



Delivering the Goods

News from the U.S. Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate

May 2010

U.S. Coast Guard's Second National Security Cutter, Waesche, Commissioned

By Linda M. Johnson

ALAMEDA, Calif. — With great fanfare, the U.S. Coast Guard commissioned its second National Security Cutter (NSC), Waesche, in a ceremony held May 7 in its homeport on Coast Guard Island. The ceremony, which featured a flyover by one of the Coast Guard's MH-65C Dolphin helicopters, officially welcomed the 418-foot U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) into the service's operational fleet. More than 1,000 guests, including current and retired Coast Guard service members, their families and members of industry were in attendance.

Vice Adm. David Pekoske, then Vice Commandant, gave the principal address, ordered the hoisting of the commission pennant and placed Waesche in commission.

"Today's commissioning completes the cycle from christening and launching and marks the ship's entry into active Coast Guard service as the newest cutter in our fleet," Pekoske said. "This requires the diligence and expertise of true professionals at every step. This would not be possible without the strong partnership with industry, from concept through design and delivery."

"Waesche is a visible symbol not only of the Coast Guard's commitment to recapitalization, but of a new generation of ships with significantly enhanced capabilities," Vice Adm. Jody Breckenridge, Commander of the Coast Guard Pacific Area, said in her address to the audience. "Waesche represents the maturing of



The crew of the USCGC Waesche man the rails while one of the service's MH-65C Dolphin helicopters performs a flyover during the ship's commissioning ceremony in its homeport of Alameda, Calif. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Sherri Eng

our acquisition line as we've already been able to take lessons learned from [NSC1] Bertholf and wrap them into Waesche."

At the ceremony, Capt. Lance Bardo assumed command as USCGC Waesche's Commanding Officer. Dr. Jeffrey Waesche, grandson of the cutter's namesake Adm. Russell R. Waesche, helped set the first watch and passed the long glass, the traditional symbol of the deck officer's authority, to the first officer of the deck, Lt. j.g. George MacDonnell. In an amazing coincidence, it was noted

that Dr. Waesche had delivered one of USCGC Waesche's crew members as a baby nearly 30 years ago.

Marilla Waesche Pivonka, Adm. Waesche's granddaughter and the ship's sponsor, then ordered the crew

continued on page 2

inside:

U.S. Coast Guard Accepts Sixth & Final HC-130J Aircraftp3

Master Chief Q & A p4

continued from page 1

to “man our ship and bring her to life.” Pivonka sailed aboard Woesche from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to San Diego and “has become a true sponsor for every one of Woesche’s 110 crew members,” Pekoske said.

Adm. Woesche was the Coast Guard’s longest serving Commandant, presiding from 1936 to 1945 over the greatest expansion in both personnel and capability in the service’s history. USCGC Woesche—with an official motto of strength, endurance, service—and its crew “embody the integrated mission, highly capable and diverse Coast Guard that he envisioned,” Pekoske noted.

Two Bay Area Coast Guard combat veterans who served with Adm. Woesche during World War II attended the ceremony, which was held to coincide with the 65th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day on May 8.

In his remarks at the ceremony’s conclusion, Bardo left USCGC Woesche’s crew with 14 words to guide them in the years to come: “Strength, endurance, service; second to none; if not us, who? if not now, when?”

Advanced Capabilities

The NSCs are the largest and most technologically advanced class of white-hull cutters the Coast Guard has ever built, with a top speed of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 miles, an endurance of 60 to 90 days and automated weapons systems capable of stopping vessels far from shore.

USCGC Woesche will improve operational readiness and enable the Coast Guard to fulfill its multi-mission roles more effectively through better sea keeping, higher sustained transit speeds and greater endurance and range. The newest NSC also possesses a greater ability to launch and recover small boats, helicopters



Seaman Shannon L. Fieste stands ready to raise the Union Jack flown during wartime on the forecastle of the USCGC Woesche during the May 7 commissioning ceremony for the cutter. USCGC Woesche is the second 418-foot NSC put into service. *U.S. Coast Guard photo*

and, eventually, unmanned aerial vehicles.

Each NSC has state-of-the-art command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems that enhance the Coast Guard’s interoperability with its Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security partners. USCGC Woesche achieved authority to operate its C4ISR systems before sail away and ahead of schedule, thanks to lessons learned during the construction of the first NSC, Bertholf.

The NSCs are capable of executing the most challenging 21st century maritime security, law enforcement and national defense missions, including supporting the mission requirements of joint U.S. combatant commanders.

USCGC Woesche is the second ship in the new Legend-class of cutters designed to be the flagship of the

Coast Guard’s recapitalized fleet. Eight cutters are planned for the class. The third NSC, Stratton, is approximately 40 percent complete and will be christened this summer by its sponsor, first lady Michelle Obama. ■

More information on the NSC project can be found online at: www.uscg.mil/acquisition/nsc



U.S. Coast Guard Accepts Sixth & Final HC-130J Aircraft

By Linda M. Johnson

The U.S. Coast Guard recently accepted delivery of its sixth and final HC-130J Long Range Surveillance (LRS) aircraft under the current contract. The HC-130J Super Hercules offers significant performance benefits over the HC-130H model, including important improvements in speed, endurance and range.

"This acceptance marks the completion of a fairly significant effort that has now placed six world-class, missionized LRS aircraft into the Coast Guard's inventory," said HC-130J Deputy Project Manager Scott Rettie. "It's about the capability we gain when we get the aircraft."

Teamwork

For the last three HC-130Js, the fleet operators at Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C., and product line staff at the Aviation Logistics Center there conducted acceptance trials and performed the functions of an Asset Project Office (APO). The HC-130J APO was stood down concurrent with the establishment of initial operating capability for the first three aircraft in July 2008, allowing APO personnel and other resources to be transferred to operating units.

"What we're doing with the process of accepting this [sixth] airplane is we're using the fleet operators—the customers—as essentially an APO," Rettie explained. "We're relying on them to fly the plane and to determine that it's acceptable. We do the due diligence on the acquisition side and ensure that we've adhered to the contract, that the invoicing is correct and that the exceptions and non-conformances are accurately reflected. It is a true partnership and that's been the success story with the fourth aircraft, fifth aircraft and this aircraft."



The Coast Guard recently completed a very successful acceptance flight on the sixth HC-130J, which provides important performance improvements over the HC-130H. *U.S. Coast Guard photo*

"What matters is when the airplane gets to the fleet, it's ready to be used and is an operating asset from day one," he continued. "We make sure the contract is adhered to, but this is a really complex system—it is much more than just throwing another box on an airplane—so it's important that the customer says it's good to go."

Rettie believes that the Coast Guard's greatest expertise on the HC-130J's capabilities lies with the users. "They've been operating the aircraft since mid-2008 and they've acquired a lot of knowledge and know the difference between a minor issue and a show-stopper," he said.

"The second three aircraft have been much more of a success story in terms of technical risk and schedule risk being greatly mitigated and cost risk being non-existent because we went to a firm, fixed price contract," Rettie explained. "In my view, this is largely due to the partnering with the customer. That cannot be overstated."

The open and honest communication among the project, contracting,

technical and financial teams with the contractor and senior leadership has been integral to the HC-130J project's success. "We talk about ways to mitigate any interruptions. For example, aircraft number six has the least number of exceptions," said HC-130J Contracting Officer Eric Mcdoniel. "The way we got to this was open communication, not only on the technical side but on the contractual side, on how we're going to approach this, how we're going to make this better. Open communication has made the project a success."

Technical Capabilities

The HC-130J undergoes an extensive, nine-month refit, called missionization, of its airframe that includes installing integrated radar, sensor and communications systems at the Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Global Sustainment facility in Greenville, S.C.

The missionized airplane is the first C-130 aircraft in the world to feature a 360-degree surface search radar that gives operators more than one chance to see a person in the water.

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

"The key thing about the HC-130J mission system is the belly-mounted radar," Rettie noted. "It is the only aircraft that has the 360-degree search capability integrated on the flight deck."

The HC-130J also features new engines and propellers that give it a 20 percent increase in speed and altitude and a 40 percent increase in range over the HC-130H. In addition, the HC-130J can be operated by as few as three people compared to a four-to-five person crew needed for the HC-130H, resulting in lower operating costs.

"In any particular mission, against the legacy HC-130H, it's going to excel," Rettie explained. "It's going to climb higher, climb faster and have better endurance. Where it really excels is when you start combining missions. You can use its multi-mission platform to prosecute a search-and-rescue case while you're doing a logistics flight. That's where this airplane shines."

The HC-130J shares many mission system components with the Coast Guard's Medium Range Surveillance maritime patrol aircraft, the HC-144A Ocean Sentry. These common

systems include a FLIR forward-looking infrared imaging system, the Rockwell Collins DF-430 direction-finding system and common operating picture software that make the HC-130J interoperable with other Coast Guard air and surface assets as well as those of partner agencies. The service will also continue to make technology investments and leverage technological improvements after delivery. ■

More information on the HC-130J project can be found online at: www.uscg.mil/acquisition/lrs

ASK THE MASTER CHIEF

MASTER CHIEF AYER,

Q. I have been hearing rumors that our new OPC (Offshore Patrol Cutter) will be designed from scratch and not based on an existing design. Why don't we just buy off the shelf and save money and time?

A. No need to listen to rumors. We have posted our general OPC acquisition strategy on our website: www.uscg.mil/acquisition/newsroom/updates/opc012910.asp.

The rumor is only partially correct, although nothing has been finalized yet. I also need to add that the term "from scratch" is a bit of a misnomer. We do not have a requirement for anything we buy to be built from scratch. We are very happy when we can buy off the shelf as long as it does the job.

It all comes down to requirements. The current requirements for the OPC are based on the mission we expect the OPC to perform. These requirements are put together by the program sponsor (the Office of Cutter Forces) using the best data available and with consultation from the Acquisition Directorate (CG-9), the Technical Authorities (CG-1, CG-4, CG-6 and CG-8) and other key stakeholders in the Coast Guard.

If there were an off-the-shelf vessel available that met all the key requirements, you can bet we would be looking at it. But, just as most people wouldn't buy a new suit that doesn't fit just because it's available off the shelf, we shouldn't buy an off-the-shelf vessel that doesn't meet the requirements we need to perform our missions.

Keep in mind we are not talking about little things. We are talking about major capabilities such as endurance, sea keeping, and speed. The little things we can give and take on, but being able to reach your patrol area in a reasonable period of time, launch and recover your helicopter in the expected sea conditions, and have enough fuel to get home safely are not things we're inclined to compromise on.

Our proposed acquisition strategy does not prevent anyone who has an existing design from competing for the contract, but at the same time, it ensures that we won't be tied down to an off-the-shelf product that doesn't quite fit our needs. We also would not exclude anyone who wants to start with an existing design and modify it to meet our requirements.

— MCPO Brett F. Ayer, Command Master Chief, Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate



[To submit a question for an upcoming Acquisition Directorate newsletter, please e-mail Master Chief Brett F. Ayer directly at: Brett.F.Ayer@uscg.mil or acquisitionwebsite@uscg.mil.]