

# SPAWAR Awards First IWRP Contract

CHARLESTON, S.C. – Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) Systems Center (SSC) Atlantic awarded the first prototype project agreement (PPA) under the Other Transaction Agreement (OTA) for the Information Warfare Research Project (IWRP) on Jan. 8 for \$1.3 million.

The focus of the prototype is for a new Low-Altitude Range Communication System (LARCS) for the U.S. Marine Corps.

The goal of the upgraded technology is to replace the current LARCS in order to meet the critical communication requirements for Marine training ranges. Once completed, the system is slated for installation at the Townsend Bombing Range at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina, where the LARCS will undergo testing and field user evaluation in the final operational environment and configuration.

“This first award is a significant milestone for the IWRP,” said Pete Reddy, SSC Atlantic deputy executive director. “This effort will not only provide inherent value to the project sponsor and warfighting capability, but it also validates and sets into motion the awesome capability that IWRP is for the SPAWAR enterprise and entire naval research and development establishment.”

The IWRP consortium utilizes white papers for prototype proposals versus the traditional acquisition request for proposal process. The LARCS prototype whitepaper was submitted Sept. 11, and from concept to award took the team only 119 days to accomplish.

“The IWRP enabled us to quickly make our way to a prototype award that will rapidly provide a new capability to the warfighter,” said John Larson, project lead and Enterprise

Systems and Services (ES2) team lead. "We learned a lot through collaboration with the IWRP consortium, and I anticipate that as IWRP matures it will only become quicker."

The combined efforts from the IWRP team, Advanced Technology International (ATI) and contracting were instrumental in both the speed of awarding the first project and ensuring the level of quality in the technology.

"We view the IWRP as a critical tool that will enable SSC Atlantic to achieve 'Pivot Speed' in rapidly responding to emerging business IT and warfighter needs," said Erik Gardner, E2S2 division head. "The IWRP, when combined with other tools, processes and environments, has proven to foster innovation and is a new way of thinking about our problems and their solutions."

The project was awarded to ATI on behalf of Booz Allen Hamilton in collaboration with Intuitive Research Technology Corp. (IRTC). A significant portion of the work will be performed by IRTC, a non-traditional defense contractor, and is scheduled to be completed in 10 months.

"The collaboration and teamwork on this process allowed for a prototype to be awarded which has potential for more advanced technologies at a cheaper cost and a faster timeline than was expected," said Don Sallee, SPAWAR IWRP program manager.

The management of the IWRP consortium was awarded by SPAWAR to ATI on June 26. The IWRP allows the use of an alternative acquisition process, called an OTA, that works to streamline acquisition processes, develop prototypes, and rapidly provide advanced technologies to the fleet. Since opening the consortium, membership has grown to 219 and approximately 81 white papers have been submitted for review to address potential information warfare needs.

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# USS Gerald R. Ford Accepts First Advanced Weapons Elevator

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The Navy’s newest aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), closed out 2018 on a high note with the acceptance of the ship’s first advanced weapons elevator (AWE), setting the tone for more positive developments in the year ahead, the ship’s public affairs department said in a release.

AWE Upper Stage No. 1 was turned over to the ship on Dec. 21 following testing and certification by engineers at Huntington Ingalls Industries-Newport News Shipbuilding, where the ship is currently working through its post-shakedown availability (PSA). The acceptance marks a major milestone for the ship and the Ford-class of aircraft carriers to follow.

USS Gerald R. Ford is the first Ford-class aircraft carrier and is the first new carrier design in over 40 years. Unlike Nimitz-class carrier elevators that utilize cables for movement, the Ford-class elevators are commanded via electromagnetic, linear synchronous motors, allowing for greater capacities and a faster movement of weapons.

The new design will allow the ship to be able to move up to 24,000 pounds of ordnance at 150 feet per minute. This is in contrast to the 10,500 pounds at up to 100 feet per minute on a Nimitz-class carrier.

“This will allow us to load more aircraft faster, and in the long run, increase our overall sortie generation rates,” said Lt. Cmdr. Chabonnie Alexander, Ford’s ordnance handling

officer.

But aside from the advantages of the new AWE, the new ship design also offered a chance to streamline the overall movement and assembly of weapons to allow for even greater efficiencies. Ford features three upper-stage elevators that move ordnance between the main deck and flight deck, and seven lower-stage elevators that move ordnance between the main deck and the lower levels of the ship. Ford also features a dedicated weapons handling area between the hangar bay and the flight deck that eliminates several horizontal and vertical movements to various staging and build-up locations. This ultimately offers a 75 percent reduction in distance traveled from magazine to aircraft.

An additional benefit of the ship's design is a separate utility elevator that can serve as a dedicated elevator to move both ordnance and supplies, and serve as a means to medically evacuate injured personnel from the flight deck to the hangar bay. This allows the 10 main AWEs and Ford's three aircraft elevators to be dedicated to their primary missions of ordnance and aircraft movement during real-world operations.

To keep up with the new technologies and radical changes that the AWEs offer, Ford Sailors recently completed newly developed familiarization, operations and maintenance training in Newport News to become better educated on how to work with and maintain the elevators. The

crew is now conducting hands-on training where they will validate technical manuals and maintenance requirements cards against the elevator's actual operation. Their feedback and observations will ultimately inform future Sailors how to properly and safely operate the elevators.

Alexander said Sailors are now training with the elevator, which will complement the classroom instruction they have

received to this point.

“Getting this elevator turned over to the ship and allowing our Sailors to get hands-on training on the elevator will help in two ways,” said Alexander. “One, it will help in the training and understanding of the system itself, and, two, to work out any bugs that remain with the system during our PSA.”

Though the first elevator has been accepted, work still remains on the remaining 10. Currently, all shipboard installation and testing activities of the AWEs are due to be completed prior to the end of Ford’s PSA, scheduled for July. However, some remaining certification documentation will be performed for five of the 11 elevators after PSA completion.

According to Alexander, while there was sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in having the first elevator turned over, the team working on the elevators can’t rest on this single event.

“We’re all 100 percent invested in this, but there’s still work left to do,” Alexander explained. “We’re all one big team with the same goal in mind: to get these systems operational and turned over to the ship.

“I think it was a greater sense of accomplishment to my Sailors that have been working on these systems for the last four to five years,” he said. “To be able to finally push the buttons and watch it operate like it’s designed to do was a great feeling. Once these systems are proven, they are going to pay huge dividends for naval strike capability.”

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# Effort Underway to Extend Service Life of Light Armored Vehicles

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – The fleet of Marine Corps Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs) will begin receiving a number of necessary upgrades under the terms of a \$37.2 million contract awarded Jan. 4. General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada will perform the work, which includes the procurement of 60 hardware kits in support of the Light Armored Vehicle Reset Program. The enhancements are designed to extend the service life of the LAV into the 2030s.

Embedded in their original design, LAVs combine speed, maneuverability and firepower to perform a variety of functions, including security, command and control, reconnaissance and assault. The first LAVs were initially fielded in 1983.

The reset effort will focus on five key areas:

- Modernized powerpack to improve reliability, cooling capacity and diagnostics with the added benefit of better fuel economy.
- New drive train which will improve towing capability.
- Steering dampener to improve road feel and usability.
- Digitized drivers' instrument panel.
- LAV 25 slip rings – doubling power supply capability to the turret and modernized to handle additional channels for gigabit Ethernet, video and fiber optics.

“The Marine Corps is committed to ensuring this platform remains viable into the 2030s,” said Steve Myers, LAV program

manager.

Active light armored reconnaissance battalions will be the first units to receive the upgraded vehicles, which will become LAV A3s.

The hardware kits will be installed at Marine Corps Depots, with initial operational capability targeted for the second quarter of fiscal 2021.

The contract was awarded through the Army Contracting Command in Warren, Michigan.

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## **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.”

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# 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.”

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## **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.”

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# **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 TA0-205-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.

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# **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.

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# 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 Stammenti, 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.”