Navy Accepts Delivery of Ship to Shore Connector, LCAC 109

By Team Ships Public Affairs, May 31, 2024

NEW ORLEANS – The U.S. Navy took delivery of the latest Ship to Shore Connector (SSC), Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 109 from Textron Systems, May 29. This new addition to the fleet signifies a substantial enhancement in the Navy's amphibious capabilities, providing a vital asset for rapid deployment and logistical support.

The delivery of LCAC 109 comes after completion of acceptance trials conducted by the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey, which tested the readiness and capability of the craft to effectively meet its requirements. LCAC 109 is the first delivery of 15 craft from the follow-on contract to the original Detail Design and Construction contract.

"This new craft will provide the Navy and Marine Corps team with unparalleled capability in amphibious warfare, ensuring

we remain agile and responsive to emerging threats and global challenges," said Capt. Jason Grabelle, program manager for Amphibious Assault and Connectors Programs, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. "The introduction of LCAC 109 into our fleet marks a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to maintain and enhance operational readiness."

LCACs are built with configurations, dimensions, and clearances similar to the legacy LCACs they replace – ensuring that this latest air cushion vehicle is fully compatible with existing, well deck-equipped amphibious ships, the Expeditionary Sea Base and the Expeditionary Transfer Dock. LCACs are capable of carrying a 60 to 75-ton payload. They primarily transport weapon systems, equipment, cargo, and assault element personnel through a wide range of conditions, including over-the-beach.

"The successful delivery of LCAC 109 is a testament to the strong partnership between the Navy and Textron Systems," said Captain Grabelle. "This advanced craft will significantly boost our operational capability, providing a critical link in our ability to project power and support joint operations across the globe." Textron Systems is currently in serial production on LCACs 110-122.

As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, auxiliary ships, special mission ships, sealift and support ships.

USS Shoup Changes Command from Commander to Captain

USS Shoup Changes Command from Commander to Captain
By Lt. Travis Weger, 23 May 2024

YOKOSUKA, Japan – Capt. Holman Agard relieved Cmdr. Dale Tourtelotte as commanding officer of the the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 86) May 23, during a change of command ceremony in Yokosuka, Japan.

The event is significant because it marks the commanding officer rank upgrade from commander to captain, which provides the U.S. Navy additional flexibility in terms of the range of missions the ship can conduct.

“It is an honor to not only be selected for this position, but to represent the outstanding crew onboard USS Shoup,” said

Agard. “The change from an O-5 command to an O-6 command is significant. It allows Shoup to serve as the home platform for a warfare commander within a carrier strike group.”
Agard thanked Tourtelotte for his leadership and guidance to the crew during his time as commanding officer.

“It’s been humbling and inspiring to work with this dedicated crew and prepare Shoup for this transition,” said Tourtelotte. “The men and women of Shoup have proven their mettle in an operational environment at-sea and continue to display professionalism and laser focus on mission accomplishment every day. I’m proud of what this team accomplished and know they will be in great hands under the leadership of Capt. Agard.”

In addition to the change from commander to captain, Shoup will add senior subject matter experts to its crew in support of the commanding officer and receive equipment upgrades during its ongoing in-port maintenance period in Yokosuka.

“This change demonstrates our continued commitment to the U.S.-Japanese alliance to promote peace and prosperity within the region,” said Agard. “As forward-deployed naval forces, we are ready to respond to any contingency, at any time. A free and open Indo-Pacific benefits all nations.”

Shoup was previously assigned to Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15.

Shoup is forward-deployed to Japan operating as part of Commander, Task Force 70. CTF 70 has tactical control of carrier strike groups, cruisers, and destroyers that deploy or transit through the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific

region.

BAE Systems to Develop Next-Generation Airborne Decoy Countermeasure

SEAPOWER
The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

From BAE Systems

NASHUA, N.H. – May 15, 2024 – BAE Systems has been selected by the U.S. Navy to develop Dual Band Decoy (DBD), one of the most advanced radio frequency (RF) countermeasures in the world. DBD is a cutting-edge RF self-protection jammer that shields fighter jets from enemy attacks.

Expanding the capabilities of BAE Systems' combat-proven AN/ALE-55 Fiber-Optic Towed Decoy, DBD consists of a towed unit connected by fiber-optic cable to electronic warfare equipment onboard the aircraft. The decoy delivers the latest

jamming technology to disrupt enemy radars and lure missiles away from the aircraft. DBD can be launched by the pilot or automatically in response to threats, offering critical protection in highly contested airspace.

“With Dual Band Decoy, we are building on the ALE-55’s years of mission success as a high-powered jamming system,” said Don Davidson, director of the Advanced Compact Electronic Warfare Solutions product line at BAE Systems. “Dual Band Decoy delivers broad capability that can be installed on a variety of aircraft and is upgradeable to address future threats.”

Dual Band Decoy incorporates the company’s custom integrated circuits, enabling higher performance and more capability with reduced size, weight, and power. DBD is an integral part of BAE Systems’ Intrepid Shield™ approach to creating a protective sphere around platforms in highly contested battlespaces using the full electromagnetic spectrum to detect, exploit, and counter advanced threats.

DBD will be initially fielded on the U.S. Navy’s F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. Work on DBD will be performed at the company’s state-of-the-art facilities in Nashua, N.H.

May 30 U.S. Central Command Update

SEAPOWER
The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

From U.S. Central Command, May 30, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – Between approximately 3:15 and 5 p.m. (Sanaa time) on May 30, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed eight uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAV) in Iranian-backed Houthi controlled areas of Yemen and over the Red Sea.

Additionally, USCENTCOM forces alongside UK Armed Forces conducted strikes against 13 Houthi targets in Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas of Yemen in self-defense.

It was determined that these UAVs and sites presented a threat to U.S. and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region. These actions are necessary to protect our forces, ensure freedom of navigation, and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

Marine Corps Launches Talent Acquisition Pilot for Cyber, Signals Intel

SEAPOWER
The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

QUANTICO, Va. – Manpower and Reserve Affairs announced the Marine Corps Talent Acquisition Pilot (MCTAP) program today, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at identifying and recruiting highly skilled individuals to fill critical roles within the active and reserve components of the 1721 Cyberspace Warfare Operator military occupational specialty and the active component of the 2629 Signals Intelligence Collection Manager MOS. The two-year pilot program commences June 2024.

As a 21st century fighting organization, the Marine Corps must creatively and critically address how to employ talent. The MCTAP explores a pathway for exceptionally talented Americans to join the service at a rank appropriate for their education and experience, up to Gunnery Sergeant, in two pre-determined fields.

“The time and investment in identifying, acquiring, and developing talent is significant, especially in these fields,”

said Lt. Gen. James Glynn, deputy commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs. “This initiative enhances readiness and contributes to lethality by leveraging proven private sector talent to rapidly meet critical areas of capability.”

All applicants accepted into the pilot with no prior Marine Corps experience will complete Marine Corps recruit training and earn the title of Marine. Applicants who previously served in the Marine Corps as successful graduates of recruit training will not be required to retrain.

“For those who have acquired the skills outlined in this MARADMIN and feel called to serve the Nation in uniform, I look forward to your applications,” said Glynn. “Join our prestigious team; we have a place for you.”

Read Marine Administrative Message 253/24 for more information and how to apply.

Winds Damage Navy TH-73 Training Helicopters at Whiting Field

By Richard Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – A strong wind that swept through Naval Air Station Whiting Field caused damage more than three dozen new TH-73 Thrasher training helicopters earlier this month, according to a Navy spokesman.

The following statement was issued by the Commander, Naval Air Training Command (CNATRA):

“On May 13, at approximately 10:35 a.m. CST, a significant weather event involving high winds up to 71 knots (gusting) caused damage to 41 TH-73 Thrasher helicopters assigned to Training Air Wing (TAW) 5. No injury to personnel occurred during the incident and there has been no reported damage to any TH-57 Sea Ranger or T-6 Texan II aircraft positioned on the flight line. All aircraft were parked aboard Naval Air Station Whiting Field during the incident. The full extent of the resources needed to restore the fleet has not yet been finalized, however, repairs are not expected to exceed a month. No operational impact to the CNATRA mission is expected

due to the availability of CNATRA's fleet of TH-57 Sea Ranger helicopters that remain undamaged."

The TH-73A, built by Leonardo's AgustaWestland Philadelphia Corp., is a military version of the Leonardo TH-119. The TH-73A was procured by the Navy to replace the Bell TH-57 Sea Ranger with the role of training rotary-wing and tilt-rotor pilots for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. The TH-73A was first delivered to TAW-5 in August 2021 and began training pilots in September 2022.

The Navy has ordered a total of 130 TH-73As. The Thrasher fleet is expected to complete replacement of the TH-57B/C during fiscal 2025 and serve through 2050, according to the Navy.

Kratos Defense Celebrates 200th Launch of BQM-177A in Support of U.S. Navy Exercises

May 28, 2024 at 8:00 AM EDT

SAN DIEGO – Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc. , a technology company in the defense, national security and global markets and provider of high-performance, jet-powered unmanned aerial systems, announced that on Tuesday, April 2, the Kratos BQM-177A flew in support of the U.S. Navy's AIM-9X mission at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, California. This event marked the 200th launch of the BQM-177A by Pacific Target and Marine Operations (PTMO) and resulted in the successful completion of the exercise.

The BQM-177A is the U.S. Navy's next-generation Sub-Sonic Aerial Target (SSAT). While it provides formidable threat emulation for air-to-air engagements, the BQM-177A's aerodynamic design and unmatched performance capabilities make it the best choice for highly dynamic, high-subsonic, sea-skimming anti-ship cruise missile threat emulation.

Capable of speeds in excess of 0.95 Mach and a sea-skimming altitude as low as 6.6 feet, the BQM-177A has no equal when it comes to delivering realistic anti-ship missile threat emulation.

This highly versatile aerial target supports a variety of mission requirements by carrying a wide array of internal and external payloads, including proximity scoring, Identification Friend or Foe (IFF), passive and active RF augmentation, electronic countermeasures, infrared (IR) augmentation (plume pods), chaff and flare dispensers, and towed targets.

Steve Fendley, President of Kratos Unmanned Systems Division, said about the program's bicentennial milestone, "Because of its high-performance capabilities and demonstrated reliability, the BQM-177A has proven to play a crucial role in the training of today's warfighters. With a global shift toward the use of drones in military applications, this platform is only becoming more relevant in the unmanned

landscape of today's battlefield. The 200th launch is an indicator of just how valuable the 177 is to executing the Navy's objectives, and I am very proud of the role we have to play in preparing our nation's warfighting personnel to be ready for what's next."

Acknowledging this significant program milestone, Greg Crewse, Program Manager for the Navy's Aerial Targets Program Office (PMA-208), said, "The 200th launch of the BQM-177A is a significant achievement that reflects the dedication and skill of our collective team. We are committed to supporting our warfighters' need for next-generation target threat capability and are excited to continue improving aerial target systems to ensure that our Navy is ready for any challenge."

Cubic Awarded NAVAIR Contract to Provide Secure Live Virtual and Constructive Advanced Training Environment (SLATE)

From Cubic Defense, 29 May 2024

SAN DIEGO – Cubic Defense, the world's leading provider of advanced air combat training, is awarded a contract modification with Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) to provide engineering support services for a demonstration in Guam, Valiant Shield '24.

"Cubic's SLATE technology injects synthetic entities and

computer-generated forces to bring the realism of the pacing multi-domain high-end threat environment to the live cockpits and operator consoles," said Paul K. Averna, VP and GM, Advanced Training Solutions for Cubic Defense. "Tomorrow's fight will be different, and our Joint and Coalition operators deserve a fully vetted system that ensures combat readiness today."

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29 May Red Sea Update

From U.S. Central Command, May 29, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – At approximately 8:40 p.m. (Sanaa time) May 28, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed two missile launchers in an Iranian-backed Houthi-controlled area of Yemen.

Separately, at approximately 11:30 p.m. (Sanaa time) on May 28, Iranian-backed Houthis launched two anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM) from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen into the Red Sea. There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition, or commercial ships.

The following day, between 1:26 and 1:38 a.m. (Sanaa time) on May 29, USCENTCOM forces successfully destroyed two uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) over the Red Sea launched from an Iranian-backed Houthi controlled area of Yemen.

It was determined these missiles and systems presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure.

F-35B Crashes in New Mexico En Route Test Assignment

ATLANTIC OCEAN (Oct. 18, 2023) U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Alex Horne, assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23, conducts flight operations from the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales (R09) in the Atlantic Ocean, Oct. 18, 2023. (U.S. Navy photo by Kyra Helwick)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. — An F-35B Lightning II strike fighter crashed shortly after takeoff from Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, on May 28. The pilot ejected and was hospitalized with serious injuries.

The Marine Corps F-35B was en route to deliver to Edwards Air Force Base, California, for assignment to test duties. The

aircraft was flying from the Lockheed Martin factory in Fort Worth, Texas, for delivery to Edwards.

According to press reports, the pilot was an Air Force officer assigned to the Defense Contract Management Agency's Fort Worth office.

Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron One, headquartered at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, has a detachment at Edwards Air Force Base for F-35 test and evaluation.

Rep. Rob Wittman, chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee issued a statement on the mishap:

"I am incredibly grateful to the first responders who promptly aided the pilot after this crash and relieved to hear the pilot is in stable condition. I am praying for the pilot and their family as they undergo treatment for serious injuries.

"Any crash of our military aircraft is of utmost concern. While we know that expanding F-35 test capacity is the first step to fundamental F-35 transformation, this incident exacerbates the already urgent need to expand it. That's why I authored an amendment in this year's National Defense Authorization Act to increase F-35 test capacity by 50%, ensuring that the U.S. military can accelerate tests associated with our nation's largest defense acquisition program.

"This incident will undoubtedly cause a technical setback for F-35 modernization and warrants an extensive and thorough investigation to determine the exact cause of this crash."