



# Delivering the Goods

News from the U.S. Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate

May 2011

## U.S. Coast Guard Transfers High Endurance Cutters Hamilton and Chase to the Philippines and Nigeria

By Linda M. Johnson

**W**ASHINGTON—The U.S. Coast Guard transferred two decommissioned 378-foot High Endurance Cutters (WHECs)—ex-Coast Guard Cutters Hamilton and Chase—to the Philippines and Nigeria respectively in separate ceremonies May 13 at Coast Guard Island in Alameda, Calif.

U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area Commander Vice Adm. Manson Brown delivered remarks at the ceremonies and signed the official certificates finalizing the transfers of the two Hamilton-class cutters, which were commissioned in 1967 and 1968 respectively.

The Philippine Ambassador to the U.S., Jose L. Cuisia Jr., and the Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S., Professor Adebowale Ibadapo Adefuye, also gave remarks and affixed their signatures on the transfer certificates on behalf of their countries.

The two WHECs were considered Excess Defense Articles (EDAs) and were transferred under the U.S. Department of Defense's EDA program, which offers U.S. assets declared excess to foreign partners in support of U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives.

The U.S. Department of State approved the Coast Guard's recommendation to transfer the ships as grants that, in turn, will save the Coast Guard approximately \$10 million in disposal costs for each cutter.

"These are the largest EDA transfers we've ever done in terms of the size of the ships and the complexity of



The Philippine Ambassador to the U.S., Jose L. Cuisia Jr. (left); Vice Adm. Manson K. Brown, commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area (center); and Capt. Mark W. Smith, Pacific Area chaplain (right), salute each other during the ceremony transferring the former U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton to the Philippine Navy. *U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Caleb Critchfield.*

the ships," explained Tod Reinert, chief of the Coast Guard's Office of International Acquisition. "They're also the largest in terms of the dollar value and the value of the transfer support cases."

### Missions

The Hamilton, which has been renamed the BRP Gregorio del Pilar, will become the flagship of the Philippine Navy. It will replace the Philippines' current flagship—the former USS Atherton, which was commissioned in 1943 and used during WWII.

"This is going to be the biggest ship in the country—it is very important to them and very high profile," noted Yael Handel, the Foreign

Military Sales case manager for the Philippine transfer.

The Philippines will use the Gregorio del Pilar to patrol the area adjacent to the Malampaya natural gas project and conduct natural resource protection missions around the Spratly Islands in the South China

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Sea. The Philippines used funds from its Department of Energy to pay for the transfer support case.

The Nigerian Navy will use the Chase, which has been renamed the NNS Thunder, to protect its off-shore oil facilities in the Gulf of Guinea and the Niger Delta area. With its ability to remain at sea without refueling for 45 days, the Thunder will allow Nigeria to loiter in that area and provide security during oil bunkering, which is the process of refueling a ship.

### Inspections

The Coast Guard sent out a message soliciting interest in the excess cutters after proposing to decommission the cutters in the President's fiscal year 2011 budget. Four countries responded with a letter of interest: the Philippines, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Uruguay.

The Coast Guard developed a strategic allocation recommendation explaining which countries should receive the cutters and forwarded the recommendation in August 2010 to the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, which later sent it to the State Department and Congress for final approval.

The condition of each cutter was fully disclosed since EDA transfers take place "as is." Each country was invited to send technical teams to the cutters' homeport of San Diego during consecutive weeks in November 2010 to conduct a thorough inspection, known as a Joint Visual Inspection, or JVI, of its prospective cutter.

The two countries conducted full reviews, both dockside and underway, of their prospective cutter's structural condition, propulsion systems, engineering plan, material history and any corrosion issues. For the Hamilton, the Philippines sent the acting head of their Navy.



Vice Adm. Manson K. Brown shakes hands with Nigerian crew members aboard the former U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Chase following the ceremony transferring the Chase to the Nigerian Navy. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Caleb Critchfield.

"That usually comes after we're authorized to offer the ship but, because we knew we'd be on a pretty compressed timeline, we petitioned for a waiver to do the Joint Visual Inspections in advance of receiving authorization to offer the ships," Reinert said. "So we offered the countries the opportunity to do the JVIs early, which is in their best interest as it gives them a chance to plan for the eventual transfer and for what they may want to have done on the ship as part of the transfer process."

### Training

After receiving authorization in January to offer the cutters to the Philippines and Nigeria, the Coast Guard provided 10 weeks of combined dockside and underway training on two sister WHECs for each cutter's prospective commanding officer, executive officer and crew.

Phase I of the training—which began in late February and ran through the end of April—involved training

21 members of each country's prospective crew. The Philippine Navy trained on the Boutwell during maneuvers off the coasts of Mexico and Panama; the Nigerian Navy trained on the Morgenthau during patrols along the Bering Straits off the coast of Alaska.

In late March, the Hamilton and the Chase were formally decommissioned. With the two cutters out of service, the Coast Guard removed each ship's air surface search radar to become spares to support operational WHECs. The service also removed each ship's Close-In Weapons System and secondary 25 mm gun systems, which will be used on the new National Security Cutters (NSCs) and Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutters respectively.

The Coast Guard then began procuring and installing the safe-to-sail navigation equipment, radar systems and additional electronics that each country requested as part of its transfer support case.

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Professor Adebowale Ibidapo Adefuye, the Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S. (front); Vice Adm. Manson K. Brown, commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area (left); and Capt. Mark W. Smith, Pacific Area chaplain (right), render honors during the playing of the Nigerian national anthem at the formal ceremony transferring the former U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Chase to the Nigerian Navy. *U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Caleb Critchfield.*

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Phase II of additional dockside and underway training on the newly transferred cutters began the day after the transfer, May 14. For the next 10 weeks, 11 Coast Guard advisors and subject matter experts are helping to train the balance of each country's crew—75 members for the Philippines and 100 for Nigeria.

"The Coast Guard subject matter experts will advise each country's original 21 crew members, who will then educate the balance of the crew on the cutter's layout, navigation systems, and operating, casualty and maintenance procedures that will allow them to safely sail the ships back to their home countries



Capt. Matthew Gimple, former commanding officer of the ex-U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton, presents Capt. Alberto Cruz, the cutter's prospective commanding officer for the Philippine Navy, with a mariner's spyglass representing the transfer of command during the formal transfer ceremony. *U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Caleb Critchfield.*

sometime in late summer," Reinert noted.

Over the next several months, the Coast Guard's Office of International Acquisition will have at least two people—a project manager and a technical expert—on the scene managing the transfer support cases, which include executing the training plan, installing all the equipment on the ships and providing food, shore power and waste removal services while the ships are moored at the pier.

After June 30, the ships will move from Coast Guard Island to a commercial pier in Alameda to finish the remaining work.

"It's a huge project management effort that we do for the next several months," he said. "There are about 13 separate contracting actions that have to take place to execute the delivery of all of these services."

Each cutter's new commanding officer will determine when the ship is ready to be sailed back to their home country, which will most likely happen sometime in August.

The President has proposed to decommission another WHEC next year. If approved by Congress, the Coast Guard will explore using the EDA process to transfer the vessel. Foreign interest in the WHECs remains high. The Philippines has already submitted a letter of request asking for three more WHECs.

The Coast Guard is replacing the WHECs with eight new NSCs—two of which are already conducting patrols. The third NSC is expected to be commissioned and join the operational fleet this fall. ■

## U.S. Coast Guard Helps Liberia Demolish Omega Navigation Tower

By Linda M. Johnson

In less than 30 seconds, 1,400 feet of steel and 520 tons of tower and wiring came tumbling down in a controlled explosion May 10, when the U.S. Coast Guard helped Liberia demolish the Omega Navigation System tower in Paynesville, just outside Liberia's capital city of Monrovia.

At 1,410 feet—which is taller than the former World Trade Center towers—and with an antenna field about one mile in diameter, the Omega tower was the tallest man-made structure on the continent of Africa.

The tower's demolition set a world record for the tallest structure felled by explosives, a record previously held by the April 2010 controlled demolition of the former Long-Range Aids to Navigation (LORAN) tower at U.S. Coast Guard Station Port Clarence, Alaska.

The demolition of the tower is good news for Liberia for several reasons. Since the Liberian tower had not been used or maintained since 1997, it was considered a safety hazard. Moreover, the tower's demolition will promote economic development in the area by turning the former tower site into a marketplace.

In a high-level show of support for the project, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, pushed the buttons that set off the explosives that destroyed the tower.



The Omega Navigation Tower in Liberia is observed before and during its controlled demolition. The 1,410-foot tall tower will go down in the Guinness Book of World Records as the tallest man-made structure felled by explosives. *Photo courtesy of Gary Lehman with Tower Inspection Inc.*

The demolition of the tower, which is owned by Liberia, was funded through a Foreign Military Financing grant from the U.S. Department of State. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Clement Ketchum, who serves as the Deputy for Security Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, conducted the initial site survey documenting the condition of the tower. He also negotiated with the government of Liberia to establish the boundaries of the tower demolition contract that was awarded by the U.S. Coast Guard to a U.S. company with the proper expertise.

Ketchum—who served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1984 to 1996—brings a unique perspective to the project because he's seen it come full circle, having served as the U.S. Coast Guard's liaison to Liberia and

operations officer for the Omega Navigation System in Liberia from 1989 to 1992.

"Everyone is very happy that the tower came down and that it was done in a professional, controlled manner that caused the least amount of damage. The tower has outlived its life and hasn't been maintained for 13 years," he said.

"The next phase of what's going to go in its place is a new market area to try to get some congestion off the roads," Ketchum explained. "There's a big market that's kind of formed on the road near the station that totally inhibits traffic, and it's on the main highway to go up country, so moving the market off

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the road and into a new area will be great.”

### Tower History

The U.S. Navy began construction on the Liberian tower in 1972 and turned the permanent structure and adjacent buildings over to Liberia in 1973. In 1976, the U.S. Coast Guard was asked to manage the tower and its 35-person Liberian crew, along with the overall operation of the Omega Navigation System network.

The Liberian tower was one of eight transmitting stations worldwide that provided global navigation assistance to aircraft, ships and submarines based on the very low frequency radio signals emitted by each station. The Omega system functioned as the world’s first GPS, but it was based on land rather than on satellites in space.

The U.S. Coast Guard maintained and operated the Omega network in cooperation with the seven partner nations that hosted transmitting stations until the entire Omega system became obsolete and ceased operations in 1997.

### FMS Case

The tower’s demolition was part of a U.S. Coast Guard Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case established in August 2009 to help rebuild the Liberian Coast Guard after several recent civil wars. The

\$7 million case, managed by FMS Case Manager Yael Handel, includes two 27-foot Defender-class small boats—which Liberia received in November 2010—spare parts, training, technical assistance and infrastructure improvements. The case also includes a maritime advisor based at the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, who happens to be U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. Jennifer Ketchum, wife of Lt. Col. Ketchum.

After conducting research and consulting with the U.S. Coast Guard, the government of Liberia amended the original FMS case in October 2010 to include a contract for the tower’s demolition. Based on a sole-source request from the government of Liberia, the U.S. Coast Guard awarded the demolition contract in March 2011 to Tower Inspection Inc. of Muskogee, Okla., which subcontracted with Controlled Demolition Inc. of Phoenix, Md. Controlled Demolition oversaw the recent demolition of all the Coast Guard LORAN towers in Alaska and the demolition of Argentina’s Omega tower in 1998.

Cmdr. Michael Hudson, the executive officer with the U.S. Coast Guard’s Civil Engineering Unit in Miami, served as the contracting officer’s technical representative and worked with the Acquisition Directorate’s contracting staff—Erica Fetter, Eric



U.S. Army Lt. Col. Clement Ketchum, who coordinated the tower’s demolition with the U.S. Coast Guard and the government of Liberia, gives directions to the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield. *Photo courtesy of Megan Johnson with the U.S. Embassy Monrovia.*



Cmdr. Michael Hudson takes field measurements of one of the tower’s structural guy anchors during a preliminary site visit in April. *Photo courtesy of Mark Loiseaux, president of Controlled Demolition Inc.*

McDoniel and Kerri Williams—to develop the tower demolition contract.

Hudson was already somewhat of a tower expert himself, having spearheaded the most recent update of the U.S. Coast Guard tower manual in

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2001. By reaching back to his Coast Guard colleagues, he managed to find the original construction drawings for the Liberian tower, which were an enormous help to bringing it down safely.

Along with three Tower Inspection and Controlled Demolition employees, Hudson travelled to Liberia in April for a post-award site visit to make field measurements, finalize the demolition plan and discuss logistics and security details with the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia and the Liberian government.

For the actual demolition, Hudson was part of a seven-person team that arrived in Liberia on May 8 to manage the tower's demolition and oversee the preparation and installation of the explosive charges and site security.

"This project was an excellent demonstration of cooperation within the Coast Guard—clearly it crossed a lot of organizational lines—and a demonstration across the Atlantic of good international cooperation with the U.S. Embassy and the government of Liberia that kept the project moving forward and made the execution of the project that much easier," Hudson said.

"This is a great example of the international cooperation between Liberia and the U.S.," noted Handel, who accompanied Hudson on the May trip to Liberia to oversee the tower's demolition. ■



The fallen tower is surrounded by a crowd of Liberians who are overjoyed that the tower has come down safely and will be replaced by a new marketplace. *Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Lt. Col. Clement Ketchum with the U.S. Embassy Monrovia.*



After the tower's demolition, Coast Guard FMS Case Manager for Liberia Yael Handel shakes the hand of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf while the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, looks on. *Photo courtesy of U.S. Marine Staff Sgt. Gary Morris with the U.S. Embassy Monrovia.*

## One Step Closer: The Launch of the First Fast Response Cutter

By Cmdr. Michael T. Rorstad

Since the September 2008 contract award to Bollinger Shipyards, the Coast Guard and its contractor have been working diligently to design, build, test and deliver the best patrol boat the Coast Guard has ever seen. On April 21, the first 154-foot Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter (FRC) was successfully launched at Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, La., moving it one significant step closer to this goal.

The much-anticipated launch took three days and proceeded very slowly to ensure the cutter's safety. To prepare for the launch, Bollinger built the FRC indoors in modules that were then brought together in the final fabrication shop, which allowed the cutter to be hauled to the dock via self-leveling, rolling dollies. Throughout the event, Coast Guard engineering representatives monitored stresses on the cutter with strain gauges to ensure that it didn't suffer any damage.

Although the first FRC is now in the water, much work remains. For example, the final outfitting will be conducted while the cutter is waterborne. The 12-plus miles—86,000 linear feet—of electrical wire that have already been pulled throughout the cutter will need to be connected, and all of the FRC's shipboard

systems will be rigorously tested by both Bollinger and Coast Guard personnel.

Once the installations are complete, personnel from Bollinger and the Coast Guard's Project Resident Office (PRO) in Lockport will conduct underway checks and speed trials—called builder's trials—to ensure that the FRC will be able to reach its contractually required speed of 28-plus knots.

After the builder's trials, the cutter will be dry-docked and inspected. A neutral party comprised of Coast Guard personnel will then put the FRC through a two-week battery of tests and demonstrations—known as preliminary acceptance trials—to inspect the cutter for contract compliance, noting any discrepancies so that they can be resolved prior to the cutter's delivery in Miami.

Meanwhile, the contract options are being executed for construction of the first eight FRCs, with hulls one through seven currently under construction. The first FRC, which will be named the Bernard C. Webber after a heroic coxswain who rescued 33 men from a sinking tanker, is expected to be delivered to Miami—the designated homeport for the first six FRCs—later this year.



Top Photo: The launch of the first Fast Response Cutter, the Bernard C. Webber, took three days. On day two of three, the Bernard C. Webber is towed from the fabrication shop across Highway 308 in Lockport, La., to the pier. *U.S. Coast Guard photo.*

Middle Photo: The Bernard C. Webber arrives safely at the pier and, after careful coordination and preparation of the rigging, it is hoisted aloft on day three. *U.S. Coast Guard photo.*

Bottom Photo: After a three-day journey, the lead Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter, the Bernard C. Webber, enters the water for the first time on April 21. The cutter's mast was installed a little over a week after the launch. *U.S. Coast Guard photo.*

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Leading up to delivery, the crew of the Bernard C. Webber will travel from Miami to the PRO's Preliminary Crew Assembly Facility in Lockport to undergo familiarization and factory training. Some of the factory courses have already been completed, including main diesel engine and reduction gear training at the MTU and ZF factories in Friedrichshafen, Germany. The remaining training courses are under development

through Bollinger's sub-contractor, Chand Inc., and are being reviewed by Coast Guard technical representatives.

The tremendous dedication and cooperation by all involved in building the Sentinel-class cutters, which are appropriately named for the Coast Guard's enlisted heroes, are a tribute to these incredible new ships and all those who will sail them.■

*Cmdr. Michael T. Rorstad is the commanding officer of the Coast Guard's Project Resident Office in Lockport, La.*

## ASK MASTER CHIEF AYER

**Q.** I can't believe you are buying this item from this company. Don't you know they build low-quality stuff that causes us nothing but problems? They should be banned from ever selling anything to the government again!

**A.** Didn't Ford build the Pinto? They also build the F-150 pickup, the best selling truck in America. Everything about the development and manufacturing of the F-150 is different from the Pinto. So, although the Pinto may not have been up to the standards we expect when we buy a vehicle, I would say the F-150 is.

The same is true of the products we buy from the companies we contract with. Just because a company put out a product that some would consider sub-standard does not mean what we are currently buying is a sub-standard product. And it most certainly does not make the company as a whole sub-standard.

Acquisition is an area where you get what you ask for and pay for what you get. In the past, if a particular company delivered a product that was below the expected standards, the first question we must ask is, "Did we get what we asked for?" And, if not, "Why did we accept it?" Perhaps we did not do a good enough job of figuring out what to ask for or how best to evaluate what we were getting.

This is where a disciplined, well-defined acquisition process comes in. A disciplined acquisition process includes the development of well-defined requirements along with stringent quality control and a robust testing and evaluation plan. These are processes we follow for the acquisitions we manage in the Acquisition Directorate.

When the government awards new contracts, the company's past performance is usually taken into account as part of the source selection process. Sometimes, however, there is a business that, for whatever reason, proves to be either undependable or dishonest. In this case, there is a process we follow that prevents that business from competing for new contracts. But this is rarely necessary or even beneficial to the government.

I can't necessarily speak for what has happened in the past, but for now and in the future, if the Acquisition Directorate is involved, we will do our best to ensure that the checks and balances built into the process are followed, and that only assets that meet defined requirements and are quality products are delivered to the fleet.

— 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](mailto:Brett.F.Ayer@uscg.mil) or [acquisitionwebsite@uscg.mil](mailto:acquisitionwebsite@uscg.mil).]*

