



Delivering the Goods

News from the U.S. Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate

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Final 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter Completes Mission Effectiveness Project

By Linda M. Johnson

BALTIMORE – The U.S. Coast Guard celebrated USCGC Steadfast’s departure from the Coast Guard Yard at a Sept. 24 ceremony honoring it as the 14th and final 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter to complete the Mission Effectiveness Project (MEP).

MEP significantly improves a cutter’s mission capability and reduces its operating and maintenance costs by replacing obsolete systems. Under MEP, 17 of the 110-foot Island-class patrol boats, 14 of the 210-foot Reliance-class Medium Endurance Cutters and 13 of the 270-foot Famous-class Medium Endurance Cutters are undergoing extended refurbishment at the Coast Guard Yard.

“MEP was designed to improve reliability and reduce the costs of sustainment until we can get the new cutters online,” said the Coast Guard’s Program Executive Officer and Director of Acquisition Programs, Rear Adm. Jake Korn.

Refurbishing the 110-foot patrol boats will help bridge the gap until the Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutters are delivered, while refurbishing the 210-foot and 270-foot cutters will help bridge the gap until the Offshore Patrol Cutters are designed and delivered.

“This is a significant milestone in the lifecycle of the yard—the completion of the Mission Effective Project for the 210-foot cutters,” Korn told a crowd of approximately 200 employees, whom he thanked for their hard work and dedication.



Coast Guard Yard employees and guests gather to celebrate the imminent departure of USCGC Steadfast as the 14th and final 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter to complete MEP. U.S. Coast Guard photo by PA1 Tasha Tully

“When Steadfast sails away from here in a few minutes, it will mark the end of an era for the yard,” Korn explained. “Highly skilled workers at the yard have been involved with the 210-class of cutters for over 40 years, including the construction of five 210s, doing the major maintenance availabilities and most recently, completing the Mission Effectiveness Project on all 14 ships in the yard’s typical stellar fashion.”

MEP is the most cost-effective way to provide equipment upgrades and structural repairs that maintain the core mission effectiveness of selected in-service vessels. Since MEP began in 2005, the project has consistently achieved its goals on time and on budget.

“The yard can be very agile in how we adapt to the realities of the open-and-inspect concept for these cutters when they come in,” Korn said. “Like Forrest Gump’s mama always says, ‘Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.’ Well, this project is like a box of chocolates. But when you open up some of the compartments, there probably aren’t a lot of chocolate-covered

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cherries in there. You've really got to adapt to the things you find. The yard knows the ships and knows how to adapt to these kinds of conditions."

Teamwork

Korn explained that MEP's "unparalleled success has been due to an excellent partnership" between the Engineering and Logistics Directorate, the Acquisition Directorate, the Legacy Sustainment Support Unit, the Coast Guard Yard and the Surface Forces Logistics Center.

"I want to recognize how the individual efforts have come together and resulted in what turned out to be a remarkably successful portion of the MEP project," the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Yard, Capt. Richard Murphy, told employees on hand for the departure ceremony.

"I think the success of the MEP program has really laid the groundwork for institutionalizing a new approach to cutter sustainment," explained Deputy Assistant Commandant for Engineering and Logistics Jeffery Orner. "If you look at the Coast Guard's acquisition schedule, a lot of great things are happening but it takes a while. We will have to sustain most of the current fleet for a very long time."

In 2008, the Coast Guard decided to accelerate the number of 210-foot cutters undergoing MEP to expedite the installation of a small crane known as a Welin-Lambie boat davit, which facilitates the deployment of over-the-horizon cutter boats.

The 210-foot cutters need an average of seven to nine months at the yard to complete MEP, which includes approximately 100 to 125 work items for each cutter. All of the work items are considered



Rear Adm. Korn addresses approximately 200 Coast Guard Yard employees at a Sept. 24 ceremony celebrating the last 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter to complete MEP.
U.S. Coast Guard photo by YN3 Jordan Walden



USCGC Steadfast departs the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay, Md., as the 14th and final 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter to complete MEP.
U.S. Coast Guard photo by YN3 Jordan Walden

hull, mechanical and engineering repairs. MEP does not include any command, control, communications or computer upgrades.

Approximately two to three weeks after all work items are completed, the cutter is re-outfitted for its return to sea and trials are conducted to make sure it is ready to sail away. As the final 210-foot cutter to successfully complete MEP and sea trials, the Steadfast is now en route to its homeport of Astoria, Ore., where it is expected to arrive in

early December.

MEP "has improved the workability of the ship," Steadfast Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Matthew Walker, explained to the official party who toured the refurbished cutter right before it got underway. "We're going to get a lot more years of livability and operational availability."

For more information on MEP, please visit www.uscg.mil/acquisition/MEP.

Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 Strengthens Acquisition Directorate and Codifies Recent Reforms

By Rebekah Gordon

Signed by President Barack Obama on Oct. 15, the long-awaited Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 marks a significant milestone for Coast Guard acquisition, putting into law many of the service's recently implemented acquisition reforms and paving the way to further strengthen the Acquisition Directorate's (CG-9) mission to recapitalize the Coast Guard.

Title IV of the bill formally establishes a Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate in statute, something that was accomplished in July 2007 with the standing up of CG-9 under the leadership of the former Commandant, retired Adm. Thad Allen. It also codifies several reforms that have been implemented by the Coast Guard, grants the Coast Guard authority to expedite hiring of highly qualified personnel to fill critical acquisition positions, and retains the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) responsibilities to oversee Coast Guard acquisition.

Rear Adm. Ronald Rábago, the Assistant Commandant for Acquisition, said he is satisfied with the act's passage and signature into law.

"The Coast Guard has benefitted from Congress' oversight and strong support of our very important recapitalization efforts. It's clear that they value the important work that the men and women of the service do each day for the American public. The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 is a positive step in strengthening the Coast Guard and our acquisition program. In close cooperation with our Department, we have already

begun to institute many of the measures required under the law as part of the Coast Guard's acquisition reform efforts," Rábago said.

Acquisition Highlights

Highlights of title IV include the statutory establishment of the Chief Acquisition Officer, who must meet certain experience and qualification standards and will monitor the performance of projects, establish policies, make acquisition decisions and develop career programs. The bill also outlines the certification requirements for acquisition project and program managers, including that all of CG-9's highest dollar projects (Level 1 programs with a lifecycle cost of at least \$1 billion) have project managers who have attained Level III certification, the highest available. Earlier this year, CG-9 achieved 100 percent compliance with this requirement.

The act prohibits the use of a private-sector Lead Systems Integrator (LSI) for acquisitions, with a minimal number of grandfathered exemptions to complete ongoing projects, including the second and third National Security Cutters. Over the last three years, CG-9 has reclaimed a leadership role in systems integration and is now the LSI for all major acquisition projects across the Coast Guard. Since 2007, the Coast Guard has drastically reduced the role of Integrated Coast Guard Systems (ICGS), a joint venture of Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin, for Deepwater capabilities and assets. While the directorate continues to work with ICGS on some systems engineering transition work for Deepwater, it is closing out existing

contractual LSI relationships. The current award term contract expires in January 2011 and will not be renewed. Going forward, the Coast Guard must conduct full and open competition for all acquisition projects.

The act further requires that all major acquisition projects be conducted in accordance with the principles and regulations outlined in the Major Systems Acquisition Manual (MSAM) and the Federal Acquisition Regulation. Without major impacts to cost or schedule, CG-9 has brought projects already underway into MSAM compliance and is launching new acquisition projects, such as the Offshore Patrol Cutter in full compliance.

The act also calls for the increased use of third-party review and testing of asset construction, design and planning. Third parties, such as federally funded research and development centers, are required to conduct analyses of alternatives before initiating a project, as well as to certify a project before it can be certified by the Coast Guard's technical authority.

The act calls for arrangements with the Department of Defense to support contracting and management of Coast Guard acquisition programs, requires lifecycle cost estimates and test and evaluation master plans, and adds reporting requirements to Congress at multiple decision points throughout the acquisition process and if a cost or schedule breach occurs.

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Strengthening the Acquisition Workforce

Rábago added that provisions in the act will further enhance the Coast Guard's capabilities to recruit and retain a strong acquisition workforce.

"We have placed a tremendous emphasis on hiring, training, credentialing and retention of our acquisition workforce," Rábago said. "The act grants us the authority to expedite hiring of highly qualified personnel to fill critical acquisition positions and will enhance our ability to create acquisition career paths, expand training opportunities and mentoring, and recognize excellence through new award programs. The act clearly recognizes that successful acquisition programs

are highly dependent on the quality of the professionals who do the work. We agree 100 percent with that!"

In addition to allowing expedited hiring for positions in high demand, the act requires the Commandant to issue guidance on the qualifications and accountability of acquisition program and project managers, as well as to develop a comprehensive strategy to enhance managers' roles. This strategy would include establishing career paths for officers and civilians, enhancing training opportunities, developing mentoring programs and improving tools to measure effectiveness.

The act further requires the Coast Guard to designate positions that make up the acquisition workforce

in order to ensure that personnel in these positions have the expertise to carry out their responsibilities. The Commandant must also implement a program to recognize quality performance of individuals and teams in acquisition.

The Coast Guard has been closely involved with Congress through the entire process of drafting and approving this language and has proactively initiated many of the prescribed reforms before being required under the new law. As a result, many of CG-9's processes and procedures already instituted under the last three years of acquisition reform will remain the same, with slight adjustments to meet the new law's requirements. ■

ASK MASTER CHIEF AYER

Q. I read an article online that said the Coast Guard has received its first Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). I didn't think we were getting into the UAV business this soon?

A. I would say don't believe what you read on the internet, but you are probably reading this on the internet, so I won't go there. :)

No, the Coast Guard does not currently have its own Predator unmanned aircraft system (UAS). The UAS discussed in the article was most likely the land-based Guardian, a Predator-B modified for the maritime environment that is used by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

What we do have is a joint program office with CBP. We have Coast Guard pilots flying CBP unmanned aircraft on joint operational and law enforcement missions, and this will continue, but the aircraft themselves are not Coast Guard-owned assets.

As for the future, we will continue to work with the CBP UAS program to determine what is the best operational fit for the Coast Guard.

On the cutter-based side of things, we are working with the U.S. Navy's project team for Fire Scout—a small, unmanned helicopter—as one possible solution.

I believe there is great potential for unmanned aircraft in the Coast Guard, but there are still challenges that need to be addressed. The Coast Guard is working hard to identify and address these challenges, but for now, we are still in the pre-acquisition phase and are not ready to select either a land-based or cutter-based UAS. One day we will probably have unmanned aircraft with Coast Guard paint jobs, but we are not quite there yet.

— 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.]