COVID-19 Causes Boeing to Suspend Puget Sound Production

A P-8A Poseidon sits parked on the apron of Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy, on Feb. 26. The P-8A Poseidon is manufactured by Boeing, which is suspending production in the Puget Sound area in the wake of the outbreak of the coronavirus in Washington state. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juan Sua

CHICAGO – Boeing has temporarily suspended production operations at its Puget Sound-area facilities in light of the state of emergency in Washington state and the company's continuous assessment of the accelerating spread of the coronavirus in the region, the company said in a release.

These actions are being taken to ensure the well-being of employees, their families and the local community and will include an orderly shutdown consistent with the requirements of its customers, the Boeing release said.

Boeing planned to begin reducing production activity on March 23 and projects the suspension of such operations to begin on March 25 at sites across the Puget Sound area. The suspension of production operations is set to last 14 days, during which Boeing will continue to monitor government guidance and actions on COVID-19 and its associated impacts on all company operations. During this time, Boeing will deep-clean at impacted sites and establish rigorous criteria for return to work.

"This necessary step protects our employees and the communities where they work and live," Boeing President and CEO Dave Calhoun said.

“We continue to work closely with public health officials, and we’re in contact with our customers, suppliers and other stakeholders who are affected by this temporary suspension. We regret the difficulty this will cause them, as well as our employees, but it’s vital to maintain health and safety for all those who support our products and services and to assist in the national effort to combat the spread of COVID-19.”

Puget Sound area-based employees who can work from home will continue to do so. Those who can’t work remotely will receive paid leave for the initial 10 working days of the suspension – double the company policy – which will provide coverage for the 14-calendar-day suspension period.

When the suspension is lifted, Boeing will take an orderly approach to restarting production with a focus on safety, quality and meeting customer commitments. This will be a key step to enabling the aerospace sector to bridge to recovery.

Defense Department Tests Hypersonic Glide Body

A C-HGB launches from the Pacific Missile Range at Kauai, Hawaii, on March 19 during a flight experiment. U.S. Navy

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Defense Department successfully tested a hypersonic glide body in a flight experiment conducted from the Pacific Missile Range at Kauai, Hawaii, on March 19, the Pentagon said in a release.

The U.S. Navy and U.S. Army jointly executed the launch of a common hypersonic glide body (C-HGB), which flew at hypersonic speed to a designated impact point.

Concurrently, the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) monitored and gathered tracking data from the flight experiment that will inform its ongoing development of systems designed to defend against adversary hypersonic weapons.

Information gathered from this and future experiments will further inform the Pentagon's hypersonic technology development, and this event is a major milestone towards the department's goal of fielding hypersonic warfighting capabilities in the early- to mid-2020s.

"This test builds on the success we had with Flight Experiment 1 in October 2017, in which our C-HGB achieved sustained hypersonic glide at our target distances," said Vice Adm. Johnny R. Wolfe, director of the Navy's Strategic Systems Programs, which is the lead designer for the C-HGB.

"In this test we put additional stresses on the system and it was able to handle them all, due to the phenomenal expertise of our top-notch team of individuals from across government, industry and academia. Today, we validated our design and are now ready to move to the next phase towards fielding a hypersonic strike capability."

Hypersonic weapons, capable of flying at speeds greater than five times the speed of sound (Mach 5), are highly maneuverable and operate at varying altitudes. This provides the warfighter with an ability to strike targets hundreds and even thousands of miles away, in a matter of minutes, to defeat a wide range of high-value targets. Delivering hypersonic weapons is one of the department's highest technical research and engineering priorities.

"This test was a critical step in rapidly delivering operational hypersonic capabilities to our warfighters in support of the National Defense Strategy," said U.S. Army Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood, director of hypersonics, directed energy, space and rapid acquisition,

whose office is leading the Army's Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon program and joint C-HGB production.

"We successfully executed a mission consistent with how we can apply this capability in the future. The joint team did a tremendous job in executing this test, and we will continue to move aggressively to get prototypes to the field."

The C-HGB – when fully fielded – will comprise the weapon's conventional warhead, guidance system, cabling and thermal protection shield. The Navy and Army are working with industry to develop the C-HGB with Navy as the lead designer and Army as the lead for production. Each service will use the C-HGB, while developing individual weapon systems and launchers tailored for launch from sea or land.

"Hypersonic systems deliver transformational warfighting capability," said Mike White, assistant director of hypersonics, OUSD research and engineering (modernization). "The glide body tested today is now ready for transition to Army and Navy weapon system development efforts and is one of several applications of hypersonic technology underway across the [Defense Department]. These capabilities help ensure that our warfighters will maintain the battlefield dominance necessary to deter, and if necessary, defeat any future adversary."

Additionally, MDA is working with Army and Navy in sharing data that will inform their development of enhanced capabilities for a layered hypersonic defense to support warfighter need and outpace the adversary threat.

Coast Guard Cutter Diligence Completes Last Patrol Before Homeport Change

WILMINGTON, N.C. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Diligence and crew returned to Wilmington on March 13 following a 39-day patrol in the North Atlantic that included living marine resources enforcement and a three-week training and evaluation period, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a release.

The Diligence, a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter, will change homeports to Pensacola, Florida, this summer.

This patrol began in Mayport, Florida, where the crew took part in the biennial operational readiness and training assessment called Tailored Ship's Training Availability. The crew conducted a total of 109 drills and exercises. The training focused on evaluating the crew's ability to repair shipboard casualties, respond to medical emergencies and proficiency in navigation and seamanship.

They shifted roles from training to enforcement of offshore fishery and vessel safety regulations aboard commercial fishing vessels off the coast of the Carolinas. In this role, the Diligence crew ensured compliance with fisheries management measures, promoted a level playing field for commercial fishermen, helped preserve seafood stock sustainability for future generations and protected the safety of life at sea.

While patrolling off Little River Inlet on the North Carolina coast, Diligence encountered two Northern Atlantic right whales. Right whales are endangered, and there are estimated to be less than 400 remaining. Because of their endangered status, right whale conservation zones with speed

restrictions have been established along the eastern seaboard, and all mariners are required to maintain a distance of at least 500 feet from any such whale.

“It was a great honor to witness such a majestic creature in its natural habitat, especially considering its status as an endangered species,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Smith, a boatswain’s mate aboard the cutter. “It was also an excellent training opportunity for the crew, as we are always on the lookout for this species. However, few have had the opportunity to see one in person.”

“Diligence performed exceptionally during our biennial operational readiness assessment, which was a testament to the crew’s outstanding preparations, steadfast commitment, and exceptional proficiency,” said Cmdr. Luke Slivinski, the cutter’s commanding officer.

“We closed out our deployment by patrolling off the Coast of North Carolina, following in the footsteps of our namesake, Revenue Cutter Diligence, that patrolled the same waters back in the early to mid-1790s. This patrol marked a fitting end to Diligence’s last patrol while homeported in Wilmington, North Carolina, as we depart later this summer for our new homeport of Pensacola, Florida.”

NOAA: New Progress on Mapping U.S. Ocean, Coastal, Great Lakes Waters

SILVER SPRING, Md. — The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has released the first annual report on

the progress made in mapping U.S. ocean, coastal and Great Lakes waters, the agency said in a release.

Knowledge of the depth, shape and composition of the seafloor is foundational data necessary to explore, sustainably develop, understand, conserve and manage our coastal and offshore natural resources. The 2019 Presidential Memorandum on Ocean Mapping of the United States Exclusive Economic Zone and the Shoreline and Nearshore of Alaska and the global Seabed 2030 initiative make comprehensive ocean mapping a priority for the coming decade. The Unmapped U.S. Waters report tracks progress toward these important goals.

“The progress made in mapping U.S. waters through 2019 represents the cumulative work of federal and state agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private contracting partners and crowdsourced contributions,” said Rear Adm. Shepard Smith, director of NOAA’s Office of Coast Survey. “Partnerships and advances in technology are key to making significant progress toward our common goal of completely mapping U.S. waters.”

Pulling from an analysis of publicly available bathymetry, the report presents the percentage of unmapped U.S. waters by region and shows our progress towards filling these basic bathymetry data gaps with each passing year. At the end of 2019, the latest analysis yielded the following results:

Percent of U.S. waters that remain unmapped in 2019:

- U.S. total – 54% of 3,592,000 square nautical miles (snm)
- Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico – 43% of 472,200 snm
- Great Lakes – 95% of 46,600 snm
- Caribbean – 42% of 61,600 snm
- Alaska – 72% of 1,080,200 snm
- Pacific (California, Oregon, Washington) – 24% of 239,700 snm
- Pacific Remote Islands and Hawaii – 50% of

1,691,700 snm

Multibeam and lidar surveys are the two primary sources of bathymetry needed to fill these gaps. In support of the integrated ocean and coastal mapping goal to “map once, use many times,” all the data collected in this effort are publicly available to benefit numerous user communities. For the latest status on these efforts and how you can contribute, click here.

Coast Guard Cutter Alert Returns After Counter-Drug Patrol, International Exercise

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Alert sails near Puerto Chiapas, Mexico, while participating in a three-day North American Maritime Security Initiative exercise on March 1. U.S. Coast Guard

ASTORIA, Ore. — The Coast Guard Cutter Alert returned home to Astoria on March 15 following a 69-day eastern Pacific Ocean counter-drug deployment, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a release. The crew patrolled international waters off the coast of Mexico to disrupt the flow of narcotics and illegal migrants.

Alert’s crew also participated in the North American Maritime Security Initiative (NAMSI) Pacific Exercise in and around Puerto Chiapas, Mexico.

NAMSI is a trinational effort by forces of the United States,

Canada and Mexico to improve mutual capacity for operational coordination. The three-day exercise focused on enhancing information-sharing and integrating capabilities of Canadian, U.S. and Mexican maritime forces during at-sea counter-drug interdiction operations.

“It was a great experience to participate in and be a part of such a culturally diverse operational exercise,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Cristina Hickey, a Spanish translator and Alert crewmember. “I thoroughly enjoyed conversing in Spanish with my foreign counterparts and learning more about their missions.”

Crews from the Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento, Coast Guard Cutter Benjamin Bottoms, Pacific Strike Team, Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team, Pacific Area/D11 command center and Joint Interagency Task Force South also participated in the exercise alongside Canadian and Mexican maritime participants.

“I’m proud of the hard work that our crew put into our Eastern Pacific patrol,” said Cdr. Tyson Scofield, Alert’s commanding officer.

“I am especially proud of the professionalism that the crew showed during our joint exercises with the Canadian and Mexican navies. They displayed a high level of skill while demonstrating counter narcotics interdiction techniques and during the shipboard launch and recovering of a Mexican helicopter for the first time. Most importantly, our crew created personal and professional relationships with their North American peers which will help to counter the flow of illegal narcotics into all of our countries.”

USS Delbert D. Black Completes Acceptance Trials

The USS Delbert D. Black maneuvers in the Gulf of Mexico during its bravo trials. Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding

Pascagoula, Miss. – The future USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 19) completed acceptance trials on March 12, returning to Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding Division after spending two days at sea in the Gulf of Mexico.

During acceptance trials, the ship's crew performed a series of demonstrations for review by the U.S. Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). These demonstrations are used to validate the quality of construction and compliance with Navy specifications and requirements prior to delivery of the ship to the Navy.

"The ship performed exceptionally well and demonstrated that the ship is materially ready to execute her mission," said Capt. Seth Miller, DDG 51 class program manager for PEO-Ships. "The success of these trials validates this highly capable ship will be a force multiplier when she joins the fleet."

Ima Black signs a photo in 2015 of the future guided-missile destroyer named after her late husband, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Delbert D. Black. The ship is the first Navy vessel to be named after a master chief petty officer of the Navy, and Black was the first MCPON. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Martin L. Carey

DDG 119 is being constructed with the Aegis Baseline 9 combat system, which incorporates integrated air and missile defense capabilities, such as increased computing power and radar upgrades, that improve detection and reaction against modern air warfare and ballistic-missile defense threats. When

operational, DDG 119 and her sister ships will serve as integral assets in global maritime security.

“DDG 119’s exceptional performance during these trials is a direct reflection of the teamwork between Ingalls Shipbuilding and the Navy,” said Capt. Nathan Schneider, supervisor of shipbuilding, conversion and repair Gulf Coast. “I am proud of this ship, and I am extremely proud of the Ingalls Shipbuilding and Navy team that built her. Right behind DDG 119 are follow-on DDGs that will be even better, including the first Flight III DDG which is a real game-changer.”

DDG 119 honors Delbert D. Black, the first master chief petty officer of the Navy, and will be the first naval ship to bear his name. Black is best known for guiding the Navy through the Vietnam War and ensuring proper enlisted leadership Navy-wide by initiating the master chief program.

The future USS Delbert D. Black is expected to be delivered to the Navy later this year. HII’s Pascagoula shipyard also is in production on the future destroyers Frank E. Peterson Jr. (DDG 121), Lenah H. Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123) and Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), the first Flight III ship.

HELIOS Laser Weapon Takes Step Toward Ship Integration

An artist rendering of the capability of the HELIOS system, once it is integrated on an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer. Lockheed Martin

MOORESTOWN, N.J. – Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Navy moved one step closer to integrating a laser weapon system onto

an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer after successfully conducting a critical design review (CDR) for the High Energy Laser with Integrated Optical-dazzler and Surveillance (HELIOS) system, the company said in a release.

“Our adversaries are rapidly developing sophisticated weapons, and the threats to the U.S. Navy’s fleet are getting more challenging,” said Hamid Salim, vice president of advanced product solutions at Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems. “Our warfighters need this capability and capacity now to effectively counter threats such as unmanned aerial systems and fast-attack vessels.”

This year, HELIOS will undergo system integration in Moorestown, New Jersey – the home of Aegis combat system development for 50 years. HELIOS will then be tested at the Wallops Island, Virginia, Navy land-based test site, which will reduce program risk before being delivered to a shipyard for integration into an Arleigh Burke destroyer next year. In addition to being built into a ship’s structure, HELIOS will become an integrated component of its Aegis system.

“HELIOS will provide an additional layer of protection for the fleet – deep magazine, low cost per kill, speed of light delivery and precision response. Additional HELIOS systems will accelerate the warfighter learning curve, provide risk reduction for future laser weapon system increments and provide a stronger demand signal to the supply base,” said Brendan Scanlon, the HELIOS program director at Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems.

Lockheed Martin has more than 40 years of experience developing laser weapon systems. HELIOS leverages technology building blocks from internal research and development projects that continue to advance the Navy’s goal to field laser weapon systems aboard surface ships.

Ribcraft Wins $43 Million Navy Contract for Rigid Inflatables

MARBLEHEAD, Mass. – The U.S. Navy has awarded Ribcraft, a manufacturer of rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) for law enforcement, safety professionals and military agencies, a five-year indefinite-quantity contract worth up to $43 million, the company said in a release.

Under the contract, Ribcraft will build and deliver an estimated 48 of its 11-meter Expeditionary Mine Counter Measure Boats. Ribcraft has also been providing the Navy with 7-Meter shipboard RIBs since 2014.

“The awarding of this latest contract is testament to Ribcraft’s exceptional design and production capabilities. We’ve enjoyed a long and collaborative relationship with the Navy,” said P. Brian Gray, Ribcraft’s president and CEO. “We have a proven track record of meeting the needs of the Navy with exceptional product and service.”

A critical component of the Expeditionary Mine Countermeasures Company, the 11-meter RIBs will serve to support explosive ordnance disposal mine countermeasure platoons in both shallow and deep-water operations.

To achieve this, Ribcraft will build two configurations for mine countermeasure operations, one with an open aft deck for stowage and deployment of two combat rubber raiding craft, and the other featuring a launch, recover and handling system for deployment and retrieval of unmanned underwater

vehicles (UUV), which will have the capability to launch, recover and handle two UUVs using a single davit.

Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma Returns Home after $12.5 Million Drug Bust

The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma works with an armed helicopter interdiction tactical squadron during a counter-drug patrol on Feb. 1 in the eastern Pacific Ocean. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan L. Noel

BOSTON – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma returned to Kittery, Maine, on March 12 after a 70-day counter-drug patrol in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 1st District said in a release.

Tahoma's crew seized about 700 pounds of cocaine, valued at $12.5 million while working with an armed Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron MH-65 aircraft on board.

The crew of Tahoma worked with several other Coast Guard units in the area to detain 27 suspected narcotics traffickers, and interdict 9,600 pounds of cocaine and 640 pounds of marijuana.

Tahoma's crew transited through the Panama Canal to conduct counter-drug operations under the tactical control of the Joint Interagency Task Force South in support of Operation Martillo. The operation involves 20 participating nations working together to counter transnational organized crime

networks and illicit trafficking in the waters along Central America.

“The crew was outstanding in executing the counter-drug mission in support of Operation Martillo,” said Cmdr. Michael Sarnowski, commanding officer of Tahoma. “I sincerely appreciate the contributions and professionalism from our detached teams while on this deployment.”

Tahoma is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter with a crew complement of 100. They conduct maritime enforcement and homeland security missions in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

SAIC Wins Award to Support Navy, Marine Corps Tactical Warfare Training

MCLEAN, Va. – SAIC has been awarded a $45.2 million follow-on contract to support the tactical warfare training of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, the company said in a release. The single-award contract has a three-year period of performance.

SAIC will continue providing technical and tactical expertise to support tactical warfare training of the Tactical Training Group Pacific (TTGP) stationed in San Diego, the Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific (EWTGP) based in Coronado, California, Tactical Training Group Detachment (TTGPDY) Yokosuka, Japan, and Carrier Strike Group 15 in San Diego.

SAIC’s support provides the Navy and Marine Corps the most up-

to-date training, including instruction related to tactics, techniques and procedures as well as practical applications and wargaming support, utilizing government-furnished training systems for classroom training, Fleet Synthetic Training, and Live, Virtual, Constructive Training. This support enables TTGP and EWTGP to execute their primary mission to train carrier strike groups, expeditionary strike groups, and amphibious ready groups of the Navy's Third and Seventh Fleets.

"SAIC is proud to continue our support of TTGP and EWTGP as they train groups for deployment," said Jim Scanlon, SAIC executive vice president and general manager of the Defense Systems Customer Group. "We want today's Navy and Marine Corps forces to be as mission-ready as possible and this program enables that preparation."

SAIC was the only awardee for this contract. Three subcontractors – American Systems, Prairie Quest, and Stellar Peak – will work with SAIC on this contract.

"Our years of successful engagement on this program, coupled with key personnel, secured this win and cemented the trust between us and our customers in this contract," Scanlon said.