildings there still have tarps on them and no air conditioning.

“We’re not going to replace buildings where we had them before,” he said.

Brilakis also said that Parris Island, South Carolina, is “no longer tenable” – despite the generations that have trained there. “We have to start making historic decisions.”

Buschman’s forces are on the front lines of climate issues, with two historic hurricane seasons in recent memory. He said the Coast Guard must make tough decisions recapitalizing ships and instead use that money to repair critical infrastructure issues after storms. When the Coast Guard is rebuilding, the service is factoring in resilience so when the next big one hits, infrastructure can take the punch.

Lindsey concurred with the infrastructure challenges climate change could bring, stating he didn't want the United States to have to face scenarios like the recent widespread power outages in South America, which could affect banking and other critical services.

"A lot of people think this is an issue with global warming. It's a critical infrastructure issue," he said.