Keel Authenticated for Future USNS Hector A. Cafferata Jr.

From Team Ships Public Affairs, 25 April 2024

SAN DIEGO – The keel for the future USNS Hector A. Cafferata Jr. (ESB 8), a Lewis B. Puller-class Expeditionary Sea Base, was laid at GD NASSCO shipyard April 25.

The ship will be named for U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Private Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who served with distinction during the Korean War. Surviving the Battle of Chosin Reservoir among those who would be called, “the Chosin Few,” Cafferata received the Medal of Honor from President Harry S. Truman for his life-saving heroism during that battle.

The contemporary keel laying ceremony represents the joining together of a ship’s modular components at the land level. As

part of the ceremony, the keel is authenticated when the sponsors etch their initials into a ceremonial keel plate. The namesake's daughter, Heather Cafferata, and granddaughter, Jessica Cafferata, attended the keel laying ceremony as the ship sponsors. The ceremony represents the connection between a ship and its sponsors, throughout the ship's life.

"We are honored that the late Hector A. Cafferata's Jr.'s legacy will live on through this ship, and the keel laying is a first step of many milestones to come for this ship," said Tim Roberts, Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Office Ships. "ESBs provide a critical capability to the fleet and provide increased flexibility to our Sailors and Marines."

Expeditionary Sea Base ships are highly flexible platforms used across a broad range of military operations, supporting multiple operational phases. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are a part of the critical access infrastructure that supports deploying forces and supplies to provide prepositioned equipment and sustainment with adaptable distribution capability.

These ships support Aviation Mine Countermeasure and Special Operations Force missions. In addition to the flight deck, the ESB features four aviation operating spots and a hangar capable of supporting MH-53E-equivalent helicopters; accommodations, workspaces, and ordnance storage for embarked forces; and enhanced command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I). These ships support embarked force mission planning and execution and have a reconfigurable mission deck area to store embarked force equipment, including mine sleds and Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs).

GD NASSCO is also currently constructing the future USNS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7) and John Lewis-class Fleet Replenishment Oilers Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208), Lucy Stone

(T-AO 209), Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210) and Thurgood Marshall (T-AO 211).

As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, auxiliary ships, special mission ships, sealift ships and support ships.

First Mine Countermeasures Mission Package Embarked on USS Canberra

A mine countermeasures unmanned surface vehicle is craned aboard the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS

Canberra (LCS 30), as a part of the first embarkation of the Mine Countermeasures (MCM) mission package, April 23. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Vance Hand)

By Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy embarked the first Mine Countermeasures Mission Package (MCM MP) aboard USS Canberra (LCS 30), April 18, service officials announced. With the MCM mission package now onboard LCS 30, the Navy is looking forward to the first MCM Mission Package deployment in Fiscal Year 2025.

As part of the embark process, the Navy installed sensors, unmanned vehicles, support containers and the software that enables Sailors to execute MCM operations from an Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship. The embarkation marks the formal turnover of the MCM mission package to the ship, signifying the crew is ready to commence onboard training and maintenance of the mission package in preparation for its first deployment.

“Today, the LCS Mission Modules program delivers to the Fleet a modernized and integrated MCM mission package that removes Sailors from the minefield and allows for the future retirement of legacy MCM ships,” said Capt. Matthew Lehmann, program manager of the LCS Mission Modules (PMS 420) program office.

An integrated suite of unmanned maritime systems and sensors, the MCM mission package locates, identifies, and destroys mines in the littorals while increasing the ship’s standoff distance from the threat area. Embarked with the MCM mission package, an LCS or a vessel of opportunity can conduct the full spectrum of detect-to-engage operations (hunt, neutralize and sweep) against mine threats using sensors and weapons deployed from the MCM Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV), an MH-60S multi-mission helicopter and associated support

equipment.

The MCM mission package achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC) on March 31, 2023, following rigorous initial operational testing and evaluation (IOT&E) of the full mission package, including the AN/AQS-20 system, during the fall of 2022 aboard USS Cincinnati (LCS 20). With the deployment of the first MCM mission packages in Fiscal Year 2025, the Navy will commence the process of divesting from aging MH-53 helicopters and Avenger Class MCM ships.

PEO Unmanned and Small Combatants leads the Navy’s efforts to provide littoral combat ships with mission-tailored capability to Combatant Commanders to provide assured access against littoral threats, leveraging unmanned naval capabilities for enhanced operational effectiveness.

HII Delivers Virginia-Class Submarine New Jersey to U.S. Navy

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., April 25, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) announced today that its Newport News Shipbuilding division has delivered *Virginia*-class fast-attack submarine *New Jersey* (SSN 796) to the U.S. Navy.

New Jersey is the 11th *Virginia*-class submarine delivered by NNS, and the 23rd built as part of the teaming agreement with General Dynamics Electric Boat.

“It is a proud day for our entire team when we deliver a high-quality submarine like *New Jersey* to the fleet,” said Jason Ward, NNS vice president of *Virginia*-class submarine construction. “The mission ahead for *New Jersey* and her crew is clear, and we applaud our shipbuilders for delivering this critical capability to the fleet, while maintaining our highest standards of safety and quality.”

More than 10,000 shipbuilders from NNS and Electric Boat participated in the construction of *New Jersey,* alongside thousands of suppliers across the country, including more than 100 in New Jersey who support submarine construction. It is the first *Virginia*-class submarine designed and built with crew gender integration.

New Jersey was christened in November 2021 at NNS by ship's sponsor Susan DiMarco, a New Jersey resident, retired dentist and wife of former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson. The submarine is expected to be commissioned later this year.

A photo accompanying this release is available at: https://hii.com/news/hii-delivers-virginia-class-submarine-new-jersey-ssn-796-to-us-navy/.

Coast Guard Cutter Orcas Decommissioned After 35 Years of Service in Coos Bay, Oregon

U.S. Coast Guard 13th District, April 23, 2024

COOS BAY, Ore. – The Coast Guard decommissioned the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Orcas (WPB1327) during a ceremony, Tuesday.

Rear Adm. Charles Fosse, the commander of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District, presided over the ceremony honoring the 35 years of service Orcas and its crews provided to the nation.

Commissioned on April 14, 1989, Orcas was the twenty-seventh Island-Class cutter to join the fleet.

Orcas has been stationed in Coos Bay, Oregon, since 1989 and is the sixth Coast Guard cutter to be stationed in Coos Bay since 1935.

The Orcas was a multi-mission platform that conducted operations to support search and rescue response, marine environmental protection, and national defense.

“From training allied nation maritime forces, conducting the largest-ever cocaine seizure in the history of the Pacific Northwest, and saving countless lives and hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of property on the Pacific Ocean – Orcas has done it all,” said Lt. Brendan O’Farrell, the commanding officer of the Orcas. “This ship, one of the last of its kind, is an old American-made workhorse built to endure the harsh Pacific waves. I’m extremely proud and blessed to have served with the finest crew in the fleet.”

Coast Guard Station Kodiak Retires its MH-65 Dolphin

Helicopters After 36 Years of Service in Alaska

U.S. Coast Guard 17th District Public Affairs, April 24,2024

KODIAK, Alaska – The Coast Guard retired the Air Station Kodiak MH-65 Dolphin helicopter fleet during a ceremony, Tuesday.

Capt. Timothy Williams, commanding officer of Air Station Kodiak, presided over the ceremony honoring the 36 years of service the MH-65 Dolphin airframe and its crews provided to the Arctic region.

Air Station Kodiak currently has a rotary-wing fleet of six MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters. The unit will shift to a rotary-wing ship-and-shore based fleet of nine MH-60 Jayhawks in 2025.

Air Station Kodiak will be the fourth Coast Guard Air Station to transition to a single rotary wing fleet of MH-60 Jayhawk

helicopters. Air Stations Borinquen, Traverse City, and New Orleans all recently completed similar transitions.

“For decades, the cutter and helicopter team were the core of the ALPAT mission,” said Cmdr. James Kenshalo, MH-65 Dolphin pilot. “Together they projected force and protection to the most extreme remote regions of our nation’s territories, operating beyond where help could reach. Countless lives have been saved because of these dedicated crews.”

Commissioned in January of 1988, the Alaksa Patrol (ALPAT) mission executed solely by MH-65 Dolphin aircrews provided Coast Guard Cutters with a reliable airborne asset during Alaska Patrols.

To read more about the Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin and MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters click the following links:

SRR – MH-65 (uscg.mil)

MH-60T Service Life Extension Program (uscg.mil)

RTX awarded $344M Contract to Modernize Electronics Unit for Standard Missile Development Program

The SM-2 missile is primarily used by U.S. and allied navies for fleet air defense and ship defense.

Updates will allow for continued, rapid deliveries of Standard Missile variants to the U.S. and international fleets

TUCSON, Arizona (April 25, 2024) – Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, has been awarded a $344 million contract for the development of two missile variants – the SM-2 Block IIICU and SM-6 Block IU – which will be based on a common guidance section, where the electronics and software that guide a missile to its target are housed.

The updated variants will share a newly designed guidance section, target detection device, independent flight termination system and electronics unit. This commonality will allow Raytheon to manufacture both missiles on a common production line, providing flexibility, scalability, and cost reductions.

“Upgrades under this contract will allow us to increase speed and efficiency in production of these weapon systems that are integral to the defense of the U.S. Navy and our allies,” said Kim Ernzen, president of Naval Power, Raytheon. “It’s also a very important step forward for our international customers,

as this will be the first time that Standard Missile active radar technology will be fielded by the U.S.'s international allies."

The development program is largely funded by Foreign Military Sales. The first users of these updated missiles will be the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, and Korea.

Work on this contract is being conducted in Tucson, Arizona. While the common sub-sections will be developed for both missile configurations under this award, there is a follow-on contract expected later this year which will complete the missile level qualification events as well as At-Sea flight tests specific to the SM-2 Block IIICU configuration.

CNO Franchetti: Navy Has a Lot to Offer Young People

WASHINGTON (April 16, 2024) Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti delivers testimony at the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Defense hearing on the fiscal year 2025 defense budget request in Washington D.C., April 16, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by MCC Michael B. Zingaro)

April 24, 2024 | By C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

Recruiters across the military are challenged every day to bring young people into service. But the chief of naval operations said she thinks the Navy has what young people are looking for – if only they knew more about it.

"All the services are facing some challenges in recruiting, and it's really broader than that," said Navy Adm. Lisa Franchetti, who spoke yesterday at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "It's probably challenges in just propensity to serve, in general."

One challenge the Navy has in recruiting, Franchetti said, is that so many young people are simply unaware of what it does.

“If you don’t live near a coast or you don’t live near a base, you may not really know what your Navy does every day,” she said. “So, talking a little bit about … operations in the Red Sea, keeping commerce flowing having your Amazon box get to your doorstep, there’s a lot of stuff that people don’t even recognize every day that your Navy is out there doing.”

Young people, part of Generation Z, are now of age to consider military service, and Franchetti said the Navy must consider what that generation values if they’re going to be convinced to enlist in military service.

“Thinking about what they value, what they’re looking for … in terms of wanting to understand why, wanting to understand the values of the organization, I think we have a really good story to tell, because we’re all about honor, courage, commitment, democracy … and the pursuit of all who threaten it,” she said. “But also, it’s about helping them become the best version of themselves … we offer a lot of opportunity, we have 150 different career specialties that they can go into.”

Spotlight: Taking Care of Our People

The Navy offers careers in nuclear engineering, cyber and medical, for instance. And most recently, a new career field in robotics has opened up, she said. And every career field is available to both men and women.

“You can really work in any field that you want to, so you can get some of your own skills, test out your own leadership abilities because we’re all leaders in the Navy,” Franchetti said. “I think those are good things for them to think about … I’d really like to have our sailors sell themselves. That’s the best way to do it.”

If the Navy can convince young people to enlist, Franchetti said, it’s equally important to ensure the Navy remains a place they want to stay, that they aren’t going to be

disappointed with their choice to enlist. The admiral said the Navy is doing a lot to retain service members.

“We are also focusing on a lot of things that we know some of the younger people are interested in: making sure that folks have access to internet, making sure they have access to the gym, making sure they have access to health care, good-paying compensation, making sure they have a place to live that isn’t on the ship,” she said. “… A good quality barracks room, good quality food … that’s some of the work that we’re doing to make sure that we can be that world-class employer.”

NOAA to Break Ground for New facility at Naval Station Newport

An illustration of the new NOAA marine operations center planned for Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island. (Image credit: Burns & McDonnell)

Apr. 24, 2024

NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations will hold a ceremony May 6 at Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island to break ground on a new facility that will serve as the future home of the NOAA Marine Operations Center-Atlantic. Four NOAA research vessels will be based at the new facility, which will also serve as the headquarters for NOAA's Atlantic fleet.

In December 2023, the U.S. Navy, on behalf of NOAA, awarded $146,778,932 to Skanska USA, from New York, to build the new NOAA facility. Funded in part by the Inflation Reduction Act, it will include a pier that will accommodate four large vessels, a floating dock for smaller vessels, space for vessel repairs and parking and a building to be used for shoreside support and as a warehouse.

NOAA's fleet of 15 research and survey ships are operated, managed and maintained by NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations. Ranging from large oceanographic research vessels capable of exploring the world's deepest ocean, to smaller ships responsible for charting the shallow bays and inlets of the U.S. The fleet supports a wide range of marine activities, including fisheries surveys, nautical charting and ocean and climate studies. NOAA ships are operated by NOAA Corps officers and civilian professional mariners.

US Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless returns home after

61-day Operation Vigilant Sentry patrol

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, April 24, 2024

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless (WMEC 624) returned to their home port in Pensacola, Wednesday, following a 61-day patrol in the Windward Passage and Florida Straits. While underway, crew members conducted maritime safety and security missions to protect life at sea and deter illegal migrant voyages bound for the United States.

Dauntless deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while patrolling in the Coast Guard Seventh District's area of responsibility. While underway, Dauntless worked alongside other Coast Guard assets and units to dissuade unsafe maritime migration and enforce U.S. law on the high seas.

During the patrol, a good Samaritan on a sailboat reported a disabled vessel using VHF-FM channel 16. Dauntless' crew received notification and conducted a search and rescue mission over several hours on a moonless night while searching for the unlit boat. Eventually, the crew located the overloaded and disabled sail freighter with 65 Haitian migrants aboard, including several children. All 65 migrants were safely evacuated and transferred aboard Dauntless, where they received food, water and basic medical care. Dauntless worked with multiple surface and air assets to successfully carryout the search, rescue and repatriation of the migrants.

Migrants attempting to reach the United States through nonlegal channels, or who land on U.S. shores without authorization, are subject to removal and repatriation to their country of origin or departure. Consistent with U.S. policy, those who bypass or attempt to circumvent lawful immigration pathways face consequences including the potential of being barred from future lawful entry in addition to risking their lives unnecessarily.

"This case was a prime example of the humanitarian lifesaving mission we remain always ready for," said Cmdr. Aaron Kowalczk, commanding officer of Dauntless. "The crew's ability to find the vessel and then safely complete the rescue in the dark of night is just another example of the utmost professionalism and skill they show every day and is indicative of 56 years of exemplary service by cutter Dauntless and her crews."

Established in 2003, HSTF-SE is the Department of Homeland Security-led interagency task force charged with directing operational and tactical planning, command and control, and functions as a standing organization to deter, mitigate, and respond to maritime mass migration in the Caribbean Sea and Florida Straits.

OVS is the 2004 DHS plan that provides the structure for

deploying joint air and surface assets and personnel to respond to irregular maritime migration in the Caribbean corridor of the United States. Its primary objectives are to protect life at sea while deterring and dissuading mass maritime migration alongside our federal, state, and local partners.

Dauntless is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter originally built in 1967 and commissioned in 1968. The cutter's primary missions are counter narcotics operations, migrant interdiction, living marine resources protection, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit GoCoastGuard.com to learn about active duty, reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found here.

Electric Boat Competition Sparks Interest in Naval Science Careers

23 April 2024

Student engineering teams from Princeton, Washington College and the University of Alabama have won first place in their respective events at the “Promoting Electric Propulsion” (PEP) boat races, sponsored by the Office of Naval Research (ONR) and the American Society of Naval Engineers (ASNE).

In just six years, this electric boat-building competition has grown from a single university to 34, with more than 200 students who took part in the five-mile races on Broad Bay in Virginia Beach. Dr. Steve Russell, program officer, Sea Warfare and Weapons department, said he launched the PEP competition with a colleague from ASNE, Dr. Leigh McCue, and Tim Cullis, Naval Sea Warfare Center Carderock, after seeing a public race by local hobbyists in the Chesapeake Bay.

“It gave us the idea this would be a good way for the Navy to get engineering students interested in electric propulsion, so we did it.”

Russell said they are reaching hundreds of science and engineering students every year. The PEP racing event not only offers students valuable learning experiences, it provides the Navy and Marines with a workforce for the future.

“The goal is to create a pipeline of graduating engineers who have worked on a suite of problems that are currently issues within the U.S. Navy. They come out of school after having designed and built a boat like this, and learning about high power electronics, propulsion, hull design, cooling and boat stability – the naval architecture parts of it,” Russell said. “So far, we’ve hired many of them into the warfare centers and our industry partners.”

The teams of college students come from universities all over the country. Some are very well known, like Princeton and Texas A&M, but others are much smaller and not necessarily easily recognized. That doesn’t mean the smaller universities aren’t as competitive. Russell said Washington College in Maryland came in first and second place, respectively, in the 2022 and 2023 manned race, as well as placing first in 2024.

“They don’t even have an engineering school. It’s just a group of students who go to school near the Chesapeake Bay and they built a couple of very good boats,” he said.

The PEP competition includes manned and unmanned boat races. Russell said the manned competition seems to be more exciting for the students. It is a race, after all – and they can go pretty fast. Most of the entrants, though, register for the unmanned competition. Regardless of which category the teams fall into, they are all involved in meaningful and, in some cases, record-breaking work.

“While we’re not really looking to use any of the techniques that the students come up with, their innovation has been very

impressive. For example, the Princeton team last fall took their boat down to a river in North Carolina and beat the world record for electric boat speed on the water with an average speed of 114 mph," Russell said. "What we're really trying to do is to get them interested in solving Navy-related problems, and hopefully they will pursue careers in the Navy."

It's also become something of an industry event where the students are introduced to industry partners in the area. Since its inception in 2018, the PEP competition has helped recruit 44 engineering graduates for the Navy. Eleven others gained engineering positions with industry partners.

For more information on PEP, visit their website at https://www.navalengineers.org/Education/Promoting-Electric-Propulsion-PEP