Northrop Grumman Demonstrates AQS-24B at Autonomous Warrior 2018

ANNAPOLIS, Md. and JERVIS BAY, Australia – The Northrop Grumman Corp. AQS-24B mine-hunting system demonstrated the benefits of performing mine warfare from a high-speed, unmanned surface vessel (USV) at the Royal Australian Navy-sponsored Autonomous Warrior 2018 exercise in Jervis Bay, the company said in a Dec. 17 release.

The AQS-24B detects mines at nearly twice the towing speed of any other mine hunting system on the market, significantly improving the area coverage rate.

The Northrop Grumman remote-controlled Mine Hunting Unmanned (MHU) Surface Vessel, with the AQS-24B mine-hunting sensor, demonstrated a safe standoff mine-hunting and undersea surveillance capability targeted at addressing three key aspects of the mine warfare challenge: reducing the mine clearance timeline; accurate detection, localization, classification and identification of undersea objects of interest; and improving crew safety by keeping the sailor out of the minefield.

The AQS-24B system includes the world's first combined operational High-Speed Synthetic Aperture Sonar and an optical laser line scan sensor, which provides complete coverage out to maximum range on a single pass. The real-time analysis capability demonstrated how unmanned systems can augment manned mine warfare operations.

"The demonstration highlighted Northrop Grumman's leading role in proving the operational utility of unmanned maritime systems in the mine warfare domain," said Alan Lytle, vice president, undersea systems, Northrop Grumman. "At operational

speeds significantly higher than other mine-hunting systems on the market, the USV/AQS-24B combination successfully completed a number of scenarios and challenges that were set by the Royal Australian Navy's exercise command task group."

The MHU was outfitted with L3 ASV's "ASView" unmanned control system. The system provided the capability to control the vessel from a remote location with minimal human oversight. ASView's situational awareness displays provided the remote captain full control and awareness to safely execute dynamic demands of mine warfare missions.

"L3 ASV is excited to be supporting Northrop Grumman's mine-hunting system with our unmanned surface vehicle technology," said Larry Karl, vice president and general manager, L3 ASV. "This operation has demonstrated the flexibility of the system which will enable it to support future mine hunting and defense applications."

Rite-Solutions Awarded Navy Combat Systems Engineering Services Contract

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – Rite-Solutions has won a five-year, $20.3 million contract with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWCDIVNPT). The company will provide engineering, technical expertise, and program services including hardware and software engineering, systems engineering, system integration and test, fleet support, and lab support for Submarine Combat Control Systems.

In addition, Rite-Solutions will support the advanced

development of new capabilities for these systems.

“For the U.S. submarine force and select allies, we will be studying new concepts and requirements, and supporting the development for these future systems as well upgrades and modifications for current systems in the fleet,” said Ken Haner, senior vice president and director of engineering services at Rite-Solutions.

This award comes on the heels of several other Navy contract and task awards to Rite-Solutions supporting the Navy’s efforts in undersea warfare (USW).

“We are extremely pleased to be able to support NUWCDIVNPT USW Combat Systems Department as they continue to improve our nation’s undersea warfare capabilities,” said Mike Coffey, executive vice president and general manager at Rite-Solutions. “This award recognizes the value of Rite-Solutions’ unique blend of small business agility and responsiveness, and large business quality and reliability.”

Next-Generation Frigate Contract Awarded to ASC Shipbuilding Under BAE Australia

ADELAIDE, Australia – BAE Systems Australia’s new subsidiary ASC Shipbuilding has been awarded a contract by the Australian government that provides the framework for the design and build of nine Hunter-class frigates for the Royal Australian Navy, BAE said in a Dec. 14 release.

The Australian government and ASC Shipbuilding signed the contract after ASC Shipbuilding structurally separated from ASC Pty. Ltd. and was acquired by BAE Systems.

Work has already begun to mobilize the Hunter-class Frigate Program, and the head contract incorporates detailed scope for the design and engineering work necessary to allow prototyping to commence in 2020, and to ensure steel is cut on the first ship in Adelaide in 2022. The scopes for the build of the ships are to be agreed and added to the head contract in due course.

The Hunter program provides a strong foundation for a continuous naval shipbuilding endeavor in Australia, creating and sustaining more than 5,000 jobs across BAE Systems and the wider Australian defense supply chain over the life of the program.

In addition to 1,000 apprentices and graduate roles that will be created throughout the program's life, job opportunities will include engineers and project managers, specialists in steel work, mechanical, electrical and technical trades and many other professions.

"I am delighted that we are embarking on the biggest surface ship project in the nation's defense history," BAE Systems Australia Chief Executive Gabby Costigan said. "Being awarded this contract demonstrates the confidence the Australian Government has in the combined capability of our employees across BAE Systems Australia and our new team at ASC Shipbuilding.

"The Hunter-class frigates will be built in South Australia by an Australian workforce, using suppliers from across the country, which will see Australian defense industry develop and sustain a world-class, sovereign naval shipbuilding capability.

"We are extremely proud to have been chosen to design and

manufacture a formidable fleet of frigates that will give the Royal Australian Navy an essential next generation capability that will be critical in helping protect the nation for decades to come.”

The Hunter-class frigate is based on BAE Systems’ Type 26 frigate, one of the world’s most advanced anti-submarine warships, which the company is currently constructing in Glasgow for the Royal Navy.

BAE Systems through ASC Shipbuilding will deliver a highly capable and versatile multimission frigate designed to support anti-submarine warfare, air defense and general-purpose operations anywhere on the world’s oceans.

Coast Guard, CBIG Interdict Go-Fast, Seize $30 Million in Cocaine

SAINT THOMAS, U.S. Virgin Islands – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos offloaded 2,606 pounds of cocaine and transferred custody of three suspected smugglers Dec. 14 to U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) special agents in St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Coast Guard and Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG) law enforcement authorities seized the $30 million cocaine shipment and apprehended the suspected smugglers following the interdiction of a go-fast vessel on the morning of Dec. 11 in international waters off Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

This interdiction is the result of ongoing multi-agency law enforcement efforts in support of Operations Full Court Press, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group.

The suspected smugglers are facing likely federal prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"This case was a team effort and perfect example of Caribbean Border Interagency Group partners working in coordination with Joint Interagency Task Force-East to protect the people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands," said Lt. Cmdr. Mario Gil, commanding officer of Joseph Tezanos. "This case involved a high-speed chase of over 10 hours in challenging weather conditions that was possible thanks to the tenacity and persistence of the Tezano's crew and of our partners, who are proud to have completed the mission and prevented a large quantity of drugs from reaching the streets."

While on a routine patrol, the crew of a HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft from Air Station Miami detected a suspicious go-fast vessel Dec. 10 transiting with three people onboard, approximately 65 nautical miles north of San Juan. Upon sunset, the go-fast continued to transit in the dark without the use of navigational lights.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan alerted CBIG partner agencies of the developing situation and diverted the Coast Guard Cutters Joseph Tezanos and Thetis to interdict the suspect vessel. The crews of two Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch maritime patrol aircrafts also responded and supported the interdiction by maintaining aerial surveillance of the go-fast.

Throughout the pursuit, the Coast Guard and CBP aircrews vectored-in Joseph Tezanos to the go-fast's position. Once on scene, Tezanos remained in hot pursuit, as the crew launched

the cutter's Over-the-Horizon Boat IV that closed-in and interdicted the go-fast approximately 95 miles nautical miles northeast of St. Thomas.

The three suspects onboard the go-fast claimed to be Dominican Republic nationals. The Tezanos boat crew located 52 bales of suspected contraband aboard the go-fast that a field test yielded positive results for cocaine. The Tezanos crew apprehended and embarked the suspected smugglers along with the seized contraband.

The go-fast was later destroyed as a hazard to navigation.

The suspected smugglers and seized contraband where transported to Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, where they were transferred to the custody of DEA special agents, who are leading the investigation into this case.

Navy Awards Austal USA Contracts for LCS 36 and 38

MOBILE, Ala. – After delivering three Independence-variant littoral combat ships (LCSs) this year, Austal USA was awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy Dec. 17 to build two additional hulls – bringing the total to four of LCSs awarded to company in 2018. The specific value of each contract is under the congressional cost cap of $584 million per ship.

"To be awarded two more LCS contracts before the end of the year is beyond exciting," said Austal USA President Craig Perciavalle. "This contract directly reflects the confidence the U.S. Navy has in Austal USA and our supplier base of over 10,000 nationwide and our ability to build highly capable

ships at an affordable cost.”

With eight delivered, six under construction, and three awaiting start of construction, these two additional ships represent Austal USA’s 18th and 19th ships in the class.

“The skill, hard work, and dedication of our employees is second to none and strengthens as we continue to play an important role in helping build the Navy’s 355-ship fleet,” said Perciavalle.

As the role of the LCS continues to take shape as a key component to the Navy’s ability to gain sea control through distributed lethality, Austal USA continues to deliver ships on-time and on-budget to support the needs of the fleet. The Independence-variant LCS, along with Austal USA’s expeditionary fast transport, are designed, constructed, and well positioned to meet the needs of the fleet today and into the future.

Navy Awards General Dynamics SeaPort NxG Contract

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) announced Dec. 17 it will support the U.S. Navy through a new contract vehicle known as SeaPort NxG. The multiple-award, indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract holds a total value of $5 billion. It includes a five-year base period with one five-year option.

“We are excited to expand our firm relationship with the Navy and deliver cutting-edge technologies and services through this new contract vehicle,” said Senior Vice President Leigh

Palmer, head of GDIT's Defense Division.

Through this contract, GDIT will compete for individual task orders supporting Naval Sea Systems Command, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, Naval Supply Systems Command, Military Sealift Command, Naval Facilities Command, the Office of Naval Research and the U.S. Marine Corps. GDIT will perform a variety of engineering services and program support as required by the individual task orders.

Virginia-Class Submarine Delaware is Launched

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries has launched the recently christened Virginia-class submarine Delaware (SSN 791) into the water for the first time at the company's Newport News Shipbuilding division.

During a three-day process that began Dec. 12, the 7,800-ton submarine was moved out of a construction facility and into a floating dry dock using a transfer car system. The floating dry dock was submerged, and the submarine was launched into the James River. Once in the water, the boat then was moved to the shipyard's submarine pier for final outfitting, testing and crew certification.

"Successfully launching Delaware into the water the first time is a proud moment for the Virginia-class submarine team and the thousands of dedicated shipbuilders involved in constructing the ship," said Dave Bolcar, Newport News' vice president of submarine construction. "With this significant key event behind us, we look forward to completing construction and sea trials next year so this great warship

can join the fleet and defend our nation.”

Delaware is the 18th Virginia-class submarine built as part of the teaming agreement with General Dynamics Electric Boat and the ninth to be delivered by Newport News. More than 10,000 shipbuilders from Newport News and Electric Boat have participated in Delaware’s construction since the work began in September 2013. The submarine was christened by Jill Biden, the former Second Lady of the United States and the ship’s sponsor, during a ceremony in October.

Following testing, Delaware is scheduled to be delivered to the U.S. Navy next year.

Hamilton Returns Home from 54-Day Counter-Drug Patrol

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton crew returned to home Dec. 17 at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Charleston, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Hamilton’s crew spent the majority of their 54-day deployment conducting counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. At the beginning of the patrol, Hamilton executed an exhaustive three-day search, along with Coast Guard aircraft, for a civilian aircraft that reportedly crashed approximately 100 miles off the coast of South Carolina.

While patrolling the drug-trafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Hamilton detained 21 suspected drug smugglers from five different vessels, and seized over 4.7 tons of cocaine, valued at over $140 million bound for the shores of

the United States. In addition, the cutter crossed the equator, a milestone for sailors and cuttermen alike.

Demonstrating the robust command and control capabilities of the national security cutter, Hamilton’s crew temporarily assumed complete tactical control of all counter-drug operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean, coordinating tasking of all air and surface assets in the fight against transnational criminal and drug-trafficking organizations.

During the final days of the patrol, Hamilton’s crew responded to report of an injured crew member from the Panamanian-flagged cargo vessel Pacific Talent in the Gulf of Mexico. Hamilton’s crew supported the medical evacuation of the crew member by directing response operations, providing vital command and control, and delivering fuel to the helicopter that hoisted the crew member to safety.

Hamilton’s crew visited Aruba, Panama, Costa Rica, and made two transits through the Panama Canal. In Golfito, Costa Rica, Hamilton’s crew transferred four suspected drug smugglers to Costa Rica’s Policia Control de Druga following the successful interdiction of a Costa Rican-flag fishing vessel increasing the nation’s partnerships in the fight against drug trafficking organizations.

Building upon that partnership, Hamilton’s crew hosted Costa Rican officials aboard to discuss current and future cooperation between Costa Rica and the United States. Attendees included the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, Sharon Day; U.S. Coast Guard Deputy for Operations Policy and Capabilities, Rear Adm. Meredith Austin; as well as Costa Rica’s National Assembly Speaker of the House, Minister of Public Security and Commandant of the Costa Rican Coast Guard. Members of U.S. Joint Task Force-Bravo, based out of Honduras, conducted a medical readiness exercise, enhanced dialogue and reinforced the United States’ commitment to Costa Rica.

“I could not be more impressed by this crew and their dedication to keeping over 4,290 kilograms of cocaine off of the streets,” stated Capt. Mark Gordon, Hamilton’s commanding officer. “It has been a busy two months for this ship and her crew in this constantly demanding maritime environment. We’re excited to be returning to homeport for the holidays and to prepare for our next patrol.”

ONR Recognizes 2019 Young Investigators

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Office of Naval Research (ONR) recognized 25 awardees of the 2019 Young Investigator Program (YIP) Dec. 17. These recipients will share $16.5 million in funding to conduct naval-relevant scientific research with direct benefits for Sailors and Marines.

“To meet the demand signal from the National Defense Strategy, we must attract the best and brightest minds to work on naval warfighting challenges. The Young Investigator Program does just that, and I’m honored to announce the recipients for 2019,” said Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. David Hahn. “Since 1985, this program has attracted outstanding scientists and engineers from across academia to support our Navy and Marine Corps – and in this era of great power competition, that is more important than ever before.”

The ONR YIP is a highly competitive program in which academic achievements and potential for scientific breakthroughs are major factors in the evaluation process. The winning candidates were selected from more than 260 applicants – all of whom are college and university faculty and obtained a PhD

within the past seven years.

Awardees represent 23 academic institutions nationwide, supporting efforts related to aerodynamics, autonomy, energetics, power and energy, machine learning, sensing and sensors, quantum materials and undersea-breathing technologies. The YIP awards support laboratory equipment, graduate student stipends and scholarships, as well as other expenses critical to ongoing and planned research. Typical grants range between $500,000 to $750,000 over a three-year period.

Established in 1985, the ONR YIP is one of the nation's oldest and most selective basic research early career awards in science and technology. Its purpose is to fund tenure-track academic researchers, or equivalent, whose scientific pursuits show outstanding promise for supporting the Department of Defense, while also promoting their professional development.

Navy Marks Establishment of the First CMV-22B Squadron

SAN DIEGO – The Navy held a ceremony Dec. 14 at Naval Base Coronado to commemorate the establishment of Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30, the Navy's first CMV-22B squadron, commander, Naval Air Forces Public Affairs, said in a release.

VRM-30 was established to begin the Navy's transition from the C-2A Greyhound, which has provided logistics support to aircraft carriers for four decades, to the CMV-22B, which has an increased operational range, greater cargo capacity, faster cargo loading/unloading, increased survivability and enhanced

beyond-line-of-sight communications compared to the C-2A.

“Where no instructions existed, no patch existed, no ‘here’s how we are going to perform our duties everyday’ existed, this team will define that. And it’s exciting because we can establish right off the bat those best practices,” said Vice Adm. DeWolfe H. Miller III, commander, Naval Air Forces. “This platform is our future and when you look at the nature of the future fight, we need that versatility, that flexibility that’s going to be provided in every subsequent squadron that transitions.”

The first CMV-22B aircraft are scheduled to be delivered to the squadron in fiscal 2020. While VRM-30 awaits the arrival of the CMV-22B, Navy pilots and maintainers will train with the U.S. Marine Corps, which has flown the MV-22 since 2007. As the C-2A squadrons stand down, their pilots and aircrew will transition to the CMV-22B. The final C-2A squadron is scheduled to stand down in 2024.

The CMV-22B is the U.S. Navy version of the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.