

'Old Salt' Designation Passes to Adm. Christopher Grady



Adm. Christopher Grady, commander, Fleet Forces Command. *U.S. NAVY*

The Surface Navy Association's (SNA) "Old Salt" designation, honoring the active duty U. S. Navy officer with the earliest date of qualification as a Surface Warfare Officer, has passed to Adm. Christopher Grady. Grady is currently assigned as the Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

Grady relieved Adm. Philip Davidson, who has retired, and is now the 21st individual to receive this honor.

Initiated in 1988, the Old Salt award is accompanied by a bronze statue depicting a naval officer on the pitching deck of a ship. The statue is cast from metal salvaged from historic U.S. naval ships, most notably the battleship USS Maine, which exploded and sank in Havana Harbor in 1898, precipitating the Spanish-American War.

Old Salts have their names engraved on brass plates attached to the base of the Old Salt statue. The statue is then held in the custody of the current Old Salt during the recipient's active-duty tenure. The Old Salt trophy may be kept in possession of the recipient or displayed by the command to which the Old Salt is assigned.

The issuance of the Old Salt Award is a tribute to the Navy's customs and traditions which call the respected, experienced, knowledgeable, and senior surface warfare officer with the designation as Old Salt.

SNA also recognizes the "Old Tar" award to honor the Surface Warfare Enlisted Specialist with the earliest date of receiving the coveted warfare qualification. That designation

recently went to [Fleet Master Chief Bill Smalts](#).

F-35B Jets to Join the Fight Against Daesh from the U.K. Carrier Strike Group



Lt. Col. Andrew D'Ambrogi, the commanding officer of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 21 "The Wake Island Avengers," conducts carrier qualifications in an F-35B Joint Strike Fighter Lightning II aboard the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth (R08) at sea, May 2, 2021. Alongside the Royal Navy 617 Squadron, VMFA-211 will form part of the largest carrier air group in the world. This deployment highlights the global reach of the U.S. and U.K. armed forces and their interoperability, and enhances the deterrence and defense capabilities of the NATO Alliance. *U.S. MARINE CORPS photo by 1st Lt. Zachary Bodner*

LONDON – U.K. F-35B fighter jets operating from HMS Queen Elizabeth will join Operation Shader in the fight against Daesh, the U.K. Ministry of Defense said in a May 4 release.

F-35B Lightning II jets will be the cutting edge of the Carrier Strike Group's (CSG21) formidable power in the air. These are next-generation, multi-role combat aircraft equipped with advanced sensors, mission systems and stealth technology, enabling them to carry out intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance tasks.

This will be the first time U.K. fighter aircraft are embarked on an operational aircraft carrier deployment since 2010 and will be the largest number of F-35Bs ever to sail the seas. The embarked aircraft also include 10 F-35Bs of a U.S. Marine

Corps squadron, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211.

The renowned 617 Squadron RAF (The Dambusters) will operate the jets to provide tangible and impactful support to counter-Daesh operations in Iraq and Syria. Daesh is another name for the Islamic State, or ISIS.

“The F-35B Lightning jets will pack a potent punch against Daesh and help prevent them from regaining a foothold in Iraq,” said James Heapey MP, minister for the Armed Forces. “This is a prime example of the U.K. armed forces stepping forward with our allies to confront persistent threats around the world. It is global Britain in action.”

CSG21, led by HMS Queen Elizabeth, is the largest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the U.K. in a generation and will set sail next month on its first operational deployment. This is a joint Royal Air Force and Royal Navy deployment which is committed to confronting persistent threats around the world and make a meaningful contribution to global security.

The F-35B Lightning jets, which will operate from HMS Queen Elizabeth throughout the deployment, will make a significant contribution in degrading Daesh.

“This deployment represents the embodiment of the UK’s Joint Expeditionary Capability and utilizing the F-35Bs in the fight against Daesh will further demonstrate our commitment to securing their global defeat,” said Chief of Joint Operations Vice Adm. Sir Ben Key.

March 2021 saw the second anniversary of Daesh’s final and total loss of territory in Syria. However, there remain significant numbers of Daesh terrorists in Iraq and Syria. The United Kingdom remains committed to defeating Daesh and enhancing security in the region, alongside the Iraqi Security Forces and our NATO allies. Operation Shader is the United

Kingdom's contribution to the Global Coalition against Daesh.

General Atomics Opens Office in Patuxent River, Maryland



An F/A-18E Super Hornet landed aboard USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) flight deck marking the 1,000th recovery of a fixed-wing aircraft using Ford's Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) in March 2020. GA-EMS' new office in Patuxent River, Maryland, will serve as a customer engagement center for the AAG and other programs. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Gary Prill*

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) has opened an office in Patuxent River, Maryland, to serve as a customer engagement center supporting maritime and naval aviation programs and business growth initiatives in the region, the company announced May 3.

James Donnelly, GA-EMS' director of Maritime Program Operations, will be responsible for leading office operations and providing program support for GA-EMS' Aircraft Launch and Recovery Systems delivered to the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) for Ford-class aircraft carriers. Donnelly will also serve as a point of interface for other maritime programs in GA-EMS' growing portfolio of business activities on the Eastern Seaboard, including nuclear submarine construction support and unmanned undersea vehicle programs.

"We are excited to join the Pax River community, and have the convenience of proximity to our NAVAIR customer and an industry base that provides world-class technologies in support of the Navy," said Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS.

“For nearly two decades, we’ve worked from our San Diego headquarters, Tupelo, Mississippi, center of excellence for manufacturing, and our Lakehurst, New Jersey, operations site to support NAVAIR’s procurement and delivery of our Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System and Advanced Arresting Gear system for all Ford-class carriers. Now, our Pax River office literally opens the door to our customers to help improve communication and collaboration at the local level. We look forward to strengthening existing partnerships and forging new relationships within the community to continue delivering technology innovations supporting the warfighter.”

Naval Air Station Patuxent River is the home of several tenant commands, including the Fleet Readiness Center Mid-Atlantic, the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, Naval Test Wing Atlantic, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division and NAVAIR headquarters. NAVAIR is the primary acquisition command for naval aviation.

Surface Ship Sustainment Company Noblis Acquires McKean Defense and its Affiliates

RESTON, Va. – Noblis has acquired McKean Defense and its affiliates, Mikros Systems and Cabrillo Technologies, for an undisclosed amount, Noblis announced in a May 3 release. Recognized as a market leader in U.S. Navy surface ship readiness, modernization, sustainment and integration, McKean Defense is an employee-owned life-cycle management,

engineering, enterprise transformation and program management business that supports Warfighters and helps clients reach new levels of mission support and transformation.

With this step, McKean Defense is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Noblis. The name of the new subsidiary will be the subject of a future announcement. Glenn Hickok, U.S. Navy veteran, seasoned industry executive and current vice president of Noblis' Defense Mission Area, has been named president of the subsidiary and will also retain his current role. Joseph Carlini, McKean's CEO, has stepped down from his role and will serve as a strategic advisor through the integration process. The subsidiary will be governed by Amr ElSawy, Noblis president and CEO, and the company's board of trustees.

"As mission-driven companies, Noblis and McKean Defense have a common purpose to enrich lives and make our nation safer with a shared passion for excellence and innovation," said ElSawy. "We are excited to welcome McKean employees to the Noblis family and look forward to combining forces to bring new and complementary solutions to address our clients' growing needs."

"McKean is an employee-owned company," said Carlini. "As such, it was important for us to join an organization with a strong, ethical foundation, similar values and a singular focus on helping to advance national security priorities. We found that in Noblis, and I'm confident that together, our teams and service to our clients will thrive."

"I'm already impressed by the McKean team. They have deep client relationships and extensive mission knowledge – particularly in the naval operations arena," said Hickok. "Together, our team can remain agile while adding scale, capabilities and contract vehicles to expand our impacts in the Defense Mission Area and lean further forward in addressing our clients' changing needs."

Wolf Den Associates and Baird served as exclusive financial advisors for Noblis and McKean respectively on this transaction.

USCGC Hamilton Conducts Exercises with Georgian Coast Guard



210502-G-G0108-1510 BLACK SEA (May 2, 2021) USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) and Georgian coast guard vessels Ochamchire (P 23) and Dioskuria (P 25) conduct underway maneuvers in the Black Sea, May 2, 2021. Hamilton is on a routine deployment in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national interests and security in Europe and Africa. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

BLACK SEA – The Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Hamilton (WMSL 753) crew conducted a series of operational exercises with the Georgian coast guard, May 2 to 3, 2021, in the Black Sea, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area said in a release.

The Hamilton crew conducted search and rescue patterns, simulated survivor rescue training, helicopter hoisting evolutions, approaches for towing, and ship communications with the crews of Georgian coast guard vessels Dioskuria (P 25) and Ochamchire (P 23). These maneuvers and operations enhanced the proficiency in specific mission areas familiar to both coast guards.

“The U.S. Coast Guard, along with the U.S. Navy, work closely with the Georgian coast guard on the maritime component of our

robust security and defense partnership,” said Kelly Degnan, U.S. ambassador to Georgia. “We welcome Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton to train with their counterparts in the Georgian coast guard, engage with community leaders, and above all, reaffirm the United States’ commitment to Georgia’s territorial integrity.”

The U.S. Coast Guard has been a consistent partner with European nations, strengthening and enforcing robust maritime governance. These exercises are designed to strengthen partnerships through interoperable capabilities and combined operations.

We continue our substantial military training cooperation, ship visits, and joint military exercises that aim to help Georgia improve its self-defense capabilities and interoperability with allied and partner forces.

“Hamilton was honored to conduct combined at-sea operations with the Georgian coast guard,” said Capt. Timothy Cronin, commanding officer of the Hamilton. “The U.S. Coast Guard values this partnership as we look to protect our shared interests by ensuring safe and lawful activity in the Black Sea.”

The U.S. Coast Guard has a deep partnership with Georgia and the Georgian coast guard, dating back to its initial establishment in the late 1990s. Through the interagency partnership with the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of State, the U.S. Coast Guard guided and developed the Georgian coast guard into a fully operational and successful maritime force.

A resilient network of alliances and partnerships is the fabric of the free and open order. We build trust and interoperability with our allies and partners through combined exercises, operations, theater security cooperation, global

health engagement, foreign internal defense, and capacity-building efforts.

Hamilton is the first U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit the Black Sea since 2008. The last U.S. Coast Guard cutter to visit the Black Sea, USCGC Dallas (WHEC 716), sailed to the Black Sea twice, in 2008 and 1995.

Hamilton is the fourth national security cutter and is the fifth cutter named for the father of the U.S. Coast Guard – Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury and advocate for the creation of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service.

The U.S. Coast Guard remains operational during COVID-19, following all COVID-19 safety precautions and regulations.

The U.S. Coast Guard is conducting a routine deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations, working alongside allies, building maritime domain awareness, and sharing best practices with partner nation navies and coast guards.

BAE Systems Awarded \$76 Million Contract for Vertical Launch System Canisters



An SM-2 telemetry surface to air missile is launched from the forward vertical launch system of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh (CG 67) while conducting a live-fire exercise. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ryre Arciaga*

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – BAE Systems has been awarded a \$76 million contract modification to produce additional Vertical Launch System (VLS) canisters for the U.S. Navy, the company said in a May 4 release. The canisters play a critical role for storing, transporting, and firing a range of offensive and defensive missiles from the deck of the Navy's guided-missile cruisers and destroyers.

“The VLS is a highly survivable and versatile system and our canisters play a key role in equipping the Navy with this world-class capability,” said Brent Butcher, vice president of the Weapon Systems product line at BAE Systems. “BAE Systems has partnered with the Navy and its allies for more than 30 years to provide them with the most flexible and reliable weapon systems to execute a variety of missions effectively, and we look forward to continuing that commitment with this VLS technology.”

Under the contract now totaling \$306 million, BAE Systems will produce canisters for the Mk 13, Mk 14, Mk 25, Mk 29 and other hardware for the Navy. The contract will also support purchases from the governments of Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, South Korea, Spain, and Turkey under a Foreign Military Sales program.

VLS canisters serve in a multifaceted role as containers for missile shipping and storage, as well as launch tubes when loaded into the VLS. They also provide identification and firing support to multiple missile types, including the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile, Standard Missile-2, Standard Missile-3, Standard Missile-6, the Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile and the vertical launch anti-submarine rocket known as ASROC.

Work on the contract modification will be performed at the BAE Systems production facility in Aberdeen, South Dakota, through 2023, with engineering and program support in Minneapolis. The new modification will allow BAE Systems to add 25 jobs to its

Aberdeen facility.

India Approved for Six More P-8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft



U.S. Navy, Indian navy, and Royal Australian Air Force P-8 Poseidons are staged at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam for Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise 2018. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kevin A. Flinn*

WASHINGTON – The State Department has approved a possible Foreign Military Sale to the government of India of P-8I patrol aircraft and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$2.42 billion, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in an April 30 release.

India has requested six P-8I Patrol aircraft, including mission systems, support equipment and spares; publications; repair and return; transportation; aircraft ferry; training; U.S. government and contractor engineering, software, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistical and program support.

The Indian navy procured eight P-8I aircraft from Boeing in January 2009, via direct commercial sale, and contracted for an additional four aircraft in July 2016. The first P-8I aircraft were delivered to the Indian navy in 2013, providing interoperability and critical capabilities to coalition maritime operations. This proposed sale of an additional six P-8I aircraft will allow the Indian navy to expand its maritime surveillance aircraft capability for the next 30 years.

The prime contractor will be the Boeing Co., Seattle, Washington.

Navy Receives Production Approval for Next-Generation Air Combat Training System



The Tactical Combat Training System Increment II (TCTS II) achieved Milestone C on April 27 and has been approved for limited production. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office (PMA-205) received Milestone C approval for its next-generation air combat training system, the Tactical Combat Training System Increment II (TCTS II) on April 27, the Naval Air Systems Command said in a May 3 release.

Approved by Program Executive Officer for Aviation Common Systems and Commercial Services (PEO(CS)), Gary Kurtz, Milestone C clears the way for the TCTS II program to transition into limited production with the support of industry partner, Collins Aerospace Systems (Collins), Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Going into production of this capability comes after many years of work and planning done by the PMA-205 and Collins team. “I could not be more proud of this team’s achievement revolutionizing the way we train,” said Kurtz.

“This is an exciting time for the program and the fleet as we start production on the next Tactical Combat Training System,”

said Capt. Lisa Sullivan, PMA-205 program manager. "The Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force all identified a critical need for a common, encrypted and multiple-level security range training system, and PMA-205 will be delivering TCTS Inc II to meet those requirements on schedule."

The TCTS II system is an open architecture system enabling highly secure air combat training across fourth- and fifth-generation aviation and maritime platforms, replacing and advancing the existing range training infrastructure. The Collins-developed training pod is the first to meet the services' requirements and communicates with both airborne and ground equipment.

"The TCTS II system is also built with future growth in mind and includes key components to achieve Live, Virtual, and Constructive (LVC) capabilities," said Sullivan.

LVC blended training is a cost-effective solution for developing and testing emerging technologies and is critical for providing aviators and weapon system operators with realistic mission rehearsal training for the complex challenges they might face during actual combat scenarios.

"The fleet has been asking for this type of capability for some time and we, along with Collins, have worked diligently to develop, test and mature this training capability, while maintaining schedule," said Chuck Kaylor, PMA-205 TCTS II team lead. "Obtaining Milestone C approval is a culmination of our efforts."

Performance and flight testing will be conducted by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 23 (VX-23) at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, in Maryland, on the F/A-18E Super Hornet.

The Air Force teamed up with the PMA-205's TCTS II program, leveraging investments made by the Navy to enable delivery of these training capabilities sooner and at a lower cost, helping our warfighter best prepare for real-world threats.

PMA-205 provides full life-cycle acquisition of naval aviation platforms, general training systems, training range instrumentation systems, and distributed mission training centers to provide USN and USMC pilots, naval flight officers, aircrew, and maintainers with the training equipment required to provide lethal capability and operational readiness. The program office manages flight simulators, part-task trainers, maintenance trainers, airborne and underwater training range instrumentation, threat systems, and associated curricula to ensure optimum performance for naval aviation.

Responsibilities include execution of naval aviation's Live, Virtual Constructive training strategy, execution of the Naval Aviation Simulator Master Plan, commonality and interoperability across training systems, procurement and sustainment of training products and services to include equipment overhaul and/or replacement, engineering changes, modernization and technology refreshes, and future technology advancements for training systems and training ranges.

Milestone KC-130J Super Hercules Delivery Includes Capability Upgrade



The 60th USMC KC-130J aircraft takes off from Lockheed Martin production facilities in Marietta, Georgia, on March 31 on its way to VMGR-252 in Cherry Point, NC. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Marine Corps received its 60th KC-130J aircraft in March; the aircraft includes improved navigational performance, a modernized cockpit, and other key upgrades, the Naval Air Systems Command said in an April 29

release.

The Tactical Airlift Program Office (PMA-207) accepted delivery of the aircraft outfitted with the Block 8.1 updated cockpit and AN/AAQ-24 DoN Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasure (DoN LAIRCM). These upgrades address obsolescence issues and improve survivability.

Produced by Lockheed Martin, the KC-130J aircraft have undergone numerous adaptations since entering Marine Corps service in September 2000.

The Block 8.1 cockpit upgrade includes a new flight management system that complies with Communications, Navigation, Surveillance and Air Traffic Management mandates. It also boasts enhanced GPS capabilities, improved communications systems, and improvements to the KC-130J's friend-or-foe identification technology.

The addition of DoN LAIRCM, a laser-based self-protection system designed to defend against surface-to-air infrared missile threats, increases survivability of the aircraft and aircrew in the event of an airborne attack.

"Both these systems increase the aircraft's combat effectiveness to perform the KC-130J core mission essential tasking," said Navy Capt. Steve Nassau, PMA-207 program manager. "The KC-130J is a global workhorse, and the Block 8.1 upgrade clears the path for the aircraft to have world-wide access, while the DoN LAIRCM allows the aircraft to operate under expanded threat environments."

The aircraft will become part of Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 252 at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina.

"Our team has worked hard to make sure the Marine Corps is ready to utilize and support this aircraft," said Joanna Sockoloskie, PMA-207 KC-130J integrated product team

lead. "We have been involved from the start and it is our mission to ensure our Marines have the latest and finest equipment available."

The Marine Corps will receive the remaining 26 aircraft over the next five years reaching their program of record 86 KC-130Js.

Navy Announces New Assignments for Flags



Adm. William D. Byrne Jr., assigned as director, warfare development, N72, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, one of several assignments announced April 30. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The acting secretary of the Navy and chief of naval operations announced on April 30 the following assignments:

Rear Adm. William D. Byrne Jr. will be assigned as director, warfare development, N72, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C. Byrne is currently serving as vice director, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.

Rear Adm. Ronald C. Copley will be assigned as director, National Maritime Intelligence Integration Office; and commander, Office of Naval Intelligence, Washington, D.C. Copley is currently serving as deputy director of operations, National Security Agency, Fort Meade, Maryland.

Rear Adm. Douglas G. Perry will be assigned as director, Undersea Warfare Division, N97, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C. Perry is currently serving as

commander, Submarine Group Nine, Silverdale, Washington.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Christopher C. French, selected for promotion to rear admiral, will be assigned as deputy judge advocate general of the Navy, Washington, D.C. French is currently serving as legal counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C.

Rear Adm. (lower half) George M. Wikoff, selected for promotion to rear admiral, will be assigned as vice director, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C. Wikoff is currently serving as special assistant to the deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans and strategy, N3/N5, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Craig C. Clapperton will be assigned as commander, Combined Joint Task Force, Cyber, U.S. Tenth Fleet, Fort Meade, Maryland. Clapperton is currently serving as commander, Carrier Strike Group Twelve, Norfolk, Virginia.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Douglas C. Verissimo will be assigned as director, Assessment Division, N81, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C. Verissimo is currently serving as commander, Carrier Strike Group Nine, San Diego, California.

Capt. Maria L. Aguayo, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Atlantic, with additional duties as fleet civil engineer (N01CE), U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia. Aguayo is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, Washington, D.C.

Capt. Erik J. Eslich, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as deputy commander, Seventh Fleet, Yokosuka, Japan. Eslich is currently serving as executive assistant, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia.

Capt. Joseph B. Hornbuckle, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as commander, Fleet Readiness Centers, Naval Air Systems Command, Patuxent River, Maryland. Hornbuckle is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Patuxent River, Maryland.

Capt. Christopher A. Kijek, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as director, operations and plans, N3, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C. Kijek is currently serving as executive assistant, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii.

Capt. Stuart C. Satterwhite, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as director, My Navy Career Center, Millington, Tennessee. Satterwhite is currently serving as deputy director, enterprise support, Office of the Chief of Naval Personnel, Arlington, Virginia.

Capt. Ralph R. Smith III, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as vice director for intelligence, J-2, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C. Smith is currently serving as director, Maritime Operations Center, U.S. Tenth Fleet/U.S. Fleet Cyber Command, Fort Meade, Maryland.