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News

JULY 2025

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U.S. Shipbuilding

The Trump Effect:
Cautious Optimism

Workforce Development

The Rise of the
Blue-Collar Worker

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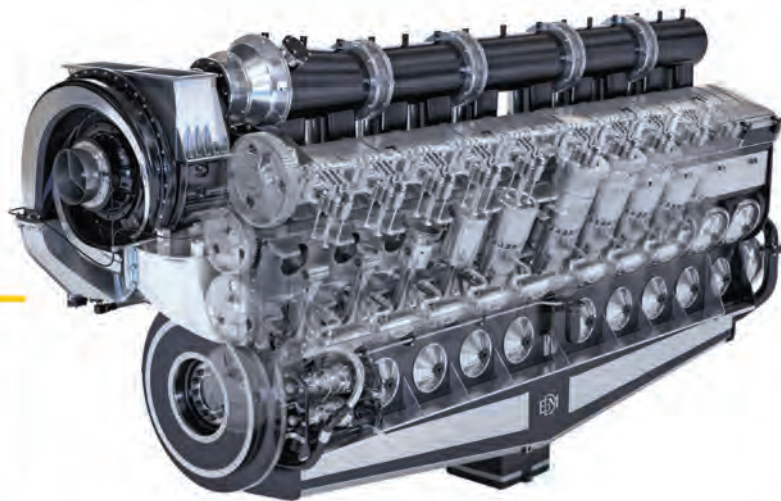
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On the Cover

U.S. Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 8, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, transport simulated casualties in a Riverine Assault Support System during Bold Quest, on Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Oct. 31, 2024.

(Cover photo: courtesy U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Mary Torres)



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Editor's Note



Greg Trauthwein, Editor,
trauthwein@marinelink.com



"Maritime" and "Shipbuilding" have arguably been uttered at the Federal government level more frequently in the past six months than the past 33 years combined, as the Trump administration prioritizes the rebuilding of U.S. manufacturing infrastructure plus offshore oil and gas in the face of an increasingly turbulent geopolitical picture.

That's the good news.

The reality on the street remains the need for Federal dollars to back the bluster, as without a collaborative partnership between government and industry the prospect of real, significant movement to reinvigorate meaningful and efficient new ship production at U.S. ship and boatyards is slim. Perhaps Bob Kunkel's article "*The U.S. Ships for America Act ... in a Corked Bottle*" – published in the June 2025 edition of sister publication *Maritime Reporter & Engineering News* – dissects the issue best. [Scan the QR code to read]. In this edition of *Marine News*, it's all boatbuilding all of the time with three feature articles dissecting what's happening today in U.S. boatbuilding, with a fourth looking at the potential ahead.

Ned Lundquist pens a pair of features touching on Patrol and Combat craft as used and needed by the United States Coast Guard (starting on page 18) and the U.S. Navy (starting on page 24). The cumulative size of these boat fleets are enormous, the breadth of functionality diverse. While Lundquist focused on the here and now, future fleet development will include a massive dose of autonomous variants.

Looking insight the boatbuilding picture today is Barry Parker, our resident financial editor who can sift through company annual and earnings reports like no other. Parker's feature, starting on page 30, takes you on a slow walk through some of the latest, greatest and innovative boatbuilding projects, both splashing in waters this year and projects currently in the works.

Finally, there have been some interesting developments on the domestic shipbuilding front, specifically the recently announced collaboration between South Korea's HD Hyundai and ECO to build small containships in the U.S., as well as Canada's Davie's proposed purchase of Gulf Copper to facilitate the construction of a U.S. icebreaking fleet. We spoke recently with a handful of ship and boat builders (starting on page 36) for their take on the recent political chatter, and their anticipation of its eventual impact.

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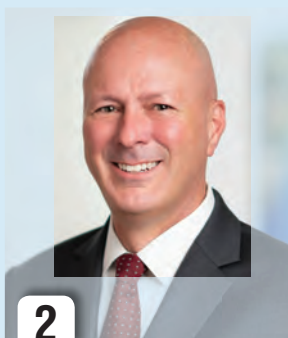


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Proposed Transfer of Deepwater Ports Regulatory Authority is Ill-advised

By Jeffrey H. Lewis, Transportation and Trade Group, Cozen O'Connor

On March 5, 2025,

the United States Senate passed an important bill to authorize funding for our United States Coast Guard, after failing to do so in the previous Congress. S. 524, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2025, would if enacted into law authorize appropriations to fund the Coast Guard totaling \$30.45 billion for fiscal years 2025 and 2026. The bill is sponsored by Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and cosponsored by Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Dan Sullivan (R-AK), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). It

was approved by the Senate by unanimous consent and now awaits further action in the House of Representatives.

S. 524 is a relatively skinny bill by today's standards, weighing in at a modest 437 pages (438 if you count the pro forma slip at the very end). In addition to authorizing congressional spending on the Coast Guard for the current and coming fiscal years, the legislation contains numerous provisions that would make changes and refinements to current law, including to the Coast Guard's organic statute at Title 14, United States Code, federal shipping and navigation laws, and other related provisions of the U.S. Code



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and federal statutes at large.

One such provision is section 243 of the bill, innocuously titled “Clarification of authorities.” It would amend section 5 of the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 (33 U.S.C. 1504) (DPA) to take away general implementing rulemaking authority for the Act from the Coast Guard—the federal agency with 50 years of expertise in design, construction, operation, and environmental impacts of deepwater ports—and vest that authority instead in the Secretary of Transportation and DOT’s Maritime Administration (MARAD), which have no such expertise. In particular, it would shift the “lead agency” role in reviewing deepwater port license applications for environmental impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) from the Coast Guard to MARAD. Within 18 months of enactment into law, the Coast Guard would be required to transfer much of its implementing regulations for the DPA license approval process to DOT. A saving clause in the legislation purports to retain responsibility in the Coast Guard for authorities pertaining to design, construction, equipment, and operation of deepwater ports and navigational safety. This transfer of authorities and roles from the Coast Guard to DOT and MARAD is ill-advised, for reasons I will explain.

First, a little background: the term “deepwater port” can easily mislead the uninitiated reader into thoughts of deep draft ports capable of accommodating the largest ocean-going vessels. But a deepwater port under the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 is instead a crude oil or natural gas terminal sited on an offshore platform at the end of a miles-long subsea pipeline. Deepwater ports make it possible to load crude oil and LNG from onshore facilities on the largest supertankers in a manner far safer, simpler, and environmentally sound than through lightering with smaller vessels. For several decades, the only deepwater port in operation was the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP) in the Gulf waters off the coast of Southeast Louisiana. A few others popped up over time, but they only were used for oil and gas imports to the United States, because imports were all the DPA allowed. In 2012, Congress amended the DPA to make exports possible, and as the United States became a net exporter of crude oil and LNG, deepwater port applications took off. According to the MARAD government website, as of March 26, 2025, 30 deepwater port license applications had been filed for approval, and eight

licenses have been issued among 11 approved applications.

Currently, MARAD and Coast Guard split responsibilities for license application review based on longstanding delegations of authority by the Secretaries of Transportation and Homeland Security, respectively. The Coast Guard is, and has always served as, the lead agency for NEPA compliance review and been responsible for matters of deepwater port navigation safety, engineering and safety standards, operations, and inspections. MARAD is responsible for determining applicant financial capability and citizenship, preparing the project record of decision, and issuing or denying the license. While there has been frustration among some applicants in recent years with the slowness of the review process, I would argue that this current division and specialization of roles between Coast Guard and MARAD is an outgrowth of the agencies’ inherent, organic capabilities, and should be left as it is.

Coast Guard’s Office of Operating and Environmental Standards (CG-OES) and Office of Maritime and International Law, Environmental Law Division (CG-LMI-E), already have the breadth and depth of experience from 50 years of deepwater port work and the Coast Guard’s many other marine safety and marine environmental stewardship regulatory responsibilities to do the environmental, design, operations, and inspection work related to deepwater port licensing and operation. MARAD does not possess these competencies at all. Nor does MARAD have the resources—both human and financial—while the Coast Guard does. MARAD possesses the ability to review the finances of deepwater port license applicants, just as it does for port infrastructure and small shipyard grant applicants, Title XI vessel finance applicants, and others. MARAD has a well-developed capacity to make citizenship determinations, just as it does with vessel ownership questions such as fishing vessel ownership under the American Fisheries Act, or domestic ownership for purposes of participation in U.S. flag promotional programs like the Maritime Security Program.

With the dozens of deepwater port license applications that have been submitted to the federal government and more likely to come, now is not the time for Congress to change the well-established and complementary roles and responsibilities of the Coast Guard and MARAD. These proposed changes will only cause confusion and inefficiency, slowing and possibly even halting the processing of deepwater port license applications.

Insights

Training Tips for Ships

Cold Starts and Rare Scenarios: Preparing for the Unlikely at Sea

By Heather Combs, CEO, Ripple Operations

Some emergencies are so rare

that they're easy to overlook during regular training cycles, until they happen. Engine room fires. Rudder failure during storm conditions. Total power loss at sea. These low-frequency, high-impact scenarios are not just the stuff of tabletop exercises; they're the events that test a crew's true readiness. Yet because they're unlikely, they often don't get the attention they deserve. This month, we explore how to strengthen your crew's ability to respond to rare but dangerous situations, before they're staring one down.

The Cold Start Problem

A “cold start” scenario refers to a situation where mariners are forced to respond to a type of emergency they've never personally encountered, and perhaps haven't trained for in years, or ever. Think of a total electrical blackout in the engine room. Or steering gear failure during close-quarter maneuvering. Or a cyberattack that disables onboard systems. These aren't day-to-day incidents, but when they happen, they demand quick

thinking, calm under pressure, and deep systems knowledge. Training must account for the fact that even experienced crews may have no muscle memory for these rare events.

Make the Rare Routine

The solution isn't to train for everything all the time. It's to rotate in the unlikely. Just as you don't run the same fire drill every week, your training calendar should occasionally include infrequent but high-consequence scenarios. Use simulations and case studies to bring these moments to life. Many maritime authorities publish anonymized incident reports that make excellent starting points for real-world scenarios. Assign crew members to respond as if the event were happening on your vessel, using your equipment, in your current environment.

Use Crew Experience as a Resource

Even if your vessel hasn't encountered certain emergencies, someone on your crew, or within your broader fleet, likely has. Consider creating a “rare event debrief” pro-



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Insights

Training Tips for Ships

gram where returning crew share stories of uncommon incidents they've faced on other ships. Frame these as informal knowledge-sharing sessions or short safety talks. Hearing how others reacted, what went wrong (or right), and what lessons were learned turns passive stories into active training opportunities.

Cross-Train and Rotate Roles

In rare situations, it's possible the person who usually handles a system or emergency response task won't be available. One way to counter this is through cross-training. If your electrician is incapacitated, does someone else know the emergency bypass procedure? If the OOW is injured, can another crew member take the helm under pressure? Encourage periodic role-swapping during drills to help develop a more resilient and capable crew.

Simulate the Chaos

Real emergencies are chaotic. During rare scenario drills, build in elements that test communication breakdowns, unavailable equipment, or missing personnel. For example, run a man-overboard drill where the person overboard is also the one who normally handles the MOB recovery checklist. Or simulate a fire with the radios temporarily inoperable. These controlled complications develop your crew's ability to improvise and adapt—exactly what's needed during rare events.

Don't Forget the Emotional Component

Rare emergencies often carry intense emotional weight, especially

when there's a threat to life, major equipment loss, or a situation unfamiliar to the crew. Incorporate post-scenario debriefs that don't just review the checklist but invite crew to share how the situation made them feel. Were they confident? Confused? Panicked? These discussions not only build psychological resilience but may uncover gaps in readiness or clarity.

Actionable Takeaways

To integrate rare scenario readiness into your training strategy:

- Rotate in at least one rare or complex scenario per quarter
- Use real-world incident reports as case studies
- Cross-train crew members on

critical systems

- Include unpredictable elements in drills
- Facilitate debriefs that explore both performance and emotional readiness

Final Thought

The difference between recovery and catastrophe in a rare emergency often comes down to whether or not the crew has ever imagined—let alone practiced for—the moment. By building “what if” moments into your training culture, you prepare your team not just for the probable, but for the truly consequential. And in maritime safety, that makes all the difference.

Until next time, sail safely!



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Insights

Offshore Energy

Restoring U.S. Offshore Energy Dominance: The Momentum Is Real

By Erik Milito, President, National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA)

America's offshore energy future is at a turning point.

After years of political headwinds, we're finally witnessing a decisive shift in Washington that is embracing the United States' position as a global offshore energy leader. The Trump administration's early moves, combined with momentum in Congress, offer a path forward that prioritizes energy security, economic growth, and technological innovation—all while laying the groundwork for more efficient permitting and expanded investment.

But this is only the beginning. What happens next—especially through budget reconciliation and follow-on permitting reform—will determine whether we unlock the full potential of our offshore resources or continue ceding ground to global competitors.

Reclaiming the Offshore Advantage

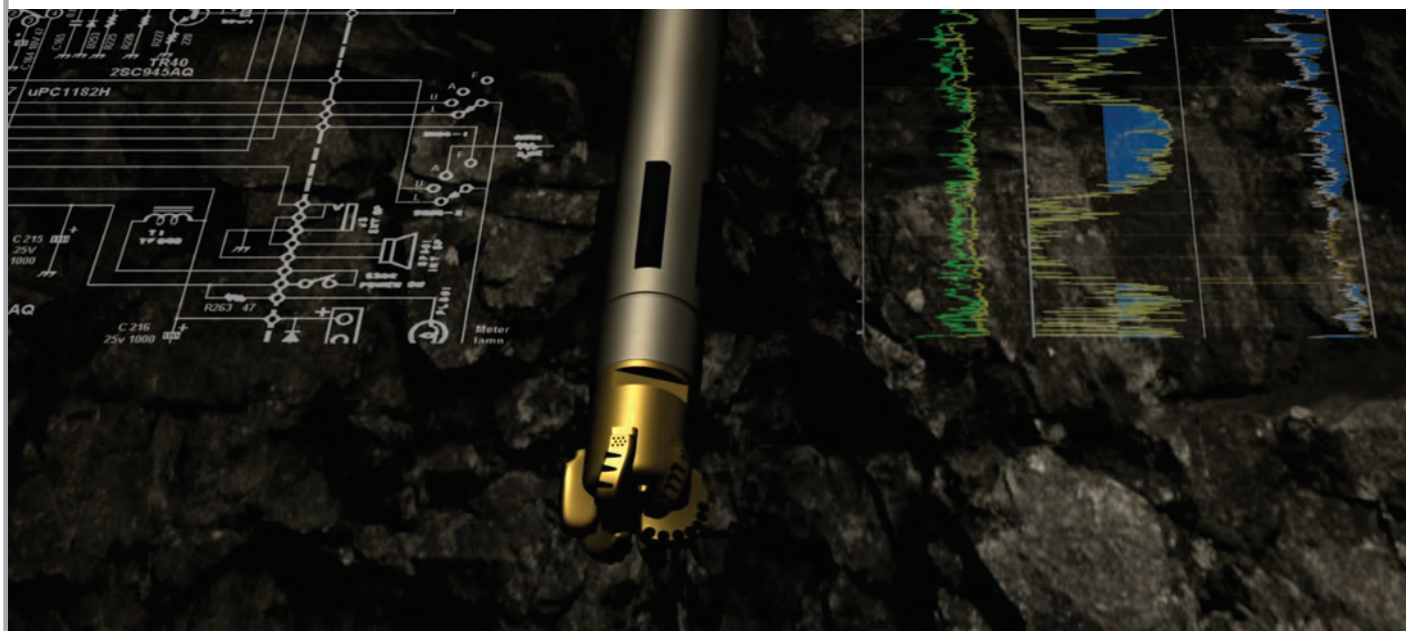
The Gulf of America has long been a powerhouse of American energy production. It provides some of the low-

est-emission barrels of oil in the world and generates billions in federal revenue that supports infrastructure, conservation, and coastal restoration. But over the past several years, federal leasing policy has failed to keep pace with our energy needs and global opportunities.

The current 2024–2029 Five-Year Leasing Program, finalized under the previous administration, includes only three offshore oil and gas lease sales—the lowest number in program history. This self-imposed scarcity undermines a stable investment environment, stifles innovation, and signals uncertainty to the domestic and global markets.

Thankfully, the Trump administration took action to fix this failure early. Through executive and secretarial orders, it has prioritized energy production on federal lands and waters, directed agencies to resume oil and gas lease sales and develop a new leasing program, and streamline permitting.

The Trump administration has sent a strong message: the Gulf of America matters.



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Congressional Action: Laying the Legislative Foundation

The real opportunity to cement this shift, however, lies with Congress. And the gears are already turning.

As part of budget reconciliation efforts, lawmakers are advancing provisions to mandate regular offshore lease sales—effectively overriding the restrictive five-year plan—for the next 15 years. This step is critical. By requiring the Department of the Interior to hold lease sales on a predictable schedule, Congress is restoring certainty to the process and ensuring the United States maintains a robust offshore leasing pipeline.

But Congress isn't stopping at lease sales. Bipartisan discussions are already underway to address permitting bottlenecks that have plagued both traditional oil and gas projects and, hopefully, emerging offshore sectors like wind, carbon capture and storage (CCS), and critical mineral recovery.

Smart permitting reform—one that maintains rigorous environmental reviews while streamlining the process—is essential for maximizing the benefits of offshore energy development. We cannot afford multiyear delays that kill projects before they start.

The Ripple Effect of Offshore Energy

Offshore energy is not an isolated industry. It supports a vast and diverse supply chain, spanning steel fabrication, vessel services, marine engineering, advanced manufacturing, and skilled labor. In the Gulf Coast and beyond, thousands of workers rely on a strong offshore energy industry to provide good-paying, stable jobs.

Today's offshore energy ecosystem is also more diverse than ever. Oil, gas, and wind aren't in competition—they're collaborating. And when these sectors grow together, the result is a more resilient and innovative energy landscape.

Consider the companies supporting offshore wind development today. Many of them—including vessel operators and subsea construction firms—have deep experience in the oil and gas sector. A healthy leasing schedule across all offshore resources keeps this industrial base strong, supports workforce development, and fosters cross-sector innovation.

Looking ahead, the United States has an opportunity to lead in next-generation offshore technologies. Carbon capture and storage, for example, will rely on offshore geo-

logical formations for long-term CO₂ sequestration. Likewise, as the demand for minerals like cobalt and rare earth elements rises, deep-sea mining could provide further opportunities for the offshore oil and gas sector and play a role in diversifying our supply chains.

All of this depends on a strong foundation of offshore activity. And that starts with predictable lease sales, permitting reform, and federal policies that recognize the strategic value of American offshore energy.

A Global Race We Can Still Win

Global energy demand is on the rise—and it's not slowing down anytime soon. As populations grow and developing nations lift themselves into the middle class and a new AI and data-driven economy emerges, the world will need drastically more energy, not less. Offshore resources, especially oil and gas, will be essential in meeting that demand while supporting global stability and economic development.

America has a unique opportunity to lead—but only if we act with urgency. Other nations have already recognized what's at stake. Authoritarian regimes like Russia and China are leveraging their own energy resources—both fossil and renewable—as geopolitical tools.

Russia wants to use oil and gas exports as leverage over Europe and other regions. China, meanwhile, is investing heavily in offshore wind, subsea mining, and critical mineral supply chains, securing dominance in the energy technologies of the future.

If the United States fails to fully engage its own offshore capabilities, we risk ceding both economic opportunity, global leadership, and national security interests. A strong offshore energy strategy serves as a powerful hedge against the ambitions of our adversaries. It also enables us to be a reliable energy partner to allies around the world, providing better, lower-emission energy than many of our global competitors.

This isn't just an energy issue. It's a foreign policy and national security imperative.

America's offshore industry has the tools, talent, and technology to lead. We simply need the policy framework to match. With the right decisions now, we can grow our economy, meet global demand, and ensure the United States—not our adversaries—sets the tone for the next era of global energy leadership.

Thought Leadership

Workforce Development

The Rise of the Blue-Collar Worker

By Robert Shuford, CEO, Mobile Pulley

For nearly 200 years,

metal casting foundries have served as the backbone of American manufacturing. Though only 1,750 foundries remain today, compared to more than 6,000 in 1955, they are responsible for more than \$110 billion in economic output and support nearly half a million jobs. With President Trump's tariff negotiations underway, a renewed mandate for reshoring manufacturing efforts, and the looming decisions around the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the future of

America's foundries—and thus, the skilled workforce that powers them—is looking stronger than it has in decades.

A Q1 2025 survey conducted by the American Foundry Society found that manufacturers have seen a notable uptick in sales over the past 90 days and maintain a positive or somewhat positive business outlook for the remainder of the year. A key concern highlighted in the survey was the growing demand for castings, accompanied by an urgent need to increase training opportunities in metallurgy



Mobile Pulley

Thought Leadership

Workforce Development

and other technical specialties related to the casting process. Notably, nearly 70% of respondents anticipate tariffs to have either a positive or neutral effect on their bottom line—an indication that momentum is shifting back toward American manufacturing.

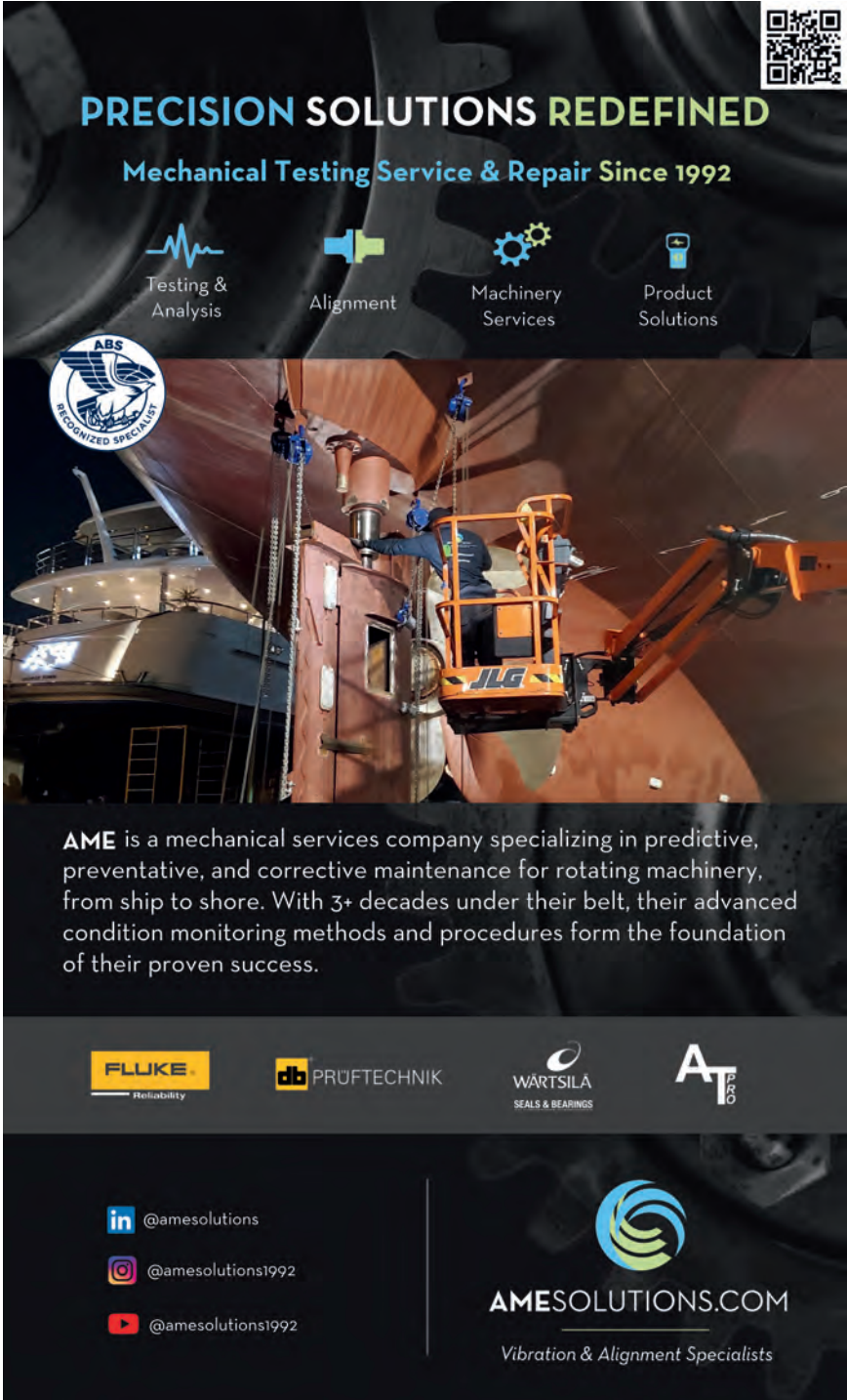
The resurgence of skilled trades is more than anecdotal—it's statistical. But to fully capitalize on this momentum, we must create the right legislative, economic, educational, and cultural environments to support it. How do we, as manufacturers, ensure that we attract and retain the most talented foundry managers, metallurgists, molders, melt crews, machinists, maintenance technicians, and other skilled professionals critical to our industry's future? It starts with Americans supporting Americans.

Pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act—Again

According to the National Association of Manufacturers' Q1 2025 Survey, the failure of Congress to extend the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) will have an immediate and significant negative effect on manufacturing.

- 69.35% of respondents said they would delay purchasing capital equipment.
- 45.23% would postpone hiring.
- 44.72% would stall plans for operational expansion.
- 41.71% would cut back on research and development.
- 40.20% would limit employee wage or benefit increases.

These numbers are not just statistics—they're missed opportunities.



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Failure to act would stifle investment, innovation, and job creation. The TCJA was instrumental in reigniting domestic manufacturing after years of stagnation. Its expiration threatens to undo that progress. To attract the next generation of workers—whether on the shop floor, in the lab, or in the maintenance bay—we must provide a stable and growth-friendly policy environment that signals long-term commitment to U.S.-based industry.

Create a Company Culture Worth Committing To

Today's skilled worker, often still referred to as "blue-collar"—a term that has increasingly become a badge of pride rather than a label of hierarchy—expects more than just a paycheck. They want to work for companies that offer a culture of respect, growth, and opportunity.

Creating such a culture means investing in competitive benefits, ongoing training, and career advancement pathways. These aren't perks—they're necessities for attracting and retaining top talent in an increasingly competitive labor market. And who better to lead this effort than one of the oldest industries in the country?

As the backbone of American manufacturing, foundries are among the most storied industries in our history, with many operating for over a century. That legacy wasn't built on chance—it was built on leadership, grit, and a deep commitment to the American workforce that still exists today.

Through the Build America, Buy America Act (BABA), companies can and should demonstrate to employees that their values are more than just words. The BABA Act establishes a "Buy America Preference" for federally funded infrastructure projects, requiring that materials used in these projects be produced in the United States. For manufactured products, at least 55% of the total cost of components must be of U.S. origin, and final assembly must occur domestically. What better way to support your employees than with a fierce commitment to protecting local jobs?

When companies treat their people like long-term partners, workers are more likely to stay and help build something that lasts.

Finalize Tariffs and Level the Playing Field

It's no secret that American manufacturers have been undercut by foreign competitors that don't play by the same rules. The renegotiation of tariff structures is about

more than fairness—it's about survival.

As shown in recent survey data, foundries generally view tariffs favorably and anticipate a net positive impact on their business outlook. These policies incentivize domestic production, protect against unfair trade practices, and allow American companies to reinvest in their operations and workforce.

Finalizing tariff agreements sooner rather than later will provide the stability businesses need to plan strategically and invest confidently. It also sends a clear message: we're prioritizing the American industry and the American worker.

Invest in Trade Schools and Technical Education

Another avenue worth greater emphasis is the role of trade and technical education. The Trump administration has discussed reallocating federal funding from elite institutions, especially those with large endowments, toward trade schools and workforce development programs. While controversial, the idea resonated with a growing segment of Americans who see college debt as a burden and skilled trades as a viable, and even superior, career path.

Manufacturers must echo this thinking, not just in rhetoric, but through action. Corporate investment in vocational programs, high school partnerships, and scholarship funds for technical certifications can create a talent pipeline directly into skilled trades. These programs help ensure that the next generation views manufacturing jobs not as a fallback, but as a first choice.

This isn't just altruism—it's good business. A more skilled, better-trained workforce directly impacts quality, output, and profitability. The sooner the private sector aligns with educational institutions, the better equipped we'll be to meet the demands of a modern industrial economy.

Conclusion

The rise of the American skilled worker is not a fleeting trend—it's a structural shift in how we view labor, value production, and invest in our economy. Whether we call it "blue-collar," "skilled trades," or simply "essential work," what matters most is that we support it through strong policy, workplace culture, and educational opportunity. If we do that, we're not just protecting jobs—we're building a more resilient and self-reliant America.



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Patrol Boats

USCG

U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jaiden Hartley

WHATEVER THE MISS COAST GUARD'S GOT A

Coast Guard Cutter Calhoun's (WMSL 759) 35-foot Long Range Interceptor II Cutter Boat (CB-LRI-II) returns to the cutter at night following a drug interdiction in the Atlantic Ocean, April 12, 2025. National Security Cutters like Calhoun carry three boats, including one CB-LRI-II two 26-foot CB-OTH-IV (Over-the-Horizon) rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIBs).

By Edward Lundquist

SION, THE BOAT FOR IT

The Coast Guard (including its heritage services) have employed boats since the beginning. Boats are just as important, if not more so, than ever.

America's first "boat force" came about in 1878, with the creation of the United States Life Saving Service (USLSS), whose boat crews rescued mariners in distress along the nation's coast line. In 1915, the USLSS merged with the United States Revenue Cutter Service (established in 1790) to form the modern-day United States Coast Guard. The Revenue cutters utilized their boats for inspections, enforcement of regulations and collection of customs duties. In 1939, the U.S. Lighthouse Service joined the Coast Guard. As many lighthouses were on island or difficult to reach by land, many relied on boats.

Today, boats are used to carry out all Coast Guard every mission. For the Coast Guard, there is a definite distinction between cutters and boats.

The Office of Boat Forces (CG-731) sets standard for safe and effective boat operations and provide integrated policies, resources, and training programs to CG Boat Forces for the safe and effective execution of CG missions.

According to the service's "Boats of the U. S. Coast Guard," "The term "boats" includes any Coast Guard vessel under 65 ft. in length without a permanently assigned crew. Commissioned vessels 65 feet and greater in length are classified as 'cutters'."

All cutters have at least one boat. Cutter deployed boats expand a cutter's operational presence and provide critical 'end game' capabilities in law enforcement, narcotic and alien interdiction, search and rescue, and other Coast Guard missions.

Today, there are many specialized boats to carry out Coast Guard missions. Some Coast Guard boats exist in small numbers, in small quantities, generally in specialized roles. Others have been procured in large quantities for service afloat and ashore. Here's are a few standard types that are prevalent in the service today:

47' MOTOR LIFEBOAT (MLB) - TEXTRON MARINE - Slidell, LA

The MLB is the shore-based go-to rescue craft for high seas, surf, and heavy weather environments. Its engines

Patrol Boats

USCG

U.S. Coast Guard History Service

The United States Life Saving Service established the Point Adams Station in 1888.



are designed to operate without interruption in a capsized event, and the boat can self-right in less than 30 seconds. Top speed is 25 knots. More than 100 are operational. The Coast Guard is currently conducting a service life extension program to extend the service life of the 47-foot MLB fleet.

45' RESPONSE BOAT - MEDIUM (RB-M) - MARINETTE MARINE, Marinette, WI/KVICHAK MARINE, Seattle, WA

They entered service in 2008, with 174 of them built. With excellent maneuverability, the waterjet propulsion makes them maneuverable and fast—40 knots plus. They are used for off-shore search and rescue, law enforcement,

and security missions, and are found at Coast Guard stations throughout the country.

29' RESPONSE BOAT-SMALL (RB-S II) - METAL SHARK ALUMINUM BOATS, Jeanerette, LA

The Coast Guard has procured 370 multi-mission RB-S II boats. They entered service in 2008 and are assigned to boat stations throughout the country, as well as with Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) and training commands.

49' STERN-LOADING BUOY BOAT (BUSL) - COAST GUARD YARD, Curtis Bay, MD

A number of boats are used to maintain the aids to navi-

Patrol Boats USCG

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Aaron Lau



Coast Guardsmen serving in Law Enforcement Detachments often operate from boats from their host vessel. Here LEDET 408 are operating from the littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South counter-illicit drug trafficking missions in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific.

gation (ATON) system on the coasts and inland waters. The BUSL is are designed for lifting and servicing buoys and other aids to navigation. 26 are in service. They have light icebreaking capabilities, and are assigned in districts one through nine.

26' CUTTER BOAT - OVER THE HORIZON (CB-OTH V) - INVENTECH MARINESOLUTIONS, Bremerton, WA

The first of the 194 CB-OTH V have joined the fleet. Eventually they will be deployed on National Security Cutters (NSC), Offshore Patrol Cutters (OPC), Polar Security Cutters (PSC), and Fast Response Cutters (FRC).

26' CUTTER BOAT - OVER THE HORIZON (CB-OTH IV) - SAFE BOATS INTERNATIONAL, Port Orchard, WA

The 40-knot CB-OTH is carried aboard cutters and launched when a quick response is required for beyond-sight pursuit and interdiction; boardings and searches; and SAR. The first entered service in 2013, with 130 built.

64' SPECIAL PURPOSE CRAFT - SCREENING VESSEL (SPC-SV) - GLADDING HEARN / DUCLOS, Somerset, MA

Unlike many Coast Guard cutters and boats, the SPC-

Patrol Boats

USCG

U.S. Coast Guard photo by Cmdr. Samuel Blasé



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) conducts cutter boat operations in Winter Quarters Bay in McMurdo Sound during Operation Deep Freeze, Mar. 2, 2025.

A Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team South Portland 49-foot Buoy Utility Stern Loading (BUSL) boat in Fore River, Maine. A BUSL is used to service buoys and can also be used for ice breaking operations.



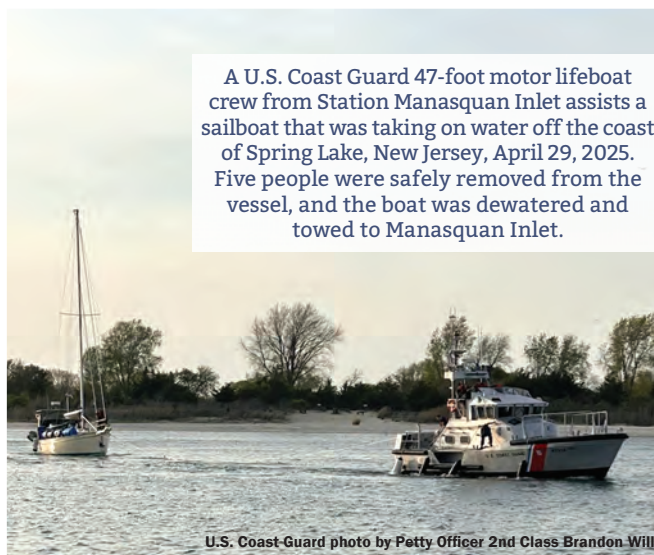
U.S. Coast Guard photo

SV has a specific mission to escort high-value U.S. Navy assets to and from port. The bow-mounted remote-controlled gun gives the SPC-SV some teeth. The 12 SPC-SV boats have been procured by the Navy and operated by Coast Guard crews at Maritime Force Protection Units (MFPU).

35' CUTTER BOAT - LONG RANGE INTERCEPTOR (CB-LRI II) - METALCRAFT MARINE, Cape Vincent, NY

The second generation LRI has speed (35+ knots) and

A U.S. Coast Guard 47-foot motor lifeboat crew from Station Manasquan Inlet assists a sailboat that was taking on water off the coast of Spring Lake, New Jersey, April 29, 2025. Five people were safely removed from the vessel, and the boat was dewatered and towed to Manasquan Inlet.



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Brandon Will

range (227 nm at 25 knots) that expands the reach of the 10 National Security Cutters (NSCs) in the fleet. Each NSC has an LRI as one of its three boats carried.

15' SKIFF - ICE RESCUE (SKF-ICE) - OCEANID, Bow, WA

This small craft is included in this list for contrast. The Coast Guard has 47 of these small 15-foot boats for use in very cold conditions. The 2.3 HP engine is designed for cold conditions. These boats are especially useful for rescue on ice floes in the Great Lakes.

Patrol Boats USCG

U.S. Coast Guard photo by Seaman Christine Bills

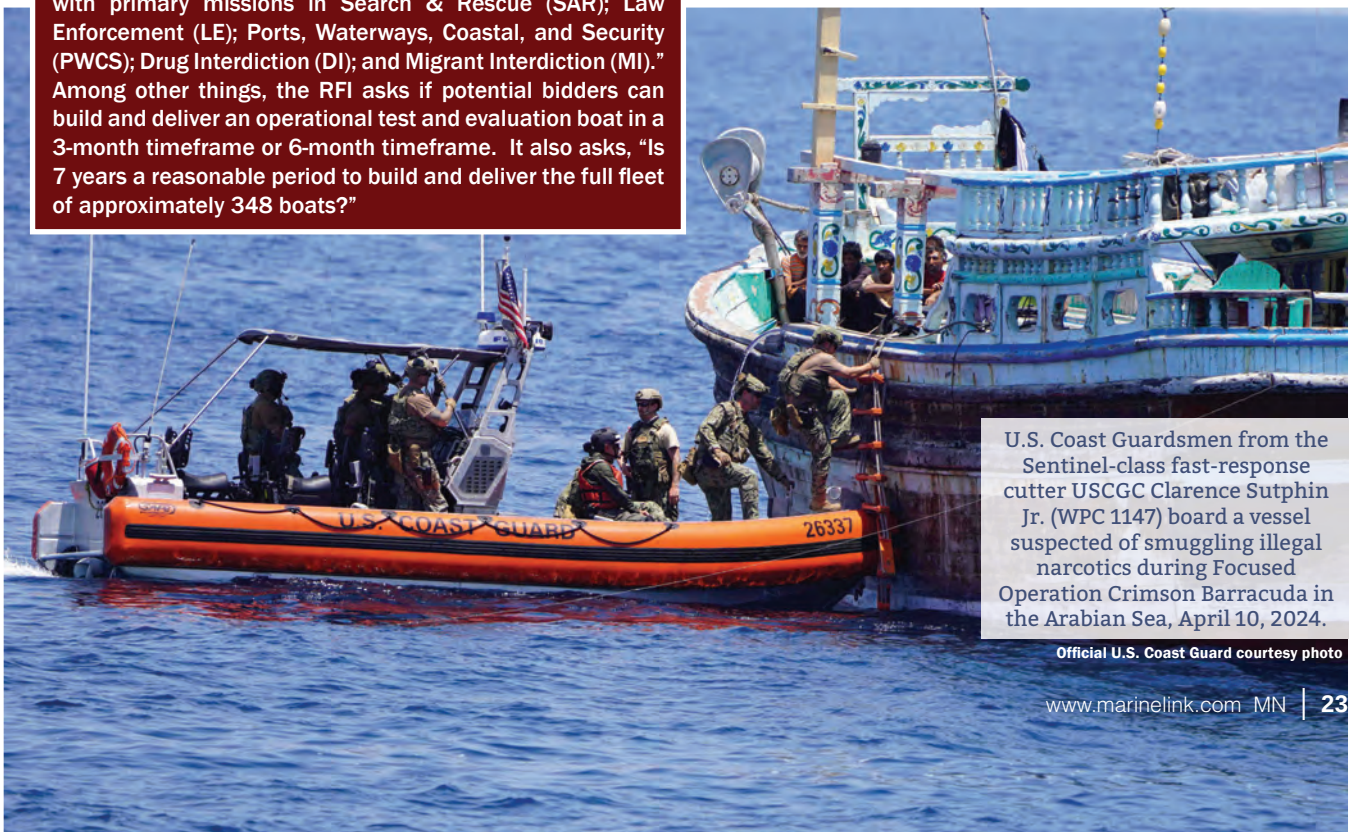
A Coast Guard Station Manistee crew operate an ice rescue skiff ice Jan. 30, 2024, on Manistee Lake, Michigan. The crew conducted ice helicopter operations with Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City to enhance their rescue training techniques during the winter season.



Request for Information will help Coast Guard with Response Boat Replacement

The Coast Guard is looking ahead to replacing the 29' Response Boat - Small 2nd generation (RB-S II). The service recently posted a "Request for Information," (RFI), which isn't a solicitation, but rather a way to understand the state of the market base for what will become the Response Boat - Small, 3rd Generation (RB-S III).

According to the RFI, "The RB-S II is a shore-based boat with primary missions in Search & Rescue (SAR); Law Enforcement (LE); Ports, Waterways, Coastal, and Security (PWCS); Drug Interdiction (DI); and Migrant Interdiction (MI)." Among other things, the RFI asks if potential bidders can build and deliver an operational test and evaluation boat in a 3-month timeframe or 6-month timeframe. It also asks, "Is 7 years a reasonable period to build and deliver the full fleet of approximately 348 boats?"



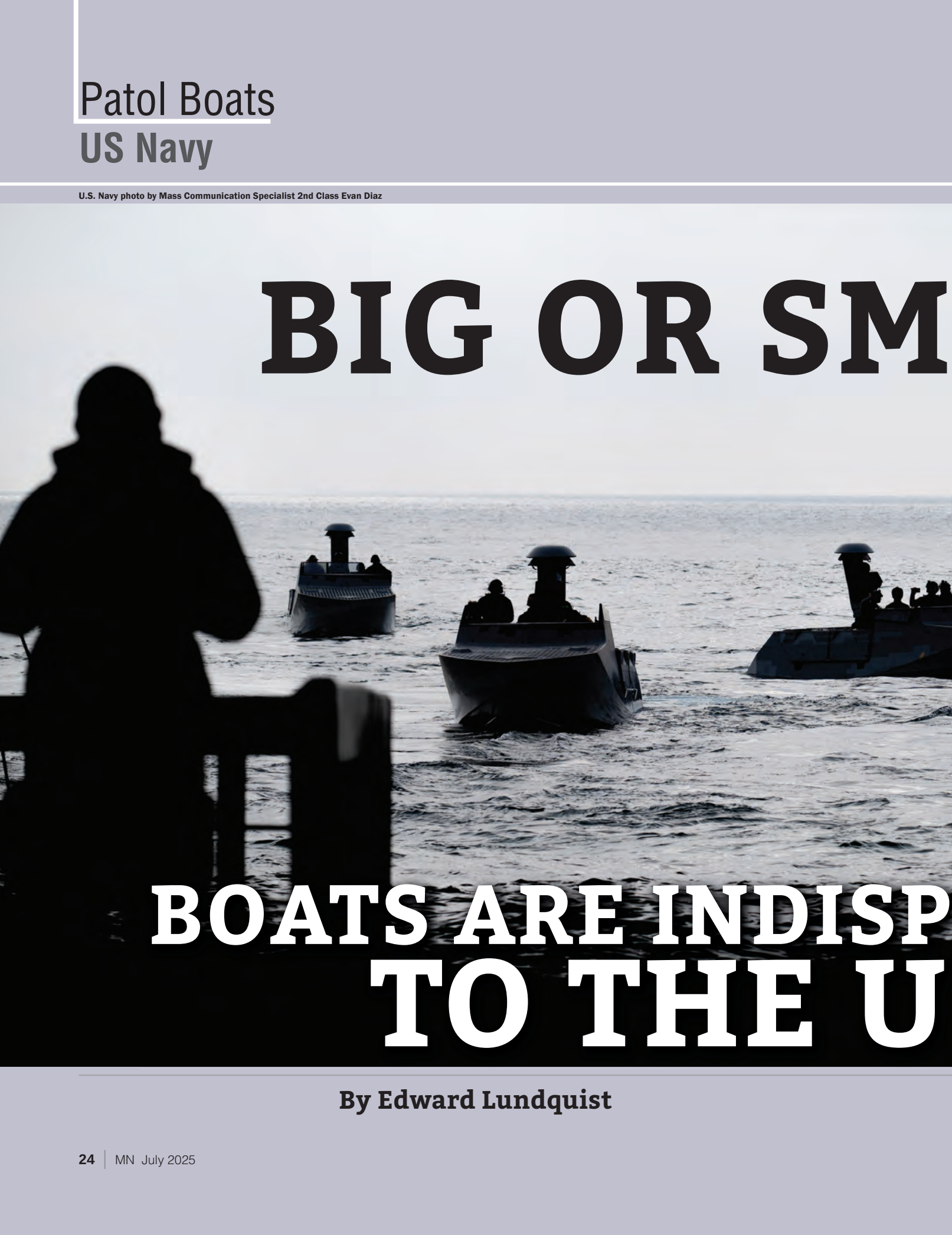
U.S. Coast Guardsmen from the Sentinel-class fast-response cutter USCGC Clarence Sutphin Jr. (WPC 1147) board a vessel suspected of smuggling illegal narcotics during Focused Operation Crimson Barracuda in the Arabian Sea, April 10, 2024.

Official U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo

Patrol Boats US Navy

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Evan Diaz

BIG OR SM



BOATS ARE INDISP TO THE U

By Edward Lundquist

Patrol Boats US Navy



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For the U.S. Navy, boats perform missions from mundane maintenance chores such as hull scraping and cleaning overboard discharges to clandestine special forces insertion and extraction. Some boats are about as basic as you can imagine, and some are equipped with sophisticated combat systems and weapons.

Big or small, they all perform indispensable tasks for the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Boats that are carried on and launched from ships are referred to as “shipboard boats,” to distinguish them from boats based at installations ashore. They serve various purposes, including search and rescue, personnel transport, and providing a platform for special operations.

Yes, the Navy is embracing the employment of small unmanned systems for a variety of purposes. Some unmanned vehicles will perform jobs that must now be done with crewed boats, but in limited roles. The employment of boats and small craft continue to be a large and vital part of the Navy’s overall inventory for the present and into the future.

The All-Purpose RHIB

The most common type of shipboard boat in modern navies is the Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB). They have replaced many older types of boats used by the Navy, such as motor whale boats and replacing ships boats, such as the motor whaleboat once found on just about every ship, RHIBs have been much easier to launch, operate, recover, store and maintain. They come in a wide range of sizes, speed, range and durability. General, they’re fast, maneuverable and can carry people and equipment.

Boats are often used to assist with mooring to a buoy, conducting painting or maintenance near the waterline, and transporting crewmembers or parts to and from the beach or other ships nearby. RHIBs are often launched during main overboard situations or conducting search and rescue (SAR) operations. Surface combatants frequently transport boarding parties to investigate suspicious vessel during “Visit, Board, Search and Seizure” (VBSS) missions. Following the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, RHIBs were used to protect the oil platforms off of Iraq by delivering VBSS teams to tanks before they took on oil and to

Patrol Boats

US Navy

Vigor Industrial



Vigor Industries is building the new Combat Craft Heavy. The 77-foot CCH can achieve speeds of 40 knots.



U.S. Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 8, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, transport simulated casualties in a Riverine Assault Support System during Bold Quest, on Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Oct. 31, 2024.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Mary Torres

Patrol Boats

US Navy

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Tanner Bernat



U.S. Marines with Maritime Special Purpose Force, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, board a vessel in rigid-hull inflatable boats while conducting maritime interception operations aboard U.S. Navy training support vessel USNS Vindicator (TSV5).

move personnel and security details between the ships and platforms. These boats usually operated in pairs, and carried armed personnel.

In the past, commanding officers would have their own “captain’s gig,” and flag officers would have a 40-foot “admiral’s barge.” Today, most ships have a standard 7-meter RHIB. Larger ships might have several. Many units embark ships with their own 11-meter RHIBs. Amphibious ships embark landing craft that can also be used for a variety of purposes.

To manage the security perimeters that the Navy has placed around its ships, docks and infrastructure, the service found a small logger boat, known as the “Boomin’ Beaver,” built by Chuck’s Boat and Drive Company of Longview, Wash., which are being used to open and close

port security barriers for its bases. It’s just 19 feet long with a 10 foot-beam, with a 260 HP Cummins diesel and a ZF transmission.

Work boats are used for ship’s husbandry tasks such as hull cleaning or painting, as well as deploying oil spill booms. Dive boats have room and deck space to conduct dive operations and support salvage, ship husbandry or other assignments. Torpedo retrievers can remain at sea for several days to support underwater weapons training or testing by recovering torpedoes, bringing them on board, and returning to them to shore to be prepared for reuse.

Surface combatants generally have boats that can be used in the “Visit, Board, Search and Seizure” (VBSS) mission, role conducted by specially trained and certified crews. The teams (which are usually armed) must be able to come

Patrol Boats

US Navy

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Aaron Lau

Coast Guardsmen, assigned to the “Los Ochos Locos” of Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) 408 and Sailors assigned to the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15), recover the rigid-hull inflatable boat (RHIB).



alongside a vessel to be boarded and inspected (and are not always compliant), and get the team on and off safely.

RHIBs can be transported by trailer, in aircraft, and carried in boat davits or in stern notches for rapid launching and safer recovery.

Hit the beach

Amphibious operations call for various types of landing craft. Naval Sea Systems Command PMS 317 is the program office responsible for the Landing Craft Utility (LCU); Landing Ship Medium (LSM); Landing Craft Air Cushion Extended Service Life Extension Program (LCAC E-SLEP), and Ship-to-Shore Connector (SSC). They connect the sea-base afloat with the operating area ashore, and thus must be specially designed to offload on the beach.

Landing craft connect the seabase afloat with the oper-

ating area ashore, and thus must be specially designed to offload on the beach.

The Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) and Landing Craft Utility (LCU) are useful vessels used for amphibious lift to the beach, and many other tasks. According to the Navy's Fact File, “Mechanized and utility landing craft are rugged, steel displacement vessels used by amphibious forces to transport equipment and troops from ship to the shore, along the shore, and from shore back to the amphibious warships. Landing craft are also used to support civilian humanitarian/maritime operations.” They've been around for years. The Navy is upgrading some of the existing LCU 1610-class boats, and is procuring the new LCU 1700. The new model doesn't look much different than the old, because it has to fit into the same well decks and carry the same vehicles and equipment. But the systems

The next generation landing craft, Ship to Shore Connector (SSC), Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC), successfully completed well deck interoperability testing with USS Carter Hall (LSD 50).



Ronald Newsome, Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division

East Coast-based U.S. Naval Special Warfare Operators (SEALs) and Special Warfare Combatant-Craft Crewmen (SWCC) conduct maritime training aboard a Combat Craft Medium with Norwegian Naval Special Operations Commandos as part of Nordic Response 24. The CCM can be custom-equipped with a variety of weapons and systems, to include drones and loitering munitions. They can carry a team of 19 SEALs up to 600 miles at 40 knots. The boats first came into service in 2015, and are now being upgraded.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Bill Carlisle

are newer. The Navy took the LCU 1700 work from Swiftships of Morgan City, La. That work is now being done by Austal USA of Mobile, Ala.

The Navy is has put some of its Landing Craft Air Cushions (LCACs) through an Extended Service Life Extension Program. The service is now procuring the new version of LCAC, called the Ship to Shore Connector, or SSC, which the Navy calls the “evolutionary replacement” of the LCAC. Textron Systems of Slidell, La., is the SSC prime contractor.

Special Ops

Other boats specialized for expeditionary operations are employed by special operations units, riverine forces and Marines.

Special Operations forces employ a variety of boats, in-

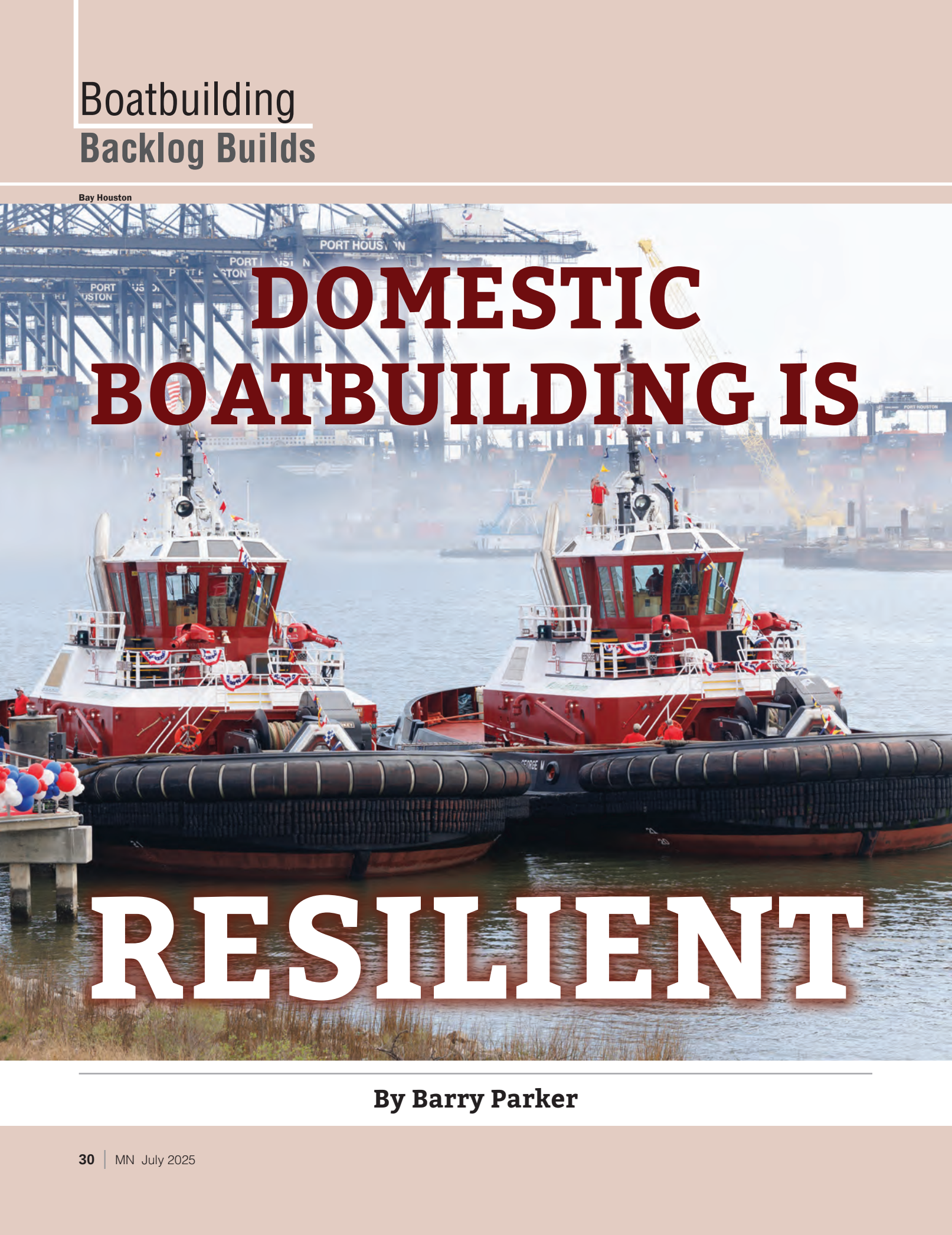
cluding the 41-foot Combat Assault Craft; 61-foot Combat Craft Medium, capable of 52 knots; and the 33-foot Special Operations Craft Riverine.

The Navy had big plans for the Mark VI patrol boat, which was to be the replacement for the Riverine Command Boat (based on the Swedish CB 90) for patrolling littoral waters. It was small enough to be carried aboard a Navy amphibious ship, but at 85 feet, was large enough to have better range and systems than the RCB, which was used for coastal and riverine missions. But the much-touted MK VI, found to be costly to operate and maintain. The Navy is, instead, procuring a new 40-foot patrol boat (40PB), suited for port security and inshore patrol missions.

Many boats are offered for foreign military sales. For example, Mark VI patrol boats are being available to Ukraine.

Boatbuilding Backlog Builds

Bay Houston

A photograph of two tugboats in the foreground, one red and white, the other black and white, both decorated with American flags. They are positioned in front of a large cargo ship at a port. The background shows industrial structures and cranes, with the text 'PORT HOUSTON' visible on some of the structures. The overall scene is hazy, suggesting a misty or foggy day.

DOMESTIC BOATBUILDING IS

RESILIENT

By Barry Parker

Boatbuilding Backlog Builds



Shipbuilding in the United States has seen a heightened profile with increased attention from Congress and the Trump 2.0 Administration. The ongoing dialogue regarding reinvigorating the U.S. deep sea fleet has brought mainstream attention to vessel construction, which has been nearly absent in recent years. In contrast, the marketplace for domestic vessel construction, for vessels serving rivers and harbors, is alive and well. Recent newbuilds for line-haul trades, and also Z-drive vessels for ship assist work, show the resilience of this sector.

April 2025 saw the christening of the towboat **DAVID NORTH**, the 10th in a series being built for barging stalwart Ingram Marine, from Main Iron Works (Houma, Louisiana). The boat, working in the Lower Mississippi, is powered by twin Cat C32 Tier 3 engines, providing a total of 1,600 horsepower. The first tug in the series had been delivered four years earlier. Sister vessels are all engaged in Ingram's Mississippi River and Houston, Texas trades. Around the same time, at its facility in Paducah, Kentucky, Ingram was christening another tug, the M/V **LEN O'CONNOR** (the ninth newbuild in the Main Iron Works series) and the re-christening M/V **JERRY W LONG** (7,200 horsepower, built in the late 1960s for Midland Enterprises, which Ingram had acquired in the early 2000's). Main Iron Works had recently completed a series of 6,000 horsepower tractor tugs for Bisso Towing, active in escort assist work on the Lower Mississippi.

Later in the Spring of 2025, tug and barge owner Maritime Partners (which, in turn, provides lease or bareboat charters to vessel operators) took delivery of the tug **JOAN PLUCK**, from FMT Shipyard (Harvey, Louisiana). The twin Mitsubishi S6R2 engines (Tier 3), providing 1,600 hp, sourced through distributor Laborde Products, are also deployed on other vessels in Maritime Partners' current newbuild program, including **PARKER BROOKS** (delivered in February, providing ship assist in waters around Houston), and the soon-to-be-completed **ISABEL PLUCK** (working around Mobile, Ala).

In early June, another Louisiana based owner, LeBeouf Brothers, christened **MARK DELESDERNIER JR.**, a 3,600-horsepower boat built at the Steiner yard in Bayou La Batre, Ala. Nearby yard Blakely BoatWorks (in Mobile, Ala), part of the Cooper Group (which got a start in logistics and

stevedoring), is building the third in a series of 6,000-horsepower, Tier 4 Z- drive boats for sister company Crescent Towing. Designed by Crowley Engineering, the vessel that will be used for ship assist on the Lower Mississippi.

Another south Louisiana yard, Intracoastal Iron Works, is building a series of boats for Nashville, Tennessee-based Hines Furlong, active on both the Mississippi River and its tributaries. The first vessel, M/V **DONNY MUDGETT** (powered with a triple screw configuration of Mitsubishi Tier 3 S6R2 engines, providing 2,400 horsepower overall) was delivered in late May. The overall construction program, which will include newbuilds from Eymard Marine Construction & Repair (in Harvey, La) will see delivery of four more triple-screw vessels and six twin-screw vessels.

Bay Houston Towing has also recently christened two Robert Allan designed Z Tech boats, **GEORGE M** (6,700 hp, built 2021 at Gulf Island Fabrication) and **MAY LOUISE** (7,000 hp, built 2024 at Master Boat Builders). Both are fitted with twin Caterpillar 3516 (Tier 4) propulsion, with selective catalytic reduction (SCR) installed. The company has two additional ship escort tugs (with a Robert Allan 3200-W design, 8800 horsepower) on order, from the Sterling Shipyard (Port Neches, Texas) for delivery later in 2025.

In Port Arthur, Moran Towing has added newbuild-**MARY JANE MORAN**, also with a Crowley design, to its fleet of escort vessels. Built at Master Boat Builders in Alabama, the boat features two Caterpillar 3512E engines (5,100 horsepower combined) tied to US 205 Z-drives from Kongsberg.

Building of boats has evolved greatly in recent years; Moran explained to *Marine News* that: "One example is our program to deploy Internet of Things (IoT) technology to increase the efficiency of our day-to-day tugboat operations." IoT uses include smart sensors and real-time connections to online platforms that enable shoreside monitoring and improved optimization of tug operations.

Shaver Transportation, operating primarily in the Pacific Northwest, launched its newest tug, **HEATHER S**, a Robert Allan Rapport 2500 design, at Gunderson Marine & Iron, in Portland, Oregon with Diversified Marine, also in Portland, completing the follow-up work. The main engines on the boat, to be used mainly for ship assist work around Portland and on the Columbia River, are Tier 4 Caterpillar 3516E, with 7,000 total horsepower.

Boatbuilding Backlog Builds

The bigger yards have, by necessity, diversified beyond traditional building of tugs and barges for commercial work. Eastern Shipbuilding Group (ESG), with yards in the Florida Panhandle, has a quartet of 7,000 horsepower escort tugs under construction for Saltchuk Marine, with Tier 4 Caterpillar engines, each vessel outfitted with a pair of Schottel SRP 510 azimuth thrusters in a Robert Allan RApport 2600 design. Importantly, these boats, set to operate by subsidiary company Foss in West Coast ports following anticipated 2026 deliveries, will meet the environmental standards set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Dredge construction is also in ESG's wheelhouse; a hopper dredge for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is currently under construction, with an expected delivery in 2027, and the yard recently signed a deal with industry leader Dutra for a newbuild trailing suction hopper dredge for 2028 delivery.

Bollinger, with more than a dozen facilities around the U.S. Gulf, has diversified as well. In a recent panel appearance at Marine Money Week, 2025, in New York, Ben Bordelon, the yard's President and CEO, said "We build for the government, and we also do a lot of commercial work. We've seen peaks and valleys over the past 40 to 50 years that have devastated the shipbuilding industry," he said. He also referred to challenges in the workflows, saying "In between the valleys, we are substituting workers

on different programs." In his remarks, Bordelon stressed the importance of the Jones Act, saying: "Frankly, without it, we'd be gone."

Nevertheless, the outlook for vessel builders can be described as cautious; Conrad Shipyard, a listed company (OTCMKTS: "CNRD"), had told investors in a Spring 2025 filing, "In the first quarter of 2025, we have encountered new steel tariffs, rising steel prices, an unclear inflation outlook and shifting U.S. trade policy and foreign policy..." adding that "These factors contribute to a more uncertain outlook for the remainder of the year.

Conrad, with yards in Louisiana and Texas, received an \$8.4 million contract from the US Army Corps of Engineers for construction of a deck barge to be used at a facility near Memphis, Tennessee, after delivery. It has also recently scored a contract worth \$29 million with the U.S. Navy, to build an accommodation barge at its Amelia, La. yard, to be deployed at a U.S. Navy base in Japan following its 2027 delivery. This follows up on a previous barge delivery to the Navy in 2024. The Jones Act panel at Marine Money, where Bordelon participated, was one of several following up on keynote remarks by Senator Mark Kelly (D- Arizona), one of the bipartisan sponsors of the SHIPS for America Act was a big topic at Marine Money. Senator Mark Kelly (D- Arizona), one of the bill's sponsors, provided Day 1 keynote remarks. Many commentators have questioned whether a desired resurgence of deep sea shipbuilding in U.S. yard,- the focus of the legislation (a "heavy lift", in the words of multiple speakers), might benefit yards building vessels working the rivers and harbors. James Lightbourn, CEO of capital arranger Cavalier Ship Finance, and a keen observer of the maritime capital markets, told *Marine News*: "Simply put, the SHIPS for America Act is not written for the domestic boatbuilding sector. The construction cost premium for building tugs, barges, and workboats domestically is generally in the 2-3x range, while the ratio is closer to 5x for building larger ocean-going vessels domestically. While there could be some indirect benefit to the domestic boatbuilding sector through grants earmarked for smaller shipyards, those sums pale in comparison to what has been budgeted to support the construction and operation of internationally trading vessels."

The workboat side of the business, has been moving in



Laborde Products

Boatbuilding Backlog Builds

“Frankly, without it [the Jones Act] we’d be gone.”

Ben Bordelon, President & CEO, Bollinger, addressing Marine Money New York in June '25

a good direction with its multi-vessel orders- such as those from Ingram, Maritime Partners, Hines Furlong and Moran. Bollinger’s Ben Bordelon, after lamenting the difficulties that the yards are facing, told the Marine Money audience, “We’ve got to have some long-term stability and discipline...” In discussing possible long-term build programs coming from the government (as the SHIPS Act is developed), he said, “We need some visibility in that. We don’t need onesies and twosies (referring to single vessel orders); that is a high risk type of project that’s going to be expensive.” On the same Marine Money panel, Sam Norton, CEO of Overseas Shipholding Group (OSG, the tanker and articulated tug / tank barge operator, now part of the Saltchuk Group) emphasized the need for stability in cash flows when supporting long term finance, and lamented recent “trader mentality” tendencies of oil companies, which favor short-term chartering strategies. In his remarks, he also expressed a concern that language in the SHIPS Act needs to be geared more towards series production of identical vessels (rather than single orders). Talking about Washington, D.C.’s yearly authorizations process, he asked “How do you put longer term programs in place ... without having to run into this political nightmare every year?”

Bordelon emphasized the stability and declining costs that come from series production. “Shipyards have had successes with repetitive long-

term contracts. If you want to bring the industrial base back to America, sign long term contracts.” He emphasized the “learning curve”, where costs

come down (and quality is enhanced as kinks are worked through), and talked about “...having a commonality in engineered solutions”.



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US Shipbuilding The Trump Effect

Birdon

BIRDON

A photograph of two shipbuilders in a shipyard. One worker, wearing a blue shirt, jeans, and a white hard hat, is leaning over a large metal structure. The other worker, wearing a blue shirt, a white hard hat with a headlamp, and safety glasses, is kneeling and working on the same structure. The background shows the interior of a shipyard with various metal parts and structures.

BUILDING BACK U.S. SHIPBUILDING

**THERE'S A POLITICAL WILL, BUT IS
THERE A FINANCIAL & LOGISTICAL WAY?**

The Trump Administration's attention to rebuilding the U.S. industrial base, with specific focus on building a stronger U.S. maritime industry, has been palpable since retaking the White House in early 2025. While the attention is real, the impact is still somewhat of a mystery, as the cumulative acts and executive orders must first work their way through the legislative machinery to hit the all-important funding level. Among boatbuilders, hope is high but uncertainty looms.

By Greg Trauthwein

US Shipbuilding The Trump Effect

The introduction of the White House Shipbuilding Office, the SHIPS for America Act, and the broader Maritime Action Plan, has generated much anticipation for an industrial sector that has long been unheard and underserved by the government. For insights, *Marine News* spoke with a handful of dispersed small- and medium-sized shipyards for their take on the plan and the path ahead, including:

- **Tony Ardito**, President, Birdon
- **Peter J Duclos**, President, Gladding-Hearn Shipbuilding, Duclos Corporation
- **Richard T. McCreary**, President, Gulf Marine Repair & Hendry Marine Industries
- **Larry Ryder**, VP of business development and External Affairs, Austal USA
- **Walter Thomassie**, Managing Director, Thoma-Sea Marine Constructors, LLC

By the Numbers

Political influence and funding traditionally have been ladled on the big military shipyards, while the small- and medium-sized yards – arguably the heart of the U.S. maritime infrastructure – have survived and thrived by doing more with less.

Walter Thomassie of Thoma-Sea Marine Constructors oversees operations across three Louisiana locations, employing more than 500 personnel. “We handle a variety of complex vessel types, including OSVs and anchor handlers, research vessels, tugs, ferries, barges and complex trawlers, delivering many vessels of various sizes and mission requirements ranging up to 330 ft. in length and 10,000LT of dis-

placement,” Thomassie said. Thoma-Sea’s facilities include steel processing centers, machine shops, and four floating dry docks ranging up to 10,800 tons. “At full production, we can process 10-12,000 tons of steel annually.”

Tony Ardito, President of Birdon USA, highlights significant capacity at their Bayou La Batre, Alabama yard. “We have 1,700 feet of waterfront, a 660-ton travel lift, and facilities capable of delivering more than four Waterways Commerce Cutters per year,” he said. Purpose-built to meet U.S. Coast Guard needs, Birdon’s facility also features a 16-ft. dredged channel to accommodate vessels up to 250 feet.

Tampa-based Gulf Marine Repair, part of Hendry Marine Industries, boasts nearly a century of service. President Richard McCreary details, “We operate four dry docks ranging from 2,500 LT to 10,500 LT capacity, with 3,200 feet of bulkhead and 388 employees supporting government and commercial repair, conversion, and modernization projects.”

Looking north to New England, Peter Duclos, President of Gladding-Hearn Shipbuilding, describes their Massachusetts yard as a focused, full-service facility. “We occupy 6.5 acres, with 60,000 square feet under cover, and average about 80 employees delivering five new vessels plus one to two major refits per year,” Duclos says. “Our engineering team works closely with Ray Hunt Design and other partners to optimize each build.”

Austal USA’s Mobile, Alabama operation stands at a much larger scale. “Our facility covers 180 acres with over one million square feet of production space,” says Larry Ryder, VP of Business Development. “We’ve delivered 32 Navy ships since 2009 and are expanding with an \$800 million capital investment plan.”



Gulf Marine Repair & Hendry Marine Industries

US Shipbuilding

The Trump Effect

A Seismic Shift in Washington

After years of decline, the Trump Administration's maritime industrial focus has been met with cautious optimism across the sector. McCreary of Gulf Marine Repair offers historical perspective. "In my career, this is the first time I've seen such comprehensive attention from any administration," he says, citing past policy decisions that decimated U.S. shipbuilding: grain embargoes, cuts to MARAD Title XI, elimination of the Construction Differential Subsidy, and consolidation of prime contractors. "The SHIPS Act is a welcome reversal, creating opportunity after 40 years of decline."

"The Administration is putting a much larger emphasis on shipbuilding than previous administrations," says Thomassie. "There's hope that meaningful policies will emerge to support not only large shipbuilders but also small and mid-sized yards, which represent significant national capacity."

Birdon's Ardito echoes that sentiment. "The renewed emphasis aligns well with Birdon's long-term goals. We look forward to continued coordination with the Office of Shipbuilding."

Duclos of Gladding-Hearn adds, "It's really extraordinary. We can't recall this level of attention before. Hopefully, some benefits will trickle down to small yards like ours."

Austal's Ryder emphasizes the importance of sustained

action. "The Executive Orders, SHIPS Act, and infrastructure funding are long overdue. We've invested heavily for 25 years, and this national focus will give us the tools to continue expanding our capabilities."

For many shipyards, material impacts from new federal policies remain on the horizon.

"So far, it's mostly been engagement, not direct operational impact," says Thomassie. "But we're encouraged by the federal government's deeper education on the shipbuilding industrial base."

At Birdon, the strongest near-term boost has come from Coast Guard programs. "The Waterways Commerce Cutter program will enable full-rate production starting in FY26," says Ardito. "Consistent funding is key for workforce retention, supplier stability, and long-term cost efficiency."

McCreary points to potential growth areas beyond new builds. "Workforce development, expanded shipyard grants, and potential subsidies for ship repowering and conversion could dramatically enhance the U.S. repair sector," he says. Gulf Marine Repair already operates its own welding and fitting school, but broader funding could help scale national training capacity.

Duclos agrees that workforce is paramount. "Training grants have been helpful, but we need longer-term thinking. Maintaining efficient operations while continuously

THOMA-SEA



"While we have had and continue to have our share of exciting projects, such as the ongoing construction of the next generation research vessels for NOAA, I would have to say the Arctic Fjord was the vessel that most represents our shipyard's capability," said Thomassie

Thoma-Sea

US Shipbuilding The Trump Effect

training is a challenge for smaller firms.”

Austal USA is already expanding aggressively. “We’re investing \$800 million to grow both submarine module and surface ship capacity,” says Ryder. “Next year we’ll open major new facilities for submarine and surface ship production. The demand is there, and we’re preparing to meet it.”

Signature Projects Showcase U.S. Capability

Despite the historical lack of political attention, funding and will, the U.S. small- and medium-sized shipbuilding infrastructure still presents a formidable array of capability premised on the historic need to supply inland towboats, coastal tugboats, passenger vessels and ferries plus offshore service vessels – to service the more than 25,000 miles of inland and coastal navigable waterways and the commerce it enables. Recent project highlights include:

- “While we have had and continue to have our share of exciting projects, such as the ongoing construction of the next generation research vessels for NOAA, I would have to say the Arctic Fjord was the vessel that most represents our shipyard’s capability,” said Thomassie. In this case he references the 99.3m Arctic Fjord factory trawler. “This is the largest Pollock trawler built in the U.S., and one of the most complex vessels of its kind. The ship includes advanced freezing systems, automation, complex hydraulics,

and dense machinery spaces, all built during the pandemic and a hurricane. It’s a testament to U.S. capability.”

- For Birdon, the \$1.187 billion Waterways Commerce Cutter program for the Coast Guard exemplifies its engineering and management capability. “We’re integrating structure, systems, and C5I on 27 vessels—a true showcase of our end-to-end capabilities,” said Ardito.

- McCreary highlights Gulf Marine Repair’s complex service life extension of an articulated tug barge (ATB). “The project involved stainless cargo systems, complete recoating, electronic upgrades, and repowering. It’s extending the unit’s life by 20 years at far less cost than new construction.”

- Duclos discussed continuous improvement with Gladding-Hearn’s 53-foot Chesapeake Class pilot boats. “Since 2002, we’ve delivered 27 of these. Each new vessel incorporates customer feedback and incremental design improvements. That’s how you build long-term expertise.”

- Austal USA’s diverse portfolio includes the Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Cutter, Navy T-AGOS surveillance ships, and submarine modules for Virginia and Columbia class boats. “We’re also leading advanced manufacturing and additive manufacturing programs that will define the future of U.S. shipbuilding,” said Ryder.



Austal

US Shipbuilding The Trump Effect

Gladding-Hearn



Investing in Capacity, Capability, and People

When the smoke clears, shipbuilding is a unique industrial endeavor that requires consistent investment in land, facilities, equipment and people.

“At Thoma-Sea, we’re upgrading automation, robotic welding, and pipe fabrication systems,” says Thomassie. “We’re also investing in workforce support spaces, training centers, and collaboration areas.”

Birdon has invested \$27 million in its Alabama yard to support WCC production, adding a semi-automated panel line, dedicated production shops, new launching equipment, and expanded training facilities. “Support from MARAD and the Maritime Industrial Base has been critical,” said Ardito.

Hendry Marine Industries is pouring \$23 million into drydock refurbishments, cranes, and equipment upgrades. “We’ve replaced aging cranes, strengthened our drydocks, and modernized electrical systems after hurricane flooding,” says McCreary. “Fully facilitized yards require continuous reinvestment.”

Gladding-Hearn has leveraged MARAD’s small shipyard grants to upgrade its yard since 2008. “We built a welder training facility, added a 35-ton transporter, new yard structures, and larger fabrication doors,” says Duclos. “These improvements make us more efficient and competitive.”

Austal USA’s ongoing expansion is massive. “By 2026, we will have invested over \$1 billion in facilities,” says Ryder.

“We’re also investing heavily in AI, advanced manufacturing technologies, and workforce development to ensure we deliver maximum value to the maritime industrial base.”

U.S. Shipbuilding: At a Crossroads

The U.S. shipbuilding infrastructure stands at a pivotal junction, as years of decline have left critical vulnerabilities across both commercial and defense sectors. Punctuated by a renewal of geopolitical hostilities in Russia, Ukraine, Iran and Israel; the decline has become more pronounced with long-simmering tensions surrounding China, Taiwan and ‘ownership’ of the South China Sea. In particular, as illustrated in all of these conflicts including the recent attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, the deployment of mass-produced surface and subsea drone technology has exacerbated the threat to traditional large, CapEx and OpEx intensive navies, and highlighted the critical need for a nimble, diverse and well-funded maritime infrastructure, and infrastructure that can be leveraged to design, build and maintain a wide range of both commercial and military assets. In summarizing the recent political shift and the prospects it brings to the U.S. industrial shipbuilding base, Thomassie is succinct:

“We hope policymakers recognize the unique capabilities that exist at all levels of the industry. A sustainable future for U.S. shipbuilding requires strategic, coordinated support that includes small and mid-sized yards, not just the primes.”

US Shipbuilding The Trump Effect



[L to R]: **Peter J. Duclos**, President, Gladding-Hearn Shipbuilding, Duclos Corporation; **Larry Ryder**, VP, Austal USA; **Tony Ardito**, President, Birdon; **Richard T. McCreary**, President, Gulf Marine Repair & Hendry Marine Industries.

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Shipyard Notes



HD Hyundai & ECO

Edison Chouest Offshore (ECO) and South Korea's HD Hyundai established a partnership for the construction of U.S. commercial vessels. The deal was signed on June 20 and announced on June 22, 2025, signed by Hannae Choi, Head of Planning at HD Korea Shipbuilding & Offshore Engineering, and Gary Chouest, Chairman, ECO. The companies agreed to cooperate on the construction of LNG dual-fuel containerships.

ECO operates five commercial shipyards across the country, and has built and currently operates a fleet of 300 Offshore Support Vessels (OSVs). ECO recently formed the **United Shipbuilding Alliance (USA)** in partnership with **Bollinger Shipyard**.

Under the agreement, the two companies plan to jointly build mid-sized containerships at ECO's shipyards by 2028. HD Hyundai will support the initiative by providing ship design support, equipment procurement services, and construction technology assistance, as well as by partially manufacturing and supplying ship blocks. The company will further contribute by investing in key technical assets. Earlier this year HD Hyundai signed business agreements with Huntington Ingalls Industries and Fairbanks Morse Defense.

Davie, a builder of icebreakers and other specialized ships, announced its intention to acquire shipbuilding assets in Galveston and Port Arthur from **Gulf Copper & Manufacturing Corporation**. The transaction is still subject to financial, legal, and regulatory closing conditions, as well as land lease negotiations with the Galveston Wharves Board of Trustees. Once complete, Davie expects to finalize the acquisition in summer 2025.



Davie & Gulf Copper

Targeting the U.S. icebreaker business, James Davies, President and CEO of Davie, said: "We share a vision with Gulf Copper to make Texas a world-class hub for American icebreaker and complex ship production.

The planned acquisition would fulfill the commitment Davie made in July 2024 to explore a permanent presence in America. It would support national priorities such as the **U.S. Maritime Action Plan** and the **Ships for America Act**. It would also align with the U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Security Cutter (ASC) program, which aims to rapidly deliver new Arctic-ready icebreakers while supporting the revitalization of U.S. shipbuilding.

Davie already has operations in Québec, Canada, and Helsinki, Finland—the latter has built around 50% of the world's icebreaker fleet. Adding an American shipyard would make Davie uniquely positioned in the trilateral Icebreaker Collaboration Effort (ICE Pact) to deliver advanced icebreakers at speed, scale, and competitive cost.

Once the transaction is complete and contracts are secured, Davie plans to invest \$1 billion to upgrade and expand capacity in Galveston and Port Arthur.

Bollinger Shipyards is building a new RoRo cargo vessel for U.S.-based **United Launch Alliance (ULA)**, a vessel to be named SpaceShip that will transport Vulcan rockets from the factory in Decatur, Alabama, to the launch sites at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida and Vandenberg Space Force Base in California. The ship will be equipped with three **Schottel** Rudder Propellers SRP 460 LE and two Schottel Transverse Thrusters STT 1. SpaceShip's tailored electric system will be designed and supplied by **elkon**, a member of the Schottel Group. The vessel is



Bollinger & Schottel

scheduled for completion in 2026.

The main propulsion system consists of three SRP 460 in the embedded L-Drive variant, each with an input power of 2100 kW and a propeller diameter of 2.6m. With this propulsion unit, the 111- x 25-m vessel will achieve a maximum speed of 15 knots. The 360-degree steerable SRP combines high maneuverability with outstanding course stability during free sailing and provides powerful thrust in any chosen direction. It will also be equipped with two STT 1 units, each with an input power of 373 kW and a propeller diameter of 1.3m. **elkon** will deliver the Active Front End (AFE) Drive technology for the main electrical propulsion system. In addition to main switchboards, the company will equip the vessel with an Alarm Control and Monitoring System (ACMS). **elkon's** scope of supply will be completed by integrated, space-optimized Motor Control Centers (MCC), Power Distribution System Panels, as well as Bridge and Engine Control Center Consoles.

St. Johns Ship Building, owned by **Americraft Marine**, won its first U.S.

Navy shipbuilding contract to construct a Dive Support Vessel (DSV), which will serve a critical operational

roles for the U.S. Navy, including support for specialized diving and underwater support, operations and training.



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Vessels

Incat Crowther was commissioned by Catalina Express to design a new low-emission, renewable diesel-powered passenger ferry. As part of the Port of Los Angeles' \$31m Los Angeles Marine Emission Reduction (LA MER) project, funded by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), Catalina Express was awarded a \$15m grant to match its own \$15,000,000 contribution to the project.

Marine Group Boat Works in San Diego will build the vessel, and plans to start it in July 2025 with sea trials expected to occur in 2027.

The new 160 ft. passenger ferry will service the popular one-hour tourist route between Los Angeles' Long Beach Port and Santa Catalina Island. Capable of transporting up to 516 passengers across three spacious decks at speeds of up to 37 knots, the new vessel will be powered by renewable diesel fuel (R-99) comprised of plant-based stocks. The new vessel will be propelled by four EPA Tier 4-compliant MTU 4000 series engines, each designed to be equipped with a diesel particulate filter (DPF) once certified by the EPA, USCG, and CARB to meet CARB commercial harbor craft regulations.

Passenger comfort will be enhanced via a resiliently mounted superstructure which will reduce vibrations and

Catalina Express' Renewable Diesel Ferry



Incat Crowther

noise transmitted from the hulls. The new vessel will offer spacious seating and amenities including two kiosks, a large protected luggage hold, space for 16 bicycles, café-style table seating, indoor and outdoor seating options and accessible toilets. The vessel has also been designed with active ride control comprising a pair of Naiad Active T-foil and interceptors to help reduce vessel motions.

Measuring 160 x 39.1 with a 5.5 ft. draft, the aluminum construction ferry will be designed for a service speed of 34 knots, a maximum speed of 37 knots, power by four MTU 12V4000 M65L engines operating at 1920kW [2575 hp] @ 1800rpm. The engines will drive four Hamilton HTX65 waterjets through four Reintjes VLJ930/1 gears.

Jack Tanner Towing's M/V Miss Hazel



Laborde Products

Jack Tanner Towing Company added the new-build 1368-HP Super Tiger workboat, M/V Miss Hazel, to its fleet. Built by Serodino, Inc., it is powered by twin Mitsubishi S6R engines, each delivering 684 horsepower at 1800 RPM. The Miss Hazel will operate primarily around Havana, Illinois, supporting the company's regional towing operations. The propulsion system includes Twin-Disc MG-5222 gears from Great Lakes Power, 5-inch sleeved shafts, and 52-inch Rice Propulsion four-blade propellers — delivering reliable thrust, maneuverability, and minimal vibration.

Santa Barbara Harbor Patrol's M2-36 CAT



Moose Boats

Moose Boats delivered an M2-36 catamaran to the Santa Barbara Harbor Patrol, which will serve as both a law enforcement and fireboat. The M2-36 catamaran features twin 300 Suzuki outboards with contra-rotating dual stainless-steel propellers. A dedicated Volvo Penta diesel engine that powers its firefighting capabilities with up to 1,500 GPM through two TFT monitors, handline discharges and one 5-inch large supply discharge. The pilot house is thermostatically controlled for patient care and crew comfort.

Vessels

Rayglass 'R Edition' Protector Range of RIBs

Rayglass Boats, a Brunswick Corporation brand, unveiled the Protector R Edition range. Leading the lineup is the 330 Targa R Edition, the first vessel in New Zealand to be powered by Mercury Racing's new 400R V10 outboard engines. With a top speed exceeding 60 knots, this 10-m boat is one of the fastest production cabin RIBs in the country.

The R Edition retains the Protector hull while adding premium upgrades including custom R badging, exclusive graphics, diamond-stitched upholstery, and new marine technology, such as the Mercury electric steering, joystick piloting with integrated autopilot, skyhook, and a bow thruster.



U.S. DoD's Truckable Tug



Silverback Marine

Schottel w equip Silverback Marine is building a new OX series tractor tug for the U.S. Department of Defense, a tug that was designed by Elliott Bay Design Group and is

equipped with two Schottel RudderPropellers type SRP 100. The truckable tug, to be delivered in late 2025, will measure 26 x 14.5 ft. and sport a bollard pull of almost seven tons.

Silverback's tug will be equipped with two SRP 100 azimuth thrusters, each with an input power of 216 kW and a propeller diameter of 850 mm. The design of the SRP fits into the overall concept of the new tug series, which aims to offer the greatest possible performance in an extremely compact vessel. For this purpose, the 360-degree steerable SRP provides the vessel with maximum maneuverability and combines bollard pull with a compact thruster design, that allows a space-saving installation on the tug.

Cheoy Lee Shipyards delivered a pair of Robert Allan Ltd.-design RAstar 3200-CL tugs bound for Coatzacoalcas, Mexico. CMM Azteca and CMM Mexico – with 83 tons of bollard pull and a free running speed of 13.4 knots – sailed on their own from Hong Kong and begin operations in Mexico as part of Compania Maritima Mexicana SA DE CV's fleet (an affiliate company of Boluda Towage). These are the latest deliveries in the RAstar 3200-CL series, which Cheoy Lee has been building since 2013.

The RAstar 3200-CL series escort tugs main particulars:

Length, oa:	32m
Beam, molded:	12.8m
Depth, molded:	5.37m
Gross tonnage:	< 500
Diesel Fuel oil:	154 cu. m.
Potable water:	55 cu. m.
Fi-Fi Foam:	12.7 cu. m.
Classification:	Lloyd's Register ✕100 A1 Escort Tug, Fire-Fighting Ship 1 (2400 m3/h) with Water Spray, *IWS, ✕LMC, UMS

Compania Maritima Mexicana's CMM Azteca and CMM Mexico



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Products

1 In-Mar Solutions



1. In-Mar Solutions: Wynn Marine Pantograph Heavy Duty Window Wipers

Wynn Marine Pantograph window wipers are the ultimate solution for applications where complex window shapes need to be wiped effectively and economically. The wipers can be applied to anything from large commercial vessels to small and military vessels on land and at sea. Pantograph wipers are available in a range of sizes from 2Nm of torque up to 110Nm with a wide variety of control systems and switch options. In addition, they can be supplied with heated arms and spray-jets.
www.inmarsystems.com

2. HPW Series Waterlocks from VETUS

The heavy-duty HPW series of waterlocks from VETUS can handle extreme conditions above 500 °F. A cost-effective option, these waterlocks feature rotating bodies and hose connections, a high-capacity water lift design, and excellent sound attenuation.
<https://vetus.com/usa/exhaust-systems>

3. Volvo Penta Debuts Electric IPS

Volvo Penta launched its new fully electric marine propulsion range, built on

2 VETUS Maxwell



the Volvo Penta IPS platform. Initially developed for the marine commercial sector, this new Volvo Penta IPS electric range includes five drivelines. In the Volvo Penta IPS Electric (E) range, the electric motor is directly coupled to the Volvo Penta IPS driveline and available in twin, triple, or quadruple configurations. This opens possibilities for a broader range of vessels to harness the core benefits of the Volvo Penta IPS system – such as Electronic Vessel Control (EVC), forward-facing propulsion, and outstanding maneuverability.

4. Warren Controls Valves

Warren Controls, a manufacturer of control valves and specialty fluid handling products, highlights the 1800 Series Heavy Globe Control Valves, designed for high-capacity applications across a range of industries. With rugged construction and precision control, the 1800 Series provides reliable performance in demanding environments. The 1800 Series is available in connection sizes up to 12 inches, offering two-way balanced and unbalanced models, as well as three-way mixing and diverting configurations. Capable of handling extreme temperatures from -20°F to 800°F, high-pressure drops, and corrosive fluids, these valves are

3 Volvo Penta



4 Warren Controls



5 Knud E. Hansen



ideal for industries such as chemical processing, district energy, food and beverage, marine, power, and refining. The 1800 Series features standard body materials of cast iron, steel, or stainless steel with multiple trim materials and port sizes. The equal percentage and linear plugs in the two-way valves and linear plugs in the three-way valves provide precise modulation of fluid flow.

5. Brine-Based Firefighting System

As EV-related fires continue to challenge the maritime industry, with incidents like the Morning Midas blaze in the North Pacific, operators are seeking more effective solutions. A new brine-based firefighting system, developed by Skansi Offshore and Knud E. Hansen offers an answer. The system is operational aboard Norrøna, sailing the world's longest RoPAX route, and is scheduled for installation on two new RoRo vessels under construction.

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