MQ-25 Achieves Air-to-Air Refueling with E-2D

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The MQ-25 Stingray test asset refuels an E-2D aircraft Aug.18 at MidAmerica Airport in Illinois. *BOEING* PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy's Unmanned Carrier Aviation program completed its first aerial refueling flight with an E-2D aircraft Aug.18 at MidAmerica Airport in Mascoutah, Illinois.

The Boeing-owned MQ-25 test asset, known as T1, transferred fuel to an E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, the newest variant of the E-2 platform which was upgraded with an aerial refueling capability in 2019.

"Once operational, the MQ-25 will refuel every receivercapable platform including E-2," said Capt. Chad Reed, the Navy's Unmanned Carrier Aviation (PMA-268) program manager. "This flight keeps us on a fast track to getting the Stingray out to the fleet where its refueling capability will greatly increase the range and operational flexibility of the carrier air wing and strike group."

This test marks the second refueling flight for the MQ-25 program. In June, the government/industry team completed the historic first unmanned tanking flight with an F/A-18 Super Hornet.

During the six-hour flight, Navy E-2D pilots from Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two Zero (VX) 20 approached T1, performed formation evaluations, wake surveys, drogue tracking and plugs with the MQ-25 test asset at 220 knots calibrated airspeed (KCAS) and 10,000 feet. This test allows the program to analyze the aerodynamic interaction of the two aircraft. The team can then determine if any adjustments to guidance and control are required and make those software updates early, with no impact to the developmental test schedule.

T1 testing will continue over the next several months to include flight envelope expansion, engine testing, and deck handling demonstrations aboard an aircraft carrier before the MQ-25 engineering, manufacturing and development aircraft are delivered next year.

"MQ-25 is leading the way as naval aviation transforms to include cutting-edge unmanned platforms," said Capt. Michael France, the Navy's Airborne Command & Control and Logistics Wing (ACCLW) commodore. "Our fleet integration team (FIT) is actively preparing for the Stingray's arrival and we're excited for the innovative capabilities of the MQ-25 that will transform our mobility and power projection. For the first time, the eyes and ears of the fleet will now be able to provide up-to-the-minute information from deep within theater to facilitate rapid-decision making by carrier strike group leadership."

The ACCLW will integrate the MQ-25A Stingray into the carrier air wing alongside the E-2 and C-2 squadrons. The Stingray's persistent mission tanking coupled with the E-2D's aerial refueling capability will transform the Hawkeye from an overthe-horizon airborne early warning platform limited to shorter missions in the carrier environment, to an asset capable of providing comprehensive battle management for extended periods from anywhere within the battlespace.

The MQ-25A FIT is working with PMA-268 and Boeing to ensure the end user (MQ-25 operators) have early input as the aircraft moves quickly from development through test. The Navy will begin standing up the fleet replacement squadron, Unmanned Carrier-Launched Multi Role Squadron (VUQ) 10, later this year followed by two MQ-25A squadrons, VUQ-11 and 12. These squadrons will deploy detachments to the U.S. Navy's aircraft carriers. MQ-25 will be the world's first operational carrier-based unmanned aircraft and provide critical aerial refueling and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities that will greatly expand the global reach, operational flexibility and lethality of the carrier air wing and carrier strike group. The Stingray is a foundational step toward the Navy's strategic vision of a future fleet augmented by unmanned systems to pace the evolving challenges of the 21st century.

BAE Systems to Provide Engineering, Integration for Navy's Secure Communications

MCLEAN, Va. – The U.S. Navy awarded BAE Systems, Inc. a \$140 million indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract for communications engineering support and integration services. From concept through deployment, the company will customize command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence (C4I) systems to ensure America's warfighters have reliable and secure communications across all domains, the company said in an Aug. 18 release. The contract – which BAE Systems has won for the past 40 years – includes one base ordering year with four option years.

"We are pleased to continue our longstanding partnership with the Navy in supporting secure and robust military operations worldwide," said Lisa Hand, vice president and general manager of BAE Systems Integrated Defense Solutions business. "As the threat landscape continues to evolve, maintaining an information advantage through secure information technology (IT) systems is critical. We deliver advanced C4I systems with surety that information access and data transmission are secure and reliable."

Through this contract, BAE Systems will support the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Webster Outlying Field Integrated Command and Control (C2) and Intelligence Division's mission with rapid response solutions to close critical communication capability gaps. In addition to engineering design and integration of legacy, current, and next-generation exterior communications, BAE Systems will also provide technical support for IT infrastructure, electronic security systems, and audio-visual and videoteleconferencing.

Leonardo DRS Link-22 Signal Processing Controller Successfully Completes Interoperability Testing

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An artist's conception of Leonardo DRS' Link-22 Signal Processing Controller in action. *LEONARDO DRS* ARLINGTON, Va, — Leonardo DRS announced it has successfully completed formal interoperability testing of its Link-22 Signal Processing Controller (SPC) within the NATO Improved Link Eleven (NILE) Link-22 Network. Compliance with this standard allows Leonardo DRS to provide world-class production of the technology and full interoperability with all NATO and allied partners supporting operations and exercises in the Indo-Pacific Command theater. Leonardo DRS worked closely with the NILE team to successfully complete all cycles and posture for future advancements. The success illustrates that Leonardo DRS SPCs are compliant with Link-22 Block Cycle 9 specifications for current and emerging mission requirements for users around the world.

Link-22 tactical datalinks are used by the U.S. military and other allied military forces to increase joint and coalition communications in the surface, subsurface, land, and air domains by providing unprecedented situational awareness across the battle space. It is the primary means to exchange data, including radar tracking information beyond line of sight.

"Leonardo DRS is very proud to provide a fully compliant Link-22 solution to our allies around the world," said Larry Ezell, senior vice president and general manager of the Leonardo DRS Airborne and Intelligence Systems business. "These systems are positioned for current and emerging mission requirements and the signal processor controllers ensure U.S. and allied forces have the best long-haul communications and situational awareness possible."

With over 40 years of tactical datalink experience, 1,100 Link-22-capable SPCs and more than 3,000 Link-11 Data Terminal Sets delivered, deployed, and on order, military services around the globe depend on Leonardo DRS for beyond-line-ofsight communications guaranteeing interoperability across domains, platforms, and nations. The company continues to invest in Link-22 technology, giving users high performance for today's battlefield while offering capability and growth for future mission sets.

HII Completes Acquisition of Alion Science and Technology

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) has completed the acquisition of Alion Science and Technology, a technology-driven solutions provider located in McLean, Virginia, from Veritas Capital, a leading investor in companies operating at the intersection of technology and government, HII announced in an Aug.19 release.

Alion provides advanced engineering, research and development services in the areas of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), military training and simulation, cyber and data analytics and other next-generation technology-based solutions to the global defense marketplace. Alion has more than 3,200 employees with more that 80% of employees maintaining security clearances.

"Alion greatly expands our ability to provide leading-edge solutions to the nation's most complex national security challenges," said Andy Green, HII executive vice president and president of HII's Technical Solutions division. "Alion is a perfect complement to our existing capabilities in the technology-driven defense and federal solutions space. The services and products they provide are directly in line with the strategic focus that we have articulated for Technical Solutions. Most importantly, we are excited to welcome such a widely respected group of experts to our team."

U.S. Forces Conduct Sinking Exercise

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U.S. joint forces conduct a coordinated multi-domain, multiaxis, long-range maritime strikes in the Hawaiian Islands Operating Area during a sinking exercise on the decommissioned guided-missile frigate ex-USS Ingraham (FFG 61), Aug. 15, 2021. The exercise synchronized joint, multi-domain, multiaxis fires with near simultaneous times on target to sink the hulk. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class David Mora Jr.

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii – U.S. joint forces conducted coordinated multi-domain, multi-axis, long-range maritime strikes in the Hawaiian Islands Operating Area during a sinking exercise on the decommissioned guided missile frigate ex-USS Ingraham, Aug. 15, the U.S. 3rd Fleet said in an 18 Aug. release.

Units from Vinson Carrier Strike Group (VINCSG), Submarine Forces Pacific, 1 Marine Expeditionary Force/3rd Marine Air Wing, III Marine Expeditionary/3rd Marine Division, and U.S. Army Multi-Domain Task Force participated in the joint, livefire exercise.

"Lethal combat power was effectively applied to a variety of maritime threats over the last two weeks in a simulated environment as part of the Navy's Large-Scale Exercise and expertly demonstrated Sunday with live ordnance," said U.S. 3rd Fleet Commander Vice Adm. Steve Koehler. "The precise and coordinated strikes from the Navy and our Joint teammates resulted in the rapid destruction and sinking of the target ship and exemplify our ability to decisively apply force in the maritime battlespace."

Former Navy vessels used in sinking exercises, referred to as hulks, are prepared in strict compliance with regulations prescribed and enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency under a general permit the Navy holds pursuant to the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act.

Each exercise is required to sink the hulk in at least 1,000 fathoms (6,000 feet) of water and at least 50 nautical miles from land and surveys are conducted to safeguard against harm to people or marine mammals during the event. Prior to being transported for participation in a sinking exercise, each vessel is put through a rigorous cleaning process for environmental safety and is inspected to ensure the ship meets EPA requirements.

Ex-Ingraham was a guided missile frigate commissioned on Aug. 5, 1989, and was decommissioned on Jan. 30, 2015. The ship was named for Duncan Nathaniel Ingraham and is the fourth Navy ship with the namesake. It is the second of its name to be used in a sinking exercise; ex-USS Ingraham (DD 694), which was decommissioned in 1971 and sold to the Greek Navy, was sunk in 2001.

USS Higgins, USS Howard Arrive in New Homeport, Yokosuka, Japan

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The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Howard (DDG 83) arrives at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), Japan Aug. 16 as one of the newest additions to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 71/Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. Howard is assigned to CTF 71/DESRON 15, the Navy's largest forward deployed DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principle surface force. U.S. NAVY / Ryo Isobe

YOKOSUKA, Japan – The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers, USS Higgins (DDG 76) and USS Howard (DDG 83) arrived Aug. 16, to their new forward-deployed location in Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, commander, Task Force 71 said in a release.

The forward presence of Higgins and Howard directly supports enduring national security strategic guidance initiatives to posture the most capable units forward in the Indo-Pacific Region. Their addition to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15 continues support toward the security of the United States and its allies and partners, including shared strategic interests.

The United States values Japan's contributions to the Indo-Pacific and its long-term commitment and hospitality in hosting U.S. forces forward-deployed there. These forces, along with their counterparts in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, frequently operate together allowing a rapid response with maritime and joint forces to uphold a rulesbased international order that promotes security and wellbeing.

Higgins and Howard's arrival brings striking power and operational readiness to maintain a presence in the region, preserve peace and security, and further our maritime partnerships.

"We are excited to have Higgins and Howard join our forwarddeployed team," said Capt. Chase Sargeant, commander, Task Force (CTF) 71. "These two ships will be an integral part of the 7th Fleet team for years to come."

Higgins is a Flight II destroyer with ballistic missile defense capabilities and Howard is a Flight IIA destroyer capable of embarking two MH-60 variant helicopters with improved ballistic-missile defense, anti-air, and surface warfare capabilities. "These destroyers are some of the most capable ships our Navy has to offer," added Sargeant. "Adding them to our forward deployed forces is a clear signal of our continuing commitment to our partners and allies, and our mutual commitment to maintaining stable regional maritime security."

Sailors and their family members received relocation briefings and support, to include the current Commander Naval Forces Japan COVID-19 mitigation measures all service members and their families are expected to adhere to. These measures ensure the United States Navy is doing its part to stop the spread of the corona virus and protect Sailors, their families and the local community.

As the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet employs 50 to 70 ships and submarines across the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans. U.S. 7th Fleet routinely operates and interacts with 35 maritime nations while conducting missions to preserve and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. Coast Guard Completes Operation Nanook 2021

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The USCGC Escanaba (WMEC 907) sails by an iceberg in the Labrador Sea. The Escanaba is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of around 100 conducting many of the service's missions, emphasizing law enforcement and security. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Dyxan Williams

NUUK, Greenland – Strengthening partnerships and testing interoperability, the Coast Guard cutters Escanaba (WMEC 907)

and Richard Snyder (WPC 1127) participated in Operation Nanook in early to mid-August, Coast Guard Atlantic Area said Aug. 17.

Operation Nanook is the Canadian Armed Forces' signature Arctic operation, comprising a series of comprehensive, joint, interagency, and multinational activities designed to exercise the defense of Canada and security in the region and incident management response and search rescue capabilities. With commercial traffic and cruise ships increasingly visible in the Arctic, international collaborations are necessary to meet this increased traffic's potential search and rescue challenges. Nanook-Tuugaalik is the maritime component of the Nanook series of deployments and training events intended to be an Arctic naval presence operation and domain awareness of the waters in and around Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. Nanook-Tatigiit is the incident management and search and rescue exercise portion.

"We had excellent training with the crews of HMCS Harry Dewolf [AOPV 430], HMCS Goose Bay [MM 707], and Richard Snyder. The joint effort during Tuugaalik and Tatigiit included multi-ship small boat training, formation steaming, hailing and signals exercises, and more. Weather, especially in the Arctic, is a genuine consideration, and increasing sea state and fog tested us," said Cmdr. Ben Spector, the commanding officer of Escanaba. "The U.S. Coast Guard remains committed to conducting operations and combined maritime exercises throughout the Atlantic and the Arctic region, ensuring mission capacity and future force readiness. Training with our partners and allied nations ensure all countries are ready, relevant, and responsive in an ever-evolving maritime environment."

This operation is also the first time the U.S. Coast Guard deployed a 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter to the region, USCGC Richard Snyder. As the inventory of FRCs grows, the U.S. Coast Guard continues to test the full range of their capability, including operations in high latitude environments. While these ships are not ice-strengthened, units observed mitigations, such as the deployment time of year and carefully considering operating areas.

"The FRC has fared exceedingly well in the Arctic. Our major concerns were fuel and food, and there have been no issues with either as the cutter continues to steam through the operational area and complete all training and interactions with stellar results," said Lt. Cmdr. Gregory Bredariol, the commanding officer of Richard Snyder. "We've done some oncein-a-lifetime activities including fjords transits, getting close aboard icebergs much larger than the cutter, restricted waters transits in harsh conditions and deployment to an unfamiliar but mission-critical area. Our colleagues aboard the Escanaba were critical in our deployment, assisting with logistics and operational support. I can't express enough our appreciation as we deployed far from our normal operations area and completed mission sets that we don't generally practice. As a cutter based in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, we primarily focus on living marine resources and search and rescue."

Following Nanook, both ship's crews are conducting engagements and resupplying in Nuuk. Snyder will return home. Escanaba will transition to support Frontier Sentinel, an annual exercise between the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, and Royal Canadian Navy, ensuring the ability of the Tri-Party Staff and tactical assets to work together. This year's live exercise uses feedback from the prior year's tabletop discussion.

Participants in all exercises are observing COVID-19 protocols to mitigate exposure and comply with host nation guidelines. Exercise scenarios took into account our COVID restrictions and respective realities.

Operation Nanook is the third of four major deployments of the U.S. Coast Guard's Atlantic Arctic Season. In June, the USCGC

Eagle (WIX 327) visited Iceland, where Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, the Atlantic Area commander, hosted Icelandic officials for Arctic discussions. Also, in June, the USCGC Maple (WLB 207) participated in the Danish Joint Arctic Command's annual exercise, Ex Argus, in Southern Greenland with international partners. Later this fall, the USCGC Healy (WAGB 20) will make stops along the U.S. East Coast after transiting the Northwest Passage on their circumnavigation of North America.

Operation Nanook has been held annually since its inception over a decade ago. Last year's exercise was scaled down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While participants could not conduct port visits, the activity focused on naval readiness, ship tracking, and gunnery operations between multinational partners, including the United States, Canada, Denmark, and France. The U.S. sent the USCGC Tahoma (WMEC 908) and USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909) to participate.

USCGC Escanaba is a 270-foot Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of about 100 operating for the U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. USCGC Richard Snyder is a Fifth Coast Guard District 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutter with a crew of about 24 also operating for U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area. The Atlantic Area commander and staff oversee all Coast Guard domestic operations east of the Rocky Mountains, including the Arctic, Caribbean and Southern Atlantic and Coast Guard out-of-hemisphere operations in Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia.

Oshkosh Defense Demonstrates ROGUE Fires Against Target at Sea

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ROGUE Fires was demonstrated at SINKEX in Hawaii, Oshkosh Defense said Aug. 18. U.S. MARINE CORPS / Maj. Nicholas Mannweiler

OSHKOSH, Wis. — Oshkosh Defense successfully demonstrated the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle-based Remotely Operated Ground Unit for Expeditionary (ROGUE) Fires at the Sink at Sea Live Fire Training Exercises in Hawaii, the company said Aug. 18.

As part of the demonstration, a Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS) launcher, based on a ROGUE Fires chassis, successfully launched a Naval Strike Missile (NSM) and scored a direct hit on a target at sea, said the company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Oshkosh Corp.

The exercise, known as SINKEX, is a component of the U.S. Navy's Large-Scale Exercise 2021, a global event in which Sailors and Marines test and validate the Navy and Marine Corps' operating concepts.

ROGUE Fires is an unmanned ground vehicle that leverages the Joint Light Tactical Vehicles' extreme off-road mobility and payload capacity and Oshkosh's advanced autonomous vehicle technologies to support Ground-Based Anti-Ship Missile operations. The unmanned technology associated with ROGUE Fires allows the vehicle to operate in teleoperator or leaderfollower modes, which protect warfighters from threats by removing them from the vehicle entirely.

"ROGUE Fires was purpose-built and leverages next-generation capabilities from several proven Oshkosh Defense vehicle platforms and technologies," said Pat Williams, vice president and general manager of U.S. Army and Marine Corps Programs.

"Much like the JLTV itself, ROGUE Fires is tailorable to the mission at hand. The flexible design allows for the integration of scalable weapon system payloads to offer the combatant commanders flexibility based on the mission's requirements."

Since receiving the JLTV production contract in 2015, Oshkosh Defense has worked closely with leading weapon system manufacturers to integrate and test various weapon system payloads and levels of firepower onto the platform.

"The successful LSE demonstration validates the maturity of ROGUE Fires as a weapons platform and highlights its ability to add significant firepower and capability into the light tactical wheeled vehicle fleet," Williams said.

Navy, Coast Guard Units Rush to Aid Haitian Earthquake Victims

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Canadian Medical Assistant Team Cristina Coams alongside with Petty Officer 1st Class Rob Updike and Hero Client Rescue paramedic Nadia Van der Heyden evaluate an injured female Aug. 15, 2021. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Villa-Rodriguez

ARLINGTON, Va. – Under the direction of U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Navy and Coast Guard units have been deployed to provide disaster relief to the victims of the Aug. 14 earthquake that struck southern Haiti. More than 1,400 people are confirmed

dead from the 7.2-magnitude earthquake, according to press reports.

U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has established a joint task force on Aug. 15 to handle the relief efforts. The command also established a Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) Situational Awareness Team in the Haitian capital, Port-Au-Prince, to help coordinate the relief efforts.

The U.S. Coast Guard responded Aug. 15 with several helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft to help evacuate injured people.

"On August 15, at the request of the Haitian Government, the Coast Guard surged aircraft and personnel to help critically injured patients from impacted areas to Port au Prince where they may obtain higher levels of care," said Coast Guard Seventh District Commander, Rear Adm. Brendan C. McPherson. "Additionally, we are coordinating with USAID and U.S. Southern Command to move urban search and rescue responders, medical personnel and supplies to impacted areas. Our crews are trained and empowered to use sound on-scene initiative to judge the risks as they respond to the most urgent requests for help. Our people have a true bias for action and know how to lead through a crisis."

Kirby said the Navy was sending the San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ship USS Arlington to Haiti. The ship is carrying two MH-60 helicopters and one landing craft.

Also en route is the USNS Burlington, a Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport operated by the Military Sealift Command, which is carrying ScanEagle surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles.

Two P-8A maritime patrol aircraft deployed to El Salvador have been staged near Haiti to provide support for the relief efforts with imagery of damaged areas of the country. Two UH-60 and two CH-47 helicopters from Joint Task Force-Bravo are also en route to Haiti, where they will provide critical airlift support to ongoing relief efforts.

Kirby also said that four field hospitals also were being dispatched to Haiti.

The Coast Guard 7th District said its efforts from Aug. 15-16 included more than 38 Coast Guard members deployed, 34 aviation evolutions, 51 people saved and 12 people assisted.

Seventy-two Fairfax County Fire Department's urban search and rescue crews, USAID Disaster Assistance Response Teams, medical personnel and first responders transported 5,500 pounds of medical supplies.

Coast Guard assets deployed for the relief efforts include two Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrews, a Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew, a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew, a Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater HC-130 Hercules aircrew and the Coast Guard Cutters Reliance, Winslow Griesser and Margaret Norvell.

Navy Awards Austal USA Contract for LCS Maintenance, Modernization

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USS Indianapolis (LCS 17), shown here at its 2019 commissioning ceremony, is one of the LCS homeported in Mayport, Florida. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Timothy Haggerty MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA was awarded a sustainment execution contract (SEC) by the U.S. Navy Aug. 13 for repair, maintenance, and modernization for all littoral combat ships (LCS) homeported in Mayport, Florida, the company said in an Aug. 16 release.

The SEC East contract is the second major service contract for Austal USA this month following the SEC West award Aug. 5. As a result, Austal USA is now positioned to support the entire LCS fleet worldwide. This award also marks a milestone in Austal USA's expansion to the east coast.

"Austal USA is committed to the success of the LCS program and the growth of our services business. This award enables us to support both variants anywhere in the world," Austal USA interim president Rusty Murdaugh said. "The SEC West and SEC East awards are a direct reflection of the growth of our services capabilities and the confidence the U.S. Navy has in Austal to provide critical services to the fleet regardless of location."

The SEC East award is yet another building block to Austal's continued investment in its service business. Following continued investment in its service centers in Mobile, San Diego and Singapore, Austal USA was awarded an SEC West contract Aug. 5 to support all LCS homeported in San Diego. Additionally, In September 2020, the company invested in its U.S. Gulf Coast service operation, expanding its Mobile service center by purchasing 15 acres of waterfront property along the Mobile River. The purchase included 100,000 square feet of covered repair facilities and a 20,000-ton Panamax-class floating dry dock and supports both government and commercial service and repair.

"We're excited to add service capabilities in Mayport to support the U.S. Navy's Southeast Regional Maintenance Center and grow our involvement in the Jacksonville community," Murdaugh said. "We continue to invest in our service business to ensure our customers have the very best service and support available to them anytime, anywhere."