

Navy to Christen Future USNS Harvey Milk



A photo illustration announcing that Military Sealift Command fleet oiler, T-AO 206, will be named USNS Harvey Milk. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will christen the John Lewis-class replenishment oiler, the future USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), during a 9 a.m. PDT ceremony Saturday, Nov. 6, in San Diego, California, the Defense Department said Nov. 5.

Stuart Milk, cofounder of the Harvey Milk Foundation and Milk's nephew, will deliver the principal ceremonial address. Remarks will also be provided by the Carlos Del Toro, secretary of the Navy; Vice Adm. Jeffrey Hughes, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Development; and Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, commander, Military Sealift Command. The ship's sponsors are U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, and Paula Neira, Navy veteran and clinical program director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Transgender Health. Neira will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow in a time-honored Navy tradition.

"Tomorrow we christen the future USNS Harvey Milk," said Del Toro. "Leaders like Harvey Milk taught us that diversity of backgrounds and experiences help contribute to the strength and resolve of our nation. There is no doubt that the future Sailors aboard this ship will be inspired by Milk's life and

legacy.”

The Navy’s Military Sealift Command will operate the future USNS Harvey Milk, the second ship in its class. The ship is named in honor of the late politician and civil and human rights activist, who served in the Navy during the Korean War as a diving officer. After his naval career, Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977, becoming the first openly gay elected official in California. Milk was assassinated on Nov. 27, 1978.

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 fuel replenishment to Navy ships at sea. Fleet replenishment oilers are part of the Navy’s Combat Logistics Force.

In June 2016, the Navy awarded a \$3.2 billion contract to General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego to design and construct the first six ships of the Future Fleet Replenishment Ship, the John Lewis-class (T-AO 205), with construction commencing in September 2018. The Navy plans to procure 20 ships of the new class.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard Returns USS Pasadena to the Fleet



USS Pasadena (SSN 752) returned to the fleet Oct. 31 following successful completion of its Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY). *NNSY / Tony Anderson*

NORFOLK NAVAL SHIPYARD, Portsmouth, Va. – USS Pasadena (SSN 752) returned to the fleet Oct. 31 following successful completion of its Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability (DSRA) at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY), said Michael Brayshaw, NNSY deputy public affairs officer for Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

The Los Angeles-class attack submarine spent just over a year at NNSY to replace, repair and overhaul components throughout the boat, as the shipyard's first DSRA in a decade.

Pasadena served as NNSY's pilot project leveraging the Naval Sustainment System–Shipyards (NSS-SY) program. NSS-SY is underway at all four public shipyards, leveraging industry and

government best practices on shipyard processes to drive quick and visible improvements in ship maintenance. During the overhaul, Navy leaders such as then-Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Harker visited NNSY and met with the Pasadena team to pledge their support and discuss the drive to “get real, get better,” encouraging shipyarders to candidly discuss any constraints so they can be resolved.

NSS-SY initiatives included establishing an Operations Control Center to drive project team communications and resolve barriers in work execution, and “crew boards” to track jobs supporting the boat’s overhaul. Deputy Project Superintendent Mike Harrell was brought onto the project for standing up the center and was instrumental in breaking down barriers to ensure non-stop execution of the critical chain of work, driving through issues and constraints to completion. While Pasadena did not meet its original completion date, these improvements helped deliver the boat back to the Fleet and are being implemented on other NNSY overhauls, to include USS Toledo (SSN 769) and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).

“Following a tremendous amount of effort and teaming on a very challenging availability, Pasadena has returned to the fleet to meet its significant operational commitment for our Navy and nation,” said Shipyard Commander Capt. Dianna Wolfson. “The Pasadena project team met our Navy leadership challenge to ‘get real, get better’ in several significant ways, and their efforts will pay off as we leverage their learning across America’s shipyard and our NAVSEA enterprise.”

Project Superintendent Frank Williams said the project team stayed focused throughout all phases of the availability on knowledge sharing and maintaining schedule. Beyond NSS-SY improvements, Pasadena’s team incorporated lessons learned from Portsmouth Naval Shipyard’s USS Newport News (SSN 750) DSRA in planning the availability and executing similar jobs. Additionally, when Pasadena missed its original

undocking date in the spring, the project team worked to perform more jobs with the boat on keel blocks to condense the schedule following undocking.

“Sailors and ships are meant to be at sea and not in a repair environment and throughout all phases of the availability, it’s been our job to get them back there,” said Williams. “The project team has done a great job keeping focused on this throughout the past 13 months. Thanks to all the efforts of our team and Ship’s Force, we have now gotten Pasadena back to sea where she belongs.”

Commandant: Many Unvaccinated Marines Swayed by Disinformation



Marines and Sailors continue to receive the COVID-19 vaccine on Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, March 25, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Rachelanne Woodward*

WASHINGTON – Because the U.S. Marine Corps is the nation's ready force, the commandant says he is concerned that "disinformation" has made thousands of Marines reluctant to get a mandatory vaccination against coronavirus.

With a Nov. 28 deadline looming for all active duty Marines to be fully vaccinated, an estimated 13,000 still have not gotten the first shot to counter COVID-19.

"I'm concerned about it because every Marine has to be ready to deploy," Gen. David Berger said Nov. 4 at the in-person 2021 Aspen Security Forum. "We are the ready force. We have to be ready to go."

Berger said he could not say exactly why so many Marines haven't rolled up their sleeves yet. Some have submitted requests for a religious or medical waiver.

"Those are being answered quickly. Within a week, they'll get

an answer back.” However, “Very few have been granted,” he said.

“The ones who flat out refuse? You’d have to ask each individual Marine their reasons why. I think we’re challenged by disinformation,” which Berger said raises questions “about how did this vaccine get approved? Is it safe? Is it ethical?

“All that swirls around on the internet and they read all that. They see all that,” Berger said. But Marines are trained and “taught that your unit is more important than you are.”

Berger is also concerned that 56% of Marines in the Ready Reserve have not been vaccinated. They have until Dec. 28 to do so. Berger said it is difficult to track vaccination rates among reservists because they are spread across the country in local units.

“We are one Marine Corps, active duty and Reserve, so it is important for them to get vaccinated as well,” he said.

Marine Corps Headquarters issued guidance Oct. 23 stating Marines who are not fully vaccinated by the deadline, without an approved administrative, medical or religious exemption, will be subject, pending appeal, to administrative separation from the Corps.

“A Marine who has not been fully vaccinated is not considered worldwide deployable and shall be assigned or reassigned, locally, to billets which account for health risks to the unvaccinated Marine and those working in proximity to the Marine,” according to the guidance. While their cases are under appeal, Marines who refuse vaccination, could also be barred from re-enlistment, promotion or holding a command.

“The approach we took is: Take all the ambiguity out of it. It’s black and white from the secretary of defense. We need to protect ourselves,” Berger said, explaining the hardline approach. “We wrote that instruction to make it clear all the

way down. There is no gray area. You must get vaccinated.”

He noted that Marine recruits already get 12 other vaccinations just to get through boot camp. Berger said he didn’t think the Marines will be losing thousands of Marines after Nov. 28 because of the mandatory vaccination order.

The number of vaccine refusals is changing every day, Berger said.

“Partly because we have a younger force and they wait to see how leaders do. And when the leaders do, they get in line quickly. I think it’s really hard to predict, because it’s not a straight line between now and the end of November.”

USS Connecticut Leadership Relieved by Fleet Commander



The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton for deployment, May 27. *U.S. NAVY / Lt. Mack Jamieson*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The leadership of the Seawolf-class attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) has been relieved and replaced by an interim leadership team, the Navy said Nov. 4.

The USS Connecticut grounded an uncharted seamount on the afternoon of Oct. 2 while submerged in the South China Sea, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. There were no life-threatening injuries. The submarine made a transit to the naval base in Apra Harbor, Guam, for an assessment of the damage.

“Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, relieved Cmdr. Cameron Aljilani as commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Patrick Cashin as executive officer, and Master Chief Sonar Technician Cory Rodgers as chief of the boat,” the release said.

Loss of confidence in the leadership team was the reason the

Navy cited in the release.

“Thomas determined sound judgement, prudent decision-making and adherence to required procedures in navigation planning, watch team execution and risk management could have prevented the incident,” the Navy said.

Capt. John Witte will assume duties as interim commanding officer, Cmdr. Joe Sammur will assume duties as interim executive officer and Command Master Chief Paul Walters will assume duties as interim chief of the boat, the Navy said.

The Navy said the Connecticut is undergoing damage assessment in Guam and will be repaired at Bremerton, Washington.

In January 2005, the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS San Francisco (SSN 711) struck a sea mount while submerged southeast of Guam. The submarine’s bow sonar dome was crushed, but the pressure hull was not compromised. Dozens of crewmen were injured, and one later died of injuries. The submarine was repaired and returned to fleet service in 2009 with the bow from the ex-USS Honolulu installed.

The Connecticut, commissioned in 2005, is the second of the three-boat Seawolf class.

**AeroVironment Awarded \$20.3M
SOCOM Contract for
Switchblade Missiles**



A Switchblade 600 tactical missile system. *AEROVIRONMENT*
ARLINGTON, Va., Nov. 4, 2021 – AeroVironment Inc. was awarded a firm-fixed-price contract Sept. 28 by the U.S. Special Operations Command for \$20.3 million for the procurement of Switchblade 600 tactical missile systems. Delivery is scheduled to be completed by January 2023.

“Switchblade 600 is an all-in-one, man-portable tactical missile that provides warfighters with the capability to fly, track and engage non-line-of-sight targets and light-armored vehicles with precision lethal effects,” said Brett Hush, vice president and product line general manager for tactical missile systems. “The tube-launched Switchblade 600 can be easily transported for deployment from fixed and mobile platforms in any environment, providing operators with superior force overmatch and minimizing exposure to direct and indirect enemy fires.”

Switchblade 600 is equipped with a high-performance electro-optical, gimballed sensor suite, precision flight control and more than 40 minutes of flight time to deliver unprecedented

tactical reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition. Its anti-armor warhead enables engagement and prosecution of hardened static and moving light armored vehicles from multiple angles without external ISR or fires assets. Switchblade 600's patented wave-off and recommit capability allows operators to abort the mission at any time and then re-engage either the same or other targets multiple times based on operator command, resulting in minimal to no collateral damage.

Ingalls Shipbuilding Successfully Completes Builder's Trials for LPD Fort Lauderdale



Huntington Ingalls Industries has announced that its Ingalls Shipbuilding division recently completed the first round of sea trials for San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28). *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES PASCAGOULA, Miss.* – Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding division recently completed the first round of sea trials for San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), the company said Nov. 2.

"Shipbuilding is about teamwork. Our shipbuilders work as a team with our Navy partners to make these ships ready to join the fleet," said Steve Sloan, Ingalls' LPD program manager. "The success we achieved this week will propel us into a strong finish as we prepare for acceptance trials later this year. We are proud of the work our shipbuilders have accomplished so far and look forward to finishing strong."

LPD 28 is named Fort Lauderdale to honor the Florida city's historic ties to the U.S. Navy, which date back to the 1830s and include an important naval training center during World War II.

Ingalls has delivered 11 San Antonio-class ships to the Navy and has three more under construction including Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29) and Harrisburg (LPD 30). Ingalls was awarded a \$1.5 billion contract for the construction of LPD 31 in 2020.

The San Antonio-class is the latest addition to the Navy's 21st-century amphibious assault force. The 684-foot-long, 105-foot-wide ships are used to embark and land Marines, their equipment and supplies ashore via air cushion or conventional landing craft and amphibious assault vehicles, augmented by helicopters or vertical takeoff and landing aircraft such as the MV-22 Osprey. The ships support a Marine Air Ground Task Force across the spectrum of operations, conducting amphibious and expeditionary missions of sea control and power projection to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions throughout the first half of the 21st century.

SOCOM Commander: Navy SEALs to Focus on Strategic Reconnaissance, Working with Partners



A U.S. Navy SEAL throws an M18 colored smoke grenade during a sweep of a training compound during Sentry Rescue IV, a joint command initiative to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for personnel recovery scenarios, Arkansas, Aug. 26, 2021. *U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD / Tech. Sgt. Brigette Waltermire*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The commander of the nation's special operations forces said the Navy's SEALs will have an important role in the future in enabling commanders to understand the enemy's capabilities and intentions.

The SEALs, along with the special operations forces of the other U.S. military services, have had a super-sized role in the Southwest Asian wars since 9-11, serving at the forefront of U.S. and coalition forces in the low-intensity conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and other locations.

With U.S. focus on deterring a future conflict with China and shifting the focus to high-end operations, the 70-000-strong special operations forces (SOF) also are shifting focus.

Speaking to the Military Reporters and Editors at a symposium

in Arlington, Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, said the S0F are “more integrated than ever before,” including with inter-agency partners.

Clarke said he sees Navy SEALs as ‘working with partners, able to train, and also to conduct another key mission or activity, which is strategic reconnaissance. They can get in places that no one else can get they can be in the littorals – in subsea/subsurface domain – and are critical.”

Clarke said S0F are more than just a direct-action raid force, but the force will still maintain that capability, one which “we have honed to an exquisite degree.”

The commander said the S0F benefits from working closely with the general-purpose forces and that his command will look for every opportunity to leverage high-end training for its forces.

Submarine USS Connecticut Grounded on Uncharted Seamount, 7th Fleet Says



The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for sea trials following a maintenance availability in this 2016 photograph. *U.S. NAVY / Thiep Van Nguyen II*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The nuclear-powered attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) “grounded an uncharted seamount,” 7th Fleet Public Affairs said in a Nov. 1 statement.

The Connecticut’s incident occurred on the afternoon of Oct. 2 while submerged in the South China Sea, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. There were no life-threatening injuries. The submarine made a transit to the naval base in Apra Harbor, Guam, for an assessment of the damage.

“The submarine remains in a safe and stable condition,” the Navy said at the time. “USS Connecticut’s nuclear propulsion plant and spaces were not affected and remain fully operational.”

“The command investigation for USS Connecticut (SSN 22) has

been submitted to Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet for review and endorsement,” the Navy said in the Nov. 1 statement. “Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet will determine whether follow-on actions – including accountability – are appropriate.”

In January 2005, the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS San Francisco (SSN 711) struck a sea mount while submerged southeast of Guam. The submarine’s bow sonar dome was crushed, but the pressure hull was not compromised. Dozens of crewmen were injured, and one later died of injuries. The submarine was repaired and returned to fleet service in 2009 with the bow from the ex-USS Honolulu installed.

The Connecticut, commissioned in 2005, is the second boat of the three-boat Seawolf class.

Editor’s note: The original version of this article incorrectly described the Connecticut as having a 100-foot extension section for enhanced payloads. That submarine is the USS Jimmy Carter.

**Adm. Christopher Grady
Nominated for Vice Chairman
of JCS**



Adm. Christopher W. Grady, appointed as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Command. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III announced Nov. 2 the president has nominated Navy Adm. Christopher W. Grady for reappointment to the rank of admiral, and assignment as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Washington, D.C.

If confirmed, Grady, a surface warfare officer currently serving as commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia, would be the first Navy officer to serve as vice chief since Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. retired in 2015.

As commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Grady is responsible for training, certifying and providing "combat-ready Navy forces to combatant commanders that are capable of conducting prompt, sustained naval, joint and combined operations in support of U.S. national interests," according to the command's mission statement. The command also supports U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Element North American Aerospace Defense Command, and U.S. Strategic Command.

Below are excerpts from Grady's official biography:

Adm. Christopher W. Grady is a native of Newport, Rhode Island. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned an ensign through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program. Grady is a distinguished graduate of Georgetown University where he earned a Master of Arts in National Security Studies while concurrently participating as a fellow in Foreign Service at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is also a distinguished graduate of the National War College earning a Master of Science in National Security Affairs.

He assumed command of U.S. Fleet Forces Command/U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command on May 4, 2018, and assumed duties of commander, U.S. Naval Forces Strategic Command and U.S. Strategic Command Joint Force Maritime Component Commander on Feb. 1, 2019.

In his most recent assignment, he was the commander, U.S. 6th Fleet and the commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, while simultaneously serving as the deputy commander,

U.S. Naval Forces Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Africa.

At sea, Grady's initial tour was aboard USS Moosbrugger (DD 980) as combat information center officer and antisubmarine warfare officer. As a department head, he served as weapons control officer and combat systems officer in USS Princeton (CG 59). He was commanding officer of Mine Countermeasures Rotational Crew Echo in USS Chief (MCM 14) and deployed to the Arabian Gulf in command of USS Ardent (MCM 12). Grady then commanded USS Cole (DDG 67), deploying as part of NATO's Standing Naval Forces Mediterranean. As commander, Destroyer Squadron 22, he deployed to the Arabian Gulf as sea combat commander for the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Ashore, Grady first served on the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then as naval aide to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). He also served on the staff of the CNO as the assistant branch head, Europe and Eurasia Politico-Military Affairs Branch (OPNAV N524). He then served as executive assistant to the Navy's Chief of Legislative Affairs. Next, he served as the deputy executive secretary of the National Security Council in the White House. He then went on to serve as the executive assistant to the CNO.

Additional flag assignments include director of the Maritime Operations Center (N2/3/5/7), Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Commander, Carrier Strike Group One/Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group, where he deployed for nearly 10 months to the Western Pacific and the Arabian Gulf conducting combat operations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve; and Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic.

AeroVironment Demonstrates Switchblade Loitering Missile Integration for Air Launched Effects from JUMP 20 UAS



AeroVironment's Switchblade 300 loitering munition, which can now be integrated with the larger JUMP 20 unmanned aircraft.

AEROVIRONMENT

ARLINGTON, Va., Nov. 3, 2021 – AeroVironment has successfully demonstration of integrating Switchblade 300 loitering missiles and JUMP 20 medium unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for increased mission autonomy and efficacy, the company said Nov. 3.

This Air Launched Effects (ALE) proof-of-concept demonstration took place in August 2021 with the goal of launching an inert Switchblade 300 from the JUMP 20 and successfully recovering

both air vehicles.

The systems were integrated by fixing the inert Switchblade 300 tube-launch system to the existing JUMP 20 platform's vertical lift boom with a custom-made bolt-on mount and firing system. Switchblade 300 was remotely fired using the JUMP 20 ground control solution with in-flight control taken by a separate Switchblade ground element. Both vehicles were successfully recovered, proving the demonstration event to be the first Switchblade 300 integration and air launch from a JUMP 20 Group 3 vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) platform.

"This end-to-end integrated solution enables customers with greater time on station than if they were to deploy a Switchblade on its own, resulting in the ability to conduct persistent real-time surveillance to increase the chance of identifying the correct target and minimizing collateral damage," said Brett Hush, AeroVironment vice president and product line general manager of tactical missile systems.

"It combines the combat-proven Switchblade loitering missile's lethality, reach and precision strike capabilities with low collateral effects and the VTOL, fixed-wing JUMP 20's advanced multi-sensor ISR services and 14-hour endurance."