

Shipbuilding Starting to Come Out of 'Readiness Divot,' Navy Vice Admiral Tells Audience



Rear Adm. Casper Donovan of the Royal Canadian Navy (right), a panelist at the "Future of Shipbuilding" program at Sea-Air-Space. Chuck Fazio

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – U.S and Canadian sea service officers and industry leaders looked forward to more seamless coordination and better times for shipbuilding, which one U.S. Navy vice admiral said was just recently emerging from a "readiness divot."

"We'd flirted dangerously, we had been shrinking the Navy for 40-plus years," said Vice. Adm. William Merz, a panelist in "The Future of Shipbuilding" program here at Sea-Air-Space on May 7.

Fellow speaker Rear Adm. Casper Donovan of the Royal Canadian Navy brought insight into Canada's 20-year shipbuilding program. "It's a great time to be in shipbuilding. For the first time, we have a long-term shipbuilding strategy," Donovan remarked of Canada's approach.

Could Canada be setting an example for its neighbors to the south in the U.S. sea services, who are still dealing with the effects of automatic spending cuts under budget sequestration? That word – sequestration – came up a lot during the hour-long discussion.



U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Douglas Schofield (left) and Steve Eckberg of General Dynamics NASSCO at the shipbuilding discussion. Chuck Fazio

But fiscal years 2019 and 2020 seem to be helping the U.S. Navy turn the corner, Merz said. The 2020 shipbuilding plan that is “now on the streets” stresses adaptability, efficiency and agility and includes funding for the Navy’s purchase of two Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers, CVNs 80 and 81, and funding for the Columbia class of nuclear submarines, among several programs.

“We *will* pay for Columbia class, a very expensive ship,” Merz added.

The shipbuilding news is also better for the U.S. Coast Guard, of course, with its 6/3/1 cutter construction strategy well underway, which fits under the National Defense Strategy, said another panelist, Coast Guard Rear Adm. Douglas Schofield.

“We’re finally recapitalizing a good portion of the Coast Guard fleet,” Schofield told the audience for the panel discussion, which was moderated by Matt Paxton, president of the Shipbuilders Council of America, and included Steve Eckberg of General Dynamics NASSCO.

“The partnership with industry is now more important than ever.”

Coast Guard Rear Adm. Douglas Schofield

The Coast Guard’s Schofield highlighted the construction of

new station boats, the new fast-response cutters, the delivery of the eighth national security cutter, the start of construction on the first Heritage-class offshore patrol cutter and the new contract to build three new polar security cutters for the Arctic, [an area of renewed focus for the Coast Guard](#).

“The partnership with industry is now more important than ever,” he said.

All panelists agreed that the “boom/bust” cycle hurts shipyards and private industry, because when the yards stand down from military ship construction, it’s very hard to engage them again. They go out of business or move on the construction of civilian-sector vessels.

Navy Undersecretary Echoes February Report in Call for ‘Agile’ Education for Future Sailors



Undersecretary of the Navy Thomas Modly (right), with moderator Francis Rose, host of “Government Matters,” at a May 7 breakfast program at Sea-Air-Space 2019. Ian Herbst Photography.

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – Undersecretary of the Navy Thomas Modly used much of his breakfast address here May 7 at Sea-Air-Space 2019 to reinforce the results of an “Education for Seapower” study and

report that
called for a more agile education infrastructure that develops
Sailors and leaders
for “this era of uncertainty.”

“We cannot take our eye off the ball in developing people,”
he said, adding that young people come to U.S. Navy service
with more
technological acumen and expecting a different experience and
lifestyle than
prior generations. “We have to think of the kinds of kids we
recruit.”

The undersecretary emphasized the February report’s findings
that called for a top-down review of how Sailors and future
Navy leaders are
educated, from ROTC programs to basic training and beyond to
continuing
education and leadership training. The interview-laden report
also showed that
a naval university system should be created and that a new
chief learning officer
(CLO) be appointed.



Rose and Modly at the Sea-Air-Space breakfast program May 7.
Ian Herbst Photography.

“We need to get that key leader in place,” Modly told the
audience at the breakfast, which was moderated by Francis
Rose, host of “Government
Matters.”

When questioned about the qualifications the new CLO should
possess, Modly mentioned the CLO’s background should include
some U.S. military
service and experience in a large university system. He also
emphasized that
the Navy’s budget for education is small and must be expanded.

Later when questioned, Modly veered off education and mentioned the need to distribute “lethality” to even the smallest of U.S. Navy ships, mentioning the frigate class, and even advocated for armed unmanned vessels. “We need a lot more distributed lethality,” he said.

CNO Cites History, Recalls Founding Fathers in Reinforcing Message of a ‘Decisive’ Navy



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson during his keynote address at the Sea Services Luncheon at Sea-Air-Space 2019 on May 6. Lisa Nipp

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – George Washington spoke May 6 at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space exposition – by way of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson, who used a famous quote by the Founding Father from 1781 to remind the audience of the necessity today – more than ever – of a “decisive” U.S. Navy.

Washington’s quote is, “Without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it, everything honorable and glorious.”

“The Navy was there at the very beginning. We’re in the nation’s DNA,” the 31st CNO told the audience, delivering a bit of a history

lesson during a keynote that also touched on Thomas Jefferson's belief that a potent Navy was essential to protect trade, commerce and the American economy.

"America depends on the seas," Richardson said.

"The Navy was there at the very beginning. We're in the nation's DNA."

CNO Adm. John M. Richardson

Much of the nation's economy, he reminded the audience, runs through the Far East now. He talks often these days about the resurgent "Great Power Competition" – and the CNO wasted no time doing so again at Sea-Air-Space, reminding the audience of China's naval expansion and mentioning such events as recent Chinese missile exercises in the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea.

"That's where your Navy is going to be," Richardson said, adding that a third of world trade runs through the South China Sea. "That's why the United States Navy is there."

He also mentioned Fleet Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, who believed the Navy's role is to deter conflict but still ensure prosperity.



The Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Award for 2019 went May 6 to James Herdt (second from left), CEO of Herdt Consulting and a retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Helping to present the award were (from left) Navy League National President Alan Kaplan, Adm. Richardson, Herdt and Navy League Executive Director Mike Stevens. Lisa Nipp

Richardson took part in ceremonies before his keynote address to laud recipients of two Navy League awards – including one that is named after Nimitz and honors an industry leader who

has made a major contribution to the nation's maritime strength.

The Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz Award for 2019 went to James Herdt, CEO of Herdt Consulting and a retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. "I know my name is on this award," Herdt said, but in thanking Navy League he accepted it on behalf of the people of his consulting firm.



The Albert A. Michelson Award went to Dr. Bruce G. Danly, director of research at the Naval Research Laboratory. Lisa Nipp

The second honor of the day, the Albert A. Michelson Award, went to Dr. Bruce G. Danly, director of research at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL). He credited the men of women of NRL, "who ensure that our forces have the best technology, unmatched by none."

Navy League National President Alan Kaplan and Navy League Executive Director Mike Stevens, also a retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, the 13th, helped present the Nimitz and Michelson awards. Richardson also spoke about the Navy's recruiting and retention in a recovering economy and added that the sea service has met its recruiting goals for more than 12 years in a row. "What is it that attracts people" to the Navy? the CNO asked. "Honorable and glorious, no better organization to join than the Navy to espouse those two ideals."

Coast Guard Cutter Robert Ward Commissioned in San Francisco



SAN FRANCISCO – The Coast Guard commissioned a new, California-based 154-foot fast response cutter (FRC), named the Robert Ward, in San Francisco on March 2.

The Robert Ward is the second of four Sentinel-Class FRCs to be homeported at Coast Guard Base Los Angeles-Long Beach. While the FRCs will be based in Southern California, they will operate throughout the 11th Coast Guard District, which includes all of California and international waters off Mexico and Central America.

“This cutter is specifically designed to face today’s threats in the maritime domain,” said Rear Adm. Peter Gautier, commander of the 11th Coast Guard District. “This cutter is faster, goes further and can do more than any other Coast Guard patrol boat.”

FRCs are 154-foot multimission ships designed to conduct drug and migrant interdictions, ports, waterways and coastal security operations, fisheries and environmental protection patrols, national defense missions and search and rescue.

“The crew and I are truly honored to serve aboard such a capable platform, and we look forward to continuing the Coast Guard’s vital missions throughout California and the Pacific,” said Lt. Benjamin Davne, Robert Ward’s commanding officer.

To date, the Coast Guard has accepted delivery of 31 FRCs. Each ship is designed for a crew of 24, has a range of 2,500 miles and is equipped for patrols up to five days. The FRCs are part of the Coast Guard’s overall fleet modernization

initiative.

FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment as well as over-the-horizon response boat deployment capability and improved habitability for the crew.

The ships can reach speeds of 28 knots and are equipped to coordinate operations with partner agencies and long-range Coast Guard assets such as the Coast Guard's national security cutters.

FRCs are named in honor of Coast Guard enlisted leaders, trailblazers and heroes. Robert Ward operated beach-landing boats during the Allied invasion of Normandy during World War II. He landed his craft on the Cotentin Peninsula and rescued two stranded boat crews in the face of a heavily fortified enemy assault.

Navy Picks BAE Systems to Develop Cyber Defenses

MCLEAN, Va. – The Navy has chosen BAE Systems to compete for future cyber-engineering task orders awarded under a seven-and-a-half-year, indefinite-delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract, according to a BAE release.

The contract is intended to be used by naval, joint and national agencies seeking lifecycle service support for command, control, communications, computers and combat systems. Additional task orders may be awarded to improve the capabilities and security of various signals intelligence, imagery intelligence, electronic warfare, surveillance and

reconnaissance systems.

"This award creates new opportunities for us to showcase our expertise in cyber-threat exploitation and analysis, computer network defense and security-focused systems engineering," said Kris Busch, who is vice president of BAE Systems' Integrated Defense Solutions business.

"We are also introducing new advanced analytics, artificial intelligence and machine-learning solutions that will further improve our nation's ability to defend against future land, sea, air, space, cyber and electromagnetic warfare threats."

The award also may be used to develop, test, produce and field next-generation autonomous and unmanned missions systems, according to BAE Systems, which is one of 10 companies chosen to compete for task orders awarded under the IDIQ, managed by Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic. The maximum value for all future task orders awarded under the contract is \$898 million.