USS Gerald R. Ford Commences Planned Incremental Availability

The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) departed Naval Station Norfolk to transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of her Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), a six-month period of modernization, maintenance, and repairs, Aug. 20, 2021. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class William Spears)

NORFOLK, Va. – The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) departed Naval Station Norfolk to make the transit to Newport News Shipyard in support of her Planned Incremental Availability (PIA), a six-month period of modernization, maintenance, and repairs, Aug. 20, 2021, the ship's public affairs office said in an Aug. 21 release.

Ford's PIA was scheduled to serve as the final maintenance phase for the ship prior to her inaugural deployment next year.

"Team Wolverine is ready for this brief but important maintenance period in Newport News, because we're pumped for what comes next," said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, Ford's commanding officer. "This is a first-in-class warship that will lead the future of carrier naval aviation for years to come, and this PIA is the last milestone for us to complete prior to our first work ups and deployment."

The move to Newport News comes on the heels a fast-paced and successful 21 months of post-delivery test and trials (PDT&T) and Full Ship Shock Trials (FSST), an intense testing and trials period crucial to ensuring the overall deployment readiness of Ford and improving upon the construction and ship trial process for follow-on carriers in the class, among them:

the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), Enterprise (CVN 80), and Doris Miller (CVN 81).

During PDT&T the crew completed all required testing, accomplished planned improvements and maintenance ahead of schedule, and learned valuable lessons to increase the reliability of Ford-class systems. At the same time, the ship also served as the sole East Coast platform for conducting carrier qualifications, qualifying more than 350 pilots.

Earlier this month Ford completed the final explosive event of FSST. During the four-month testing evolution, the first-in-class aircraft carrier withstood the impact of three 40,000-pound underwater blasts, released at distances progressively closer to the ship to confirm that it can continue to meet demanding mission requirements under the harsh conditions it might encounter in battle.

“This ship and the crew performed exceptionally well during shock trials, and much of the credit goes to the ship designers and builders who put in the technical rigor to ensure Ford-class carriers will sustain Naval Aviation for generations to come,” said Lanzilotta.

The Gerald R. Ford-class represents the first major design investment in aircraft carriers since the 1960s. CVN 78 is engineered to support new technologies and a modern air wing essential to deterring and defeating near-peer adversaries in a complex maritime environment.

ONR Awards General Atomics

Contract for LDUUV Motor, Energy Storage System

The First publicly released photo of ONR's Large Displacement Unmanned Underwater Vehicle – Innovative Naval Prototype (LDUUV-INP), from 2015. *OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH*

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced in an Aug. 20 release that it has been awarded a design contract from the Office of Naval Research (ONR) to develop a concept for integrating a unique GA-EMS motor and next generation power system into a Large Displacement Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (LDUUV).

The planned systems will provide the LDUUV with power for propulsion and an energy storage system to support improved system performance necessary for future LDUUV operations.

"Our energy and battery systems have been successfully demonstrated and proven safe for use on a variety of underwater manned and unmanned vehicles," stated Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS. "Over the course of the last two years, the motor has undergone lab testing, and power system has completed underwater testing. Both systems have performed successfully, demonstrating capabilities to both power and propel underwater vehicles. Together, the systems are proving to be key technologies to provide the combined power, energy density, and improved vehicle performance necessary to help meet the objectives."

Development and testing of both motor and power systems continues in order to optimize performance. An LDUUV with the integrated motor and power propulsion system eventually will undergo at-sea testing during a later phase of the program.

USS Curtis Wilbur Returning Home After 25 Years in Japan

The fleet replenishment oiler USNS Tippecanoe (T-AO 199) conducts a replenishment at sea with USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer. *U.S. NAVY / Christopher Bosch*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) departed Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, Aug. 18, following 25 years of service as a forward-deployed ship to U.S. 7th Fleet, the fleet said in a release.

Curtis Wilbur arrived in Yokosuka, Japan in September 1996 and operated in the Indo-Pacific while assigned to Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's largest forward-deployed DESRON and U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force. The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer is en route to San Diego, scheduled for routine maintenance and operations as a part of U.S. 3rd Fleet.

"Curtis Wilbur has been a Destroyer Squadron 15 mainstay in the Forward Deployed Naval Forces for the past 25 years," said Cmdr. Anthony Massey, USS Curtis Wilbur's commanding officer. "She executed countless operations and exercises in support of United States' strategic interests and maintained free and open Indo-Pacific sea lanes while navigating the most highly contested waterways in the world."

Curtis Wilbur's numerous years in U.S. 7th Fleet included many highlights across all warfare areas and helped forge lasting relationships with partner nations and allies in the region. The ship participated in multiple bilateral anti-submarine operations with the Republic of Korea navy and Japan Maritime

Self-Defense Force, to include submarine detection exercises and joint anti-submarine warfare tactics. as well as participated in various bilateral operations across all domains with the Royal Australian Navy, the Royal Thai navy and the Royal Saudi navy.

Curtis Wilbur integrated with multiple U.S. Navy battle groups, strike groups, and expeditionary strike groups in surface, subsurface, fire support, Ballistic Missile Defense, and air and strike warfare operations. The ship's most recent operations include enforcing U.N. Sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, routine operations in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, Freedom of Navigation Operations and bilateral operations with the Royal Australian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. Additionally, Curtis Wilbur participated in multiple joint operations with the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force.

"As the first Aegis destroyer forward-deployed to Japan, Curtis Wilbur leaves behind a legacy of warfighting excellence and operational performance that set the standard for every destroyer that followed," said Capt. Chase Sargeant, Commander, Task Force (CTF) 71. "For the last 25 years, the 'Steel Hammer of the Fleet' boldly sailed the Indo-Pacific as part of the long grey line of warships of Destroyer Squadron 15 that maintained the freedom of the seas and protection of our national interests."

Curtis Wilbur also spent time in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operation conducting maritime interception operations in the Arabian Sea in support of U.N. resolutions in the region, and later supported Operation Enduring Freedom with the Kitty Hawk Battle Group.

Curtis Wilbur provided humanitarian assistance to the people of Dili, East Timor, and supported some of the first on-site help for Operation Tomodachi following the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami.

Massey stated the memories Curtis Wilbur Sailors have made in U.S. 7th Fleet, and especially Japan, will be enjoyed for long after the ship leaves the region.

“While forward-deployed, many Curtis Wilbur Sailors have developed lifelong friendships, met spouses, and started families in Japan,” said Massey. “I cannot express how deeply thankful I am to the people of Japan for making us part of their family and letting us enjoy all the great things Japan has to offer – from its cuisine and towering landscapes to the beautiful countryside.”

With arrival of USS Higgins (DDG 76) and USS Howard (DDG 83) to their new forward-deployed location in Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan on Aug. 16, Curtis Wilbur is scheduled to join U.S. 3rd Fleet, which leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary for an effective global Navy. U.S. 3rd Fleet works consistently with U.S. 7th Fleet to complement one another and provide commanders capable, ready assets across the spectrum of military operations in the Indo-Pacific.

USS Arlington Arrives in Haiti to Support USAID

The San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24) transits the Atlantic Ocean Aug. 14, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jesse Schwab*

CARIBBEAN SEA – The San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24) arrived in U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations off the coast Haiti to begin humanitarian

assistance and disaster relief operations, Aug. 21, said Lt. Laura Price, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet.

Arlington departed Naval Station Norfolk Aug. 17 to support U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) following a 7.2-magnitute earthquake that struck Haiti on Aug. 14, 2021.

“Our initial focus is to concentrate on saving lives while alleviating suffering for the people of Haiti,” said Capt. Eric Kellum, commanding officer of Arlington. “Assisting those in need due to a natural disaster is something this team is trained and ready to do. Our presence here demonstrates our nation’s commitment to supporting our partners in this part of the world.”

Arlington has approximately 600 Sailors and Marines which includes service members embarked from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment to provide lifesaving and humanitarian assistance support. The ship is augmented by two MH-60 Seahawk helicopters from the “Chargers” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 26, a landing craft, utility (LCU) from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 2, Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 2, in addition to staff from Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 40, and amphibious and aviation planners.

The mission forms part of an inter-agency framework lending aid to Haiti, including the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), which was deployed Aug. 14 immediately after the earthquake occurred. U.S. Southern Command Joint Task Force-Haiti, commanded by Navy Rear Adm. Keith Davids was stood up to coordinate military support, with Arlington deployed as a maritime component.

Arlington joins other U.S. Southern Command components and U.S. Coast Guard ships already on station, in addition to allies and partners from the Netherlands, France, and United

Kingdom.

USS Arlington, homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, is part of Expeditionary Strike Group 2, whose mission is to provide timely, operational, amphibious expertise in support of national tasking to sustain maritime security and defense of the nation.

Coast Guard Holds Lighthouse Rededication Ceremony in San Diego

The Coast Guard holds a rededication ceremony at the New Point Loma Lighthouse in San Diego, August 20, 2021. The rededication is the official recognition of the light station's service career and honors its history as a Coast Guard navigational aid. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray*

SAN DIEGO – The Coast Guard held a rededication ceremony Friday at the New Point Loma Lighthouse in San Diego, the Coast Guard 11th District said in an Aug. 20 release.

The rededication is the official recognition of the light station's service career and honors its history as a Coast Guard navigational aid.

"Every time you see this light flash, know that lives are being saved, trade and travelers are flowing through our marine transit system, illegal drugs are prevented from entering our great nation and sailors are welcomed home," said Capt. Timothy J. Barelli, the Coast Guard Sector San Diego

commander.

The lighthouse was placed on secondary power in April 2017 while contractors and Coast Guard members conducted renovations. The restoration cost over $2 million and took approximately three years to complete. Coast Guard members spent more than 30 hours rewiring the light during the final stages of construction, and the main light was formally re-lit in March 2020.

The ceremony was attended by Rep. Scott Peters, D-California, Rear Adm. Brian Penoyer, the 11th Coast Guard District commander, local Coast Guard members, the San Diego mayor and the National Park Service Cabrillo National Monument superintendent.

The event was initially scheduled last year but was postponed due to COVID-19.

Embassy, USAID, Coast Guard, CBP Discuss Haitian Earthquake Response Efforts

U.S. Agency for International Development for the Latin and Caribbean region senior official Tim Callahan (Left), Coast Guard Seventh District Commander Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson, and U.S Ambassador to Haiti Michele Sison discuss unity of efforts in Port au Prince, Haiti, Aug. 20, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Villa Rodriguez*

MIAMI – Since the Aug. 14 earthquake in Haiti, Coast Guard men and women deployed there have flown 196 evolutions, saved 206 people, assisted 131 people, transported 306 urban disaster

and relief personnel and transported 10,200 pounds of disaster and relief supplies, officials said Aug. 20.

U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Michele Sison joined Tim Callaghan, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Haiti earthquake disaster assistance response team leader, Coast Guard Seventh District Commander Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson and Customs and Border Protection AMO Southeast Region Executive Director John Priddy on Aug. 20 to discuss U.S. government disaster and relief operations and unity of efforts in Port au Prince following the magnitude 7.2 earthquake, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

According to Haitian government officials, since the earthquake on Aug. 14 Haitians suffered at least 2,189 deaths, 12,260 injuries and 130,000 homes damaged or destroyed.

“The United States’ response to the Aug. 14 earthquake and Tropical Depression Grace is a whole of U.S. government effort, led by USAID, to get help to those most in need,” said Sison. “The U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince is proud to work alongside USAID, the Coast Guard, and Joint Task Force Haiti, in coordination with the Haitian government and international partners, to save lives.”

“USAID continues to expand relief operations to more areas impacted by the earthquake,” said Callaghan. “I would like to thank the U.S. Coast Guard team for the tireless work they have been doing not only to support the DART and help us quickly get out to affected areas, but also to save lives.”

“Coast Guard aircraft and personnel are medevacing critically injured citizens from impacted remote areas to Port au Prince where they may obtain higher levels of care,” said McPherson. “Additionally, we are coordinating with USAID and U.S. Southern Command, and JTF-Haiti to move urban search and rescue responders, medical personnel and supplies to impacted

areas. Today's leadership engagement with Ambassador Sison and others really highlight the American unity of effort to this response."

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with our partners every day, carrying out the nation's work," said Priddy. "Our integrated operations with our partners enable us to better carry out our shared responsibilities and respond to disasters, as partnerships make us stronger."

Navy Awards Rite-Solutions $20M Combat Systems Engineering Services Contract

USS Newport News (SSN 750) makes its way up the Thames River and past the City of New London, Connecticut, after routine operations on Wednesday, August 11, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / John Narewski*

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – Rite-Solutions recently won a five-year, $20.4 million contract with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWCDIVNPT).

The company will provide engineering and technical services to support the evolution and deployment of submarine communications networks, including the Submarine Local Area Network (SubLAN) and the Consolidated Afloat Networks and Enterprise Services (CANES), to all U.S. Navy submarines under the cognizance of NUWCDIVNPT.

SubLAN and CANES are enterprise submarine network systems that manage internal and external communications.

Engineering and technical services that Rite-Solutions will provide include systems engineering, in-lab integration and certification testing, onboard software installation, in-service engineering support, software and hardware configuration management, and system administration.

“This contract will have us working directly with NUWC and our Submarine Forces as we support NUWC in providing the best possible network systems and solutions,” says Laura Deady, senior vice president and director of Engineering Services at Rite-Solutions. “It also adds talented personnel to our growing team of subject matter experts in all facets of submarine warfare, especially in our ability to support NUWC for these leading-edge communication systems.”

This award comes in the wake of several other recent Navy undersea warfare (USW) contract and task awards that Rite-Solutions has received.

“We’re very proud of winning this unrestricted contract against very strong competition. Of course, we are pleased to be able to support NUWCDIVNPT USW Combat Systems Department as they continuously improve our nation’s undersea warfare capabilities,” said Dennis McLaughlin, president and CEO at Rite-Solutions. “This award recognizes the value of Rite-Solutions’ unique blend of small business agility and responsiveness, and large business quality and reliability.”

Huntington Ingalls Industries Names Danny Hernandez

Corporate Director, Public Affairs

Danny Hernandez, HII's pending new corporate director of public affairs. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries announced today that Danny Hernandez will succeed Beci Brenton as the company's corporate director of public affairs upon Brenton's Oct. 31 retirement. Hernandez will join HII on Sept. 13, transition into the position, and report to the executive vice president of communications, while based in the company's Washington, D.C. office.

Brenton joined HII as corporate director of public affairs in 2011 after serving in various public affairs roles during her 26-year career with the U.S. Navy. Prior to joining HII, Brenton acted as the special assistant for public affairs for former Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

"Beci joined HII shortly after it became an independent, publicly traded company, and from day one, she played an integral role in helping build HII's corporate communications team and telling the HII story to our many stakeholders," said Jerri Dickseski, HII's executive vice president of communications. "Her leadership, insight and public affairs knowledge have been an incredible part of our success, and I'm very thankful to her and wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement."

As corporate director of public affairs, Hernandez will be responsible for the creation, execution, alignment and sustainment of public affairs and media communications for HII. He will lead HII's corporate media relations team to develop external communications that advance critical business themes and messages to support HII's portfolio of programs,

corporate and division-level events, community relations and more.

“Danny brings nearly three decades of communications and public affairs acumen to this position,” Dickseski said. “His years of naval service offer an invaluable perspective to the communications team, as well as his extensive experience in media relations and crisis communications.”

Prior to joining HII, as a captain in the U.S. Navy, Hernandez served as director of communications to the assistant secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) where he was the spokesperson for the Department of the Navy’s most senior acquisition executive. He also served as director of public affairs and communications engagement for U.S. European Command and director of communications for the chief of naval operations. Hernandez was commissioned as a naval flight officer in 1991 and became a Navy public affairs officer in 1993, serving multiple tours in communications, public affairs and media relations. He earned a bachelor’s degree from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and a master’s degree from the U.S. Naval War College.

Huntington Ingalls Industries is America’s largest military shipbuilding company and a provider of professional services to partners in government and industry. For more than a century, HII’s Newport News and Ingalls shipbuilding divisions in Virginia and Mississippi have built more ships in more ship classes than any other U.S. naval shipbuilder. HII’s Technical Solutions division provides mission-critical national security solutions to government and commercial customers worldwide. Headquartered in Newport News, Virginia, HII employs about 44,000 people operating both domestically and internationally.

Navy to Christen Amphibious Transport Dock Ship Fort Lauderdale

The future USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) was successfully launched at the Huntington Ingalls Industries Ingalls Division shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi. on March 28. HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will christen its newest amphibious transport dock, the future USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), during a 10 a.m. CT ceremony Saturday, Aug. 21, at the Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) Ingalls Division shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the Defense Department Announced in an Aug. 20 release.

The mayor of Fort Lauderdale, Dean Trantalis, will deliver the ceremony's principal address. Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Ship Programs Bilyana Anderson and Vice Adm. William Galinis, commander, Naval Sea Systems Command, will also provide remarks. In a time-honored Navy tradition, the ship's sponsor, Meredith Berger, will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

"Tomorrow we christen the future USS Fort Lauderdale, recognizing a city with a proud naval history," said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. "This momentous occasion brings us one step closer to 'manning the rails' with the men and women who will carry on the naval tradition of defending our nation and working towards a more peaceful world."

USS Fort Lauderdale is the first ship to be named for the city of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The future Fort Lauderdale is the 12th San Antonio-class ship. The ships are designed to support embarking, transporting and

bringing ashore elements of 650 Marines by landing craft or air cushion vehicles. The ship's capabilities are further enhanced by a flight deck and hangar, which can operate the Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft (MV-22). San Antonio-class ships can support a variety of amphibious assault, special operations or expeditionary warfare missions, operating independently or as part of Amphibious Readiness Groups (ARGs), Expeditionary Strike Groups or joint task forces.

CNO Addresses Fleet on Afghan War

ARLINGTON, Va. – Chief of Naval Operations Michael M. Gilday released the following letter to the Fleet on Aug. 20:

Shipmates,

In 2001, we went to war to protect our nation and bring justice to those who committed cold-blooded attacks on our country. We went to war to defend our citizens, our friends and our allies. We went to war to protect freedom – a fragile ideal, but one worth defending.

As the events in Afghanistan unfolded this past week, some of you may question whether your contributions and sacrifice were worth it. I want to be very clear: Your service was not in vain, and it made a difference. For 20 years, you have deployed in support of the mission in Afghanistan. Whether on the ground, from the sea or from the air, Sailors fought tirelessly to keep our homeland safe, and to uphold principles which we hold dear.

As a sea service, we maintain an enduring presence around the

world, steadfast in our resolve to defend our nation, our principles and our allies. While we must remain focused, at the same time I encourage each of you to reflect on your service, reach out to those who may be struggling, and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to a grateful nation. Your courage and commitment reflect our Navy’s and our nation’s best virtues. Of this, you should be proud. Please also know that I am deeply humbled to serve both you and our nation.

Sincerely,

M.M. Gilday

Admiral, U.S. Navy