L3 OceanServer Successfully Participates in Advanced Naval Technology Exercise

FALL RIVER, Mass. – L3 OceanServer successfully participated in the Advanced Naval Technology Exercise (ANTX), an annual event held at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, Rhode Island, where the future of naval technologies is demonstrated, the company announced in an Oct. 4 release. L3 OceanServer's presence included 12 Iver unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), the largest UUV showing at ANTX.

Iver vehicles successfully completed seven missions at the event, including three customer-operated missions, showcasing new technology payloads and advanced command and control capabilities. One successful exercise integrated the Marine Magnetics internal magnetometer into an Iver UUV for the collection of magnetometer data over a simulated minefield.

Notably, an Iver4 concept vehicle demonstrated battery power endurance and system efficiency by completing a long ingress/egress mission. The vehicle started its mission with a 15-nautical-mile ingress, was retasked on arrival to survey a simulated minefield and finished with a 3-nautical-mile egress. On mission completion, 57 percent of battery power remained.

"As undersea missions evolve, our dialogue with naval customers has consistently reiterated the need for a portable vehicle that can complete long-duration missions," said Daryl Slocum, L3 OceanServer's general manager. "The Iver4 offers a broad range of innovative technologies, including various power options, to execute these demanding missions."

L3 OceanServer is part of the Maritime Sensor Systems sector within L3's Communications & Networked Systems business

segment. Since its inception in 2003, L3 OceanServer has sold more than 300 autonomous underwater vehicles worldwide, providing highly capable solutions to a broad array of military, commercial and international customers.

Coast Guard Cutter Stratton Returns Home Following 104-day Patrol

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard Cutter Stratton returned home Oct. 4 to Coast Guard Island following a 104-day, 23,500-nautical-mile patrol that included enforcement of fisheries regulations in Alaska and interdicting more than 16,000 pounds of cocaine from known drug trafficking zones in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release.

Stratton's crew began their deployment in the Arctic Ocean supporting Coast Guard District Seventeen and Operation Arctic Shield. Deploying with a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and an aircrew from Air Station San Francisco, Stratton provided maritime domain awareness in waters off the north slope of Alaska, ensuring the sovereignty over U.S. waters in the region. Stratton also served as a search and rescue platform and conducted living marine resource and commercial vessel safety regulation enforcement.

U.S. waters surrounding Alaska support significant renewable resources, including a robust fishing industry. More than 59 percent of fish caught in the United States are harvested from Alaskan waters, generating more than $6.4 billion annually. The U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for conducting at-sea enforcement in direct support of both domestic and

international fisheries management schemes to ensure the sustainability of these living marine resources.

Stratton additionally patrolled international waters off the coasts of Central and South America conducting counterdrug operations with an aircrew and a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron based in Jacksonville, Florida. Stratton partnered with units from multiple U.S. agencies in support of the 11nth Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, and the Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida.

The crew interdicted seven drug smuggling vessels in 26 days, including three low-profile go-fast vessels. The interdictions yielded more than 16,000 pounds of cocaine seized by Stratton’s crew worth an estimated $235 million wholesale and detained 23 suspected smugglers for prosecution in U.S. and partner nation courts.

Throughout the patrol, Stratton leveraged a Small Unmanned Aerial System (sUAS) for mission support in both operational theatres. The sUAS provided the crew real-time video footage through aerial surveillance and expanded Stratton’s capabilities to support operations across all Coast Guard missions. The real-time video increases situational awareness enabling the crew to make more-informed decisions and assists with mission planning, efficiency and crew safety.

Stratton is a 418-foot-long national security cutter, one of four homeported in Alameda.

ESG, MAGTF Departs for Exercise Trident Juncture 18

MAYPORT, Fla. – Ships of an expeditionary strike group have departed ports in the U.S. East Coast and will embark a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) in North Carolina bound for participation in Exercise Trident Juncture 18 in Northern Europe, Expeditionary Strike Group Two (ESG-2) said in an Oct. 5 release.

The Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima and the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS New York departed Naval Station Mayport and the Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Gunston Hall sailed from Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia.

Nearly 2,000 Marines with a MAGTF built around the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit command element from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, will also embark the ships. The MAGTF is comprised of battalion landing team, a composite aviation squadron and a combat logistics battalion.

Exercise Trident Juncture 18 will take place in Norway, Sweden and Finland beginning this month, with expected participation of more than 40,000 troops from more than 30 NATO member and partner nations. It will be one of NATO's largest exercises in recent history.

"It's important for U.S. amphibious forces to conduct operations in the European area of responsibility and for us to work with multinational amphibious forces," said Rear Adm. Brad Skillman, commander, ESG-2. "Exercises like Trident Juncture 18 provide and reinforce security measures; maritime and amphibious capability development and presence; synchronized operational planning; and better options for political-military decision-making."

The majority of U.S. personnel participating will be a part of ESG 2 and the Marine Corps' II Marine Expeditionary Group. En route to Norway, U.S. forces will conduct training in Iceland, host a Marine assault landing rehearsal, cold-weather training, a Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO pre-sail conference, and a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, which took place during World War II.

In Norway, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps will participate primarily in the live training portion of Trident Juncture 18. This includes maneuvers on land, at sea, and in the air.

Defense Industrial Base Report Delivered to President

ARLINGTON, Va. — Deputy Secretary of Defense Pat Shanahan, on behalf of Secretary of Defense James Mattis, presented a report, "Assessing and Strengthening the Manufacturing and Defense Industrial Base and Supply Chain Resiliency of the United States," to President Donald J. Trump Oct. 5, pursuant to Executive Order 13806, the Department of Defense (DoD)said in a release.

Trump directed Mattis to lead a whole-of-government effort to identify and assess risks in the manufacturing and defense industrial base. Based on this review, the secretary made recommendations to the president to ensure a robust, resilient, secure, and ready manufacturing and defense industrial base.

The recommendations outlined in the report reflect the administration's commitment to securing the industrial capabilities of the United States. The action that followed

the president’s Executive Order included a multi-agency risk assessment of the industrial base of the United States, which involved experts from the DoD; Commerce, Labor, Energy and Homeland Security departments; and other agencies and offices.

The report provides recommendations to address immediate risks identified in the manufacturing and defense industrial base and initiates follow-on efforts to create a strategy for building this base for next-generation technologies.

The assessment identified:
■ Five macro forces shaping industrial base-wide trends and causing a deterioration in U.S. capabilities;
■ Ten risk archetypes resulting from the macro forces, each of which contribute to insecurity in DoD’s supply chain;
■ Over 280 impacts across sectors, acutely affecting the vitality and resiliency of the industrial base.

Major findings include:
■ Macro forces have led to impacts primarily in the sub-tiers of the defense supply chain;
■ A surprising level of foreign dependence on competitor nations exists;
■ Workforce challenges face employers across all sectors; and
■ Many sectors continue to move critical capabilities offshore in pursuit of competitive pricing and access to foreign markets.

In addition to the ongoing reform efforts, the DoD-led Interagency Task Force created a set of recommendations, which are organized by the secretary, with DoD’s recommendations provided in a classified Action Plan. In summary, the recommendations propose:
■ Creating an industrial policy in support of national security efforts, as outlined in the National Defense Strategy, to inform current and future acquisition practices;
■ Expanding direct investment in the lower tier of the industrial base through DoD’s Defense Production Act Title

III, Manufacturing Technology, and Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment programs to address critical bottlenecks, support fragile suppliers and mitigate single points-of-failure;

■ Diversifying away from complete dependency on sources of supply in politically unstable countries who may cut off U.S. access. Diversification strategies may include re-engineering, expanded use of the National Defense Stockpile program or qualification of new suppliers;

■ Working with allies and partners on joint industrial base challenges through the National Technology Industrial Base and similar structures;

■ Modernizing the organic industrial base to ensure its readiness to sustain fleets and meet contingency surge requirements;

■ Accelerating workforce development efforts to grow domestic science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and critical trade skills;

■ Reducing the personnel security clearance backlog through more efficient processes; and

■ Further enhancing efforts to explore next-generation technology for future threats.

“A challenge this large demands a multifaceted approach,” the report states. “Therefore, the classified Action Plan also includes direction for DoD to conduct a comprehensive study on the industrial base requirements needed to support force modernization efforts, specifically focused on the technologies necessary to win the future fight.”

The report can be found at http://defense.gov/StrengtheningDefenseIndustrialBase.

Naval Aviation Leaders: Readiness Improving, but 'Still Not Where We Need to Be'

WASHINGTON – The combat readiness of naval aviation is improving, but it is not where it needs to be, the Navy and Marine Corps top aviation leaders said Oct. 5.

Vice Adm. DeWolfe Miller, commander of Naval Air Forces, said his readiness has increased from the one-third availability reported by his predecessor a year ago, "to about 50 percent, on average. We're still not where we need to be."

"I have 260 airplanes [ready] on average. We need 341," Miller told a Center for Strategic and International Studies forum.

Miller noted that when he was director of Air Warfare in the Pentagon last year, the feeling was they could fix readiness quickly and move on to modernizing the force. When he moved to the fleet as air boss, he said, "we found the hole is a little bit deeper than we thought."

But, Miller said, "the entire naval air enterprise is being aligned toward this recovery," and there is "a sense of urgency" throughout that enterprise.

After a lot of analysis by industry and military experts, "It comes down to people and parts," he said.

Marine Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, the deputy commandant for Aviation, had a similar conclusion on what it will take to fix the Corps' aviation readiness, which had been lingering around 25 percent in some aircraft types.

Rudder did not give a readiness number, saying the Marines

used different metrics, but said the Corps made a decision that they needed to "fully fund the accounts for keeping aircraft up, and we did." He said they gave money to the supply system to buy the parts required, to the Fleet Readiness Centers and aviation depots that repair aircraft, and to the program managers so they could "help a particular community to get out of the hole."

He said later that they were taking steps to reverse personnel decisions made when the Marines were reducing end strength and created shortages of experienced maintenance noncommissioned officers on the flight lines.

And, he said, "we put money back into the flight-hour program so we can fly. We're not where we should be, but we are seeing some increases" and "seeing higher percentage of up aircraft."

Rudder said Marine pilots had averaged 13.5 hours a month in fiscal 2016, 15.4 hours in fiscal 2017 and "we're closing out '18 averaging 17.9. Our readiness is creeping up. It will take time, because some of our aircraft are old. … But we're moving in the right direction."

Asked about complaints about the material condition of the new F-35Bs they are receiving, Rudder acknowledged that he was not satisfied with the quality of some of the planes delivered by Lockheed Martin.

But, he said, "if the taxpayers give the Marine Corps new airplanes, we're going to use them."

He noted that the Corps has 33 operational F-35Bs, and 22 are forward deployed in Asia, and in the Central Command where the Marine Lightning IIs reportedly conducted their first combat missions.

Miller said the Navy's first squadron of carrier-capable F-35Cs was in transition and expected to make its first deployment in fiscal 2021. He said the Navy was preparing for

that deployment by using tactics developed by the Top Gun air combat training unit and applying lessons from the Marines' experience with their F-35s on the amphibious ships to the F-35s.

Both of the aviation leaders said they no longer used old metrics of whether aircraft were "full mission capable" or lower readiness status.

"It's going to be very simple. We're going to have an airplane that's ready to fight, or it's not," Miller said, adding that the aircraft being deployed are the best they can be.

And both listed a variety of programs they are using to retain qualified pilots, including a new Navy program that would allow some midgrade aviators to opt out of the normal quest for command positions and remain as "permanent pilots" in training units.

Navy to Christen Guided-Missile Destroyer Frank E. Petersen Jr.

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will christen the newest guided-missile destroyer, the future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) Oct. 6 at Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the Defense Department said in an Oct. 4 release.

The future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. is the first ship named in honor of Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen Jr., the first African-American Marine Corps aviator and the first

African-American Marine Corps officer promoted to brigadier general. When he retired in 1988 after 38 years of service, he was, by date of designation, the senior-ranking aviator in the Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy.

At the ceremony, the principal speaker will be Gen. Alfred Gray, 29th commandant of the Marine Corps. D'Arcy Neller, wife of Gen. Robert Neller, commandant of the Marine Corps, and Dr. Alicia J. Petersen, widow of Frank E. Petersen Jr., will serve as ship's sponsors. In a time-honored Navy tradition, the two sponsors will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

"The future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. will serve for decades as a reminder of Lt. Gen. Petersen's service to our nation and Navy and Marine Corps team," said Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer. "This ceremony honors not only Petersen's service but also the service of our nation's industrial partners, who, for centuries, have helped make our Navy the greatest in the world."

The future Frank E. Petersen Jr. will be the 71st Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, and is the fifth of 21 ships currently under contract for the DDG 51 program. The ship will be configured as a Flight IIA destroyer, which enables power projection, forward presence, and escort operations at sea in support of low-intensity conflict/coastal and littoral offshore warfare, as well as open ocean conflict.

Coast Guard Offloads More

Than 11 Tons of Cocaine in San Diego

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton offloaded more than 11 tons of cocaine seized in international waters off the Eastern Pacific Ocean from late August to mid-September on Oct. 3, the 11th Coast Guard District said in a release.

The drugs were seized during the interdiction of eight suspected smuggling vessels found off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America by the Coast Guard cutters Stratton, Seneca and Active.

Stratton was responsible for six cases, seizing an estimated 16,473 pounds of cocaine. Seneca was responsible for one case, seizing an estimated 2,954 pounds of cocaine. Active was responsible for one case, seizing an estimated 2,646 pounds of cocaine.

“This offload reflects the outstanding efforts of the Coast Guard and our partner agencies to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations,” said Capt. Craig J. Wieschhorster, Stratton’s commanding officer. “These interdiction results take hundreds of millions of dollars away from these criminal networks that work to undermine the rule of law in South and Central America, which increases migration pressures on the U.S. southern border. Keeping this product off the streets of America saves lives, and I am very proud of the efforts of my crew.”

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement along

with allied and international partner agencies play a role in counter-drug operations. The fight against transnational criminal organizations in the Eastern Pacific requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by U.S. Attorneys in districts across the nation.

The Coast Guard increased U.S. and allied presence in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Basin, which are known drug transit zones off Central and South America, as part of its Western Hemisphere Strategy. During at-sea interdictions in international waters, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boarding's, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Stratton is a 418-foot national security cutter homeported in Alameda. The Seneca is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Boston. The Active is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Port Angeles, Washington.

Huntington Ingalls Industries Closes Sale of Avondale

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) has closed the sale of HII's Avondale facility to Avondale Marine, a joint venture between T.P. Host and Hilco Redevelopment

Partners, HII said in an Oct. 4 release.

The Avondale facility, part of HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division, ceased its Navy shipbuilding operations in December 2014. Avondale's UNO Maritime Center of Excellence has remained open and continues to do engineering and design work in support of Ingalls' shipbuilding programs.

"We are very proud of our legacy at Avondale and the many contributions that generations of its shipbuilders made to our national security," said Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias. "Ingalls will continue to maintain a presence in Louisiana, not only at the UNO Center, but also through the many Louisiana residents who commute to Pascagoula each day to help us build the ships we produce for our nation's defense. We are pleased that Avondale Marine plans to put the facility back into commerce and look forward to its success."

T.P. Host is one of the nation's largest terminal operators and a leader in the maritime industry, specializing in agency, terminal operations and marine assets. In business for over 90 years, the company has developed a strong reputation in the maritime community for its expertise, transparency and high standards of service.

"For generations, Avondale Shipyards has been a source of pride for the community that generated jobs and economic development," said Adam Anderson, president and CEO of T.P. Host and principal of Avondale Marine. "Our team will unleash its potential by transforming the shipyard into a global logistics hub for intermodal commerce.

"As we usher in a new era for this facility, we will benefit from the strength and skill of the workforce in Jefferson Parish and Louisiana. We are grateful for the steadfast support and leadership of the governor, parish president and council, as well as our partners in this project, including the Port of New Orleans, Public Belt, JEDCO, GNO Inc.,

Business Council and Chamber of Commerce.”

Hilco Redevelopment Partners, a real estate firm based in Chicago, remediates and redevelops large-scale industrial facilities across North America, such as Tradepoint Atlantic and the Avondale Shipyard.

“We’re thrilled to leverage our extensive experience in redeveloping and transforming facilities that are at the end of their current useful life into modern productive businesses for the future,” said Roberto Perez, CEO of Hilco Redevelopment Partners. “We look forward to supporting our managing partners at T.P. Host in the Avondale Marine project as we build this important logistics hub in New Orleans.”

In the coming months, Avondale Marine will begin its planning process for the approximately 254-acre site in partnership with stakeholders.

First Saudi Helicopter Arrives at Naval Station Mayport

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. –The first of several MH-60R Seahawk helicopters purchased by the Royal Saudi Arabian Navy arrived at Naval Station Mayport Oct. 2. The helicopters are part of a training program for Saudi pilots and crew that is expected to last for the next three years.

“This is an exciting day!” said Lt. Cmdr. Ryan Miller, the training officer for the “Airwolves” of Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 40. “This is the first of a series of five

aircraft that will be joining us here at HSM 40."

HSM 40, a helicopter squadron based out of Naval Station Mayport, is playing an imperative role in the training of Royal Saudi Naval officers and crewmen.

"We are responsible for providing the training that the foreign military sales office has contracted with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Miller said. "[We will be providing the training] for their 250 plus, pilots, aircrew and maintainers."

The Saudi detachment was excited to receive their new aircraft.

"We've been waiting for this moment for a long time," said Lt. Cmdr. Mazin Alshahrani, the officer in charge of the Saudi detachment. "We appreciate our partnership with the U.S. Navy and especially the squadron, HSM 40."

The MH-60R helicopter that the Royal Saudi Navy received is one of the most advanced helicopters in the world and is capable of a multitude of missions.

"This helicopter is really a game changer," Alshahrani said. "It's the top of the line and one of the best helicopters that the Saudi government will provide our navy and will be the main mission helicopter of our fleet."

Once the detachment is fully trained, 10 aircraft, including five from Mayport, will be shipped to Saudi Arabia where a new squadron will be stood up.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has purchased 10 MH-60R helicopters," Miller said. "Five of those aircraft will be homebased in Mayport for the next three years. [This one] is the first of those aircraft. We expect one more per month for the next four months. The remaining five aircraft will remain in the United States until all of the remaining aircraft are

ready to be shipped back to Saudi Arabia to join the Royal Saudi Naval fleet."

The addition of the aircraft and the training of the Saudi naval personnel is a step to promote global security in the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of operations.

"This is a big milestone for us in the partnership," Miller said. "We look forward to providing the highest quality of training to the Kingdom. Once the training program is complete in about three years, we look forward to sending all of the aircraft and personnel back home and strengthening the relationship that both nations have towards global security.

Modly: Unmanned Systems 'Huge Priority' in Building a Bigger Fleet

WASHINGTON – When talking about the future fleet size, the Navy's No. 2 civilian leader says he calls it "355-plus," with the "plus" meaning a lot of unmanned systems and other innovative things not normally considered part of the fleet.

"Unmanned is a huge priority for the Navy," which is looking at a range of systems to take advantage of the "huge advances in unmanned" technology, Navy Undersecretary Thomas B. Modly told a Defense Writers Group breakfast Oct. 4.

Despite that push to add unmanned systems, Modly said there is no quota or goal for the share of the fleet they will fill.

"We are definitely on a path to building a bigger fleet" and it will include "a bigger integration of unmanned."

The Navy and Marine Corps already are fielding a large number of unmanned air and ground vehicles and surface and subsurface vessels, and are developing larger and more capable systems. The Navy recently awarded a contract to Boeing to produce the MQ-25 Stingray, a carrier-based unmanned aerial refueling jet, and the Marines want a large Group 5 unmanned aerial vehicle that can operate from amphibious ships.

Modly said a new Navy force structure plan should go to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson and Navy Secretary Richard Spencer next month and probably would be released early next year.

A lot of things have changed since the last plan was released in 2016, he said, including the build-up of Chinese capabilities and activities in the Pacific, how unmanned systems would fit in and the effect of the planned new frigate on the force of small surface combatants.

Modly said the larger fleet obviously would require more Sailors. Asked whether there were concerns that those plans to add personnel would hit the same problems the Army suffered when it fell 6,500 short of its recruiting goal in fiscal 2018, he conceded the Navy "was going to face the same challenges." Recruiting always becomes more difficult in a "hot economy" with low unemployment rates, he said.

"We always have to make the case that the Navy is a good place to start a career," with its training opportunities, and "the ships are more comfortable to live in" than when he served in the Navy several decades ago.

Modly said the Navy was making a maximum effort to improve the sustainability of its ships and aircraft, with investments in the shipyards and a focus on improving the maintenance and supply of spare parts for the F/A-18s, which suffered badly during the years of tight budgets.

He did not believe that the emerging "dynamic deployment"

concept would interfere with the planned maintenance cycle for ships, like a similar aggressive deployment plan a decade ago that had caused an epidemic of unfit ships. The ships would make their six-month deployments as scheduled so they could meet the planned maintenance periods, he said.

But what the ships would do during that deployment will be different, he said, noting the recent unusual activities of the USS Harry S. Truman battlegroup.

The “dynamic deployment” concept was proposed by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis who said U.S. forces should be strategically predictable but tactically unpredictable.

Modly recently returned from an extensive tour of many of the small island nations in the Pacific. He said the impression he gained from their leaders was a strong desire for more U.S. presence, including port visits, and help in improving their capabilities to monitor their territorial waters.