CIAT Trains its First Ship

SAN DIEGO – Over 40 crew members of the guided-missile destroyer USS Rafael Peralta were the first to pilot the updated Advance Warfare Training (AWT) curriculum inside the Navy's newest combat systems trainer, Combined Integrated Air and Missile Defense/Anti-Submarine Warfare Trainer (CIAT), onboard Naval Base San Diego (NBSD), Jan. 8-11.

The Center for Surface Combat Systems (CSCS) officially opened the CIAT during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in December and is planned to deliver tactical training to all San Diego-based Baseline 9 warships.

"The overall purpose of CIAT is to capitalize on advances in virtual technology to deliver a warfighting laboratory that is realistic, relevant, and just as complex as the threat environment our deployed ships are sailing into," said Lt. Cmdr. Reisheid Dixon, CSCS Det. San Diego's officer in charge.

The CIAT facility currently provides Navy watchstanders a state-of-the art training environment to detect and engage the entire spectrum of naval combatants. With an emphasis on realism, it is engineered in every detail to replicate a naval warship's actual combat suite. The feedback from Rafael Peralta is overwhelmingly positive.

"We are honored and thrilled to be the first warship through CIAT," said Cmdr. Aaron DeMeyer, commanding officer. "It's clear that even this first iteration of the CIAT curriculum is far better than any training we could develop on the ship."

Moving away from pre-packaged training scenarios, the virtualization of the trainer is completely customizable by CSCS instructors. Evaluators can now employ advanced enemy tactics, reduce visibility, degrade weapons systems, overwhelm the radars with clutter returns, and in the end, force every single watchstander in the combat information center to adapt.

The first CIAT students were able to experience these advanced training capabilities.

“This is by far the most realistic level of complexity and integration that our ship’s training team has faced,” said Lt. j.g. Anthony Pronchilo, fire control officer.

Chief Operations Specialist Anna Penrod, anti-air warfare coordinator, has been through the AWT curriculum in the past, but not like this.

“The CIAT has so many features,” she explained. “This was our team’s first opportunity to combat a reactive threat or fight through an electronic attack. I know full well the next time we see this challenged battlespace may be on deployment.”

“There is a steep learning curve for every training event in CIAT,” said Lt. Aaron Van Driessche, CSCS Det. San Diego’s course supervisor for AWT. “Many of our students are seeing complex enemy tactics for the first time but it’s critical that they face these combat challenges now. We need to begin training ships for the worst case scenarios because when a ship leaves the pier, its mission could depend on it.”

The CIAT is also equipped with a full debrief room capable of replaying all scenarios. CSCS instructors can break-down, in exact detail, every choice made by a ship’s combat team.

“The debrief room allowed us to articulate the full PBED process – plan, brief, execute and debrief,” said Lt. Wayne Badstuebner, tactical action officer evaluator. “With the ability to relive every scenario in the debrief, the feedback loop was instantaneous, and their team was maturing with every run.”

This multimission and shore-based trainer also executes training at a lower cost compared to training live on shipboard systems.

“CSCS’ CIAT is a game changer,” said Capt. David Fowler, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 23. “It provides the most realistic combat systems training of any system to date. The full potential of CIAT’s capabilities are yet to be experienced.”

Navy Commissions LCS USS Wichita

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – The U.S. Navy commissioned USS Wichita (LCS 13) – the nation’s seventh Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) – at Naval Station Mayport Jan. 12 before a crowd including active-duty and veteran sailors. This milestone places the ship, built by the Lockheed Martin-led team into active service.

“We are confident that LCS 13 will be what the Navy needs, when the fleet needs it, and we are proud to mark this day with her crew as the Navy welcomes its newest combat ship,” said Joe DePietro, vice president, Small Combatants and Ship Systems, Lockheed Martin. “We remain focused on delivering these ships as quickly as possible with increasing capability and lethality.”

The LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship, designed to support focused mine countermeasures, anti-submarine warfare and surface warfare missions. It is enabled with the COMBATSS-21 Combat Management System, built from the Aegis Common Source Library, which drives commonality among the fleet. The Freedom-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future mission capability from deep water to the littorals.

“Like a proud parent, I am so excited to share with you how awesome this ship really is,” said LCS 13’s Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Nathan Rowan. “People ask me about littoral combat ship. Is it a new cruiser or destroyer? Actually, it’s neither. It’s an entirely new category of warship. The LCS packs quite a hefty punch for such a small package.”

There are seven ships in various stages of production and test at Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Wisconsin, where the Freedom-variant LCS is built. The next Freedom-variant in the class is LCS 15, the future USS Billings, slated for delivery this spring.

“We consider it a privilege to support the men and women who will sail this great ship, protecting the United States and our allies,” said Jan Allman, president and CEO of Fincantieri Marinette Marine. “On behalf of the 2,000 individuals that crafted the LCS 13, we congratulate the U.S. Navy and the outstanding crew of the USS Wichita.”

LAV Anti-Tank Weapon System to Reach FOC By End of 2019

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – The Marine Corps continues to upgrade the turret system for one of its longest-serving fighting vehicles – the Light Armored Vehicle-Anti-Tank (LAV-AT).

In September 2017, Marine Corps Systems Command’s (MCSC’s) LAV-AT Modernization Program Team achieved initial operational capability by completing the fielding of its first four Anti-Tank Light Armored Vehicles with the upgraded Anti-Tank Weapon Systems (ATWS) to Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion

Marines.

The ATWS fires the tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided – or TOW – missiles. It provides long-range standoff anti-armor fire support to maneuvering Light Armored Reconnaissance companies and platoons. The ATWS also provides an observational capability in all climates, as well as other environments of limited visibility, thanks to an improved thermal sight system that is similar to the Light Armored Vehicle 25 mm variant fielded in 2007.

“Marines using the new ATWS are immediately noticing the changes, including a new far target location capability, a commander/gunner video sight display, a relocated gunner’s station, and an electric elevation and azimuth drive system, which replaced the previous noisy hydraulic system,” said Steve Myers, LAV program manager.

The ATWS also possesses a built-in test capability, allowing the operators and maintainers to conduct an automated basic systems check of the ATWS, he said.

The LAV-ATM Team continues to provide new equipment training (NET) to units receiving the ATWS upgrade, with the final two training evolutions scheduled for early this year. Training consists of a 10-day evolution with three days devoted to the operator and seven days devoted to maintaining the weapon system. Follow-on training can be conducted by the unit using the embedded training mode within the ATWS.

“This vehicle equips anti-tank gunner Marines with a modern capability that helps them maintain readiness and lethality to complete their mission,” said Maj. Christopher Dell, LAV operations officer.

Full operational capability for the ATWS is expected at the end of fiscal year 2019.

“Currently, there are 58 in service within the active fleet,”

said Myers. “The original equipment manufacturer delivered 91 of the 106 contracted kits and is ahead of schedule. Now MCSC’s focus is directed at the Marine Corps Forces Reserve, ensuring they receive the same quality NET and support as their active counterparts.”

General Dynamics NASSCO Commissions New Panel Line

SAN DIEGO – General Dynamics NASSCO held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 11 to commission its new panel line, which expands steel production capabilities for the construction of commercial and government ships in San Diego, the company said in a release.

The new panel line enables distortion-free welding of plates as thin as five millimeters to produce lighter, more energy-efficient ships. The cutting-edge facility uses hybrid laser arc welding and numerically controlled robots to mill, seam and weld steel panels in a highly automated production line. These features improve capacity, quality, accuracy and cycle time, and are expected to double steel processing rates.

“Our team scouted thin plate welding technology and processing facilities from around the world to identify the components that would allow NASSCO to stay at the forefront of shipbuilding manufacturing technology,” said Kevin Graney, president of General Dynamics NASSCO.

“This facility, the only one in the world with this unique combination of technologies, is already beginning to transform our business while reducing energy consumption and emissions,” said Graney. “This facility is a win for NASSCO, our customers

and our region.”

Four ships are currently under construction at the San Diego shipyard, including two containerships for Matson Inc., and the first TAO-205-class oiler for the U.S. Navy, all of which will feature steel from the new panel line. An expeditionary sea base for the Navy is also under construction.

Representatives from NASSCO, the U.S. Navy and Matson Inc. attended the ceremony.

Coast Guard, Partners Recover Section of Downed Jet off Oahu

HONOLULU – Personnel from the Coast Guard and the State of Hawaii oversaw local salvor’s recovery of a section of the fuselage from a Hawker Hunter aircraft, downed initially in December, off Honolulu, Jan. 8.

“Using a blend of local salvage assets, remote engineering guidance, and advanced sensing technology sourced from the mainland, the locally based salvage company Parker Marine Corp. has completed the next stage of the aircraft salvage,” said Chief Warrant Officer Russ Strathern, a marine safety specialist, and response officer at Sector Honolulu. “The main section of the fuselage containing residual oil and potentially hazardous substances has been salvaged and transported to a staging location for the ongoing National Transportation Safety Board-led investigation.”

Strathern also noted, “Because of the incident complexity and

operational environment, this evolution was technically challenging. The aircraft owners worked tirelessly with the salvor and jurisdictional authorities to safely mitigate the threat to the public and environment, all while preserving evidence critical to future root-cause analyses. I'm pleased to note that there were no reported injuries after the initial accident or impacts to wildlife, these are great measures of success, and indicative of the hard work of the involved parties."

Following exhaustive searches, the fuselage was positively identified in 260-feet of water by a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) in early January. After analyzing the data from the ROV, the salvor consulted with an engineer, formulated a plan, and received concurrence from the Coast Guard to proceed.

Using the ROV, the salvage company lassoed the tail of the aircraft wreckage with line and slowly raised it to the surface. The team towed the section to a haul-out point designated by the State's Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation Division. Following the section's removal from the water, it was transported by truck to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, where the National Transportation Safety Board will continue its investigation into the cause of the crash.

Throughout the operation, the Coast Guard worked closely with representatives from the Hawaii State Department of Health Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response and Department of Land and Natural Resources offices to monitor the salvage and recovery efforts.

"With the removal of this section, which contained the aircraft's engine, any oil or hazardous substances from the aircraft has either been removed or naturally dissipated and the remaining pieces do not pose a significant or substantial threat to the public or environment," Strathern said. "Any future actions related to the crash site or remaining debris

will be coordinated with the State's Department of Land and Natural Resources."

The privately owned aircraft crashed in December while participating in the Hawaii Air National Guard-sponsored training exercise Sentry Aloha. The pilot ejected before the crash and was rescued by the Coast Guard with the assistance of nearby good Samaritans.

Alion Awarded SeaPort Next Generation Contract

WASHINGTON – The Department of Navy has awarded Alion Science and Technology, headquartered in McLean, Virginia, an indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity, multiple-award SeaPort Next Generation contract vehicle, the company said in a Jan. 10 release.

This contract has a five-year base period of performance, with an additional five-year ordering period option. Under this vehicle, Alion will compete for individual task orders for engineering and program management support services.

Engineering services consist of supporting the research and development of new and existing naval platforms and systems. Innovative warfighting capabilities are introduced through the design and complex integration of hardware and software into ships, submarines and aircraft during new construction, maintenance and modernization availabilities. These efforts include the analysis and evaluation of foreign as well as nondevelopmental systems, equipment and technologies.

Program management services consist of the application of

acquisition, business, financial, technical and quality-control expertise within large and small Navy programs. These services enable Navy leaders to manage the design, development, production, training, deployment, sustainment and disposal of equipment, systems and platforms.

“Alion has been a trusted partner of the Navy for many years and as a company we are humbled and thrilled to be able to continue this work so vital to our country.” said Vince Stammetti, Alion senior vice president. “In concert with our Navy customers, our singular mission is to ensure that fleet assets are on station and our Sailors, Marines and Airmen are equipped to do the nation’s bidding – simple as that.”

Coast Guard Academy Announces Next Superintendent

NEW LONDON, Conn. – The Coast Guard Academy announced in a Jan. 10 release that Rear Adm. William G. Kelly to be its 42nd superintendent.

Kelly will relieve current Superintendent Rear Adm. James E. Rendon this summer.

Kelly currently serves as the assistant commandant for Human Resources since April 2016. He also oversees the Coast Guard’s human resources field activities, from accession of new military personnel to retirees’ pay and benefits. His previous flag assignment was as the commander, Personnel Service Center.

Kelly is a 1987 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy and he earned his master’s degree in Instructional Systems Design

from Florida State University and a Certificate in Human Resource Management. He has extensive experience in personnel development as the director of the Coast Guard's Leadership Development Center in New London, and also served as the school chief for Officer Candidate School.

Ranked among the nation's most prestigious institutions of higher learning, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London is proud to educate future leaders of America's multimission, maritime military force. Each year, approximately 200 graduates are commissioned as Coast Guard officers to help ensure the safety, security and stewardship of our nation's waters.

Coast Guard, Partners Stop Multiple Smuggling Events off Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard interdicted a vessel Jan. 7 with 35 Dominican migrants and 4 kilograms of heroin approximately 34 miles west of Desecheo, Puerto Rico, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

The crew of a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry, deployed to Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, detected the vessel on the evening of Jan. 7. Watchstanders with Coast Guard Sector San Juan diverted the Cutter Heriberto Hernandez, which arrived on scene, embarked the 35 migrants and discovered a backpack with 4 kilograms of heroin floating near the vessel.

"While this interdiction is certainly a success of Coast Guard

operational units through Operation Unified Resolve partnered with the Caribbean Border Interagency Group, it is also a symptom of a serious threat to our national security and maritime borders where narcotics smuggling is paired with illegal migrant ventures." said Capt. Jason Ryan, chief of enforcement for the 7th Coast Guard District.

"Together with other DHS [Department of Homeland Security] components and local law enforcement partners, we will continue to diligently patrol throughout the Caribbean Basin and Florida Straits to stem the flow of maritime smuggling and criminal organizations that bring violence to our shores and fuel the growing epidemic of drug use and overdoses throughout our country."

On Jan. 10, 27 of the migrants were repatriated to the Dominican Republic, while the remaining eight were transferred into the custody of the Department of Justice's District of Puerto Rico for further investigation and possible prosecution. One of the individual's is a suspected smuggler who is being investigated for participation in prior smuggling operations in which several migrants lost their lives.

In the past month, the Coast Guard and partners have made multiple interdictions in the Caribbean. Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan.

Navy Awards General Dynamics Voice Systems Engineering

Contract

FAIRFAX, Va. – The U.S. Navy's Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) Atlantic has awarded its Navy Secure Voice Systems contract to General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT), the company announced in a Jan. 9 release.

The single-award, indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract holds a ceiling of $91.2 million. It includes a five-year base period with one four-year option as well as one six-month option period. GDIT will submit proposals for individual task orders to provide next-generation solutions for the Navy's voice systems.

"GDIT continues to expand our platform of next-generation services and solutions for the Navy," said Rich Farinacci, vice president and general manager for GDIT's Naval and Training Solutions Sector. "Our secure voice systems portfolio will provide robust engineering support to the Navy worldwide. Together, we will fortify this support and enable the Navy to remain focused on their important mission."

GDIT has supported SPAWAR Atlantic under this program since 2001. Through this contract, GDIT will provide systems engineering and life-cycle sustainment support for the Navy's secure voice systems, which includes VINSON/ANDVT Crypto Modernization, Automated Digital Network System, Defense Red Switch Network, Tactical Shore Gateway, and other secure voice systems and equipment. Work will be performed worldwide and is expected to be completed by November 2023. If all options are exercised, work could continue until June 2028.

MBDA Demonstrates Anti-Surface Capabilities of the Mistral Missile

PARIS – MBDA successfully demonstrated the use of the Mistral missile against fast boats such as fast inshore attack craft during tests conducted at the end of the year, the company said in a Jan. 9 release.

A number of foreign delegations attended the demonstration firing that was performed from a SIMBAD-RC automated naval turret firing from the land against a fast-moving, remotely controlled semi-rigid boat more than 3 kilometers off the coast. The scenario was intended to be representative of the self-protection of a vessel against an asymmetric threat (commando or terrorist attack).

In its latest version currently in service with the French armed forces, the Mistral is an air-defense missile equipped with an imaging infrared seeker with advanced image processing capabilities that allow it to engage low thermal signature targets from a long distance (such targets include unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), missiles and fast boats), while at the same time offering excellent resistance to countermeasures.

The SIMBAD-RC is a remotely-controlled very short-range naval air defense system that provides highly efficient capacities against a wide range of threats, from combat aircraft through anti-ship missiles to small-sized threats such as UAVs.

The system is easy to install and thus provides small units or support vessels with a true self-defense capacity or can even ensure reinforced defense for the other types of surface vessels. Each turret supports two ready-to-fire Mistral missiles. The turret is remotely operated, allowing the operator to remain under cover in the vessel's operation

center, and thus ensures longer operational availability in case of a combat alert.

“MBDA is constantly striving to help armed forces make optimum use of their investments in our products,” said Antoine Bouvier, MBDA CEO. “The demonstration of the SIMBAD-RC Mistral combination against surface targets reflects our policy of giving our systems additional capacities to supplement those they were originally designed to provide.”