

# New Commanders Nominated for 5th, 7th Fleets



Rear Admiral Fred Kacher and Rear Admiral Fred Kacher

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ARLINGTON, Va. – President Joe Biden has nominated two Navy rear admirals for the rank of vice admiral and as numbered fleet commanders.

In a Jan. 27 announcement, Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III said that Navy Rear Adm. George M. Wikoff and Rear Adm. Frederick W. Kacher had been nominated for the next rank and as commanders of the U.S. 5th Fleet and U.S. 7th Fleet, respectively. Wikoff also would become commander, Combined Maritime Forces, Manama, Bahrain. Both admirals currently serve in the Joint Staff, Wikoff as vice director and Kacher as vice director of operations.

Wikoff, a [native of New Brunswick, New Jersey](#), is a naval aviator and served as a fighter pilot. He commanded a fighter

squadron, a strike fighter fleet replacement squadron, a carrier air wing and a carrier strike group. Kacher, a [native of Oakton, Virginia](#), is a surface warfare officer who served on cruisers and destroyers. He commanded a guided-missile destroyer, a destroyer squadron and an expeditionary strike group.

If confirmed, Wikoff would succeed Vice Adm. Brad Cooper and Kacher would succeed Vice Adm. Karl Thomas.

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## **UK Frigate Forward-Deployment Programme: Demonstrating value through improved availability**



Pictured: HMS MONTROSE carrying out duties, protecting British shipping in the Gulf.

HMS MONTROSE is currently carrying out duties patrolling the Gulf, keeping the shipping lanes safe and ensuring that international trade is not threatened. In the first two months on patrol in 2019 HMS MONTROSE safeguarded over 6 million tonnes of British Shipping. HMS MONTROSE is also carrying out counter narcotic operations for CTF 150.

HMS MONTROSE is a type 23 frigate originally based in Plymouth and is the Royal Navy's forward operating ship based out in the Gulf for the upcoming years and works on a watch rotation basis. Every 4 months the port and starboard crew rotate. The Starboard crew of HMS MONTROSE is made up from sailors from HMS MONMOUTH.

Dr. Lee Willett, London

The UK's forward-deployed frigate programme in the Gulf is demonstrating operational value for the UK, senior Royal Navy (RN) officers told *Seapower* as HMS *Montrose* – the Type 23 frigate that was the first ship deployed under the programme – returned home on 17 December 2022. Type 23 sister ship HMS *Lancaster* took over on station in late November.

Under the forward-deployed programme, a Type 23 frigate operates across the Gulf and wider region, using the UK's Naval Support Facility in Manama, Bahrain and other regional facilities (including Duqm Naval Dockyard, Oman) for operational support, maintenance, and rotation of the ship's two crews (port and starboard). *Montrose* arrived in the Gulf region in April 2019, having sailed from the UK in November 2018 and conducting a global deployment en route.

The programme's purpose is to improve availability at sea in a critical region by eliminating rotational ship transits; and to improve effect on station by building understanding of the region and partnerships with regional countries.

As regards availability, *Montrose* was on operations for 1300 of the 1509 days it was away from the UK, Rear Admiral Steve Moorhouse, the RN's Director Force Generation, told a media briefing onboard *Montrose* as the ship sailed back into HM Naval Base Devonport, Plymouth, UK. In current operational terms, that increased availability allowed the UK to maintain increased presence around the critical choke points located in the region, Rear Adm. Moorhouse explained: in future operational terms, it allowed the RN to learn lessons to feed into the planned forward deployment for the incoming Type 31 frigates (which are scheduled to enter service from the mid-2020s).

### **Keeping Ships in Shipshape Condition**

"The key lesson is the model and the concept work," Rear Adm. Moorhouse told *Seapower*. "It will change almost everything in how we traditionally go about our business .... Every element changes and modernises, such that we get the best value for money out of the hull." Such changes, he explained, included ensuring the platform is fully prepared before deploying, for example conducting major refit and upgrade work in the UK, but also conducting maintenance at various partners' dockyard facilities across the Gulf region. In training terms, there is a need to complete crew and individual training prior to the crew departing from the UK, including through using simulation; in theatre, training can be supported through working with allies and partners or by dispatching training teams from the UK.

As regards in-theatre upkeep, Commander Claire Thompson – commanding officer (CO) of *Montrose*'s starboard crew – told *Seapower* that conducting "operational spring cleans" with a "little and often" approach has been the model used for *Montrose*. Little and often helps build a maintenance baseline, Cdr Thompson explained. "When you get the opportunity, you can get above that baseline – but don't drop below it is the key thing."

As regards improved regional understanding, forward deployment enables the RN to maintain presence for much longer periods. “[The ship’s crews] understand the region far, far better now because they’re persistently there,” said Rear Adm. Moorhouse.

Cdr Thompson added that the handover process with *Lancaster*’s CO included detailed discussion of operational routines based around this improved understanding – how to employ the best tactics, how to achieve the mission, and what operational approaches *Montrose*’s crews found successful.

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## CH-53K lifts F-35C in external load test



A non-flyable F-35C Lightning II airframe is flown as part of a CH-53K King Stallion external load certification lift Dec. 13, 2022, at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md. The structure is from the first F-35C carrier variant aircraft,

[Release from Naval Valley Air Systems Command](#)

CF-1, a former developmental flight test jet from the [an](#) Patuxent River F-35 Integrated Test Force (ITF). ITF test [d](#) teams collaborated with Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron One (VMX-1) and a Marine helicopter\*\* support team with Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 24,\*\* Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group to\*\* conduct the lift. (U.S. Navy photo by Kyra Helwick) \*

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND PATUXENT RIVER, Md.

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A CH-53K King Stallion heavy lift helicopter from Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) performed an external load certification lift of an inoperable F-35 Lightning II airframe in December at Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River, Maryland. The lift was to evaluate the load and inform future lift capabilities.

The CH-53K is the most powerful helicopter ever developed by the United States government. This new-build helicopter will continue to fill the CH-53E Super Stallion mission as a pillar of logistics and assault support for the U.S. Marine Corps efforts, but with significant improvements such as state-of-the-art, fly-by-wire technology reducing pilot work load, contributing to aircraft stability, and improving overall safety. The recent full rate production decision for the CH-53K is validation of the aircraft's value to the U.S. Marine Corps and last month's test lift is one more demonstration of its performance and reliability.

The NAS Patuxent River F-35 Integrated Test Force (ITF) test team, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) Cargo Lab, and others ensured a successful lift and flight by conducting load certification testing, sling configuration analysis, and cargo characteristics documentation were completed as required. Data from the tests will inform the flight envelope for future events. An earlier crane test lift verified the sling, rig, pitch and bank attitudes of the jet,

and control surface states.

The aircraft lifted is a developmental test carrier variant F-35C fighter jet that had accrued 750 flight hours during 450 test flights between 2010 and 2016. The F-35C and rigging weighed about 22,000 pounds after removal of its mission and propulsion systems, outer wings, and additional equipment.

The CH-53K is currently cleared to conduct a 27,000-pound external lift and is projected to be cleared for a 36,000-pound external lift, nearly three-times more under high, hot conditions than its predecessor, the CH-53E.

In September 2021, the CH-53K performed its first operational mission by lifting a Navy MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter from a 12,000-foot mountain top in California. That aircraft weighed approximately 15,000 pounds and was successfully transported 23 miles to Fallon, NV.

"This type of mission is precisely what the K was designed and built to do," said Col. Kate Fleeher, program manager for the Heavy Lift Helicopter Program Office (PMA-261). "It continues to prove its value in support of Marine Corps operations, transporting equipment that no other rotary wing platform can lift."

The CH-53K entered its full rate production and deployment phase in December and is on schedule to declare Full Operational Capability in FY2029.

The F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office (JP0) leads the life-cycle program management of the F-35A, F-35B, and F-35C; the fifth-generation joint strike fighter (JSF) air system of choice for the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, international partners and foreign military sales customers.

Heavy Lift Helicopter Program Office (PMA-261) manages the cradle-to-grave procurement, development, support, fielding and disposal of the entire family of H-53 heavy lift

helicopters.

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# BAE Systems to support Columbia-class submarine effort



Artist rendering of Columbia-class submarine (US Navy image)

[Release from BAE Systems](#)

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BAE Systems won a \$71 million competitive contract award to manufacture and deliver U.S. Navy Columbia-class submarine components.

This is the second contract award received by BAE Systems for work on the U.S. Navy's key nuclear sea-based deterrent, Columbia-class submarines.

“We look forward to continuing to support the U.S. Navy’s Undersea Force by providing critical submarine components for this key national deterrent,” said Brent Butcher, vice president of the Weapon Systems product line at BAE Systems. “Our decades of experience in supporting submarine programs and our selection for this opportunity demonstrates that the BAE Systems team has the trusted expertise required to manufacture and deliver components that promote the Navy’s undersea dominance and excellence.”

For over 30 years, BAE Systems has supported the Navy’s submarine programs by providing more than 30 Virginia-class propulsors, Virginia payload module tubes, and Seawolf-class propulsors. Work under the current contract will be performed in Louisville, Kentucky and Minneapolis, Minnesota with a completion expected by the third quarter of 2030.

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## **National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) Program Achieves Milestone with Steel Cutting of Fourth Ship**



TOTE Services, LLC, (TOTE Services), Philly Shipyard, Inc., (Philly Shipyard) and Texas A&M University at Galveston today celebrated the cutting of steel for the fourth National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) destined for the Texas A&M Maritime Academy in Galveston, Texas.

[Release from Philly Shipyard](#)

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National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) Program Achieves Milestone with Steel Cutting of Fourth Ship

*NSMV IV to be delivered to Texas A&M Maritime Academy in 2025*

TOTE Services, LLC, (Tote Services) Philly Shipyard, Inc., (Philly Shipyard) and Texas A&M University at Galveston today celebrated the cutting of steel for the fourth National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) destined for the Texas A&M Maritime Academy in Galveston, Texas.

This event marks another major construction milestone for the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration's

(MARAD) NSMV program, designed to provide a purpose-built, state-of-the-art training platform for state maritime academies in New York Massachusetts, Maine, Texas, and California, respectively. In addition to providing world-class training for America's future mariners, these five NSMVs will be available to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need. The vessel is contracted for delivery in 2025 to the Academy in Galveston.

"TOTE Services is proud to join MARAD, Philly Shipyard, and the Texas A&M Aggies to celebrate the start of construction of this new vessel that will be used to help train the next generation of officers at the only maritime academy on the Gulf Coast," said TOTE Services President Jeff Dixon. "This vessel will vastly enhance Texas A&M's degree programs and give the Academy a ship that can hold its entire program in a single cruise, providing cadets the opportunity to become skilled in ship-handling, decision-making, and unexpected challenges with the type of comradery that cannot be replicated in a classroom."

In May 2019, MARAD awarded TOTE Services a contract to be the Vessel Construction Manager (VCM) for the NSMV program. Since then, the innovative VCM contract structure has proven to be an effective model in which the government benefits from commercial best practices to design and construct vessels that are built by union labor in a U.S. shipyard with U.S.-made steel and U.S.-made engines.

"Today, marks another significant milestone for TOTE, the Maritime Administration, and the maritime industry as whole," said Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips (Rear Admiral USN, Ret.). "These NSMV's will play a crucial role in the maritime industry – providing future generations of mariners a world-class platform for training and serving as an exceptional resource for emergency response and homeland security for the nation."

Construction of the NSMVs will recapitalize our nation's maritime training fleet, strengthen America's industrial base, and directly support more than 1,300 shipyard jobs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"We are proud to welcome cadets and staff from Texas A&M Maritime Academy to our shipyard in celebration of the official start of fabrication on their new training vessel," said Steinar Nerbovik, President and CEO, Philly Shipyard. "With this milestone event in the NSMV program, we now have four ships under active construction and strong backlog into the future. I want to thank everyone involved in this project across the board, including all of our advocates, our partners at MARAD and TOTE Services, our suppliers, and of course the staff and workers around me who are supporting and constructing these important vessels that will build America's maritime future."

"This is a significant milestone for Texas A&M University at Galveston, home to the Texas A&M Maritime Academy," 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. "Having the ability to live, learn and train together on a world-class, specialized training vessel is essential to meeting our mission in educating and training merchant mariners who go on to serve in both our armed forces and the maritime industry. We're incredibly grateful to MARAD, TOTE Services, and Philly Shipyard for their stewardship of the NSMV program."

Construction of the first two vessels is well underway, with contracted delivery of NSMV I to SUNY Maritime College in 2023, NSMV II to Massachusetts Maritime Academy in 2024, and NSMV III to Maine Maritime Academy in 2024.

# About the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel (NSMV) Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration's (MARAD) NSMV program is designed to provide a purpose-built, state-of-the-art training platform for the state maritime academies in New York Massachusetts, Maine, Texas, and California, respectively.

This next-generation training fleet will address a critical shortage of qualified officers necessary to crew government and commercial owned sealift ships. In addition to providing world-class training for America's future mariners, the NSMVs will be available to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need.

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, 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.

Ship specifications will be compatible with the pier length, draft restrictions, and mooring limitations at each of the maritime training academies.

Vessel specifications:

- Length: 159.85 m
  - Breadth: 27.00 m
  - Draft, scantling: 7.50 m
  - Total berthing: 760 people
  - Speed: 18 kts
  - Deadweight: 8,487 MT
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# Fairbanks Morse Defense Awarded Sole-Source Service Contract for LCS Freedom- Class Vessels



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Deyan Bowden/Released

[Release from Fairbanks Morse Defense](#)

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BELOIT, Wis. – January 24, 2023 – [Fairbanks Morse Defense](#) (FMD), a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management, has been awarded a five-year indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) requirements contract by the U.S. Navy. The agreement makes FMD the sole source for engineering and technical support of the main propulsion diesel engines on the Navy's Freedom-class Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program.

FMD will provide global maintenance and repair services and OEM parts to improve engine performance and increase operational availability. Additionally, the defense contractor's Factory-Certified technicians will conduct essential training so that Navy sailors are also equipped to support emergent repair needs for these critical pieces of equipment.

"Supporting our nation's fleets requires a finely tuned balance of service and speed of delivery. This is something that Fairbanks Morse Defense has mastered over more than a century of configuring the delivery of every customer engagement," said FMD CEO George Whittier. "We manufactured and delivered the main propulsion diesel engines for the LCS Freedom-class vessels, and no one else knows these engines better than our service team. We stand ready to provide the essential services that ensure our fleet is always mission-ready."

The U.S. Navy has turned to FMD for a full array of marine technologies and ship service systems for nearly 100 years. Approximately 80% of U.S. Navy ships with a medium-speed power application are powered by Fairbanks Morse Defense.

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# SECNAV awards Navy Cross to retired Korean War veteran



SAN DIEGO (Jan. 20, 2023) – (from left) Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, retired U.S. Navy Capt. E. Royce Williams, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, and Vice Adm. Kenneth Whitesell render honors during a ceremony awarding Williams with a Navy Cross Jan. 20. Del Toro was in San Diego for various fleet engagements, awards ceremonies and ship events.

[Release from U.S. Navy](#)

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[By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Aleksandr Freutel,](#)  
Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 23 January 2023

SAN DIEGO – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro awarded the Navy Cross to retired Navy Capt. Royce Williams for his exploits during the Korean War at a ceremony at the San Diego Air and Space Museum, Jan. 20.

The Navy Cross is an upgrade of the Silver Star Medal previously awarded to then-Lt. Williams on May 7, 1953, while assigned to the "Pacemakers" of Fighter Squadron (VF) 781, for combat action against seven Soviet Mikoyan Gurevich (MiG) 15 aircraft.

"Royce Williams was a Lieutenant in the United States Navy when he took the lead of an incredibly critical mission during the Korean War, resulting in the protection of Task Force 77 from enemy attack," said Secretary Del Toro. "His actions almost 70 years ago earned him recognition, and he was awarded the Silver Star Medal. However, as the Secretary of the Navy, I have the authority to consider proposals to upgrade awards. Among the many cases I have reviewed, Captain Williams' case stood out. It was very clear to me that his actions were extraordinary, and more closely aligned with the criteria describing a higher award...and sir, what a tremendous honor it was to tell you in person, that after all these years, your courageous actions would finally get the recognition they deserve."

On Nov. 18, 1952, Williams was flying with two other members of VF-781 from Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Oriskany (CVA 34) when they encountered seven MiG-15 aircraft. Before they could engage, the team's flight leader had to return to Oriskany due to a fuel pump issue, leaving only Williams and his wingman. After Williams downed the first MiG, his wingman chased the falling aircraft, and Williams found himself alone in air-to-air combat with the remaining MiGs.

"In the moment I was a fighter pilot doing my job...I was only shooting what I had," said Williams in a previous account of the fight. "They had me cold on maneuverability and acceleration – the MiG was vastly superior on those counts to the F9F. The only thing I could do was out-turn them."

Out-manned and piloting what was considered an inferior

aircraft to the MiG-15, Williams engaged the enemy for 35 minutes, shooting down four of them in the longest dogfight in U.S. military history. Additionally, no other American fighter pilot has ever shot down four MiG-15s in one fight.

The Navy Cross is only awarded to service members who distinguish themselves for extraordinary heroism in combat with an armed enemy force, and is the U.S. Navy's second-highest military decoration. Williams retired from the Navy in 1980, and his medals include the Navy Cross and two Distinguished Flying Crosses.

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**Marine Corps, Navy Cease  
Administrative Actions to  
Dismiss COVID Vaccine  
Refusers**



5/12/22: Covid Vaccine – Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Mark Forrey administers a COVID-19 vaccine to Navy Seaman Micah Dayoub aboard the USS Ronald Reagan, in Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 9, 2022. The Ronald Reagan, Carrier Strike Group 5's flagship, is the Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier. (Photo By: Navy Seaman Natasha Chevalier Losada)

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps have halted administrative actions to discharge Sailors and Marines for refusing mandatory vaccination against the COVID-19 coronavirus variant.

In accordance with updated guidance from Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III, "Commanders will immediately discontinue administrative separation processing of Marines solely for declining to receive the COVID-19 vaccine," Capt. Ryan Bruce, a Marine Corps spokesperson, told Seapower in a Jan. 20 email.

A [Marine administrative message](#) (MARADMIN) signed Jan. 18 by Lt. Gen. D.J. Furness, the Marine Corps deputy commandant for

Plans, Policies and Operations directed commanders to, “immediately suspend any new or ongoing adverse administrative actions associated with declining the COVID-19 vaccine.”

The MARADMIN also instructed commanders to cease any ongoing reviews of requests by current service members for a religious, administrative, or medical exemption, including pending appeals.

Furness’s directive came a week after similar guidance for Navy commanders issued by Vice Adm. Richard J. Cheeseman, Jr., deputy chief of naval operations for Personnel, Manpower, and Training, N1.

Cheeseman told all commands to discontinue administrative separation processing of vaccine-refusing Sailors and, “suspend immediately any new adverse administrative actions associated with refusing the COVID-19 vaccine.”

Thousands of Sailors and Marines have been separated from the sea services for vaccination refusal, following Austin’s Aug. 24, 2021 memo making COVID vaccination mandatory for all active duty and Reserve members of the armed services and the National Guard.

Austin said the vaccination mandate was necessary to protect the force and maintain readiness. However, language in the fiscal 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), enacted in late December, [required the defense secretary to rescind the mandate](#), which had sparked complaints from lawmakers and lawsuits from service members.

The legislation stopped short of requiring the Pentagon to reinstate troops who were dismissed for refusing the shot. It also did not mention giving them back pay.

However, on Jan. 17, Pentagon Press Secretary Brigadier Gen. Pat Ryder told reporters, “Right now, we are not currently pursuing back-pay to service members who were dismissed for

refusing to take the COVID vaccination.”

As of Dec. 20, 2022, the latest [Defense Department COVID-19 statistics](#), almost 2 million service members have been fully vaccinated, including 389,177 in the Navy and 200,186 Marines.

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# General Dynamics NASSCO Christens the Third Ship in the T-AO Fleet Oiler Program for the U.S. Navy



[Release from General Dynamics NASSCO](#)

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SAN DIEGO – General Dynamics NASSCO christened the future USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), the third ship for the U.S. Navy's John Lewis-class fleet oiler program, today. Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Carlos Del Toro, served as the principal speaker at the ceremony, in addition to remarks from NASSCO and U.S. Navy representatives. Following brief remarks, the ship's sponsor, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan, christened the ship with the traditional champagne bottle break alongside the hull.

"Along with its namesake, this majestic vessel will be instrumental in shaping the future of our nation. The shipbuilders of NASSCO are proud to have ensured Earl Warren's legacy will live on in this ship," said David Carver, president of General Dynamics NASSCO. "On behalf of the 48-hundred employees of General Dynamics NASSCO, I am proud to present the USNS Earl Warren for christening to our sponsor the Supreme Court Justice, Elena Kagan."

The ship honors Earl Warren, 14th Chief Justice of the United States of the Supreme Court. During his 16 years as Chief Justice, a period of time when the Supreme Court was known as the "Warren Court", civil rights and civil liberties were dramatically expanded, marking this period as one of the most important periods in the history of American constitutional law.

"Indeed, the ship's motto could not be more appropriate: 'I Will Find a Way or I Will Make One,'" said Del Toro. "That's exactly what a young Earl Warren did when he overcame obstacles to joining the Army during the First World War, and that's what he continued to do in the fight for equality, democracy, and social justice throughout his life."

General Dynamics NASSCO was awarded with a contract to design and build the first six ships, T-AO 205 – T-AO 210, by the U.S. Navy for the next generation of fleet oilers, the John Lewis-class in 2016. In 2022, the Navy awarded NASSCO with a

contract modification for the construction of two additional John Lewis-class fleet oilers (T-AO 211 and 212), with the option for the Navy to procure an additional oiler, T-AO 213 which was included in the 2023 defense budget.

In addition to the christening of this ship, two ships in the T-AO class fleet oiler program for the U.S. Navy – the future USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208) and the future USNS Lucy Stone (T-AO 209), – are currently under construction. The second ship, the future USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206) will be delivered to the Navy later this year. The lead ship, the USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) was delivered to the Navy in 2022.

The 742-foot-long oilers are designed to transfer fuel to U.S. Navy carrier strike group ships operating at sea and have the capacity to carry 157,000 barrels of oil, a significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and up to a speed of 20 knots.

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## **Chaplain Admiral: Navy Growing Chaplain Force by 90 to Staff Destroyers**



PEARL HARBOR (July 7, 2022) U.S. Navy Chief of Chaplains, Rear Adm. Gregory Todd speaks to partner-nation members during the International Chaplaincy Symposium at Joint Base Pearl Harbor as part of Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2022. Twenty-six nations, 38 ships, four submarines, more than 170 aircraft and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC from June 29 to Aug. 4 in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships among participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. RIMPAC 2022 is the 28th exercise in the series that began in 1971. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Royal Australian Navy LSIS Kylie Jagiello)

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ARLINGTON, Va. –The U.S. Navy's chief of chaplains said the service expects to increase the number of serving chaplains by 90 over the next five years in order to provide chaplains to the guided-missile destroyer (DDG) fleet as those ships deploy.

Two years ago the commander, Naval Surface Forces, requested that the Navy provide chaplains to DDGs. Previously, sea-going billets for chaplains were typically limited to ships – such as aircraft carriers and amphibious warfare ships – that had large crews.

Rear Adm. Gregory N. Todd, chief of chaplains, speaking in an online conversation with retired Rear Adm. Frank Thorp IV, President and CEO of the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington as one of the memorial's SITREP Speaker Series events, said the program to assign chaplains to deploying DDGs is in place and is showing good results.

"The data that is coming as a result of that is a reduction in a lot of the bad behavior–NJP [non-judicial punishment, low morale issues, retention issues," Todd said. "It's apparent that the chaplains on board are change agents. Can we pinpoint exactly how that change happens? Not yet. But we do know that there is some sort of concurrent effect of attending to people's spirituality or spiritual readiness within that [DDG's] command, creating a venue where it's okay and then its resultant impact on some of their negative behaviors."

## **First Increase in Chaplains Since Cold War**

Todd oversees a force of about 1,100 chaplains – active and reserve – plus enlisted religion affairs specialists that provide service to 570,000 Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen and their families.

The increase in the number of chaplains is the first time the force has grown since the end of the Cold War, Todd said.

"The Navy is hiring, and I'm trying to beat the bushes to the religious organizations of America," the admiral said. "Send us your best. It's a great opportunity; it's a great place to

work.

“If I were to hold up what’s unique about this ministry, it’s the interaction with 18-to-25-year-olds,” he said. “We’re just immersed in a world of leadership. ... It’s operating in the public square, not confined to the church on the corner. Here we are, interacting with the whole Navy trying to impact the institution for the better.”

Todd said the Coast Guard “has put us on notice that they intend to ask for more [chaplains], and the Marine Corps as well is looking at the question of adding more chaplains. So, right now, there is a realization that spiritual readiness does have an impact on the operational forces. If you attend to individual readiness in the aggregate, you’ll also build the readiness of the unit and the team.”

Earlier in his career, Todd served as Chaplain of the Coast Guard and Chaplain of the Marine Corps.