

# Airbus and U.S. Coast Guard Sign Support Agreement for MH-65 Fleet



From Airbus Helicopters

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas, 29 January 2025 – Airbus Helicopters has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to continue providing support for the service’s fleet of MH-65 Dolphin helicopters through 2037. The agreement reaffirms Airbus Helicopters’ commitment to ensuring the mission readiness of the USCG’s fleet as it performs critical search and rescue, law enforcement, and disaster response missions.

Under the terms of the MOU, Airbus Helicopters will deliver enhanced maintenance, spare parts, and technical support to

optimize the performance and availability of the MH-65 fleet. The agreement also includes provisions for fleet modernization and engineering services to extend the operational life of the aircraft.

“The U.S. Coast Guard’s MH-65 helicopters are at the forefront of safeguarding our nation’s coastlines and saving lives,” said Bart Reijnen, President of Airbus Helicopters in the U.S. and Head of the North America region. “We are honored to continue working with the Coast Guard to ensure their fleet remains mission-ready for years to come. This agreement demonstrates our shared commitment to safety, reliability, and operational excellence.”

The MH-65 Dolphin has been the backbone of the Coast Guard’s aviation fleet for more than four decades. With this new MOU, Airbus Helicopters and the USCG aim to maintain the fleet’s high level of operational capability, enabling continued support for critical missions across the country.

Airbus Helicopters has a long-standing partnership with the USCG, providing tailored solutions to meet the service’s dynamic operational demands. The extended collaboration will build on this history, leveraging Airbus’ global support network and industry-leading expertise.

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**Lockheed Martin Offers Mk70  
Launcher to Increase**

# Lethality of LCS



An SM-6 missile is launched from a containerized launcher on board USS Savannah (LCS 28) on Oct. 24, 2023. (U.S. Navy photo)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – Lockheed Martin has adapted its Mk41 vertical missile launcher into a scalable containerized system that can be deployed on U.S. Navy ships, including the littoral combat ships (LCS) and non-traditional platforms of opportunity to increase their lethality with mid-range precision strike and air defense capabilities, company officials said.

The system, called the Mk70 Payload Delivery System, is a 40-foot-long ISO container in which four VLS cells can be fitted. The Mk70 system, designed for and deployed with the U.S. Army in a land-based configuration, can launch any type of missile certified for the Mk41, including the Tomahawk cruise missile, the various Standard surface-to-air missiles, the antisubmarine rocket, and the Evolved SeaSparrow missile. The Mk70 container is transportable on a C-17 cargo aircraft.

Ed Dobeck, director for launching systems at Lockheed Martin, told Seapower that the Mk70 was developed two years ago in concert with the Defense Department's Strategic Capabilities Office to provide the Army with the ability to deploy and fire the Raytheon-built SM-6 Standard missile.

The same container can be secured on the flight deck or helicopter landing pad of a Navy ship using helicopter tie-down chains, occupying 400 square feet of a flight deck. Power from the ship's electrical system can supply 400 volts to the Mk70. No modifications are required to the ship itself. The container can be installed within hours with a pier-side crane. A command shelter with virtual Aegis and Tomahawk control systems controls the launch of the missiles.

The flight deck of the Freedom-class LCS can accommodate three Mk70 containers, while the Independence-class LCS can accommodate four containers, Dobeck said. With one or more containers installed, the ships are unable to launch or land helicopters. The missile tubes can be reloaded horizontally, an advantage over the ship-installed Mk41's need for vertical re-load by cranes.

Lockheed Martin has demonstrated containerized launch of SM-6 missiles from two Navy ships. An SM-6 missile was fired from the USS Savannah (LCS 28) in October 2023 and before that another was fired from the Overlord medium unmanned surface vessel Ranger during an exercise.

Dobeck said that the Navy has shown great interest in the Mk70 system, which already has been delivered to the Army. Two full batteries – totaling eight missile cells – have been delivered to the Army and two have been delivered to other customers. The Army has deployed the Mk70 to the Philippines

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# Operation Southern Spear: Latest Development in Operationalizing Robotic and Autonomous Systems



Operation Southern Spear will deploy unmanned air and surface vessels to help determine combinations of unmanned vehicles and manned forces to provide coordinated maritime domain awareness and conduct counternarcotics operations.

From U.S. 4th Fleet, Jan. 28, 2025

MAYPORT, Fla. – U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet is advancing the Navy's Hybrid Fleet Campaign through Operation Southern Spear, which will start later this month in U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility (USSOUTHCOM AOR) and at U.S. 4th Fleet Headquarters at Naval Station Mayport.

“Southern Spear will operationalize a heterogeneous mix of Robotic and Autonomous Systems (RAS) to support the detection and monitoring of illicit trafficking while learning lessons for other theaters,” said Cmdr. Foster Edwards, 4th Fleet's Hybrid Fleet Director. “Southern Spear will continue our (4th Fleet's) move away from short-duration experimentation into long-duration operations that will help develop critical techniques and procedures in integrating RAS into the maritime environment.”

Specifically, Operation Southern Spear will deploy long-dwell robotic surface vessels, small robotic interceptor boats, and vertical take-off and landing robotic air vessels to the USSOUTHCOM AOR. 4th Fleet will operationalize these unmanned systems through integration with U.S. Coast Guard cutters at sea and operations centers at 4th Fleet and Joint Interagency Task Force South. Southern Spear's results will help determine combinations of unmanned vehicles and manned forces needed to provide coordinated maritime domain awareness and conduct counternarcotics operations.

U.S. 4th Fleet is conducting Operation Southern Spear in support of our Navy's Project 33 targets to operationalize RAS. Using RAS to increase presence in, and awareness of, strategically and economically important maritime regions will help decision-making, strengthen sovereignty, and facilitate regional cooperation.

“Operation Southern Spear is the next step in our Hybrid Fleet

Campaign,” said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet. “We look forward to the results of Southern Spear. Hybrid Fleet operations increase our collaboration with partners in the region while furthering the Navy’s tactics, techniques, procedures, and processes.”

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet is the trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South America maritime forces leading to improved unity, security and stability.

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## Secretary Hegseth’s Message to the Force



From U.S. Department of Defense Public Affairs, Jan. 25, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – The following message to the U.S. armed forces was released by the new Defense Secretary, Pete Hegseth:

“It is the privilege of a lifetime to lead the warriors of the Department of Defense, under the leadership of our Commander in Chief Donald J. Trump. We will put America First, and we will never back down.

The President gave us a clear mission: achieve Peace through Strength. We will do this in three ways – by restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding our military, and reestablishing deterrence.

o We will revive the warrior ethos and restore trust in our military. We are American warriors. We will defend our country. Our standards will be high, uncompromising, and clear. The strength of our military is our unity and our shared purpose.

o We will rebuild our military by matching threats to capabilities. This means reviving our defense industrial base, reforming our acquisition process, passing a financial audit, and rapidly fielding emerging technologies. We will remain the strongest and most lethal force in the world.

o We will reestablish deterrence by defending our homeland – on the ground and in the sky. We will work with allies and partners to deter aggression in the Indo-Pacific by Communist China, as well as supporting the President’s priority to end wars responsibly and reorient to key threats. We will stand by our allies – and our enemies are on notice.

All of this will be done with a focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards, and readiness.

I have committed my life to warfighters and their families. Just as my fellow soldiers had my back on the battlefield, know that I will always have your back. We serve together at a dangerous time. Our enemies will neither rest nor relent. And neither will we. We will stand shoulder to shoulder to meet the urgency of this moment.

Like each of you, I love my country and swore an oath to defend the Constitution. We will do that each and every day, as one team. Together we will accomplish the President's mission to deter war, and if necessary, defeat and destroy our enemies. Godspeed!"

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## **HII Closes on Asset Acquisition to Expand Shipbuilding Capacity**



## Operations Are Underway at Newport News Shipbuilding Charleston Operations

From HII

GOOSE CREEK, S.C., Jan. 27, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) announced today it has closed on its acquisition of an advanced manufacturing facility and assets and begun work at its Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) – Charleston Operations site in South Carolina.

“HII is committed to going where the labor is to increase shipbuilding capacity and increase throughput for our national security customers,” HII President and CEO Chris Kastner said. “This lets us efficiently add trained talent and state-of-the-art manufacturing capabilities to the urgent job of building ships, making it a unique opportunity to immediately accelerate throughput at Newport News Shipbuilding in support of the Navy and AUKUS.”

HII announced last month its intent to acquire the facility and associated assets. Since then, more than 99% of the legacy workforce have accepted offers to continue to work on site, supporting the construction of nuclear-powered submarine

modules and aircraft carrier units for U.S. Navy programs. Working closely with the South Carolina state and regional leadership, HII plans to create hundreds of additional jobs to support the increased demand and growth at the Charleston facility.

Photos accompanying this release are available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-closes-on-asset-acquisition-to-expand-shipbuilding-capacity/>.

In addition to existing trained talent, HII's acquisition also provides:

Advanced production facilities with state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment, tooling and infrastructure used to fabricate complex metal modules and structures.

Facility location on 45-acres with more than 480,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

Access to barge and rail transportation.

Access in nearby Charleston and surrounding region to rapidly growing shipbuilding ecosystem and capacity to expand a highly skilled maritime trades workforce.

"This is great news for the South Carolina economy. This investment will allow us to expand our manufacturing footprint more aggressively in the shipbuilding industry," U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said. "If you can drive it, fly it, shoot it or float it, South Carolina makes it."

"The expansion of our nation's largest military shipbuilder in South Carolina underscores the pivotal role our state plays in strengthening America's national security," U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., said. "The dedicated shipbuilders in the Charleston area are part of a highly skilled workforce that will propel our nation forward. This innovation and modernization in our defense industrial base will create jobs

and draw resources to our state's already robust Navy presence."

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# Coast Guard Conducts Alien Expulsion Flight Operations Between California and Texas



U.S. Coast Guard conducts Alien Expulsion Flight Operations in coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. (U.S. Coast Guard)

From Coast Guard Headquarters Public Affairs, Jan. 25, 2025

SAN DIEGO – Today, the Coast Guard conducted several Alien

Expulsion Flight Operations between California and Texas, in coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

“In accordance with the President’s Executive Orders, the Coast Guard continues to surge assets and leverage its unique capabilities to protect America’s borders, territorial integrity, and sovereignty,” said Adm. Kevin Lunday, the Coast Guard’s Acting Commandant. “Today’s operation exemplifies our coordination with our Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense teammates, through which we are detecting, deterring, and interdicting aliens, drug smuggling, and other terrorist or hostile activity before it reaches our border.”

The Coast Guard is coordinating the operations of multiple Coast Guard units in support of this operation. Led by the Eleventh Coast Guard District in California, the Service is surging assets and personnel from around the nation to support the Department of Homeland Security-led operation.

The Coast Guard’s current role is to assist with the national transport of aliens to designated locations in Texas and California, where the Department of Defense will transport the aliens internationally.

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## **3d Marine Littoral Regiment Fires the Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS)**

From 3d Marine Littoral Regiment, Jan. 25, 2025

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii – U.S. Marines with 3d Marine

Littoral Regiment, 3d Marine Division, conducted a counter unmanned aerial system live-fire training event utilizing the Marine Air Defense Integrated System – a ground-based air defense capability, on January 25, 2025, to commemorate the addition of the MADIS and the months of operational testing and evaluation required to field this new weapon system.

Lt. Col. Matthew E. Sladek, Commanding Officer, 3d Littoral Anti-Air Battalion, stated, “The fielding of the Marine Air Defense Integrated System to the Marines of 3d Littoral Anti-Air Battalion is the culmination of years of tireless work from government and industry teammates across the country. The delivery of the critical capabilities the system provides to 3d Littoral Anti-Air Battalion and by extension 3d Marine Littoral Regiment, makes the stand-in-force more survivable and lethal in the conduct of contested littoral operations against emerging aerial threats. As a career Low Altitude Air Defender Marine, it is truly amazing to have watched the Marine Air Defense Integrated System transition from an idea to a capability and with it, the modernization of Marine Corps short range air defense capabilities. Now the real work begins.”

The MADIS is operated by the Marines of 3d LAAB’s Ground-Based Air Defense Battery. Giving low-altitude air defense Marines the ability to detect, track, identify, and engage various unmanned aerial systems with various missiles, air-to-air launchers, chain guns, machine guns, and simulated munitions – all of which are part of the MADIS weapon system.

The MADIS live-fire event marked the first time this weapon system has been fired on a Hawaiian island since it’s fielding in December, attendees were able ask questions to commanders and subject matter experts about the fielding process and the operational value of the system. Training with the MADIS reinforces the Marine Corps’ threat-informed, concept-based approach to Force Design and modernization, and 3d MLR’s support to allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region.





By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – The industry association for suppliers for the builder of U.S. Navy’s amphibious warfare fleet sees immediate benefits this year and the next one for its member companies, the association’s survey said.

In its annual survey of 219 member companies, the Amphibious Warfare Industrial Base Coalition (AWIBC) said that a majority of its member companies affirmed that the Navy’s announcement last year of a multi-ship buy will benefit their companies.

The survey focused on the August 2024 announcement by then-Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro that the Navy would procure four amphibious warfare ships – one America-class amphibious assault ship (LHA) and three Flight II San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ships (LPDs) in a bundle procurement according to the below schedule:

- LPD 33 in FY25
  
- LPD 34 in FY27

- LHA 10 in FY27
- LPD 35 in FY29

The four ships in the procurement would be built at the HII Ingalls Shipbuilding shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

“Our survey asked specifically about the impacts this bundle will have on the supplier base,” said Jack Feenick, a spokesman for the AWIBC. “We also included questions about the overall health of the industrial base, touching on key areas like workforce, training, inflation, and supply chain disruptions. Below are some of the key findings from our survey and attached is an infographic that provides some more insight on the data.”

### **Amphibious Warship Industrial Base Coalition (AWIBC) Survey**

*(Conducted survey from October – November 2024 from a sample of 219 total suppliers.)*

- 65% of amphibious warship suppliers say that the bundle buy will lead to immediate benefits starting in 2025 or 2026.
- 82% of suppliers that support both amphibious ships and submarines agree that bundle buys benefit their capability to deliver on orders as well as their overall capacity.
- 52% say the bundle purchase will strengthen the shipbuilding industrial base to meet the demand of today and tomorrow

- 46% say the bundle purchase enables the hiring, retention, and training of a workforce
- 42% say the bundle purchase helps invest in equipment to ensure quality and on-time delivery
- Consistent with findings from our survey last year, the top three challenges facing suppliers are:
  - Inflation
  - Workforce training and retention
  - Supply chain disruptions
- Currently, only 10% of amphibious warship suppliers are operating at full capacity.
- 74% of suppliers who say they are sole-source/single-source supplier to the Navy are amphib suppliers.
- Suppliers say that multi-ship procurements and earlier AP [advance procurement] funding are most likely factors to drive down material costs, help meet delivery schedules and improve their workforce and facilities.

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# Forging the Future: Training Center Opens to Train Next Generation of Defense Manufacturers



Jim Hook, an Accelerated Training for Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) instructor, teaches a student how to use a Haas CNC machine at the newly opened National Training Center in Danville, Virginia. This state-of-the-art facility, which opened on January 13, 2025, expands the program's capacity to train skilled workers for submarine and surface ship manufacturing. (Courtesy photo from ATDM)

From The Maritime Industrial Base Program, Jan. 24, 2025

DANVILLE, Va. – The U.S. Navy strengthened its efforts to revitalize the nation's shipbuilding capability with the

opening of a new training center in Danville, Virginia.

The Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) program, launched in 2021, has graduated more than 777 students from 45 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Australia. About 25% of participants are veterans, and the program boasts a 90% job placement rate within the defense industrial base. New cohorts begin every eight weeks, offering a fast track to meaningful careers across five trades.

The new National Training Center, a state-of-the-art, 100,000-square-foot facility on the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) campus, opened its doors on January 13. On that day, the center welcomed its first cohort of students, marking the beginning of an expanded operation that will train 1,000 students annually, creating a pipeline of skilled workers critical for building and maintaining the nation's submarines and warships.

"This facility helps address our immediate workforce needs," said Frederick "Jay" Stefany, the Direct Reporting Program Manager for the Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program. "It advances our efforts to restore our industrial base and ensure our industry partners have the skilled workforce they need to build and maintain the Navy's fleet."

ATDM's graduates are essential in addressing the maritime industry's expanding workforce needs. The Navy's shipbuilding plans include the construction of Columbia-class and Virginia-class submarines, along with more than 10 different classes of surface ships, including aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates, amphibious warships, and support vessels. This unprecedented scale of shipbuilding requires a comprehensive strategy to rebuild America's manufacturing capabilities. The establishment of the National Training Center marks a significant milestone in this endeavor.

## **A National Imperative**

The MIB Program leads the Navy's workforce development initiatives while advancing shipbuilding and repair capabilities through industrial base development, supply chain resilience, and advanced manufacturing technologies. With the U.S. manufacturing base having shrunk to a third of its size from 30 years ago, the program must overcome major challenges. One of these pressing challenges involves recruiting and training 140,000 new workers over the next decade for submarine production and sustainment, with an additional 110,000 workers needed for surface vessel construction and maintenance.

"The decline in American manufacturing has created a critical skills gap," said Erica Logan, Workforce Director for the MIB Program. "But we're not just filling jobs—we're rebuilding America's maritime manufacturing capability and offering meaningful careers for the next generation of workers. Every graduate represents another step toward restoring our nation's industrial strength."

This workforce development initiative is vital for both new construction and fleet maintenance, underscoring the strategic importance of programs like ATDM in maintaining America's naval readiness. This national revitalization effort takes shape through individual success stories and community partnerships.

The IALR campus, which hosts the National Training Center, also houses another key MIB Program initiative: the Navy's Additive Manufacturing Center of Excellence. This co-location creates a hub for maritime manufacturing innovation.

### **Transforming Lives, Strengthening Communities**

Natasha Barnes, part of the inaugural class that began training January 13 in the new facility, represents a growing wave of skilled workers entering the defense manufacturing workforce.

“ATDM has done an excellent job adapting during the transition into the new facility,” said Barnes, a CNC student. “It’s been an uplifting experience to learn in such a clean and well-maintained environment. I am very excited to see what the future holds for the program.”

For Telly Tucker, president of the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), the program’s impact goes beyond the classroom.

“This facility is about more than training—it’s about revitalizing southern Virginia,” Tucker said. “It’s creating jobs, fostering economic growth, and building a pipeline of skilled workers who will strengthen our nation’s security.”

To deliver on this promise of regional revitalization and support to national security, the National Training Center provides intensive, hands-on preparation.

### **Hands-On Training for Real-World Impact**

ATDM’s intensive, 16-week accelerated training program provides students with 600 hours of hands-on experience in one of five trades critical to maritime manufacturing: welding, CNC machining, additive manufacturing, quality assurance, and non-destructive testing. Training runs on three shifts, mirroring the 24/7 operations of the defense industry.

“This program isn’t theoretical—it’s practical,” said Christa Reed, ATDM’s Interim Vice-President. “When our students graduate, they’re not just trained—they’re ready to hit the ground running.”

The curriculum, developed in collaboration with industry leaders, ensures students are equipped with the skills and certifications needed to meet the Navy’s rigorous standards. By

simulating real-world manufacturing environments, the program

prepares graduates to succeed in high-demand roles. This focused training approach directly enhances America's maritime security.

### **A Shared Mission**

The opening of the National Training Center represents a milestone in the Navy's efforts to address workforce challenges and bolster the maritime industrial base. For Stefany, it's a reminder of how these efforts impact national security.

"Every ship we build, every submarine we launch, is a promise to the American people," Stefany said. "That promise begins here, with the people we train."

As the Navy ramps up its fleet expansion, programs like ATDM and the new National Training Center are creating a ripple effect—transforming communities, empowering individuals, and ensuring America's maritime superiority. The center highlights innovation, collaboration, and resilience, its impact extending beyond Danville to strengthen America's maritime future.

For more information about ATDM and its programs, visit [www.atdm.org](http://www.atdm.org).

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# **Kratos Receives \$34.8M Contract for Valkyrie Mission System Integration**



From Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Jan. 21, 2025

SAN DIEGO, Jan. 21, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – [Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc.](#) (Nasdaq: KTOS), a Technology Company in Defense, National Security and Global Markets, announced today a \$34,856,449 award modification to a previously awarded cost-plus-fixed-fee contract from the U.S. Marine Corps. The expanded scope is to support the XQ-58A Unmanned Aerial Systems mission systems and subsystems integration for the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Unmanned Aerial System Expeditionary (MUX) Tactical Aircraft (TACAIR).

Since 2022, Kratos and its industry partner, Northrop Grumman, have been working with the U.S. Marine Corps to define operational requirements for the MQ-58 Valkyrie variant. The team recently demonstrated advanced collaborative capabilities during the Penetrating Affordable Autonomous Collaborative Killer Portfolio (PAACK-P) program, which is transitioning to MUX TACAIR in 2025. The modification contract provides the additional non-recurring engineering and material to support the planned spiral developmental efforts, as well as

additional flight tests for the continuing capability enhancement of the Valkyrie system.

Work under this contract will be performed in Sacramento, California, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, China Lake, California and Patuxent River, Maryland.

Col Derek Brannon, Director of the HQ USMC Cunningham Group, said, "The U.S. Marine Corps is at the vanguard of collaborative combat aircraft (CCA) development and intends to field an operational CCA squadron with a tactically relevant aircraft equipped with effective, affordable mission system payloads."

Steve Fendley, President of Kratos Unmanned Systems Division, said, "The Valkyrie is validating the thesis that uncrewed system development and evaluation can be executed at a fraction of the cost and schedule required for manned military jet aircraft systems. The immediate takeaway is recognizing that uncrewed systems can be teamed in the very near term with existing fielded manned aircraft—reducing risk and increasing effectiveness and life of the manned systems long before replacement or next generation manned systems can be fielded, not to mention afforded. It's an incredible opportunity."

The Kratos XQ-58A Valkyrie is a high-performance, runway-independent tactical unmanned aerial vehicle capable of long-range flights at high-subsonic speeds. Combining affordability, survivability, long-range, high-subsonic speeds, maneuverability and ability to carry flexible mission kit configurations and mix of lethal weapons from its internal weapons bay and wing stations, the XQ-58A provides unmatched operational flexibility at an affordable price for multiple DoD customers.