

# Rear Adm. Wettlaufer: Shortage of Ships, Mariners an Ongoing Problem for Military Sealift Command



Rear Adm. Michael A. Wettlaufer, commander of Military Sealift Command, answers questions from the audience after speaking about the needs of the organization at the Navy League hosted Special Topic Breakfast, Oct. 18, sponsored by General Dynamics. *NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES / James Peterson*  
ARLINGTON, VA – Military Sealift Command (MSC) continues to face a shortage of both ships and sailors, and it will take a “collective effort” from government and industry to turn the tide, Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, commander of MSC, said here during an event hosted by the Navy League of the United

States.

Rear Adm. Wettlaufer noted that after the number of U.S. mariners reached their peak during World War II at 262,000, their population has plummeted to a fraction of that today – about 33,000 between 2018-2021. With recruitment and retention a problem across all of the services, MSC faces no easy solutions.

Specifically, the top challenges currently facing MSC in this area are an atrophied maritime industry, a reduced U.S. flag commercial fleet and a shortage of ocean-going mariners, he said.

To help the issue of a lack of vessels, Wettlaufer said MSC will seek to incentivize commercial participation.

“We’ve got to incentivize U.S. flagged shipping,” he said, noting that the number of U.S. flagged ships at their disposal had declined from 282 at the start of this century to 178 today. “On the production side, it’s great; we’re building ships. But we certainly need more.”

On the recruitment side, it is a multi-pronged problem. A lack of U.S. flagged ships causes a decrease in the mariner population naturally, but there are other issues that the command needs to address, Wettlaufer said.

“This ecosystem is under stress [and] this needs our nation’s focus,” Wettlaufer said. “Why does [this decline in mariner population] happen? Have people changed, or are we ignoring the problem? I think we’re ignoring the problem. I think we’re ignoring the engagement opportunity.”

To help fix this issue, MSC will seek to get mariners to sea through a vigorous recruiting campaign, incentives and training. He also said MSC will be more aggressive in preventing sexual assault. Regardless, it will take a “collective effort” between government and industry to deal

with this ongoing issue, the rear admiral said.

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## Leaders Honor Merchant Marine Bravery in World War II, Ongoing Pandemic for National Maritime Day



Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg speaks at the DOT's National Maritime Day observance. *SEAPOW / Brett Davis*  
WASHINGTON, D.C. – Transportation and military officials observed the annual National Maritime Day on May 24, saying the Merchant Marines were the unsung heroes of the second world war and continue to be heroes by shipping vital supplies during the ongoing pandemic.

“We have always been, and always will be, a nation whose destiny is connect to the sea,” Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg said during the ceremony at the Department of Transportation headquarters.

The ceremony especially honored the Merchant Mariners who helped win World War II, losing their lives at a higher rate than any other services. On May 18, congressional leaders revealed a new Congressional Gold Medal for American Merchant Mariners.

During World War II, they delivered an average 17 million pounds of cargo to the armed forces every hour, and “often they did so without protection against U Boats, destroyers and the aircraft that menaced the waters,” Buttigieg said.

Now, during a pandemic, “you have kept America afloat,” he said.



Daniel Maffei. left, Ann Phillips, the new administrator of the Maritime Administration, and Polly Trottenberg, the deputy secretary of transportation, during the presentation of a



wreath to honor fallen Merchant Marines. *SEAPOW* / Brett Davis

Daniel Maffei, chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission, said the COVID pandemic put current mariners to the test again, and “they put their lives on the line for our country.” Americans stayed home to help fight the spread of the virus, but “thanks especially to the workers in our ports, America was never cut off.”

Retired Navy Rear Adm. Ann Phillips, sworn in as the 20<sup>th</sup> administrator of the Maritime Administration on May 16, also cited maritime bravery during World War II and said, “today, our mariners continue to navigate historic challenges” such as the pandemic and supply chain disruptions.

Strengthening the maritime services is critical, said outgoing Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz.

Maritime officials like to talk about ships and boats and ports, he said, but “it’s really the mariners. It’s not the steel, it’s not the concrete ... mariners deserve the best support we as a nation can provide,” including updated technology, streamlined induction processes and a renewed fight against sexual assault to create a safe environment for all mariners.

Rear Adm. Michael A. Wettlaufer, command of Military Sealift Command, said his service is also embarking on modernization to improve the environment for the maritime fleet. He cited the 2021 delivery of a component from a Navy ship and Coast Guard vessel as an example, and said in the future “I expect to be able to deliver key components between ships” at distances of up to several hundred miles.

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# Phillips Sworn In as 20th Maritime Administrator



Rear Adm. Ann Phillips, left, then commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 2, visited the Netherlands navy frigate HNLMS Evertsen (F805) during Exercise Baltic Operations 2013. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation announced May 16 that retired U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Ann Phillips has been confirmed and sworn in as the 20th administrator of the Maritime Administration.

Nominated by President Biden on Oct. 21, 2021, Rear Adm. Phillips was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on May 10. She is the first woman to lead MARAD as administrator.

“From her distinguished naval service to her leadership on coastal infrastructure, Rear Adm. Ann Phillips has championed America’s maritime sector throughout her career,” said Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “Her experience and expertise will be invaluable as we address supply chain

bottlenecks, implement the maritime investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, ensure the safety and success of midshipmen at the Merchant Marine Academy, and combat climate change in the maritime sector. I thank Deputy Administrator Lucinda Lessley for her tremendous service guiding MARAD as acting administrator and look forward to all that she and Ann will accomplish together at the agency in the years ahead."

As head of the Maritime Administration, Phillips will advise the Secretary of Transportation on commercial maritime matters, to include the movement of goods, supply chain, as well as the U.S. maritime industry, environment and compliance, ports and waterways infrastructure and strategic sealift. She will engage public and private stakeholders in the maritime industry and oversee the U.S Merchant Marine Academy.

Phillips will also oversee MARAD's programs to improve and modernize the nation's maritime network by administering the investment in ports and waterways made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including \$2.25 billion to be awarded over the next five years through the Port Infrastructure Development Program and \$25 million for the America's Marine Highway Program.

"It's an honor to work alongside the professionals who make up the MARAD team, and, to serve the American people, Secretary Buttigieg and the Biden-Harris Administration," Phillips said. "I understand the critical role that our commercial Merchant Marine plays in our national and economic security. In my nearly 31-year Navy career, I have witnessed many of the challenges facing our maritime sector and look forward to working with my colleagues to address them. This is an exciting time for MARAD as we work to expand and strengthen America's waterborne transportation system and workforce."

Phillips served most recently as Special Assistant to the

Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection, Commonwealth of Virginia, developing Virginia's first Coastal Resilience Master Plan. Prior to her appointment to the Office of the Governor, she served nearly 31 years on active duty and has extensive experience operating with multi-national maritime forces, including NATO and Partnership for Peace nations, and serving overseas in Guam and Lisbon, Portugal.

Her final flag command, Expeditionary Strike Group Two, included 14 ships and 10 subordinate commands – all the Amphibious Expeditionary Forces on the East Coast of the United States. Earlier she served on the Chief of Naval Operations' Staff as Deputy Director and then Director of Surface Warfare Division. Previous to those positions, she commissioned and commanded the USS Mustin (DDG 89) and to command Destroyer Squadron 28.

Phillips graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and earned a Master of Business Administration, with distinction, from The College of William & Mary – Raymond A. Mason School of Business.

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## **Philly Shipyard Awarded Contract for Fifth NSMV**





An artist's conception of the purpose-built National Security Multi-Mission Vessel, to which the Maritime Administration (MARAD) wants to transition to replace obsolete training ships. *MARAD*

PHILADELPHIA – Philly Shipyard Inc. will build one additional National Security Multi-Mission Vessel, or NSMV, the fifth and final in the training ship series.

The vessel, built under an order from TOTE Services as authorized by the Maritime Administration, will replace the aging training vessel at California State University Maritime Academy in Vallejo, California.

Construction of the new vessel, NSMV 5, is expected to commence in 2023. The contractual delivery date for NSMV 5 is 2026.

The order was placed under the April 2020 contract with TOTE Services, which allows for the construction of up to five NSMVs. The initial award included the first two vessels in the NSMV program, NSMVs 1 and 2. The next two vessels in the NSMV program, NSMVs 3 and 4, were ordered in January 2021.

The award for NSMV 5 is valued at approximately \$300 million, bringing the total order intake under the contract for the

five-ship program to be approximately \$1.5 billion.

As announced in November 2021, Philly Shipyard's order backlog also includes a contract from Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co. to construct one Jones Act-compliant Subsea Rock Installation Vessel, with a contract value of approximately \$200 million. The SRIV will be constructed in between NSMVs 4 and 5.

"It is truly a great day for Philly Shipyard as we are now responsible for building the complete series of the NSMV program – a physical symbol of MARAD's investment in the future of maritime education and training," said Steinar Nerbovik, president and CEO of Philly Shipyard. "The NSMV program continues to mark a turning point in our company's transformation to serve both commercial and government markets."

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## **Crowley to Operate Ice-Class Tanker for Military Sealift Command**



The Stena Polaris, an Ice-class tanker that will be operated by Crowley for Military Sealift Command. *CROWLEY*  
JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Crowley has been awarded the Military Sealift Command charter contract to operate the Stena Polaris, an Ice-class tanker serving bulk fuel needs of the U.S. Department of Defense, the company said March 21.

Crowley's government ship management group has completed the conversion of the ship to meet government and military service standards, including registration as a U.S.-flag vessel. The tanker will transport necessary fuel for defense operations in the Arctic and Antarctica regions. When not operating in those regions, the vessel will transport fuel for defense services in the Mediterranean Sea.

Crowley has partnered with the DNV classification society and the U.S. Coast Guard to verify the vessel meets the applicable standards to support its missions safely and effectively. Enhancements include adding at-sea refueling capabilities for the military. The tanker, now U.S.-flagged with U.S. mariners, is set to enter service this week.

The conversion was completed at Fincantieri Marine Repair near downtown Jacksonville, Florida, supporting investment, jobs

and the economy of the home city of Crowley's global headquarters.

"The Stena Polaris plays a critical mission for our warfighters serving our nation in austere environments, and fundamental work to help our military succeed will be done by the strong workforce and maritime industry in Jacksonville," said Mike Golonka, vice president, government maritime services, for the Crowley Solutions business unit. "Crowley's team is fortunate to partner with the U.S. Coast Guard, DNV and Fincantieri Marine Repair to complete the conversion, and we are honored that the U.S. government continues to trust Crowley's ship management team to meet the Defense Department standards for success and efficient service."

"We are excited to partner with Crowley here in Jacksonville to successfully complete this tanker reflagging project," said Ryan Smith, Fincantieri Marine Repair's president. "We are now operating in Northeast Florida providing high-quality services to meet the operational needs of military, government, and commercial clients."

The contract, which carries a one-year term with multiple option years, has a potential cumulative value of more than \$98 million.

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## **Fleet Oiler USNS John Lewis Conducts Builder's Trials**





USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's lead ship of its new class of fleet replenishment oilers, conducted initial builder's trials and returned to port on Feb. 4. *GENERAL DYNAMICS NATIONAL STEEL AND SHIPBUILDING. CO.*

WASHINGTON – USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's lead ship of its new class of fleet replenishment oilers, conducted initial builder's trials and returned to port on Feb. 4, Team Ships Public Affairs said in a release.

Builder's trials consist of a series of in-port and at-sea demonstrations that allow the Navy and the shipbuilder, General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Co., to assess the ship's systems and readiness prior to acceptance trials and delivery to the Navy.

"Ensuring readiness through sea trials is a crucial step to bringing this ship closer to fleet tasking," said John Lighthammer, program manager at the Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office. "USNS John Lewis will provide much needed capability to the fleet as the primary fuel pipeline at sea. We are looking forward to getting the



ship into the hands of Sailors and merchant mariners as another tool to support at-sea operations.”

The new John Lewis-class T-AOs will be operated by Military Sealift Command to provide diesel fuel and lubricating oil, and small quantities of fresh and frozen provisions, stores, and potable water to Navy ships at sea, and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. The new T-AOs will add capacity to the Navy’s combat logistics force and become the cornerstone of the fuel delivery system.

General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. is currently in production on USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207) and USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208). The future USNS Lucy Stone (T-AO 209) and USNS Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210) are under contract.

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## **DOT, MARAD Release Assessment of US Merchant Marine Academy**



Midshipmen and plebe candidates stand in formation at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point in 2018. The Plebe candidates are congressionally nominated and are starting indoctrination, a rigorous, 20-day regimen of academic, military, and physical training. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Maritime Administration (MARAD) released Nov. 24 a new report titled, “Organizational Assessment of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy: A Path Forward” and an accompanying implementation plan prepared by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA).

“USMMA students are remarkable leaders committed to serving the nation and supporting positive change,” said Acting Maritime Administrator Lucinda Lessley. “They deserve a modern, safe, and inclusive learning environment where they have the training and resources that will prepare them to succeed in the U.S. merchant marine and in our armed forces. We acknowledge, and have been working to address, the many

urgent issues raised by NAPA's report and to put USMMA on a path to modernization."

NAPA's assessment affirms that USMMA faces "longstanding systemic issues" across almost all areas of its operations, including educational programs; facilities maintenance and capital management; sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response, including during the Sea Year; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and internal and external governance.

The assessment further warns that, "Because of the magnitude and fundamental nature of the challenges USMMA faces, the greatest risk to USMMA's future is doing nothing to significantly address its challenges and the causes of those challenges."

NAPA's report also makes clear that these challenges have worsened over many years and that under-resourcing – particularly unmet personnel needs – makes many of these challenges more difficult to resolve.

## **The Way Forward**

Since the start of the new administration, USDOT and MARAD leaders have been focused on the most urgent issues facing the USMMA. USDOT and MARAD will establish a task force, as recommended by the NAPA report, to develop recommendations that help chart the Academy's future.

USDOT and MARAD also have numerous efforts underway to address challenges identified in the NAPA report. For example, USDOT and MARAD have announced a temporary pause in Sea Year training and are developing new requirements for commercial vessels that carry cadets to protect the safety, security, and well-being of cadets.

In alignment with the reports' recommendation that USMMA should engage a facility executive to direct and coordinate

maintenance and capital efforts, USDOT has detailed a senior federal official to direct ongoing efforts to address the Academy's maintenance backlog and lead capital efforts.

In addition, leadership is working to finalize and implement a campus-wide maintenance contract.

Consistent with the NAPA recommendation that USMMA accelerate investments in information technology, the USDOT Office of Chief Information Officer will work to identify options to upgrade information technology systems.

USDOT and MARAD remain committed to ensuring training and resources are available to graduate licensed merchant marine officers who can meet the national security, economic, and transportation needs of the nation. The recommendations provided by NAPA will assist the administration in supporting a campus where midshipmen learn to become exemplary leaders in a safe, secure, and modern environment.

For more information, the assessment and implementation plan are available for [download](#).

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy was founded in 1956 with a mission to educate and graduate leaders to serve the national security, marine transportation, and economic needs of the United States as licensed merchant marine officers and commissioned officers in the Armed Forces. USMMA provides students with a degree and credentials that allow them to embark on a career in public service.

The NAPA assessment was directed by the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act to provide an analysis of the operations of the USMMA and offer modernization recommendations for implementation consideration.

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# The Coast Guard and American Maritime: A Vital Post-9/11 Partnership



A Coast Guard rescue team from Sandy Hook, New Jersey, races to the scene of the World Trade Center terrorist attack. A subsequent call for “all available boats” led to the largest maritime evacuation in history. *U.S. COAST GUARD / PA2 Tom Sperduto*

Twenty years ago this week, al Qaeda carried out attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and perhaps would have succeeded in attacking a third target but for the bravery of the airline passengers who forced their plane down in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

These attacks would ultimately claim thousands of lives and dramatically alter America’s domestic security posture and the geopolitical landscape for years to come. But in the tense, chaotic hours that followed the unimaginable horror of commercial airliners striking the Twin Towers, amid the uncertainty of whether more was on the way, the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. maritime industry were focused on a single shared mission in New York: Get people to safety.

When the local Coast Guard commander put out the call for “all available boats” to make their way to lower Manhattan to help rescue people stranded due to the closure of bridges and tunnels, the response was widespread and immediate. An armada of tugboats, ferries and other vessels quickly arrived on the scene and, in a collective undertaking of tremendous skill and grit, safely evacuated 500,000 people. It was the largest maritime evacuation in history, even exceeding the heroic



achievement at Dunkirk in 1940.

This kind of proactive collaboration to keep people safe has long defined the relationship between the Coast Guard and the U.S. maritime industry. And in the years since 9/11, they have continued their close partnership to keep our waterways and our nation secure – a partnership made possible by a mix of sound policy, focused coordination and shared commitment. The continued strength, agility and effectiveness of the partnership in the face of existing and emerging threats will depend on several key factors.

## **The Jones Act**

First, the Jones Act, the law requiring that vessels moving cargo between two U.S. points be American built, owned and crewed, plays a foundational role in our maritime security and must remain sacrosanct. By keeping our domestic maritime industry in American hands, the law ensures a reliable pipeline of experienced American mariners for the long-term – the kind that works seamlessly with the Coast Guard and risks their own lives to evacuate half a million people from New York, without hesitation. It also greatly reduces the potential for malign actors who might seek to use our waterways to carry out attacks, decreasing the operational burden on the Coast Guard and allowing the service to channel its limited resources where they are needed most.

The Jones Act is also instrumental to the durability of what the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments [calls](#) the Defense Maritime Industrial Base – the vast network of public and private sector maritime entities that collectively serve as a major component of our national security. The U.S. must be able to rely on American shipyards to build boats the Coast Guard needs to patrol and defend our territorial waters and that America's maritime industry needs to move the cargo that drives our economy and supports military readiness.

## Cyber Risk Management

Second, cyber risk management must remain an urgent priority. The Coast Guard's latest [alert](#) discussing recent cyberattacks on South African ports and leaked Iranian documents describing research on how a cyberattack can be used to target the Maritime Transportation System (MTS) is a stark reminder that our adversaries don't have to be in our waters to attack our waterways. And as ever, with greater technology innovation comes greater cyber risk to the MTS as these threats continue to evolve.

The Coast Guard recently issued its [2021 Cyber Strategic Outlook](#), detailing its approach to this complex, high-stakes threat landscape. Notably, among the report's major Lines of Effort is to "Protect the Marine Transportation System," elements of which emphasize continued coordination with the maritime industry to manage cyber risks and "improve the ability for owners and operators to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to threats to maritime critical infrastructure." Recognizing the importance of its own role in safeguarding the MTS, the tugboat, towboat and barge industry has taken proactive steps to improve that ability, including by developing [Best Practices for the Towing Industry](#), a cyber risk management guide for use by marine towing companies of all sizes and sectors. This is important progress, but more surely remains to be done.

Finally, whether in response to threats of physical attacks, or attacks carried out in cyberspace, for the partnership to continue achieving results that keep the American people safe, the policies and practices guiding it into the future must be crafted with an eye toward facilitating the tracking and exchange of threat information in real time; ensuring that security regulations are informed by practical operational realities and risk management principles; and maintaining effective security for our waterways without impeding the waterborne commerce that is itself fundamental to our national

security.

That worst of days 20 years ago summoned what is best in our Coast Guard and our mariners, whose actions helped prevent further loss of life. And while we hope and pray not to hear another call for “all available boats,” we owe it to our nation to make sure this vital partnership is ready if we do.

*Adm. James Loy, retired, served as the 21<sup>st</sup> commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard from 1998-2002 and subsequently as deputy secretary of homeland security. Jennifer Carpenter is president and CEO of The American Waterways Operators.*

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## **Strategic Sealift Must Prepare for Contested Oceans, Panelists Said**



The Henry J. Kaiser-class underway replenishment oiler USNS Yukon (T-AO-202), right, prepares to conduct a consolidated loading with the commercial tanker MT Empire State. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Patrick W. Menah Jr. NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The nation's sealift components are used to operating in peaceful seas and permissive environments but must prepare now for times when control of the seas is not assured, a panel of maritime leaders said.

Speaking Aug. 4 at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space expo at National Harbor, Maryland, were Douglas Harrington, deputy associate administrator for Federal Sealift at the Maritime Administration (MARAD); Christopher Thayer, director, Maritime Operations, Military Sealift Command (MSC); and Adam Peterson, of the government business development team at APL. The panel was moderated by Erica Plath, director, Strategic Mobility/Combat Logistics, Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy.

Thayer pointed out that sealift "capability today is far more than it was in 1990" when large numbers of sealift ships were activated for Operation Desert Storm. He said that sealift was again at an inflection point, with the Navy' preparation for distributed maritime operations in contested environments.

He said that, during distributed operations, the nation's maritime logistics forces may not always have escorts or overwatch and must "be prepared to operate and evade the enemy."

Thayer also stressed the need for counter-UAS systems, anti-jam capabilities for GPS, the need for cybersecurity and the ability to operate under emissions control.

Communications is "a huge vulnerability," Thayer said, noting that mobile communications capabilities are being deployed on some ships with tactical advisers.

Harrington also stressed the need for improved, more resilient communications capabilities for MARAD's Ready Reserve Force (RRF). He noted the current reliance on satellite communications and the effect on morale that emissions control would have on the crews.

To adapt to providing logistics in a contested environment, Thayer said that MSC was working on concepts such as re-loading missiles in vertical launch cells while ships are underway, underway replenishment using unmanned aerial vehicles and refueling the combat logistics ships from commercial ships using modular CONSOL (consolidated cargo replenishment) adapter kits.

Harrington discussed the need for recapitalization of the RRF MARAD's Ready Reserve Force and new, comprehensive strategy for equipping strategic sealift with new technology and regulations. He noted the increasing size and weight of defense cargoes. He advocated building increased resilience as well as cybersecurity.

He also said the government must "recall and re-focus on naval operations in a contested environment."

Peterson pointed out the dramatic decline of the U.S.-flag merchant marine since 1960, now less than 0.5% of the 43,000



ships (displacing 1,000 or more gross weight tons) in international trade. He stressed that the government needs to develop more incentives to keep commercial vessels available in peacetime and war.

Harrington praised the “significant period of recapitalization,” which includes the construction of first of five National Security Multi-Mission Vessels, which will replace older ships and train mariners with modern technology now found on many merchant ships.

Asked about the Navy’s plans to operate autonomous unmanned ships in its fleet, Thayer noted that it is “hard to refuel an autonomous ship at sea.”

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**MARAD Awards Vessel  
Acquisition Management  
Contract to Crowley**



MARAD has awarded Crowley Maritime Corp.'s Solutions business unit a \$638 million contract for vessel acquisition management. *CROWLEY MARITIME CORP.*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Crowley Maritime Corp.'s Solutions business unit has been awarded a multi-year, \$638 million contract for vessel acquisition management (VAM) by the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), the company said in a July 28 release.

Crowley's strategic acquisition and vessel management service will assist MARAD in the enhancement of the Ready Reserve Force, helping reduce the overall age of the fleet and increase ship reliability. The fleet executes U.S. Department of Defense sealifts.

To carry out the contract, Crowley will use a new, proprietary information technology system to assess, research and make purchasing recommendations. Once the vessels are acquired, Crowley will oversee any required reflagging,

reclassification, modification and maintenance to ensure they are fit for service in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard, American Bureau of Shipping, and Defense Department requirements. After ships enter the fleet, Crowley will maintain and operate the vessels on behalf of MARAD.

“A successful VAM program is important to the U.S. as a maritime nation, the maritime industry and Crowley as we mutually invest in the strength of our nation,” said Mike Golonka, vice president, government ship management in Crowley Solutions. “We want to share our innovative, successful approach to vessel ownership and lifecycle engineering with the U.S. government.”

Building on over 20 years of experience managing MARAD and other government and Navy vessels, Crowley will use the web-based platform to perform data analysis of the lifecycle of vessels and their components. The SHIPFAX platform will provide data-driven recommendations based on essential service requirements, as well as important factors to successfully manage and operate vessels.

Crowley will execute the contract with Stena Line, Serco and LCE (Life Cycle Engineering), who bring specialized and unique experiences and services in acquisitions, naval ship architecture, engineering and applied technology.