

Bell Unveils New Manufacturing Technology Center



FORT WORTH, Texas – Bell Textron Inc. unveiled on Aug. 10 its new 140,000-square-foot Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC) in Fort Worth, Texas, the company said in a release.

The MTC is a proving ground where Bell will test and refine technologies and processes – demonstrating manufacturing readiness and ability to successfully build and support Future Vertical Lift (FVL) aircraft. The facility provides capabilities that span all of Bell’s core manufacturing of rotor and drive systems, critical infrastructure and final assembly.

Since establishing a footprint in North Texas in 1951, Bell’s facilities have been a hub for new technology in aviation. Many milestones, including first flight of the XV-15, V-22, 609 and 407, took place in the DFW metroplex. Building FVL aircraft will require the right blend of investment in manufacturing technology and a quality workforce, as well as strong partnerships with the state and community, to deliver an affordable, capable and reliable aircraft for the warfighter.

“The MTC is the next step in successfully deploying new manufacturing technologies and processes into Bell’s future factories,” said Glenn Isbell, vice president of rapid prototyping and manufacturing innovation for Bell Textron. “These future factories working together with our teammates and suppliers, will be designed to enable high-quality, high-rate production of the Bell V-280 Valor, Bell 360 Invictus and other future aircraft.”

Digital connectivity and integration form the backbone of the MTC. The facility will be monitored and controlled by a network of IT, Internet of Things (IoT) and cybersecurity systems that manage the inflow and outflow of materials, as well as the movement of activity throughout the factory.

By deploying a networked software infrastructure, the MTC will produce a digital twin of itself that gives everyone a common operating picture of the building, the equipment and the processes.

DIU Awards ThinKom Contract to Evaluate Comms Antenna for Navy Ships

HAWTHORNE, Calif. – The Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) has awarded a contract to ThinKom Solutions to test and evaluate one of the company's commercial off-the-shelf aeronautical phased-array antenna systems as a solution for next-generation communications on U.S. Navy ships, the company said in a release.

Under the seven-month contract, ThinKom is delivering a ThinAir Ka2517 antenna system for on-board testing to meet Navy requirements for multidomain tactical communications. The Ka-band antenna, based on the company's patented VICTS technology, will demonstrate the capability to be integrated onto a Navy ship. A concurrent design study phase will evaluate performance modifications requested by the Navy.

DIU is a U.S. Department of Defense organization focused

exclusively on fielding and scaling commercial technology across the U.S. military to help solve critical problems. Through its agile processes, contract authorities and diverse team of experts, DIU has reduced the time it takes to identify a problem, prototype a commercial solution and implement it into the field to 12 to 24 months.

ThinKom's industry-leading VICTS phased arrays are installed on more than 1,550 commercial aircraft and have accrued more than 17 million flight hours, demonstrating mean-time-between-failure rates well in excess of 100,000 hours. The Ka2517 terminals are in full production and currently operational on a fleet of U.S. government aircraft.

"ThinKom's VICTS technology currently meets all of the DIU requirements for a low-cost, low-risk COTS solution that can be deployed on a DDG 1000-class destroyer," said Bill Milroy, chief technology officer for ThinKom Solutions. "With millions of hours of service under the extreme dynamic and environmental conditions of modern commercial and military jet aircraft, ThinKom's low-profile, compact VICTS antennas are ideally positioned to meet the Navy's performance requirements on a platform at sea."

Coast Guard Offloads \$12 million in Seized Cocaine



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier offloads 430 kilograms of cocaine at Sector San Juan on Aug. 5. U.S. COAST GUARD DISTRICT 7 / Ricardo Castrodad

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The U.S. Coast Guard transferred custody of two suspected smugglers and 430 kilograms of seized

cocaine to federal law enforcement at Sector San Juan on Aug. 5 following the interdiction of a go-fast boat in the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard's 7th District said in a release.

The interdiction was the result of multiagency efforts in support of U.S. Southern Command's enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force program and the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico is leading the prosecution for this case.

The estimated wholesale value of the seized drug shipment is more than \$12 million.

"The positive outcome in this case is a reflection of the professionalism and unwavering resolve of the Richard Dixon crew and of our fellow Coast Guardsmen and federal law enforcement partners involved in this case," said Lt. Matthew Monahan, cutter Richard Dixon's commanding officer. "Our collective efforts resulted in preventing 430 kilograms of cocaine from reaching the streets and the apprehension of two smugglers who will now have their day in court."

The interdiction occurred on Aug. 2 afternoon following the detection of a suspicious 30-foot go-fast vessel, with two people aboard, by the crew of a patrolling U.S. maritime patrol aircraft.

The Richard Dixon responded to the sighting and interdicted the go-fast with the assistance of the cutter's small boat. The cutter's boarding team located 21 bales of suspected contraband aboard the go-fast that the smugglers attempted to conceal with a blue tarp. The boarding team placed the two men in custody and embarked them aboard the cutter along with the seized contraband.

The seized cocaine, destined for the United States, and two detainees were later transferred to the Coast Guard Cutter

Joseph Napier and transported to San Juan, where CCSF federal law enforcement agents received custody.

The Richard Dixon and Joseph Napier are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in San Juan.

Cutter Legare Offloads Nearly 5,000 Pounds of Interdicted Drugs



Coast Guard Cutter Legare crew members offload about 3,900 pounds of marijuana in the rain on Aug. 5 in Port Everglades, Florida. U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicole J. Groll

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Legare’s crew offloaded nearly 5,000 pounds of interdicted contraband, worth an estimated \$25.7 million, on Aug. 5 at Port Everglades, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser crew also interdicted nearly 1,100 pounds of cocaine, and the Cyclone-class patrol ship USS Shamal crew with an embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment interdicted about 3,900 pounds of marijuana while on patrol in the Caribbean Sea from suspected drug smuggling vessels.

The Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Legare is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The USS Shamal is a 179-foot Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship homeported in Mayport, Florida.

Navy Escorts Army Logistics Support Vessels Out of 5th Fleet after 20 Years of Duty



A Mark VI patrol boat (front), assigned to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 56 escorts the logistics support vessel Maj. Gen. Charles P. Gross (LSV 5) in the Persian Gulf, July 14, 2020. CTF 56 is responsible for planning and execution of expeditionary missions, including coastal riverine operations, in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jordan R. Bair

BAHRAIN – U.S. Navy warships assigned to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), escorted two U.S. Army Frank S. Besson-class logistics support vessels (LSV), assigned to U.S. Army Central Command (ARCENT), as they transited out of the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, in July and August, U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs said in an Aug. 5 release.

The two LSVs, Major General Charles P. Gross (LSV 5) and Specialist 4 James A. Loux (LSV 6), had been forward deployed to the region for 20 years in support of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) tasking and were departing Kuwait as a result of an Army-wide restructuring and asset allocation.

Over the past two decades, U.S. naval ships regularly escorted the Army vessels as they transited the Persian Gulf, delivering supplies to U.S. Army units in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates from their forward deployed homeport in Kuwait.

“The importance of U.S. and partner forces operating together in the region while supporting our shared maritime security goals continues to be vital,” said Brig. Gen. Dianne Del

Rosso, Deputy Commanding General, 1st Theater Sustainment Command. "The Logistics Support Vessels have been critical to training exercises and operations in the CENTCOM area of operations [AOR] for both the joint force and our strategic partners in the region."

Escort ships during the outbound transit included at various stages, USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), USS James E. Williams (DDG 95), USS Stout (DDG 55), patrol coastal ships assigned to CTF 55 and Mark VI patrol boats assigned to CTF 56.

NAVCENT forces regularly participate in joint operations with assets from ARCENT and other component commanders. Recent examples have included U.S. Navy warships conducting live fire exercises with U.S. Army AH-64E Apache attack helicopters assigned to ARCENT, and U.S. Air Force AC-130W Stinger II gunships assigned to Special Operations Command Central.

"The joint operations we conduct with other component commands in the CENTCOM AOR is crucial in supporting U.S. and partner nation interests in the region," said Vice Adm. James Malloy, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. "I'm proud of the work we've been able to do with our ARCENT counterparts, and I look forward to what our joint team will continue to accomplish in the future."

The U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse is comprised of 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

Coast Guard Seizes 1,395 Pounds of Cocaine From Smuggling Vessel



The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) and a go-fast vessel interdicted in the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the Coast of Central America in late-July 2020. The Bertholf's crew boarded the boat and interdicted approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine and three suspected smugglers. This photo has been edited for law enforcement purposes. U.S. COAST GUARD

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard seized approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine in late-July with an estimated value of \$24 million from a go-fast vessel in international waters of the Pacific Ocean off Central America, the Coast Guard 11th District said in an Aug. 5 release.

A maritime patrol aircraft spotted a suspected smuggling vessel and diverted the crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL-750) to the go-fast vessel's position.

Once on scene, Bertholf's crew launched a small unmanned aerial system to locate the suspected smugglers. After the suspected smugglers complied with orders to stop their boat, the Coast Guard crew boarded the vessel and discovered approximately 1,395 pounds of cocaine. Three suspected smugglers aboard the vessel were detained.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs in support of Presidential National Security Objectives. Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf, homeported in Alameda, was commissioned in 2008.

L3Harris to Provide Services for MSC Vessels

AYER, Mass. – L3Harris Technologies has been awarded a five-year indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract from the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command to provide product support services for ship control products installed on its vessels, the company said in an Aug. 4 release.

The work scope includes repair and maintenance of the control systems onboard the Henry J. Kaiser-class oilers (T-AO-187/199) and other MSC vessels. L3Harris will conduct appraisals, inspections, reports, repairs, and tests regularly throughout the contract period and any option years exercised under the contract. Required services include shipboard performance, onsite service during sea trials and in-shop

engineering support.

MSC operates vessels that replenish Navy ships, conduct specialized missions and pre-position combat cargo at sea to support deployed U.S. forces and coalition partners.

“L3Harris is excited to provide ship control product support and services for the MSC vessels to enhance operational performance and specialized missions,” said Don Hairston, vice president and general manager, C5 Systems, L3Harris. “Our reliable engineering services and ship control performance enable these critical vessels to conduct missions around the world.”

Marine Corps Identifies Personnel Killed in AAV Mishap



Naval Air Crewman (Helicopter) 2nd Class Joseph Rivera, a search-and-rescue swimmer assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island, looks out of an MH-60 Seahawk helicopter while conducting search-and-rescue following an amphibious assault vehicle mishap off the coast of Southern California on July 30. U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Mackenzie Binion

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Officials with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I Marine Expeditionary Force, have identified the one Marine who was killed and seven other Marines and one Sailor who are presumed dead after an amphibious assault vehicle mishap on July 30.

Lance Cpl. Guillermo S. Perez, 20, of New Braunfels, Texas,

was pronounced dead at the scene before being transported by helicopter to Scripps Memorial Hospital in San Diego. He was a rifleman with Bravo Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 15th MEU.

The seven Marines – all riflemen – and one Navy hospital corpsman were from Bravo Company, Battalion 1/4 of the 15th MEU. The presumed dead are:

- Pfc. Bryan J. Baltierra, 19, of Corona, California
- Lance Cpl. Marco A. Barranco, 21, of Montebello, California
- Pfc. Evan A. Bath, 19, of Oak Creek, Wisconsin
- Pfc. Jack Ryan Ostrovsky, 21, of Bend, Oregon
- Cpl. Wesley A. Rodd, 23, of Harris, Texas
- Lance Cpl. Chase D. Sweetwood, 19, of Portland, Oregon
- Cpl. Cesar A. Villanueva, 21, of Riverside, California
- Navy Hospitalman Christopher Gnem, 22, of Stockton, California

The injured were:

- A Marine rifleman with Bravo Company, BLT 1/4, 15th MEU. The Marine was transported from the scene to Scripps Memorial Hospital by helicopter and was in critical condition.
- A Marine assault amphibious vehicle crew member with Mechanized Company, BLT 1/4, 15th MEU. The Marine was transported from the scene to Scripps Memorial Hospital by helicopter and was in critical condition. He has since been upgraded to stable condition.

In total, 16 personnel were aboard the AAV when on July 30 around 5:45 p.m. they reported taking on water while conducting shore-to-ship waterborne operations training in the vicinity of San Clemente Island off the coast of Southern California. Five Marines were rescued and brought aboard the USS Somerset.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper issued the following statement: "A grateful nation and the Department of Defense grieves the tragic loss of the Marines and Sailor lost in the amphibious assault vehicle accident off the coast of San Clemente Island. Our prayers and condolences are with the family and friends of these brave young men. Their service, commitment and courage will always be remembered by the nation they served.

"While the incident remains under investigation, I want to assure our service members and their families that we are committed to gathering all the facts, understanding exactly how this incident occurred, and preventing similar tragedies in the future."

USNS Newport Completes Integrated Sea Trials



The U.S. Navy's 12th EPF, USNS Newport, completed integrated sea trials on July 30. AUSTAL USA MOBILE, Ala. – The U.S. Navy's 12th expeditionary fast transport vessel, USNS Newport, successfully completed integrated sea trials on July 30, the Program Executive Office-Ships said in an Aug. 3 release.

Integrated trials combine builder's and acceptance trials, allowing for the shipyard to demonstrate to the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey the operational capability and mission readiness of all the ship's systems during a single underway period.

During trials, the shipbuilder conducted comprehensive tests

to demonstrate the performance of all of the ship's major systems. The USNS Newport is the second EPF ship to undergo the integrated trial, signifying the stability and maturity of the shipbuilding program.

"Achieving this milestone is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the shipbuilding team and our partners in industry," said Tim Roberts, strategic and theater sealift program manager for PEO-Ships. "We are eager to press forward with delivering USNS Newport to the fleet this year and to enhance the operational flexibility available to our combatant commanders."

EPFs are designed to operate in shallow waterways and are capable of a range of activities. The vessels are versatile, noncombatant transport ships that are being used for high-speed transportation of troops, military vehicles, and equipment. Their missions include overseas contingency operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, support of special operations forces, theater security cooperation activities and emerging joint sea-basing concepts.

EPFs can transport 600 short tons 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots. Each vessel includes a flight deck to support day and night aircraft launch and recovery operations. The ships are capable of interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities as well as on/off-loading vehicles such as a fully combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank.

The USNS Newport is on track to be delivered later this year. Austal USA has also started construction of the future USNS Apalachicola and is under contract to build the future USNS Cody.

Cubic to Support Navy Surface Training Immersive Gaming, Simulations

SAN DIEGO – Cubic Corp.’s Cubic Global Defense division has been awarded a contract worth more than \$99 million to support the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division’s Surface Training Immersive Gaming and Simulations (STIGS) effort and the development, delivery and total life cycle support of a new virtual environment training system, the company said in a release.

This system will be one of the key pillars under the Navy’s Surface Training Advanced Virtual Environment program, bringing courseware and simulator training systems into a Family of Trainers to support surface training at the point of need.

“We are proud the U.S. Navy continues to trust in us as a key partner as it invests in state-of-the-art technologies to train Sailors,” said Mike Knowles, president of Cubic Global Defense. “Our solution will provide the baseline for a fully blended instructional training approach that seamlessly supports all levels of Surface Fleet Training.”

Cubic brings decades of experience delivering training solutions to every training program. By applying this experience to a common baseline for the STIGS family of trainers, Cubic will provide a solution that supports the continuum of systems while remaining open for updates and improvements for emerging needs in fleet readiness.

“Our successful performance on the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Immersive Virtual Ship Environment programs have validated the benefits of our Total Learning Platform and game-based training,” said Ray Oliver, general manager of Cubic Orlando. “Both provide a common baseline for the immersive Program of Instruction used to qualify and certify Sailors.”

This contract will also allow Cubic to deliver upgrades and modifications to previously delivered LCS courseware, in addition to new capabilities for LCS and other ships. Work for the STIGS program will be performed in Orlando and is expected to be complete by July 2025.