U.S. Navy Releases Command Investigation into USS Connecticut Grounding

The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton for deployment, May 27, 2021. Its underwater collision happened a few months later. *U.S. NAVY / Lt. Mack Jamieson*

PEARL HARBOR – The U.S. Navy has released the command investigation into the USS Connecticut (SSN 22) grounding that occurred Oct. 2, 2021, the U.S. Pacific Fleet said May 23.

USS Connecticut grounded on an uncharted seamount while operating submerged in a poorly surveyed area in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. The investigation determined the grounding was preventable. Specifically, the grounding resulted from an accumulation of unit-level errors and omissions in navigation planning, watch team execution and

risk management, all of which were deemed to fall far below U.S. Navy standards.

The investigation and endorsements describe what happened, promulgate lessons learned, memorialize completed corrective actions, document accountability actions and delineate pending actions that must be finalized with a sense of urgency.

In addition to addressing the unit-level errors that caused the grounding, the investigation highlighted specific areas for improvement in the deployment training and certification process, and the Navy is urgently implementing these improvements across the Submarine Force. This investigation delineates 28 corrective actions, of which 14 actions are complete, 13 actions are in progress, and one is enduring.

In implementing these significant improvements, the Navy said it will become a more effective fighting force.

Raytheon awarded $423 Million Navy Contract for SPY-6 Family of Radars

Raytheon's SPY-6 radar. *RAYTHEON MISSILES & DEFENSE*

TUCSON, Ariz. – Raytheon Missiles & Defense has been awarded a $423 million contract to continue to produce SPY-6 radars for the U.S. Navy, the company said May 23. This is the first option exercised from the March 2022 hardware, production and sustainment contract that is valued up to $3.16 billion over five years.

"SPY-6 is the premiere surface naval radar in the world, and contracts like this ensure Sailors across the fleet will be equipped with the information, tracking and detection it provides," said Kim Ernzen, president of Naval Power at Raytheon Missiles & Defense. "SPY-6 radar arrays have already been delivered to multiple ships with installation ongoing."

The SPY-6 family of radars can defend against ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, hostile aircraft and surface ships simultaneously. They provide several advantages over legacy radars, including significantly greater detection range, increased sensitivity and more accurate discrimination. Their scalable and modular radar arrays reduce cost and sustainment needs, while meeting the mission requirements of seven classes of ships.

Airbus Wins Contract for Continuing Lakota Helicopter Fleet Support

A UH-72A Lakota helicopter attached to the U.S. Army 112th Aviation Regiment takes off from Naval Air Station Key West's Boca Chica Field in Key West, Florida, on March 3. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Nicholas V. Huynh*

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas – Airbus has signed a follow-on contractor logistics support contract with the U.S. Army to provide spare parts, material, and engineering support for the Army's entire UH-72A and UH-72B Lakota fleet of 482 utility and training helicopters. The fleet includes several UH-72As on loan to the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School.

The contract includes a six-month base and 4.5 option years,

with a potential total value of more than $1.5 Billion. Airbus will provide support across 67 Lakota sites in the U.S. and overseas. This includes National Guard bases in 43 states, and Fort Rucker in Alabama, where the UH-72A performs the Army's Initial Entry Rotary Wing mission.

The CLS contract with the U.S. Army is the largest helicopter performance-based support contract managed by Airbus worldwide.

"Airbus has provided exceptional product and support services in the UH-72A for nearly two decades," said Col. Calvin Lane, U.S. Army Utility project manager. "This contract underscores the Army's trust in the aircraft's capabilities, and we look forward to the continued support this contract provides to the UH-72 fleet."

The contract will be managed by Airbus U.S. Space & Defense. Headquartered in Arlington, Virginia.

HII's Newport News Shipbuilding Hiring Thousands

Newport News Shipbuilding contractor Justice Gibson, from Franklin, Virginia, welds a bulkhead aboard the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), in Newport News, Virginia, April 28. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Curtis Burdick*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Global defense and technologies partner HII announced May 23 that the company's Newport News Shipbuilding division plans to hire approximately 5,000 people this year to meet the shipbuilding needs of the Navy.

The shipyard anticipates hiring nearly 21,000 people within the next decade as HII fulfills orders for U.S. aircraft carriers and submarines.

"We at NNS are driven to support the men and women in uniform, to serve the nation, by delivering great ships," said Xavier Beale, vice president of Human Resources and Trades for Newport News Shipbuilding. "This is not just a job. It is a mission to serve national security, and we are committed to investing in our people so those who choose this mission can create a long and rewarding career."

Newport News Shipbuilding intends to hire nearly 3,000 skilled trades in 2022, including entry-level positions and trainee fitters and welders.

Entry-level trade positions at Newport News can pay $21 plus per hour; no experience is required and training is provided. Candidates may be eligible for $500 sign-on bonuses and up to $1,500 for relocation. Newport News is also offering weekly paychecks, comprehensive benefits, an on-site health center and employee discounts.

For more information on all open positions and benefits, visit buildyourcareer.com.

Austal USA Launches the Future LCS USS Augusta

The future USS Augusta (LCS 34) prepares to take to the water. *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. — On May 23, Austal USA successfully launched the 17th Independence-variant littoral combat ship, the future USS

Augusta (LCS 34), the company said in a release.

Assisted by tugs, the ship was escorted out of Austal USA's floating dry dock and secured pier side on the waterfront for machinery commissioning and system activation in preparation for sea trials later this year.

The launch of Augusta was a multi-step process which involved lifting the 2,500-metric-ton ship almost three feet in the air, moving it approximately 400 feet onto a moored deck barge adjacent to the assembly bay using transporters and then transferring the LCS from the deck barge to a floating dry dock. The floating dry dock was submerged with LCS 34 entering the water for the first time.

"We're proud to announce another successful milestone achievement for the LCS program at Austal USA," said Austal USA's Vice President of New Construction Dave Growden. "Austal USA's team of talented shipbuilders are excited to have another LCS in the water and are looking forward to delivering her to the Navy so she can join her sister ships in the Pacific fleet."

Augusta is the 17th of 19 Independence-variant littoral combat ships Austal USA is building for the U.S. Navy. Five LCS are under various stages of construction. Austal USA is also constructing four expeditionary fast transport ships for the U.S. Navy and will begin construction on Navajo-class towing, salvage and rescue ships this summer.

U.S. Marine Corps C-UAS

Program Kicks Off U.S. Production

The Marine Air Defense Integrated System Remote Weapon Station. *KONGSBERG*

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – Production of the Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS) Remote Weapon Station (RWS) has successfully moved from Kongsberg, Norway, to Kongsberg Protech Systems USA in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, with the inaugural system completing assembly and testing in March.

Additional systems are also being built for MADIS as part of the U.S. Marine Corps' Ground Based Air Defense modernization effort.

"Kongsberg's Johnstown facility consistently yields remote weapon station manufacturing excellence, having produced more

than 20,000 systems over the last 15 years," said Jason Toepfer, project manager, MADIS RWS, Kongsberg Protech Systems. "Our highly trained and skilled staff partnered with engineers and staff from Norway to successfully transition the production of all MADIS RWS to the Pennsylvania facility as part of our schedule and contract with the U.S. Marine Corps. The successful build of this inaugural system exemplifies our rigorous processes, joining the 5 prototype and test assets we've produced for the Marine Corps in Norway. This also kicks off MADIS RWS production here in the U.S., a move that allows us to better support this customer and deliver this critical lethality enhancement."

The Kongsberg RS6 RWS for MADIS RWS includes the XM914E1 30mmx113mm percussion-primed cannon with a co-axial M240C (7.62mm) machine gun, an integration kit for the Stinger Air-To-Air Launcher and provisions for future C-UAS defeat systems.

MADIS is part of the U.S. Marine Corps' plan to upgrade their two active Low-Altitude Air Defense battalions. The first 30mm remote weapon system to be qualified on the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle platform, MADIS RWS mounts on JLTVs and fights as a complimentary pair, designated as Mk1 and Mk2. The MADIS Mk1 features Stinger missiles and neutralizes fixed and rotary-wing aircraft. Mk2 fulfills the Counter-Unmanned Aircraft System mission requirement, while also providing radar and command-and-control for the pair.

The U.S. Marine Corps awarded Kongsberg the indefinite delivery / indefinite quantity other transaction authority production contract in Sept. 2021. It has a ceiling of $94 million and includes a series of low-rate initial production systems, full-rate production units, spares and training. This production contract award followed a Sept. 2020 OTA contract award from the Marine Corps to Kongsberg for test articles and activities, which included Design Verification Testing, after a competitive process.

The Kongsberg RS6 RWS for MADIS leverages technology and competence drawn from multiple counter-unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS) and air defense programs. The system leverages commonality with the family of Protector RWS delivered and fielded with the U.S. Army and Marine Corps.

Littoral Combat Ship USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul Commissioned

Sailors salute the audience during the commissioning ceremony of the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21) in Duluth, Minnesota. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sonja Wickard*

DULUTH, Minn. – The U.S. Navy commissioned its newest littoral combat ship, USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21), in Duluth, Minnesota, May 21, 2022, said Commander, Naval Surface Force, US Pacific Fleet, in a release.

Rep. Betty McCollum, of Minnesota's 4th District, was the principal speaker for the commissioning ceremony.

"The strength of America's national security, and the democratic values we hold dear, are being tested today like they have not been in decades," said McCollum. "I can think of no two names that represent that strength more than Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Together we are one team – those who built this fine ship, and those who will serve on her. It is the strength and determination of the American people that is the backbone of our national security."

Erik Raven, undersecretary of the Navy, reflected on attending his first commissioning ceremony. "The Twin Cities represent the Great State of Minnesota's economic, cultural, and political center. The Twin Cities play a significant role in our nation's economic network," said Raven. "Now, more than ever, it is fitting that a littoral combat ship is named Minneapolis-Saint Paul – honoring the legacy of work and contribution of the people whose work ultimately impacts our daily lives nationwide and globally."

Vice Admiral Scott Conn, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities also attended. "Thank you all for preparing LCS 21 for this day," said Conn. "I recognize how special it is to be together for this milestone, and to spend this day bringing the newest ship in our fleet to life in this way. And more so, to do it in the State of her namesake cities is unique and special."

The governor of Minnesota, Tim Walz, also attended the ceremony. "This is a unique opportunity to gather ourselves as

Minnesotans, and Americans," said Walz. "We're not just a country; we're an ideal."

Guest speakers for the event were Jon Rambeau, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin Integrated Warfare Systems and Sensors and Sen. Amy Klobuchar.

Rep. Pete Stauber, of Minnesota's 8th District, assisted in placing the ship into commission. The ship's sponsor Jodi Greene, former deputy undersecretary of the Navy, gave the first order to "man our ship and bring her to life."

Built by the Lockheed Martin and Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Marinette, Wisconsin. Minneapolis-Saint Paul was launched and christened in on June 15, 2019. The ship completed acceptance trials, Aug. 21, 2020, and was delivered to U.S. Navy on Nov. 18, 2021.

Minneapolis-Saint Paul will be homeported at Naval Station Mayport, Florida.

Ishee Nominated for Vice Admiral and Command of U.S. 6th Fleet

Rear Adm. Thomas E. Ishee. *U.S NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. — Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III announced May 20 that the president has made the following nomination:

Navy Rear Adm. Thomas E. Ishee for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, and assignment as commander, 6th Fleet; commander, Task Force Six; commander, Striking and Support Forces NATO; deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe; deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Africa; and Joint Force Maritime Component Commander Europe, Naples, Italy. Ishee is currently serving as director, Global Operations, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Ishee is a native of Danielsville, Georgia, and a 1987 graduate of the University of Georgia, where he majored in mathematics and computer science. He was commissioned in 1988 after attending Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island and earned a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Arts in Security Studies from the Air War College.

His sea tours included assignments onboard submarines USS Narwhal (SSN 671), USS Sea Devil (SSN 664), engineer officer onboard USS Tunny (SSN 682) and executive officer onboard USS La Jolla (SSN 701).

He commanded USS Key West (SSN 722). While in command, the crew was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation, the U.S. Pacific Fleet Arleigh Burke Trophy and Battle Efficiency Award. He also commanded Submarine Squadron 11, where he ensured the readiness of six fast attack submarines and oversaw the operations of three torpedo retrievers, a floating drydock and the Navy’s submarine rescue systems.

His tours ashore included assistant professor of Naval Science at the University of Texas at Austin; engineer and executive officer of Moored Training Ship MTS 626; executive assistant to the deputy commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; director of intelligence and special operations for Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet; director of operations for Commander, Submarine Group 7 and Task Force 54/74; senior

advisor to the Secretary of Defense for U.S. Pacific Command Plans; executive assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations; deputy commander, Joint Functional Component Command-Global Strike; director of operations, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa; deputy commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, and commander, Submarine Group 8.

Phillips Sworn In as 20th Maritime Administrator

Rear Adm. Ann Phillips, left, then commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 2, visited the Netherlands navy frigate HNLMS Evertsen (F805) during Exercise Baltic Operations 2013. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation announced May 16 that retired U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Ann Phillips has been confirmed and sworn in as the 20th administrator of the

Maritime Administration.

Nominated by President Biden on Oct. 21, 2021, Rear Adm. Phillips was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on May 10. She is the first woman to lead MARAD as administrator.

“From her distinguished naval service to her leadership on coastal infrastructure, Rear Adm. Ann Phillips has championed America’s maritime sector throughout her career,” said Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “Her experience and expertise will be invaluable as we address supply chain bottlenecks, implement the maritime investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, ensure the safety and success of midshipmen at the Merchant Marine Academy, and combat climate change in the maritime sector. I thank Deputy Administrator Lucinda Lessley for her tremendous service guiding MARAD as acting administrator and look forward to all that she and Ann will accomplish together at the agency in the years ahead.”

As head of the Maritime Administration, Phillips will advise the Secretary of Transportation on commercial maritime matters, to include the movement of goods, supply chain, as well as the U.S. maritime industry, environment and compliance, ports and waterways infrastructure and strategic sealift. She will engage public and private stakeholders in the maritime industry and oversee the U.S Merchant Marine Academy.

Phillips will also oversee MARAD’s programs to improve and modernize the nation’s maritime network by administering the investment in ports and waterways made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including $2.25 billion to be awarded over the next five years through the Port Infrastructure Development Program and $25 million for the America’s Marine Highway Program.

“It’s an honor to work alongside the professionals who make up

the MARAD team, and, to serve the American people, Secretary Buttigieg and the Biden-Harris Administration," Phillips said. "I understand the critical role that our commercial Merchant Marine plays in our national and economic security. In my nearly 31-year Navy career, I have witnessed many of the challenges facing our maritime sector and look forward to working with my colleagues to address them. This is an exciting time for MARAD as we work to expand and strengthen America's waterborne transportation system and workforce."

Phillips served most recently as Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection, Commonwealth of Virginia, developing Virginia's first Coastal Resilience Master Plan. Prior to her appointment to the Office of the Governor, she served nearly 31 years on active duty and has extensive experience operating with multi-national maritime forces, including NATO and Partnership for Peace nations, and serving overseas in Guam and Lisbon, Portugal.

Her final flag command, Expeditionary Strike Group Two, included 14 ships and 10 subordinate commands – all the Amphibious Expeditionary Forces on the East Coast of the United States. Earlier she served on the Chief of Naval Operations' Staff as Deputy Director and then Director of Surface Warfare Division. Previous to those positions, she commissioned and commanded the USS Mustin (DDG 89) and to command Destroyer Squadron 28.

Phillips graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and earned a Master of Business Administration, with distinction, from The College of William & Mary – Raymond A. Mason School of Business.

Second Iwakuni-Based F-35B Squadron Achieves Full Operational Capability

A U.S. Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II aircraft with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 242 lands at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, in 2021 during a joint training evolution with Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force assets. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Tyler Harmon*

IWAKUNI, YAMAGUCHI, Japan – On May 17, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242 achieved full operational capability and is now ready to support the full complement of its missions, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing said May 19.

A significant part of this milestone is the establishment of 32 F-35B aircraft permanently forward-based as part of Marine Aircraft Group 12, ready to support a free and open Indo-Pacific. This transition occurred on schedule per the annual

Marine Corps' aviation plan.

The F-35 Lightning II represents the future of Marine Corps tactical aviation and will eventually replace the AV-8B Harrier II and the F/A-18 Hornet in all units across the Marine Corps. On Oct. 16, 2020, VMFA-242, known as the "Bats," was re-designated as an F-35B squadron and, on Sept. 9, 2021, the squadron attained initial operational capability.

"The FOC milestone is the culmination of well over two years of planning and execution, all while being forward-deployed and in the face of a global pandemic. In my 20-plus years of service, I have never seen a unit come together in a way that our Marines and Sailors have while overcoming many challenges," said Lt. Col. Michael D. Wyrsch, the commanding officer of VMFA-242. "I am incredibly proud to say that I was a member of this team and I look forward to seeing where the Bats' lasting culture of excellence will take them."

MAG-12 received the first forward-based F-35B squadron in January 2017 when VMFA-121 relocated to MCAS Iwakuni. With the addition of VMFA-242, MAG-12 is now the only forward-based unit in the Indo-Pacific with two permanently based F-35B squadrons.

"VMFA-242 has executed a masterful training plan and successfully accomplished the required elements necessary to declare FOC. This declaration provides added capability and capacity, enhances our posture, and ensures that we are able to effectively respond to any tasking," said Maj. Gen. Brian W. Cavanaugh, the commanding general of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.