

Marine Recruiting Command Transitions to Digital, Telephonic Prospecting

QUANTICO, Va. – Amid the national emergency caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) is taking steps to protect recruiters and applicants, their families and their communities by limiting face-to-face interactions with the public, the command said in a release.

Effective immediately, MCRC will temporarily transition to prospecting entirely via digital and telephonic means, and Marine recruiters will no longer meet with new applicants in person.

“The preservation of our recruiting force, applicants, poolees and their families is the highest priority for the Marine Corps Recruiting Command during this national emergency,” said Maj. Gen. James W. Bierman, commanding general of MCRC. “With that in mind, we will immediately transition to prospecting exclusively via digital and telephonic means, and no longer initiate in-person interviews. We remain committed to recruiting the highly-qualified men and women our nation needs for its Marine Corps.”

“Because recruiting is an activity of vital importance to our nation and Corps, we will continue our efforts to ship young men and women to our recruit depots and officer candidate school as conditions permit,” Bierman said. “At the same time, it is recognized this imperative is not the only consideration. Our efforts will prioritize protecting our Marines and families.”

Local recruiting offices will continue to be staffed, but at reduced manpower levels commensurate with social distancing guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention.

Leaders at every level have full discretion to carefully appraise the personal and geographic risk factors unique to each situation and then move to curtail or modify activities when necessary. Travel is limited to mission-essential requirements, and no more than two individuals will travel in a vehicle.

Any member of the recruiting staff who has family members in a high-risk category as it pertains to COVID-19 will work remotely from their home.

Boeing Receives \$1.5 Billion P-8A Poseidon Contract from U.S. Navy



Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Michael Perna taxis and directs a P-8A Poseidon aircraft. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan Sua

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded Boeing a \$1.5 billion production contract for the next 18 P-8A Poseidon aircraft, the company announced in a release. The contract includes eight aircraft for the U.S. Navy, six aircraft for the Republic of Korea Navy and four aircraft for the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

The Republic of Korea Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force acquired the aircraft through the foreign military sales process and will receive the same P-8A Poseidon variant designed and produced for the U.S. Navy. The Royal New Zealand

Air Force is expected to begin receiving aircraft in 2022 and the Republic of Korea Navy is expected to begin receiving aircraft in 2023.

The P-8 is a long-range multimission maritime patrol aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. A military derivative of the Boeing 737 next-generation airplane, the P-8 combines superior performance and reliability with an advanced mission system that ensures maximum interoperability in the battle space.

The P-8 is militarized with maritime weapons, a modern open mission system architecture and commercial-like support for affordability. The aircraft is modified to include a bomb bay and pylons for weapons. It has two weapons stations on each wing and can carry 129 sonobuoys. The aircraft is also fitted with an in-flight refueling system.

With more than 254,000 flight hours to date, the P-8A Poseidon and P-8I variants patrol the globe performing anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, humanitarian and search-and-rescue missions.

Mitcham Delivers micro-MA-X System for Navy's Next-Gen Small UUV Evaluation

THE WOODLANDS, Texas – Mitcham Industries' Klein Marine Systems unit recently delivered the first micro-MA-X (μ MA-X System) in support of the U.S. Navy's next-generation small-class unmanned undersea vehicle (UUV) evaluation sponsored by the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), the company said in

a release.

DIU is a defense organization focused exclusively on fielding and scaling commercial technology across the U.S. military to help solve critical problems.

The μ MA-X system is the first in a series of new imaging products based on Klein's previously announced MA-X technology and designed for both commercial and military unmanned vehicle markets.

The reduced size and power requirements of the μ MA-X system make it an ideal payload for the rapidly growing UUV market. MA-X technology represents a high-quality, cost-effective nadir imaging solution that has long been sought by the industry. Traditional side scan sonar imaging creates a nadir gap directly under the path of the vehicle. The μ MA-X system fills that gap, when paired with conventional side scan, eliminating the need for additional time for overlapping survey lines to achieve 100% coverage. For UUVs, this translates into extended mission duration, or shorter time to cover the same area.

One of the key discriminators of the μ MA-X, particularly for the defense sector, is the ability to produce high-quality imagery of the nadir area that is comparable to the traditional side scan images. This allows for the data acquired by the system to be fed directly into existing automatic target recognition software allowing for automated detection and recognition of targets of interest.

"The μ MA-X system is the result of a fast-tracked, internally-funded development, and we are very excited to have the U.S. Navy evaluate its effectiveness for the Maritime Expeditionary Mine Countermeasures Unmanned Undersea Vehicle program," said Guy Malden, co-CEO of Mitcham.

Medical Center Seeks Marine Corps Command's Help to Manufacture Ventilator Splitter



U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Ricler Magsayo calibrates a ventilator at Camp Kinser in Okinawa, Japan, on March 23. The University of California San Diego Medical Center has asked for Marine Corps Systems Command's help in making a ventilator splitter part via 3-D printing. U.S. Marine Corps/Lance Cpl. Terry Wong

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – The University of California San Diego Medical Center has requested Marine Corps Systems Command's (MCSC) assistance to help medical professionals as they deal with the evolving crisis of COVID-19, the command said in a release.

On March 16, Dr. Sidney Merritt, an anesthesiologist at UCSD Medical Center, contacted MCSC's Advanced Manufacturing Operations Cell and requested help in coordinating 3-D printer assets to design parts to enable the simultaneous ventilation of multiple patients.

AMOC sought collaboration with the Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific Reverse Engineering, Science and Technology for Obsolescence, Restoration and Evaluation Lab to rapidly design, print, test and evaluate prototype ventilator splitters using various materials.

The AMOC team also worked with the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery for support in evaluating, certifying and

approving the parts prior to delivery to the medical center.

On March 18, Merritt provided design files for the ventilator splitter based on a successful test print conducted by the UCSD engineering team. UCSD requested assistance in printing ventilator splitters in higher resolution and with diverse materials that could meet specific design requirements.

After receiving the design files, AMOC and the NIWC Pacific RESTORE lab printed several prototypes using different materials. In less than a day, AMOC used its industrial printer in Quantico, Virginia, and the RESTORE Lab employed its organic printers to produce initial prototypes.

The 3-D-printed ventilator splitters were scanned to ensure accuracy with the design files and then brought to UCSD Medical Center for fit testing and further design analysis.

AMOC's reputation in advanced manufacturing has grown since its establishment in 2019. The cell has demonstrated the ability to produce 3-D-printed parts and provide other sustainment and manufacturing solutions. When called upon, the AMOC can produce parts in a fraction of the time it takes traditional manufacturers.

"AMOC's response to this situation demonstrates how additive manufacturing can respond quickly to supply chain disruptions and rapidly prototype, evaluate and test new solutions to meet emerging urgent requirements," said Scott Adams, AMOC lead at Marine Corps Systems Command.

The rapid response by AMOC and the NIWC Pacific RESTORE lab to UCSD Medical Center's request for support indicates how the Department of the Navy is prepared to respond to the medical community during the COVID-19 crisis.

"I couldn't be prouder of the Marine Corps and NIWC Pacific team," said Carly Jackson, the chief technology officer at Naval Information Warfare Systems Command. "We are

demonstrating the power, agility and speed of response that our Naval research and development centers bring to bear in times of national need.”

Coast Guard Awards Eight Contracts for Industry OPC Studies

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard has awarded eight offshore patrol cutter (OPC) industry studies contracts, the service announced in a release. These awards support the Coast Guard’s strategy to mitigate OPC program risk and establish a new, fair and open competitive environment to complete the OPC program of record.

Industry studies contracts were awarded to:

- Austal USA of Mobile, Alabama: \$2 million base award (\$3 million total potential value)
- Bath Iron Works of Bath, Maine: \$2 million base award (\$3 million total potential value)
- Bollinger Shipyards Lockport of Lockport, Louisiana: \$2 million base award (\$3 million potential value)
- Eastern Shipbuilding Group of Panama City, Florida: \$1.1 million base award (\$1.2 million potential value)
- Fincantieri Marinette Marine of Marinette, Wisconsin: \$2 million base award (\$3 million total potential value)
- Huntington Ingalls, Inc. of Pascagoula, Mississippi: \$2 million base award (\$3 million total potential value)
- Philly Shipyard of Philadelphia: \$2 million base award (\$3 million total potential value)
- VT Halter Marine of Pascagoula, Mississippi: \$2 million

base award (\$2.9 million total potential value)

Under their respective contracts, the awardees will assess OPC design and technical data, provided by the Coast Guard, and the program's construction approach. Based on their analyses, the awardees will recommend to the Coast Guard potential strategies and approaches for the follow-on detail design and construction (DD&C). The awardees will also discuss how they would prepare the OPC functional design for production. The awardees may also identify possible design or systems revisions that would be advantageous to the program if implemented, with strategies to ensure those revisions are properly managed.

The Coast Guard will use the industry studies results to further inform its follow-on acquisition strategy and promote a competitive environment for the DD&C award. Participation in industry studies is not a pre-requisite for submitting a DD&C proposal.

The OPCs will replace the service's aging medium-endurance cutters, which are becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and operate. The OPCs will bridge the capabilities of the national security cutters, which patrol the open ocean, and the fast response cutters, which serve closer to shore.

The current OPC DD&C contract is for up to four hulls. The contract was adjusted as part of a request made by the incumbent, Eastern Shipbuilding Group, for extraordinary relief. The request was a result of devastation caused when Hurricane Michael made landfall in Panama City, Florida, on Oct. 10, 2018. Hurricane Michael caused extensive damage to the ESG's shipyard and the Panama City region.

Hospital Ship Comfort Arrives in New York City



The USNS Comfort leaves Naval Station Norfolk on March 28. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jonathan Clay

NORFOLK, Va. – The Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort arrived in New York City on March 30 in support of the nation's COVID-19 response efforts, the U.S. 2nd Fleet announced.

While in New York, the ship will serve as a hospital for non-COVID-19 patients admitted to shore-based hospitals and will provide medical care to include general surgeries, critical care and ward care for adults, allowing local health professionals to focus on treating COVID-19 patients and for hospitals there to use their intensive care units and ventilators for those patients.

Comfort is a seagoing medical treatment facility that has more than 1,200 personnel embarked for the New York mission, including U.S. Navy medical and support staff assembled from 22 commands as well as over 70 civil mariners.

“The USNS Comfort arrives in New York City this morning with more than 1,100 medical personnel who are ready to provide safe, high-quality health care to non-COVID patients,” said Capt. Patrick Amersbach, commanding officer of the USNS Comfort Military Treatment Facility (MTF). “We are ready and grateful to serve the needs of our nation.”

Comfort's primary mission is to provide an afloat, mobile, acute surgical medical facility to the U.S. military that is flexible, capable and uniquely adaptable to support expeditionary warfare. Comfort's secondary mission is to provide hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and

humanitarian operations worldwide.

“Like her sister ship, USNS Mercy, which recently moored in Los Angeles, this great ship will support civil authorities by increasing medical capacity and collaboration for medical assistance,” said Rear Adm. John Mustin, vice commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. “Not treating COVID-19 patients ... but by acting as a relief valve for other urgent needs, freeing New York’s hospitals and medical professionals to focus on the pandemic.”

“This USNS Comfort team of Sailors, Marines and civilian mariners came together during the transit to New York City and our medical professionals are ready to begin receiving patients from local hospitals tomorrow,” said Capt. Joseph O’Brien, mission commander of Task Force New York City. “Our personnel are our strength – the men and women of our military services accomplish incredible things every day, and I am confident in their abilities as we start the next phase of this mission.”

The ship expects to begin receiving patients 24 hours after arriving in New York. All patient transfers will be coordinated with local hospitals, thus ensuring a consistent handoff of care between medical providers. Patients will not be accepted on a walk-on basis and should not come to the pier expecting to receive care.

“The last time that this great hospital ship was here was in the wake of 9/11, where she served as respite and comfort for our first responders working around the clock,” Mustin said. “Our message to New Yorkers – now your Navy has returned, and we are with you, committed in this fight.”

USS Fort Lauderdale Amphibious Transport Dock Ship Launched



Shipbuilders lift into place the aft end of the deckhouse of the USS Fort Lauderdale last May. Huntington Ingalls Industries

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – The USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) was successfully launched at the Huntington Ingalls Industries Ingalls Division shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, on March 28. Fort Lauderdale is the Navy's 12th San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship.

On March 7, 2020, the ship was transferred from the land-level facility to the dry dock in preparation for floating off. During the launch, the dry dock was slowly flooded until the ship floated off the blocks.

"I am thrilled to get Fort Lauderdale in the water, so we can begin final outfitting and eventually take the ship out to sea for trials," said Capt. Scot Searles, LPD 17-class program manager for PEO-Ships. "The San Antonio class has proven essential to expeditionary warfighters, and we are eager to deliver another ship to the fleet."

San Antonio-class ships support embarking, transporting and landing elements of 650 Marines by landing craft or air cushion vehicles. The ships' capabilities are further enhanced by their flight decks and hangars, which can operate V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. Because of the ships' inherent capabilities, they can support a variety of amphibious assault, special operations and expeditionary warfare missions, operating independently or as part of Amphibious Readiness Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups or Joint Task Forces.

Ingalls Shipbuilding also is in production on the USS Richard M. McCool (LPD 29) and Harrisburg (LPD 30). LPD 28 and 29 will serve as transition ships to LPD 30, the first LPD 17 Flight II ship.

Polar Star Completes 123-Day Antarctic Treaty Inspection, Resupply Mission



Rear Adm. Jack Vogt, commander of the 13th Coast Guard District, welcomes the crew of Polar Star to Seattle on March 25. U.S. Coast Guard/Public Affairs Specialist 3rd Class Michael Clark

SEATTLE – The 150-member crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star returned March 25 to their homeport of Seattle following a 123-day deployment to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said.

This mission marks the Polar Star's 23rd journey to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze, an annual joint military service mission to resupply U.S. Antarctic stations, in support of the National Science Foundation, the lead agency for the Antarctic program. This year also marks the 63rd iteration of the operation.

The Polar Star crew departed Seattle on Nov. 27 for their sixth deployment in as many years and traveled more than 26,350 miles through the North Pacific, South Pacific, Indian and Southern Oceans.

"I am very proud of the tenacity of this Polar Star crew."

Capt. Greg Stanclik, commanding officer of the Polar Star

In the Southern Ocean, the crew travelled through nearly 500 miles of pack ice and broke through 23 miles of fast ice in order to create a nearly 18-square-mile navigable channel to McMurdo Station, Antarctica. Because of the efforts of the Polar Star crew, two resupply vessels and one tanker travelled to McMurdo Station unescorted in order to refuel and resupply U.S. Antarctic stations.

This year's operation required the construction of a temporary, modular mobile causeway to replace an ice pier, which disintegrated during Operation Deep Freeze 2018-2019. The modular pier required a three-day construction period prior to the offload of supplies, followed by a three-day deconstruction period at the conclusion of the mission.

Three resupply ships required 23 days to offload 19.6 million pounds of cargo and 7.6 million gallons of fuel during this year's operation, more than doubling the operation duration and capacity as previous years. Together, the three ships delivered enough fuel and critical supplies to sustain NSF operations throughout the year until Polar Star returns in 2021.

Among the cargo offloaded were construction materials for a five-year, \$460 million Antarctica Infrastructure Modernization for Science (AIMS) project to recapitalize McMurdo Station, South Pole Station and other American outposts on the continent.

Additionally, the Polar Star crew also supported a team of U.S. government officials from the State Department, National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Coast Guard who conducted a five-day inspection of foreign research stations, installations and equipment in Antarctica.

The team inspected three stations: Mario Zucchelli (Italy), Jang Bogo (South Korea) and Inexpressible Island (China). This was the 15th inspection of foreign research stations by the United States in Antarctica and the first since 2012.

Inspections emphasize all of Antarctica is accessible to interested countries despite territorial claims and reinforce the importance of compliance with the Antarctic Treaty's arms control provisions. The U.S. will present its report on the inspection at the next Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Helsinki, Finland, in May 2020.

"I am very proud of the tenacity of this Polar Star crew," said Coast Guard Capt. Greg Stanclik, commanding officer of the Polar Star. "158 crew members earned the Antarctic Service Medal during Operation Deep Freeze 2020."

USS Gerald R. Ford Completes Flight Deck, Air Traffic Control Certifications



F/A-18E and F/A-18F Super Hornets assigned to CVW-8 launch from the flight deck of the USS Gerald R. Ford during flight operations in the Atlantic Ocean on March 21 for the ship's certifications. U.S. Navy/Chief Mass Communication Specialist RJ Stratchko

ATLANTIC OCEAN – "Man all flight quarters stations!" These words were heard across every space on the USS Gerald R. Ford as the carrier prepared to launch and recover aircraft from Carrier Air Wing Eight (CVW-8) to complete flight deck certification (FDC)

and carrier air traffic control center (CATCC) certification on March 20.

Conducting flight operations is the key role of every carrier. To certify Ford's flight deck and air traffic control center, the ship was required to complete a precision approach landing systems (PALS) certification and finish two straight days of flight operations with 50 day traps on the first day followed by 70 day traps and 40 night traps on the second. The crews of Ford and CVW-8 exceeded those minimums.

Over a two-day period, F/A-18E and F/A-18F Super Hornets from four squadrons assigned to CVW-8 conducted 123 daytime and 42 night cats and traps aboard the Ford to reach this milestone in the ship's operational readiness.

"Our Sailors performed at a level that was on par with a forward-deployed aircraft carrier, and this was a direct result of the hard-core training and deployment ready mentality we have pushed every day for the past year," said Capt. J. J. Cummings, the Ford's commanding officer. "Our team put their game faces on, stepped into the batter's box and smashed line drives out of the park. It was fun to watch."

Prior to FDC and CATCC certification, Ford received its PALS Mode IA and Mode II certification from Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division. PALS, through the assistance of air traffic controllers in CATCC, aids pilots as they execute night or bad-weather landings, guiding pilots to a good starting position for approaches, and is a requirement for ships to conduct flight operations.

"PALS cert was a critical step to achieving our flight deck certification," said Cmdr. Phil Brown, the Ford's air operations officer. "Our system performed really well during our approaches and provided a solid level of confidence to NAWCAD in our ability to recover jets."

The Ford CATCC team was not only essential to FDC but was also required to complete a certification in concert with the flight deck certification.

Ford's CATCC certification was the culmination of a three-phase process that began in October 2019 at the Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) in Pensacola, Florida. Since then, NATTC instructors have been alongside Ford Sailors for every phase, testing their practical knowledge, reviewing their checklists and observing their recovery operations.

NAVFAC Southeast Orders Kings Bay Dry Dock Recapitalization for Columbia SSBN



An artist rendering of the future Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines. U.S. NAVY

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast awarded a \$191.9 million fixed-price award-fee contract March 20 to Alberici-Mortenson, Joint Venture out of St. Louis, Missouri, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast Public Affairs said in a March 23 release. The first phase of the design-bid-build contract is for the recapitalization of the dry dock at Naval Submarine Base (NSB) Kings Bay, Georgia.

“The overhaul and restoration of the Kings Bay Dry Dock is the most important strategic deterrence enterprise modernization effort outside of the construction of the new Columbia-class SSBN, a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine,” said Trident Refit Facility Commanding Officer Capt. Paul Dinius.

The Navy's submarines serve as the nation's sea-based deterrent strategies. The Dry Dock Recapitalization Project at NSB Kings Bay is in direct support of the future of submarine warfare. The new Columbia-class submarine is replacing the Ohio-class submarine.

"There have been several dedicated teams brought to bear for this effort," said NAVFAC Southeast Deputy Construction Management Officer Travis Baker. "So many have worked tirelessly to ensure the project would be ready for award and of high quality."

Dinius explained, "This will be the hardest single effort executed in this region since the construction of the dry dock more than 30 years ago, but I'm confident that Team Kings Bay is ready for the challenge."

The work to be performed includes concrete and steel repairs, overhaul and repair of the steel caisson and upgrades to power distribution, chilled water and fire detection and alarm systems. The entire superstructure will be re-coated, along with replacement of the roof, wall panels, and other plumbing and piping. The control system, electronic components and the auxiliary seawater system will also be upgraded.

All existing training and maintenance facilities will be retrofitted and some new facilities will be constructed to support the next generation of submarines.

"The window of opportunity to perform the majority of the work is limited," said Baker. "The sheer magnitude of the work to be accomplished combined with the limited time to accomplish everything is almost overwhelming."

In order to meet this tight deadline, NAVFAC Southeast has established a Construction Management Office on site at NSB Kings Bay with dedicated resources capable of supporting 24-hour-a-day activities.

“We have been successful in pulling several dedicated teams together to prepare for this effort,” said Baker. “Our team has worked tirelessly to ensure the project would be ready for award and be of high quality.”

Baker explained that this is the most significant project he has ever seen in his career both in terms of importance and scale. “The amount of senior-level leadership and supported command focus and support has been unparalleled.”

The contract also contains unexercised options, which if exercised, would increase the cumulative contract value to \$592.3 million. The work is expected to be complete by July 2023.