

Maritime Gala Celebrates the Sea Services

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – An Irish Tenor, country star Lee Greenwood and all four of the sea service chiefs helped the Navy League celebrate the sea services and their families during the inaugural Maritime Gala at the Sea-Air-Space Exposition April 10.

The event featured remarks from Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert B. Neller and was highlighted by the presentation of awards to honor service and business leaders whose devotion to duty deserved special recognition.

“We are so excited to have you here in celebration of all our sea services and their families,” said Navy League National President Alan Kaplan in his opening remarks.

John McDermott, founder of the Irish Tenors, sang the national anthem after the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard presented the colors, and Greenwood performed “Wind Beneath My Wings” prior to the gala dinner. He concluded the event with an encore performance of patriotic songs, including his signature “God Bless the U.S.A.”

Prior to introducing Neller as the keynote speaker, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson offered a few words of thanks to the Navy League for the gala and the exposition as a whole.

“What a fantastic event, Sea-Air-Space in 2018, the biggest, the best, the most attended ... people fighting for the opportunity to come and join this team here at Sea-Air-Space,” he said. “That wouldn’t happen without the Navy League, just one of the so many things they do for the sea services.”

In introducing Neller, Richardson described the commandant as

“an innovative thinker; he is moving the Marine Corps into new territory to make sure that they continue to be relevant in this new era that we’re moving into with smart machines, digital communications, everything. He’s leading the way intellectually. Far more than that is you would never, ever hope for anybody else to go into a fight with you.”

Neller prefaced his remarks by noting, “This is an interesting year; there is a lot to talk about.”

Specifically, he addressed the theme of this year’s Sea-Air-Space: “learn, compete, win.”

“That speaks to the heart of our naval force,” Neller said. “As Marines, we like to think of ourselves as innovative. Innovation is a hallmark of our Corps and it remains so today. Your Marines are learning through testing and evaluation of new technology to gain advantages over our competitors, our rivals. And there is competition; we are in a competition right now.

“We are not at war; we’re competing below the level of conflict, but make no mistake about it – we’re competing every single day, whether it be in cyber, information or electronic warfare, command and control, engineering, manned and unmanned teaming, robotics, additive manufacturing, trying to figure out how to leverage artificial intelligence. Those competitions go on every single day.

“Advancements in those areas that many of you are involved in, and can help us with, will help propel us into the future, enabling us to compete,” Neller said, addressing the gala attendees from industry. “We don’t want to compete on the battlefield –we want to dominate the battlefield.”

At the same time, Neller noted, the nation’s competitors have evolved and are increasing their capabilities.

“They are not standing by and watching us,” he said. “They

want to dominate the battlespace, so it is essential that we, our military, our civilians, our leadership, our political leaders, our business community, all work together to keep our capability at a competitive advantage that we must have. We don't know when the next fight is coming, but we have to be prepared in case it does.

"We need to drive innovation and come up with new advanced equipment where we can continue to dominate the battlefield. ... So this is an exciting time. We are always in continuous competition. We always must be ready to compete, learn and win. We have to win."

Following Neller's remarks, the Navy League honored several service and business leaders who Kaplan noted, "exemplify what it means to be a leader in their field."

Outgoing Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul F. Zukunft received the new Semper Paratus Leader Award for his more than 40 years of service to the country. He was presented the award by retired Vice Adm. Jay Donnelly, who called the commandant "a Sailor's Sailor." Zukunft will be retiring next month.

Coast Guard Capt. Holly R. Harrison was presented with the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps Distinguished Alumni Award. "She is a shining example of how the Sea Cadet program introduces young people to a lifetime of exemplary service," said gala co-chair Bruce Mosler of Cushman & Wakefield.

Harrison was the first woman to command a Coast Guard cutter in a combat zone and the first to be awarded the Bronze Star. "I can trace the beginning of my Coast Guard career to when I joined the Naval Sea Cadet Corps in the fall of 1986," she said after accepting the award.

Frank Bisignano, chairman and CEO of First Data Corp. received the Teddy Roosevelt Award. "He epitomizes steadfast business leadership," said gala co-chair Tom Higgins of First Data.

Bisignano is the founder of the 100,000 Jobs Mission, a coalition of 170 firms that have hired nearly 450,000 veterans. As chairman and CEO of First Data, he is a steward of the First Data Salutes Program, providing opportunities and support for returning military and their families.

In a special presentation, Kaplan also honored Navy League Staff Vice President for External & Governmental Affairs Sara Fuentes with the Navy League National President's Award for her legislative affairs work on behalf of the organization.

Arleigh Burke Program Pushes Ahead, With First Two Flight III Ships Under Contract

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The DDG 51 program is moving ahead rapidly, with 12 ships under contract, including the first two of the substantially improved Flight III ships, the program manager said April 10.

The detail design on Flight III is “just about done and we’re on track to start construction,” with work on DDG 125 expected to start at Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) in May, and DDG 126 at Bath Iron Works later this year, said Capt. Casey Moton. “We have a good, stable design” that was approved by both yards last year with fixed-price contracts.

The major change for Flight III is the AN/SPY-6 Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) “which will bring a significant improvement in missile defense,” Moton told a Naval Sea Systems Command briefing at the Sea-Air-Space Exposition.

The Flight III design also required some “enabling changes” needed to accommodate the combat changes and to restore life expectancy margins to match the current Arleigh Burke destroyers, he said.

Those included expansion of the deck house, widening the hull above the water line to improve stability and thicker “inner-bottom scantling” to increase hull strength and to lower the center of gravity to offset the heavier SPY-6 radar antenna, he said. The design also included a major increase in air conditioning capacity and electrical energy, to support the more powerful radar.

Integrating the AMDR with the Aegis combat system “is going smoothly” with tests in Hawaii and elsewhere, he said.

The cost of the new class of ships is expected to be \$1.7 billion to \$1.75 billion for the first ships, which is expected to drop with later ships, as has happened throughout the DDG 51 program, Moton said.

The program office now is focusing on executing the latest multi-year production contract, which will buy 22 ships through fiscal 2023, he said. That contract calls for three ships a year for each year, except 2020.

A total of 65 Burkes have been delivered, with another about to transfer to the Navy, Moton said.

Navy Renames LCS Program Executive Office to Reflect

Broadened Portfolio

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has renamed Program Executive Office Littoral Combat Ship (PEO LCS) as Program Executive Office, Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC), in a move to encompass the PEO's broadening portfolio of responsibilities.

The name change was ordered in a March 13 memorandum by James F. Geurts, the assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition.

"Since the creation of PEO LCS in July of 2011, the organization's portfolio has grown beyond its original focus on the development, procurement and sustainment of LCS; its associated mission modules; and related systems," Geurts said in the memo. "Today, PEO LCS oversees the acquisition of the littoral combat ship (LCS) and its associated mission modules, as well as mine warfare systems, unmanned maritime systems, the future Frigate (FFG(X)) and the Multimission Surface Combatant (MMSC), an LCS variant for international customers. This represents four distinct shipbuilding product lines in development or under construction, 10 unmanned maritime systems, and 15 ACA T or pre-A CAT programs. The name PEO LCS no longer adequately reflects the breadth of its portfolio nor the full importance of its work.

"The Littoral Combat Ship and its mission capabilities remains a critically important shipbuilding program," he said. "With the introduction of FFG(X) and MMSC in the near future and our burgeoning fleet of unmanned surface and subsurface vehicles, this new name more accurately represents the work on platforms and systems that are key enablers for the future fleet through all phases of warfare. Their continued organization under a single PEO will allow improved program execution, alignment and agility today and into the future."

The PEO USC includes the following program offices: Unmanned

Maritime Systems (PMS 406), LCS Mission Modules (PMS 420), Mine Warfare Systems (PMS 495), Littoral Combat Ships (PMS 501), LCS Fleet Introduction and Sustainment (PMS 505), Frigate (PMS 515) and International LCS (PMS 525).