DOD Identifies Marine Corps, Navy and Army Casualties

Flag-draped transfer cases line the inside of a C-17 Globemaster II Aug. 29, 2021, prior to a dignified transfer at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. The fallen service members died while supporting non-combat operations in Kabul. *U.S. AIR FORCE / Jason Minto*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Department of Defense announced Aug. 28 the deaths of 13 service members who were supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel. They died Aug. 26, 2021, as the result of an enemy attack while supporting non-combatant evacuation operations in Kabul, Afghanistan. The incident is under investigation.

For the Marine Corps, the deceased are:

Staff Sgt. Darin T. Hoover, 31, of Salt Lake City, Utah.
Sgt. Johanny Rosariopichardo, 25, of Lawrence, Massachusetts.
Sgt. Nicole L. Gee, 23, of Sacramento, California.
Cpl. Hunter Lopez, 22, of Indio, California.
Cpl. Daegan W. Page, 23, of Omaha, Nebraska.
Cpl. Humberto A. Sanchez, 22, of Logansport, Indiana.
Lance Cpl. David L. Espinoza, 20, of Rio Bravo, Texas.
Lance Cpl. Jared M. Schmitz, 20, of St. Charles, Missouri.
Lance Cpl. Rylee J. McCollum, 20, of Jackson, Wyoming.
Lance Cpl. Dylan R. Merola, 20, of Rancho Cucamonga, California.
Lance Cpl. Kareem M. Nikoui, 20, of Norco, California.

Hoover, Lopez, Page, Sanchez, Schmitz, Espinoza, McCollum, Merola and Nikoui were assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, California.

Gee was assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion 24, 24th Marine

Expeditionary Unit, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Rosariopichardo was assigned to 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

For the Navy, the deceased is:

Hospitalman Maxton W. Soviak, 22, of Berlin Heights, Ohio.

Soviak was assigned to 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California.

For the Army, the deceased is:

Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Knauss, 23, of Corryton, Tennessee.

Knauss was assigned to 9th PSYOP Battalion, 8th PSYOP Group, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina.

Coast Guard Conducts Hurricane Ida Post-Storm Overflights Along the Gulf Coast

The Coast Guard conducts Hurricane Ida post-storm overflights along the Gulf Coast on August 30, 2020. Aircrews conducted overflights near Galliano, Louisiana, to assess damage and identify hazards. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

NEW ORLEANS – The Coast Guard is conducting critical incident search and rescue overflights and assessing for damage Aug. 30 along the Gulf Coast Region of Louisiana following Hurricane

Ida, the Coast 8th District said in a release.

The Coast Guard has brought to bear more than 28 aviation assets and nearly 21 shallow-water response assets to respond to flooded and damaged areas.

“The Coast Guard will continue to provide search and rescue capabilities, assess the damage done by Hurricane Ida, repair aids-to-navigation, and ensure the ports along the Gulf Coast can be safely reopened for the flow of maritime commerce,” said Capt. Tracy Phillips, area commander for the Ida response.

Coast Guard Interdicts, Returns 23 Migrants

Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser’s boat crew is on scene with an illegal migrant voyage Aug. 26, 2021, in the Mona Passage between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. The migrant group was comprised of 12 Haitians and 11 Dominican nationals, who were returned to the Dominican Republic Aug. 28. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser repatriated 11 Dominican migrants and returned 12 Haitians to the Dominican Republic Saturday, following the interdiction of an illegal voyage in the Mona Passage.

The interdiction is the result of ongoing Coast Guard and Caribbean Border Interagency group partner efforts to deter and stop illegal voyages in the Mona Passage. Since Oct. 1, 2021, the Coast Guard and CBIG federal and state partner agencies have interdicted and or apprehended 2,100 migrants

traveling illegally to Puerto Rico.

“We urge any person thinking of taking part in an illegal voyage to not take to the sea,” said Cmdr. Beau Powers, Sector San Juan chief of response. “Your life will be at risk, as will the lives of everyone aboard the vessel. The perils are many, including traveling with ruthless smugglers, aboard grossly overloaded makeshift vessels, in dangerous sea states, with little or no lifesaving equipment onboard. Those making this voyage should expect to be returned to their country of origin and also may face prosecution. The dangers are real, please don’t trust your life to a smuggler or in a makeshift vessel.”

The interdiction took place Aug. 26, after a Customs and Border Protection marine patrol aircraft crew sighted a migrant vessel, approximately 42 nautical miles north of Mona Island, Puerto Rico. The cutter Winslow Griesser diverted to the scene and interdicted the 25-foot makeshift boat with 11 Dominicans, 11 Haitian adults and one Haitian minor aboard.

The crew of the Winslow Griesser transferred the adult migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel just outside Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, while the minor was transferred to local authorities ashore from the Childrens and Adolescents National Council CONANI.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser is a fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Navy Celebrates Commissioning of USS Vermont (SSN 792)

The Navy celebrated the commissioning of USS Vermont (SSN 792), the first Block IV Virginia-class submarine to enter service, Saturday, Aug. 28, at Naval Submarine Base New London. *U.S. NAVY*

GROTON, Conn. – The Navy celebrated the commissioning of USS Vermont (SSN 792), the first Block IV Virginia-class submarine to enter service, Saturday, Aug. 28, at Naval Submarine Base New London, Submarine Readiness Squadron 32 said in a release.

"Vermonters have served with valor from the highest mountains to the depths of the ocean," said Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, who served as the event's keynote speaker and was attending his first ship ceremony as secretary.

"This vessel has already proven itself in service, not only because it was designed the right way, but because of the exemplary work of the men aboard," he said.

Vermont was administratively commissioned on April 18, 2020, but due to restrictions on large gatherings because of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time, no traditional commissioning ceremony was held. To ensure the health and safety of the crew and all those in attendance during the ceremony Saturday, attendance was limited and no public or media tours were held. Masks were required in all indoor spaces and encouraged in outdoor spaces.

Since its administrative commissioning, USS Vermont has been an active submarine in the U.S. Navy, including participation in anti-submarine warfare exercises alongside the Brazilian navy in the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations in December of 2020.

In addition to Del Toro, Rear Adm. Douglas Perry, director of undersea warfare on the chief of naval operations' staff and a Vermont native, was among those who spoke at the Saturday ceremony.

Perry spoke of the legacies of previous Navy ships with Vermont ties and military heroes from the state's past, like Ethan Allen during the Revolutionary War and 19th Century Admiral of the Navy George Dewey.

"The Green Mountain State's legacy of naval service runs deep," Perry said. "You join a rich history of honorable service."

This is the third U.S. Navy ship to bear the name Vermont, but first in a century. The first was one of nine 74-gun warships authorized by Congress in 1816. The second, Battleship No. 20, was commissioned in 1907 and first deployed in December of that year as part of the "Great White Fleet." The battleship Vermont was decommissioned June 30, 1920.

The submarine Vermont was christened in a traditional ceremony at General Dynamics' Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, Connecticut, on Oct. 20, 2018.

"She was built by the best, for the best, and is the best of the best," said Gloria Valdez, the ship sponsor and a former deputy assistant secretary of the Navy overseeing shipbuilding and modernization. "She is the most technologically advanced submarine in the world."

USS Vermont is 377 feet long, has a 34-foot beam and will be able to dive to depths greater than 800 feet and operate at speeds in excess of 25 knots submerged. She has a crew of more than 130 Navy personnel.

"We get to finally say, 'The ship's in commission, thank you so much to everyone who supported us,'" said Cmdr. Charles Phillips, the commanding officer of USS Vermont. "This

represents the people of Vermont. We want to make them proud and let them justify their confidence in us as we defend our country.”

Fast-attack submarines are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security and deterrence. They are designed to excel in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare. Fast-attack submarines project power ashore with special operations forces and Tomahawk cruise missiles in the prevention or preparation of regional crises.

Block IV Virginia-class submarines incorporate design changes focused on reduced total ownership cost. By making these smaller-scale design changes to increase the component-level lifecycle of the submarine, the Navy will increase the periods between depot maintenance availabilities and increase the number of deployments.

Blocks I-III Virginia-class submarines are planned to undergo four depot maintenance availabilities and conduct 14 deployments. Block IV design changes are intended to reduce planned availabilities by one to three and increase deployments to 15.

Also speaking at the ceremony Saturday were members of the Vermont and Connecticut congressional delegations: U.S. Rep. Peter Welch of Vermont, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney of Connecticut and U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut.

Navy’s AARGM-ER to Enter Production

The Navy’s Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile-Extended Range (AARGM-ER) completes its first live fire event July 19 off the coast of Point Mugu Sea Test Range in California. *U.S. Navy photo*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy’s Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile – Extended Range (AARGM-ER) received Milestone C (MS-C) approval Aug. 23, allowing the program to move into its first phase of production, the Naval Air Systems Command said in an Aug. 25 release.

The Navy plans to award the first two low-rate initial production lots over the next several months.

“The combined government/industry team has worked tirelessly over the last few years to reach this milestone,” said Capt. Alex Dutko, Direct and Time Sensitive Strike (PMA-242) program manager. “We look forward to getting this new weapon with its increased capability and lethality out to the fleet as soon as possible.”

The MS-C decision comes just over two years after the Navy awarded the Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) contract to its prime contractor, Northrop Grumman. The team conducted the first live-fire event in July to verify system integration and rocket motor performance, as well as initiate modeling and simulation validation.

Captive and live fire flight testing is planned to continue through 2022 and initial operational capability is planned for 2023.

The Navy is integrating AARGM-ER on the F/A-18E/F and EA-18G, and it will be compatible for integration on the F-35. By

leveraging the U.S. Navy's AARGM program, the AARGM-ER with a new rocket motor and warhead will provide advanced capability to detect and engage enemy air defense systems.

Navy Tests Second Stage Hypersonic Rocket Motor

Navy Strategic Systems Programs conducted a successful test of the Second Stage Solid Rocket Motor on Aug. 25 as part of the development of the Navy's Conventional Prompt Strike offensive hypersonic strike capability and the Army's Long Range Hypersonic Weapon. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – Navy Strategic Systems Programs successfully conducted a test of the Second Stage Solid Rocket Motor (SRM) Aug. 25 in Promontory, Utah, as part of the development of the Navy's Conventional Prompt Strike offensive hypersonic strike capability and the Army's Long Range Hypersonic Weapon, Navy SSP public affairs said in an Aug. 26 release.

This was the initial live-fire test of the second stage SRM and follows a successful test of the first stage SRM on May 27. This test marked the successful testing of both stages of the newly developed missile booster, as well as a thrust vector control system on the SRM. These tests are a vital step in the development of a Navy-designed common hypersonic missile that will be fielded by both the Navy and Army.

The second stage SRM will be part of a new missile booster for the services and will be combined with a Common Hypersonic Glide Body (CHGB) to create the common hypersonic missile. Each service will use the common hypersonic missile, while developing individual weapon systems and launchers tailored

for launch from sea or land. This successful SRM test represents a critical milestone leading up to the next series of Navy and Army joint flight tests and will lead to the fielding of the CPS and LRHW weapon systems.

The Department of Defense successfully tested the CHGB on March 20, 2020. The services are working closely with government national laboratories and industry to continue development and production of the CHGB. The Navy is the lead designer of the CHGB, and the Army leads production of the CHGB.

Information gathered from this and future tests will further inform the services offensive hypersonic technology development. The Department of Defense is working in collaboration with industry, government national laboratories, and academia to field hypersonic warfighting capability in the early-to mid-2020s.

Hypersonic weapons, capable of flying at speeds greater than five times the speed of sound, or Mach 5, are highly maneuverable and operate at varying altitudes. In a matter of minutes, Navy and Army warfighters can defeat high-value targets hundreds or even thousands of miles away. Delivering hypersonic weapons is one of the DoD’s highest priorities.

The common hypersonic missile design for sea and land-based applications provides economies of scale for future production and relies upon a growing U.S. hypersonics industrial base.

Navy Orders Three

PteroDynamics UAS to Deliver Cargo

PteroDynamics' Transwing vertical takeoff and landing unmanned aicraft. *PTERODYNAMICS*

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — PteroDynamics, an aircraft design and manufacturing company that develops innovative vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft, has secured a contract with Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) to deliver three VTOL prototypes for the Blue Water Maritime Logistics UAS program, the company said in an Aug. 23 release.

In 2018, Military Sealift Command and Fleet Forces Command identified a need for the United States Navy to develop a capability to autonomously deliver cargo with unmanned aircraft to and from ships at sea. Their analysis found that 90% of critical repair cargo delivered at sea by helicopters and V-22 aircraft weighed less than 50 pounds. A VTOL UAS can fill this critical need and free the manned aircraft to perform other higher priority missions.

"We are honored to be selected for this important project," said Matthew Graczyk, PteroDynamics' CEO. "This contract is the start of an important partnership, and we look forward to delivering the prototypes to NAWCAD."

"This is an exciting milestone for our distinctive VTOL aircraft," added Val Petrov, PteroDynamics' founder and chief technology officer. "Our design is well suited for operations on ships where windy conditions and tight spaces challenge other VTOL aircraft during takeoffs and landings."

"Using unmanned, autonomous aircraft for delivery of these critical payloads is an important capability for the Navy to have," said Blue Water's project lead, Bill Macchione. "The

innovative design of PteroDynamics offers significant potential for both military and civilian missions."

HII Celebrates Ceremonial First Cut of Steel for the Aircraft Carrier Doris Miller

Members of Doris Miller's family attend the ceremonial first cut of steel for the aircraft carrier Doris Miller (CVN 81) at Newport News Shipbuilding division, Aug. 25, 2021. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries hosted a ceremonial event Aug. 25 at its Newport News Shipbuilding division that marked the first construction milestone in the life of the aircraft carrier Doris Miller (CVN 81), the company said in a release.

During a small ceremony held inside of a manufacturing facility, Thomas Bledsoe, the great nephew of the ship's namesake, gave the order to "cut that steel" to shipbuilder Gerald Bish, who operated a large plasma-cutting machine that sliced into a steel plate. Shipbuilders, U.S. Navy leadership, elected officials and Doris Miller's relatives signed their names on the plate.

"Today we recognize the start of construction of the fourth ship of the Gerald R. Ford class," said Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding. "From this day forward, our shipbuilders will put their hearts into every pipe they fit, every unit they lift and every inch of steel they weld.

“Shipbuilders, I thank you for the hard work, innovation and dedication you will put into transforming this first piece of steel into an awe-inspiring aircraft carrier.”

Ceremony participants included U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Virginia, who offered remarks; Rear Adm. James Downey, program executive officer for aircraft carriers; Master Chief Petty Officer of the U.S. Navy Russell Smith; shipbuilders and six members of Miller’s family.

“It is so fitting and timely during a period of significant discussion and change we come together to begin construction of one of our Navy’s next great aircraft carriers, in the name of one of the finest heroes of the greatest generation,” Downey said. “We will construct a sound and mighty warship worthy of his legacy.”

Members of Virginia’s congressional delegation, including Reps. Rob Wittman and Elaine Luria also attended the event. Other guests included Capt. Andrew P. Johnson, commanding officer of Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair, Newport News.

Doris Miller is the second ship named in honor of Miller, and the first aircraft carrier ever named for an African American. This also is the first aircraft carrier named in honor of a sailor for actions while serving in the enlisted ranks.

Miller is credited with heroic actions while serving aboard the Newport News-built West Virginia (BB 48) during the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Miller’s bravery earned him the Navy Cross.

Doris Miller also is the second ship of the two-carrier contract award HII received in January 2019 for the detail design and construction of the Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers; Enterprise (CVN 80) being the first ship of the contract.

Newport News currently is performing early manufacturing of Doris Miller, which includes structural fabrication and shop work. The ship also will be the second aircraft carrier built completely using digital drawings and procedures rather than traditional paperwork packages and products.

Doris Miller's keel is scheduled to be laid in 2026 and delivered to the Navy in 2032.

"The Doris Miller story provides so many lessons to us as Americans," Bledsoe said. "The Miller family cannot express in words what this means to us, to Americans and to anyone inspired by Doris Miller's story."

The Ford class features new software-controlled electromagnetic catapults and weapons elevators, a redesigned flight deck and island, and more than twice the electrical capacity of the preceding Nimitz-class carriers. These aircraft carriers are designed to be the centerpiece of the nation's security strategy and support and protect the global economy through the protection of sea lanes around the world.

BAE Systems Unveils World's Smallest M-Code Military GPS Receiver

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa – Aug. 25, 2021 – BAE Systems Inc. unveiled its ultra-small MicroGRAM-M global positioning system (GPS) receiver compatible with next-generation M-Code military GPS signals that are resistant to jamming and spoofing, the company said in an Aug. 25 release. About the size of a postage stamp, MicroGRAM-M is the world's smallest, lightest,

and most power-efficient M-Code embedded GPS receiver – delivering assured positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) for size-constrained and other micro-applications.

“We’re delivering reliable PNT where our customers need it – from soldiers’ handheld devices to small unmanned aerial vehicles,” said Greg Wild, director of Navigation and Sensor Systems at BAE Systems. “MicroGRAM-M provides our armed forces and allies with a low-SWAP M-Code GPS solution that’s resistant to adversaries’ disruption efforts in highly contested environments.”

MicroGRAM-M features rapid secure GPS signal acquisition, enhanced security and resiliency, anti-jamming and anti-spoofing capabilities, and the industry’s lowest power consumption for an M-Code device. The 1.0” x 1.25” x 0.275” MicroGRAM-M has the same physical dimensions as its predecessor, enabling quick upgradability to M-Code and reduced system integration costs. At its core is a proven, tamper-proof M-Code Common GPS Module that encapsulates classified data and signal processing.

“MicroGRAM-M is the latest BAE Systems M-Code military GPS product, joining MPE-M and NavStrike-M, which deliver enhanced awareness in highly contested environments and precision munitions guidance,” said John Watkins, vice president and general manager of Precision Strike & Sensing Solutions at BAE Systems. “Qualification of MicroGRAM-M is underway, with full-rate production expected in 2022.”

HII Technical Solutions

Division Announces New Business Groups

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) announced on Aug. 25 new business groups within its Technical Solutions division, on the heels of the successful acquisition of Alion Science and Technology.

The new business groups include:

- Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) – This group designs, develops, integrates and manages sensors, systems, and other assets to support ISR operations, exploitation and analysis.
- Live, Virtual and Constructive (LVC) Solutions – This group designs, develops and operates enterprise tactical training systems to ensure full coordination and readiness.
- Cyber and Electronic Warfare (EW) – This group provides full spectrum cyber, big data architectures, analytics and cloud migration; EW and foreign material exploitation.
- Fleet Sustainment – This group is responsible for full-spectrum sustainment, including hull, mechanical and electrical and C5ISR maintenance, modernization, and integrated product support.

The Unmanned Systems and Nuclear and Environmental Services business groups are unchanged.