

Czech Republic Orders AH-1Z and UH-1Y Helicopters from Bell

WASHINGTON – The U.S. secretary of defense, Mark Esper, and Czech Republic Minister of Defence, Lubomir Metnar, signed a letter finalizing the foreign military sale by Bell Textron Inc. of H-1 helicopters to the Czech Air Force, the company announced in a release.

“We are privileged to support the Czech people and applaud the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces of the Czech Republic for selecting AH-1Z and UH-1Y helicopters.” said Vince Tobin, executive vice president of Bell’s Military Business.

The H-1 mixed fleet shares 85-percent commonality between parts, reducing the logistics, maintenance, and training costs of the AH-1Z and UY-1Y helicopters while offering a lethal combination of integrated weapons systems to counter ground, air and maritime targets effectively. The AH-1Z is the only helicopter in production equipped with the AIM-9 Sidewinder providing the most advanced air-to-air combat capabilities.

“This mix allows the Czech Republic to accomplish a diverse mission set, from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to close air support and air-to-air warfare,” said Joel Best, director of Military Sales and Strategy, Europe. “The advanced capabilities of the H-1 program help ensure the safety and security of Czech sons and daughters for years to come.”

The purchase of four AH-1Z and eight UH-1Y military helicopters represents the first foreign military sale of a mixed H-1 fleet. Bell anticipates the delivery of the first H-1 aircraft to the Czech Republic will begin in 2023 and complete delivery by 2024.

The AH-1Z and UH-1Y are operated by U.S. Marine Corps light attack helicopter squadrons. The AH-1Z also is operated by Pakistan and has been approved for sale to Bahrain.

P-8A Poseidon to Support Chilean-Led Search for C-130

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – U.S. Southern Command directed U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command to deploy a P-8A Poseidon multimission maritime aircraft to Punta Arenas, Chile, on Dec. 10 to support Chile's ongoing search for a Chilean Air Force C-130 Hercules that went missing in the Drake Passage while transporting 38 passengers and crew to the Antarctic.

In response to a request from the government of Chile, the aircraft and its 20-person crew departed El Salvador's Comalapa Air Base and arrived in Punta Arenas on Dec. 11. The aircraft and crew are expected to begin supporting the ongoing search on Dec. 12.

Prior to the P-8A deployment, SOUTHCOM assisted the Chilean search efforts by providing satellite imagery of the search area.

The aircraft was in El Salvador's Comalapa Air Base supporting counter-illicit trafficking maritime patrol operations as part of a bilateral agreement between the U.S. and El Salvador.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Chile and with the families of the missing as we join other regional partners supporting Chile's ongoing search for the C-130, its crew and their passengers," said U.S. Navy Adm. Craig Faller,

commander of U.S. Southern Command.

The P-8A Poseidon is the Navy's newest maritime, patrol and reconnaissance aircraft and is configured with state-of-the-art sensors and communications equipment, allowing it to support a wide range of missions over large bodies of water, including subsurface search-and-rescue operations. It can reach an airspeed of 564 mph, has a ceiling of 41,000 feet and a range of 1,200 nautical miles with four hours on station, allowing it to loiter over search areas.

In 2017, SOUTHCOM deployed two P-8A Poseidon aircraft to Bahia Blanca, Argentina, where they contributed to an internationally supported search for the Argentinean Navy's submarine A.R.A. San Juan after it went missing in Southern Atlantic waters.

Saab Receives Order for Components for Marine Corps G/ATOR Radar

STOCKHOLM – Saab has received an order for components and subsystems for full-rate production systems for the U.S. Marine Corps Ground/Air Task Oriented Radar (G/ATOR), which has the U.S. designation AN/TPS-80, the company said in a Dec. 9 release.

The initial order value is \$31.9 million, and the contract includes options for additional systems over a five-year period. G/ATOR provides the Corps with capability for air surveillance, air defense and ground weapon locating missions in one single ground-based radar solution.

Saab received the order from Northrop Grumman Systems Corp., which is the prime contractor for G/ATOR to the Marine Corps. Saab's order includes options for additional sets of assemblies and associated spares. Deliveries are anticipated to take place between 2020 and 2024.

"We look forward to continue strengthening the next generation U.S. radar program with our radar expertise and to further deepen our collaboration with [Northrop Grumman] as part of the G/ATOR delivery team," said Anders Carp, senior vice president and head of Saab's surveillance business area.

Saab received the initial G/ATOR order, which covered low-rate initial production units, from Northrop Grumman in 2014. Saab will carry out the work in Syracuse, New York.

Navy Accepts Delivery of 11th EPF, USNS Puerto Rico



The expeditionary fast-transport ship USNS Puerto Rico successfully completed the first integrated sea trials for an EPF on Aug. 22. Austal USA

MOBILE, Ala. – The U.S. Navy accepted delivery of its 11th Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF), the future USNS Puerto Rico, from Austal USA on Dec. 10.

Delivery marks the official transfer of the ship from the shipbuilder to the Navy. EPF 11 will be owned and operated by Military Sealift Command.

"We are excited to accept delivery of another versatile ship, further expanding the advantage of our civilian mariners at

sea,” said Capt. Scot Searles, strategic and theater sealift program manager, Program Executive Office-Ships. “Delivery of our 11th ship is a testament to the inherent flexibility of the EPF class.”

EPFs are shallow-draft, all-aluminum, commercial-based catamarans that are capable of intra-theater personnel and cargo transport, which provide combatant commanders high-speed sealift mobility. EPFs enable rapid projection, agile maneuver and transport of personnel, equipment and supplies over operational distances with access to austere and degraded offload points.

As versatile, noncombatant vessels, EPFs provide increased operational flexibility for a wide range of activities including maneuver and sustainment, relief operations and flexible logistics support.

These vessels are capable of interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, and on/off-loading a combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank. EPFs include a flight deck to support day and night aircraft launch and recovery operations and airline-style seating for 312 embarked forces, with fixed berthing for 104.

Austal USA is also in production on the future USNS Newport (EPF 12) and USNS Apalachicola (EPF 13) and is under contract to build the future USNS Cody (EPF 14).

Bell Boeing Delivers First

Modified Osprey for Improved Fleet Readiness



Test pilots conduct the maiden flight of the first V-22 Osprey under the CC-RAM program. Boeing PHILADELPHIA – Boeing and Bell Textron Inc. have delivered the first modified MV-22 Osprey to the U.S. Marine Corps for improved readiness and reliability of the tilt-rotor fleet, Boeing said in a release.

The Marines have multiple configurations of the MV-22 aircraft in service. Under the Common Configuration-Readiness and Modernization (CC-RAM) program, Bell Boeing is reducing the number of configurations by upgrading block “B” aircraft to the current block “C” configuration.

“Our first CC-RAM aircraft returning to Marine Corps Air Station New River was a key program benchmark,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Matthew Kelly, program manager, V-22 Joint Program Office (PMA-275). “We are excited to see the capability, commonality and readiness improvements these CC-RAM aircraft bring to the fleet as part of the Marine Corps’ V-22 readiness program.”

As a block “B” configuration, this MV-22 was originally delivered to the fleet in 2005. In 2018, the aircraft flew from Marine Corps Air Station New River to the Boeing Philadelphia facility for modernization.

“This milestone marks the beginning of an Osprey evolution,” said Kristin Houston, vice president of Boeing tilt-rotor programs and director of Bell Boeing’s V-22 program. “Through a shared focus on safety and quality, the Bell Boeing team is delivering modernized MV-22 aircraft that are ready to serve our dedicated servicemen and women who rely on this essential aviation resource.”

The next CC-RAM delivery is expected in early 2020.

“We look forward to having the remaining MV-22 block “B” aircraft rejoin the fleet in a block “C” configuration,” Kelly said.

In November 2019, the U.S. Navy awarded Bell Boeing \$146 million to upgrade nine additional MV-22 aircraft under the CC-RAM program, with work expected to be completed in March 2022.

L3 Harris Receives \$50 Million Order for HF Radios From Marine Corps

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – L3 Harris Technologies has received a \$50 million follow-on delivery order for Falcon III AN/PRC-160 HF radios and related equipment from the U.S. Marine Corps as part of its High Frequency Radio II modernization program, the company said in a release. The order is part of the Navy Portable Radio Program five-year IDIQ contract received in 2017.

The Corps selected the AN/PRC-160 to replace legacy L3 Harris HF radios. The AN/PRC-160 is a modern solution for beyond-line-of-sight communications in a satellite-denied environment. It is the smallest, lightest and fastest wideband HF manpack available – providing 10X throughput over legacy systems.

The wideband system also is the world’s only HF manpack meeting new NSA crypto-modernization standards. The system’s

software-defined architecture allows encryption updates, ensuring mission-critical information stays secure. It also enables command and control in a degraded environment and long-range voice and data with interoperability across U.S. and Coalition forces.

“The AN/PRC-160 delivers the security and resilience the Marine Corps needs for its tactical radio modernization programs, while providing unmatched capability for Marines on the battlefield,” said Dana Mehnert, president, Communication Systems, L3 Harris. “These radios provide high-speed, long-range HF communications that meet the Marine Corps’ demanding program of record requirements.”

Lockheed Martin Continues Partnership With Spain For Future Frigates

MOORESTOWN, N.J. – Lockheed Martin recently signed a contract with Navantia to equip five new F-110 multimission frigates and their land-based test site (Centro de Integración de Sistemas en Tierra or CIST) with Lockheed’s first naval installation of its solid-state S-band radar, the company said in a Dec. 5 release. The new F-110 frigates will be built by Spain’s national shipbuilder, Navantia.

Recently designated by the U.S. government as AN/SPY-7(V)1, this technology is derived from current radar programs and significant Lockheed investment. Variants of the SPY-7 radar will also be utilized on programs with Japan’s Aegis Ashore, the Royal Canadian Navy for the Canadian Surface Combatant program and the U.S. government.

Providing Spain's homeland with a defense for evolving threats, the F-110 program will further protect the country and its citizens. Equipped with the latest digital, solid-state radar technology, this crucial program:

- Ensures Spain's warfighters have the most capable combat system to perform new missions.
- Strengthens Spain's economy through industrial participation.
- Advances Spain's competitiveness in the global market by providing an opportunity for joint technology development.
- Paves the way for interoperability with navies across the world, thanks to Aegis' open architecture.

The F-110 will host the first-ever naval solid-state S-band radar for the Spanish navy. To foster the growth of Spain's defense and technology industries, Lockheed and a Spanish company, Indra, will jointly provide the radar. It will go to sea as part of the Aegis Weapon System, which will be integrated with the ship's combat management system SCOMBA, when the first frigate deploys in 2026.

The Aegis Weapon System is the most deployed combat system in the world, and its flexible system enables it to fulfill a variety of missions. Due in part to its unique open architecture design, the Aegis family continues to grow internationally as more nations around the world partner with Lockheed.

Coast Guard Repatriates 26 Migrants to the Dominican Republic



The Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez repatriated 26 migrants, 22 men and four women, to the Dominican Republic on Dec. 9, 2019. U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez repatriated 26 migrants to the Dominican Republic on Dec. 9 following the interdiction of an illegal migrant voyage on Dec. 7 in the Mona Passage, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

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 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations marine patrol aircraft sighted the illegal migrant voyage, about 35 nautical miles south of Mona Island. The Coast Guard Cutter Reliance diverted to the scene and interdicted the 25-foot migrant boat with 22 Dominican men and four women aboard.

“I’m extremely proud of our crews and our CBP partners who did an excellent job responding to this case and rescuing all 26 occupants aboard this grossly overloaded makeshift vessel,” said Cmdr. Beau Power, Sector San Juan chief of response.

“The migrants were not wearing lifejackets and they were observed continuously bailing out water from their boat. Unfortunately, this is a common representation of what an illegal migrant voyage looks like each and every day, the conditions of the voyage are extremely dangerous and the migrants are always at risk of losing their lives at any given

moment.”

The crew of the Reliance transferred the migrants to the Heriberto Hernandez for their repatriation. The migrants were transported to Dominican Republic waters just off Samaná, where they were transferred to a Dominican Republic navy patrol boat.

Aircraft Carrier John F. Kennedy Christened



Caroline Kennedy, President John F. Kennedy’s daughter, former ambassador to Japan and sponsor of the Ford-class aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy, christens the ship on Dec. 7. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Samuel Lee Pederson

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – In a ceremony celebrating the U.S. Navy’s newest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and the American hero for whom the ship is named, Huntington Ingalls Industries’ christened John F. Kennedy on Dec. 7 at the company’s Newport News Shipbuilding division, the company said in a release.

“We are here to celebrate America’s military might and the brawn behind it,” said Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding. “We are here to celebrate innovation, pride and perseverance that is the American way, and we are here to honor the patriot who inspired it. I speak for every Newport News shipbuilder – 25,000 strong – and the thousands of suppliers across the nation who support us when I say that we are proud to build John F. Kennedy.”

Former U.S. Ambassador Caroline Kennedy, the ship’s sponsor

and daughter of President Kennedy, smashed a bottle of American sparkling wine across the bow to christen the ship. During her remarks, she reflected on christening the first aircraft carrier named in her father's honor.

"This ship will represent the ideals he lived by – courage, sacrifice and belief in freedom – and it will help make real his vision of a more just America and a more peaceful world," Kennedy said.

"I'm so proud to be sponsor of this ship and to join with all of you to bring her to life. I look forward to being part of her odyssey and of her extended family. Most of all, I hope she will carry my father's spirit with her as she sails, his leadership in wartime, his courage in crisis and his commitment to the hard and steady work of building peace."



Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly delivers remarks at the christening of USS John F. Kennedy at Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding division. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory J. Daut

More than 20,000 guests attended the ceremony, including members of the Virginia congressional delegation U.S. Sen. Mark Warner and U.S. Rep. Robert C. Scott, who both offered remarks, and U.S. Rep. Elaine Luria. Other speakers included former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Adm. Frank Caldwell, director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Ceremony participants included James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition; Vice Adm. Thomas Moore, commander of Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA); Adm. Christopher W. Grady, commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command; and Capt. Todd Marzano, the ship's prospective commanding officer.

Retired Navy Adm. Tom Fargo, HII's chairman of the board, and Mike Petters, HII's president and CEO, attended – as did Newport News employees who are building

Kennedy, Kennedy's crew, Navy personnel and other government officials. Former Sailors who served on the first USS John F. Kennedy, which was built and christened at Newport News in May 1967, also attended the ceremony.



The hull of the Kennedy, decorated before its Dec. 7 christening. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory J. Daut

"As we observe 'a date which will live in infamy' on this 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, this magnificent vessel we see before us today is a symbol of our nation's strength, of our technical achievements and of the critical service our men and women in uniform provide for this nation and the entire world," said Charles Frank Bolden Jr., a retired U.S. Marine Corps major general and former NASA administrator and astronaut who served as the principal speaker.

"This carrier is also a tangible example of the legacy of a great man who risked his own life volunteering for hazardous duty in the Pacific during World War II in the wake of Pearl Harbor and later came to embody a time of optimism that he translated into a vision for taking humans beyond the sphere of our planet."

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Charles Frank Bolden Jr., retired Marine major general, former NASA administrator and astronaut and principal speaker at Kennedy's christening

Since the first cut of steel in February 2011, more than 5,000

shipbuilders have helped to construct Kennedy, and suppliers from 46 states across the country have contributed specialized parts, skilled services and support to carrier production. In the weeks following the christening, the carrier will be launched into the James River and moved to a pier where outfitting and testing of its systems will continue until the ship is delivered to the Navy in 2022.

“President John F. Kennedy taught us that deterrence will always cost less than war,” said Thomas Modly, acting secretary of the Navy. “The purpose of our military, including this warship that bears his name, must be to ensure our nation’s commitment to peace and prosperity for all nations of the world.”

Coast Guard Cutter Thetis Returns to Key West from Drug-Interdiction Patrol



A suspected cocaine smuggling vessel drifts in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean after being intercepted by the crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Thetis Nov. 21, 2019. U.S. Coast Guard

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Thetis returned home Dec. 5 to Key West, Florida, after completing a 79-day patrol throughout the Eastern Pacific Ocean in support of U.S. Southern Command Joint Interagency Task Force South and the Coast Guard 11th District, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release of the same date.

The Thetis crew interdicted four suspected drug smuggling

vessels seizing an estimated 9,300 pounds of cocaine and preventing more than a ton of additional drugs dumped by suspected smugglers from reaching the United States. The interdictions, which included two low-profile vessels in one week and resulted in the apprehension of 13 suspected smugglers and seizure of drugs with an estimated value of \$165-million, were accomplished by working with multiple interagency partners to counter transnational criminal organizations and hinder the illicit flow of drugs, people and other dangerous shipments bound for the United States.

“These interdictions were an all-hands effort working with Joint Interagency Task Force South, interagency partners and partner nations in the region,” said Cmdr. Randall Chong, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Thetis. “I could not be prouder of my crew for stepping up and successfully completing our mission.”

During a port call in Huatulco, Mexico, Thetis crewmembers volunteered for a community relations event and built a playground at a school located in the mountains of the Oaxaca province. The Thetis crew provided children with a new, safe playground that will last them many years to come.

In addition to its operational success, the Thetis crew completed damage control, seamanship, and navigation and shipboard helicopter operations and training with an embarked Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron MH-65 Dolphin from Jacksonville, Florida.

Named for the famous Greek mythology sea nymph and mother of Achilles, the Thetis is a 270-foot Famous-class cutter, homeported in Key West and has a crew of 100.