Coast Guard Decommissions Bahrain-based Cutters Aquidneck, Adak

Coast Guardsmen present pennants from the USCGC Adak (WPB 1333) and USCGC Aquidneck (WPB 1309) during the decommissioning ceremony for Adak and Aquidneck onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, June 15. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dawson Roth*

MANAMA, Bahrain – After more than 30 years of active service, U.S. Coast Guard Island-class patrol boats USCGC Aquidneck (WPB 1309) and USCGC Adak (WPB 1333) were decommissioned in a ceremony aboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, June 15, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area announced.

Vice Adm. Steven Poulin, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, was in attendance to honor the years of service Aquidneck, Adak, and their crews, provided to the Coast Guard.

“Thank you to every single crew member who has ever served aboard Aquidneck and Adak, from the plank owners to the final crew and all the crews in between,” said Poulin. “You selflessly volunteered to deploy from your family, friends, and home, accepting the inherent risks and adversities to serve your country. You built a legacy for these two cutters that will not soon be forgotten.”

As part of the Coast Guard’s Fast Response Cutter program, the service is acquiring 64 fast response cutters total, with six of those assigned to U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia. Aquidneck and Adak were replaced by the Sentinel-class FRCs USCGC Charles Moulthrope (WPC 1141) and USCGC Robert Goldman (WPC 1142), which arrived at NSA Bahrain on May 25.

Aquidneck’s namesake comes from Aquidneck Island in Rhode Island. It was originally homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia, and later shifted to Fort Macon, North Carolina. It was employed in search and rescue, counter-drug, and other law enforcement operations domestically for more than 16 years.

Adak’s namesake comes from Adak Island in Alaska. It was originally stationed in Sandy Hook, New Jersey, in 1991 and laid claim to the third-largest cocaine bust in Coast Guard history when the crew stopped a fishing vessel off the coast of New York. In August 1994, it took part in Operation Able Vigil, which rescued over 29,000 Cuban migrants from unsafe rafts and makeshift craft attempting to reach American shores. The operation consisted of over 50 Coast Guard cutters and U.S. Navy ships, making it the largest Coast Guard-led naval operation since World War II.

In late 2002, Aquidneck and Adak received orders to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. Within one week of their arrival in Bahrain, they were underway conducting maritime interdiction operations in the North Arabian Gulf.

For the next 18 years, the two cutters remained forward deployed out of Bahrain under U.S. Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, attached to Commander, Task Force 55, conducting operations to ensure the free flow of commerce throughout the region’s critical waterways.

Patrol Force Southwest Asia is composed of six patrol vessels, shoreside mission support personnel, and the Maritime Engagement Team. They play a crucial role in maritime security, maritime infrastructure protection, and theater security cooperation in the region. The unit also supports other U.S. Coast Guard deployable specialized forces operating throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

Commander, Task Force 55 operates in the U.S. 5th Fleet area

of operations, supporting naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and Pacific through the Western Indian Ocean and three critical chokepoints to the free flow of global commerce.

General Dynamics Continues Support for Navy's Independence-Variant LCS Combat System

General Dynamics Mission Systems will continue supporting Independence-variant littoral combat ships under two new Navy contracts. *GENERAL DYNAMICS MISSION SYSTEMS*

PITTSFIELD, Mass. – General Dynamics Mission Systems was awarded two contracts by the U.S. Navy worth $30.5 million in support of various maintenance and upgrade initiatives for the Navy's Independence-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) fleet, the company said in a June 21 release.

As part of a $17.4 million contract announced by the Department of Defense on May 4, General Dynamics Mission Systems will develop and upgrade the Independence-variant LCS fleet's hull mechanical & electrical system, which includes software upgrades and maintenance of the engineering control system. Work for this contract will be performed in Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Mobile, Alabama; San Diego; Philadelphia; and Singapore, and is expected to be completed by May 2026.

As part of a $13.1 million contract announced by DoD on May 24, General Dynamics Mission Systems will provide the Independence-variant LCS' in-service engineering and life cycle support for command, control, communications, computers, cyber and intelligence and training systems to include critical engineering, design, integration. test and evaluation, software development and testing, logistics product development and distribution and configuration management. This contract includes options, which, if exercised, would bring the cumulative value of this contract to $79.2 million. Work will be performed in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Mobile, Alabama, San Diego and Singapore, and is expected to be completed by May 2026.

"General Dynamics Mission Systems is excited to continue this sustainment and modernization work for U.S. Navy," said Stan Kordana, vice president of surface systems at General Dynamics Mission Systems. "Our engineers have a long history of collaborating with our industry and Navy partners to sustain the performance of LCS engineering control and core mission systems; ensuring they are ready and able to support the Navy's mission requirements at home and abroad. Our sustainment team recognizes the critical role the Independence-variant littoral combat ship plays on the national stage, especially with three ships planned for deployment to the western Pacific this year. Our 'any program, any mission system on any platform' approach ensures LCS will be able to successfully achieve their missions, today and in the future."

Fairbanks Morse Engines to Power Fourth OPC

An artist’s rendering of the Offshore Patrol Cutter. *EASTERN SHIPBUILDING GROUP*

BELOIT, Wis. – Fairbanks Morse Defense, a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management, announced June 22 that its Fairbanks Morse Engine (FME) division was awarded a contract by Eastern Shipbuilding Group (ESG) to build and deliver the two main propulsion diesel engines (MPDE) for the U.S. Coast Guard’s fourth Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) the Rush (WMSM-918). FME will build the engines at its Beloit, Wisconsin manufacturing facility.

“Fairbanks Morse engines will help the OPCs perform the mission-critical task of preserving the country’s maritime security. We are honored to continue providing powerful and reliable engines to this essential program,” said Fairbanks Morse Defense CEO George Whittier. “No matter what the temperature is or how big the seas are, FME’s resilient engines are ready for the challenge of serving alongside each and every cutterman that crew an OPC.”

The OPCs will act as a capability bridge between the National Security Cutter, which patrols the open ocean, and the Fast Response Cutter, which serves closer to shore. The vessels will also be capable of carrying an MH-60 or MH-65 Helicopter and three operational Over-The-Horizon small boats. They will be equipped with highly sophisticated combat systems and will enhance the USCG’s ability to execute various missions that range from drug interdiction to marine environmental protection.

The U.S. military has turned to Fairbanks Morse Defense for more than 70 years to provide quality diesel engines, parts,

repair, and service solutions for marine propulsion and ship service systems.

Collins Completes Milestone C for TCTS Inc. II Air Combat Training System

Collins Aerospace has successfully completed Milestone C for the U.S. Navy’s Tactical Combat Training System II (TCTS Inc. II) program. *COLLINS AEROSPACE*

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa – Collins Aerospace, a unit of Raytheon Technologies Corp., has successfully completed Milestone C for the U.S. Navy’s Tactical Combat Training System II (TCTS Inc. II) program.

In addition, Collins Aerospace was awarded the first production order for TCTS II. TCTS Inc. II was developed and built by Collins Aerospace and Leonardo DRS.

Completion of Milestone C marks the transition to system production, based on meeting all key performance parameters. Initial Operational Capability is set to be declared in 2022.

TCTS Inc. II is the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force program of record for fourth- and fifth-generation aircraft that enables highly secure air combat training between the U.S. and international platforms. Through Live Virtual Constructive (LVC) technologies, TCTS Inc. II simulates various highly contested combat situations, tailoring the threats to enable pilots to train as they fight.

It also collects relevant data to rapidly develop new tactics, techniques, and procedures in real time. It is the only air-combat training system with security certification that supports encryption requirements from Top Secret through Unclassified that is needed for today’s legacy U.S. and coalition fighter aircraft. The scalable TCTS Inc. II system architecture is envisioned to create a fully immersive environment for all aircraft, ships and vehicles in the U.S. Navy inventory, and the U.S. Air Force.

“The successful completion of Milestone C demonstrates the Live, Virtual, and Constructive-enabled capabilities of the TCTS Inc. II technology from Collins Aerospace,” said Heather Robertson, vice president, and general manager, Integrated Solutions for Collins Aerospace. “Enabling more realistic and secure cross-service air combat exercises is invaluable preparation for fourth- and fifth-generation pilots to ensure warfighters achieve the readiness levels needed.”

TCTS Inc. II securely connects to the Navy Continuous Training Environment to live aircraft allowing synthetic threats to stimulate the aircraft’s sensors via a multiple independent levels of security architecture featuring an NSA-certified, Type 1 encryptor. When used with the onboard cross domain solution, the system enables sharing of information in near real time and uses SITL to properly stress the warfighter with representative realistic threats. TCTS Inc. II is capable of Future Airborne Capability Environment certification which enables best-in-class third applications to be integrated easily and accelerates new capabilities to the warfighters. With the ability to host operational capabilities, TCTS II creates the infrastructure able to run both training and tactical waveforms across a multitude of platforms.

Saab Awarded Marine Corps Contract for Next-Generation Live Training Systems

The U.S. Marine Corps Program Manager for Training Systems has awarded Saab the Force on Force Training Systems – Next (FoFTS-Next) Single Award Task Order Contract. *SAAB*

STERLING, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps Program Manager for Training Systems has awarded Saab the Force-on-Force Training Systems – Next (FoFTS-Next) Single Award Task Order Contract (SATOC), the company said in a June 17 release. The contract has a potential value of $127.9 million.

The FoFTS-Next SATOC will include U.S. Marine Corps Training Instrumentation Systems (MCTIS) equipment, logistics, and training exercise support.

Through this framework agreement with future task orders exercised, Saab will provide a full turnkey live training capability to include equipment deliveries for individual Marine weapons and vehicles, as well as logistics and maintenance support and training exercise support at all major U.S. Marine Corps installations worldwide.

“Ensuring the readiness of our Armed Forces is the foundation of all Saab training systems. The Saab Live MCTIS Training System is a proven solution that will provide interoperability training to prepare our U.S. Marines for combat effectiveness across multi-domain operations,” said Erik Smith, president and CEO of Saab in the U.S.

The Saab next-generation Live MCTIS Training System will

replace the U.S. Marine Corps' current Instrumentation and Tactical Engagement Simulation System (ITESS) equipment.

U.S., Dutch Navy Chiefs Discuss Maritime Security, Reaffirm Continued Cooperation

HMS Queen Elizabeth and USS The Sullivans with the United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group joined ships with NATO Standing Maritime Groups One and Two for an impressive display of maritime power in the Eastern Atlantic on 28 May 2021. The rendezvous was part of Steadfast Defender 21, a large scale defensive exercise designed to test NATO's ability to rapidly deploy forces from North America to the coast of Portugal and the Black Sea region. *ROYAL NAVY / LPhot Unaisi Luke*

WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday hosted Commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy Vice Adm. Rob Kramer and his relief Rear Adm. René Tas at the Pentagon June 17 to discuss maritime security issues and reaffirm their commitment to continued cooperation between the two navies, the Navy said in a June 17 release.

This meeting marked the second in-person discussion between the two heads of navy.

"Our bilateral relationship with the Royal Netherlands Navy is one of our oldest," said Gilday. "The Dutch are an important ally and play a vital role in global maritime security. I look forward to working alongside Vice Adm. Kramer and Rear Adm.

Tas to enhance our navies’ cooperation far into the future.”

Kramer echoed Gilday’s sentiments.

“Our deep friendship enables an inclusive and very valuable collaboration on both global maritime security issues and illicit trafficking in the Caribbean region,” said Kramer.

From operations in the Middle East to the Caribbean, and from the Atlantic to counter piracy operations off Africa, the U.S. Navy and Royal Netherlands Navy operate regularly together around the globe.

Most recently, both navies participated in the recent NATO exercise Steadfast Defender and At-Sea Demo/Formidable Shield, where USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117) and the Royal Netherlands Navy’s frigate HNLMS De Zeven Provinciën (F802) engaged a live medium-range ballistic target using a Standard Missile-3 together.

In the groundbreaking engagement, HNLMS De Zeven Provincien employed its advanced combat system suite to provide an early warning ballistic track to the maritime task group. Upon receipt of the track information, Paul Ignatius calculated a firing solution to launch an SM-3 Blk IA.

Both navies also have ships that are operating as part of the HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Group, USS The Sullivans (DDG-68) and HNLMS Evertsen (F805).

Keel Laid for Future Littoral

Combat Ship USS Cleveland

A welder authenticates the keel of Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) 31, the future USS Cleveland, by welding the initials of the ship's sponsor, Robyn Modly, wife of a Clevelander and former U.S. Navy secretary, who has embraced the city as her own. *LOCKHEED MARTIN*

ARLINGTON, Va.– Lockheed Martin celebrated the keel-laying of the future littoral combat ship (LCS) USS Cleveland in June 17 ceremonies at the Fincantieri Marinete Marine shipyard in Wisconsin.

A welder authenticated the keel of LCS 31, the future USS Cleveland, by welding the initials of the ship's sponsor, Robyn Modly, wife of Thomas B. Modly, a Clevelander and former U.S. Navy secretary.

"I am humbled and honored to be the sponsor of a ship that bears the name of the great city of Cleveland, with its rich and storied history of support to our armed services," Modly said. "I look forward to a lifelong relationship with the ship and her crew as they proudly serve the Navy and our nation."

The laying of the keel celebrates an important milestone in the life of the future USS Cleveland (LCS 31) and marks a significant event for the construction of the nation's 31st LCS. The USS Cleveland will be the fourth commissioned ship in naval service, since World War I, named after Cleveland, the second-largest city in Ohio and home to countless Navy and Marine Corps veterans. With the city's deep ties to maritime service since the turn of the 20th century, LCS 31 will honor Cleveland's longstanding naval history.

"We are proud to build another proven warship that allows our Navy to carry out missions around the world," said Steve Allen, Lockheed Martin Vice President of Small Combatants and

Ship Systems. “All of us at Lockheed Martin, including our hardworking team in Marinette, Wisconsin, look forward to working with the U.S. Navy to continue delivering highly capable and adaptable Freedom-variant littoral combat ships to the fleet.”

“Our team at Fincantieri Marinette Marine is proud to celebrate the keel laying of the LCS 31 with the gracious citizens of Cleveland,” said Jan Allman, CEO of Fincantieri Marinette Marine. “This milestone is a testament to the power of cooperation and forward thinking by the entire Freedom team and our customer, the United States Navy. It also bears witness to all the dedicated craftsmen and women working in our FMG system of shipyards.”

Navy Seeks to Unleash the Potential of Unmanned Systems

Chief of Naval Research, Rear Adm. Lorin Selby, observes an unmanned vessel on Pier 12 during Integrated Battle Problem 21 (UxS IBP 21) Distinguished Visitors Day at Naval Base San Diego, April 16. U.S. Pacific Fleet’s UxS IBP 21, April 19-26, integrates manned and unmanned capabilities into the most challenging operational scenarios to generate war fighting advantages. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Natalie M. Byers*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Department of the Navy (DoN) is producing an after-action review of the U.S. Pacific Fleet-led Unmanned Integrated Battle Problem 21 (IBP21), an exercise held April 19-26 in San Diego, California, the Office of Naval Research said in a June 17 release.

“Advancements in technology have created the opportunity to provide our military with an operational advantage by developing improved manned/unmanned command and control capabilities,” said Dorothy Engelhardt, director of unmanned systems for the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Ships. “This enables our military to be more agile, lethal and decisive.”

During IBP21, numerous multi-domain unmanned platforms – including unmanned aerial, surface and underwater vehicles (UAVs, USVs and UUVs, respectively) – were put into real-world, “blue-water” environments, working in sync with manned platforms in actual combat drills designed to support Pacific Fleet objectives in the Indo-Pacific region.

“Large-scale exercises such as IBP21 are critical for the Navy and Marine Corps to make the transition to a hybrid manned-unmanned force in the future,” said Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Lorin C. Selby. “These demonstrations ensure what works in theory will work in the fleet—in an environment that is messier, dirtier and wetter than a lab. They also allow us to get valuable feedback from the Sailors and Marines themselves.”

Many of the platforms tested in IBP21 were supported by the Naval Research Enterprise (NRE), which Selby commands. Comprising the Office of Naval Research (ONR), ONR Global (the command’s international arm) and the Naval Research Laboratory, the NRE is tasked with providing the capabilities and long-term vision ensuring U.S. naval dominance today and into the future.

The purpose of IBP21 was to explore a variety of questions about how unmanned systems can be incorporated into fleet operations. For example: How can unmanned and manned systems work together effectively in diverse warfighting scenarios? How can you integrate unmanned systems seamlessly into existing platforms? What is the best way to train Sailors and

Marines to use such complex, evolving technologies?

So far, major takeaways from IBP21 include: Unmanned systems are resilient, enable better beyond-line-of-sight targeting, and improve battlespace awareness and command and control. They also provide significant advantages in ISR (intelligence, survival, reconnaissance) and Targeting and Fires capabilities, without creating additional risks to the mission or warfighters. The result—more effective offensive and defensive postures.

The testing of new unmanned technologies reflects the Navy and Marine Corps' commitment to rethinking concepts of operations, as noted in the widely publicized naval document "Unmanned Campaign Framework," which was recently released by the DoN.

The Unmanned Campaign Framework notes autonomy will complement, not replace, manned assets, and will provide warfighters far more options in combat.

Since the completion of IBP21, naval leaders, scientists and engineers have assessed what worked, what didn't and future actions for accelerating unmanned capabilities to the fleet and force.

These future steps include:

Continuing to leverage fleet experimentation exercises to execute the DoN Unmanned Campaign Plan

Creating a more iterative experimentation process to tighten the "test fast, operate, learn fast" concept

Improving industry partnerships and participation in fleet experiments and exercises

Improving the integration of secure communication networks to maximize effectiveness of manned-unmanned teaming

Developing concepts of operation and employment to quickly

operationalize unmanned systems.

HII Announces First International Order for REMUS 300 UUVs

Four of Huntington Ingalls Industries' REMUS 300 unmanned underwater vehicles have been ordered by the Royal New Zealand Navy for use in mine countermeasure and survey operations. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The Royal New Zealand Navy has placed the first international order for four REMUS 300 unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), Huntington Ingalls Industries announced in a June 21 release.

"We are pleased New Zealand is upgrading their fleet with new REMUS 300 UUVs," said Duane Fotheringham, president of the Unmanned Systems business group in HII's Technical Solutions division. "Technology has progressed significantly over the past few years, and the REMUS 300 represents one of the most advanced man-portable UUVs on the market today. We look forward to continuing our long-standing relationship with the Royal New Zealand Navy."

New Zealand has a fleet of six REMUS 100 UUVs that are used for mine countermeasures and underwater survey operations. The Royal New Zealand Navy has also used its REMUS vehicles for search and recovery, including locating the wreck of the Princess Ashika ferry in 2009 and assisting with the White Island volcano search effort in 2019.

“We have a fleet of six REMUS 100 UUVs we have been using consistently for the past 14 years,” said Captain Garin Golding, Royal New Zealand Navy. “The flexibility and modularity of the REMUS 300 will allow us to tailor the vehicles to specific missions, further augmenting our capabilities.”

Designed for modularity and portability, the REMUS 300 can be reconfigured with a range of sensors and payloads to meet mission requirements. In addition to the four vehicles, New Zealand acquired high-definition camera modules and additional swappable battery modules. The sale was facilitated through New Zealand Ocean Technology, HII’s REMUS sales and in-country support partner. Delivery of the four REMUS 300s is expected by summer 2022.

VTG Awarded NAVSEA Prime Contract to Expedite Delivery of Innovative Technologies

CHANTILLY, Va. – VTG, a provider of force modernization and digital transformation solutions, has won a $27 million, full and open, single-award, prime contract to support the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) in overseeing and executing its Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs, and assisting in the expedient transition of SBIR and STTR technologies, products and services to the fleet, the company said in a June 16 release.

“We are honored to support NAVSEA in harnessing the creativity, agility and entrepreneurial spirit of small businesses to deliver the highest-priority technology needs of

the Navy," said John Hassoun, VTG president and CEO. "We look forward to leveraging our expertise across the defense and intelligence sectors to increase small business participation in federally funded research and development, foster collaboration between small firms and nonprofit research institutions, and stimulate the exciting technological innovations that will transform our nation's sea power and benefit our national economy."

Under the five-year contract, VTG will provide program and project support services to the NAVSEA SBIR/STTR programs by defining focus areas, developing topics and identifying small business proposals and contractors to participate in the program. The company will also be responsible for supplying expertise and knowledge to assist the program manager in developing strategies and plans, as well as policies, processes and procedures to increase the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the SBIR/STTR programs. The work will primarily be performed at the Washington Navy Yard.

The SBIR program originated in 1982 as the government's primary mechanism for engaging small technology businesses in R&D. It was designed to spur technological innovation, help meet federal R&D needs, increase private sector commercialization of innovations resulting from federally funded investments and encourage participation by minority and disadvantaged persons. The Navy has taken part in the SBIR program since its inception and has developed the highest commercialization success rate in the Defense Department. Last September, NAVSEA SBIR/STTR received the prestigious DoD Vanguard award for recognition of its outstanding work in supporting the Navy's goal to "rapidly and adaptively procure innovative technologies from small businesses."