

Navy to Christen Future Expeditionary Sea Base USS Robert E. Simanek

From the Chief of Information, 3 May 2024

The Navy will christen the future USS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7) as the newest Expeditionary Sea Base ship (ESB) during a 9:00 a.m. PST ceremony on Saturday, May 4, in San Diego, California.

The christening ceremony's principal address will be delivered by the Honorable Sean Coffey, General Counsel of the Navy. Remarks will also be provided by the Honorable Scott Peters, U.S. Representative, California's 50th District; Master Chief Britt Slabinski, President of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and Medal of Honor Recipient; Vice Admiral Yvette Davids, Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy; Brigadier General Robert Weiler, Assistant Division Commander, First Marine Division; and Mr. David Carver, President of General Dynamics NASSCO. The ship's sponsor is Ann Simanek Clark, Private first class Simanek's daughter.

The first of its name, the ship honors United States Marine Corps Private First Class Robert E. Simanek, Ret., who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Korean War at Outpost Irene, Korea. Pfc. Simanek was presented the Medal of Honor by President Eisenhower on October 27, 1953.

The future USS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7) is a highly flexible platform used across various military operations. When commissioned, the ship will be employed as a mobile sea-based asset. It will be a part of the critical access infrastructure supporting the deployment of forces, equipment, supplies, and warfighting capability. Specifically, ESB 7 will support

missions such as Mine Countermeasures, Special Operations, Unmanned Aircraft Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Counter-Piracy, Humanitarian Aid, and Crisis Response.

General Dynamics NASSCO built and delivered the following ships to the fleet: USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1), USNS John Glenn (T-ESD 2), USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4), USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5), and USS John L. Canley (ESB 6). Follow-on ship Hector A. Cafferata Jr. (ESB 8) is under construction.

Navy Announces Flag Officer Assignments

MAY 3, 2024

The secretary of the Navy and chief of naval operations announced May 3 the following assignments:

Rear Adm. Heidi K. Berg will be assigned as deputy commander, Navy Space Command; and deputy commander, Fleet Cyber Command, Fort Meade, Maryland. Berg is currently serving as assistant deputy chief of naval operations for Operations, Plans, and Strategy, N3/N5B, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Rear Adm. Nicholas M. Homan will be assigned as deputy director, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Operations; and director, Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Operations Center, J-3, Joint Staff, Fort Meade, Maryland. Homan is currently serving as director, J-2, U.S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

Rear Adm. Kevin P. Lenox will be assigned as director, J5, U.S. Cyber Command, Fort Meade, Maryland. Lenox is currently serving as commander, Carrier Strike Group Three, Bremerton, Washington.

Rear Adm. Darryl L. Walker will be assigned as president, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. Walker is currently serving as commander, Combined Joint Task Force, Cyber, Tenth Fleet, Fort Meade, Maryland.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Benjamin R. Nicholson, selected for promotion to rear admiral, will be assigned as assistant deputy chief of naval operations for Operations, Plans, and Strategy, N3/N5B, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C. Nicholson is currently serving as commander, Expeditionary Strike Group Two, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Kristen Acquavella will be assigned as commander, Naval Supply Systems Command Weapons Systems Support, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Acquavella is currently serving as director, Logistics, Fleet Supply and Ordnance, N4, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Eric J. Anduze will be assigned as deputy director for Joint Training, Joint Staff, Suffolk, Virginia. Anduze is currently serving as deputy commander, Combined Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa, Djibouti, Africa.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Kurtis A. Mole will be assigned as deputy commander, Joint Forces Headquarters-Cyber (Navy); and deputy commander, Fleet Cyber Command, Fort Meade, Maryland. Mole is currently serving as deputy commander, Tenth Fleet, Fort Meade, Maryland.

Capt. Kevin J. Brown, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as commander, Naval Medical Forces Atlantic, with additional duties as director, Tidewater Market/chief of Medical Service Corps, Portsmouth, Virginia.

Brown is currently serving as commanding officer, Navy Medical Readiness and Training Command/Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Capt. Todd F. Camicata, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as commander, Logistics Group, Western Pacific; and commander, Task Force Seven Three, Singapore. Camicata is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Air Forces/Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, San Diego, California.

Capt. Jorge R. Cuadros, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Atlantic; and director, Fleet Installations and Environmental Division (N46), U.S. Fleet Forces Command, with additional duties as fleet civil engineer (N01CE), U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia. Cuadros is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command, Washington, D.C.

Capt. Marcos A. Jasso, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as deputy director, Plans, U.S. Space Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. Jasso is currently serving as director for Operations, N3, Maritime Operations Center, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Capt. Cassidy C. Norman, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as director, Joint/Fleet Operations, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia. Norman is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Air Force Atlantic, Norfolk, Virginia.

30 Injured in LCAC Incident During Training



An LCAC departs the well deck of a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jesse Turner)

02 May 2024

From Commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet, Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. – On the evening of May 1, an incident occurred involving two landing craft, air cushions (LCAC) from USS Wasp (LHD 1) and USS New York (LPD 21) off the coast of Jacksonville, Fla.

30 Sailors and Marines were injured. Five Sailors were medically evacuated for further care at Savannah Memorial University Medical Center. Four of the five Sailors have been released from the hospital after treatment. One Sailor remains under medical care and is being assessed for further

treatment.

Sailors and Marines with minor injuries were treated aboard Wasp and New York.

Sailors and Marines assigned to the Wasp Amphibious Ready Group and 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) were conducting a training exercise when the incident occurred.

The recovery and investigation processes are ongoing, and more information will be provided by U.S. 2nd Fleet once available. For any inquiries, contact c2f_pao@us.navy.mil.

May 2 Red Sea Update

From U.S. Central Command, May 2, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – At approximately 2:00 p.m. (Sanaa time) on May 2, 2024, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully engaged and destroyed three uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) in an Iranian-backed Houthi controlled area of Yemen.

It was determined these systems presented an imminent threat to U.S., 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.

Navy's Triton UAV to Provide Targeting for LRASM



MQ-4C Triton | Credit: Northrop Grumman

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – An upgrade to the U.S. Navy's MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial vehicle will enable it to provide targeting for the AGM-158 Long-Range Anti-ship Missile (LRASM), senior Navy officials said.

In a May 1, 2024, Nickolas H. Guertin, assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition; Vice Admiral James Pitts, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities; and Lieutenant General Karsten S. Heckl, deputy commandant for Combat Development and Integration and Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, testified before the Subcommittee on Seapower of the Senate Armed Services

Committee. A written joint statement was submitted for the record and provided some detail on the planned MQ-4C upgrades.

“The MQ-4 program is meeting schedule objectives, completing Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in July 2023 with its first orbit stand up in INDOPACOM [U.S. Indo-Pacific Command,” the statement said. “The Program is currently in the process of standing up its remaining two operational orbits in EUCOM [U.S. European Command] and CENTCOM [U.S. Central Command], scheduled for Q2FY24 and Q1FY25 respectively.”

The MQ-4C, built by Northrop Grumman, is now deployed to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam and Naval Air Station Sigonella in Sicily. The site of the future CENTCOM deployment has not been announced.

“The MQ-4 will undergo continuous spiral upgrades throughout the next four years, to include Link-16 targeting with LRASM in 2024 culminating in Full Operational Capability in FY28 enabling near-24/7 ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] coverage in simultaneous theaters of operation,” the statement said.

The LRASM, built by Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, is designed to be deployed on Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighters and P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, as well as Air Force B-1B Lancer bombers.

As noted in a May 1 Defense Department contract announcement, the Navy awarded Lockheed Martin a \$288 million contract modification to support development of the AGM-158C-3, an extended-range version of the LRASM. The C-3 version would include “advanced communications and survivability capabilities while supporting maritime strike missions for the Navy,” the announcement said.

SECNAV Names Future America-class Amphibious Assault Ship USS Helmand Province



From SECNAV Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that a future America-class amphibious assault ship will be named USS Helmand Province (LHA 10). Secretary Del Toro made the announcement, today, during the final day of Modern Day Marine 2024 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

The future USS Helmand Province commemorates the multiple U.S. Marine Corps operations that took place in Afghanistan's

Helmand Province as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The name selection follows the tradition of naming amphibious assault ships after U.S. Marine Corps battles, early U.S. sailing ships, or legacy names of earlier carriers from World War II. Secretary Del Toro named LHA 9, the future USS Fallujah, in 2022.

“In keeping with naval tradition of naming our Navy’s amphibious assault ships after U.S. Marine Corps battles, I am honored to announce today that the future LHA-10 will be named USS Helmand Province,” said Secretary Del Toro. “Recognizing the bravery and sacrifice of our Marines and Sailors who fought for almost 20 years in the mountains of Afghanistan.”

Initiating the first U.S. ground offensive of OEF, on Oct. 19, 2001, helicopters launched from USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) lifted Task Force Sword (FT-11) to Objective Rhino, a remote airstrip in Helmand Province. Following the airstrip’s seizure, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived on Nov. 25, 2001 to establish Camp Rhino. It was one of the longest ship-to-shore amphibious operations in history. Elements of the 26th MEU (Special Operations Command) subsequently reinforced the 15th MEU on Dec. 4, 2001. Afterward, Marine presence in Helmand remained constant, though minimal. On April 29, 2008, the 24th MEU stormed Taliban-held Garmser, then staged into southern Helmand on June 1, 2008. With allied support, the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade launched Operation Strike of the Sword on July 2, 2009. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines later conducted operation Sangin Moshtrarak Naweed in May 2012. This was one of OEF’s largest air assault operations. By 2013, with relative regional stability secured, Marines trained Afghan forces to maintain security in advance of the late 2014 drawdown.

“For Marines, Helmand Province is a place of bittersweet memories,” said Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Eric M. Smith. “An entire generation of Marines wrote another chapter

in the storied history of our Corps there, as warriors, but also as peacebuilders. Their legacy is defined by the spirit they embodied and the lives they touched. I look forward to the day when the USS Helmand Province will steam forward and carry Marines on their way to write new chapters—in peace, and if called, in war.”

Along with the ship’s name, Secretary Del Toro announced the sponsor for the future USS Helmand Province as Mrs. Trish Smith, the spouse of Gen. Smith. She is an active volunteer for Marine Corps programs, including the Cornerstone Program, and Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (LINKS) program. She is an advocate and mentor for military families. In her role as sponsor, Trish Smith will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

“Sponsoring the USS Helmand Province is an honor beyond words,” said Trish Smith. “I am looking forward to a lifelong relationship with the ship’s leaders, but more importantly, with the generations of Marines, Sailors, and their families that she will carry abroad. Together, we will forever carry the memories of those who served in Helmand.”

During his remarks, Secretary Del Toro reiterated that Marines on naval vessels, such as the future USS Helmand Province, are building relationships with our allies and partners in support of integrated deterrence. The Marine Corps remains focused on modernizing to fight and win against current and future threats in any clime and place.

“The work we ask our Marines and Sailors to do every day is anything but ordinary or routine, and in many cases extremely dangerous. It is incumbent upon all of us, including government and industry, to leverage every resource at our disposal to ensure our Marines have what they need to be successful in their assigned missions and return home safely to their loved ones,” said Secretary Del Toro.

America-class amphibious assault ships are designed to support Marine Corps Operational Maneuver From the Sea and Ship to Objective Maneuvers. The America-class ships replaced all of the decommissioned Tarawa-class LHAs and are now optimized for aviation ability, accommodating the Marine Corps' future Air Combat Element while adding additional aviation maintenance capabilities and increasing fuel capacities, and extra cargo storage. With the unique inherent powers of the amphibious assault ships, they are often called upon to also support humanitarian and other contingency missions upon short notice.

More information on amphibious assault ships can be found [here](#).

Modern Day Marine is an annual trade show and exposition which showcases the latest innovations and technologies in military equipment, weapons, and gear and is primarily aimed at U.S. Marines and defense industry representatives. The show provides a forum for Marine Corps leaders to collaborate with our industry partners, Congressional stakeholders, and Department of Defense leadership on current and future initiatives. Engagements during the expo are intended to reinforce existing programs and priorities and set conditions for future initiatives.

**KONGSBERG turret delivers
firepower to U.S. Marine**

Corps' ACV-30



From Kongsberg Aerospace & Defense, April 30, 2024

A new Amphibious Combat Vehicle that is undergoing testing by the U.S. Marine Corps includes a PROTECTOR remote turret (RT-20) from Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace.

BAE Systems delivered the first production representative test vehicle (PRTV) of the new Amphibious Combat Vehicle 30mm Cannon (ACV-30) to the customer earlier this year. ACV-30 is the third variant in the ACV family of vehicles designed, developed, and built since BAE Systems was selected as the prime contractor for the program in 2018.

“We are proud to be working with BAE Systems and partners on a vehicle and weapon system that will increase the USMC firepower and the capacity to the Marines. The PROTECTOR RT-20 is a modern remotely operated turret with highly accurate firepower for wheeled, tracked, and robotic combat vehicles.

The modularity and digitalization of the system has growth potential to incorporate new technologies to deter and defeat future threats,” said Jørgen Bull, Vice President, land systems at Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace.

The vehicle mounts a stabilized, medium caliber Remote Turret System manufactured by KONGSBERG that provides the lethality and protection Marines need while leaving ample room for troop capacity and payload while keeping the crew under armor.

The remote turret eliminates the space requirement of legacy turreted cannon systems and provides more room to transport troops and associated mission essential equipment and reduces weight for better mobility.

BAE Systems’ customizable ACV variants provide true open-ocean and ship-to-objective capability, land mobility, survivability, and growth potential to meet the evolving operational needs of Marines around the world.

“Delivering capability like the ACV-30 to the U.S. Marine Corps remains critical in the ever-changing battle space,” said Garrett Lacaillade, vice president of the amphibious vehicles product line for BAE Systems. “The collaboration we have with Kongsberg on this PRTV enables our customer to see and test a modern and lethal firepower technology on the battlefield.”

Kaman’s KARGO UAV Makes First Flight



From Kaman Air Vehicles

BLOOMFIELD, Conn. – (BUSINESS WIRE)—April 30, 2024—Kaman Corporation proudly announces the significant achievement of the first flight of the full-scale KARGO UAV, a purpose-built, autonomous, expeditionary resupply vehicle. This milestone, which took place in December of 2023, signifies a major accomplishment in the ongoing flight test progression. The development of this medium-lift UAS, initiated in 2021 to address logistics needs for U. S. Marine Corps operations, is now well underway.

“It is difficult to describe the sense of satisfaction one feels when watching an aircraft take flight for the first time, and very few people get the opportunity to participate in something like this,” said Romin Dasmalchi, General Manager of KARGO UAV. “This team worked hard to get here, and the intensity continues as we look to move from prototyping to production,” he added. KARGO UAV is intended to support the U. S. Military, partners, allies, and commercial customers by providing affordable, reliable, and maintainable logistics

support in austere and maritime environments. The design leverages existing high-TRL components so that a suitable system could be deployed as soon as 2026.

Contributions from partners significantly aided the success of the KARGO UAV flight test. Near Earth Autonomy, Kaman's partner for the autonomy system based in Pittsburgh, PA, provided autonomy features on the KARGO UAV. The two companies had previously collaborated on the K-MAX unmanned system and had showcased an earlier version of the autonomy technology to the Marines in April 2021. The Alaska Center for UAS Integration, part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute, was key in facilitating KARGO UAV flight test operations.

KARGO UAV is currently competing under the Marines' Medium Autonomous Resupply Vehicle–Expeditionary Logistics (MARV-EL) program, which is managed by NAVAIR PMA-263 and culminates in a fly-off in July of this year.

April 30 Red Sea Update

From U.S. Central Command

April 30, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – At approximately [1:52](#) p.m. (Sanaa time) on April 30, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully engaged and destroyed an uncrewed surface vessel (USV) in Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas of Yemen.

It was determined the USV presented an imminent threat to U.S., 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.

Temporary Pier in Gaza on Track to Be Operational in May



Pier-building begins Construction of the floating JL0TS pier in the Mediterranean is underway. The pier will support USAID and humanitarian partners to receive and deliver humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. U.S. Transportation Command and U.S. European Command support the movement of humanitarian aid. (Courtesy Photo)

April 29, 2024 | By Matthew Olay, DoD News

A temporary pier the Defense Department is constructing off the Gazan coast to deliver humanitarian aid is on track to establish initial operations soon, the Pentagon announced today.

"We're scheduled on track to meet our goal of early May," said Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh during a news media gathering.

DOD originally announced its mission to construct the Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore, or JLOTS, capability on [March 8](#), with a goal of beginning initial delivery operations about 60 days from that date.

DOD officials announced on [April 25](#) that construction of the pier had begun, and recent satellite imagery from Gaza's coastline has shown construction activity in the area.

The components of the JLOTS include a floating pier, an approximately 1,800-foot-long causeway that will be attached to the shore, and a group of logistic support vessels and barges that will transport the aid from the pier to the causeway.

"Right now, you're seeing construction of that floating, temporary pier, and then, you'll start to see construction of the causeway," Singh told reporters. "Eventually, that causeway will be ... pushed into the coastline and secured by the ."

Since announcing the temporary pier would be used in the humanitarian aid mission, DOD officials have repeatedly emphasized that the IDF will provide force protection on and around the JLOTS. No U.S. boots will be on the ground as part of pier operations in Gaza.

"There is an integrated cell with the IDF and our U.S. military to ensure that there is deconfliction happening," Singh said. "And that also helps with the coordination of

JLOTS and the pier itself. So, we are confident that we are in a good place.”

When the pier is completed, officials anticipate it will initially facilitate the delivery of an estimated 90 daily truckloads of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Once fully operational, that number should jump to about 150 truckloads, or roughly 2,000,000 meals per day.