Elements of Kearsarge ARG and 22nd MEU Deploy

The Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3) departs Naval Station Norfolk, March 16. Kearsarge Amphibious Readiness Group with embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed from Naval Station Norfolk and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for a regularly scheduled deployment. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Anderson W. Branch*

NORFOLK, Va. – Elements of the Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group with embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit departed Naval Station Norfolk and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for a regularly scheduled deployment on March 16, U.S. 2nd Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

The deployment is part of a regular rotation of forces that foster maritime security and increased theater cooperation by providing a forward naval presence with vast, specialized crisis response capabilities.

“After months of rigorous training, the Kearsarge ARG and 22nd MEU are ready to exercise our mission sets across a range of

military operations," said Capt. David Guluzian, commander of Amphibious Squadron 6. "The ARG-MEU team is a fully integrated, multi-mission fighting force ready to respond and decisively engage any situation or challenge during this deployment."

The ARG consists of the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship and ARG flagship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3), amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24) and dock landing ship USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44). Gunston Hall is scheduled to depart Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek later in the month.

Embarked commands with the Kearsarge ARG include commander, Amphibious Squadron 6, Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 2, Tactical Air Control Squadron (TACRON) 22, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28, Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 2, Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 4, Naval Beach Group (NBG) 2 and Beach Master Unit (BMU) 2.

The 22nd MEU, commanded by Col. Paul Merida, will serve as a sea-based, expeditionary crisis response force capable of conducting amphibious missions across the full range of military operations. The 22nd MEU includes the command element; the aviation combat element, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron, 263 (Reinforced); the ground combat element, Battalion Landing Team 2/6 (Reinforced); and the logistics combat element, Combat Logistics Battalion 26.

"During the course of a comprehensive six month training program, the Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit have built a closely integrated and well trained naval expeditionary force," said Merida. "We stand ready for any mission or challenge that comes our way."

This deployment follows months of intense training and preparations during various maritime integration exercises. The Kearsarge ARG-MEU team most recently concluded a composite

training unit exercise, a series of exercises designed to fully integrate roughly 4,000 Sailors and Marines into one cohesive contingency force while testing the units' abilities to carry out sustained operations from the sea. During COMPTUEX, the ARG-MEU operated under NATO command and control, which was a first for an ARG-MEU and is typically only practiced among carrier strike groups. Additionally, this exercise marked the first time a U.S. Coast Guard cutter participated in an ARG-MEU exercise by providing valuable interoperability experience between naval and USCG forces.

The Kearsarge ARG-MEU team is manned, trained, and equipped to fulfill amphibious requirements in support of maritime security and stability. Amphibious ready groups and larger amphibious task forces provide military commanders a wide range of flexible capabilities including maritime security operations, expeditionary power projection, strike operations, forward naval presence, crisis response, sea control, deterrence, counter-terrorism, information operations, security cooperation and counter-proliferation, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

DoD Announces Release of JADC2 Implementation Plan

Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. Kathleen Hicks and Lt. Gen. Dennis A. Crall participate in a virtual joint all domain command and control cross function team meeting at the Pentagon on Jan. 18. *DOD / photo U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Brittany A. Chase*

ARLINGTON, Va. — Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks signed the Department of Defense Joint All-Domain Command and Control Implementation Plan on March 15, 2022, the department said in a release.

JADC2 is a warfighting necessity to keep pace with the volume and complexity of data in modern warfare and to defeat adversaries decisively. JADC2 enables the Joint Force to sense, make sense, and act on information across the battle-space quickly using automation, artificial intelligence, predictive analytics and machine learning to deliver informed solutions via a resilient and robust network environment.

“We must maintain continued focus and momentum on these initiatives and programs which enhance Department capabilities to face current and future threats,” said Hicks. “Command and control in an increasingly information-focused warfighting

environment have never been more critical. JADC2 will enable the DoD to act at the speed of relevance to improve U.S. national security. JADC2 is delivering capabilities beginning now, and it will continue to be funded in the coming years."

The DSD chartered JADC2 Cross-Functional Team will oversee the execution of the JADC2 strategy, initially announced in June 2021, and the implementation plan. While the JADC2 strategy provides a vision and an approach for identifying, organizing, and delivering improved Joint Force C2 capabilities, the implementation plan outlines how the department will accomplish this. An unclassified summary of the JADC2 strategy is available here.

"This step represents irreversible momentum toward implementing the JADC2 Strategy and concepts the department announced earlier this year," said Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "This is about dramatically increasing the speed of information sharing and decision making in a contested environment to ensure we can quickly bring to bear all our capabilities to address specific threats."

JADC2 is the Department's way ahead. The JADC2 implementation plan, while classified, can be described as the document which details the plans of actions, milestones and resourcing requirements. It identifies the organizations responsible for delivering JADC2 capabilities. The plan drives the Department's investment in accelerating the decision cycle, closing operational gaps, and improving the resiliency of C2 systems. It will better integrate conventional and nuclear C2 processes and procedures and enhance interoperability and information-sharing with mission partners.

Boeing Begins Build on New Zealand's First P-8A Aircraft

A Boeing P-8A flies over the Great Barrier Reef near Queensland, Australia. *BOEING*

WICHITA, Kan. – Boeing P-8A team members and Spirit AeroSystems employees have laid the keel beam for New Zealand's first P-8A, Boeing said March 17.

This process, also called 'keeling,' was done at the Spirit AeroSystems facility where all Boeing 737 fuselages, nacelles and pylons are designed and built. Laying the keel is an important production milestone during the build of any ship or aircraft and represents the cornerstone of this latest P-8.

Rosemary Banks, New Zealand's ambassador to the United States, who was on hand to witness the keeling said, "Today's keeling ceremony is the beginning of a new era for New Zealand's maritime patrol and response capability. Our four P-8A Poseidons will better equip our defence forces to extend their reach into the Pacific and beyond, working with our partners and friends."

An aircraft keel runs the length of the fuselage belly. Due to the innovative in-line approach to the build of commercial derivative aircraft pioneered on the P-8A, the keel beam on a P-8 is different from the typical 737 keel beam. The P-8 keel includes unique aspects of the P-8 configuration, such as the integration of an internal weapons bay.

"The excitement of seeing this come together was contagious," said Brian Stuart, P-8 program manager for New Zealand. "Not only are we kicking off the journey to the first New Zealand P-8A delivery, but we are strengthening our relationships with suppliers like Spirit as well as our U.S. Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force customers."

The panel and other fuselage components will be completed on Spirit's existing 737 production line. Spirit will ship the P-8A fuselage to a Boeing Commercial Airplanes facility in Renton, Washington, for final assembly. After that, Boeing Defense, Space & Security employees will install mission systems and complete testing prior to delivery to New Zealand later this year.

In total, four Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft will eventually replace New Zealand's current fleet of six aging P-3K2 Orion aircraft providing advanced capabilities to maintain situational awareness in neighboring waters on and below the surface of the ocean.

Berger: Ukraine War Demonstrates Vulnerability of Tanks to Missile-Armed Infantry

U.S. Marines with 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, 3d Marine Division fire a Javelin shoulder-fired anti-tank missile while conducting squad attacks during Fuji Viper 22.3 at Combined Arms Training Center, Camp Fuji, Japan, Feb. 17. Javelins have proven to be effective against tanks in Ukraine and elsewhere. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. Juan Carpanzano*

WASHINGTON – The success of Ukrainian forces in countering Russian armored vehicle columns with missiles and rockets in the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine shows the vulnerability of tanks to missile-armed infantry, the Marine

Corps commandant said, and seemed to reinforce his decision to shed tanks from the Corps as part of his Force Design 2030 concept.

During a live-streamed conversation with Washington Post columnist David Ignatius, Gen. David Berger said the Russian forces seemed to be ineffective in using a combined arms approach in that they were not using "maneuver to bolster your fires or using fires to set up your forces for maneuver. In both cases, one without the other … is very ineffective."

Berger also said Ukrainian forces seemed to be effective at causing confusion among Russian forces by stripping away Russian reconnaissance – which he said parenthetically that U.S. Marines "were very, very good at."

The commandant also noted Russian forces seemed to have planned for a very short war and lost momentum with poor logistics planning. He said the Ukrainian forces seemed to be able to strike at the Russian "logistics backside."

Berger noted that amphibious operations are very complex and the Russian forces seemed to unnecessarily delay their limited amphibious operations. He said amphibious operations remain very much the core mission of the Corps.

"Amphibious landings, amphibious assault, forcible entry – things which Marines are known for for 70 years – we'll continue to do but in a very different way," Berger said. "Why? Because the character of war is changing. We need to change with it.

"Instead of tank-on-tank formations, I would say if you look at Armenia and Azerbaijan, Lebanon, or even right now in Ukraine, it's pretty clear the top-down missile attacks on the top side of heavy armor makes [tanks] pretty vulnerable," he said.

The Javelin missiles supplied by the United States to Ukraine

have a vertical attack mode.

“Tanks did tremendous work for us for many years in many different scenarios,” Berger said. “Going forward, they are heavier, too difficult to logistically support, and in some cases too vulnerable to attack from a proliferation of very inexpensive missiles.

“So, in some cases, we’ve let go of things that were very successful in the past in order to move towards things that we are going to need in the future,” he said. “The aviation/ground/logistics team – that’s the strength of the Marine Corps having it all organic – we are an enabler for the joint force. We’re the first ones on the scene to figure it out. We need the mobility to do that, which means we need amphibious ships, which [are] critical for the nation to have.

“You need to have the ability – I would say especially today in Ukraine – to have a crisis response force from the sea,” he said. “That means we need to have the number of amphibious ships necessary to global in the pacific or the Mediterranean. For the U.S., that’s 31 amphibious ships we have to have in order to do what the nation needs us to do.”

MH-60R Helicopters Approved by State Dept. for Spain

Boatswain’s Mate Seaman Armando Herrera, left, and Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class Clifford Turner remove chocks and chains from a MH-60R Seahawk helicopter aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), March 13. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Andrea Rumple*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. State Department has approved the possible Foreign Military Sale of MH-60R Seahawk helicopters along with support and related equipment to Spain, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said March 15.

The DSCA said the total cost of the program would be approximately $950 million. Approved was the possible sale of eight MH-60Rs, built by Lockheed Martin.

The sale also would include engines, avionics, data links and other communications systems, APS-153 radars, electronic countermeasures and support systems, Airborne Low-Frequency Sonars, rocket launchers, AGM-114R(N) Hellfire missiles, Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System rockets, GAU-21 machine guns, and sonobuoys, as well as a flight simulator, spare

parts, publications, training, engineering, logistics, ferry and technical support.

“The proposed sale will improve Spain’s capability to meet current and future threats. The MH-60R Multi-Mission Helicopter will provide the capability to perform anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare missions along with the ability to perform secondary missions including vertical replenishment, search and rescue, and communications relay and will bolster the Spanish navy’s ability to support NATO and remain interoperable with the U.S. and the NATO alliance,” the announcement said.

Spain currently operates SH-60F versions of the Seahawk.

Spain would become the eighth nation to procure the MH-60R. The MH-60R is in service with the U.S. Navy, Australian navy, Danish navy, Saudi navy, and Indian navy. Greece and the Republic of Korea also have ordered MH-60Rs.

Marine Corps and Navy Aviation Fly Together for Manned-Unmanned Teaming

An AH-1Z Viper (top) with Marine Operational and Test Evaluation Squadron 1 (VMX-1), and an MQ-8C Fire Scout unmanned helicopter assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23 (HSC-23), conduct Strike Coordination and Reconnaissance Training near El Centro, California, March 10. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Jade Venegas*

Washington, D.C. – Marines from Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron One (VMX-1) and Sailors from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23 (HSC-23) teamed to conduct tactics development in integrating manned and unmanned rotary-wing aircraft at Naval Air Facility El Centro, California, on March 10, Headquarters Marine Corps said March 15.

During the exercise, VMX-1's UH-1Y Venom and AH-1Z Viper helicopters conducted attacks while Marines and Sailors operating in the ground control station assisted with the target detection and strike coordination utilizing a MQ-8C Fire Scout.

“This opportunity promotes greater familiarization and concept development of the manned-unmanned teaming that builds confidence and efficiency throughout the Blue-Green Team,” said VMX-1 Commanding Officer Col. Byron Sullivan. “Our partnership plays an integral part of the commandant and [Chief of Naval Operation]’s vision to embrace the future of warfare and turn it into our advantage on the battlefield.”

The services continue to develop manned-unmanned tactics to better align with the 2018 National Defense Strategy and the Commandant’s Planning Guidance. As the exercise in El Centro progressed, the Navy-Marine Corps team became more proficient in planning, communicating, and coordinating effective fires from manned and unmanned rotary wing aircraft. The proliferation of unmanned rotary wing platforms on U.S. Navy ships makes integration with Marine rotary wing and the MQ-8C a likelihood in the littoral environment.

“Adversaries are going to be placed on the horns of a dilemma as we strengthen our naval expeditionary force in leveraging unmanned systems to complement our rotary wing,” said VMX-1 Science and Technology lead Maj. Ben Henry.

The mission of VMX-1 is to conduct operational test and evaluation of Marine Corps aviation platforms and systems.

Carrier Aircraft Operate Over Yellow Sea in Response to North Korean ICBMs

An F/A-18E Super Hornet, assigned to the "Tophatters" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 14, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) on March 15. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes*

ARLINGTON, Va. – U.S. Navy and Marine Corps operated over the Yellow Sea off the west coast of North Korea in a demonstration in response to North Korean launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), deployed in the Western Pacific region, launched F-35C Lightning II and F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighters assigned to Carrier Air Wing Nine into international airspace over the Yellow Sea, which was described as "a demonstration of our resolve and commitment to our regional allies," in a March 15 release from U.S. 7th Fleet.

The flights were in response to the launch of two ICBMs by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Feb. 27 and March 5, respectively.

The F-35Cs are assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, which have taken the Marine Corps' F-35Cs on their first deployment.

In addition, the U.S. Air Force aircraft based in the region also participated.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has increased reconnaissance and surveillance collection efforts in the Yellow Sea, while U.S. forces in Korea have increased the posture of ballistic-missile defense in South Korea,

"The ICBM launches by DPRK are a brazen violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions – as well as its international commitments – and pose a threat to regional neighbors and the international community," the release said.

"We have made clear our growing concern over the significant increase in DPRK's missile testing, and we will continue to take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the United States and our allies. We remain in close coordination with our allies and partners to address the threats posed by the DPRK. Our commitment to the defense of the Republic of Korea and Japan remains ironclad."

Congress Orders Navy to 'Buy American' for Some Ship Components

The new budget bill calls for the 11th and subsequent Constellation-class guided-missile frigates to have many of its components purchased from American companies. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Buried deep in the text of the 2022 budget bill signed into law March 15 by the president are certain provisions to force the Navy to "buy American," purchasing from U.S. companies many of the components and systems that will be installed on some new-construction ships for the U.S Navy and Military Sealift Command.

For the 11th Constellation-class guided-missile frigate and subsequent, the Navy is forbidden to award new contracts unless the following components are manufactured in the United States: air circuit breakers; gyrocompasses; electronic navigation chart systems; steering controls; pumps; propulsion and machinery control systems; totally enclosed lifeboats; auxiliary equipment pumps; shipboard cranes; auxiliary chill water systems; and propulsion propellers, provided that the Navy "shall incorporate United States-manufactured propulsion engines and propulsion reduction gears into the [frigate] program beginning not later than with the eleventh ship of the program."

For the seventh and subsequent John Lewis-class fleet replenishment ships, for example, the Navy is forbidden to fund purchase of the following components unless they are

manufactured in the United States: auxiliary equipment (including pumps) for shipboard services; propulsion equipment (including engines, reduction gears, and propellers); shipboard cranes; spreaders for shipboard cranes; and anchor chains.

Similarly, for the T-ARC(X) cable-laying ship and T-AGOS(X) ocean surveillance ship programs, the Navy is forbidden to use funds for a new contract for "requirements development, performance specification development, concept design and development, ship configuration development, systems engineering, naval architecture, marine engineering, operations research analysis, industry studies, preliminary design, development of the Detailed Design and Construction Request for Proposals solicitation package, or related activities … unless these contracts include specifications that all auxiliary equipment, including pumps and propulsion shafts, are manufactured in the United States."

NGC Begins Full-Rate Production of Link-16 for the Marine Corps H-1 Fleet

Link-16 will give the AH-1Z and UH-1Y the ability to share data and communications securely with other aircraft and users of military networks. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

WOODLAND HILLS, Calif. – Northrop Grumman has been awarded a $65 million contract by the U.S. Navy to execute the full-rate production of Link-16 for the U.S. Marine Corps AH-1Z and UH-1Y aircraft, which will involve the integration of data link hardware across the fleet, the company said March 9.

“As lead technology integrator for H-1 Avionics, we are expanding our long-standing partnership with the Marine Corps to modernize electronic systems across the fleet through an open systems architecture approach,” said Lindsay McEwen, vice president, navigation, targeting and survivability at Northrop Grumman. “Link-16 full-rate production is the starting point.”

Link-16 is a secure data link that allows H-1 crews to share data and communications with other aircraft and users on military networks. This capability is a critical mission enabler as the Department of Defense moves to joint all-domain

command and control.

The company said the processes, capabilities and open architecture developed for the H-1 fleet are directly applicable to other platforms and could be used in future aircraft development programs such as Naval Air Command's Vertical Take Off and Landing Family of Systems, MUX and others.

Russian Navy Blockades Ukraine's Coast, Continues Missile Strikes

The Ukrainian Slovyansk, formerly the U.S. Coast Guard Island-class cutter Cushing, was reportedly destroyed on March 3. *WIKIPEDIA*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Russian Black Sea Fleet has set up a naval blockade of Ukrainian ports along the Black Sea, a

United Kingdom defense official said, and is continuing fire support of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“The [U.K.] Ministry of Defence’s Defence Intelligence said Russian naval forces have established a distant blockade of Ukraine’s Black Sea coast, effectively isolating Ukraine from international maritime trade,” Air Vice-Marshal Mick Smeath, British defence attaché in Washington, said in a March 13 release.

While the Russian navy has taken a lesser role than its army counterparts in the invasion of Ukraine, it has taken part in offensive operations and amphibious warfare.

“Russian naval forces are also continuing to conduct missile strikes against targets throughout Ukraine,” Smeath said.

Some Russian navy warships are equipped with Kalibr cruise missiles.

Russian naval infantry – the equivalent of U.S. Marines – have landed ashore in Ukraine to participate in the campaign in southeastern Ukraine.

“Russia has already conducted one amphibious landing in the Sea of Azov and could look to conduct further such operations in the coming weeks,” Smeath said.

Ukraine’s main port on the Black Sea, Odesa, remains in Ukrainian hands.

Press reports have said that a Ukrainian patrol boat – the Slovyansk, formerly the U.S. Coast Guard Island-class cutter Cushing – was destroyed by a Russian aircraft on March 3.

A Russian patrol boat, the Vasily Bykov, reportedly was severely damaged and sunk on March 7 by rockets launched by a Ukrainian battery, according to press reports.

Some of the Russian ships in the region entered the Black Sea

after a transit from Russia’s Baltic Sea and Northern Fleet. These included several amphibious warfare ships and missile-armed surface warships.