First California-based Fast Response Cutter Commissioned in San Pedro

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – The Coast Guard commissioned the first California-based 154-foot fast response cutter (FRC) in San Pedro Nov. 8, the 11th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Forrest Rednour is the first of four Sentinel-class FRC to be homeported at Base Los Angeles-Long Beach. Three additional FRCs are scheduled to be commissioned by next summer. While these ships will be based in San Pedro, they will operate throughout the 11th District, which includes all of California and international waters off Mexico and Central America.

“This cutter is specifically designed to face today’s threats in the maritime domain,” said. Rear Adm. Peter Gautier, the 11th District commander. “This cutter is faster, goes further and can do more than any other Coast Guard patrol boat.”

FRC’s are 154-foot multimission ships designed to conduct drug and migrant interdictions; ports, waterways and coastal security operations; fisheries and environmental protection patrols; national defense missions; and search and rescue.

“This crew and I are truly honored and humbled to be assigned to serve as plank owners aboard this cutter named for a true Coast Guard hero,” said Lt. Graham Sherman, Forrest Rednour’s commanding officer.

To date, the Coast Guard has accepted delivery of 31 FRCs. Each ship is designed for a crew of 24, has a range of 2,500 miles and is equipped for patrols up to five days. The FRCs are part of the Coast Guard’s overall fleet modernization initiative.

FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, as well as over-the-horizon response boat deployment capability and improved habitability for the crew. The ships can reach speeds of 28 knots and are equipped to coordinate operations with partner agencies and long-range Coast Guard assets such as the national security cutters.

Construction Begins on Future USS Patrick Gallagher

BATH, Maine – The construction of the future USS Patrick Gallagher (DDG 127) is officially underway at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works (BIW) shipyard, Naval Sea Systems Command said in a Nov. 9 release.

The milestone was marked with a ceremony held in the shipyard's fabrication shop during which U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, made the initial cut to the first plate of steel for the ship. The ceremony was attended by BIW shipyard workers and Navy representatives.

The ship will honor Lance Cpl. Patrick Gallagher, Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and Navy Cross recipient. Gallagher was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on July 18, 1966, when he selflessly threw his body on an incoming grenade, shielding his fellow Marines. He quickly pitched the grenade to a nearby river where it safely exploded out of harm's way, without injury to himself or others. Gallagher was killed in action one year later in DaLoc near Da Nang on March 30, 1967. He is one of only 30 known Irish citizens to have died in the Vietnam conflict.

“It is exciting to commence construction on what will be the 77th ship of the Arleigh Burke class” said Capt. Casey Moton, DDG 51-class program manager, Program Executive Office Ships. “Not only will this ship continue the legacy of enduring warfighting capability, it will carry with it the strength and courage demonstrated by its namesake.”

DDG 127 will be the last Flight IIA configuration destroyer built by BIW. The ship will incorporate the AEGIS Baseline 9 Combat System which includes Integrated Air and Missile Defense capability. This system delivers quick reaction time, high firepower, and increased electronic countermeasures capability for anti-air Warfare.

BIW is currently in production on the future Arleigh Burke-class destroyers Daniel Inouye (DDG 118), Carl M. Levin (DDG 120), John Basilone (DDG 122) and Harvey C. Barnum Jr. (DDG 124), as well as the Zumwalt-class destroyer Lyndon B. Johnson (DDG 1002). BIW was also recently awarded a contract for the construction of four DDG 51 Flight III ships as part of the Navy’s fiscal 2018-22 multiyear procurement.

Future USS Michael Monsoor Departs Bath Shipyard for San Diego

BATH, Maine – The future USS Michael Monsoor (DDG 1001), the second ship in the Zumwalt-class of destroyers, departed General Dynamics’ Bath Iron Works (BIW) shipyard Nov. 9, Naval Sea Systems Command said in a release.

The guided missile destroyer is en route to California where

it is so scheduled to be commissioned in Coronado on Jan. 26, prior to commencing post-delivery availability and combat systems activation.

As the ship's departure coincides with Veterans Day weekend, the ship's crew will take time to reflect on the sacrifice of service members, such as Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor. DDG 1001 was named in honor of Monsoor, a U.S. Navy SEAL, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions while serving in Ramadi, Iraq.

As noted in the Medal of Honor citation, "by his undaunted courage, fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of certain death, Petty Officer Monsoor selflessly gave his life for his country, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and upholding the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

"Michael Monsoor was, in the words of his teammates, a big, tough frogman," said Capt. Scott M. Smith, commanding officer of PCU Michael Monsoor. "DDG 1001 is also big and tough – made that way by the skilled and dedicated workers and operators of Bath Iron Works. We are proud of our ship and our association with the City of Ships."

Zumwalt-class destroyers feature a state-of-the-art electric propulsion system, wave-piercing tumblehome hull, stealth design and are equipped with space and weight margins that will allow the ship to employ our most advanced warfighting technology. These ships will be capable of performing a range of deterrence, power projection, sea control, and command and control missions while allowing the Navy to evolve with new systems and missions.

"This formidable warship will be a lasting tribute to the ship's namesake. Petty Officer Monsoor's bravery and sacrifice will be reflected in the crew's dedication for generations to come," said Capt. Kevin Smith, DDG 1000 class program manager,

Program Executive Office Ships. “With the ship underway, we look forward to celebrating the ship’s commissioning with the Monsoor family and ship’s crew in the coming months.”

The Navy accepted hull, mechanical and electrical (HM&E) delivery of DDG 1001 from shipbuilder BIW on April 24. Zumwalt-class ships are delivered through a two-phase approach in which combat systems are installed and activated subsequent to HM&E delivery. Following commissioning, Michael Monsoor will begin combat systems activation, testing and trials.

Strategy Drives Undersea Warfare Programs

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy is working on greater integration of all aspects of undersea warfare, including strategic deterrence, attack submarines, unmanned undersea vehicles, seabed infrastructure and the surface and air anti-submarine assets, to ensure its investments and tactics all will contribute to a possible fight, the director of Undersea Warfare said Nov. 8.

“We are, no kidding, having the strategy drive the programs … to make sure we’re not buying things we don’t need to win the war,” Rear Adm. John Tammen told the Navy Submarine League’s annual symposium. The directions from the National Defense and National Security strategies are guiding an Integrated undersea investment strategy, he said.

A crucial focus of those investments is the modernization of the sea-based strategic deterrence with the Columbia ballistic-missile submarine to replace the current Ohio-class boomers.

“There really is no margin for Columbia,” to be on patrol by 2031, Tammen said, repeating a message heard earlier in the day from Vice Adm. Johnny Wolfe, director of Strategic Systems Programs. The ballistic-missile subs are “the only survivable component” of the strategic deterrence triad and provide 70 percent of the nuclear deterrent warheads, he said.

Keeping Columbia on schedule is critical because the Navy is extending the service life of the Ohios out to 42 years and “we’ve never taken a submarine out to 42 years.” To ensure the Ohio-class boats can remain operational for 42 years, the Navy stood up a study that will use the four early Ohios now serving as guided-missile subs as a test, he said.

They also will continue to modernize the Ohios to keep them relevant out to 42 years, Tammen said, using technology going into the new models of Virginia-class attack subs.

Tammen also discussed the little-known fact that the new Nuclear Posture Review said the sea-based strategic deterrence program would have “at least 12 Columbia” boats. It has been widely understood that the program called for only 12 of the new boomers.

Without going into any details, Tammen said “we’re going to keep the Columbia [production] line hot after the 12th boat, so if we need to build more than 12, we can.”

The limit on 12 Columbias is generally based on the number of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles allowed under the New Start arms control treaty with Russia.

Tammen put considerable focus on the efforts to develop a family of unmanned undersea vehicles noting that they have consolidated unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) programs into his N-97 office, while closely cooperating with Expeditionary Warfare (N-95), which plans to use unmanned underwater systems in its mine warfare missions.

“Every day we have conversations on how we can move faster with UUVs,” he said.

In apparent response to some criticism of the slower development of UUVs, compared the aerial or ground unmanned systems, Tammen said, “unmanned undersea vehicles are truly autonomous. There is no joystick [controller] and no lawyer standing behind the joystick.” And they “have to ensure we can get the data off of them, to make them relevant.”

Although the primary purpose of producing the Virginia Payload Modules was to increase the Tomahawk strike capabilities of the attack subs, Tammen said the modules also could launch smaller UUVs. And the Navy is looking at other weapons that could go into the modules as part of the increased focus on tactical warfare capabilities.

Looking ahead, Tammen said his office was working on designs for block 5, 6 and 7 Virginia-class subs, but after that “we get to a new SSN,” which will “put fast back into fast attack. Fast with stealth.”

Navy to Christen Expeditionary Fast Transport Puerto Rico

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy will christen its newest Expeditionary Fast Transport, the future USNS Puerto Rico (T-EPF 11), during a ceremony Nov. 10 at the Austal USA shipyard in Mobile, Alabama, the Defense Department said in a release.

The principal speaker is congresswoman Jenniffer González-

Colón, resident commissioner of Puerto Rico. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor will serve as the ship's sponsor. In a time-honored Navy tradition, she will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

"This ship honors the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the contributions Puerto Ricans have made to our nation and Navy and Marine Corps team," said Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer. "USNS Puerto Rico will provide our commanders high-speed sealift mobility and agility and I am thankful for this ship, her crew, and our industrial force teammates whose service makes this great ship possible."

The future USNS Puerto Rico will be the first active ship in naval service to honor the island in the West Indies east of Hispaniola. An Alaska-class cruiser named Puerto Rico was authorized July 19, 1940, but construction was canceled June 24, 1943.

With an all-aluminum shallow-draft hull, the EPF is a commercial-based catamaran capable of intra-theater personnel and cargo lift providing combatant commanders high-speed sealift mobility with inherent cargo handling capability and agility to achieve positional advantage over operational distances.

EPF-class ships are designed to transport 600 short tons of military cargo 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots. The ship is capable of operating in shallow-draft ports and waterways, interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, and on/off-loading a combat-loaded Abrams main battle tank (M1A2).

The EPF includes a flight deck for helicopter operations and an off-load ramp that will allow vehicles to quickly drive off the ship. EPF's shallow draft (under 15 feet) further enhances littoral operations and port access.

The EPF program delivered its ninth ship late last year, USNS

City of Bismarck (T-EPF 9), with delivery of USNS Burlington (EPF 10) planned for mid-November. Puerto Rico and Newport (EPF 12) are currently under construction at Austal's shipyard.

Sparton, Leidos Team on Mk5 Acoustic Device Countermeasure

DELEON SPRINGS, Fla. – Sparton Corp. has teamed with Leidos Maritime Systems to support the Acoustic Device Countermeasure (ADC) Mk5 program, Sparton said in a Nov. 6 release.

The Mk5 is a next-generation countermeasure intended to replace the ADC Mk3. The ADC Mk5 is a 3-inch diameter expendable device that is submarine launched from internal signal ejectors and is part of a submarine's defense against acoustic-homing torpedoes.

On Sept. 13, the U.S. Navy announced Leidos had been awarded the contract (valued up to $36.1 million) under a competitive solicitation. Sparton will contribute to the contract's scope of work, which includes the design, development, fabrication, integration, testing and low-rate initial production of the U.S. Navy's Mk5 program. Sparton will also provide manufacturing services to support system fabrication.

"Sparton is excited to leverage our knowledge of maritime acoustic communication systems, packaging, and deployment systems for this new opportunity", said Jim Lackemacher, group vice president of the Engineered Components & Products Segment. "Sparton looks forward to collaborating with Leidos

to bring this vital capability to the fleet.”

Coast Guard Returns 71 Migrants to the Dominican Republic Following At-Sea Interdictions

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard returned 71 of 81 interdicted migrants to law enforcement authorities in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, over the weekend following multiple at-sea interdictions off Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, the 7th District Coast Guard said in a Nov. 6 release.

Ten other migrants interdicted are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico for attempting to illegally re-enter a U.S. territory.

The interdictions were a result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group.

“Each vessel was grossly overloaded, which created an extremely dangerous and life-threatening situation for the people aboard,” said Cmdr. Christopher Douglas, chief of response for Coast Guard Sector San Juan. “The great coordination between the Coast Guard and our interagency partners prevented significant loss of life at sea.

“The Coast Guard and our local partners maintain a robust patrol presence in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean with both air

and surface assets, and any migrant interdicted at sea regardless of nationality will be repatriated back to their country of origin," he said.

During patrols from Oct. 31 through Nov. 2, aircrews with a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry maritime patrol aircraft detected three grossly overloaded, makeshift boats in international waters traveling illegally toward Puerto Rico. The Coast Guard Cutter Richard Dixon crew interdicted and safely embarked 16 migrants from one vessel on Oct. 31; 53 migrants from a second vessel on Nov. 1 with the help of Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations-Caribbean Air and Marine Branch crews; and 12 migrants from a third vessel on Nov. 2.

Dixon and Coast Guard Cutter Decisive returned the 71 migrants to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The 10 migrants facing prosecution were transferred to the custody of Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents in Puerto Rico.

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

Decisive is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola, Florida, while Richard Dixon is a 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan.

AeroVironment Awarded Puma AE UAS Contract for U.S. Indo-

Pacific Command Ally

MONROVIA, Calif. —AeroVironment Inc. has received a $3.2 million firm-fixed-price contract from the U.S. Department of Defense to provide RQ-20B Puma AE II small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), training and support to an allied nation in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) area of responsibility, the company announced in a Nov. 6 release. Delivery is anticipated by March 30.

“The vast, diverse landscape of the INDOPACOM area of operation demands small unmanned aircraft systems that can support ground, riverine and maritime operations effectively,” said Kirk Flittie, vice president and general manager of AeroVironment’s Unmanned Aircraft Systems business. “The combat-proven Puma has demonstrated its unique effectiveness in a wide range of operating environments, from mountains to deserts, from the Arctic to Antarctica, on land and on the open ocean, delivering actionable intelligence to help customers proceed with certainty.”

AeroVironment’s family of small drones comprise the majority of all unmanned aircraft in the U.S. Department of Defense inventory and its rapidly growing international customer base numbers more than 45 allied governments.

“This contract is a good example of the additional procurement potential among our international customers,” Flittie said.

The AeroVironment Puma is designed for land-based and maritime operations. Capable of landing in water or on the ground, the all-environment Puma, with its Mantis i45 sensor suite, empowers the operator with extended flight time and a level of imaging capability never before available in the small UAS class.

Navy EP-3 Intercepted Over the Black Sea

NAPLES, Italy – A U.S. EP-3 Aries aircraft flying in international airspace over the Black Sea was intercepted by a Russian SU-27 on Nov. 5, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

“This interaction was determined to be unsafe due to the SU-27 conducting a high-speed pass directly in front of the mission aircraft, which put our pilots and crew at risk,” the release said. “The intercepting SU-27 made an additional pass, closing with the EP-3 and applying its afterburner while conducting a banking turn away. The crew of the EP-3 reported turbulence following the first interaction, and vibrations from the second. The duration of the intercept was approximately 25 minutes.

“While the Russian military is within its right to exercise within international airspace, this interaction was irresponsible. We expect them to behave within international standards set to ensure safety and to prevent incidents, including the 1972 Agreement for the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas (INCSEA). Unsafe actions increase the risk of miscalculation and potential for midair collisions.

“The U.S. aircraft was operating in accordance with international law and did not provoke this Russian activity.”

Sikorsky Awarded Contract to Sustain Navy, Marine Super Stallion, Sea Dragon Helicopters

STRATFORD, Conn. – Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company, was awarded a performance-based logistics contract with a value of $717 million to provide supply and logistics support to the entire fleet of in-service CH-53E Super Stallions and MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopters, the company said in a Nov. 5 release.

The H-53E is a battle-proven heavy-lift helicopter continuing to support the U.S. Marine Corps and Navy in missions at home and around the world.

The scope of the contract includes repairs, overhauls, spares, obsolescence mitigation and asset management services over four years. Contract performance is based on material availability metrics with additional incentives added for demand reductions, maintainability enhancements and aircraft readiness contributions.

The expanded comprehensive arrangement will cover additional readiness-critical components, including main and tail rotor blades, main gearbox, main rotor head and flight control components, as well as accessories such as refueling probe and cargo system components.

“We expect the expanded performance-based logistics to measurably improve material availability and reduce support cost while increasing overall aircraft readiness,” said Pierre Garant, Sikorsky senior program manager, Marine Corps In-Service Programs. “Our support infrastructure and past performance-based logistics successes will result in Sikorsky continuing to reliably provide mission support critical to the

warfighter.”

As the Marine Corps’ heavy lift-helicopter designed for the transportation of heavy material and supplies, the CH-53E Super Stallion is compatible with most amphibious class ships. With four-and-one-half hours’ endurance, the helicopter can move heavy equipment over rugged terrain in bad weather and at night. The MH-53E Sea Dragon fills the Navy’s need for long-range minesweeping missions, in addition to heavy-lift duties. The H-53E has consistently proven its worth to the fleet commanders with its versatility and range.

The contract will provide the vital and affordable support to the entire fleet – expanding a reliable base of long-term sustainment as the aircraft continue to fully operate until the introduction of the replacement aircraft, the Sikorsky CH-53K King Stallion.