

# MCM Mission Package Completes Integration Testing of Unmanned Vehicles

SAN DIEGO – The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Mission Module Program successfully completed shipboard integration testing of two unmanned systems on board USS Independence (LCS 2) Jan. 14, Naval Sea Systems Command said in a Jan. 24 release.

The two systems – the Knifefish unmanned undersea vehicle (UUV) and Unmanned Influence Sweep System (UISS) – are part of the Mine Countermeasures Mission Package (MCM MP), which uses a system-of-systems approach to target specific portions of the water column and segments of the MCM detect-to-engage sequence.

During these integration events, both the Knifefish and UISS successfully verified the communications link between Independence and the unmanned systems as well as executed multiple launch and recovery evolutions from the ship. These test events mark a critical milestone for the LCS Mission Module Program, having now successfully tested each vehicle in the MCM MP (that is, an MH-60S helicopter, MQ-8B Fire Scout unmanned helicopter, UISS and Knifefish UUV) on board an Independence-variant LCS.

In addition to UISS and the Knifefish UUV completing integration tests, the program has certified all the aviation modules for the MCM MP for deployment on Independence-variant ships. These airborne MCM systems provide combatant commanders the ability to rapidly deploy systems that can detect near-surface mines as well as neutralizes mines in the water and on the bottom without requiring Sailors to sail into the minefield. Additionally, the Coastal Battlefield Reconnaissance and Analysis system, which is a vertical-

takeoff unmanned aerial vehicle payload, provides a much-needed beach zone mine-detection capability in support of the amphibious assault mission.

These tests are a subset of a comprehensive test program that encompasses shore-based system testing to characterize individual systems prior to completing final integration on an LCS. The LCS Mission Module program office will continue to incrementally deliver MCM MP systems to the fleet in advance of the formal MCM MP initial operational test and evaluation events beginning in 2021.

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## **Austal USA Awarded Contract for LCS Post-Delivery Work in Mobile**

MOBILE, Ala. – The U.S. Navy awarded Austal USA a \$16.3 million contract Jan. 24 to perform extended industrial post-delivery availability work at its Mobile manufacturing facility – a first for Austal USA and the Navy, the company said in a release.

Austal USA will perform post-delivery work on Littoral Combat Ship 20, the future USS Cincinnati (LCS 20), at its Vessel Completion Yard along the Mobile River. This work will include engineering, management and production services in support of prefabrication efforts, material procurement and execution of work items for the LCS 20 Extended Industrial Post Delivery Availability.

Typically, this type of work is performed in San Diego, but through efforts to streamline production, support and

sustainment for the LCS program, Austal USA and the Navy are teaming to reduce post-delivery cost and increase efficiency by performing additional work at Austal's facility in Alabama.

"This is an important step in the growth of our post-delivery business," said Austal USA President Craig Perciavalle. "We are excited to continue to expand our relationship with the Navy to do new post-delivery work in Mobile."

Established in 1999, Austal USA has grown to become the fifth largest shipbuilder in the United States through innovative practices. The company's moving modular assembly line revolutionized the shipbuilding industry and helped it capture the U.S. Navy's expeditionary fast transport contract and the Independence-variant LCS contract, now a critical part of the shipbuilding industrial base supporting nearly 10,000 suppliers across the country.

As the company continues to invest in its workforce and facilities, Austal USA is expanding its offerings in small surface combatants, auxiliary support ships, autonomous vehicles and worldwide post-delivery support and sustainment.

"We're appreciative of the recognition and confidence the U.S. Navy has displayed in us through continuous contractual awards in ship construction and post-delivery, including the recent award as prime contractor for the drydocking of LCS 14," said Perciavalle. "But I can tell you, we've only scratched the surface on what Austal USA can provide."

# Fishermen in Series of Responses off Pacific Northwest Coast

SEATTLE – Coast Guard crews along the Oregon and Washington coasts have assisted 17 fishermen in five responses since Jan. 20, the 13th Coast Guard District said in a Jan. 25 release.

Response efforts included crews from Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay, Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment and Coast Guard Air Facility Newport, in coordination with members at Coast Guard Sector Columbia River and Coast Guard Sector North Bend.

The two-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Zephyr was escorted across the Yaquina Bay Bar in Oregon by a 47-foot Motor Lifeboat (MLB) crew from Station Yaquina Bay on Jan. 20. The crew of the 31-foot fishing vessel reported taking on water 17 miles off the south of bay with less than 500 pounds of crab aboard. The onboard pump and auxiliary pumps were able to keep up with the flooding as the fishing crew were escorted in. An MH-65 Dolphin aircrew from Air Facility Newport launched as well.

A four-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Dream was escorted across the Columbia River Bar and safely moored in Ilwaco by a Station Cape Disappointment boat crew aboard the 52-foot MLB Triumph on Jan. 21. The 42-foot fishing vessel crew reported experiencing fuel injector issues while attempting to cross the bar with 1,000 pounds of crab aboard.

A three-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Miss Jessie was towed into Ilwaco by a 47-foot MLB crew from Station Cape Disappointment on Jan. 21. The crew of the 36-foot fishing vessel reported they lost propulsion almost three miles west of Ocean Park where they anchored with 1,500 pounds

of crab aboard until the Coast Guard crew arrived.

A four-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Redeemer was towed to Newport, Oregon, by Station Yaquina Bay boat crew aboard the 52-foot MLB Victory on Jan. 21. The crew of the 51-foot fishing vessel reported they lost steering while on approach to the Yaquina Bay entrance with 5,000 pounds of crab aboard.

A four-person crew aboard the commercial fishing vessel Triggerfish was towed into Newport by Victory on Jan. 24. The 42-foot fishing vessel crew reported they lost steering almost two miles west from the Yaquina Bay entrance with no catch aboard.

Coast Guard stations along the coast maintain ready crews in the event of emergencies, which often involve the use of the 47-foot and 52-foot MLBs. The 52-foot MLB is unique in that they are only located in the Pacific Northwest and are the only Coast Guard vessels under 65 feet with names. The four vessels are stationed at Grays Harbor, Cape Disappointment, Yaquina Bay and Coos Bay.

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## **Northrop Grumman Gets LRIP Authorization for SEWIP Block 3**

BALTIMORE – Northrop Grumman Corp. has received authorization to proceed with low rate initial production (LRIP) of Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program (SEWIP) Block 3 systems following a successful Milestone C decision for the SEWIP Block 3 AN/SLQ-32(V)7 program.

Milestone C is a government-led review to assess a program's performance and readiness to enter the production and deployment phase. The successful Milestone C decision for SEWIP Block 3 recognizes the accomplishments of the Northrop Grumman and Navy team in demonstrating the capability of this groundbreaking electronic warfare (EW) capability.

"Milestone C approval and the start of LRIP are significant milestones for the SEWIP Block 3 program," said Capt. Seiko Okano, the Navy's major program manager of above water sensors. "SEWIP Block 3 is a critical capability that the fleet needed yesterday to pace the evolving anti-ship cruise missile threat. We must continue to push to deliver this critical electronic warfare improvement to the fleet on schedule and cost."

SEWIP Block 3 is the third in a series of block upgrades of the AN/SLQ-32 electronic warfare system which provides electronic attack capability improvements required to pace the evolving anti-ship missile threat. Northrop Grumman has provided electronic warfare expertise to the legacy AN/SLQ-32 EW system for over four decades.

With the Navy elevating the electromagnetic spectrum as a warfighting domain, SEWIP Block 3 is a cornerstone capability that will meet the urgent operational needs of the Navy in that domain. SEWIP Block 3 provides game-changing improved capability for non-kinetic electronic attack options.

"I am very proud of the entire team in achieving this significant engineering milestone despite the complexities of pursuing such a demanding technological goal," said Ingrid Vaughan, vice president and general manager, navigation and maritime systems division, Northrop Grumman Mission Systems. "The relentless commitment of the U.S. Navy Program Executive Office Integrated Warfare Systems (PEO IWS) and Northrop Grumman team in developing this revolutionary electronic attack capability will dramatically assist our fleet in pacing

21st century threats.”

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# **General Dynamics Awarded F-35 Joint Strike Fighter IT Support Contract**

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) announced Jan 24 that it had been awarded the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) F-35 IT program support contract.

The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) awarded a task order against a previously issued General Services Administration, Government Wide Acquisition Alliant Contract to General Dynamics One Source, a joint venture between GDIT and General Dynamics Mission Systems. The contract holds an estimated ceiling value of \$155.6 million and includes a base period of two years with three one-year options.

GDIT will provide knowledge-based, information-assurance and cybersecurity IT services to the F-35 JSF Virtual Enterprise network in support of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office (JPO).

“We are excited to bring a full platform of next-generation services as the primary IT provider of the F-35 JPO,” said Senior Vice President Leigh Palmer, head of GDIT’s Defense Division. “Through GDIT’s impressive offerings, we will enable full scale technology solutions for the successful execution of the F-35 JPO.”

Through this contract, GDIT will provide a full range of IT

and cybersecurity services for the entire JSF Virtual Enterprise. These services will include program management, enterprise performance management, enterprise architecture, implementation of emerging capabilities and requirements, life cycle management, operations & maintenance, enterprise data management, service desk support and IT training.

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## **Marine Rifle Squads Get Upgraded Night Vision Devices**

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – An updated helmet-mounted night vision system is beginning to make its way to infantry units. Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) accelerated the acquisition of about 1,300 Squad Binocular Night Vision Goggles (SNBVG) using existing Defense Logistics Agency contracts, the command reported in a release.

“We have employed a bridge capability to give Marines the best gear right now available in the commercial marketplace,” said Lt. Col. Tim Hough, program manager for Infantry Weapons. “A final procurement solution will allow a larger pool of our industry partners to bid on the program.”

Army/Navy Portable Visual Search devices, or AN/PVS, have been employed by the military since at least the 1990s and upgraded with next-generation systems as funding and technology became available.

The move to the SNBVG is expected to enhance the infantry’s lethality and situational awareness in reduced visibility. It combines two systems: a binocular night vision device and an enhanced clip-on thermal imager.

"It's a little bit lighter than the current system, and gives Marines better depth perception when they are performing movements," said Joe Blackstone, Optics team lead at MCSC.

Marines took delivery of the equipment and learned how to use them in December at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Known as NET, the new equipment training entails teaching Marines about the operations, characteristics, maintenance and use of the new devices.

"With these new [BNVGs], having the ability to not only use thermal optics along with it, but just the entire depth perception and speed that we can operate in is going to significantly increase, as opposed to what we were able to do in the past," said Cpl. Zachary Zapata, a Marine who participated in the training.

The initial buy and follow-on procurement are being funded with Marine Corps dollars as prioritized by the Department of Defense Close Combat Lethality Task Force, which concentrates on the squad-level infantry and is aimed at ensuring close combat overmatch against pacing threats. The SBNVG acquisition strategy is to procure the devices incrementally and concurrently as the Corps looks toward future technologies.

"Right now, we are participating with the Army on their next generation night vision systems, both the Enhanced Night Vision Device-Binocular and Integrated Visual Augmentation System Programs," Hough said. "We are eager to see the maturation of these capabilities for adoption to improve the effectiveness of our Marines."

The program office plans on releasing a final request for proposals to procure an estimated 16,000 additional systems on the basis of full and open competition. According to program officials, a draft request for proposals was posted to the Federal Business Opportunities website in mid-November and closed on Dec. 19. The government is currently adjudicating

comments and anticipates release of a final request for proposals in the near future.

Additional fielding of the systems is planned for September. While the devices may eventually make their way to the entire Ground Combat Element (GCE), for now the first priority is given to the Marine Rifle Squad, program officials said.

“This program office is committed to bolstering the combat lethality, survivability, resilience and readiness of the GCE,” said Hough.

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## **Coast Guard Interdicts Migrants, Suspected Smuggler off Puerto Rico**

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard interdicted 29 migrants, and one suspected smuggler Jan. 22 following two separate at-sea interdictions, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Two of the interdicted migrants are facing potential federal criminal immigration charges in Puerto Rico for attempted illegal re-entry into the United States, one will be further investigated as a possible smuggler and the other 27 migrants were repatriated to the Dominican Republic, Jan. 23.

The interdiction resulted from ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“An outstanding coordination between the Coast Guard, CBP [Customs and Border Protection], FURA [Puerto Rico Joint

Forces of Rapid Reaction] and our other partner agencies was a critical component for our joint crews to safely complete both these interdictions,” said Cmdr. Luis Rodriguez, 7th District deputy chief of enforcement. “These partnerships are not only vital to our maritime border security but are instrumental in stopping these perilous voyages before they end in tragedy.”

On Jan. 22, a CBP Air and Marine Branch aircrew located a migrant vessel approximately 18 miles northeast of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Tezanos interdicted the vessel with 10 migrants.

A FURA Cobra unit interdicted 19 migrants, and one suspected smuggler Jan. 22, 4 miles west of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser embarked the 20 migrants.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

Joseph Tezanos and Winslow Griesser are 154-foot fast response cutters homeported in San Juan.

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## **Vigor Awarded Contract for Maintenance of Coast Guard Cutter Healy**

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard’s most technologically advanced polar icebreaker, Healy, arrived at Vigor’s shipyard in Seattle in early January for maintenance, the company announced in a release.

The \$7.3 million contract includes sea valve renewal and overhaul, bow thruster modifications, ballast tank and

underwater hull paint preservation and various machinery overhauls.

The Seattle-based vessel will be at Vigor's Harbor Island facility through June. Healy returned home at the end of November following a four-month deployment in the Arctic.

In addition to providing presence and access in the Arctic during the 129-day summer deployment, the Healy crew completed three research missions in partnership with the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Office of Naval Research, conducting physical and biological research in the Arctic Ocean.

Along with science operations, Healy is capable of conducting a range of Coast Guard operations such as search and rescue, ship escorts, environmental protection and the enforcement of laws and treaties in the polar regions. Healy provides access and presence throughout the Arctic region to protect U.S. maritime borders and to safeguard the maritime economy.

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## **Coast Guard Rescues 31 from Disabled Boat North of Bimini**

MIAMI – The Coast Guard rescued 31 Haitians from the disabled pleasure craft, Summer Art, Jan. 20 approximately 9 miles north of Bimini, Bahamas, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release.

At approximately 5 a.m., 7th Coast Guard District watchstanders received a report of a disabled vessel with 31 people aboard approximately 9 miles north of Bimini. Watchstanders authorized the launch of a Coast Guard Air

Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane crew and diverted the Cutter Bernard C. Webber crew to the scene. The Bernard Webber crew safely embarked all 31 people and transferred them to Freeport, Bahamas.

“Due to an approaching cold front, high seas and wind made this rescue extremely challenging,” said Cmdr. Jason Aleksak, chief of response at Coast Guard Sector Miami. “The responsiveness and professionalism of the crew of the Bernard C. Webber was remarkable and demonstrated our Coast Guard core value of devotion to duty.”

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## **VT Group Acquires National Technologies Associates Inc.**

CHANTILLY, Va. – VT Group announced in Jan. 22 release the acquisition of National Technologies Associates Inc. (NTA), a Patuxent River, Maryland-based firm specializing in program management, engineering and logistics services for military aviation platforms and systems.

Founded in 1981, NTA’s 300 employees provide research, development, test and evaluation support and a full spectrum of mission-critical maintenance and sustainment services for fixed and rotary-wing, tilt-rotor, and unmanned aircraft. The acquisition of NTA positions VT Group as a key industry partner to the Defense Department on several high-priority initiatives, including the U.S. Navy’s Presidential Helicopter and V-22 Osprey programs.

“NTA shares the VT Group passion for engineering excellence and our commitment to meet the critical needs of the warfighter,” said John Hassoun, VT Group president and CEO.

“This acquisition adds unique and differentiated expertise to VT Group’s aviation solutions portfolio. It will be a force-multiplier for our customers and a catalyst for further growth.”

Chief Growth Officer Sunil Ramchand added, “The acquisition of NTA is another important step on our journey to become the industry leader in the C4ISR modernization and sustainment market.”