

Lawmakers Renew Push for Navy to Procure 3 Virginia Submarines Per Year



The Virginia-class attack submarine USS Vermont (SSN 792) makes its way up the Thames River and past New London, Connecticut on Feb. 3. Leaders of the House Armed Services Committee's Seapower subcommittee want the Navy to increase its procurement of Virginia-class boats to three per year. U.S. Navy / John Narewski

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy needs to increase procurement of its Virginia-class attack submarines (SSNs) to three per year in order to pace the potential threat of China and Russia, said the congressmen who lead the Seapower subcommittee in the House Armed Services Committee. The U.S. Navy also needs to push ahead with development of the follow-on to the Virginia class, they said.

Speaking Feb. 19 in a webinar sponsored by the Hudson

Institute, Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Connecticut, chairman of the Seapower subcommittee, and Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Virginia, ranking member, were united in their reiteration of the need for more attack submarines and have renewed the push to include three in the 2022 defense budget, a level that nearly was achieved in the 2021 final budget.

Wittman noted a recent study that reinforced how “incredibly important getting to building three attack submarines per year will be for this nation going forward.”

Wittman said it was critical the Navy request a third SSN in the president’s 2022 budget proposal because “it is extraordinarily difficult to add things to the president’s budget.”

He recounted the effort to increase the procurement of a third SSN in the 2021 budget, which was ultimately unsuccessful when the proposed amendment was defeated in the House in a floor vote for the appropriations bill.

Wittman is optimistic the third submarine will be included in the 2022 budget, saying, “I think the glass is half full.”

Courtney also is optimistic, noting the recent statements by Defense Secretary Austin – a retired Army general – and Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – an Army general – that the budget “pie” may need to be sliced more in favor of naval, aerial, and cyber capabilities.

The construction of the Columbia ballistic-missile submarine that began recently is pressuring the budget of the Navy and capacity of the submarine industrial base.

“Frankly, we’re going to need more facilities if we’re really going to get serious about going for three [SSNs] per year on a regular basis,” Courtney said.

The nation’s two submarine builders are General Dynamics

Electric Boat in Courtney's district and Huntington Ingalls Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia, Wittman's home state.

Courtney said he also has concerns about the work force but is "bullish" on solving that challenge. He stressed the need to "keep performance of the shipyards at uppermost."

Wittman supports the Navy's plan to extend the service lives of some Los Angeles-class SSNs as part of the formula to a submarine force large enough to meet the potential threat from near-peer competitors like China and Russia.

He also stressed the need for the Navy to focus on development of the next-generation of attack submarines to assure no gaps as the production of the Virginia-class SSNs ends.

15th MEU Supports Operation Inherent Resolve from Makin Island ARG



A Marine Corps F35B Lightning II assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 164 (Reinforced), 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), launches from the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8) during flight operations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, Feb. 13. U.S. Marine Corps / Sgt. Sarah Stegall

PERSIAN GULF – The Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) began air operations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), Feb. 13, the 15th MEU Public Affairs said in a Feb. 16 release.

Close air support operations and defensive counter air support operations were carried out by Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 164 (Reinforced), the aviation combat element of the 15th MEU, as part of broader U.S. Central Command counterterrorism operations in the region.

U.S. Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II aircraft departed from the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8), flagship of the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group, to execute the

long-range strike.

“Long range F-35B Lightning II strike operations demonstrate the ARG/MEU’s ability to project air power well beyond the shore,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Christopher J. Bronzi, the 15th MEU commanding officer. “We look forward to exercising the capabilities in our arsenal while in theater and remain ready to deliver those capabilities at any time if called upon.”

The Makin Island ARG transited through the Strait of Hormuz and into the Arabian Gulf on Feb. 8. The Makin Island ARG and 15th MEU’s presence in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations demonstrates the U.S. and its regional partners’ commitment to the free flow of commerce, regional maritime security and freedom of navigation.

“This mission is a strong example of the value a deployed naval expeditionary force brings to combatant commanders and joint partners in the region,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Stewart Bateshansky, Makin Island ARG commodore. “The MEU’s ability to source combat sorties from the Makin Island, while simultaneously supporting training and operations, is a testament to the flexibility and responsiveness of our Navy and Marine Corps team.”

The Makin Island ARG and embarked 15th MEU provide the combatant commander with a responsive, flexible and forward-deployed asset capable of maritime power projection, contingency operations and crisis response, shaping the operational environment to protect the United States and allied interests in any threat environment.

“We are proud and excited to be able to support missions in areas of the world where we are most needed,” said U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Christopher Kelly, VMM-164 (Rein.) executive officer. “Conducting a long range strike mission with fifth

generation F-35B fighters from amphibious assault ships demonstrates the versatility this platform brings to the joint force.”

The U.S. 5th Fleet AOR encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water and includes the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse is comprised of 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

Cubic to Deliver P5 Combat Training System for the F-35



U.S. Marines with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211, 13th

Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), guide ordnance toward an F-35B Lightning II aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2), Sept. 22, 2018. Cubic Mission and Performance Solutions will provide two more production lots of the P5 Combat Training System for the F-35. U.S. Marine Corps / Cpl. Francisco J. Diaz Jr.

SAN DIEGO –Cubic Mission and Performance Solutions (CMPS) business division was awarded a contract worth \$32 million from Lockheed Martin for two more production lots of the P5 Combat Training System (P5CTS) for the F-35 Lightning II, Cubic announced in a Feb. 19 release.

Under the contract, Cubic will deliver over 150 training subsystems for Lockheed Martin's F-35 Air Combat Maneuvering Instrumentation (ACMI) system. This new order increases the total number of F-35 P5 on contract to over 1,150 and ensures fielding of F-35 P5 out to 2025.

Unlike traditional P5 podded solutions for fourth-generation fighter aircraft, the F-35 P5 is an internal subsystem configuration that relays time, space and position information between participating aircraft and range ground stations during training sorties.

"Our advanced and interoperable P5CTS is used on more than 30 ranges worldwide and continues to set the standard for joint, multiservice and coalition training," said Mike Knowles, president of Cubic Mission and Performance Solutions. "Training for today's advanced threats to air combat operations requires adaptable, high-fidelity training tools. Cubic's P5CTS provides secure and scalable instrumentation solutions that enable integrated fourth- and fifth-generation training for our U.S. forces, allies and partners."

The worldwide P5 infrastructure includes the integration of P5 pods and internal subsystems, ground stations and software, and is an investment shared by 17 countries. A recent upgrade to this training infrastructure is the integration of decryptors in the P5 ground stations to enable F-35 live

monitoring at training ranges.

Cubic and its principal subcontractor, Leonardo DRS, will continue to produce and maintain the F-35 P5 internal subsystem. The Leonardo DRS Airborne and Intelligence Systems business division is responsible for the design and production of the airborne P5CTS Internal Subsystem.

State Dept. Approves Possible Sale of RAM Block 2 Missiles for Egyptian Navy



The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) launches a Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) during combat system ship qualification trials in this 2018 photo. U.S. Navy photo
WASHINGTON—The U.S. State Department has approved a possible Foreign Military Sale to the government of Egypt of Rolling

Airframe Missile (RAM) Block 2 tactical missiles and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$197 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said in a Feb. 16 release.

Egypt has requested to buy up to 168 RIM-116C RAM Block 2 missiles, according to the release. "Also included in the possible sale are RAM Guided Missile Round Pack Tri-Pack shipping and storage containers; operator manuals and technical documentation; U.S. government and contractor engineering, technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistical and program support."

The proposed sale will support the Egyptian navy's fast missile craft to provide "significantly enhanced area defense capabilities over Egypt's coastal areas and approaches to the Suez Canal. Egypt will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces since Egypt already operates previously procured RAM Block 1A missiles," the release said.

The principal contractor will be Raytheon Missiles & Defense, Tucson, Arizona.

KBR to Reinforce the US Navy's Counter-Unmanned Air Systems



1st Lt. Taylor Barefoot, a low altitude air defense officer with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163 (Reinforced), 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, programs a counter-unmanned aircraft system on a Light Marine Air Defense Integrated System (LMADIS) during a predeployment training exercise at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Nov. 13, 2018. U.S. Marine Corps / Lance Cpl. Dalton S. Swanbeck

HOUSTON – KBR has been awarded a \$92.6 million contract to perform engineering, integration and sustainment services on counter unmanned air systems (C-UAS) for the Combat Integration & Identification Systems unit within the U.S. Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD), the company said in a Feb. 16 release.

This cost-plus-fixed-fee, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract is a new opportunity for KBR to help the U.S. military with ground-based air defense.

KBR will provide its expertise to various Navy identification and data link systems, which include the Negation of Improvised Non-State Joint Aerial-Threats (NINJA) system;

Counter-Remote Control Model Aircraft Integrated Air Defense Network (CORIAN) system; SkyTracker UAS detection and tracking suite; Light Marine Air Defense Integrated System (LMADIS); Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS); and ANDURIL artificial intelligence platforms.

The Department of Defense uses these C-UAS systems to strengthen homeland security and address potential threats in the U.S. and abroad. The systems can scan the skies for enemy aircraft and take appropriate action to deny airspace access.

KBR's specific tasks will include the integration and installation of systems; the characterization of system and subsystem components; development of training curriculum and materials, as well as delivery of formal training programs; supply system management and material control; testing and repair of C-UAS; and laboratory maintenance and quality assurance. The company will perform the five-year contract primarily at Webster Outlying Field in St. Inigoes, Maryland.

KBR's services supporting NAWCAD will also benefit programs sponsored by the Naval Air Systems Command; Naval Sea Systems Command; Naval Inventory Control Point – Mechanicsburg; U.S. Coast Guard; commercial and Foreign Military Sales customers; and other DoD and government entities.

“Our work through this new win will have wide-reaching impacts within the DoD and international allied community,” said Byron Bright, KBR Government Solutions president. “We are excited to join NAWCAD as it advances C-UAS technology and, ultimately, strengthens national security and protects our armed forces around the globe.”

Astronics Awarded Boeing Contracts to Support Navy's MQ-25 Unmanned Tanker



The MQ-25 unmanned aerial refueling tanker. Boeing EAST AURORA, N.Y. – Astronics Corp. has been awarded contracts by Boeing to supply CorePower aircraft power distribution units and custom-engineered exterior lighting for the MQ-25 unmanned aerial refueling program, Astronics said in a Feb. 17 release.

“Our CorePower Electronic Circuit Breaker Unit (ECBU) technology is ideally suited for use in unmanned aircraft. This COTS [commercial off the shelf] power distribution technology will support the success of the MQ-25 program by providing intelligent control and visibility of the on-board power systems,” said Pete Gundermann, president and CEO of Astronics. “Additionally, we are proud to bring our exterior lighting expertise for military programs to Boeing on this

project.”

The CorePower system replaces pilot-operated, thermal mechanical breaker systems with intelligently controlled, solid-state switches to provide safe, reliable performance remotely. The system planned for the MQ-25 incorporates the use of Astronics’ latest generation ECBU products to create an evenly distributed system at a fraction of the wire weight and increased reliability compared with traditional systems.

Astronics is also currently working with Boeing to design custom lighting for the MQ-25 that to provide for safe operations for flight deck personnel and aid in the aerial refueling process.

The MQ-25 is the U.S. Navy’s first operational carrier-based unmanned aircraft and is designed to provide a much-needed refueling capability. The contract supports Boeing’s engineering and manufacturing development program.

“The MQ-25 program is vital because it will help the U.S. Navy to extend the range of the carrier air wing and Boeing and our industry team is all-in on delivering this capability,” said Dave Bujold, Boeing’s MQ-25 program director. “The work we’re doing is also foundational for the future of Boeing – where we’re building autonomous systems from seabed to space.”

**Navy Awards Collins Aerospace
\$64 Million Contract for**

Warship Sonar Domes



The Naval Programs group within Aerostructures at Collins Aerospace has supplied more than 25 composite keel domes and 360 rubber bow windows for U.S. Navy surface ships. Collins Aerospace

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, Indiana, has awarded Collins Aerospace Systems, a unit of Raytheon Technologies, a seven-year, \$64 million indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract to provide sonar domes for surface combat ships for the U.S. Navy and allied forces, the company said in a Feb. 16 release.

The agreement, which builds upon a previous five-year production contract, includes shipping, installation, engineering support, field services, inspection and repairs. Work will be produced by the Naval Programs (Engineered Polymer Products) group of the Aerostructures business unit at Collins Aerospace.

Sonar domes, located on the hulls of warships, protect critical electronic equipment used for detection, navigation

and ranging. The domes permit acoustic energy to pass through with minimal sound transmission interference.

The contract includes domes made of a proprietary advanced composite material developed by Collins Aerospace that provides optimal structural and acoustic performance to the ship's sonar system. This allows for enhanced detection and classification of underwater targets. These composite keel domes replaced traditional rubber domes on U.S. and Allied Navy frigates in 1997 because they require less maintenance and are expected to last more than 30 years even under the most extreme operating conditions.

"Our sailors are putting their lives on the line, and they need the most advanced solutions available to keep them safe. We've spent more than 25 years refining our sonar systems technologies and materials to do just that," said Marc Duvall, president of Aerostructures at Collins Aerospace. "We're honored to serve the men and women of the Navy and provide the technology they need to see deep into the seas they protect."

To date, Naval Programs has supplied over 25 composite bow domes for U.S. Navy Virginia-class submarines, as well as more than 25 composite keel domes and 360 rubber bow windows for U.S. Navy surface ships.

First ACV Command Variant Delivered to Marine Corps for

Testing



U.S. Marines with Amphibious Vehicle Test Branch, Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity, drive new Amphibious Combat Vehicles along the beach during low-light surf transit testing at AVTB Beach on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, Dec. 18, 2019. U.S. Marine Corps / Lance Cpl. Andrew Cortez STAFFORD, Va. – BAE Systems has handed over the first of a new variant of the Amphibious Combat Vehicle to the U.S. Marine Corps for testing, the company said in a Feb. 18 release. The Command variant (ACV-C) is designed to provide the highest levels of communications, coordination, and analysis on the battlefield to support command and control.

BAE Systems is under contract to deliver two variants to the Marine Corps under the ACV Family of Vehicles program: the ACV personnel carrier (ACV-P) and the ACV-C. A 30mm cannon (ACV-30) is currently under contract for design and development and a recovery variant (ACV-R) is also planned.

The ACV-C employs multiple workstations for Marines to maintain and manage situational awareness in the battle space. The workstations access independent networks for advanced

digital communications while on the move. This capability supports immediate information synchronization in the application of combat power.

“This ACV’s base design for payload makes it a uniquely adaptable platform for the integration of numerous mission capability sets,” said John Swift, director of amphibious programs at BAE Systems. “The delivery of the first ACV-C for testing is significant as it provides Marines with advanced operational control for defeating adversaries. Marines will be able to quickly receive and analyze data, coordinate battlefield functions, and transmit information to provide terminal mission control rapidly from the mobile protected ACV-C.”

The ACV platform was designed to grow and adapt to mission needs, allowing space for new capabilities as technology evolves such as turreted, reconnaissance, electronic warfare, anti-air, and UAS systems integration.

The Marine Corps and BAE Systems entered full-rate production on the ACV program with a contract award in December, achieving its most significant milestone to date along with the Marine Corps’ decision to declare initial operational capability. Work is currently underway on the ACV-30 variant.

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.

Cutter Delivers Water to Alaska Residents Experiencing Waterline Failures



Coast Guard Cutter Hickory crewmembers offload pallets of water in a humanitarian effort to deliver goods to the small community of Angoon, Alaska, Feb. 14, 2021. U.S. Coast Guard KODIAK, Alaska – The Coast Guard Cutter Hickory crewmembers delivered pallets of water to the remote community of Angoon, Alaska, on Feb. 14, after the residents experienced waterline

failures, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a Feb. 16 release.

The cutter crew loaded four pallets of water onto the ship with each pallet containing 1,700 bottles and delivered the supplies to Angoon Sunday evening.

Along with the nearly 7,000 bottles of water being delivered, the Hickory crew reportedly had 8,000 gallons of potable water onboard that could be offloaded to the residents if needed.

Coast Guard District 17 Command Center watchstanders received a call Saturday afternoon from the Alaska Emergency Operations Center requesting assistance in delivering the pallets.

Angoon, a small community with a population of 400, is experiencing waterline failures resulting in one third of the community being completely without water while the rest of the residents have been advised to boil water before consumption.

There was no water available at the local store and commercial services are not available to deliver water until late next week. The waterline failures are expected to last for a couple of weeks.

The Hickory is a 225-foot sea-going buoy tender homeported in Homer, Alaska.

Cutters Interdict 3 Suspected Smuggling Vessels, \$156M of

Cocaine in Eastern Pacific



Coast Guard Cutter Munro (WMSL 755) boarding team member sits atop an interdicted low-profile vessel in the Eastern Pacific Ocean after crews seized 3,439 pounds of cocaine from the LPV, Jan. 27, 2021. U.S. Coast Guard ALAMEDA, Calif. – Crews aboard two Alameda-based Coast Guard cutters interdicted three suspected drug smuggling vessels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean between Jan. 26 and Feb. 1 and seized more than 9,000 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated \$156 million, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Feb. 17 release.

Conducting the operations were the crews of the Coast Guard Cutters Munro (WMSL 755) and Bertholf (WMSL 750).

Munro's crew boarded a fishing vessel Jan. 26 suspected of smuggling illicit narcotics. Exercising a bilateral agreement with a partner nation, the boarding teams searched and discovered 1,300 pounds of cocaine concealed within the

vessel.

Munro's crew interdicted a second suspected drug smuggling vessel hours later after a maritime patrol aircraft detected a suspicious vessel and directed Munro's crew towards it. Munro launched a helicopter aircrew and boarding teams, and together they interdicted a low-profile vessel. The boarding teams discovered 3,439 pounds of cocaine aboard the purpose-built drug smuggling vessel.

"Having back-to-back cases lasting 31 hours pushed our limits, but our crew took on the challenge," said Capt. Blake Novak, commanding officer of the Munro. "Cartels are cunning and sophisticated, and this is a dynamic environment, which required interagency and international coordination which yielded results. I am proud of our crew, but these successes would not be possible without our Central and South American partnerships."

On Feb. 1, Bertholf's boarding teams also interdicted a low-profile vessel, seizing more than 4,380 pounds of cocaine.

Cartels design low-profile vessels specifically to evade law enforcement by being difficult to detect. These vessels are built to ferry large quantities of illicit contraband while riding low in the water.

"The crew continues to impress me as they rise above challenges, stand a taut watch, and conduct themselves in a professional manner as we go about our business of stemming the flow of narcotics in the Eastern Pacific," said Capt. Brian Anderson, commanding officer of the Bertholf. "I could not be more pleased with the overall teamwork between the aircraft, our small boats, and my crew in the interdiction of this drug laden vessel. Together we are making a difference."

Nine suspected traffickers were taken into custody between the three interdictions.

Munro and Bertholf are two of four 418-foot Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda. National security cutters have a crew of more than 150 and are among the largest and most technologically sophisticated vessels in the Coast Guard's fleet. The cutters can operate globally in the most demanding open ocean environments, from the North Pacific's hazardous fishing grounds to the Eastern Pacific's vast approaches, where its crews battle transnational crime.