MARAD Authorizes Construction of Two Additional National Security Multi-Mission Vessels

An artist's conception of the NSMV. MARAD

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) authorized the construction of two additional National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMV), which will replace aging training vessels at Maine Maritime Academy in Castine, Maine, and Texas A&M Maritime Academy in Galveston, Texas, MARAD said in a Jan. 19 release.

MARAD previously authorized the construction of the first two NSMVs, destined for SUNY Maritime College in Bronx, New York, and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, in Bourne, Massachusetts, on April 8, 2020.

"The NSMV is part of a strategy to bolster maritime education, revitalize U.S. shipbuilding, and provide a much-needed shot

in the arm to the U.S. maritime industry," added Doug Burnett, the chief counsel of MARAD, who is acting in lieu of the administrator. "America must be a maritime nation if it is to continue to lead the world in this century."

With this authorization, recapitalization of our nation's aging maritime training fleet is nearly complete. Construction of all authorized vessels at Philly Shipyard Inc. will also strengthen America's industrial base while supporting more than 1,200 shipyard jobs in Philadelphia.

The NSMV will feature numerous instructional spaces, a full training bridge, and have space for up to 600 cadets in a first-rate maritime academic environment at sea. State maritime academies graduate approximately 70 percent of all new officers each year – the merchant mariners who help keep cargoes and the U.S. economy moving. Many also support U.S. national security by crewing military sealift vessels.

The NSMV is also a highly functional national asset that includes modern medical facilities, a helicopter pad, the ability to accommodate up to 1,000 people in times of humanitarian need, and roll-on/roll-off and container storage capacity for use during disaster relief missions.

In May 2019, MARAD awarded TOTE Services LLC a contract to be the vessel construction manager for the NSMV program. This contract is an innovative approach to federal shipbuilding where the government benefits from commercial best practices for ship design and construction. In April 2020, TOTE Services awarded Philly Shipyard Inc. a contract to construct up to five NSMVs with fixed prices and schedules.

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Superintendent Receives Third Star

Capt. Charles McDermott, center, gives a tour of the Naval Coordination and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) facilities in Bahrain to then -Rear Adm. Jack Buono, Superintendent of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, in this 2013 photo. Buono has now been promoted to vice admiral. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dawson Roth

WASHINGTON – Now-former Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao promoted U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Superintendent Rear Adm. Jack Buono to vice admiral in the U.S. Maritime Service (USMS) at a small ceremony Jan. 11 in the Department of Transportation headquarters, Washington, D.C., the Maritime Administration said in a release.

"Vice Admiral Buono deserves this third star – he's been a great leader, especially during COVID-19, and has put USMMA at

Kings Point on a solid foundation to develop our country's future maritime leaders," Chao said on the same day she resigned from her post.

Buono will continue to lead at USMMA, where he has been stationed since joining the academy in November 2018. The promotion makes Buono the first USMMA graduate to serve in this position at this rank.

Prior to his appointment as superintendent, Buono had nearly 40 years of maritime experience in the private sector. He retired from his last private sector employer in 2016.

"This well-deserved promotion is an indication of the trust and confidence we have in Vice Adm. Buono's leadership in the critical role of preparing our Nation's next generation of leaders – afloat and ashore," said former Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby, who has also just resigned. "His steady hand on the wheel continues to steer Kings Point fair."

Buono is a Master Mariner and a 1978 graduate of the academy. During his tenure as superintendent, he has been responsible for implementing the academy's strategic plan, which includes updating institutional culture, governance, communications, infrastructure, academics and athletics. More recently, Buono has guided the Regiment of Midshipmen and the academy community through the global health crisis while maintaining a strong focus on accomplishing the mission of the academy. His inspirational leadership has rallied the entire academy family – students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni.

"I am truly humbled and honored by this promotion, and I look forward to continuing to develop the future of this national treasure we call USMMA," Buono said. "We will continue to press forward with our mission, developing leaders of exemplary character committed to serving the national security, marine transportation and economic needs of this

great nation.”

Other recent and significant accomplishments at USMMA under the guidance of Buono include the first semi-virtual graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020, the pivot to distance learning during the COVID-19 public health emergency, maintaining at-sea training experience for midshipmen aboard U.S. Flag merchant ships and two state maritime academy training vessels, and the milestone achievement of sending the Regiment of Midshipmen home for the recent holiday break COVID-free.

MARAD Cuts Steel on New Training Ships, Congress Funds Fourth NSMV to Prepare New Mariners

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

America’s merchant fleet and maritime industry are vital to the nation’s commerce. The six state maritime academies together produce more than 70 percent of U.S. Coast Guard licensed officers each year. Along with the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, the schools are addressing the shortage of qualified seafarers for U.S.-flagged ships.

The six state maritime academies (SMAs) rely on dedicated platforms for at-sea training in in engineering, seamanship

and navigation. Each of the schools have training ships owned by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), but the ships are getting old and challenged by maintenance, repairs and obsolescence, and were never intended for the school-ship role in the first place.

MARAD has embarked on an ambitious effort to replace the fleet of training ships with the new National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV).

Construction of the first two NSMVs will replace training ships at SUNY Maritime Academy and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, ships which are both more than 50 years old.

Steel was cut for the first NSMV Dec. 15 in Philadelphia. The keel laying is expected in about a year, with delivery anticipated for early 2023. The new ship will replace SUNY Maritime Academy's current school ship, Empire State VI.

The current training ships are not representative of the types of vessels on which academy graduates may expect to serve. The NSMV will have a modern, efficient and environmentally compliant diesel-electric power plant and state-of-the-art navigation equipment, which is more typical in commercial shipping today.

Currently, all of the SMAs operate hand-me-down ships that have been adapted for the training mission. With the adoption of the NSMV, the academies will have a standardized and purpose-built state-of-the-art training platform.

NSMV will be 524.5 feet long with a beam of 88.6 feet and a draft of 21.4 feet. It will displace 19,237 tons. The NSMV is equipped with berthing, classrooms and laboratories to train up to 600 cadets, but can also support humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HA/DR) missions with medical facilities, a helicopter deck, roll-on/roll-off and container storage capacity, and the ability to accommodate up to 1,000 people in times of a humanitarian crisis. The ship is

compatible with pier length, draft restrictions and mooring limitations at each of the academies, as well as being able to call at austere ports to conduct HA/DR operations.

Congress authorized funding for the fourth ship on Dec. 21, approving $390 million to fund construction of a fourth NSMV, which will be assigned to the Texas A&M Maritime Academy at Texas A&M University at Galveston, and is expected to be delivered to campus in 2025.

“Having the ability to live, learn, and train together as a single unit is essential to meeting our mission in educating and training the next generation of merchant mariners who go on to serve in both our armed forces and the maritime industry,” said Col. Michael E. Fossum, vice president of Texas A&M University, chief operating officer of the Galveston Campus and superintendent of the Texas A&M Maritime Academy. The new ship will replace the 224-foot, 1,900-ton TS General Rudder, which began her career in 1983 as the USNS Contender, an ocean surveillance ship for the U.S. Navy.

“While the ship will serve as a state-of-the-art classroom for the maritime program at Texas A&M University at Galveston, it will also provide a key mission capability for disaster response along the Gulf Coast – able to respond to emergencies in other states and U.S. territories – and will provide a needed emergency response resource to Texas and the gulf,” said Nim Kidd, chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management and vice chancellor for disaster and emergency services.

Herbert Engineering Corp. of Alameda, California, was responsible for generating the preliminary specifications and design. In May 2019, TOTE Services LLC was awarded a contract to be the vessel construction manager for the NSMV program. In April 2020, TOTE Services awarded Philly Shipyard Inc. the contract to construct up to five NSMVs. TOTE Services is working with its design partners – Glosten Inc., Philly

Shipyard, and Philly Shipyard's subcontractors, including the design team at DSEC – to deliver the first NSMV in early 2023. Key ship equipment includes GE Wabtec engines and generators, GE Transportation main generator engines, Cummins USA emergency generator sets and Bronswerk air conditioning systems.

"This program will further advance excellence in American maritime education and reignite the jobs engine that is America's shipyards," said MARAD Administrator Mark H. Buzby.

Current Training Ships

TS *Empire State VI*, ex-S.S. *Oregon*, ex-*Mormactide*
State University of New York Maritime College
Fort Schuyler, Bronx, NY
Built 1962/Converted 1989
Modified C4-S-1u commercial breakbulk freighter

USTS *Kennedy*, ex-USTS *Enterprise*, ex-MV *Cape Bon*, ex-MV *Velma Lykes*
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts
Built 1966/Converted 2009
C4-S-66a break bulk cargo freighter

TS *State of Maine*, ex-USNS *Tanner* (T-AGS 40)/ex-*Upshur*, launched as ex-*President Hayes* 1952
Maine Maritime Academy
Castine, Maine
Build 1990/Converted 1997
Maury Class Hydrographic Survey Ship

T/S *State of Michigan*, ex- USNS *Persistent* (T-AGOS-6), ex-USCGC *Persistent* (WMEC-6)
Great Lakes Maritime Academy
Traverse City, Michigan
Built 1985/Converted 2002
Stalwart-class Tactical Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance

Ship (TAGOS

TS *General Rudder* (ex- USNS *Contender* (T-AGOS-2), ex-T/V *Kings Pointer*)
Texas Maritime Academy
Galveston, Texas
Built 1984/Converted 1992
Stalwart-class Modified Tactical Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance Ship

TV *Golden Bear* (ex-USNS *Maury* T-AGS 39)
California Maritime Academy
Vallejo, California
Built 1989/Converted 1996
Pathfinder-class survey ship

TV *Kings Pointer*, ex-MV *Liberty Star*
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, New York
Built 1981/Converted 2013
MV *Liberty Star*, NASA-owned and United Space Alliance-operated vessel for solid rocket booster SRB recovery ship supporting space shuttle missions.

NMSV Achieves Milestone with Steel-Cutting Ceremony

An artist's rendering of the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV). MARAD
PHILADELPHIA – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) launched a new era in maritime education with the Dec. 15 cutting of steel for the new

National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) at Philly Shipyard Inc., MARAD said in a release.

This is the initial major construction milestone for the first purpose-built, state-of-the-art training vessel for America's state maritime academies. In addition to providing world-class training for America's future mariners, the NSMV will be available to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions.

A video of the steel cutting can be found here.

"This new state-of-the-art modern school training ship will be a tremendous addition to the U. S. Flag fleet, be available to respond to disaster relief efforts, and support about 1,200 jobs in Philly Shipyard," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

Construction of the NSMV will help recapitalize our nation's maritime training fleet, strengthen America's industrial base and directly support more than 1,200 shipyard jobs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"For more than a decade, MARAD has been working to make the NSMV a reality for America's state maritime academy cadets who deserve state-of-the-art training ships," added MARAD Administrator Mark H. Buzby. "Thanks to the strong bipartisan support that the NSMV has received in Congress and the leadership of secretary Chao, this program will further advance excellence in American maritime education and reignite the jobs engine that is America's shipyards."

In May 2019, MARAD awarded TOTE Services LLC, a company involved in ship management, marine operations and vessel services, a contract to be the vessel construction manager for the NSMV program. This contract is an innovative approach to federal shipbuilding where the government benefits from commercial best practices for ship design and construction.

In April 2020, TOTE Services awarded Philly Shipyard, the sole operating subsidiary of Philly Shipyard ASA, a contract to construct up to five NSMVs.

“TOTE Services is proud to have been awarded a contract by MARAD to be the vessel construction manager for this new, state-of-the-art training ship that will help provide qualified officers to support the domestic maritime industry,” said TOTE Services President Jeff Dixon. “Each of us at TOTE Services is thrilled to be part of this historic investment in the U.S. maritime industry, and are working closely with MARAD and Philly Shipyard to advance this new class of vessel built by union labor in a U.S. shipyard with U.S.-made steel and U.S.-made engines.”

Steinar Nerbovik, Philly Shipyard president and CEO, said, “This is a tremendous honor and recognition of our history of building high-quality ships over the last 17 years. This project begins a new chapter in our history, a new customer and the first in series, which is a challenge we are eager to meet. I am confident that our workforce will deliver ships that the state academy cadets will be proud to sail for many years to come.”

The NSMV program is an important investment in the U.S. shipbuilding industry, which supports nearly 400,000 American jobs. As part of the contract, Philly Shipyard will be working with domestic mills to supply steel for the vessels and U.S. manufacturers to provide key ship equipment.

The NSMV will feature numerous instructional spaces, a full training bridge, and have space for up to 600 cadets to train in a first-rate maritime academic environment at sea. State maritime academies graduate more than half of all new officers each year – the merchant mariners who help keep cargoes and our economy moving. Many also support U.S. national security by crewing military sealift vessels.

In addition to being a state-of-the-art training and educational platform, the NSMV is a highly-functional national asset designed to fulfill numerous roles. Each ship will feature modern hospital facilities, a helicopter pad, and the ability to accommodate up to 1,000 people in times of humanitarian need. Adding to the NSMV's capability, it will provide needed roll-on/roll-off and container storage capacity for use during disaster relief missions.

TOTE Services has ordered the first two NSMVs and the president's budget request for Fiscal Year 2021 includes sufficient funding for TOTE Services to order the third ship. Construction of the first two NSMVs will replace training ships at SUNY Maritime Academy and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, which are both more than 50 years old.

GE to Supply Power, Propulsion for MARAD's National Security Multi-Mission Vessel

An artist's conception of the National Security Multi Mission Vessel. MARAD

WARWICKSHIRE, U.K. – GE's Power Conversion business has been awarded a $40 million contract to supply the power and propulsion systems for two National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMVs), GE said in a Nov. 23 release. This new class of purpose-built ships will be used primarily to provide cadets with at-sea training on operational vessels.

GE was selected as the single-source vendor for the ships' propulsion system, which includes the integration of the diesel engines, generators, switchboards, transformers, main propulsion drives, propulsion motors, and auxiliary support systems. While prior training vessels used steam propulsion plants, the new ships will have an all-electric system, enabling students to be trained on the latest technology being used in the commercial marine industry.

"GE Power Conversion is honored to be selected to provide the power and propulsion systems for the two National Security Multi-Mission Vessels and are equally honored to be partnering with the U.S. Government and MARAD [Maritime Administration] on these vessels," said Gagan Sood, CEO of GE Power Conversion North America. "We will bring our long history and strong expertise to ensure the U.S. Government and MARAD are training cadets on the latest technology available."

In addition to introducing cadets to the work of a merchant mariner, the ships also will serve critical national security interests, including missions in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief throughout the world. Cadets may also benefit from learning about and working with the latest electric ship systems, gaining valuable insights in how electrification is impacting ship performance and emissions. It is an opportunity to get practical experience of GE's electric ship technology, learning in a real, safe environment.

The new ships will accommodate up to 600 cadets and instructors and provide comprehensive, instructional spaces and a full training bridge. The vessels have roll-on/roll-off (RORO) capabilities and container storage capacity as well as a helicopter landing pad, enabling them to support humanitarian aid or disaster relief if needed. The NSMV will be powered by Cummins Inc. using Wabtec's latest 16V250 Series diesel engines, which meet the EPA's stringent Tier 4 emission standards without using urea-based after-treatments.

MARAD plans to contract for a total of five NSMVs, with power systems contracts estimated at more than $100 million. The first two vessels are scheduled to enter service in 2023 and 2024, The NSMVs will replace current training ships at the State Maritime Academies.

TOTE Services, an industry leader in ship management, marine operations and vessel services, is the project's vessel construction manager. TOTE Services chose Philly Shipyard, Inc. of Philadelphia, for construction of up to five NSMVs, with South Korea's DSEC overseeing the ships' detail naval architecture design.

Important Expertise

DSEC, in turn, awarded the power systems contract to GE, with GE's Korea team providing global support during the bidding process. "This project award is the culmination of global collaboration within GE, with the Republic of Korea team working closely with DSEC, and the U.S. team supporting Philly Shipyard," said Steve Mankevich, who led Power Conversion's U.S. team on the project.

Ultimately, GE won the power systems contract with its low-risk but high-performance commercial solution. With more than 100 electric and hybrid references with 15 navies globally, GE is one of the top electric propulsion providers to navies around the world.

"We are proud to be selected for this project and will strive to ensure success by offering proven commercial technology that will de-risk the overall program," Mankevich said. "We're the recognized experts, and our knowledge and competence absolutely set us apart."

Major win for U.S. manufacturers

The U.S. Congressional Pennsylvania delegation was particularly adamant that U.S.-based manufacturers such as GE

would be used for the ships' construction. The R&D, engineering, and manufacturing of GE's Power Conversion equipment for the two NSMVs will be located out of GE's facility in Pennsylvania, according to Steve Mankevich, who led Power Conversion's U.S. team on the project.

U.S. Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania) said, "This federal order will create job opportunities and economic growth in Western Pennsylvania. In my letter to U.S. Maritime Administrator Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, I advocated for contracts awarded by the Maritime Administration for its National Security Multi-Mission Vessel Program to include American manufacturers to the maximum extent and consequently strengthen U.S. manufacturing and contribute to our Nation's economic recovery. I have long supported GE and I am pleased to see that the GE Power Conversion employees in Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania have been awarded this opportunity."

In addition, U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly (R-Pennsylvania), said, "Congratulations to GE Power Conversion for winning the contract for the National Security Multi-Mission Vessels. This award will not only mean jobs in Western Pennsylvania but will help our military achieve its operational goals. Too often when people think of national defense, bullets, shells, and missiles come to mind. In reality, the technologically advanced products of GE Power that allow ships to operate in field at a high level over substantial lengths of time are just as crucial. The awarding of this contract will allow our sailors to train on the most advance American built equipment and be ready to defend our nation on the high seas."

Biden Focus on Infrastructure, Environmental Improvements Could Lift Jones Act

The new administration is expected to bolster support for the Jones Act. Crowley

ARLINGTON, Va. — President-elect Joseph R. Biden's Jr. twin goals of rebuilding America's infrastructure, while protecting the environment, could bolster support for maintaining the 100-year-old law that protects the U.S. maritime industry, according to a Washington think tank analyst.

The Biden campaign "had expressed interest in new infrastructure, in new green initiatives, and the maritime industry is actually a pretty good confluence of the two," Tim Walton, a fellow at the Hudson Institute's Center for Defense Concepts and Technology, told a Navy League webinar marking the 100th anniversary of the Jones Act.

Also known as the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, the Jones Act bars foreign-built, foreign-owned or foreign-flagged vessels from conducting coastal and inland waterway trade within the United States and between the United States and its non-contiguous states and territories such as Alaska and Puerto Rico.

The long-standing legislation could figure in plans "where we're talking about building maritime infrastructure, building low carbon emitting transportation mechanisms, green industries that support our economy in the oceans as we build a blue economy," Walton added. A "Blue Economy," according to the World Bank, is built on sustainable use of ocean resources

for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs and ocean ecosystem health.

Critics say the aged Jones Act has led to higher shipping costs, which are passed along as higher prices to vendors, retailers and consumers. They also maintain higher costs have driven the commercial shipbuilding industry overseas, leading to a smaller pool of qualified U.S. merchant mariners.

Without the law, U.S. Navy and Coast Guard officials have argued there would be no pool of U.S. noncombat ships – or trained American seafarers to man them – in a war or other national emergency. During the Nov. 12 webinar, former Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft (retired) called for "a coherent maritime national strategy that connects with a national security strategy. That's where the Jones Act needs to be woven into our national security strategies."

Former U.S. Rep. Ernest Istook, an Oklahoma Republican, said the need for such a strategy is evident, in a world where 90% of trade is moved by ship, and Great Power competitor China is the world's biggest shipbuilder, by some measures has the world's largest navy, and is expanding its commercial ports and naval bases around the world.

Walton's comment about Biden came after a webinar viewer asked where the Democrat stood on the Jones Act. Both Biden and President Donald Trump support the law, although Trump considered, but later rejected, an extended waiver for foreign carriers to deliver liquid natural gas to hurricane wracked-Puerto Rico and LNG-dependent New England States. Biden incorporated Jones Act support in his campaign's Buy American/Ship American strategy.

"Historically, the U.S. maritime industry has been a leader in technology," Walton said, "but now in the 21st century, the Biden administration, as it appears it's going to be, will have an opportunity, I think, to take some leadership and, as

Adm. Zukunft said, actually craft an integrated national strategy for the maritime industry, and then implement it."

To read the new Navy League special report on the Jones Act and its impact, go here.

Transportation Secretary Announces Over $220 Million in Grants for America's Ports

Ports in 16 states and territories, including the Port of Los Angeles, shown here, will share in $220 million worth of discretionary grant money to improve facilities. Port of Los Angeles

WASHINGTON – U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao announced in an Oct. 15 release the award of more than $220 million in discretionary grant funding to improve port facilities in 16 states and territories through the Maritime Administration's (MARAD's) Port Infrastructure Development Program.

"This $220 million in federal grants will improve America's ports with nearly half the projects are located in Opportunity Zones, which were established to revitalize economically distressed communities," Chao said.

U.S. maritime ports are critical links in the U.S. domestic and international trade supply chain and this funding will assist in the improvement of port facilities at or near coastal seaports. The Port Infrastructure Development Program aims to support efforts by ports and industry stakeholders to

improve facility and freight infrastructure to ensure our nation's freight transportation needs, present and future, are met. The program provides planning, operational and capital financing, and project management assistance to improve their capacity and efficiency.

Of the 18 projects that were awarded grants, eight are located in Opportunity Zones, created to revitalize economically distressed communities using private investments.

"This critical investment demonstrates the Trump Administration's commitment to supporting our nation's ports and maritime industry," said Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby. "These grants will help our nation's economy and ensure that America's ports can continue to operate effectively in the competitive global marketplace."

Ports provide countless jobs for Americans and are key to a nation that heavily relies on its maritime services. By providing the funding to support the improvement of this critical infrastructure component, MARAD and the Department of Transportation are ensuring these services will succeed during the nation's ongoing economic recovery.

Wärtsilä Voyage Simulators Selected by Maritime for Remote Learning

Massachusetts Maritime Academy cadets are receiving remote training via Wartsila's cloud-based simulation systems. Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

HELSINKI – Wärtsilä Voyage will supply two of its advanced cloud-based simulation solutions to the Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA) in the United States under a one-year agreement, the company said in an Oct. 12 release.

This will allow cadets at the Academy to continue receiving safe and effective navigational training, despite restrictions imposed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The agreement was signed in September 2020 and was the first application of Wärtsilä's cloud simulation technology in the US.

By adding cloud simulation, MMA can maintain total class volume but offer the same instruction either in the physical classroom or online, by shifting to a blended method of delivery as needed. The online simulator utilizes the same content as deployed in the on-campus classroom, allowing for quick implementation, while providing the flexibility needed to help in overcoming scheduling challenges. The cloud infrastructure also provides a ready-to-go solution as part of contingency planning in case of heightened restrictions being necessitated in the future.

"Wärtsilä's cloud simulation solution solves our immediate needs to offer expanded online content due to Covid-19. It also gives us a long-term platform for simulation in blended learning that will allow MMA to continue leading the industry with innovative technologies for our students," said John Belle, Associate Professor at the Academy.

"Remote learning is a growing trend that is especially valuable in times like these, and it is important that the training of future maritime officers can continue with or without classroom attendance. The approved courses can carry on just as before, the only difference being the delivery method. This is a prime example of Wärtsilä's success in developing smart technologies that enhance the efficiency and safety of maritime operations," said Neil Bennett, director of Global Simulation Sales, Wärtsilä Voyage. The Wärtsilä scope

under this agreement includes the company's Navi-Trainer Professional Marine Navigation Cloud Simulation software, two classrooms and TADS navigational charts.

Massachusetts Maritime Academy is a fully accredited, four-year, co-educational state university offering Bachelor and Master of Science degrees for maritime cadets. The Academy is an established customer of Wärtsilä Voyage and utilizes a number of the company's simulator solutions in its training program.

MARAD Launches New Marine Highway Module of Port Planning, Investment Toolkit

A cargo ship unloads at the Port of New Orleans. Gnovick / Wikipedia

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) announced in an Oct. 8 release the launch of a new Marine Highway module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit (Toolkit), which helps U.S. ports plan, evaluate, and finance freight transportation projects.

This easy-to-read, easy-to-understand, and easy-to-execute Toolkit, which was produced as part of a cooperative agreement between MARAD and the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), helps guide ports toward fruitful investments.

"This Toolkit will help the development of future port projects and improve the nation's long-term efficiency and economic competitiveness," said U.S. Transportation Secretary

Elaine L. Chao

The goal of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit is to provide U.S. ports with a common framework and examples of best practices. The analytical tools and guidance contained in this comprehensive resource are designed to aid ports in developing “investment-grade” project plans and obtaining capital for their projects in a variety of ways, including: (1) assisting metropolitan and regional planning organizations and state agencies in qualifying for formula funding or aid; (2) better positioning marine highway projects for federal aid; and (3) assisting ports in obtaining private sector investments.

“By working together, we are helping to support investments in our ports that will pay dividends for years to come,” said Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby. “I am pleased that the new module of the Toolkit focuses on investments in America’s Marine Highways, which can help reduce traffic congestion and related pollution by moving cargoes off our crowded highways and onto to our Nation’s navigable waterways.”

The marine highway module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit provides an overview of America’s Marine Highway Program and educates readers on how marine highway services can become designated projects by USDOT. It explains how to plan a new marine highway service, determine its feasibility, and identify possible funding mechanisms. This module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit will be updated periodically as new regulations and policies affecting marine highway planning, feasibility, and investment requirements related to the applicable laws discussed in the document are developed.

Navy League VP Kaskin: More Tankers Needed to Support a Pacific War

Gunner’s Mate 2nd Class Joshua Davis fires a shot-line aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Paul Hamilton during a replenishment-at-sea with the Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Walter S Diehl on July 8. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matthew F. Jackson

ARLINGTON, Va. — The United States needs a larger merchant fleet, including ships available for sealift and tankers to meet the challenges of the new era of “great power competition,” particularly a conflict in the Pacific, said a senior Navy League of the United States official.

Jonathan Kaskin, who spoke July 14 during a webinar, NatSec 2020: Coronavirus and Beyond, co-sponsored by the Navy League, the Association of the United States Army and Government Matters, said the “fleet itself just needs to grow.”

Kaskin, a former Navy logistics official, said “we in the Navy League would like to … advocate for a much larger Merchant Marine in order to support the tenets of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936, which says that we should have a [merchant] fleet large enough to support not only our domestic trade but a portion of our international trade to be able to maintain our commerce at all time in peace and war. I don’t think we have adequate capability in both areas right now.”

Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby, a retired Navy admiral and former commander of Military Sealift Command (MSC), also spoke during the webinar.

“We need more ships,” Buzby said, noting that about 50 more vessels are needed for sealift; 87 U.S.-flag international-

trading cargo ships (of which 60 are enrolled in MARAD's Maritime Security Program, a stipend paid to keep ships available for sealift), available for mobilization for military use; and 99 large Jones Act ships.

Buzby said that the nation's Merchant Mariner workforce is short about 1,800 personnel for a sustained sealift mission.

He said he prefers to have more commercial ships operating rather than Reserve ships tied up at the pier, because they would be more ready and would have trained mariners already on board and qualified.

Kaskin said that there are two ways to grow the merchant fleet, one being an expansion of the Maritime Security Program. The other is a MARAD proposal to create a Tanker Security Program "to help mitigate a shortfall of tankers required to support a war in the Pacific."

He said only six U.S-flag international trade tankers are available for use by the military – and three of those are already leased by the Navy to support current operations.

"The requirement that U.S. Transportation Command has shown – and earlier studies have shown – that we need more than 78 tankers. Adding 10 is not going to be sufficient," he said. "So, what we really need to do is find ways of utilizing the tankers that we have in the domestic fleet – the Jones Act [ships] – to be able to support wartime operations."