LCS Mobile Completes Acceptance Trials

The future USS Mobile (LCS 26) completed acceptance trials in the Gulf of Mexico in September. Austal USA

MOBILE, Ala. – The future USS *Mobile* (LCS 26) successfully completed acceptance trials in the Gulf of Mexico Sept. 25, Austal USA said in an Oct. 12 release. LCS 26 is the third Austal-built ship for the U.S. Navy to complete acceptance trials in 2020.

"I am proud of how the Austal team has come together again, in the middle of this pandemic, only a week after a Cat 2 hurricane made landfall in our backyard, completing another major milestone for one of our Navy ships – especially one so near and dear to us, named after our great city of Mobile, Alabama," Austal USA President Craig Perciavalle said. "This is proof of what happens when we work together with our Navy teammates to form an incredibly strong team that just gets the job done and done the right way!"

Acceptance trials involve the execution of intense comprehensive tests by the Austal USA-led industry team while underway, which demonstrate to the Navy the successful operation of the ship's major systems and equipment. This is the last significant milestone before delivery of the ship.

The Independence-variant LCS is a high-speed, shallow-draft, focused-mission ship capable of operating independently or in a group. These ships are designed to defeat growing littoral threats and provide access and dominance along coastal waters, yet capable of open-ocean operation. A fast, maneuverable and networked surface-combatant, LCS provides the required warfighting capabilities and operational flexibility to execute focused missions such as surface warfare, mine warfare

and anti-submarine warfare. USS *Gabrielle Giffords* (LCS 10) recently completed a successful deployment with the Pacific fleet and ten other Independence-variant LCS are homeported in San Diego.

The LCS program is at full-rate production and continuing its momentum at Austal USA, with five ships currently under construction including *Mobile*. The future USS *Savannah* (LCS 28) has launched and is preparing for trials. Final assembly is underway on the future USS *Canberra* (LCS 30) and USS *Santa Barbara* (LCS 32). Modules for the future USS *Augusta* (LCS 34) are under construction in the module manufacturing facility.

DLA to Scrap Five Ex-Navy Warships

An aerial port bow view of the U.S. Navy guided missile cruiser USS *Ticonderoga* (CG-47) underway during *Standard II* missile tests near the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico (USA), on 9 April 1983. U.S. Navy / Bruce Trombecky

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. – Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Disposition Services will recycle five retired U.S. Navy ships as part of a new scrap sales contract to save taxpayer money and protect the environment, Jeff Landenberger, DLA Disposition Services, wrote in an Oct. 5 article on the DLA website.

The five ships are: the ex-USS Charles F. Adams (DDG-2), the ex-USS Barry (DD 933), -the ex-USS Stephen W. Groves (FFG-29), the ex-USS Hawes (FFG 53), and the ex-USS Ticonderoga (CG47).

The winning bid for recycling the ships was $240, according to DLA Disposition Services Public Sales Division Chief Carlos Torres. The important takeaway for taxpayers is that the contract allows the U.S. Navy to avoid per-ship disposal costs that can add up to millions of dollars.

Torres said DLA and the Navy partnered in writing the contract. Navy officials then reviewed technical proposals and ensured that companies bidding could meet the requirements.

The ships' final destination will be Brownsville, Texas, where full dismantling will commence and 98% of all removed materials are expected to be recycled.

Thousands of sailors served on the five ships while they were part of the active fleet. Ron Tucker was new to the Navy in 1982 when he joined USS Ticonderoga's crew. It was still under construction in the shipyards of Pascagoula, Mississippi, awaiting commissioning, designating him a "plank owner."

"Looking back, we were the center of attention with regards to the Navy and DoD," Tucker said. "The Washington Post carried some articles, they called the 'Star Wars' ship."

Tucker said that, at the time, he did not understand the significance of his new ship being the first to deploy the Aegis weapons system. Today, that system is a standard in the fleet.

After ships are decommissioned, the Navy places them in reserve, or, what is often referred to as the "Mothball Fleet." Some are retained in case they are needed in an emergency. But as newer ships are moved into the reserve fleet, the older ones are released to make room and reduce the Navy's maintenance costs.

"It's part of the Navy experience to have to say goodbye to a ship, they don't last forever," said Tucker.

SeaRobotics to Supply Autonomous Surface Vehicles to NRL

A SeaRobotics SR-Surveyor M1.8 Autonomous Surface Vehicle. SeaRobotics

STUART, Fla. – SeaRobotics Corp. has been awarded a contract to supply multiple SR-Surveyor M1.8 Autonomous Surface Vehicles (ASVs) to the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory to help the Department of the Navy develop its advanced autonomy research program, the company said in an Oct. 8 release.

The SR-Surveyor M1.8 is a tightly integrated, 1.8-meter long ASV designed to streamline logistics and optimize data acquisition in shallow and hard-to-navigate waters. The platform is specifically purposed to be versatile and rapidly deployable for users that require high quality, reliable data capture in remote and restricted waters.

Leveraging the highly reliable SR-Surveyor M1.8 ASV, SeaRobotics optimized the platform for multi-vehicle collaborative behavior development. This custom configuration provides an innovative and cost-effective system for various research activities.

“While we have developed a number of unmanned systems for marine defense application in the past, this is the first truly man-portable asset for multi-vehicle deployment,” said SeaRobotics president Don Darling. “This contract award supports the continued commitment to the advancement of autonomy research for naval operations and we are excited that the SR-Surveyor M1.8 will play an instrumental role.”

The first SR-Surveyor M1.8 is scheduled for delivery in the fourth quarter of 2020, with staged deliveries bi-weekly to follow and scheduled to be completed early in the first quarter of 2021.

USCG, Partners Interdict 2 tons of Drugs throughout Caribbean in September

The Coast Guard and partner nations halted more than two tons of cocaine trafficking in the Caribbean in September. This image shows the result of a rain from late August in the Caribbean, where 225 kilograms of cocaine were seized. U.S. Coast Guard

MIAMI – The Coast Guard and partner nations halted more than 4,000 pounds of cocaine during September, worth almost $73 million, the Coast Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 8 release.

These interdictions were a direct result of the partnerships with crews aboard Dutch, British and U.S. naval ships with embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment boarding teams who worked jointly with U.S. Southern Command and other Department of Defense agencies to detect and interdict illegal drugs and stopping the flow of drugs throughout the Caribbean.

“Coast Guard law enforcement detachments – or LEDETs – are highly specialized and play a vital role in the fight against illicit drug trafficking in the maritime domain,” said Rear Adm. Eric C. Jones, commander of Seventh Coast Guard District.

“Our LEDETs deploy with the U.S. Navy and Allied navies supporting enhanced counter narcotics operations, bringing broad law enforcement authority critical to successful interdictions throughout the Caribbean Basin.”

The Coast Guard’s Western Hemisphere Strategy assigns three specific priorities of combatting networks, securing borders and safeguarding commerce. To achieve success in these priorities, the Coast Guard continuously strives for close coordination between partnering naval assets as well as its own. Effective communication, persistence and teamwork are among many characteristics that contribute to mission success. The diversity of the assets that contributed to these interdictions demonstrates the effectiveness of the high level of cooperation between the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy, British Royal navy, and Dutch navy. The Coast Guard remains committed to the enhancement of counter-narcotic operations throughout the maritime domain to diminish transnational threats and maximize our country’s security.

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 and the Caribbean Sea requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions for these 12 interdictions by Attorney’s Offices from the District of Puerto Rico, the Middle District of Florida and the Southern District of Florida. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the

Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District, headquartered in Alameda, California, and the law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean Sea is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 7th District, headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the Coast Guard.

In 1986, Public Law 99-570 authorized Coast Guard personnel, such as LEDETs, to conduct law enforcement operations from U.S. Navy ships, in addition to Coast Guard vessels. In 1988, Public Law 100-456 required all Navy surface units transiting drug interdiction areas to carry Coast Guard law enforcement personnel increasing the need for LEDETs. In addition, the 1989 National Defense Authorization Act tasked Department of Defense agencies with monitoring maritime and aerial importation of illegal drugs. The act named the Coast Guard as the lead agency for waterborne drug interdiction and apprehension of illegal drug traffickers.

MARAD Launches New Marine Highway Module of Port Planning, Investment Toolkit

A cargo ship unloads at the Port of New Orleans. Gnovick / Wikipedia

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) announced in an Oct. 8 release the launch of a new Marine Highway module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit (Toolkit), which helps U.S. ports plan,

evaluate, and finance freight transportation projects.

This easy-to-read, easy-to-understand, and easy-to-execute Toolkit, which was produced as part of a cooperative agreement between MARAD and the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), helps guide ports toward fruitful investments.

“This Toolkit will help the development of future port projects and improve the nation’s long-term efficiency and economic competitiveness,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao

The goal of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit is to provide U.S. ports with a common framework and examples of best practices. The analytical tools and guidance contained in this comprehensive resource are designed to aid ports in developing “investment-grade” project plans and obtaining capital for their projects in a variety of ways, including: (1) assisting metropolitan and regional planning organizations and state agencies in qualifying for formula funding or aid; (2) better positioning marine highway projects for federal aid; and (3) assisting ports in obtaining private sector investments.

“By working together, we are helping to support investments in our ports that will pay dividends for years to come,” said Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby. “I am pleased that the new module of the Toolkit focuses on investments in America’s Marine Highways, which can help reduce traffic congestion and related pollution by moving cargoes off our crowded highways and onto to our Nation’s navigable waterways.”

The marine highway module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit provides an overview of America’s Marine Highway Program and educates readers on how marine highway services can become designated projects by USDOT. It explains how to plan a new marine highway service, determine its feasibility, and identify possible funding mechanisms. This module of the

Port Planning & Investment Toolkit will be updated periodically as new regulations and policies affecting marine highway planning, feasibility, and investment requirements related to the applicable laws discussed in the document are developed.

General Atomics EMALS and AAG Reach 4,492 ‘Cats and Traps’ Milestone on Ford

GA-EMS has reached a milestone for catapult launches and landing arrestments using the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System and Advanced Arresting Gear system on the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford. U.S. Navy

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced Oct. 7 that a milestone of 4,492 catapult launches and landing arrestments using the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) system has been successfully and safely achieved aboard the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

“CVN 78 passed the half-way mark of its PDT&T, and we are well underway toward achieving the cats and traps milestones by the end of this rigorous testing phase,” stated Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS. “In addition to the demanding system shakedown testing, the ship, and EMALS and AAG, are providing valuable capacity to meet the Navy’s certification and training requirements for today, with an eye toward the future as the next *Ford* class carriers begin to enter the fleet. We are extremely proud of our dedicated team supporting the ship’s crew as they continue to qualify naval aviators as well

as demonstrate the systems capabilities under combat operations tempo.”

During CVN 78’s at sea periods, which involve night and day, all weather, and various sea state operations, EMALS and AAG successfully launch and recover a range of aircraft, including F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, E-2C/D Hawkeyes and Advanced Hawkeyes, C-2A Greyhounds, EA-18G Growlers, and T-45C Goshawks. In addition to CVN 78, GA-EMS is delivering EMALS and AAG for the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) and USS Enterprise (CVN 80). EMALS and AAG will provide greater flexibility over legacy systems to not only accommodate aircraft in the current air wing, but also future aircraft, including unmanned aerial vehicles.

SECNAV Names Navy’s Future Class of Guided-Missile Frigates

Secretary of the Navy Kenneth J. Braithwaite announces USS Constellation (FFG 62) as the name for the first ship in the new Guided Missile Frigate class of ships while aboard the museum ship Constellation in Baltimore Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Md., Oct. 7, 2020. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Levingston Lewis

BALTIMORE – Secretary of the Navy Kenneth J. Braithwaite announced USS Constellation (FFG 62) as the name for the first ship in the new Guided Missile Frigate (FFG(X)) class of ships Oct. 7 while aboard the museum ship Constellation in Baltimore Inner Harbor, the Navy said in a release.

The name was selected in honor of the first U.S. Navy ships authorized by Congress in 1794 – heavy frigates named United States, Constellation, Constitution, Chesapeake, Congress, and President. These ships established the Continental Navy as an agile, lethal and ready force for the 19th century. This will be the fifth U.S. Navy ship to bear the name Constellation.

“As the first in her class, these ships will now be known as the Constellation Class frigates, linking them directly to the original six frigates of our Navy, carrying on the traditions of our great service which have been passed down from generation to generation of Sailors,” said Braithwaite. “While providing an unmatched capability and survivability for the 21st Century, Constellation Class Frigates will honor our Navy’s historic beginnings as we continue to operate around the world in today’s era of Great Power Competition.”

As the next generation of small surface combatants will contribute to meeting the goal of 355 battle force ships. With the ability to operate independently or as part of a strike group, it will deliver an Enterprise Air Surveillance Radar (EASR), Mk 41 Vertical Launching System, and Baseline 10 (BL 10) Aegis Combat System capabilities. The ships’ lethality, survivability, and improved capability will provide Fleet Commanders multiple options while supporting the National Defense Strategy across the full range of military operations.

Constellation is a historic name with a long Naval history. The original name was submitted to President Washington in 1795 to represent the ‘new constellation of stars’ on the United States flag. The first Constellation was a 38-gun frigate with a crew of 340 personnel. The ship was built in Baltimore in 1797 and remained in service until 1853.

The second Constellation was a sloop-of-war launched in 1854 and was the last sail-only warship designed and built by the U.S. Navy. The ship currently stands as a museum in

Baltimore.

The keel for a third ship named Constellation was laid, but the ship was never completed in the peace years following WWI.

The most prominent Constellation is the Kitty Hawk-class conventional aircraft carrier that commissioned in 1961. It had a storied history to include overcoming several catastrophic fires on board, supporting operations during the Vietnam War, the first Persian Gulf War, and Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom before decommissioning in 2003.

Constellation-class Frigates will be built at Marinette Marine Corporation in Marinette, Wisconsin, with the first ship scheduled for delivery in 2026.

Coast Guard Interdicts, Repatriates 33 Migrants to the Dominican Republic

The crew of the cutter Heriberto Hernandez small boat is on scene with an illegal voyage interdicted moments earlier in Mona Passage waters near Puerto Rico Oct. 6, 2020. The migrant vessel was the first of two illegal voyages interdicted by the cutter Heriberto Hernandez within hours of each other, which totaled 33 Dominican migrants, who were repatriated to a Dominican Republic Navy patrol boat near Punta Cana, Dominican Republic Oct. 7, 2020. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) repatriated 33 migrants to the Dominican Republic Oct. 7, following the interdiction of two illegal

voyages in the Mona Passage near Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

The interdictions are the result of ongoing multiagency efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“I’m proud of the crew of the Heriberto Hernandez and our fellow partner agencies, who responded and worked tirelessly throughout the night to interdict two migrant smuggling voyages and ensure all 33 migrants were safely recovered from these grossly overloaded and unseaworthy makeshift boats,” said Lt. Andrew Russo, Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) commanding officer.

The first interdiction occurred late Tuesday night, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage 43 nautical miles north of Mona Island, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan directed the launch of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft from Air Station Miami to relieve the CBP aircraft and diverted the cutter Heriberto Hernandez to interdict the suspect vessel.

Once on scene, the crew of cutter Heriberto Hernandez interdicted the 25-foot makeshift boat and safely embarked 20 migrants, 19 men and a woman, for safety of life at sea concerns. The migrant group claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals.

The second interdiction occurred early Wednesday morning, after the crew of a U.S. Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected an illegal voyage 38 nautical miles northwest of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico. Shortly thereafter, cutter Heriberto Hernandez arrived on scene and interdicted a 20-foot makeshift boat with the assistance of the cutter’s small boat. The cutter crew safely embarked 13 migrants from the migrant vessel, two women and 11

men, all of whom claimed Dominican Republic nationality.

Once aboard the Coast Guard cutter, all migrants received food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Throughout the interdiction, Coast Guard crewmembers were equipped with personal protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to any possible case of COVID-19. There were no migrants in these cases reported to have any COVID-19 related symptoms.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez rendezvoused and repatriated the migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel near the Dominican Republic.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Courtney Reacts to Esper's Battle Force 2045 Comments on Submarine Shipbuilding

Rep. Joe Courtney of Connecticut, left, shakes hands with Aviation Boatswain's Mate Launch/Recovery (Equipment) Jeremy Stoecklein prior to a 2016 tour of the ship's Electromagnetic Aircraft Launching System during a scheduled visit. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Patrick Grieco

NORWICH, Conn. – Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Connecticut, chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, issued on Oct. 6 the following statement regarding Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper's Oct. 6 comments on submarine shipbuilding during a preview of future Navy Force Structure Plan.

“Today, Secretary Esper previewed a long-overdue force structure plan that begs for more detail and explanation,” Courtney said. “Notably, the Secretary shared the predictable outcome of these months of review and study – that we need a bigger and more capable submarine force. After four long years of stonewalling Congress’s commitment to enlarging our nation’s submarine fleet – including submitting a budget this year that proposed a 19% cut to the submarine budget and eliminated a planned Virginia class submarine – the Trump administration today acknowledged what has long been blindingly obvious: Our undersea fleet is dangerously small.

“If Secretary Esper is serious about boosting production, he could direct his department to support the House-passed authorization and funding levels for a second Virginia-class submarine in 2021 that reverses the Administration’s anemic shipbuilding budget in the House-Senate conference process happening right now,” Courtney added.

U.S., Singapore Navy Chiefs Reaffirm Continued Partnership

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday and his wife Linda pose for a photo.

WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday conducted a video teleconference Oct. 6, with Rear Adm. Aaron Beng Yao Cheng, Republic of Singapore Chief of Navy, the CNO’s public affairs office said in a release.

The two leaders discussed engagement between the two navies this past year, which included RIMPAC 2020, as well as ways to further deepen cooperation between the two navies going forward.

“I am grateful to Republic of Singapore for their partnership and friendship – and we greatly value the contributions their Navy brings to the maritime domain,” Gilday said. “I am excited to work closely with Rear Adm. Beng and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) for years to come to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

Gilday also thanked Beng for continuing to host commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific in Sembawang and supporting the forward-deployment of Destroyer Squadron 7 and littoral combat ships, like USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10).

Beng said the Republic of Singapore Navy and the United States Navy share a unique and long- standing relationship underpinned by mutual trust and shared values.

“We have maintained a steady cadence of professional interactions over the last few months, which further underscores the strength of this partnership,” Beng said. “Our navies conducted a passage exercise in May, the RSN frigate RSS Supreme (73) deployed to RIMPAC 2020, and ships from both navies will conduct a bilateral CARAT exercise in December. We will continue to seek opportunities to strengthen cooperation, including resuming face-to-face interactions when the situation allows.”

The U.S. and Singaporean navies recently exercised bilateral interoperability in the South China Sea and jointly participated in a virtual Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) symposium. The two navies operate together during exercises like Pacific Griffin 2019, the most advanced naval training between the two nations to date.

This VTC was the first between the two leaders since Beng took

office in March 2020.