SAIC Advances Scalable Open-Architecture Counter-UAS Systems

From left to right: the vehicles are the Polaris MRZR, Polaris DAGOR, and the EOS Defense HMMWV, all of which are enabled by SAIC's CUAS. (SAIC photo)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. — SAIC's counter-unmanned aerial system (CUAS) concepts will be further tested in a June 2024 demonstration, a company official said. The company has two types of CUAS systems deployed and is in competition for two Department of the Navy programs.

"We're really excited about the [June] counter-swarm demo that we've been selected to participate in," said Greg Fortier,

SAIC's senior vice president for Army aviation, fires, and C2 in the Army business group, in an interview with Seapower.

SAIC, which has been developing CUAS systems for more than a decade, already has two CUAS systems fielded with U.S. agencies.

The company's Valkyrie CUAS System is "operational in a few parts of our country," Fortier said, with "[O]perational forces in the U.S. Army right now on a pilot type of effort. The predecessor of our system [the Medusa] is also active across the CENTCOM AOR [U.S. Central Command area of responsibility] in certain capacities, and that's mostly with the Department of the Air Force."

Fortier said that SAIC has "continued to evolve our solutions, continued to understand the different requirements from all of the services – frankly all of the agencies in our nation – and then really have driven for the past couple of years into a modular, 100% open system that is a scalable approach to meeting all the different threats within counter-UAS. That's not just in the all-domain warfighting imperative but it's also things like the border of the future as well as the general overall citizen experience for our country.

"SAIC is pivoting on five national imperatives: all-domain warfighting, undersea dominance, citizen experience, border of the future, and next-gen space. CUAS applies to four of the five across multiple agencies," he said. "The company has multiple lines of effort with these imperatives. We go at it in terms of four phases: detect, track, identify, and mitigate. There are multiple technologies that apply across the board—kinetic and non-kinetic solutions. Every customer, every requirement is a little bit different."

"It's all about our open architecture that allows us to integrate very quickly to any of the different modalities that support detect, identify, track, and mitigate," said Jeremy

Davidson, SAIC's counter-UAS lead, also speaking during the interview. "Multi-functional capability within each of those mission domains from detect to mitigate – including all of your different non-kinetic and kinetic modalities as well, including lasers, but also traditional small arms, rockets, ATM [air traffic management], drone interceptors, things like that.

"We bring all of the sensors that feed into that, from radars, to RF [radio frequency], to EW [electronic warfare], and of course the last one is the eye, which is identify where you get into your EO/IR [electro-optical/infrared] sensors," Davidson said.

"We are a tech-agnostic integrator," Fortier said. "We feel like we are a world-wide leader in technology agnostic integration. That makes our systems more powerful in that we can take multiple technologies as we've already done in the past couple of years, integrate and learn, understand, and then pass that along [and] make that connection among the multiple agencies within the United States."

He stresses that the company's integration of technology is not just with hardware but also with software, and that cost reduction and operational effectiveness are achieved through open architecture.

"When you have an open system, and you have an obsolete part, you can pull that part off, and if the technology or the threat changes, you can plug and play new technology at pennies on the dollar because you're not re-integrating or re-configurating an entire system," Fortier said.

SAIC continues to participate in multiple demonstrations for the Joint Capabilities Office and for the Department of Homeland Security on the border, he said.

"There are two offices right now in the Department of the Navy, both of which we are pursuing," Fortier. "We were down-

selected in one of those opportunities to continue in the competition, but that competition is still active.”

The two Department of the Navy competitions are the MADIS-CES (Marine Air Defense Integrated System-CUAS Engagement System) Lethality Upgrade and Marine Corps Installation CUAS.

SAIC has 25 partners and integrates more than 45 technologies. Most of its current integration work is performed in Huntsville, Alabama. The company has had discussions with foreign countries in Europe and elsewhere about its integration technology.

DOD Releases Fiscal Year 2023 Freedom of Navigation Report

TAIWAN STRAIT (May 8, 2024) The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Halsey (DDG 97) conducts routine underway operations while transiting through the Taiwan Strait, May 8. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Ismael Martinez)
From the Department of Defense, May 8, 2024

Today, the Department of Defense (DoD) released its annual Freedom of Navigation (FON) Report for Fiscal Year 2023. During the period from October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, U.S. forces operationally challenged 29 different excessive maritime claims advanced by 17 different claimants throughout the world.

Excessive maritime claims are inconsistent with international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. They include a variety of restrictions on the exercise of navigation and overflight rights and other freedoms and lawful uses of the seas. Unlawful maritime claims pose a threat to global mobility and commerce, as well as the legal foundation of the rules-based international order. If left unchallenged, excessive maritime claims could limit the rights and freedoms enjoyed by every nation.

DoD’s regular and routine operational challenges complement diplomatic engagements by the U.S. State Department and support the longstanding U.S. national interest in freedom of the seas worldwide.

Each year, DoD releases an unclassified FON Report summarizing the broad range of excessive maritime claims challenged by U.S. forces. It also includes general geographic information to describe the location of FON assertions. The summarized reports transparently demonstrate U.S. non-acquiescence to excessive maritime claims, while protecting the operational security of U.S. military forces.

The United States will uphold the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea for the benefit of all nations – and will stand with like-minded partners doing the same.

DoD FON Reports are available at http://policy.defense.gov/OUSDPOffices/FON.aspx.

SECDEF Announces Flag Officer Nominations

ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced May 9 that the president has made the following nominations:

Navy Vice Adm. John F. Wade for reappointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as commander, Third Fleet, San Diego, California. Wade most recently served as commander, Task Force Red Hill, Camp H.S. Smith, Hawaii.

Navy Rear Adm. Michael J. Vernazza for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as commander, Naval Information Forces, Suffolk, Virginia. Vernazza is currently serving as commander, Fleet Information Warfare Command Pacific/Information Warfare Task Force (TF-501), Pacific, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

US Coast Guard Cutter Eagle to Depart on Annual Summer

Cruise

(U.S. Coast Guard photo by Auxiliarist David Lau/Released)
From U.S. Coast Guard Academy, May 9, 2024

NEW LONDON, Conn. – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Eagle (WIX 327) is scheduled to depart Fort Trumbull in New London, Saturday, at 2:30 p.m. to begin the training vessel's annual summer cruise.

U.S. Coast Guard Academy cadets on board will have the unique and experiential learning opportunity of sailing aboard a tall ship, which provides them with their first introduction to life at sea and is a foundational experience in their leadership development journey toward becoming future officers in the Coast Guard. During the cruise, cadets take classes on numerous subjects that are key to life at sea, including navigation, seamanship, ship and boat maneuvering, line handling, sailing, first aid, weather patterns, damage control, engineering, career development, and more. They will

stand their first watch, and assist with setting, dousing, and trimming the sails, often requiring trainees to climb the rigging, and push themselves outside of their comfort zones.

While the primary mission is training the cadets, the ship also performs a public relations role for the Coast Guard and the United States, making calls at foreign ports as a goodwill ambassador. During this year's cruise, Eagle will leverage its unique ability to foster international relations with critical partners throughout the Americas.

During its 2024 deployment, Eagle will sail through the Caribbean Sea, visit South America, and make port of calls in the northern Atlantic Ocean.

Eagle's 2024 full summer schedule includes port visits to:

- May 11: Departs from New London
- May 25 – May 28: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- June 4 – June 7: Cartagena, Colombia
- June 14 – June 17: San Juan, Puerto Rico
- June 24 – June 27: Bridgetown, Barbados
- July 7 – July 10: Hamiliton, Bermuda
- July 18 – July 21: Halifax, Nova Scotia
- July 26 – July 29: Portsmouth, New Hampshire
- Aug. 2 – August 5: Rockland, Maine
- Aug. 9 – August 12: Boston, Massachusetts
- Aug. 16: Returns to New London

Eagle is scheduled to return to New London on Aug. 16.

Known as "America's Tall Ship," Eagle is a 295-foot, three-masted barque used as a training vessel for future officers of the United States Coast Guard. It is the largest tall ship flying the Stars and Stripes and the only active square-rigger in U.S. government service.

For continuous updates about Eagle to include port cities, tour schedules, current events, and photographs of cadets and active duty crew members, you can follow the cutter's Facebook page here and Instagram feed here.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit GoCoastGuard.com to learn about active duty, reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found here.

Coast Guard Holds Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for New Station in Fort Myers

The Coast Guard held a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the

official opening of the new Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Beach facility, March 13, 2024, in Fort Myers. Station Fort Myers Beach and Coast Guard Cutter Crocodile crews will utilize the new three-story building. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Santiago Gomez)
From Public Affairs Detachment Tampa Bay, March 13, 2024

CLEARWATER, Fla. – The Coast Guard held a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Wednesday, marking the official opening of the new Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Beach facility.

Rear Adm. Amy Grable, assistant commandant, Engineering and Logistics, presided over the ceremony.

Station Fort Myers Beach and Coast Guard Cutter Crocodile crews will utilize the new three-story building.

The building was set to be completed one year prior, but was delayed due to hurricane damage in 2021 and consists of berthing rooms, a galley, training rooms and a fitness room.

Station Fort Myers Beach is a multi-mission station capable of conducting search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime security, environmental protection operations and migrant operations from Boca Grande Pass to Rabbit Key.

The station has a crew size of about 60 members and their assets include two 45-foot Response Boat–Medium and two 29-foot Response Boat–Smalls.

The cutter Crocodile’s missions include combating drug smuggling, illegal immigration, ports, waterways and coastal security, marine fisheries enforcement and search and rescue support.

“It is an honor and a privilege to accept this new multi-mission facility on behalf of Coast Guard Station Fort Myers Beach and Coast Guard Cutter Crocodile,” said Chief Warrant Officer Christopher C. Cone, commanding officer, Station Fort Myers Beach. ”This new facility will allow Coast Guard crews

to continue mission support and operational excellence throughout the Southwest Florida coastline.”

SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Nuclear-Powered Attack Submarine USS Miami with Gloria Estefan as Sponsor

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that future Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarine SSN 811 will be named USS Miami. Secretary Del Toro made the announcement, May 7, during the official kickoff concert of the inaugural Fleet Week Miami, hosted by Blue Star Families. Along with the ship’s name, Secretary Del Toro announced that international

pop star Gloria Estefan will be the sponsor for the future USS Miami. In her role, Gloria Estefan will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 William Bennett IV)
From SECNAV Public Affairs, May 7, 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that future Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarine SSN 811 will be named USS Miami. Secretary Del Toro made the announcement, May 7, during the official kickoff concert of the inaugural Fleet Week Miami, hosted by Blue Star Families.

The future USS Miami honors the city of Miami and the crews of three previously Navy vessels to bear the name.

“That shared history is what makes Miami one of the greatest cities on Earth—and emblematic of what makes this country the greatest country in the world,” said Del Toro. “Miami is a shining example of what happens when a city welcomes all who come seeking a better life.”

Along with the ship’s name, Secretary Del Toro announced that international pop star Gloria Estefan will be the sponsor for the future USS Miami. In her role, Gloria Estefan will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

“We are so thankful as citizens of this great country to have all of you out there protecting and serving all of us,” Gloria Estefan said to the approximately 1,500 Sailors and Marines attending the kickoff concert, produced by entertainment icon Emilio Estefan.

The city of Miami has been honored with three previous vessels: a gunboat (1862-1865), a light cruiser (1942-1947), and a nuclear-powered submarine (1990-2014).

In June 1862, the first Miami engaged enemy forces at a rapid fire while Flag Officer David G. Farragut’s ships ran past Confederate shore batteries at Vicksburg, Mississippi. In

1864, the Gunboat's crew supported Union troops ashore and battled Confederate ironclad Albemarle at Plymouth, NC..

At the Battle of Leyte Gulf during World War II, the second Miami (CL 89) fought as part of Admiral William F. Halsey's Third Fleet, helping to sink Japanese destroyer Nowaki on October 26, 1944. Two seaplane pilots operating from Miamireceived the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing downed airmen in enemy waters. Miamiearned a total of 6 battle stars for operations in the Marianas, Western Caroline Islands, Leyte Gulf, Luzon, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

The third Miami (SSN 755) conducted cruise missile strikes during Operation Desert Fox in 1998 and again during Operation Allied Force in 1999.

Attack submarines are designed to seek and destroy enemy submarines and surface ships; project power ashore with Tomahawk cruise missiles and Special Operation Forces (SOF); carry out Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions; support battle group operations; and engage in mine warfare.

Miami also has a maritime connection. The greater Miami region was formerly home to a seaplane base (1918-1920), a naval reserve air base (1931-1942), and a naval air station (1940-1958). United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has been headquartered in Miami-Dade County since 1997.

More information on attack submarines can be found here.

Read Secretary Del Toro's full remarks online.

U.S. Navy Accepts Delivery of USNS Earl Warren

USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207) during a testing event. (U.S. Navy photo)

By Team Ships Public Affairs, May 7, 2024

SAN DIEGO – John Lewis-class fleet replenishment oiler, USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207) was delivered to the Navy, May 7.

Delivery follows the successful completion of Integrated Sea Trials to test the readiness and capability of the ship and to validate requirements.

“Delivery of the third ship in the class will bring more refueling capability directly to the fleet, including replenishment underway capacity,” said John Lighthammer, program manager, Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office. “The civilian mariners who crew this ship will have the tools they need to operate in often rapidly changing environments.”

The John Lewis-class ships are based on commercial design standards and will recapitalize the current T-AO 187-class

fleet replenishment oilers to provide underway replenishment of fuel to U.S. Navy ships at sea. These ships are part of the Navy’s Combat Logistics Force.

General Dynamics NASSCO, the shipbuilder, is also in production on future T-AOs USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208), USNS Lucy Stone (T-AO 209) and USNS Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210). Future TAOs USNS Thurgood Marshall (T-AO 211), USNS Ruth Bader Ginsburg (T-AO 212), and USNS Harriet Tubman (T-AO 213) are under contract.

As one of the Defense Department’s largest acquisition organizations, Program Executive Office Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, auxiliary ships, special mission ships, sealift ships and support ships.

May 7 Central Command Update

RED SEA (April 10, 2024) An aviation machinist’s mate signals to an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter tfrom Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 74 aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gravely (DDG 107) in the Red Sea, April 10, 2024. (Official U.S. Navy photo)
U.S. Central Command, May 07, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – Between approximately 11:02 p.m. and 11:48 p.m. (Sanaa time) on May 6, Iranian-backed Houthi terrorists launched three uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) over the Gulf of Aden from Houthi controlled areas in Yemen. A coalition ship successfully engaged one UAS, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully engaged the second UAS, and the final UAS crashed in the Gulf of Aden. There were no injuries or damages reported by U.S., coalition, or merchant vessels.

Later, at approximately 5:02 a.m. (Sanaa time) on May 7, Iran-backed Houthi terrorists launched an anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) over the Gulf of Aden. There were no injuries or damages reported by U.S., coalition, or merchant vessels.

It was determined that these weapons presented an imminent threat to both coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region. These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

Floating Piers, Cargo Ship With Aid for Gaza Face Weather Delays

MEDITERRANEAN SEA (April 26, 2024) U.S. military personnel work on construction of the floating Joint Logistics Over the Sea (JLOTS) pier in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of the Gaza Strip, April 26, 2024. The pier will support the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. (U.S. Navy photo)

May 7, 2024 | By C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

Construction of the Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore, or JLOTS, system on the Mediterranean Sea, which will streamline delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, is now complete, the deputy Pentagon press secretary said today.

“The U.S. military has completed the offshore construction of the Trident pier section, or ‘the causeway,’ which is the component that will eventually be anchored to the Gaza shore,” said Sabrina Singh during a briefing today. “As I mentioned last week, construction of the floating pier section has also been completed. So as of today, the construction of the two portions of the JLOTS — the floating pier and the Trident pier — are complete and awaiting final movement offshore.”

At the same time, she said, the cargo ship MV Sagamore is at port in Cyprus being loaded with humanitarian aid supplies bound for Gaza.

“The Sagamore is a cargo vessel that will use the JLOTS system and will make trips between Cyprus and the offshore floating pier as USAID and other partners collect aid from around the world,” she said.

Singh explained that the Sagamore, a commercial ship registered in the U.S., will be loaded with humanitarian aid in Cyprus and will then travel from Cyprus to a temporary floating pier several miles off the coast of Gaza. There, at sea, cargo will be unloaded from the Sagamore onto trucks that are onboard Army-owned landing craft utility ships, or LCUs, and logistic support vessels, or LSVs.

The Army ships will then travel toward Gaza where they will meet up with the Trident pier. There, the trucks onboard the LCUs and LSVs will drive onto the pier and onto the shore of Gaza where the humanitarian aid supplies can then be staged for delivery inside Gaza.

It’s expected that initially about 90 truckloads of supplies will transit the causeway each day and make their way into Gaza. When the operation reaches full capacity, as many as 150 trucks will make their way into Gaza daily.

“I think what you’re going to see at the very beginning is a ‘crawl, walk, run’ scenario,” Singh said. “We’re going to start with an additional small amount of aid trucks to flow in to make sure that the system works, that the distribution works, and then you’ll see that increase … when we get to full operational capacity.”

While the JLOTS system may eventually deliver substantial capacity, Singh said it’s neither the only way nor the best way to get much-needed supplies into Gaza.

“The best way through those land routes, and we do want to see those opened up,” she said. “We do want to see aid continue to flow in through those land crossings. This is just one It’s meant to help augment, to help complement, other ways that aid can get in.”

The Gaza Strip, which is about 25 miles long, lies entirely inside Israel and shares a border to the south with Egypt. There are three locations along its border where humanitarian supplies could move into Gaza from either Egypt or Israel. Those locations include the Erez crossing in northern Gaza and the Kerem Shalom crossing in southern Gaza. Both of those crossings connect Gaza to Israel. The Rafah crossing is on the Gaza border with Egypt.

Since March 2, U.S. Central Command, in coordination with the Royal Jordanian Air Force, has carried out nearly 40 humanitarian missions to airdrop nearly 1,200 tons of humanitarian assistance into Gaza.

While the JLOTS construction is now complete, that capability has not yet been deployed due to weather conditions, Singh said. Right now, the two piers are floating on the

Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Israel near the Port of Ashdod – about 18 miles north of Gaza. Weather conditions, Singh said, prevent moving either of them to their final location.

“Late last week, Centcom temporarily paused moving the floating pier and Trident pier toward the vicinity of Gaza due to sea state considerations,” she said. “Today there are still forecasted high winds and high sea swells, which are causing unsafe conditions for the JLOTS components to be moved.”

ULA Signs Agreements with Bollinger Shipyards and Bristol Harbor Group Inc. to Design and Build New Ship to Carry Vulcan Rockets

Centennial, Colo., May 8, 2024 – ULA announced that it has signed agreements with Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana and Bristol Harbor Group, Inc. in Bristol, Rhode Island, to design, oversee and build a new ship to transport Vulcan rockets from the factory in Decatur, Alabama to the launch sites at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida and Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.

“We are pleased to be partnering with two of the best companies in the business to build our second transportation ship,” said Chris Ellerhorst, ULA’s vice president of the Kuiper Program. “Over the next year, ULA will be doubling its launch rate capacity in support of our Amazon customer and to ensure timely deliveries of the rockets to the launch site, we needed to build a second ship to support our transportation needs.”

ULA awarded Bollinger Shipyards a contract to build a second

roll-on/roll-off vessel classed for both ocean-going and river service. Construction has just begun on the 356-ft-long ship at Bollinger's shipyard located in Amelia, Louisiana with delivery to ULA expected in January 2026.

"We're proud to continue our partnership with ULA in support of their increasing capabilities and launch capacity," said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. "Bollinger's skilled workforce is second to none when it comes to designing, engineering and building complex vessels to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, and we look forward to beginning work on SpaceShip to ensure delivery of Vulcan rockets from the factory to the launch pad."

"ULA currently has its first ship called RocketShip that has been in service for decades and with this second ship called SpaceShip our maritime fleet will enable enterprise transportation capacity of four Vulcan launch vehicles across two voyages to either the East or West Coast," said Ellerhorst.

In addition, ULA has also hired Bristol Harbor Group, Inc., a well-respected naval architecture and marine engineering firm to oversee the design and build phases of the project with Bollinger.

Vulcan is ULA's next generation rocket, and it saw its successful inaugural launch in January 2024. Vulcan will provide high performance and affordability while continuing to deliver superior reliability and orbital precision for all our customers across the national security, civil and commercial markets.

For Amazon, ULA's new Vulcan rocket is contracted for 38 launches to support the majority of the deployment for the Project Kuiper constellation, which will provide fast, affordable broadband service to unserved and underserved

communities around the world.

All rockets are not created equal. ULA is the nation’s most experienced, reliable and accurate launch service provider delivering unmatched value, a tireless drive to improve, and commitment to the extraordinary. Vulcan’s inaugural launch marked the beginning of a new era of space capabilities and provides higher performance and greater affordability while offering the world’s only high energy architecture rocket to deliver any payload, at any time, to any orbit.