Upgraded RAM Missile Ready for U.S. Navy

The amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) launches a RAM during an exercise in the Pacific Ocean in March. (U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Markus Castaneda

PARIS – The U.S. Navy successfully completed a series of guided flight tests for Raytheon Co.'s Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) Block 2A short-range, surface-to-air missile, the company said in a release.

Testing occurred at Naval Air Warfare Center in China Lake, California, and from the Navy's self-defense test ship off the coast of Southern California.

RAM is the world's most modern ship self-defense weapon and protects ships of all sizes. It is deployed on more than 165 ships in 11 countries, ranging from 500-ton fast attack craft to 95,000-ton aircraft carriers. The latest software upgrade enhances guidance and the missile's capability to defeat threats.

Raytheon expects to deliver the RAM Block 2A missile to the Navy by the end of the year.

RAM is an international cooperative program between the United States and Germany. Raytheon and the

German company RAMSYS share development, production and maintenance costs.

Littoral Combat Ship Minneapolis-Saint Paul Is Christened, Launched

The future Minneapolis-Saint Paul is launched on June 15 at the Fincantieri shipyard in Marinette, Wis. Lockheed Martin Corp.

MARINETTE, Wis. – The Lockheed Martin-led shipbuilding team launched Littoral Combat Ship 21, the future USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul, into the Menominee River at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Shipyard on June 15.

Ship sponsor Jodi J. Greene, deputy U.S. Navy undersecretary for policy, christened LCS 21 just prior to launch, according to a Lockheed press release. "LCS 21 is going to bring the name 'Minneapolis-Saint Paul' all around the globe," said Greene, who is native of the Twin Cities.

U.S. Navy Vice Adm. G. Dean Peters speaks during the christening ceremony. Lockheed Martin Corp.

"LCS is the second largest ship class in the U.S. Navy, and Lockheed

Martin is proud to deliver capability and added force projection with each additional hull," said Joe DePietro, vice president and general manager of small combatants and ship systems for Lockheed.

Littoral combat ships are designed to complete close-to-shore missions and are a growing part of the Navy's fleet. With 40 percent of its hull easily reconfigurable, an LCS can be modified to integrate capabilities such as over-the-horizon missiles, advanced electronic warfare systems and decoys and, in the future, vertical launching systems or laser weapon systems.

An LCS is fast, as it is capable of speeds in excess of 40 knots. The ships are lethal as well, as all are equipped with Rolling Airframe Missiles (RAM) and a Mark 110 gun, which is capable of firing 220 rounds per minute.

Lockheed Martin is in full-rate production and has delivered eight LCS to the U.S. Navy. There are eight others in various stages of production and testing. This year, Lockheed and Fincantieri Marinette Marine will begin construction on two ships, deliver two ships, complete sea trials for two ships and see three ships commissioned (LCS 13, 15 and 17).

Transportation Secretary Announces Over $19 Million in Grants for Small U.S. Shipyards

WASHINGTON –
The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD)
announced $19.6 million in grants to support capital improvements at 28 U.S.
small shipyards as a part of its Small Shipyard Grant program, MARAD said in a release.

Provided
through MARAD's Small Shipyard Grant program, the funding supports employee
training and related improvements that foster increased efficiency and economic
growth, the release said.

"These grants
help create jobs in America's small shipyards, which play a significant role in
our country's maritime sector," Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said.

In 2013, U.S.
shipbuilders produced $37.3 billion in gross domestic product. Usually
family-owned and employing less than 1,200 workers, small shipyards play a

critical role in contributing to our nation’s economy. Supporting more than 400,000 jobs, they create employment opportunities for working families and small communities.

“Small shipyards are an irreplaceable aspect of America’s shipbuilding industry,” Maritime Administrator Mark. H. Buzby said. “They are a key component to national security and our economic viability as a whole, providing good jobs for hardworking Americans.”

Since 2008, MARAD’s Small Shipyard Grant Program has awarded more than $226 million for a total of 216 grants. These grants help fund upgrades and expansions that often lead to more competitive operations, quality ship construction and improved employee skill.

Having produced some of the most innovative vessels in the world, U.S. small shipyards have become economic backbones throughout the country. Small shipyard grants leverage the skills and expertise of the shipyard community, according to the release.

Alion Awarded $75 Million C4ISR On-the-Move Systems for the Joint Warfighter

MCLEAN, Va. – Alion Science and Technology has been awarded a task order totaling $75 million to support Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific, the company announced in a release.

The contract supports a technical focus of Combat Vehicle Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) On-the-Move (OTM) Systems for the Joint Warfighter.

The Alion team will support the U.S. Marine Corps and Army programs for C4ISR-OTM at NIWC Pacific to ensure interoperability and commonality of functions between systems and upgrades. This includes the advancement of joint and coalition force capabilities by helping to provide OTM satellite communications technology that gives weapon system platforms on the battlefield reliable, worldwide connectivity to the Joint Information Environment.

Alion will provide technical expertise to develop operational concepts for OTM satellite communications across multiple weapon system platforms, to include tactical vehicles. Focus will be on systems engineering and providing the technology expertise required to evaluate, design

and test and implement advanced hardware and software components for the
C4ISR-OTM.

“Alion has supported this customer since 2009. Being able to provide continued access to the team that built the NOTM [Networking
On-the-Move] system and the OEMs for the individual components allows for
uninterrupted advancement of C4ISR technologies,” said Tim Lawrence, Alion senior
vice president.

World War II-Era Mines Cleared During BALTOPS 2019

A British 1,000-pound, World War II-era mine detonates in the Baltic Sea after being discovered by the BALTOPS 2019 Mine Warfare Task Group and being rigged for detonation by a team of Norwegian explosive ordnancemen. U.S. Navy/Chief Mass Communication Specialist Shannon E. Renfroe

TODENDORF, Germany – German, Norwegian, Danish and U.S. Navy Sailors from the Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) exercise Mine Warfare Task Group came together to clear three World War II-era air-laid mines in the Baltic Sea on June 14, the Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center said in a release.

During complex mine warfare training to increase combined force integration and maritime capability among 11 nations, the task group
identified three historical mines on the sea floor. The team

detonated the mines after receiving approval from German authorities to increase safety and reduce risk to mariners operating in German territorial waters.

“This is an excellent example of the valuable training we gain from exercises like BALTOPS,” said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Scott Robertson, commander of the BALTOPS 2019 Mine Warfare Task Group and commander of Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center.

An unexploded Mark I-VI mine lays at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. The mine was detected and classified by the Royal Norwegian Navy minesweeper HMNoS Otra (M351) and reacquired and identified by Royal Danish Navy divers as part of BALTOPS 2019 Mine Warfare Task Group. U.S. Navy via Royal Danish Navy

“Working together with our professional partners from Denmark and Norway to clear these undetonated, historical mines provides hands-on training and increases safety to mariners in the region by clearing hazardous material from the Baltic Sea. There is a good chance we will find more of these mines as the exercise continues, and it’s reassuring to know our international task group has the training and expertise necessary to safely dispose of them,” Robertson emphasized.

A team of mine warfare professionals aboard the Norwegian Alta-class MS HMNoS Otra (M351) detected and classified two mines, which were reacquired and identified by a team of Danish divers. Members of a Norwegian dive team discovered the third mine in another Mine Warfare

Task Group's
training area off the coast of the Bundeswehr Military Training Area in
Todendorf, Germany.

"German authorities willingly support the reduction of
threat to navigation and shipping," said Bundeswehr Personnel Exchange Program
Officer Fregattenkapitaen Stefan Oeggl, who is assigned to the U.S. Navy's Mine
Countermeasures Division 31 and serves as a liaison for the Mine Warfare Task Group
and Germany.

"Even after 75 years, explosives like these are dangerous,
and we are happy to have the mines cleared as part of the exercise."

Each of the cleared mines were World War II-era British
air-laid, bottom mines (A Mk I–VI), each roughly 1,000 pounds.

"This has been a tremendous opportunity to continue to work
with partner and allied forces that we frequently engage with throughout the
region," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jeff Demarco, commanding officer of Explosive
Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 8 based in Rota, Spain, which serves as the
Undersea Mine Countermeasures Commander within the BALTOPS Mine Warfare Task
Group.

"Working with the Norwegian, Danish and Belgium clearance
diving and AUV teams during training exercises is critical to our ability to maintain
sea control in a complex theater."

Nations participating in the BALTOPS 2019 Mine Warfare Task
Group include Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Belgium,

Germany, the
Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, France and the United States.

Nations participating in BALTOPS 2019 include Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands,
Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom
and the United States.

BALTOPS is an opportunity to promote partnerships, presence, and professionalism through an unambiguous display of strength in the Baltic
region.

U.S. Coast Guard Announces Homeport of Polar Security Cutter


An artist’s rendering of the new polar security cutter, which the U.S. Coast Guard announced will be homeported in Seattle. VT Halter Marine Inc.
WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard announced that Seattle will be the home of the service’s new polar security cutters.

“The Pacific Northwest has
been the home of our icebreaking fleet since 1976, and I am confident that the
Seattle area will continue to provide the support we need to carry out our

critical operations in the polar regions," Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl L.
Schultz said.

The Coast Guard is the
nation's lead agency responsible for providing assured surface access in the
polar regions. The addition of the polar security cutters in Seattle will
support the United States' ability to conduct national missions, respond to
critical events and project American presence in the high latitudes.

The Coast Guard conducted a
detailed analysis to identify locations that could accommodate the polar security
cutter. Based on operational and logistical needs, Seattle was determined to be
the appropriate homeport for the first three PSCs.

In April 2019, VT Halter
Marine Inc. of Pascagoula, Mississippi, was awarded a contract for the detail
design and construction of the PSC class.

Navy to Evaluate Kraken Sensors for Man-Portable AUVs

ST. JOHN'S,
Newfoundland – Kraken Robotic Systems Inc. has been chosen by the Pentagon to test
and integrate its AquaPix MINSAS sensor into a U.S. Navy man-

portable autonomous
underwater vehicle (AUV), the company said in a release.

Foreign
Comparative Testing (FCT) is designed to allow U.S. military operators to test foreign
technologies, with a view toward future procurement. The Kraken FCT will be managed
by Naval Sea Systems Command, EOD Program Office. The contract value is $900,000.

> *“The competition for FCT awards is fierce and only a few projects each year that meet the strict criteria are selected.”*
>
> *Kraken’s president and CEO KARL KENNY*

Man-portable AUVs make up the largest deployment of all AUV classes worldwide. The Navy and its allies continue to invest in man-portable AUVs, which utilize a range of sonar technologies.

Kraken’s AquaPix MINSAS synthetic aperture sonar sensor is offered in the MINSAS 60, 120, 180 and 240 configurations and has been traditionally integrated to medium- and large-size AUVs and towfish. As part of Kraken’s FCT contract, the company will optimize the MINSAS 60 sensor, making it better suited for small man-portable AUVs while offering a significant increase in capability and performance for the platforms.

“The competition for FCT awards is fierce and only a few projects each year that meet the strict criteria are selected,” said Karl Kenny, Kraken’s president and CEO. “An acceptable FCT project must have a high technology readiness level, which means that research and testing must have already been completed and the capability has already been proven in a setting similar to what will be encountered in real-world

operations.”

BAE Systems Joins Boeing’s MQ-25 Industry Team

Boeing Co. conducts a MQ-25 deck-handling demonstration at its facility in St. Louis, Missouri. U.S. Navy via Boeing Co.

NASHUA, N.H.
– BAE Systems has been awarded contracts by Boeing Co. to supply the Vehicle
Management Control System (VMCS) and Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) System
for the MQ-25 unmanned aerial vehicle, BAE said in a release.

“BAE
Systems leads the industry in high-integrity fly-by-wire and mission-critical
IFF technologies,” said Corin Beck, director of military aircraft systems at
BAE Systems. “Our relationship with Boeing started more than four decades ago and
has resulted in aircraft that have some of the most advanced avionics and
reduced size transponders in the world.”

> *“The MQ-25 program is vital because it will help the U.S. Navy extend the range of the carrier air wing, and Boeing and our industry team is all-in on delivering this capability.”*
>
> *Dave Bujold, Boeing Co. MQ-25 program director*

The VMCS

will control all flight surfaces and perform overall vehicle management duties
for the MQ-25. The IFF product ensures operation in contested environments by
reliably identifying both coalition and enemy vehicles.

The MQ-25 will be the U.S. Navy's first operational carrier-based unmanned aircraft and is designed to provide a much-needed refueling capability. The contract supports Boeing's engineering and manufacturing development program to provide four MQ-25 aircraft to the Navy for Initial Operational Capability by 2024.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZXVnlWhPSM
"The MQ-25 program is vital because it will help the U.S. Navy extend the range of the carrier air wing, and Boeing and our industry team is all-in on delivering this capability," said Dave Bujold, Boeing's MQ-25 program director. "The work we're doing is also foundational for the future of Boeing – where we're building autonomous systems from seabed to space."

General Dynamics NASSCO to Launch Largest Containership Ever Built in San Diego

The Lurline, the largest containership built in San Diego, at General Dynamics NASSCO.
SAN DIEGO – General
Dynamics NASSCO will hold an event on June 15 to christen and launch the
containership Lurline, the largest such ship ever built in San

Diego, the company announced.

Lurline, constructed for Honolulu-based Matson Inc., is an 870-foot vessel that can hold 3,500 cargo containers – 20-foot-equivalent units (TEUs).

She has liquefied natural gas-capable engines and is designed for energy efficiency. Lurline is the lead ship of a two-vessel contract being built for Matson.

Thousands of people had roles in constructing the Lurline, which is designed to not only transport containers but also automobiles and rolling stock, including trailers. The construction and operation of the Lurline and its future sister ship are aligned with the Jones Act, which requires that goods transported between U.S. ports must go on ships that are built, owned and operated by U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

NASSCO is the only major shipyard on the West Coast of the U.S. that is designing, constructing and repairing ships for the U.S. Navy and commercial customers.

Ceremony participants will include General Dynamics NASSCO President Kevin Graney and Matson CEO Matt Cox. Constance Lau, CEO and director of Hawaiian Electric Industries and a Matson board member, will christen the ship with the traditional breaking of a champagne bottle on the hull.

The christening will be streamed live on June 15 starting at 6:30 p.m.

Corps Begins Fielding Mobile Satellite Communication System

U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Frankie Garcia calls for a radio check using a PRC-117G at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California. U.S. Marine Corps/Lance Cpl. Jason Monty

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps recently began fielding a next-generation narrowband satellite communication system that assists warfighters in connecting to networks on the battlefield, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) said in a June 12 release.

Fielded in the first quarter of 2019, the Mobile User Objective System provides satellite communication capabilities to mobile or stationary Marines. The system enables the warfighter to leverage cellular technology to increase access to voice and data communication while using the MUOS network.

"MUOS is another way for warfighters to communicate in a tactical environment," said Eddie Young, project officer of Multiband Radio II Family of Systems at MCSC.

"The system brings [satellite communications] capabilities in

various formats
to Marines.”

The MUOS
capability encompasses updated firmware to the AN/PRC-117G radio system and one
of three antenna kits. The antennas help Marines simultaneously access satellite
networks and gives them secure and nonsecure internet access. MUOS also
improves overall reliability in urban environments, challenging vegetation and
other arduous conditions.

> *“MUOS is another way for warfighters to communicate in a tactical environment. The system brings [satellite communications] capabilities in various formats to Marines.”*
>
> *Eddie Young, project officer, Multiband Radio II Family of Systems,*
> *Marine Corps Systems Command*

“MUOS is
essentially software and an antenna capability augmenting existing hardware,”
said Noah Slemp, systems engineer at MCSC. “It’s similar to adding an
application to a cellphone.”

The first
service to widely employ MUOS, the Corps is deploying thousands of antenna kits
for the AN/PRC-117G radio system and hundreds of diplexers that enable
vehicular systems to access MUOS satellites.

“The Marine
Corps is leading all services in terms of getting MUOS to

warfighters," Young said.

Satellite communication has become increasingly important for the Corps in the 21st century. According to the Department of Defense, more than 50 percent of DoD satellite communication involves narrowband communication. Yet, this form of communication accounts for less than 2 percent of the DoD's bandwidth, making it an efficient way to transmit information.

MUOS is particularly important because the satellite communications infrastructure of the legacy system is nearing its expiration, Slemp said. As a result, the Corps intends to incrementally replace the older capabilities with the MUOS waveform, enabling more Marines to access ultra-high frequency tactical satellite communications.

Prior to fielding MUOS, MCSC had to demonstrate to the Milestone Decision Authority that the system was safe, met technical performance and was ready for use by the warfighter. Since MUOS's Field User Evaluation in 2017, Marines have raved about the benefits of the system.

"Our Marines find MUOS useful in completing their missions," Young said. "We've received a lot of positive feedback thus far."

The efforts of Young's team in getting the system out to the warfighter have not gone unnoticed. In May 2018, at a Narrowband Working Group conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the Joint Staff J6 and the DoD Chief Information Officer recognized Young and Slemp for leading the services in employing MUOS.

The J6 and DoD CIO also emphasized the joint effort between the Multiband Radio II team and the Naval Information Warfare Center in using the Multiple Reconfigurable Training Systems, an interactive training aid that will be used to assist in the rapid fielding of MUOS.

"It was motivating to see that we were recognized for our efforts, because the team had put in a considerable amount of time and effort to make this happen," Young said. "We recognize the warfighter needs this capability, and we've done everything we can to get it to them in a timely manner."