GD Develops Floating Platform for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief

MADRID — General Dynamics European Land Systems-Bridge Systems (GDELS-Bridge Systems) has been awarded a contract to develop a multifunctional, modular floating platform known as Pontoon Boat, or PoBo, the company announced in a Jan. 28 release.

The project was awarded under the Innovation Program for the Support of Diversification Strategies of Defense Companies in Civil Security Technologies, or DIVERS. DIVERS is a program launched by Germany's Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy, with VDI Technologiezentrum GmbH as the responsible project executing agency.

"The PoBo is a modularly configurable floating device," said Sascha Wahlster, head of civil activities for GDELS-Bridge Systems. "It can be used to assemble heavy-duty transport, working, diving and recovery platforms or bridges."

"By means of specially developed propulsion systems and supported by drone based underwater sensors, safe, semi-autonomous driving in flooded and unmapped areas will be made possible," Wahlster said.

The PoBo will be developed to be ergonomically friendly and will have a mobile virtual reality system to conduct fast and cost-effective training.

GDELS-Bridge Systems, the market leader in military floating bridges is a part of the newly-established General Dynamics European Land Systems—Deutschland. The company, which employs 400 people, has been developing and producing these systems in Kaiserslautern, Rhineland-Palatinate, for 65 years.

“Essential for the success of our application was the integration not only of existing long-standing cooperation partners such as the Entwicklungszentrum für Schiffstechnik und Transportsysteme e.V. (Development Centre for Ship Technology and Transport Systems) in Duisburg and the Bremen-based company szenaris specialized in learning programs and simulations for digital learning,” said Christian Kauth, Managing Director of GDELS-Bridge Systems. “Through our collaboration in the Science and Innovation Alliance Kaiserslautern and the Commercial Vehicle Cluster, many new cooperation approaches have emerged.

“Consequently, the integration of the Institute for Robotic Systems at Kaiserslautern University of Technology and the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Mathematics into the project developed,” Kauth said. “The decisive factor, however, was that we were able to win the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief in close cooperation with national fire brigades and police authorities as a project partners, as this is the only way to successfully develop a system that optimally supports relief, rescue and security forces in their challenging tasks worldwide.”

Navy Awards Boeing $2.4 Billion P-8A Poseidon Contract

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Navy has awarded Boeing a $2.4 billion production contract for the next 19 P-8A Poseidon aircraft, the company announced in a Jan. 28 release.

The contract includes 10 aircraft to add to the current

inventory of P-8As in the U.S. Navy fleet, all five jets currently under contract for Norway and the four aircraft remaining for the existing United Kingdom contract, bringing the total U.K. acquisition to nine aircraft.

The United Kingdom and Norway are acquiring the Boeing aircraft through the Foreign Military Sales process and will receive a variant designed and produced for the U.S. Navy called the P-8A Poseidon. The United Kingdom will receive its first aircraft this year and Norway will begin receiving aircraft in 2021.

The P-8 is a long-range multimission maritime patrol aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. A military derivative of the Boeing Commercial Next-Generation 737 airplane, the P-8 combines superior performance and reliability with an advanced mission system that ensures maximum interoperability in the battle space.

The P-8 is militarized with maritime weapons, a modern open mission system architecture, and commercial-like support for affordability. The aircraft has been modified to include a bomb bay and pylons for weapons – two weapons stations on each wing – and can carry 129 sonobuoys. The aircraft is also fitted with an in-flight refueling system. With more than 180,000 flight hours to date, P-8 variants, the P-8A Poseidon and the P-8I, patrol the globe performing anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; humanitarian; and search and rescue missions.

Coast Guard Patrols South

Pacific in Support of International Fisheries

HONOLULU – Following a stop in Fiji in late January, the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Mellon continued their South Pacific patrol in support of counter-Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing and global security missions, the 14th Coast Guard District said in a Jan. 26 release.

The presence of a high-endurance Coast Guard cutter conducting operations in the region demonstrates the U.S. commitment to regional partnerships and strengthening a coalition of like-minded countries to strengthen regional maritime governance and promote a rules-based regime for fisheries.

Mellon's crew is supporting international fisheries on the high seas and enforcement of the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Upon arrival in the WCPFC convention area, they partnered with the Canadian Armed Forces who flew seven reconnaissance flights improving maritime domain awareness and aiding in the enforcement of the WCPFC convention.

Patrolling over 1,110 square miles within the WCPFC convention area, the Mellon's law enforcement team boarded two vessels, one fishing vessel and one bunkering vessel. Both boardings resulted in potential violations of conservation management measures including high seas transshipment and specifications for the marking and identification of fishing vessels.

"Participating in the WCPFC ties into a broader strategy the Coast Guard is pursuing in the Indo-Pacific region," said Capt. Stephen Burdian, commanding officer, cutter Mellon. "Throughout the area, the U.S., and by extension the Coast Guard, is encouraging relationships respecting the sovereignty, supporting fair and reciprocal trade, and the

rule of law in an open and free Oceania. Through a tactical lens, that strategy looks like a Coast Guard boarding of a foreign fishing vessel, while on the high seas or in a sovereign Exclusive Economic Zone jointly with a member of that country's enforcement team. On this patrol, we are fortunate to have excellent support from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and our Canadian counterparts."

While on a port call in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy in Suva, Fiji, the crew strengthened partnerships with Pacific Islands Nation communities by participating in community relations events at a local animal shelter, children's hospital and garden. At the animal shelter crew members engaged with kittens and puppies while giving animals baths and general clean-up of the shelter. At the children's hospital and garden, the crew read books to children and tidied up the garden area.

Mellon's crew of 150 departed their homeport of Seattle shortly after Christmas. They made a brief stop in Hawaii for fuel and supplies. This stop was leveraged for training as the crew conducted Astern Refueling-at-Sea training with the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Gerczak.

Also, they worked with Air Station Barbers Point crews to complete 72 shipboard helicopter evolutions over three days, resulting in the qualification of three MH-65 Dolphin helicopter pilots and 10 flight deck personnel aboard Mellon.

The cutter also embarked two Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans officers, two U.S. Navy Aerographer's Mates, and one U.S. Marine Corps Mandarin translator while in Hawaii for the upcoming operations. The crew is more than 8,000 miles into their patrol and have taken every opportunity for professional development with more than 40 crew earning new qualifications.

Oceania covers an area of 3.3 million square miles and has a

population of 40 million and is home to some of our valued strategic partners in the Pacific Island Nations as well as Australia and New Zealand, with whom the U.S. has aligned for more than a century.

The importance of the Pacific Islands is very evident as the Coast Guard continues operations in the region and the U.S. strengthens partnerships with the governments of these nations. We recognize tourism and exports, both requiring a great deal of commercial vessel traffic, are a primary economic driver. Tuna represented a nearly $5 billion industry in 2015 with more than half the world's tuna is sourced from the Western Pacific. In 2017 reported landings were 2.5 million tons of fish.

The presence of a high-endurance cutter in this part of the Pacific to enforce Conservation and Management Measures established by the WCPFC represents the U.S. and the service's commitment to our partnerships in the region. This body represents another essential collaboration. The WCPFC is an international body made up of 43 nations and international organizations. Members agree to allow the 13-enforcer nations in the pact to board and record any potential violations on their nationally flagged vessels. The findings go to the WCPFC who notifies the vessel's flag state of the suspected infraction for further investigation.

"The U.S. Coast Guard and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans have a long history of working together to ensure the viability of fish stocks off North America. Working with experts from Canada and regional leaders like Fiji is vital to ensuring food security and the rule of law in Oceania," said Capt. Robert Hendrickson, chief of response for the 14th District. "Working together we are helping to ensure a more secure, free and open Indo-Pacific."

CNO: ‘We’ve Got to Restore Agility’

WASHINGTON – The Navy must be able to rapidly adjust to changing geopolitical situations and technological advances to maintain maritime superiority, the Navy’s top officer said.

“We’ve got to, in the Navy, restore agility,” said Adm. John M. Richardson, chief of naval operations (CNO), said Jan. 28 to an audience at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank.

Richardson was not talking just of acquisition agility, a recent theme of other Navy officials to make the weapons procurement more responsive to emerging requirements, though he touched on that need as well.

The CNO said that agility has three dimensions, one of which is conceptual agility in the way the Navy operates.

“Frankly, we just need more imagination,” he said. “We have a conceptual or imagination challenge to be competitive at the low end of the spectrum [of naval warfare]. At the high end there is this capability challenge as technology moves faster and faster and more tools become available. We want to make sure that at the high end we get things done, get them done faster, get them out to the fleet faster so that we will compete.”

The second dimension is geographical agility.

“The Navy got very, very good at putting strike groups together,” he said. “Those strike groups would leave Norfolk or San Diego and book it to the [Persian] Gulf. They would do

their operations and stay there as long as they could and then they would come back. We got excellent at that. But that was very predictable. We had the Optimized Fleet Response Plan, optimized to get the most presence for the least amount of resources. It got pretty optimized that way.

“It wasn’t very flexible, it wasn’t very dynamic, and it wasn’t very agile,” Richardson said. “As we regain that muscle memory [and] go back and do those sorts of things, this geographic agility, going to places we haven’t been in a long time, we’re doing so a little bit less predictably [with] fewer indicators of where we’re going to go, is a big part of our business.

Richardson made the same point with the Navy’s role in ballistic missile defense (BMD).

“We’ve had some ships protecting some pretty static assets on land for a decade now,” he said. “That [BMD] ship is designed to be a maneuver force. If that asset is going to be a long-term protective asset, then let’s build something on land and liberate these ships from this mission.

“[BMD] is an important mission,” he said. “We will be there as long as we need to, but it seems that land-based system is better suited to protect a land-based asset than a ship. Then I can take

a ship out of those small boxes where they have to stay for ballistic missile defense and get them moving again.”

The CNO noted the recent voyage of the USS Harry S. Truman carrier strike group north of the Arctic Circle as an example of geographic agility, the first such carrier operations since 1991.

Speaking of the third type, technological agility, the CNO said, “We simply have to get better at this. It’s a strategic Achilles’ Heel. It’s the lack of tempo in terms of how we can

field technology to the fleet. We cannot get outpaced in this."

Richardson also said the current great power competition "is going to be a long competition. We have to think in terms of infinite-game-type strategy."

He pointed out that, at the high end of the warfare spectrum, "the U.S. Navy must always de-escalate on the high end on our own terms. Which is another way of saying we want to have the best capability on the water."

MCM Mission Package Completes Integration Testing of Unmanned Vehicles

SAN DIEGO – The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Mission Module Program successfully completed shipboard integration testing of two unmanned systems on board USS Independence (LCS 2) Jan. 14, Naval Sea Systems Command said in a Jan. 24 release.

The two systems – the Knifefish unmanned undersea vehicle (UUV) and Unmanned Influence Sweep System (UISS) – are part of the Mine Countermeasures Mission Package (MCM MP), which uses a system-of-systems approach to target specific portions of the water column and segments of the MCM detect-to-engage sequence.

During these integration events, both the Knifefish and UISS successfully verified the communications link between Independence and the unmanned systems as well as executed multiple launch and recovery evolutions from the ship. These

test events mark a critical milestone for the LCS Mission Module Program, having now successfully tested each vehicle in the MCM MP (that is, an MH-60S helicopter, MQ-8B Fire Scout unmanned helicopter, UISS and Knifefish UUV) on board an Independence-variant LCS.

In addition to UISS and the Knifefish UUV completing integration tests, the program has certified all the aviation modules for the MCM MP for deployment on Independence-variant ships. These airborne MCM systems provide combatant commanders the ability to rapidly deploy systems that can detect near-surface mines as well as neutralizes mines in the water and on the bottom without requiring Sailors to sail into the minefield. Additionally, the Coastal Battlefield Reconnaissance and Analysis system, which is a vertical-takeoff unmanned aerial vehicle payload, provides a much-needed beach zone mine-detection capability in support of the amphibious assault mission.

These tests are a subset of a comprehensive test program that encompasses shore-based system testing to characterize individual systems prior to completing final integration on an LCS. The LCS Mission Module program office will continue to incrementally deliver MCM MP systems to the fleet in advance of the formal MCM MP initial operational test and evaluation events beginning in 2021.

Austal USA Awarded Contract for LCS Post-Delivery Work in

Mobile

MOBILE, Ala. – The U.S. Navy awarded Austal USA a $16.3 million contract Jan. 24 to perform extended industrial post-delivery availability work at its Mobile manufacturing facility – a first for Austal USA and the Navy, the company said in a release.

Austal USA will perform post-delivery work on Littoral Combat Ship 20, the future USS Cincinnati (LCS 20), at its Vessel Completion Yard along the Mobile River. This work will include engineering, management and production services in support of prefabrication efforts, material procurement and execution of work items for the LCS 20 Extended Industrial Post Delivery Availability.

Typically, this type of work is performed in San Diego, but through efforts to streamline production, support and sustainment for the LCS program, Austal USA and the Navy are teaming to reduce post-delivery cost and increase efficiency by performing additional work at Austal's facility in Alabama.

"This is an important step in the growth of our post-delivery business," said Austal USA President Craig Perciavalle. "We are excited to continue to expand our relationship with the Navy to do new post-delivery work in Mobile."

Established in 1999, Austal USA has grown to become the fifth largest shipbuilder in the United States through innovative practices. The company's moving modular assembly line revolutionized the shipbuilding industry and helped it capture the U.S. Navy's expeditionary fast transport contract and the Independence-variant LCS contract, now a critical part of the shipbuilding industrial base supporting nearly 10,000 suppliers across the country.

As the company continues to invest in its workforce and facilities, Austal USA is expanding its offerings in small

surface combatants, auxiliary support ships, autonomous vehicles and worldwide post-delivery support and sustainment.

“We’re appreciative of the recognition and confidence the U.S. Navy has displayed in us through continuous contractual awards in ship construction and post-delivery, including the recent award as prime contractor for the drydocking of LCS 14,” said Perciavalle. “But I can tell you, we’ve only scratched the surface on what Austal USA can provide.”

Coast Guard Assists 17 Fishermen in Series of Responses off Pacific Northwest Coast

SEATTLE — Coast Guard crews along the Oregon and Washington coasts have assisted 17 fishermen in five responses since Jan. 20, the 13th Coast Guard District said in a Jan. 25 release.

Response efforts included crews from Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay, Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment and Coast Guard Air Facility Newport, in coordination with members at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River and Coast Guard Sector North Bend.

The two-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Zephyr was escorted across the Yaquina Bay Bar in Oregon by a 47-foot Motor Lifeboat (MLB) crew from Station Yaquina Bay on Jan. 20. The crew of the 31-foot fishing vessel reported taking on water 17 miles off the south of bay with less than 500 pounds of crab aboard. The onboard pump and auxiliary

pumps were able to keep up with the flooding as the fishing crew were escorted in. An MH-65 Dolphin aircrew from Air Facility Newport launched as well.

A four-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Dream was escorted across the Columbia River Bar and safely moored in Ilwaco by a Station Cape Disappointment boat crew aboard the 52-foot MLB Triumph on Jan. 21. The 42-foot fishing vessel crew reported experiencing fuel injector issues while attempting to cross the bar with 1,000 pounds of crab aboard.

A three-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Miss Jessie was towed into Ilwaco by a 47-foot MLB crew from Station Cape Disappointment on Jan. 21. The crew of the 36-foot fishing vessel reported they lost propulsion almost three miles west of Ocean Park where they anchored with 1,500 pounds of crab aboard until the Coast Guard crew arrived.

A four-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Redeemer was towed to Newport, Oregon, by Station Yaquina Bay boat crew aboard the 52-foot MLB Victory on Jan. 21. The crew of the 51-foot fishing vessel reported they lost steering while on approach to the Yaquina Bay entrance with 5,000 pounds of crab aboard.

A four-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Triggerfish was towed into Newport by Victory on Jan. 24. The 42-foot fishing vessel crew reported they lost steering almost two miles west from the Yaquina Bay entrance with no catch aboard.

Coast Guard stations along the coast maintain ready crews in the event of emergencies, which often involve the use of the 47-foot and 52-foot MLBs. The 52-foot MLB is unique in that they are only located in the Pacific Northwest and are the only Coast Guard vessels under 65 feet with names. The four vessels are stationed at Grays Harbor, Cape Disappointment, Yaquina Bay and Coos Bay.

Northrop Grumman Gets LRIP Authorization for SEWIP Block 3

BALTIMORE – Northrop Grumman Corp. has received authorization to proceed with low rate initial production (LRIP) of Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program (SEWIP) Block 3 systems following a successful Milestone C decision for the SEWIP Block 3 AN/SLQ-32(V)7 program.

Milestone C is a government-led review to assess a program's performance and readiness to enter the production and deployment phase. The successful Milestone C decision for SEWIP Block 3 recognizes the accomplishments of the Northrop Grumman and Navy team in demonstrating the capability of this groundbreaking electronic warfare (EW) capability.

"Milestone C approval and the start of LRIP are significant milestones for the SEWIP Block 3 program," said Capt. Seiko Okano, the Navy's major program manager of above water sensors. "SEWIP Block 3 is a critical capability that the fleet needed yesterday to pace the evolving anti-ship cruise missile threat. We must continue to push to deliver this critical electronic warfare improvement to the fleet on schedule and cost."

SEWIP Block 3 is the third in a series of block upgrades of the AN/SLQ-32 electronic warfare system which provides electronic attack capability improvements required to pace the evolving anti-ship missile threat. Northrop Grumman has provided electronic warfare expertise to the legacy AN/SLQ-32 EW system for over four decades.

With the Navy elevating the electromagnetic spectrum as a warfighting domain, SEWIP Block 3 is a cornerstone capability that will meet the urgent operational needs of the Navy in that domain. SEWIP Block 3 provides game-changing improved capability for non-kinetic electronic attack options.

“I am very proud of the entire team in achieving this significant engineering milestone despite the complexities of pursuing such a demanding technological goal,” said Ingrid Vaughan, vice president and general manager, navigation and maritime systems division, Northrop Grumman Mission Systems. “The relentless commitment of the U.S. Navy Program Executive Office Integrated Warfare Systems (PEO IWS) and Northrop Grumman team in developing this revolutionary electronic attack capability will dramatically assist our fleet in pacing 21st century threats.”

Hypersonic Weapons, Cruise Missiles Gain Greater Focus in New Missile Defense Review

WASHINGTON – The primary value of the recently released Missile Defense Review is to expand the focus of missile defense to include the new threats from cruise missiles and hypersonic weapons, and to provide clear guidance, focus and integration of views to the programs, two of the top leaders on the issue said Jan. 23.

The review “really does usher in the next generation of missile defense” against “not just ballistic missiles but also cruise and hypersonics,” said John Rood, the undersecretary of Defense for Policy, who led the effort to draft the new review

that was released Jan. 17.

Noting the early resistance to a comprehensive program to defend the nation against ballistic missiles, Rood said, “we have come a long way,” and have a goal “not to just pursue the initial stages of missile defense, but to outpace the threat, against missiles of all variety.”

The biggest benefit to his agency was clear guidance and focus coming from the review and the strong endorsement from President Donald Trump, said Air Force Lt. Gen. Samuel Greaves, director of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA).

“We have direction and knowledge of where we need to go. It’s time to get things done,” Greaves said, joining Rood at a briefing on Capitol Hill sponsored by the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance.

The expanded focus of the review was highlighted by the change in its title, dropping the word “ballistic,” which was in the previous reviews and in the early days of this one.

The added emphasis on hypersonic weapons is to account for their different flight paths, which significantly increases the need for space-based sensors and possibly space-based interceptors, the two officials said.

Unlike ballistic missiles that fly a high trajectory into space and generally plunge directly to their targets, hypersonic weapons can fly at a low altitude and at speeds exceeding five times the speed of sound. And, like the low-flying cruise missiles, they may maneuver to complicate interception.

Citing the reports of tests of hypersonic weapons by Russia and China, Greaves said the space component of the multilayered defense MDA developed to counter ballistic missiles “is absolutely critical” to be able to “find, fix and track hypersonics.” To intercept a maneuvering hypersonic

threat, they will need “birth-to-death track. We will need to do that from space.”

Countering hypersonic weapons also accentuates the quest for directed energy, or lasers, as an interceptor, he said, while noting the challenge of developing that capability.

But while highlighting the new focus on the emerging threats, both officials stressed the need to continue progress on the existing primarily land- and sea-based sensors and interceptors

against the growing arsenals of ballistic missiles being fielded by “rogue states” such as North Korea and Iran.

Greaves said his top priority was to “maintain the focus on sustaining” the fielded missile defense system, with the second priority to “increase the engagement capabilities of those systems – to do more with what we have.” His third priority was to “rapidly address the advanced threats.”

Improving the existing missile defense included fielding a “multi-object kill vehicle” for the ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California, new radars in the Pacific and Alaska, testing and fielding the SM-3 block IIA missiles for the Navy’s Aegis-equipped warships and enhancing the command and control network.

Rood said under the strategy set by the new review, “homeland defense will be prioritized against all others.” They will continue with “today’s generation of technology and field new technologies that are significantly more capable” to deal with the rogue states, he said.

But, he added, because Russia and China have very large arsenals of ballistic missiles, “we rely on deterrence,” meaning the threat of a counter strike by nuclear missiles.

That appeared to counter the impression left by Trump’s

comments at the review’s unveiling that the proposed new defense would be able to defeat Russia’s missiles.

General Dynamics Awarded F-35 Joint Strike Fighter IT Support Contract

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) announced Jan 24 that is had been awarded the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) F-35 IT program support contract.

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) awarded a task order against a previously issued General Services Administration, Government Wide Acquisition Alliant Contract to General Dynamics One Source, a joint venture between GDIT and General Dynamics Mission Systems. The contract holds an estimated ceiling value of $155.6 million and includes a base period of two years with three one-year options.

GDIT will provide knowledge-based, information-assurance and cybersecurity IT services to the F-35 JSF Virtual Enterprise network in support of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office (JPO).

“We are excited to bring a full platform of next-generation services as the primary IT provider of the F-35 JPO,” said Senior Vice President Leigh Palmer, head of GDIT’s Defense Division. “Through GDIT’s impressive offerings, we will enable full scale technology solutions for the successful execution of the F-35 JPO.”

Through this contract, GDIT will provide a full range of IT and cybersecurity services for the entire JSF Virtual Enterprise. These services will include program management, enterprise performance management, enterprise architecture, implementation of emerging capabilities and requirements, life cycle management, operations & maintenance, enterprise data management, service desk support and IT training.