N.S. Savannah Returns from Dry Dock

NS Savannah reaches the Golden Gate Bridge in 1962 en route to the World's Fair in Seattle. U.S. government archives

WASHINGTON – The N.S. Savannah, the world's first nuclear-powered merchant ship, was to begin its journey back on Feb. 13 from dry-docking in preparation for decommissioning, the Maritime Administration said in a release.

Having spent the last few months at Northeast Ship Repair in Philadelphia undergoing maintenance, the ship will be back at home at the Canton Marine Terminal in Baltimore by Feb. 14.

The only U.S.-built, nuclear-powered merchant ship, the Savannah was in Philadelphia for general inspection, repairs and structural modifications. The ship was a demonstration project for the potential use of nuclear energy and was named after the SS Savannah, the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean.

The N.S. Savannah, which was deactivated in 1971, was in service between 1962 and 1972 as one of only four nuclear-powered cargo ships ever built. Soviet icebreaker Lenin, launched in 1957, was the first nuclear-powered civil ship.

While the last nuclear fuel was removed from the Savannah nearly 50 years ago, there are still components of the nuclear power plant that need to be removed to support its decommissioning. A contract for decommissioning the vessel's nuclear plant is expected to be announced later this year.

Once the ship is back in Baltimore, it will be open for limited tours.

Titan to Acquire HII's San Diego Shipyard

Titan Acquisition Holdings, created through the combination of Vigor Industrial and MHI Holdings, announced Feb. 12 an agreement to acquire Huntington Ingalls' San Diego Shipyard, one of the largest fleet service and repair sites in America, located in the nation's largest Navy port.

The acquisition creates opportunities to better serve key defense customers, economies of scale, expanded scope and performance optimization. Customers of Titan include the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Military Sealift Command, the U.S. Army, Boeing and nondefense and commercial customers such as state and local ferry systems.

The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions and closing is expected in the second quarter of the year. Financial terms were not disclosed.

"We are excited to add the San Diego Shipyard to our already strongly positioned and growing enterprise. The opportunity to add the San Diego Shipyard to our family of companies is a natural step in our evolution given its strategic location and wealth of talented employees," said Jim Marcotuli, CEO and president of Titan.

"Titan is a first-class organization with a strong reputation in the ship repair and sustainment market," said Andy Green, executive vice president of HII and president of HII Technical Solutions. "We believe this transaction will enable us to leverage complementary capabilities, capacity and facilities to improve efficiencies and better serve the needs of our U.S. Navy customer."

“We are thrilled to announce this agreement to acquire the San Diego Shipyard,” said Tom Rabaut, chairman of Titan. “Our goal is aimed at creating a stronger company of scale, capable of providing differentiated, coast-to-coast services to the U.S. Navy, U.S. Army and other defense, infrastructure and maritime customers.”

As a part of this transaction, Huntington Ingalls will hold a minority interest in Titan, the majority of which is controlled by The Carlyle Group and Stellex Capital Management. Other investors include Frank Foti, former CEO of Vigor, and members of management.

he San Diego Shipyard, formerly Continental Maritime of San Diego, covers 14 acres of land and 17 acres of water area on San Diego Bay. The shipyard is a division of HII Technical Solutions Fleet Support Group and provides shipfitting, welding, pipefitting, machinery, repair, marine electrical repair and installation, sheet metal repair and fabrication, boiler repair and preservation services to customers.

EMALS, AAG Systems OK’d for All Carrier Aircraft

A C-2A Greyhound approaches the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford during testing of its EMALS launch system and AAG landing system. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ryan Carter

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced that the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) have been cleared for shipboard launch and recovery of all currently deployed

naval aircraft types aboard USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

The Navy issued Aircraft Launch Bulletins (ALB) and Aircraft Recovery Bulletins (ARB) that identify the weights and engaging speeds authorized for shipboard aircraft launch and recovery, and signal EMALS and AAG are operationally safe for use aboard the Ford. On Jan. 31, the carrier completed at-sea aircraft compatibility testing (ACT) utilizing a range of aircraft, including F/A-18E/F, E-2D, C-2A, EA-18G, and T-45C, to prove EMALS and AAG can accommodate the air wing aircraft.

“EMALS and AAG can launch and recover the current air wing and any future aircraft, to provide greater flexibility than the legacy systems aboard Nimitz-class carriers,” said Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS.

“The Navy is expecting flight-deck certification to take place in the coming months and will conduct a steady stream of cats and traps this year – we’re talking in the thousands – to move the ship closer to full mission capability and capacity.”

GA-EMS is delivering EMALS and AAG for the future USS John F. Kennedy and USS Enterprise. Significant cost savings are being realized through multiple ship production contracts, which minimize gaps in production while maximizing planning, scheduling and delivery to support all three Ford-class carriers.

“The next few months are really where all the hard work comes together to intensely exercise these systems to meet [Gerald R. Ford] operational objectives,” stated Rolf Ziesing, vice president of programs at GA-EMS. “This is a very exciting time for us, generating a great deal of team pride as EMALS and AAG successfully performs. We remain laser-focused on our support of the Ford and ensuring that same success comes to fruition on the future CVN 79 and CVN 80.”

Coast Guard Offloads $338 Million of Cocaine in San Diego

Coast Guardsmen gather together before preparing bails of cocaine to be offloaded from the Coast Guard Cutter Munro in San Diego on Feb. 10. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray\

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Munro offloaded nearly 20,000 pounds of cocaine Feb. 10 seized from known drug-transit zones of the eastern Pacific Ocean worth about $338 million, according to the Coast Guard's 11th District.

Eight interdictions were made between mid-November and mid-January by the joint efforts of the following four separate Coast Guard cutter crews:

- Thetis was responsible for two cases, seizing 6,830 pounds.
- Resolute was responsible for one case, seizing 1,951 pounds.
- Tampa was responsible for two cases, seizing 4,270 pounds.
- Munro was responsible for three cases, seizing 6,680 pounds.

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, U.S. Navy, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs

Enforcement and the Panama Express Strike Force, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the eastern Pacific requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to criminal prosecutions of these cases by U.S. Attorneys in districts within Florida and Texas.

“By disrupting the profits of these cartels, we are reducing their effectiveness and helping our partner nations maintain their stability,” said Rear Adm. Peter Gautier, the 11th District’s commander. “These efforts also provide invaluable information to us that we can then use to stop these drugs further up the supply chain before they begin these dangerous routes at sea.”

These interdictions were in support of Campaign Martillo, a regional initiative targeting illicit trafficking that threatens security and prosperity at the national, regional, and international levels. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the 11th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the Coast Guard.

First Navy V-22 arrives in

Patuxent River

The CMV-22B Osprey lands at NAS Patuxent River on Feb. 2 after completing a ferry flight from Bell’s Amarillo Assembly Center in Amarillo, Texas. U.S. Navy

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The first U.S. Navy CMV-22B Osprey arrived at Patuxent River on Feb. 2 after completing its ferry flight from Bell’s Amarillo Assembly Center in Texas, Naval Air Systems Command said.

This is the first of two CMV-22B aircraft assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (HX) 21, the squadron leading the developmental test efforts for the program.

“Accepting the first aircraft and ferrying it to Patuxent River to continue developmental testing is a critical step forward for the program,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Matthew Kelly, program manager for the V-22 Joint Program Office. “Our government/industry team can be proud of this milestone as we prepare to put the CMV-22B through testing which will ensure it is ready to support the Navy anywhere around the world.”

HX-21 and Bell conducted the aircraft’s first flight in December prior to transiting cross-country.

“The developmental test program is designed to validate the capabilities of the aircraft and ensure they meet the Navy’s unique mission,” said Kacie Fleck, PMA-275’s assistant program manager for test and evaluation. “Our integrated test team will complete a variety of ground, flight and avionics test events.”

The integrated test team, which includes pilots, aircrew, engineers and maintainers from HX-21, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Boeing and Bell, will conduct developmental test over the next year.

The first operational squadron, Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30, is scheduled to receive the aircraft in summer 2020 and operational testing is slated to begin in early 2021. The CMV-22B is a variant of the MV-22B and is the replacement for the C-2A Greyhound for the Carrier Onboard Delivery (COD) mission. The aircraft will be used to transport personnel, mail, supplies and high-priority cargo from shore bases to aircraft carriers at sea.

“The CMV-22B will enable the Navy to supply the carrier strike groups with what they need to project sea power, anytime, anyplace,” Kelly said.

For example, the CMV-22B will be capable of transporting up to 6,000 pounds of cargo and/or personnel over a 1,150 nautical mile range. This expanded range is due to the addition of two new 60-gallon tanks installed in the wing for an additional 120 gallons of fuel and the forward sponson tanks were redesigned for additional capacity.

The CMV-22B variant has a beyond line-of-sight high frequency radio, a public address system for passengers and an improved lighting system for cargo loading. The aircraft will also be capable of internally transporting the F-35C Lightning II engine power module.

The CMV-22B is scheduled to achieve initial operational capability in 2021.

Laser-Guided Excalibur S

Munition Aces Navy Test

The new Excalibur S precision-guided munition is fired from a howitzer. Raytheon Co.

YUMA PROVING GROUND, Ariz. — Raytheon's new Excalibur S precision-guided munition scored direct hits on moving targets in a U.S. Navy test, the company said in a Feb. 5 release. Testing validated the projectile's ability to survive the shock and stress of a howitzer firing, then transition from GPS to laser guidance and hit a moving target.

Excalibur S uses the Excalibur Ib variant's GPS technology and incorporates a semi-active laser seeker to engage mobile land and maritime targets at comparable ranges. Existing Ib projectiles can be upgraded with Excalibur S capabilities.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=18&v=rxa0ASS2wp8&feature=emb_logo

"Using artillery to engage moving targets gives soldiers more flexibility," said Sam Deneke, Raytheon Land Warfare Systems vice president. "Artillery is typically used to hit stationary objects, but Excalibur S expands the capability of artillery on the battlefield."

Excalibur is a true precision weapon, impacting at a radial miss distance of less than 2 meters from the target. Widely used by U.S. and international artillery forces, Excalibur has been fired more than 1,400 times in combat.

Coast Guard Repatriates 64 Migrants to Dominican Republic

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The U.S. Coast Guard repatriated 64 migrants to the Dominican Republic between Feb. 5 and Feb. 6 following the interdiction of an illegal migrant voyage on Feb. 3 about 51 nautical miles north of Punta Cana, the according to the Coast Guard's 7th District.

The interdiction was the result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

The crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft sighted the illegal migrant voyage about 51 nautical miles north of Punta Cana. Coast Guard watchstanders at Sector San Juan diverted cutter Donald Horsley, which had arrived on scene and interdicted the 30-foot white migrant boat. The makeshift vessel was transporting 63 Dominican males, including a 17-year-old minor, and one Haitian man.

"In the last 10 days, the U.S. Coast Guard and our Dominican Republic navy partners have worked together to interdict 191 migrants at sea," said Lt. Michael Lopez, Coast Guard liaison officer in the Dominican Republic. "Our collective efforts help safeguard the maritime borders of both nations and the people who risk their lives when they embark grossly overloaded makeshift vessels to attempt the perilous voyage across the Mona Passage."

The crew of the cutter Donald Horsley embarked the migrants and transported them to waters Feb. 5 just off Samaná, Dominican Republic, where the 63 adult migrants were transferred to local authorities aboard a Dominican navy patrol boat. The following day, the Coast Guard Cutter

Joseph Tezanos repatriated the 17-year-old minor in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, where he was received by local authorities.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Cutters Donald Horsley and Joseph Tezanos are 154-foot fast-response cutters homeported in San Juan.

Components of Northrop Grumman AQS-24B Mine-Hunting System Now Made in Australia

CANBERRA, Australia – Northrop Grumman Corp. has started to manufacture components of the AQS-24B towed mine-hunting system with Marand Precision Engineering in Australia, at the company's Moorabbin, Victoria, facility.

The AQS-24 mine-hunting system includes an operational high-speed synthetic aperture sonar (HSSAS) and an optical laser line-scan sensor. The system performs high-resolution detection, localization, classification and identification of mine-like objects from helicopter and unmanned surface vessel platforms at speeds of up to 18 knots. A total of 31 systems are deployed worldwide.

"Northrop Grumman is committed to providing our customers worldwide with a sustainable and affordable mine-hunting system," said Alan Lytle, vice president of undersea systems at Northrop Grumman. "Our partnership with Australian industry enables us to source key components from local manufacturers."

Marand designs and manufactures products for the aerospace, defense, automotive, rail and renewable-energy industries. The towed vehicle shell assemblies and sonar array housings being manufactured in Australia for the AQS-24B will benefit from Marand's experience on other successful programs such as the F-35 Lightning II strike fighter. Assemblies will be delivered this summer to satisfy existing spares contracts Northrop Grumman has to support fielded and operational AQS-24 systems.

"We are thrilled to be selected by Northrop Grumman as their partner for the AQS-24B program," said Steve Mellor, general manager of Marand Defence Partnerships. "Having received our very first order from Northrop Grumman was an important step towards a long-term relationship."

Northrop Grumman has also expanded its current partnership with Sydney-based Electrotech Australia Pty Ltd, which performs post-delivery support of Northrop Grumman navigation and radar systems operating in Australia, to include future sustainment of the AQS-24B mine-hunting sensor systems.

First RAF Poseidon Lands in U.K.

The RAF's new submarine-hunting Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) touches down for the first time in the U.K. on Feb. 4 at Kinloss Barracks. Royal Air Force

LONDON – The RAF's new submarine-hunting Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) has touched down for the first time in the United Kingdom, the U.K. Ministry of Defence said

in a release.

The aircraft is the first of a new program, including the purchase of nine state-of-the-art Poseidon jets, which will improve the U.K.’s ability to track hostile targets below and above the waves.

Poseidon aircraft will protect the U.K.’s continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent and be central to NATO missions across the North Atlantic, co-operating closely with the U.S. and Norwegian Poseidon fleets.

The U.K.’s purchase of the Poseidon is in response to increased threats such as Russian submarine activity in the Atlantic Ocean returning to Cold War levels, while China is also investing heavily in new Arctic facilities, infrastructure and ice-capable ships.

“Our Poseidon fleet will soon join an integrated U.K. force of fighter jets, ships, submarines, helicopters and highly-trained Royal Marines, ready to operate in Arctic conditions,” Defence Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan said. “The U.K. will not stand by if peace in the Arctic region is threatened.

“RAF Lossiemouth’s strategic northerly location makes it one of the most important air stations in the U.K., already home to half of the U.K.’s Typhoon Force, and now sitting at the heart of our anti-submarine operations,” Trevelyan said.

The Poseidon is designed to carry out extended surveillance missions at high and low altitudes. The aircraft is equipped with cutting-edge sensors which use high-resolution area mapping to find both submarines and surface vessels.

Each aircraft carries sonobuoys which are dropped from the aircraft into the sea to search for enemy submarines, surveying the battlespace under the sea and relaying data back to the aircraft.

The Poseidon will also be armed with Harpoon anti-surface ship missiles and Mk54 torpedoes capable of attacking both surface and sub-surface targets.

“The Poseidon MRA1 is a game-changing maritime patrol aircraft,” said Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston, chief of the Air Staff. “I am delighted and proud to see the ‘Pride of Moray’ and her crews returning to maritime patrol flying from Scotland, working alongside the Royal Navy to secure our seas and protect our nation.”

“The arrival of the first Poseidon marks a significant upgrade in the U.K.’s ability to conduct anti-submarine operations,” said First Sea Lord Adm. Tony Radakin. “This will give the U.K. the ability to conduct long range patrols and integrate seamlessly with our NATO allies to provide a world-leading capability.”

All nine U.K. Poseidons will be delivered to the RAF by the end of 2021 and achieve full operational capability from RAF Lossiemouth in 2024. The aircraft will be flown initially by 120 Squadron, the leading anti-submarine warfare squadron in World War II, with 201 Squadron joining the program in due course.

Poseidon will temporarily operate from Kinloss until October 2020 while runway and taxiway resurfacing work is completed at Lossiemouth. Routine Typhoon training also will temporarily relocate from Lossiemouth to Kinloss in June and July while the intersection of the runways there is resurfaced.

“Seeing the first RAF Poseidon MRA Mk1 landing in the U.K. is an incredibly proud moment for all of the team at DE&S,” said Michelle Sanders, DE&S P-8A delivery team leader. “Close, collaborative working with colleagues in Air Capability, the U.S. Navy and industry has helped us deliver this very capable aircraft.”

Moray’s RAF Lossiemouth is one of the most important air

stations in the U.K. as it's already home to four RAF Typhoon squadrons – half of the RAF Typhoon Force – and will become the center of operations for the U.K. Poseidon fleet.

The Ministry of Defence is upgrading RAF Lossiemouth's infrastructure, including a new strategic facility for the Poseidon fleet, upgraded runways and operating surfaces, a new air traffic control tower, upgraded facilities for IX (Bomber) Squadron, which moved to Scotland in 2019, new personnel accommodation, upgraded drainage and electrical supplies.

When these developments are complete there will be 550 additional military personnel based at RAF Lossiemouth, bringing the total number of military personnel employed there to 2,532.

Marine Corps Orders Two Northrop Grumman TPS-80 Radars

The U.S. Marine Corps AN/TPS-80 Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar (G/ATOR) system. Northrop Grumman Corp.

BALTIMORE – Northrop Grumman Corp. has received an order from the U.S. Marine Corps for two additional AN/TPS-80 Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar (G/ATOR) systems as part of the full-rate production Lot 2 award received in December, Northrop Grumman said. This order completes the planned Lot 2 procurement for a total of eight systems for the Marines.

"We are continuing to provide an

advanced, multimission capability that meets the evolving needs of our customers," said Mike Meaney, vice president of land and maritime sensors for Northrop Grumman. "This order also enables us to keep the G/ATOR production pipeline full in anticipation for a Lot 3 award next year."

In June, the Marine Corps awarded Northrop Grumman a $958 million full-rate production contract for 30 of the G/ATOR systems.

The AN/TPS-80 G/ATOR is an advanced active electronically scanned array (AESA) multimission radar that leverages GaN to provide comprehensive real-time, full-sector, 360-degree situational awareness against a wide array of threats.