Coast Guard, Columbian Navy Interdict Suspected Drugs

A Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant over-the-horizon boat crew approaches a 72-foot vessel about 46 miles northeast of Panama on June 8. The Coast Guard and partner agencies interdicted about 1,500 packages testing positive for cocaine. U.S. Coast Guard

MIAMI – The U.S. Coast Guard and partner agencies interdicted about 1,500 packages testing positive for cocaine on a 72-foot motor vessel approximately 46 miles northeast of Panama on June 8, the Coast Guard 7th District said.

While on routine patrol, a Coast Guard HC-130 maritime patrol aircraft crew detected a suspect motor vessel traveling northeast of Panama. The Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant crew launched an over-the-horizon small boat with an embarked law enforcement team, who proceeded to board the vessel and discovered that it was taking on water.

The Vigilant sent a rescue and assistance team aboard, who were able to contain the source of flooding at the request of the motor vessel crew. The Vigilant's law enforcement team continued the boarding and discovered general cargo that was suspected of containing contraband. After completing the initial boarding, the crew recommended a further inspection be completed in port due to sea-state and safety concerns and to more fully access the cargo and cargo holds.

Coordinating with Colombian authorities, the Vigilant crew placed the motor vessel, which had experienced a mechanical problem, in tow and transferred it to the Colombian coast guard and navy.

The Colombian navy continued the boarding pier side and discovered over 16,700 pounds of suspected contraband. Lab

test reports yielded positive hits for cocaine, which validated both the efforts of the Vigilant crew and the Colombian partners. As final lab testing continues, this drug seizure is predicted to be worth up to $286 million.

“Despite the various challenges our crew faced during this multi-day boarding, they demonstrated the utmost professionalism and resiliency, identifying numerous indicators of contraband in arduous conditions while preserving the seaworthiness of the vessel,” said Cmdr. Fred Bertsch, commanding officer of the Vigilant.

“We are extremely appreciative of the coordination and substantial efforts undertaken by our Colombian partners to continue the law enforcement efforts where we left off. As transnational criminal organizations continue to adapt their techniques and procedures, we will continue to work with our partner nations to thwart their illicit activities is the region.”

“As we address the persistent threats our nation faces across our maritime approaches, the success of this highly collaborative operation speaks to the value of our relationship with our valued international partner, Colombia, and of the mutual successes we achieve when we coordinate our efforts,” said Rear Adm. Eric C. Jones, commanding officer of the Coast Guard’s 7th District.

Mercury Systems Receives $25 Million Order for Naval

Electronic Support

ANDOVER, Mass. — Mercury Systems Inc. has received a $25 million follow-on order from a leading defense prime contractor for integrated radio frequency (RF) and digital subsystems for an advanced naval electronic support application, the company said in a June 30 release.

The order was booked in the company's fiscal 2020 fourth quarter and is expected to be shipped over the next several quarters.

"Receiving this follow-on order demonstrates our focus on developing the most advanced RF conversion and digital signal processing technologies and making them profoundly more accessible to the defense industry," said Neal Austin, vice president and general manager of Mercury's Embedded Sensor Processing group.

"As new threats rapidly emerge across the electromagnetic spectrum, we support our customers with the agile, high-performance capabilities they need. Our ability to provide complete RF-to-digital conversion and processing solutions has created a level of value that's unique in our industry and reinforces our commitment to innovation that matters."

Mercury is accelerating innovation for its customers as the company bridges the gap between commercial technology and defense applications to meet the industry's current and emerging needs.

HII Awarded $936 Million Contract to Build Navy Destroyer

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer Delbert D. Black conducts builder's trials in the Gulf of Mexico in February. U.S. Navy via Huntington Ingalls Industries/Lance Davis

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding division has been awarded a $936 million contract for the construction of an additional Arleigh Burke-class (DDG 51) Flight III guided-missile destroyer for the U.S. Navy, the company said in a June 30 release.

In 2018, Ingalls was awarded a $5.1 billion fixed-price incentive, multiyear contract for six Arleigh Burke-class Flight III destroyers for the Navy.

"We take great pride in the craftsmanship of our shipbuilders, and in the capabilities of our world-class shipyard," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias said. "This contract award provides great momentum for Ingalls and our more than 600 suppliers, in nearly 40 states, as we enter the second half of the year. We continue to focus on high performance and providing the greatest value possible to our customers."

Ingalls has delivered 32 Arleigh Burke-class destroyers to the Navy and has four more under construction, including the Frank E. Petersen Jr., the Lenah H. Sutcliffe Higbee, the Jack H. Lucas and the Ted Stevens. Ingalls delivered the Delbert D. Black to the Navy in April.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are multimission ships and can conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis management to sea control and power projection, all in

support of U.S. military strategy.

These guided missile destroyers are capable of simultaneously fighting air, surface and subsurface battles. They contain myriad offensive and defensive weapons designed to support maritime defense needs well into the 21st century.

Consortium Members Receive $230 Million for Prototype Technology for Navy

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – In June 2018 the national Undersea Technology Innovation Consortium (UTIC), headquartered in Middletown, Rhode Island, was awarded the Other Transaction Agreement (OTA) for Undersea Technology Innovation by the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Division Newport, the consortium said in a June 29 release. UTIC, represented by its management firm, Advanced Technology International (ATI), and NUWC Division Newport signed a three-year OTA with options for up to 10 years.

The OTA allows for industry, academia and the nonprofit sector to engage in a broad range of undersea and maritime prototyping activities in support of the Department of Navy's needs. An OTA is an "enterprise partnership" between the government and a consortium of technology developers/providers allowing innovation through partnership and collaboration.

To date, 31 UTIC OTA awards, to provide prototype technology solutions, have been made to 26 member organizations with a total value of $230.4 million. The Department of Navy

identifies technology needs to UTIC members biannually in the spring and fall. Urgent needs can be identified out-of-cycle. Members respond with an enhanced white paper defining their proposed technology solutions. The government can choose to accept the white paper proposal and award, decline to award, or put the proposal in "the basket," allowing the government the opportunity, over the next three years, to make a future award.

"UTIC is an important resource for innovative undersea and maritime technology solutions," said Molly Donohue Magee, UTIC's executive director. "The Other Transaction Agreement (OTA) allows for streamlined contracting, ensuring the government can expeditiously get needed technology prototype solutions. We are extremely proud to have accomplished so much in just two years and we look forward to continuing to support the technology needs of the Department of Navy.

"NUWC Division Newport and UTIC have been leading the way with our OTA agreement," said Ronald Vien, technical director, NUWC Division Newport. The results of the OTA are proof of the success of collaborating with our industry partners to advance the state of the art in undersea warfare."

The Undersea Technology Innovation Consortium (UTIC) has over 300 UTIC members from 36 states who are part of the national community of technology practitioners in the undersea and maritime technology domain responding to the needs of the Department of Navy. Consortium members support 25 defined technology areas including: Environmental Sensing, Monitoring and Prediction; Autonomous Vehicles, Bio-inspired Sensing; Energy Storage and Release; Quantum Computing; and Virtualization.

UTIC membership is comprised of 75% nontraditional defense contractors, representing 70% small businesses, 25% large businesses, and 5% academic and nonprofit organizations. Membership is open to U.S. organizations who

have undersea and maritime related technologies.

New Acting Undersecretary of the Navy Selected

Gregory J. Slavonic (middle), at the time assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower and reserve affairs, tours the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island in January 2019. Slavonic has been selected to become acting undersecretary of the Navy. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jeremy Laramore

WASHINGTON – Gregory J. Slavonic was selected by the president as acting undersecretary of the Navy on June 22, the Navy secretary's public affairs office said in a release.

Slavonic has been serving as the 18th assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower and reserve affairs since June 2018.

"I've had the opportunity to work with Greg Slavonic for a number of years and value his leadership abilities, foresight and friendship," Navy Secretary Kenneth J. Braithwaite said. "I look forward to the innovation and inspiration he will continue to bring to the Department of the Navy in his new position."

As the acting undersecretary of the Navy, Slavonic serves as the deputy and principal assistant to Braithwaite as well as chief operating officer and chief management officer for the Department of the Navy.

Additionally, he oversees intelligence activities, intelligence-related activities, special access programs, critical infrastructure and sensitive activities within the

department.

“Over the past two years, I’ve been very fortunate to work with a great team of Sailors, Marines and civilians to make advances and improvements in manpower and reserve component affairs for the [department],” Slavonic said. “I am honored to have been selected to this new position, being able to do a job that I love, engaging with a broader scope of issues and personnel.”

The majority of Slavonic’s professional life has been in service to the Department of the Navy, both in uniform and out. He enlisted as a seaman recruit and retired after a distinguished military career at the rank of rear admiral in the Navy Reserve.

During his time as a service member, he held four command assignments, served in combat deployments to Vietnam, Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. His final assignment was as the Navy’s sixth special assistant to the chief of information and director of the Navy Reserve Public Affairs Program.

The secretary also served as the co-chair for the design and building of the USS Oklahoma Memorial at Pearl Harbor to remember the 429 Sailors and Marines who served aboard the battleship and lost their lives on Dec. 7, 1941.

Prior to serving as ASN (RA), Slavonic served as chief of staff for U.S. Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.), and was Lankford’s last chief when he was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

For the past 40 years, Slavonic has held various civilian senior level positions in the communications industry and held positions with broadcasting and print organizations.

USS Carney Concludes Time as FDNF-E Asset with 6th Fleet

The USS Carney departs Naval Station Rota, Spain, for the last time as a Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe asset on June 27. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Peter Lewis

ROTA, Spain – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Carney departed Naval Station Rota for the last time as a Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) asset on June 27.

USS Roosevelt, named after the 32nd President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor, replaced Carney in the first of four scheduled homeport shifts to occur in support of the U.S. Navy's long-range plan to gradually rotate the Rota-based destroyers.

"Carney's role as one of our forward-deployed destroyers in Spain has been the cornerstone of the United States' commitment to our NATO allies and partners and to our combined integrated air and missile defense architecture," said Vice Adm. Lisa M. Franchetti, commander of the U.S. 6th Fleet. "Through all five years' worth of operations and exercises, Carney Sailors set the bar high for readiness, interoperability and combat effectiveness."

Carney came to C6F on Sept. 25, 2015, as one of the first Rota-based FDNF-E destroyers under commander, Task Force (CTF). Carney began operational tasking in the C6F area of operation immediately upon arrival, conducting operations in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Eastern Atlantic Ocean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Persian Gulf.

The ship conducted 55 port calls throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa. In an effort to maintain and improve efforts towards “Partnership for Peace,” Carney conducted six at-sea maritime training exercises and one passing exercise with partner nations in the Black Sea. Additionally, the ship participated in 11 large-scale exercises in the European theater, improving relations with both NATO allies and partners to include exercise Sea Breeze 2019.

“Working in 6th Fleet and under the direction of CTF 65 has been a phenomenal experience,” said Cmdr. Christopher J. Carrol, Carney’s commanding officer. “We were extremely blessed for the opportunities to meet the objectives of the Fleet.”

On her seventh and final patrol this spring, Carney conducted a tactical control shift from C6F to 5th Fleet in support of national tasking alongside the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). The unconventional FDNF-E patrol included port visits to the Seychelles and to Cape Town, South Africa, which reinforced the partnership between the U.S. and South Africa. While transiting back to Rota, Spain, Carney became the most recent ship in naval history to circumnavigate Africa instead of transiting north through the Suez Canal.

“Carney’s departure is a proud moment for all of us,” said Capt. Joseph A. Gagliano, commander, Task Force (CTF) 65. “In addition to the crew departing with pride for a job well done, we are proud to return Carney in peak readiness condition. Both the ship and crew are ready for any mission.”

Carney is scheduled to return to its former homeport of Mayport, Florida.

Construction Begins on Fourth Expeditionary Sea Base Ship

An CH-47F helicopter lands aboard the expeditionary sea base USS Lewis B. Puller in May. Construction of the fourth ESB officially began June 25. U.S. Navy/Chief Logistics Specialist Thomas Joyce

SAN DIEGO – Construction of the fourth expeditionary sea base ship officially began June 25 at the General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding shipyard, the Program Executive Office-Ships said in a release. Due to the COVID pandemic, the milestone was marked with an informal shipyard ceremony.

ESB ships are flexible platforms that are used across a range of military operations supporting multiple operational phases. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are part of the infrastructure that supports the deployment of forces and supplies to provide prepositioned equipment and sustainment.

"This is a great Navy day as we mark the start of construction on the fourth ship in a class of flexible, adaptable ships that will provide our combatant commanders with enhanced capabilities," said Tim Roberts, strategic and theater sealift program manager for PEO-Ships. "The ESB platform has proven to be a valuable addition to the Navy and Marine Corps battle force."

ESBs support aviation mine countermeasure and special operations force missions. In addition to the flight deck, the ESB has a hangar with two aviation operating spots capable of handling MH-53E equivalent helicopters, accommodations, work spaces, and ordnance storage for embarked force, enhanced command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence to support embarked force mission planning and execution and reconfigurable mission deck area to store

embarked force equipment to include mine sleds and rigid hull inflatable boats.

In 2019, the Navy made the decision to commission all ESBs to allow them to conduct a broader and more lethal mission set, compared to original plans for them to operate with a USNS designation.

ESBs are commanded by a Navy O-6 with a hybrid-manned crew of military personnel and Military Sealift Command civilian mariners. This designation provides combatant commanders greater operational flexibility as to how the platform is employed.

In addition to ESB 6, NASSCO is under contract for the construction of ESB 7, with an option for ESB 8, as well as the Navy's John Lewis Class Fleet Replenishment Oilers.

USS Preble Returns After Successful Counter-Narcotics Deployment

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Preble returns to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on June 25. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jaimar Carson Bondurant

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Preble returned June 25 to its homeport of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam following the ship's surge deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, the U.S. 3rd Fleet said in a release.

Preble, along with a detachment from “Easyriders” from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 37, deployed in March to conduct U.S. Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South’s enhanced counter-narcotics operations missions in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

During their deployment, Preble, with their embarked U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment, recovered 100 bales of suspected cocaine totaling an estimated 2,000 kilograms, with an estimated wholesale value of $40 million.

“The success of this deployment was due to our Sailors and embarked Coast Guardsmen working together daily for a common cause – enhanced counter-narcotics operations,” said Cmdr. Leonardo Giovannelli, Preble’s commanding officer. “We thank our Preble families and friends whose unwavering support made it possible for their loved ones, our Sailors, to succeed at sea and complete our mission.”

With the deployment conducted in a COVID-19 environment, the primary focus of ship’s leadership was crew safety.

“We took all available precautions before the start of the deployment,” said Cmdr. Peter Lesaca, Preble’s executive officer. “I credit our Sailors for understanding the gravity of the pandemic, keeping themselves in good health, and taking care of their shipmates to keep the ship safe.”

Preble joined other Navy warships, numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperating in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, are all playing a role in counter-drug operations.

Navy Accepts Delivery of Future USS Oakland

MOBILE, Ala. – The U.S. Navy accepted delivery of the future USS Oakland on June 26 during a ceremony at Austal USA in Mobile, the Program Executive Office-Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) public affairs said in a release.

Oakland is the 22nd littoral combat ship (LCS) and the 12th of the Independence variant to join the fleet. Its delivery marks the official transfer of the ship from the shipbuilder to the Navy, bringing the service's inventory up to 300. It is the final milestone prior to its scheduled commissioning in early 2021.

"This is a great day for the Navy and our country with the delivery of the future USS Oakland," said LCS program manager Capt. Mike Taylor. "This ship will play an essential role in in carrying out our nation's future maritime strategy."

Four additional Independence-variant ships are under construction at Austal USA: Mobile, Savannah, Canberra and Santa Barbara. Three additional ships are awaiting the start of construction.

The future USS Oakland is the third Navy ship to honor the long history its namesake city has had with the Navy. The first Oakland was commissioned in 1918 and used to transport cargo. In 1943, the second USS Oakland was commissioned. Though in service for less than seven years, she was key to many anti-aircraft missions in the western Pacific – Marshall Islands, Pagan Island, Guam, Iwo Jima, Rota, Peleliu and Okinawa. After the war, Oakland performed two duty patrols off

the coast of China before her decommissioning in 1949.

The future USS Oakland is the third LCS delivered to the Navy in 2020. The future USS St. Louis was delivered Feb. 6, and the future USS Kansas City delivered Feb. 12. Two additional ships – Minneapolis-St. Paul and Mobile – are planned for delivery this year.

Rolls-Royce Secures Navy Contracts Worth $115.6 Million

RESTON, Va. – Rolls-Royce has secured recent agreements with the U.S. Navy for ship engines, propulsion components and services valued at up to $115.6 million, the company said in a June 24 release.

“Rolls-Royce is proud to support the U.S. Navy through an extensive portfolio of engines and propulsion system components, as well as service agreements,” said Leo Martins, program director of U.S. Naval & Coast Guard Platforms at Rolls-Royce Defense. “Rolls-Royce propulsion equipment is in service around the globe on nearly all U.S. Navy ships and the new agreements reflect continued confidence from the Navy in Rolls-Royce products.”

The engine contract, for $34.4 million, is a follow-on production agreement for 16 new MT7 gas-turbine engines for Navy ship-to-shore connector landing craft. Rolls-Royce is the exclusive provider of gas-turbine engines installed on the landing craft, which is produced by Textron. The MT7 engine is produced in Indianapolis in the U.S. and is a variant of the

Rolls-Royce AE 1107C engine powering V-22 aircraft and a member of the proven and reliable Rolls-Royce AE family of engines.

The propulsion components contract, valued at $10.9 million, will include production of main propulsion monobloc propellers, propeller hubs, blades and other components. The ship components will be produced at Rolls-Royce facilities in Walpole, Massachusetts.

The services agreement, valued at up to $70.3 million, covers maintenance and repair services of controllable pitch propeller hubs and oil distribution boxes for multiple Navy ship classes including DDG 51 destroyers. The ship components will be serviced at Rolls-Royce facilities in Walpole and work is expected to be completed in 2026.

Rolls-Royce is nearing completion of $400 million in improvements in its advanced manufacturing capabilities in Indianapolis as part of a total $600 million investment program announced in 2015. Rolls-Royce is also investing in upgrades in Walpole to enhance production and service facilities.