

Data Link Solutions to Provide BAE Systems' FireNet Tactical Systems for US Navy



FireNet enables Joint All Domain Command and Control operations and will be provided to the U.S. Navy. *BAE Systems* WAYNE, N.J. – The U.S. Navy has awarded Data Link Solutions, a joint venture between BAE Systems and Rockwell Collins Inc., a contract to provide small form factor Link 16 radios, which will be fulfilled using BAE Systems' FireNet Link 16 tactical systems.

FireNet is a scalable, secure, and open system architecture communications solution with a unified tactical network to enable Joint All Domain Command and Control operations.

“We have developed a first-of-its kind small form factor system that enables full Link 16 connectivity. FireNet is scalable and modular to give our service men and women a battlefield advantage in network-centric environments across

domains,” said Amber Dolan, director of Adaptive Communications and Sensing at BAE Systems. “Using the government’s program of record waveform, we can reduce lifecycle costs, quickly deliver updated capabilities, and enhance mission survivability across manned and unmanned fleets.”

The FireNet system is Crypto Modernization 1 compliant and offers the highest transmit power available in a SFF radio for current and future fleets. The system addresses size, weight, power, and cost demands and its applications can extend across rotary-wing aircraft, unmanned vehicles, maritime vessels and space platforms. It enables additional line-of-sight voice, data and network communications from very high frequency to S-Band.

Work on the FireNet system will take place at BAE Systems’ Wayne, New Jersey; Austin, Texas; Fort Wayne, Indiana; and Hudson, New Hampshire sites. Qualification and certification will begin in 2024.

Chesty XVI, Mascot of Marine Barracks Washington, Promoted to Lance Corporal



Chesty XVI, mascot of the Barracks, receives his promotion warrant during a ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, Jan. 17. Chesty XVI was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal by Carlos Del Toro, secretary of the Navy. *U.S. Marine Corps | Lance Cpl. Chloe N. McAfee*

In a momentous ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington last week, presided over by Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, Chesty XVI, the official mascot of Marine Barracks Washington, was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal.

“At a time when our nation is being challenged in many different ways, we need Marines like each and every one of you to represent everything that’s great about this country,” Del Toro said. “And Chesty XVI represents everything that’s great about the Marine Corps.”

After the Battle of Belleau Wood, U.S. Marines adopted the moniker “devil dogs,” a term believed to have originated from

the defeated Germans who, in awe of their tenacious adversaries, allegedly referred to them as “teufelhunden,” meaning hell hounds. Following World War I, the nickname gained prominence and began to feature prominently on Marine Corps recruitment posters, often accompanied by an iconic depiction of a scowling, helmet-clad English bulldog, symbolizing the indomitable spirit of the Marine Corps. While the nickname played a significant role in shaping the Marine Corps identity in the 20th century, it’s worth noting that there isn’t evidence to confirm its origin as a reference to the Marines by German troops.

Chesty XVI’s Pup Predecessors

During his tenure as the commanding officer of the Marine Barracks at Quantico, Virginia, Brig. Gen. Smedley D. Butler extended the nascent tradition by enlisting “Private Jiggs” into the Marine Corps on Oct. 14, 1922. Jiggs was born in Philadelphia on May 22, 1921, and boasted an impressive pedigree. The mascot experienced rapid promotions within the ranks, attaining the position of Sergeant Major on July 17, 1924.

Remaining true to custom, the Barracks welcomed Private First Class Chauncy into its ranks in 1956. Following Chauncy, Chesty I assumed the mantle, bearing the name in homage to the legendary Marine Lt. Gen. Lewis “Chesty” Puller, the most decorated Marine in the history of the Corps. Chesty I made his debut during the very first Evening Parade on July 5, 1957.

Over the years, numerous English bulldogs have faithfully served at the Barracks, with some receiving formal burial honors within the Barracks’ hallowed grounds. This enduring tradition underscores the profound connection between legend and the fighting spirit of every Marine, past and present.

Former U.S. Marine Keith Burns, who served as a Marine

Barracks Washington mascot handler in 1998, had the opportunity to escort Chesty XI to the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Belleau Wood.

“As this battle was the birthplace of the mascot’s role, being there 80 years later with our mascot was humbling and awe-inspiring,” said Burns. “Being part of an ongoing tribute to our history and moniker of ‘devil dog’ made me feel even more connected to the Corps and served as a reminder of how our past continues to shape our present, and future.”

Chesty XVI enlisted in the Marine Corps February 2022. He relieved Chesty XV of his duties on May 6, 2022, and marched in his debut parade that evening.

Chesty XVI’s promotion to Lance Corporal not only embodies the Marine Corps’ legacy but also highlights the mission of Marine Barracks Washington to represent the Marine Corps to the nation. The “Oldest Post of the Corps” continues to stand as a keeper of tradition and beacon of the Marine Corps’ values, inspiring patriotism and showcasing the unwavering commitment of Marines who have served, are

Coast Guard Rescues 9 from Ice Floe on Lake Erie



The Coast Guard rescued nine people from an ice floe on Lake Erie, near Catawba Island, Monday. *U.S. Coast Guard*

CLEVELAND – The Coast Guard rescued nine people from an ice floe on Lake Erie, near Catawba Island, on Monday, the service announced Jan. 23.

At 10:21 a.m., Coast Guard and local authorities responded to an initial report of more than 20 people on an ice floe a half mile offshore near Catawba Island, Ohio.

Coast Guard crews from Station Marblehead and Air Station Detroit responded in conjunction with the Put-in-Bay Fire Department and Ottawa County Sheriff's Office.

The Coast Guard rescued nine people and four more were rescued by the Put-in-Bay Fire Department. Seven people were able to self-rescue via their own airboat. A total of 20 people were rescued from the ice floe.

“We are committed to public safety and want to remind everyone the importance of exercising caution around ice formations,” said Lt. Adeeb Ahmad, Sector Detroit public affairs officer. “Ice floes are unpredictable and can quickly become hazardous, particularly in windy conditions or strong currents. Always check local ice conditions before venturing out and be prepared for any emergencies. Your safety is our top priority.”

SECNAV Del Toro Meets with Key Leaders During Travel Through Europe



U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Steven Basham, U.S. European Command deputy commander, hosted U.S. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro during a visit to the command's Stuttgart, Germany, headquarters Jan. 22. *U.S. European Command | Staff Sgt. Aaron Daugherty*

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro traveled to Stuttgart, Germany for key leader engagements, Jan. 21-22.

During his visit, Del Toro held an office call with U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Michael E. Langley, the sixth commander of U.S. Africa Command, met with senior Navy and Marine Corps officers and enlisted leaders, and participated in an AFRICOM roundtable. He discussed AFRICOM's efforts to counter transnational threats and malign actors, strengthen security forces, and support partners in Africa using a 3D approach: diplomacy, development and defense.

Del Toro also met with U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Steven L.

Basham, deputy commander, U.S. European Command, Patch Barracks. As the deputy commander for U.S. European Command, Basham is responsible for establishing and overseeing a warfighting headquarters that conducts a full range of multi-domain operations in coordination with allies and partners to support NATO, deter Russia, enable global operations and counter transnational threats to defend the U.S. homeland forward and fortify Euro-Atlantic security.

In addition, Del Toro met with the team at U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Europe and Africa (MARFOREUR/AF). Led by Maj. Gen. Robert B. Sofge Jr., MARFOREUR/AF works with sister U.S. services and NATO partners to facilitate European and African engagements in support of global campaigns, enhancing joint, and combined forces through NATO.

"There is nothing that we do on our Navy and Marine Corps team that is not done in concert with our allies and partners," Del Toro said. "From the combatant commander all the way down to the most junior Sailor and Marine, our work abroad protects our way of life at home."

While in Stuttgart, Del Toro held all-hands calls with Navy, Marine Corps, civilian personnel and their families to hear firsthand about their concerns and answer their questions. He also met with various servicemembers at each command to recognize their accomplishments.

"I've said it before, and it bears repeating. I am grateful for all you do for our Nation," Del Toro said. "We're facing challenging times, and I thank you for everything you do as we face significant threats to democracy around the world."

Del Toro will travel to Berlin for additional engagements in the region before heading to the United Kingdom to deliver a speech at the Royal United Services Institute, the world's oldest and the U.K.'s leading defense and security think tank.

US, Republic of Korea, Japan Navies Conduct Trilateral Exercise



USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), shown here anchored in Manila, Philippines in early January. The carrier later took part in a trilateral exercise with navies from Korea and Japan. *U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Micheal Mensah*

BUSAN, Republic of Korea – The U.S. Navy, the Republic of Korea navies and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force executed a trilateral-naval exercise Jan. 15 to Jan. 17 south of Jeju Island, in international waters near the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

Commander, Naval Forces Korea participated with Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1 aboard USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) in the multi-day

trilateral exercise that focused on integration, interoperability and readiness across multiple complex warfare areas.

“This exercise sharpens our combined skills and deepens our relationship with our partner nations,” said Rear Adm. Neil Koprowski, commander, CNFK. “Our close-knit teamwork with ROK and JMSDF is critical to the success of conducting combined maritime operations and training at sea.”

The collaborative exercise reflects shared values, through a trilateral commitment to deter aggression, and to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

The USS Carl Vinson, the flagship of CSG 1, kicked off the exercise Monday. The USS Carl Vinson previously conducted a trilateral maritime exercise with JMSDF and ROK on November 26, 2023.

These exercises support a free and open Indo-Pacific.

CNFK is the U.S. Navy’s representative in the Republic of Korea, it fosters enduring relationships with joint, combined, and multinational partners and strengthens combined maritime warfighting capability, interoperability, and readiness.

Delay to CVN 82 Buy Could Endanger Industrial Base, New Industry Report Says



Norfolk Naval Shipyard welcomed USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) for a Planned Incremental Availability Jan. 11. The Navy should continue with two-ship buys for future carriers at regular intervals, a new industry report says. *Norfolk Naval Shipyard* | Shelby West

Delaying the next two-aircraft carrier buy beyond fiscal year 2028 would lead to sizable delays, growing cost and would have a serious impact on the shipbuilding industry and its supply base, according to a [new report](#) from the Aircraft Carrier Industrial Base Coalition (ACIBC).

“There are significant challenges that most of the companies in the supply base face,” ACIBC Chair Lisa Papini told Seapower, including “inflation, supply chain disruption and workforce issues.”

As was [expressed last week](#) by shipbuilder HII, the industry favors a “2-3-4” approach, with a two-carrier buy, three years of advance materials procurement and four years between carrier construction.

“Companies in the supply chain are planning work based on the stability of that schedule. When we maintain that schedule, that is when we are optimized and when we will perform at our best,” she said.

The ACIBC report notes that even a two-carrier buy in fiscal 28 means six years between the construction of CVN 81 and 82, and “nearly 50% of AP [advanced procurement] suppliers are already expected to have stopped continuous production [i.e., ‘go cold’] for their respective CVN material/equipment by then.”

Bumping the contracting for CVN 82 beyond fiscal 2028 would make things even worse, with 40% of carrier suppliers “saying they will need to lay off workers and/or deprioritize military shipbuilding and explore more commercial options,” the report says.

Papini said the delays and uncertainty are harmful to the industrial base, which is widespread – aircraft carriers are built and maintained with parts from more than 2,000 businesses in almost every state in the country.

A two-carrier buy means more lead time for raw material, which is now taking longer to procure than in the past, and also on the workforce itself, Papini said. “If we can place material on order earlier, that would help with the schedule.”

It would also help avoid “peaks and valleys” where shipbuilders become idle and are forced to lay off workers, which in turn makes the overall industry less attractive to workers.

“When that happens, we lose trained, highly qualified people,” she said. “And there’s a ramp-up period if we have to start up again. The workforce is at its best with steady, consistent funding and shipbuilding schedules.”

The decision on the buy for CVN 82 and 83 is expected to be in

the next president's budget, expected to be released soon. ACIBC is planning to conduct briefings on Capitol Hill in March with a second, more comprehensive report.

Papini said she welcomes the [recent announcement](#) from Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro that he has ordered a comprehensive review of the Navy shipbuilding industry, with an interim progress review due in 45 days.

"He's got a commitment in there that he is looking at recommended actions for achieving a healthy U.S. shipbuilding industrial base," she said. "I think we're talking about ways to achieve that, that's hopefully what this survey is raising."

The new study includes a look at three main major challenges to aircraft carrier suppliers, their impact and ways to resolve them, as drawn from a survey of suppliers across the country:

Inflation

- Challenge: 95% have faced challenges due to rising costs from inflation
- Impact: 79% have experienced raw material cost increases of at least 7%
- Resolution: 91% regard multi-ship "block buys" critical to offsetting inflation and contributing to the health and future of their company.

Supply Chain Disruptions

- Challenge: 91% have faced challenges as a result of material availability/delivery
- Impact: 76% have experienced an increase in the amount of time it takes to build and deliver their products
- Resolution: 64% regard earlier advanced funding critical

to addressing increased material lead-times and meeting required in-yard dates.

Workforce Issues

- Challenge: 85% have faced challenges hiring, training, and retaining their workforce
- Impact: 32% believe workforce-related challenges have had a detrimental impact on their ability to fulfill contracts
- Resolution: 76% believe 3- or 4-year centers are optimal build intervals with 60% saying operating under four-year construction intervals will enable the hiring, retention and training of a workforce.

USCGC Harriet Lane Holds Change of Home Port Ceremony



U.S. Coast Guard Vice Admiral Andrew Tiongson renders a hand salute while departing the change of home port ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam, Jan. 16. Harriet Lane recently transferred to Hawaii from its former home port in Portsmouth, Virginia. *U.S. Coast Guard | photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Ty Robertson*

HONOLULU – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane (WMEC 903) and crew held a ceremony celebrating their recent home port shift to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Jan. 17, presided by Adm. Steven Poulin, vice commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Harriet Lane is U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area's newest Indo-Pacific support cutter. Harriet Lane and crew departed Coast Guard Base Portsmouth, Virginia, in November and arrived at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December, after transiting more than 8,000 nautical miles for over 36 days.

The home port shift of Harriet Lane marks a significant milestone in strengthening the U.S. Coast Guard's capabilities and relations with nations in the Pacific Ocean. As part of this historic home port shift, Harriet Lane will work

alongside allies and partner nations within the Oceania region with a focus on advising, training, joint deployments, and capacity building to promote and model good maritime governance.

“The U.S. has long supported peace, security and stability in the Pacific Islands,” said Cmdr. Nicole Tesoniero, commanding officer of Harriet Lane. “Joining like-minded partners including Australia, New Zealand, and France, Harriet Lane stands ready to deliver sustained regional presence while signaling the Coast Guard’s commitment to be a steadfast partner in one of the world’s most dynamic economically significant regions.”

“The presence of the Harriet Lane in the Pacific is significant,” said Vice Adm. Andrew Tiongson, commander, Pacific Area. “The demand for maritime governance has never been higher especially today in this dynamic region. Harriet Lane is a shining symbol of maritime governance, and it will make a positive impact in this world to align their operations with overarching strategies.”

“The Pacific stands out as a strategic and vital region for the United States,” said Poulin. “All Pacific nations must maintain sovereignty and must be able to enjoy their sovereign rights. The U.S. Coast Guard has unique capabilities and authorities that often make us the partner of choice, and we can meet the needs of other nations because we are flexible. We listen to what our partners and allies need and maintain strong relationships. This cutter reflects our enduring commitment to our partners.”

Harriet Lane, commissioned in 1984, is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter now homeported in Honolulu to support Coast Guard missions in the Pacific region. The service’s medium endurance cutter fleet supports a variety of Coast Guard missions including search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime defense, and protection of the marine environment.

BAE Systems Delivers First Production-Ready ACV Command Variant to U.S. Marine Corps



BAE Systems' ACV-C variant. *BAE Systems*
STAFFORD, Va. – BAE Systems delivered the first Amphibious Combat Vehicle Command and Control (ACV-C) variant under the full-rate production contract to the U.S. Marine Corps.

The ACV-C will provide Marines with a mobile command center which enables situational awareness and operations planning in the battlespace.

ACV-C provides true open-ocean and ship-to-objective amphibious capability, land mobility, survivability and ample growth capacity and flexibility to incorporate and adapt future technologies. Through previous studies with the Marine Corps, BAE Systems has proven that the ACV is truly

customizable and has the built-in growth capacity to integrate future mission critical technologies, including new battle management capabilities, advanced communications, multi-domain targeting management, beyond-line-of-sight sensors, and manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) with autonomous and unmanned systems.

“We are thrilled to deliver this critical capability into the hands of Marines in the field,” said Garrett Lacaille, vice president of the amphibious vehicles product line for BAE Systems. “As the Marines begin to familiarize themselves with the new ACV-C, BAE Systems and our strategic partner Iveco Defence Vehicles remain ready to fulfill any of the Corps’ critical amphibious warfighting needs to ensure the Fleet Marine Force is mission ready.”

The Marine Corps and BAE Systems entered full-rate production on the ACV program with a contract award in December 2020. Currently, two of the four ACV variants are in production today at BAE Systems facility in York, Pennsylvania: the ACV Personnel variant (ACV-P), which provides transport for 13 combat-loaded Marines and three crew, and the new ACV-C variant. Production Representative Test Vehicles are currently in production for ACV 30mm (ACV-30). ACV-30 is armed with a 30mm Remote Turret System that provides the lethality and protection Marines need while leaving ample room for troop capacity and payload.

The fourth variant on contract, the ACV Recovery variant (ACV-R) recently completed phase one of the design process. BAE Systems will deliver production representative test vehicles in 2025. ACV-R will provide direct field support, maintenance, and recovery to the ACV family of vehicles.

ACV production and support is taking place at BAE Systems locations in Stafford, Virginia; San Jose, California; Sterling Heights, Michigan; Aiken, South Carolina; and York, Pennsylvania.

SECNAV Del Toro Directs Comprehensive Navy Shipbuilding Review



Rear Adm. Tom J. Anderson, then acting commander of Naval Sea Systems Command, discusses the construction status of pre-commissioning unit John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) with HII's construction leadership team during a production progress visit in September 2023. *U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tyler Slavicek*

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro has directed newly confirmed Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development & Acquisition Nickolas Guertin and Commander of Naval Sea Systems Command Vice Adm. James Downey to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Navy shipbuilding portfolio.

The intent is to provide an interim progress review to Secretary Del Toro within 45 days. The purpose of the review is to provide an assessment of national and local causes of shipbuilding challenges, as well as recommended actions for achieving a healthier U.S. shipbuilding industrial base that provides combat capabilities that our warfighters need, on a schedule that is relevant.

“I remain concerned with the lingering effects of post-pandemic conditions on our shipbuilders and their suppliers that continue to affect our shipbuilding programs, particularly our Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines and Constellation-class frigate,” Del Toro said. “The Department of the Navy has a strategic imperative requiring a whole-of-government effort to rebuild our nation’s comprehensive maritime power – a new Maritime Statecraft in which the Navy plays a vital role. The American public should know that the Department of the Navy is committed to developing, delivering, and sustaining the finest warfighting capability to our Sailors and Marines. We will continue to work with industry and all other stakeholders to strengthen our national shipbuilding capacity, both naval and commercial.”

New Air Defense System Advances Corps’ Air Dominance



U.S. Marines with Marine Corps Systems Command fire a Stinger Missile from a Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS) at Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona, Dec. 13. U.S. *Marine Corps* | *Virginia Guffey*

YUMA PROVING GROUND, Arizona – The Marine Corps is one step closer to defeating unmanned aircraft systems. In December, Program Executive Officer Land Systems successfully tested the Marine Air Defense Integrated System, or MADIS, low-rate initial production model, hitting several launched drones during a live-fire test at the Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona.

The live-fire test subjected MADIS to actual battlefield scenarios, where it detected, tracked, identified, and defeated unmanned aerial threats. “MADIS can complete the entire kill chain, and we witness that during this event,” said Col. Andrew Konicki, program manager for Ground Based Air Defense. “It is a linchpin for mission success and our ability to neutralize airborne threats...which in turn, increases our lethality.”

MADIS is a short-range, surface-to-air system that enables Low Altitude Air Defense Battalions to deter and neutralize unmanned aircraft systems and fixed wing/rotary wing aircraft. Mounted aboard two Joint Light Tactical Vehicles, the system is a complementary pair. MADIS includes multiple disparate systems, including radar systems, surface-to-air missiles, and

command and control elements. In layman's terms, one detects, and the other attacks.

Drones continue to be a threat, especially with the emergence of easily accessible, commercial off-the-shelf products. MADIS uses real-time communication and coordination to destroy or neutralize low-altitude aerial threats in defense of the Marine Air Ground Task Force.

"The importance of countering UAS threats cannot be overstated," said Konicki. "We see it all over the news. MADIS is the key. We're excited to get this out to Marines."

During the test, MADIS successfully tracked and hit multiple targets using the Stinger missiles and 30mm cannon. Information passed through the Common Aviation Command and Control System to the "fighting pair" of vehicles, executing the engagements while continuing to track other UAS targets.

"We've taken multiple disparate commercial off-the-shelf and government off-the-shelf technologies and put them together," said Konicki. "This is a capability the Marine Corps has never had, and it was a challenge for the acquisition community. This test event shows we met that challenge."

The program office has additional live-fire testing planned for new equipment training, system verification testing, and initial operational test and evaluation in FY24, prior to the start of fielding, said Maj. Craig Warner, product manager for Future Weapons Systems. The 3rd Littoral Anti-Air Battalion will be the first battalion in the Marine Corps to receive the MADIS.