

Admiral: Ecosystems Around Shipyards Can Attract, Retain Workers



ARLINGTON, Va. – The services offered by communities adjacent to shipyards can help attract and retain skilled shipbuilding and repair workers, a Navy admiral in charge of shipbuilding said.

“One of the things we’ve seen that is very successful is building ecosystems around the shipyards – Congress working with state and local governments to aid in the development of systems around shipyards that really provide opportunity, said Rear Admiral Thomas J. Anderson, Navy Program Executive Officer for Ships, testifying May 11 before the House Oversight and Accountability Subcommittee on National

Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs.

“If there is no housing in the area of a shipyard, you’re going to have a hard time having blue-collar labor come in and be interested in a job there,” Anderson said. “Things like health care, day care, [and] housing are really important to have in the vicinity of the yards to attract the talent that we need to build the ships we need in the future.”

Anderson said that “[o]ne of the real challenges we have in this country is availability of blue-collar labor. We saw that as a challenge as we were in COVID and when we came out of COVID and we continue to struggle to identify talent to come in, people who are interested in the blue-collar trades.

“So, support of our budget requests that provide funding to develop the work force that comes in two ways: the submarine industrial base, which I mentioned earlier, has targeted funds to help advance the work force,” he said. “Additionally, last year in the NDAA [2023 National Defense Authorization Act], Section 122, provided a requirement for the Navy – when awarding shipbuilding contracts in the future – to fund a percentage of the overall cost of the ship to go toward workforce development items.”

Anderson noted that supplier industrial base funds are being used “to get people interested in blue-collar labor, get them married up with companies that support that supply chain. The submarine industrial base is where we really need efforts.”

The admiral said that “somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000 tradespeople [need] to be hired over the next 10 years” for the submarine shipbuilders.

Anderson touched on a more inspirational aspect of attracting shipyard workers: “Growing the work force, making sure that young people understand that it is an honorable and important profession to build ships or to repair ships for the U.S. Navy, something that not just the Congress but at all levels

of our country is something that we can stress and will pay dividends as we expand our capacity.”

Navy Orders Four CMV-22B Osprey COD Aircraft, Bringing Total to 48



SASEBO, Japan (Feb. 23, 2022) A CMV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft assigned to the “Titans” of Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30, prepares to land at Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo (CFAS) while conducting passenger and cargo transfer operations. For 75 years, CFAS has provided, maintained, and operated base facilities and services to empower forward-deployed U.S. and Allied Forces while providing superior support to their families and the

community. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist
1st Class Jeremy Graham)

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has ordered four additional CMV-22B Osprey carrier-onboard delivery aircraft, according to a March 5 Defense Department contract announcement.

The Bell Boeing Joint Project Office, Amarillo, Texas, was awarded a \$482.3 million contract modification by the Naval Air Systems Command for the four CMV-22Bs, the announcement said. The order follows a Feb. 26 order for four CMV-22Bs.

The order completes the Navy's plan to procure 48 CMV-22Bs. The aircraft are scheduled to be delivered by June 26 under the June 2018 multiyear procurement contract.

The Navy's CMV-22B replaces the C-2A Greyhound for the Carrier On-Board Delivery (COD) mission. Its mission is to transport personnel, mail, supplies and cargo from shore bases to aircraft carriers at sea.

The CMV-22B differs from the MV-22B by having a high-frequency radio, extra fuel capacity, improved fuel dump capability, improved lighting for cargo handling and a public address system. The aircraft can carry up to 6,000 pounds up to a range of 1,150 nautical miles. It is capable of internally carrying the F-135 engine power module for the F-35 Lightning II.

The first CMV-22B squadron, VRM-30, is working up a detachment to deploy on board USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). VRM-30 detachments have completed two deployments to the Western Pacific.

Full operational capability of the CMV-22B is scheduled for 2024.

Marine Units Ordered to the Southern Border

Arlington, Va. – U.S. Marines from two units have been selected to augment the Department of Homeland Security in assisting with operations along the U.S. southwest border, according to the U.S. Northern Command.

The Marines will “provide support with duties including data entry, warehousing, support, and additional detection and monitoring support efforts,” a May 6 Northern Command release said. “This military support increases the availability of Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) law enforcement personnel to conduct law enforcement-specific duties.

The Marines will come from two regiments from the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina:

- 2nd Marine Regiment
- Combat Logistics Battalion 2

The Army’s 93rd Military Police Battalion based at Fort Bliss, Texas, and some Air Force personnel from unidentified units also are being assigned the same duties. All assigned forces are to be in place by May 10.

“Military personnel will not be permitted to support migrant processing and escort duties or other activities that involve direct participation in civilian law enforcement activities, be responsible for property seized from migrants, or require direct contact with migrants,” the release said.

Navalist: Investment in Carrier Air Wings Needed to Keep Carriers Relevant



SOUTH CHINA SEA (April 22, 2023) F/A-18F Super Hornets from the “Mighty Shrikes” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 94 fly in formation above the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) during an all-domain joint exercise, demonstrating unique theater-wide multi-discipline high-end warfighting capability, maritime superiority, power projection, speed of maneuver and readiness. VFA-94 is attached to the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group, currently underway in U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations conducting routine operations. 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)

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's aircraft carrier force is losing relevance because of a lack of investment in the aircraft that it carries, a naval analyst said.

"We are a carrier-based force, so we have the 11 aircraft carriers mandated by law," said Dr. Jerry Hendrix, senior fellow of the Sagamore Institute, a retired Navy captain, and former director of the Navy History and Heritage Command, speaking May 1 at an event at the Hudson Institute, a Washington think tank. "We built our navy around the aircraft carrier ever since the Battle of Midway. It is the preeminent platform in our navy. And yet, because of the lack of investment in the carrier air wing itself, the carriers themselves are losing their relevance."

"We're actually seeing this in wargame activities, whether it's wargames in the commercial or civilian sector or academic sector or whether the things we're hearing out of the Pentagon, where the carriers are having lesser and lesser roles to play in some of these wargames," Hendrix said. "So, if you want the carrier to remain relevant as a centerpiece, you have to make significant investments in that carrier air wing to get to a long-range, penetrating strike capacity back that will allow those carriers to operate in anti-access/area-denial environments."

Hendrix also said the Navy needs to look hard at the force mix between the Atlantic and Pacific regions. He said he believes a greater submarine capacity is needed in the Pacific region than necessarily in the Atlantic, despite the fact that the primary Russian naval threat is its attack submarine force.

He noted the Navy's return to building frigates, with the Constellation-class guided-missile frigate now under construction.

"We need to have the frigate be a frigate, providing presence,

convoy escort," he said. "Don't ask every frigate to be a destroyer and don't ask every destroyer to be a cruiser and a battleship – it's what we've done in recent years. We need to look at that small-end, small-capacity, small surface combatants and drive more investment into whether it's manned or unmanned, getting back out there to be able to operate in small, confined spaces but also build more platforms at a cheaper price."

Hendrix indicated that he sees the traditional carrier strike group as needing to be re-thought.

"I would see us really departing from the tried and the true, the standard method of one carrier, two cruisers, four destroyers, and two attack submarines," he said. "I want to see the fleet of the future look significantly different than the fleet of today. In fact, if it doesn't, we've made a strategic mistake at that point."

Berger: Lack of Amphibs Left AFRICOM with No Sea-Based Option for Sudan Evacuation



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (April 30, 2022) The San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24), center, and the Military Sealift Command Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie (T-AO 203), background, sail through the Mediterranean Sea while conducting a replenishment-at-sea, April 30, 2022. Arlington, assigned to the Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group, is on a scheduled deployment under the command and control of Task Force 61/2 operating in U.S. Sixth Fleet in support of U.S., Allied and partner interests in Europe and Africa. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Bellino)

WASHINGTON – The presence of an amphibious ready group (ARG), with a Marine expeditionary unit (MEU) embarked, gives a regional combatant commander an option to respond to a crisis ashore. When the United States government decided to evacuate its embassy in Sudan on April 23, last week, no ARG-MEU was available in the region.

Similarly, if the United States government had decided that projecting a force ashore in Sudan was needed to protect or

evacuate some 15,000 Americans in Sudan, it would have had few options.

To Marine Corps Commandant General David. H. Berger, testifying April 2 before the House Armed Services Committee, the Sudan crisis is an example of the lack of a crisis response capability that the Navy and Marine Corps amphibious warfare forces, if nearby, could have provided to the combatant commander, in this case, Marine General Michael E. Langley, commander, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

To Berger, the crisis illustrated yet again why the nation's need for 31 [large and medium amphibious warfare ships] to provide the crisis response and deterrence capabilities needed by U.S. combatant commanders.

Berger was referring to the statutory requirement in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act for the Navy to sustain a fleet of a minimum of 31 amphibious warfare ships. Without such a force, there would be occasions when response would be lacking.

"We would have gaps during the year when we would not have an at-sea capability for the combatant commander when something happens," Berger said. "We would not be deterring; we would not be in a position to respond. In places like Türkiye or places like Sudan, I feel like I let down the combatant commander, because General Langley needs options. He didn't have a sea-based option. That's how we reinforce embassies. That's how we evacuate them. That's how we deter.

"It opens up risks for the combatant commander," Berger said. "We have to have 31 [large and medium amphibious warfare ships] at a minimum; nothing less."

General Lists Marine Corps VTOL Development Priorities for Congress



BALTIC SEA (May 18, 2022) U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Ryan Mortensen and Capt. Jeffrey Jaeckel, both AH-1Z pilots assigned to the Aviation Combat Element, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, take-off during flight operations aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD3) in the Baltic Sea, May 18, 2022. The Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit are participating in the Estonian-led exercise Siil 22 (Hedgehog 22 in English). Siil 22 brings together members of the Estonian Defense Force and Sailors and Marines under Commander Task Force 61/2 to enhance Allied interoperability and preserve security and stability in the Baltic region. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Brittney Vella)

WASHINGTON – The Marine Corps general in charge of aviation requirements detailed for Congress the service's priorities for vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) platforms during testimony regarding the 2024 defense budget hearings.

"Our VTOL Family of Systems has three lines of effort," said Lieutenant General Michael S. Cederholm, deputy commandant for aviation, testifying April 19 before the Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

"The first one is logistics," Cederholm said. "We're looking at a risk-worthy, unmanned logistics connector. We're in the process of developing and working through our process and Initial Capabilities Requirement Document right now. That's gone through and is sitting at the MROC [Marine Requirements Oversight Council] for decision."

Cederholm said the second line of effort "is attack/strike. We have taken a different approach because we're at different stages of modernization. The Marine Corps is in a unique position – a good one. The relative health of our fleet and the nascent age of our fleet of H-1s [AH-1Z and UH-1Y helicopters] and V-22s. We're just transitioning to the 53Kilo [CH-53K helicopter]. This gives us an opportunity to – in the future – not wait but very expeditiously and thoroughly explore the intersection point between budget, requirements, and future capabilities. We can look at the attack/strike role and what are the advances in teaming, autonomy; advances in lethality and survivability."

The general listed the third line of effort, "is to replace our extant platforms like the MV-22 when it ages out with the Next-Gen Assault Support."

Cederholm said he "is excited [about] where the Marine Corps is. We have a sense of urgency, but we also have time to be thorough in our approach to unmanned in the future."

Admiral: Analysis of Alternatives for MH-60 Helo Replacement Completed



ATLANTIC OCEAN (March 31, 2023) Sailors assigned to the first-in-class aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) weapons department, attach an ammunition crate to an MH-60S Knighthawk, attached to the "Tridents" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9, during an ammunition on-load with USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13), March 31, 2023. Gerald R. Ford is underway in the Atlantic Ocean conducting routine operations and training in order to maintain readiness. As the first-in-class ship of Ford-class aircraft carriers, CVN-78 represents a generational leap in the U.S. Navy's capacity to project power on a global scale. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass

Communication Specialist 2nd Class Nolan Pennington)

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Navy has completed analysis of its options for future rotorcraft to replace the service's MH-60R and MH-60S Seahawk helicopters and has forwarded the analysis to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Rear Admiral Andrew J. Loisel, director, Air Warfare Division, testifying April 19 before the Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, said the Analysis of Alternatives for the Navy's version of Future Vertical Lift (FVL) has been forwarded to the OSD's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) office.

"Once [CAPE] is done with that sufficiency assessment, then we will absolutely move on to selecting a preferred alternative for the Navy, and all the costing and acquisition documentation necessary to reach a Milestone A, likely in about the [fiscal] '25 time frame," Loisel said.

The admiral said the Navy's FVL effort, "is about five years behind the Army, as far as an acquisition program goes. [...] That fits with when we expect service life to be expired in our Sierra [MH-60S] and Romeo [MH-60R] fleet. "

The Navy has service-life extension programs underway or planned for both types of helicopters. The MH-60S extension is to extend their service lives from 10,000 flight hours to 12,000 flight hours, about seven years, into the 2030s.

Loisel said a service life extension for the MH-60R can be delayed until the 2030s because the Navy has some new-production MH-60Rs in storage that can be brought into service.

Loisel said the Navy is tuned in to the Army's FVL efforts and is predominately focused on mission systems.

He noted that of the Army's planned airframes, the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLARA) is too large for the flight decks of the Navy's destroyers and the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) is, "too small for our needs, so I don't see a direct correlation to our requirements to theirs, however, that does not mean we will not have numerous opportunities."

Senator Grills SECNAV on Amphib Ship Plans



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)

ARLINGTON, Va. – A senator used a congressional hearing to point out that the Navy would be violating the law by letting the number of amphibious warships drop below a Congressionally mandated level of 31 in fiscal year 2024.

The President's 2024 budget calls for the decommissioning of three Whidbey Island-class old dock landing ships and not procuring any Flight II San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ships (LPDs) over the next five years to replace them. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2023 requires the Navy to maintain a fleet of 31 large and medium-size amphibious warfare ships.

In an otherwise convivial April 18 hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), a reserve Marine Corps colonel, confronted Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro about the Navy's shipbuilding plans.

"The 30-year [shipbuilding] plan shows that the Navy has no intention of meeting this statutory requirement," Sullivan said, noting that he worked with Marine Corps Commandant General David H. Berger to legislate the requirement into the law, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2023, a requirement which Berger affirmed during the hearing.

During the hearing, Sullivan read an excerpt from the law: "The naval combat forces of the Navy shall include not less than 11 operational aircraft carriers and not less than 31 operational amphibious warfare ships of which not less than 10 shall be amphibious assault ships."

The senator said he sympathized with Berger's awkward position.

"I want to compliment the commandant," Sullivan said. "It's not easy to be sitting next to your boss saying, 'We need this.' Your boss obviously doesn't agree, General."

Taking note of all of the planned studies and analysis on the subject, Sullivan declared all of it irrelevant in that the requirement has been set in law.

"The Congress of the United States did the balancing, Mr. Secretary, working with the Marine Corps," Sullivan said. [...] You are violating the law. Would you come before this committee and say, 'Sorry, we're not going to do 11 carriers'? [...] You can't do it sir. I simply find it unacceptable that that we're all just letting you say, 'Eh, maybe that was a suggestion by the Congress.' It wasn't a suggestion; it was a mandate."

Sullivan pursued the issue further.

"Why are you violating the law?" he asked. "And why does your shipbuilding plan have no remote interest for the next 3 years, as far as I can tell, of hitting the statutory mandate that we told you to hit. I have no idea what your answer is going to be, but you need to follow the law, sir. What's the answer?"

"Senator, as a member of the executive, it is my responsibility to follow the law," Del Toro said. "It's also my responsibility to ensure that we just don't waste taxpayer money on vessels, for example, that will never see the light of day."

"This Congress has given you multi-ship procurement authorities in the past three NDAA's," Sullivan said. "This is the third year in a row that amphibs are not being procured with this cost-saving authority. So, it's a little rich when you talk to me about taxpayer savings when you're not using the ability to save money that we gave you on amphibs. ... I'm requesting that you come back to this committee soon and tell

us how you're going to follow the law. That's your only option, Mr. Secretary."

"Senator, you have my commitment that I will come back to you with a statement on how we can fix this," Del Toro said. "Yes, sir, it is my intent to follow the law. [...] As we develop the president's budget for '25, I will look at that as an option that we can pursue to get us back on track with multi-ship procurement for LPDs."

"It's not an option for you, Mr. Secretary," Sullivan replied. "The committee, the Congress, the President have spoken. [...] This is a big issue, and right now the secretary of the Navy is ignoring the Congress of the United States. This is unacceptable."

Marine Corps to Activate Second F-35C Squadron



Caption: PHILIPPINE SEA (April 19, 2022) An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), April 19, 2022. VMFA-314 will be joined this month by VMFA-311, being re-activated to be the Marine Corps’ second F-35C squadron. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes)

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps is scheduled to activate its second F-35C Lightning II strike fighter squadron at the end of the week, Headquarters Marine Corps announced in a media announcement.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 311 (VMFA-311) will be re-activated from its former Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMA-311) identity in ceremonies on Friday, April 14, 2023, at [Marine Corps Air Station \(MCAS\) Miramar](#), California. The squadron will become the second operational Marine Corps squadron to operate the carrier-based F-35C version. VMFA-314, also based at Miramar, was the first, and has completed one deployment

with the F-35C, on board USS Abraham Lincoln.

VMA-311 was an AV-8B Harrier II squadron that was deactivated in October 2020. It was based at MCAS Yuma, Arizona. It had operated the AV-8 since 1988.

VMA-311 was established on December 1, 1942, as Marine Fighter Squadron 311 (VMF-311) and deployed to the Pacific Theater in April 1943, equipped with F4U-1 Corsair fighters. The squadron eventually operated from Okinawa in March 1945 and conducted dive bombing and combat air patrol missions.

The squadron became the Marine Corps' first operational jet squadron in 1948, operating F9F Panther fighters, and during the Korean War flew the Corps' first jet combat mission. After the war, the squadron upgraded to the F9F-8 Cougar. The squadron was re-designated VMA-311 on June 1, 1957, and by 1958 was operating the A4D Skyhawk.

The squadron flew its A-4s in combat in the Vietnam War from April 1965 through January 1973.

After transition to the AV-8B, VMA-311 deployed to Saudi Arabia, and, in Operation Desert Storm, became the first squadron to fly the Harrier II in combat. In November 2001, the squadron also became the first Harrier squadron to fly in combat during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The squadron also flew combat missions in Iraq beginning in March 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lt. Col. Michael P. Fisher will be the first commanding officer of VMFA-311.

Navy's Frigate Program Pushing Hard for 2026 Delivery of USS Constellation



Captain Kevin Smith responds to workforce pipeline question from Ann Tropea, Editor-in-Chief at Seapower. Photo Credit: Dan Goodrich

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. –The Navy is pressing full bore to ensure that its new guided-missile frigate joins the fleet on time, the ship's program manager said.

"We're pushing hard with our industry partners to deliver that ship in 2026," said Captain Kevin Smith, program manager, Constellation Class Frigate, speaking to an audience at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space Expo in National Harbor. "A lot of hard work has gone into the design, the production readiness, and now we're actually building it up in Marinette, Wisconsin."

A frigate, in modern terminology, is "primarily an escort for high value units that don't have their own self-defense," Smith said. "It's also to help offset some of the work of the

large surface combatants like the cruisers and destroyers. It is a primary anti-submarine warfare platform, just like the FFG 7 [the Perry class frigates which have been decommissioned].”

“I am very happy with the performance we’re seeing thus far,” Smith said. “Obviously, we did change to a different variable to sonar a few years ago. ... The performance is astounding. ... Its integration with the [SQQ]-89 [antisubmarine warfare system] is going to be huge for the United States Navy and will be welcomed by the fleet.”

Smith also said the Aegis Baseline 10 combat system and the Enterprise Air Search Radar will give the new ship “a lot of capability.”

Fincantieri Partnership

The future USS Constellation (FFG 62) is one of three frigates under contract to Fincantieri’s Marinette Marine shipyard, the others being FFGs 63 and 64, under a 10-ship contract, including options. Smith said construction of FFG 62 will start soon and he expects the option for FFG 64 to be awarded this year as part of a four-ship buy.

The Navy worked with Fincantieri to design an advanced construction pilot, “to really exercise all of the capital improvements, all of their workflow processes, all of their instructions, all the way through the value stream ... from materials planning and getting the work orders to the workforce, making sure all those are understood.”

The frigate’s Aegis Combat System and SPY-6 Enterprise Air Search Radar are being integrated at the Lockheed Martin test lab in Moorestown, New Jersey, and at Wallops Island, Virginia. The propulsion plant and machinery control systems will be tested at a land-based test site in Philadelphia.

Need for Skilled Workforce

Smith said the Navy is working closely with Marinette Marine in strengthening the company's supply chain and develop and retain its skilled work force "to make sure we have a good strong industrial base workforce to build these frigates for the next decade and decades to come. We need that as part of our industrial base risk reduction."

The program manager also discussed the challenges of recruiting a skilled work force, in response to a question from Seapower.

"How do you build a community that people want to live and grow and raise families and be shipbuilders?" he asked rhetorically. "We have people on our staff that have experience in that. The other part is working with Marinette on how we can really build the workforce. There's training, there's investments on how they can get people to come work and stay and then be retained."

"Some shipbuilding people come out of high school ... and they stay there a year, maybe two," Smith said. "But if they don't make it past two years, they're not going to stay. So how do we get people to stay for longer than a year or two? And how do we how do we really get them excited about shipbuilding?"

"You may read about some of the things Colombia [the Columbia-class ballistic-missile submarine program] is doing," continued Smith. "We're looking at doing the same exact thing ... to think about Wisconsin ... There's other jobs out there that maybe are better ... but we're working on a lot of those things with the company and kind of coaching them with some of this funding we got from Congress. The big message here is I would predict that this company is going to be around for a long time and we need to get into the shipbuilding business long term as far as a prime and then we'll be able to count on them for decades."