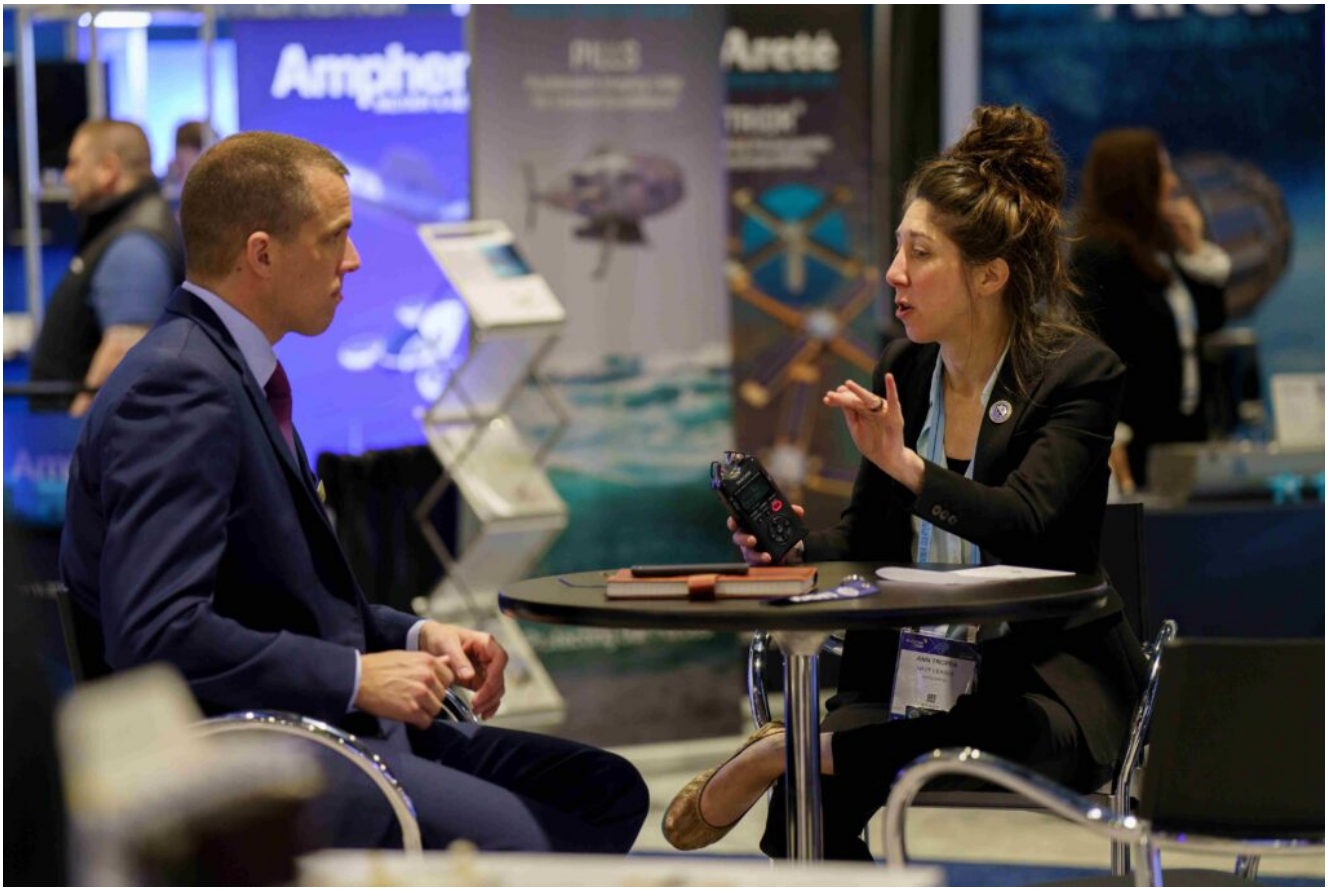
Navy Commissions First LCS with New GE Composite Engine Enclosure



NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The littoral combat ship (LCS) commissioned April 1 is the first equipped with the new lightweight gas turbine engine enclosure designed by GE Marine to provide greater safety and more comfortable engineering spaces for Sailors, a GE Marine official said.

Steve Rogers, director of Marketing and Business Development for GE Marine Engines, told Seapower in an April 3 interview at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space Expo in National Harbor, said that the Independence-class littoral combat ship USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32) is the first LCS to be fitted with the new lightweight composite-material enclosure for its engines.

"Traditionally what the Navy has used is a is a steel base on

which it sits and then an enclosure with steel walls. So … loud, noisy, hot," Rogers said. "Now it's a single forward composite piece for the walls and the roof. So, you don't have rust maintenance and things like that. But more importantly, [there's] 60% less airborne noise in the engine room."

Rogers said the temperature of the enclosure walls, "is anywhere from 25 to 50 degrees cooler. So, a lot less heat is being ejected into the engine room and the Sailors have more access, better access to the engine."

He said the composite enclosure is 2.5 tons lighter than the steel enclosure with the same footprint, providing ship designers with the flexibility to devote more weight capacity to fuel, payloads, or other uses. The new enclosure meets the Navy's standards for fire protection and toxicity.

The U.S. Navy will be installing the composite enclosures on its Flight III Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers and Constellation-class guided-missile frigates. The enclosure also is being installed on the Finnish Navy's Pohjanmaa-class corvettes.

Rogers said his company has seen no supply chain issues with producing the composite enclosure, pointing out that composite material is made five miles from the plant where the enclosure is made.

GE Marine Engines is working to improve the efficiency of its gas turbine engines while maintaining the same power output and reliability, Rogers said, also noting that the company is working to meet power requirements for warships to deploy such systems as laser weapons.

He said GE Marine Engines is expanding its global network – maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facilities and service technicians – to meet the requirements of its far-flung customers. The company maintains MROs in Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, and South Korea.

Transition Connection Provides Career Support for Service Members

Over a million men and women serve as active-duty members of our military, with an additional 800,000 in reservist roles. Every year, approximately 200,000 of those service members transition out of the military and into civilian roles. That transition is not always easy.

Transition Connection is an important hiring and networking event that links everyone in the military community, from enlisted service members to veterans to military spouses and civilians, with organizations looking for the caliber of employees that come from having a strong military connection.

Navy League CEO Mike Stevens kicked off the event, introducing Dr. Ernie Rosado, Director of Military Outreach for Columbia Southern University. The Navy League has recently partnered with Columbia Southern to offer a new scholarship for military spouses that grants 60 credit hours towards any degree program at CSU.

“You folks are critical in this next process for all these folks that are transitioning,” said Rosado. “I know you will match that individual that has been protected by the military for years. And now they’re stepping out and they’re by themselves with their families. So, help them out. Let’s do a good job today,” he said.

During the four-hour event, members of the military had the opportunity to meet with some of the leading employers seeking to make offers to individuals that are either transitioning out of military service, trying to find a job that offers flexibility for military families on the move, or looking for out-of-the box options and support for civilian employment.

First time participants from American Systems commented on the big turnout and were excited to assist service members with the hiring process. “We support a number of different types of programs throughout the country and enterprise,” said Ed Wakeley and Chris McBeth of American Systems. “I support mostly Navy waterfront programs,” commented McBeth. “So engineering, training of getting ships ready to get back out to the South China Sea.”

Amazon, a regular Sea-Air-Space participant, have pledged to hire 100,000 transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses over the course of five years, said representatives John Pierce and Matt McGury. “As transitioned service members and advocates, we’re here to help answer questions [and] give guidance,” said Pierce. He also stressed that many of the roles at Amazon are a good fit because they utilize similar skill sets. “A lot of our data center positions are cleared facilities […] operations mission critical facilities, very similar for military individuals. The skill sets that they offer work very well within our teams and the jobs that we have,” Pierce said.

Laura Hatcher, a 31-year Navy veteran turned photographer, wasn’t at the event to hire, but to provide professional headshots to attendees at no cost. “This is my second career, and the majority of my clients are transitioning veterans,

because that’s what I went through,” Hatcher said. “I understand it. And I love these kinds of events, mainly because you get to stay in the community and [help] a lot of people that are looking for jobs,” she said.

HII Dedicated to STEM

Amidst a maze of colorful exhibition booths, a bustling stream of kids and parents explore cutting edge tech, including 3D printers, tablet-controlled robots, rocket testing stations, and hands on (literally!) electricity experiments.

America’s largest shipbuilder, HII, is at the center of it all with a huge variety of interactive exhibit stations and lots of smiles from their enthusiastic staff. Grant Ronquillo and Kelsie Rountree (mechanical engineer and trade school

coordinator for HII, respectively) both talked about the fun being at the Navy League Expo, grinning as they watched kids learn how to weld in a virtual reality simulator.

President and CEO of HII, Chris Kastner, also spoke with Seapower about HII's dedication to STEM, including a rigorous internship program. "We have a good conversion rate from our interns, especially our technical interns, because we actually give them real work to do when they come into the company," he said. "They're not just doing busy work."

But ultimately, HII's focus is on the benefit to the larger community.

"If we don't invest our communities, in STEM, and make sure we have technical talent that can work in the shipyards, then we're not doing the right thing for the community," said Kastner.

Building a City

The Exhibit Hall under construction.

Armchair experts and motivational speakers the world over are fond of saying that Rome wasn't built in a day. Less an historical account of Roman expediency, the saying is meant to convey the idea that great things take time. Civilizations don't happen overnight. And certainly, building a city represents a commitment to an idea.

The sprawling city you see before you here at Sea-Air-Space 2023 also wasn't built in a day. But close. It took three.

Last Thursday, these exhibit halls were empty shells. Footsteps rang across football-field expanses, voices echoed, and dust motes – not bands – played in ballrooms. We got to work. Everyone, from Navy League staff to contractors and vendors, to exhibit builders, to operations and logistics experts rolled up their sleeves and began the process of turning nothing into something. And not just any something, but something amazing.

The exhibition booths themselves are an incredible feat on

their own. They showcase possibilities, and in many cases, fantastic realities of technology and innovation that will bulwark our sea services and support their missions in the years to come. The panel discussions and other events are built as well, and not only with the physical infrastructure of microphones, lights, speakers, and chairs. Our Navy League team built these events with dedication, with people, and with a commitment to an idea.

Our idea is this: What if we amass the best and brightest together for three days once a year, put our collective heads together, and create real solutions that affect the viability of our seapower. What if we change our world. What if.

Welcome to our city.

Q&A with Naval Supply Systems Command

Seapower magazine interviews Vice Commander Kurt J. Wendelken

What are the roles of the Naval Supply Systems Command?

1. NAVSUP and the Supply Corps conduct and enable supply chain, acquisition, operational logistics and Sailor & family care activities with our mission partners to generate readiness and sustain naval forces worldwide to prevent and decisively win wars.

How is the era of great power competition affecting NAVSUP’s roles and responsibilities?

1. As Navy’s end-to-end supply chain integrator, NAVSUP is working hard to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness in Navy’s supply chains. One major initiative is Naval Sustainment System-Supply (NSS-S). Naval Sustainment System (NSS) is a combination of commercial best practices, process improvements, governance and oversight to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness within available means. NSS-Supply embraces industry best practices tailored for specific Navy needs and fleet operations in order to reduce maintenance turnaround times, increase end-to-end velocity of spares, repairs, and reduce costs.

Why does the Navy’s supply chain need the transformation of the Naval Sustainment System-Supply?

1. NSS-Supply seeks to strengthen Navy’s supply chain in order to increase readiness, thus enhancing combat capability and creating a model of sustainment that will allow the Navy to effectively generate readiness and sustain global navy power.

How does NAVSUP fit in the Navy’s push for more distributed maritime operations and in the Marine Corps’ expeditionary advance base operations?

1. Combined with the most robust, end-to-end logistics doctrine that the world has ever seen, NAVSUP provides uninterrupted (despite contested environment) supply chain management, bulk and aviation fueling capability, material handling equipment, contracting, hazardous material management, household goods and vehicle processing and postal operations to fleet, installation and other service components throughout every area of operations.

How will management of the supply chain be more integrated and streamlined with the warfighting commands?

1. By extension, NSS-Supply embraces industry best practices tailored for specific Navy needs and fleet operations in order to reduce maintenance turnaround times, increase end-to-end velocity of spares, repairs, and reduce costs.

What major segments of the supply chain are not owned by NAVSUP? How does the Defense Logistics Agency's roles compare with those of NAVSUP?

1. NAVSUP and the Supply Corps conduct and enable service specific supply chain, acquisition, operational logistics, and Sailor & family care activities with our mission partners to generate readiness and sustain naval forces worldwide to prevent and decisively win wars. The Defense Logistics Agency is the DoD executive agent for specific classes of supply that are common across the military services like food, fuel, construction material, and medical supplies. They also provide extensive warehousing services across DoD.

What are that current challenges that NAVSUP faces with the defense industry in executing the supply chain?

1. Executing an effective naval supply chain is increasingly challenging, in part due to the Defense Department's pressure on industry to become lean. We now face raw material shortages, weapon systems obsolescence, a shrinking skilled labor pool, excessive acquisition lead times, and a dwindling sub vendor base with a heavy reliance on sole source vendors. Maintaining our current warfighting edge requires better

collaboration and transparency with industry. We need to invest in sustainment up front, consider where prepositioning materials makes sense, and work better to reverse the current trends deteriorating material lead times.

What new technologies look promising in aiding NAVSUP in streamlining the supply chain?

1. NAVSUP manages Navy's globally distributed, highly complex, and increasingly digital supply chains. LOG IT and Supply Chain systems are critical enablers in generating and sustaining readiness. NAVSUP is proactively taking steps to deliver modern digital solutions that support real-time operations to include system modernization, leveraging internet of things (IOT) technology and machine learning/artificial intelligence to improve asset visibility.

What can be done to expand competition among suppliers?

1. NAVSUP contracting offices attempt to enhance competition through early outreach in an effort to identify as many potential sources as possible. The use of Industry Days is also a popular method among NAVSUP contracting offices for specific types of procurements, such as ship repair or husbanding. These are established days where potential sources are invited to attend and learn as NAVSUP provides guidance on doing business with the government. This is a way to ease private sector concerns and generate interest.

What can the defense industry do to help the Navy improve its supply chain?

1. Just as the Navy has incorporated a “Get Real, Get Better” mantra, so we ask industry to embrace the same. We are all working towards a collective goal of supporting national defense, and it is imperative to operate with transparency and honesty, not distrust. Short-term, be accurate with contract schedules and deliver on time in accordance with contractual commitments. Increase the number and scope of strategic contracts to help offset material, labor, and financial stressors. Long-term, deepen the partnership with the Navy to create a more effective sustainment environment earlier in weapons system development. With more agility and cooperation, we can identify, plan, and overcome supply chain barriers to better support our fleet, which is the ultimate goal.

Navy Orders Third Lot of Next-Generation Jammer Pods

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has placed an order with Raytheon for the third lot of ALQ-249 Next-Generation Jammer-Mid-Band (NGJ-MB) pods.

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded a $650 million fixed-price incentive (firm target) and cost-plus-fixed-fee contract to Raytheon, "for the production and delivery of low-rate initial production (LRIP) Lot III Next Generation Jammer (NGJ) Mid-Band (MB), to include 15 NGJ-MB LRIP ship sets (2 pods per ship set), 11 for the Navy and four for the government of Australia," a March 30 Defense Department contract announcement said.

The contract also includes "associated spares, support equipment, non-recurring engineering and associated data."

The NGJ-MB is a portion of the overall NGJ program that will replace the legacy ALQ-99 jamming pods on board the EA-18G aircraft. When the NGJ is combined with the EA-18G's comprehensive suite of radar and communications receivers, electronic warfare officers can detect, analyze and react to current and future threat systems.

Raytheon delivered two production-representative NGJ-MB pods to the Navy's Airborne Electronic Attack Systems Program Office (PMA-234) pod shop in July 2022 where they were used for testing.

Initial operational capability of the NGJ-MB was scheduled for fall 2023, according to information obtained in 2022.

Congressman Questions Navy's Delay in Super Hornet Contract

PHILIPPINE SEA (March 21, 2023) An F/A-18F Super Hornet from the "Mighty Shrikes" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 94 approaches for an arrested landing aboard the aircraft carrier

USS Nimitz (CVN 68). Nimitz is in U.S. 7th Fleet conducting routine operations. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with Allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Justin McTaggart)
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WASHINGTON – The delay in the Navy's award of a contract for the service's final procurement of 20 F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters is exacerbating the service's strike fighter shortage, a congressman said, and is reducing the Navy's future warfighting capacity.

Rep. Mike Garcia, R-California, a former Navy F/A-18 pilot and a member of the House Appropriations Committee's defense subcommittee (HAC-D), questioned Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro about the delay in a March 29 hearing.

Garcia said the Navy currently is, "effectively two air wings short [of strike fighters] over the next 10 years" which will not be resolved until 2031.

The congressman noted that the 12 Super Hornets approved in fiscal 2022 and the eight approved in fiscal 2023 are not yet on contract. He noted that there are discussions between the Navy and Boeing, the Super Hornet's manufacturer regarding the technical data package for the aircraft.

Data Package Negotiations

"The Department of the Navy is committed to putting on contract those 20 additional F/A-18E/Fs," Del Toro said. "In fact, we've extended an RFP [Request for Proposal] to the Boeing Corporation. They have told us that they will come back to us with a proposal sometime in the June time frame. In the meantime, what we're trying to actually do is to ensure that Boeing does deliver to us the data rights are essential for us to be able to in the future maintain and repair those

aircraft.

“And what I’m most concerned about, Congressman, is that if we do actually get into a conflict with China, we’re not going to be able to send those aircraft back to the continental United States to get repaired at a manufacturing plant,” he said. “We’re going to have to repair those things ourselves. Which means the government – we need on behalf of the American people and our service members the data rights – the full data package that we paid for and deserve to have in order to be able to repair and sustain those aircraft in combat. That’s our major concern. […] Our engineers are meeting with their engineers to get the full definition of what the data package actually calls for.”

Del Toro also said he instructed the respective general counsels to meet to have parallel discussions on the issue.

Get the Jets Delivered

Garcia noted his own experience on the warfighting side and the defense contracting side and that he has read Super Hornet contracts specifically.

“I would submit that I agree with you the Navy has a requirement to maintain and repair and the tech data package to support that, not to manufacturing, and there is a clear bifurcating line there,” he said. “You are calling right now an IP [intellectual property] that is not within the government’s domain. Boeing has been very supportive in the SLM [F/A-18E/F Service-Life Modernization] projects and making sure that the FRCs [Fleet Readiness Centers] – the O-level depot maintenance is actually functional.

“And I would submit that the IP that you’re calling for right now – the manufacturing know-how, which is not only Boeing but their entire supply chain is not nearly as valuable in closing the strike fighter as the 20 jets,” Garcia said. We have mandate – it’s not formal, but we should – to be ready for

something in 2025. Closing the gap in 2023 (sic) would be interesting, but your gap by that point will be significantly higher because our carriers will be schwacked, our air wings will be missing, and our warfighters will be dead.

“I think this conversation between the lawyers and the contracting officers is screwing the customer,” Garcia said. “The customer is the warfighter, the customer is the taxpayer, and I implore you sir, with all the power and levers at your disposal, to compartmentalize this IP conversation, get these jets so they can get delivered. They’re already going to be late. I don’t know if we’re going to get 20 for the amount of money that we allocated at this point.”

Navy Decommissions Last Coastal Patrol Ships

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has decommissioned its last two Cyclone-class patrol coastal ships in March 28 ceremonies at Naval Support Activity, Bahrain, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said in a release. The USS Monsoon (PC 4) and USS Chinook (PC 9) were the last of the class. They are scheduled to be transferred to the Philippine Navy.

The event marked the end of service with the 14-ship Cyclone class and the end of the coastal patrol ship – which the Navy called the patrol coastal ship – in the U.S. Navy, at least for the foreseeable future. The ships were designed to support special operations forces in coastal operations.

In early 2022, the Navy decommissioned and transferred five patrol craft to the Royal Bahrain Naval Force: USS Tempest (PC 2), USS Typhoon (PC 5), USS Squall (PC 7), USS Firebolt (PC 10) and USS Whirlwind (PC 11). Last week, on March 21, the U.S. Navy decommissioned and transferred USS Hurricane (PC 3), USS Sirocco (PC 6) and USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) were

decommissioned and transferred to the Egyptian Navy during a formal ceremony in Alexandria, Egypt.

In February and March 2021, the Navy decommissioned three PCs used for training PC crews based in Mayport, Florida, and deployed to man the 10 deployed PCs: USS Shamal, USS Zephyr, and USS Tornado.

The lead ship of the class, the former USS Cyclone, was commissioned in August 1993. It was decommissioned on February 28, 2000, and eventually transferred to the Philippine Navy during a time when the U.S. Navy and U.S. Special Operations Command saw little use for the ships. That changed with the terrorist attacks of 9-11. The PCs were tasked with homeland security missions and three were transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard, being returned to the Navy in 2011. Ten of the Navy's PCs eventually were transferred to the U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain for maritime security patrols.

"I'm honored to be a part of the legacy on this waterfront," said Lieutenant Commander Dre Johnson, Monsoon's last commanding officer during the ceremony, according to the Navy release. "PC Sailors are a unique bunch, and only they can understand the amount of work they've done and the pride they have in what they've accomplished."

"With 28 years of crew covering multiple generations, each one was dedicated to the mission, adapting to rapidly changing mission sets, and working together as a team to accomplish whatever obstacle that came their way," said Lieutenant Commander David Hartmann, Chinook's commanding officer.

Senate Seapower Chair: Committee Will Drill Down on Navy’s Amphib Issue

SASEBO, Japan (Sept. 15, 2021) The amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown (LSD 42) departs Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan (CFAS), Sept. 15, 2021. Germantown will shift home ports from Sasebo to San Diego after serving as a forward-deployed ship in U.S. 7th Fleet since Jan. 5, 2011. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jasmine Ikusebiala)

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WASHINGTON – The new chairman of the Senate’s Seapower subcommittee said he plans to drill down on the issue of the Navy’s requirement for 31 large and medium amphibious warships and why the 2024 budget does not apparently support that requirement, which is law.

“I’m still mystified with the reticence of the president’s budget with respect to meeting our 31 amphib requirement,” said Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Virginia, speaking March 2 in his first online press conference since becoming chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee’s Seapower subcommittee.

In the 2024 budget proposal, the Navy plans to decommission three old Whidbey Island-class dock landing ships (LSDs) but declined to fund any more Flight II San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ships (LPDs) over the next five years.

The 2023 National Defense Authorization Act requires the Navy to sustain a force level of 31 large and medium amphibious warships.

“Last year, when we had the hearing, all three – the SECNAV, the [Marine Corps] commandant, the CNO – all said, ‘Look, we’re all on the same page,” Kaine said. “There’s no difference between us. They promised that a study would be forthcoming soon. That showed that the requirement that the Marines need to basically meet their objectives and our national security objectives is 31 amphibs.”

“The president’s budget doesn’t suggest that they’re making that kind of investment to get us to 31,” he said. “I’ve heard testimony from our Navy and Marine leadership enough to know that the 31 amphibs is the requirement and somebody’s going to have to do a pretty amazing job to convince me otherwise at this point. They have been so consistent on that for a significant period of time.”

Kaine said, “The Navy should know that we’re really going to dig into this. We have been convinced that the number is 31 and we’ve yet to be told by anybody that it’s not 31. So, is there a mismatch between the SECNAV, commandant, and CNO? And with the OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] is there a mismatch with OMB [Office of Management and Budget]? I don’t

know exactly where the mismatch is, but I think it's above the Navy. I think the Navy and Marines are completely on board on this. The consistency of this testimony has been notable. If that's the case, you're going to see a really strong bias on the committee to make sure [the Navy] has the funds for 31 and not drop below it.

The senator said he has seen "tentative suggestion" that the level of 31 could be reached if the funds were made available next beginning next year "But that is sending a confusing message that suggests that they're not really committed to 31. I think the committee is committed to 31."

AUKUS Deal Buoys Submarine Suppliers

President Joe Biden greets British Prime Minister Rishi Surnak and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese the AUKUS bilateral meeting in San Diego, Calif, March 13, 2023. (DoD photo by Chad J. McNeeley)

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The suppliers of components and materials to the nation's submarine shipyards praised the AUKUS agreement's plan for building three or potentially five Virginia-class attack submarines (SSNs).

The AUKUS agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to provide nuclear-powered attack submarines for Australia will involve supplying three Virginia-class SSNs to Australia (with an option for two more) starting in the early 2030s, followed by a new class of SSNs – the SSN-AUKUS – built in the United Kingdom in the late 2030s, followed by further SSN-AUKUS submarines built in Australia in the early 1940s.

Steven Dobos, chairman of the Submarine Industrial Base

Council, said in an interview with Seapower that the timing of when the three-to-five Virginia-class SSNs are slotted in the production presents a challenge and an opportunity.

“It’s a good problem,” Dobos said. “For years it was, are they going to fund a boat? Are they going to fund two boats? Are they going to put two Virginias in the same year? What are we going to do with Columbia? … It comes with an extensive set of challenges, but they are all opportunities. The defense industry, and particularly the submarine industrial base, they have met the challenges of the past and I don’t think there’s anything in the future preventing it from doing it in the future with adequate planning.”

Dobos said that Congress is “extremely” supportive of the submarine industrial base, “probably more than ever.”

“I would expect to see some plus-ups put in there, but I think everybody would be happy if it went in at the president’s budget [level],” he said.

“Everything is pie in the sky until the contract is awarded,” he said. “The supply chain now is being told that they’re going to go to a larger block buy for most of this, where they’re going to package five Columbias and seven Virginias gives you visibility as to what your cadence is going to be, and that allows you to accurately staff your work force and give you the time to build up what you need.”

As with the submarine-building shipyards, the submarine suppliers face the challenges of recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce.

“As fast as we can hire skill, we lose skill for varying reasons,” said Dobos, whose own company in Cameron, Texas. “Texas is in the middle of the oil field. You’re fighting with oil and gas [industry] for your welders, your fitters and your machinists.”

Dobos said the SIBC was pleased with the $636 million proposed in the president's 2023 budget for supplier and workforce development.

Dobos is the president and CEO of Butler Weldments in Cameron, Texas. His company produces components for the prime contractors that build submarines, HII's Newport News Shipbuilding and General Dynamics' Electric Boat. The products include foundations for heavy machinery such as turbine sub-bases for the main propulsion unit for the Virginia-class, numerous components for the Columbia-class, large fixtures for Newport News and Electric Boat to support the Columbia construction, and large power-generation frames.

The SIBC's membership includes approximately 2,000 suppliers.