



Delivering the Goods

News from the U.S. Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate

December 2007

2007: A Productive Year in Coast Guard Acquisition

By Hunter C. Keeter

As December draws to a close, the Acquisition Directorate looks back on success and progress and looks forward to meeting the challenges ahead in 2008. The first National Security Cutter (NSC) has been underway for trials on ship's power, marking a significant step toward delivery; a number of new and modernized aircraft are strengthening Coast Guard aviation; and new command, control & communications capabilities are helping to make the US coastline and waterways safer.

The Directorate was formally established in July and already has overcome significant hurdles during its first six months. These challenges included a major organizational overhaul (characterized by workforce, policy and process improvements) and intense Departmental and congressional oversight, particularly of the 25-year, \$24 billion Deepwater Program.

Addressing concerns raised by stakeholders and external overseers, Rear Adm. Gary T. Blore, Assistant Commandant for Acquisition, has echoed the Commandant's recent statements to Congress and the media by noting that during the past 12 months the Coast Guard has "taken control of a number of real challenges in Deepwater" and other major programs and projects.

Rear Adm. Blore has focused his efforts on improving contracting, program management workforce hiring, and training. Both Blore and Rear Adm. Ronald J. Rábago,



At Project Resident Office, Juneau, Alaska, (left to right): Cmdr. Alan Arsenault; Capt. Mike Christian, Rescue 21 Project Manager; Pastor Sam Dalin, Capital City Fire and Rescue; Rear Adm. Arthur E. Brooks, Commander 17th Coast Guard District; and Cmdr. Joseph Calnan, Commanding Officer Rescue 21 Project Resident Office, Juneau. (Official Coast Guard photo by PA2 Thomas McKenzie)

Director of Acquisition Programs, have emphasized the need for sound acquisition processes and policies to minimize risk and ensure that the most effective materiel and service support is delivered to the operational community.

As a result, while both leaders are quick to point out that much work remains to be done, some of the Coast Guard's largest acquisition projects have passed major milestones during fiscal year 2007.

The Rescue 21 project (which replaces the legacy National Distress and Response System) now provides coverage for 10,042 miles of coastline, from just over 2,200 miles in 2006. The new system is already saving lives and helping Coast Guard watch standers operate more effectively and efficiently.

For example, on November 6, 2007, 16 miles south of Atlantic

City, N.J., Rescue 21 supported a joint Coast Guard and commercial rescue effort that saved a fisherman's life when his 42' vessel began taking on water in worsening weather conditions. Earlier in May, at Sector Mobile, Ala., Rescue 21 direction finding capability helped watch standers to identify a hoax call without wasting resources or tying up Coast Guard rescuers in the event of an actual emergency. On January 31 at Sector St. Petersburg, Fla., Rescue 21 helped a Good Samaritan quickly pinpoint the location of a vessel in distress, without resorting to a time consuming search.

Rescue 21 is online at Sectors

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Delaware Bay, Long Island Sound, New York and New Orleans, as well as a Project Resident Office (PRO) at Juneau, Alaska. As full-rate production continues, 14 other sectors, groups and air stations are scheduled for Rescue 21 acceptance at a rate of one per month.

The Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) project, another important command, control & communication project, has completed the roll out of Increment 1 which established initial operational capability at 165 sites around the country. The Coast Guard has released a request for proposals for Increment 2 (which adds transmit capability to NAIS receiver stations), and expects to award a contract in 2008.

At the end of 2006, the Coast Guard had inked an eight-year production contract for 180 Response Boats-Medium (RB-M). Today, 12 boats are under contract with first delivery slated for March 2008. RB-M will replace aging 41' utility and non-standard boats. The Coast Guard has selected six stations to receive RB-M, including Little Creek, Va., where the new boats will undergo operational test and evaluation.

While the Deepwater program had to overcome challenges and criticism during 2007, the year ends on a high note with the NSC concluding its Machinery Trials off Pascagoula, Miss.

Rear Adm. Rábago visited the ship during its return from the six day trials event, noting: "It was a real privilege (thrill) to talk with the Coast Guard team on the Bertholf while she was underway and hear of their important work during the entire six days of Machinery Trials."

Rábago added that while much work remained ahead for Builder's

Trials and Acceptance Trials this winter, the first look at Bertholf's capabilities while underway was "very promising ... [and] the list of unknowns on our path to a fully operational NSC is now shorter because of the good work done during MT."

During MT, a crew of industry and Coast Guard personnel evaluated many aspects of the ship's performance, including its propulsion plant and maneuverability, 28-plus knots sustained speed, and several helicopter launch and recovery operations. Additionally, the cutter's sophisticated electronics (command, control & communications; radar and electro-optical sensors) were energized, well ahead of their scheduled testing during Builder's Trials.

NSC project manager Capt. Michael Haycock, and Capt. William S. Krewsky, supervisor at the Project Manager's Resident Office (PMRO), Gulf Coast both reported their satisfaction with MT and noted that the next major event —Builders Trials—would move forward with reduced risk because of lessons learned during MT.

In its integrated aviation program, the Acquisition Directorate closes 2007 with a number of successes, including delivery of three HC-144A Ocean Sentry Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), with five more on contract.

2007 also saw the launch of human capital initiatives aimed at building a larger and more capable workforce and ensuring that there is a viable career path for people to grow within the organization.

"Building our human capital is one of the most important factors in our approach to business transformation," said Michael Tangora, Deputy Assistant

Commandant for Acquisition. "This is not only about filling vacancies, but identifying where we may need additional billets to build capacity. Also, we are committed not only to recruiting people with the right skills sets, but also providing the training and opportunities for professional growth that will ensure we can retain a highly qualified workforce over time."

Fiscal year 2008 is already well underway and there are new challenges ahead. Some targets on the radar include acceptance of the NSC, delivery of additional MPAs, completing modifications, mission equipment installation and testing aboard other aircraft (such as the HH-60J/Ts and HC-130H/Js), and contract award for NAIS Increment 2.

With the New Year also begins a new cycle of congressional oversight reports, hearings and proposed legislation, all of which will affect the Directorate's world of work and demand the best effort and innovation in contracting, program management and support staff. The Directorate's leadership is committed to building and maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders and overseers in all aspects of Coast Guard acquisition.

Standing up CG-9 was only the beginning, according to Blore and Rábago. The new organization will grow to become part of the Commandant's vision of a broader mission support organization, one that provides all aspects of materiel and service support for Coast Guard operational units. Building on lessons learned in 2007 will help strengthen the new organization in 2008, according to CG-9 leadership.

As Commandant Adm. Thad W. Allen recently told the media, "the future of Coast Guard major acquisition is bright." ■

Coast Guard, Industry Conclude 'Extremely Productive' Sea Trial of National Security Cutter

By Hunter C. Keeter

In December, the Coast Guard's acquisition and operations communities anticipated with great excitement Machinery Trials (MT) for Bertholf, the first of the new class of National Security Cutters (NSC). According to the Acquisition Directorate, the trials, which took place December 4–10 off Pascagoula, Miss., were "extremely productive" in helping to identify and reduce risk ahead of Bertholf's delivery in spring 2008.

"While MT was certainly a significant milestone in of itself, the real value was all the work that was done by the contractors and our personnel (in careful oversight) to prepare the ship for a safe and productive trial," Rear Adm. Ronald J. Rábago wrote in a Dec. 9 message from aboard Bertholf. "Nevertheless, the list of unknowns on our path to ... a fully operational cutter is now shorter because of the good work done during MT. In addition to the stellar work of the Program Manager's Resident Office [PMRO], the entire Acquisition Directorate team, along with sponsor and technical authorities, have brought us to this significant milestone."

MT was significant in many ways, including marking the first time Bertholf got underway on her own power. The trials also saw the first underway evaluations of the ship's propulsion plant—Combined Diesel and Gas Turbine (CODAG)—reduction gear, and steering system in various modes of operation.

Many other systems, equipment and facilities also were exercised, including the Machinery Control and Monitoring System (MCMS); the Aqueous Fire Fighting Foam system; flight operations (with a leased Bell 412 helicopter); and

Bertholf's hotel services (crew berthing, accommodations and galley).

During MT, 225 contractor and government personnel were aboard (57 more than the NSC's baseline complement of 148). The trials crew included 40 personnel from PMRO Gulf Coast (which is co-located with the Northrop Grumman Ship Systems shipyard at Pascagoula), to provide oversight and hands-on assessments of Bertholf's machinery.

The Coast Guard's MT team included Chief Warrant Officer Walter Probst, test officer with PMRO Gulf Coast. During a Dec. 19 interview, Probst noted that some innovative tests were performed with the propulsion plant, including a demonstration that the ship would make standard speed running a single engine on one propeller shaft, with the other shaft "freewheeling" and its prop

feathered to reduce drag. During another demonstration, the ship met its required 28 knots speed using less than 85 percent power.

Some elements of Bertholf's machinery and computer software controls require adjustments, but that was the purpose of performing MT, Probst added. Data from MT in all modes of operation is being analyzed by industry and Coast Guard engineers as they adjust Bertholf's propulsion plant ahead of Builder's Trials.

"However, there was nothing that outright failed us," Probst said. "We now have a very good baseline of data in all modes of operation and we have made good discoveries of things that didn't work quite the way we wanted them to. Everyone—from the vendors and shipbuilders to the government personnel—is working collaboratively to come up with the best solutions."



The first National Security Cutter, Bertholf, underway in the Gulf of Mexico, off Pascagoula, Miss., Dec. 4-10. During Machinery Trials the cutter's propulsion plant, machinery control and management system and steering gear were exercised, along with other ship's equipment, ahead of acceptance testing and delivery in spring 2008. (Credit: Northrop Grumman Ship Systems)

While not expressly part of the MT test series, the ship's accommodations got a workout from the large number of personnel aboard. Reports from the crew show that berthing spaces were "more comfortable than some other ships ... comparable to the 270' cutters," showers and head facilities functioned well. In the galley, the crew found sufficient capacity to handle the extra personnel aboard, even if the space became a little crowded.

Other aspects of Bertholf's habitability will be more thoroughly tested later, including the ship's gymnasium, computer room, officer's ward room, and chief's mess.

Early next year, the shipbuilder and the Coast Guard will take Bertholf to sea again, this time for Builder's Trials (BT), which will completely exercise all equipment

functionality. BT events include "measured mile" and full power runs of the propulsion system. Additionally, the builder and the Coast Guard will assess and "sell" the last of the ship's compartments —such as medical and galley facilities.

In shipbuilding a vessel's spaces or compartments are evaluated individually by the government customer, who ensures that each space meets contractual requirements. When a space is accepted as complete, it is considered "sold." Bertholf has more than 300 compartments, including engineering, bridge, berthing spaces, water and fuel tanks.

Builder's Trials also serves as a complete review of the ship's condition ahead of Acceptance Trials (AT) and delivery, which occur later in winter and spring of 2008

respectively. The Coast Guard has partnered with the USN to conduct the final assessments of Bertholf before it enters operation. During AT the contractor will demonstrate to the Coast Guard and the USN's Board of Inspection and Survey that the ship meets its requirements. INSURV is the premier organization for determining the materiel readiness of naval ships.

With much work ahead through the holiday season, the PMRO and the shipbuilder are focused on success during the upcoming trials.

"We have been able to progress very rapidly based on what we learned at MT," Probst said. "We have had our noses to the grindstone these past several months and now our heads are up, and we are looking forward to the next phase of trials and delivery. The Coast Guard is going to be very proud to get this ship!" ■

Dear Master Chief Wells,
What are the crew accommodations like aboard the National Security Cutter?

Answer:

Thanks for the great question. While the capabilities of the NSC are usually tops on people's minds, I've also received many inquiries about crew accommodations. I've toured the NSC Training Facility at Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, Calif., and visited Bertholf several times over the past 18 months.

The typical berthing configuration aboard an NSC is a two-person (officers and E-6 and above) or four-person stateroom (E-5 and below). There are also several six-person staterooms, generally for non-rates. Each stateroom has its own head and shower facility, as well as a shared computer station. When I visited a six-person stateroom on Bertholf earlier this year, it reminded me of a 10-person berthing area on Sherman and some of the other 378s I've deployed aboard.

I'm also very impressed with the exercise facilities being installed on Bertholf. The weight training equipment is better than that of some of the smaller shore units I've visited.

Master Chief Marvin R. Wells

[To submit a question for an upcoming Acquisition Directorate newsletter, please email Master Chief Marvin Wells directly at: Marvin.R.Wells@uscg.mil or acquisitionwebsite@uscg.mil.]

