

# **Elbit to Provide Advanced Electronic Warfare Capabilities for UK Royal Navy**

LONDON – Elbit Systems UK has been awarded a roughly £73 million (\$98 million) contract from Babcock International Group to provide electronic warfare (EW) capabilities to the Royal Navy, as part of the U.K. Ministry of Defence's Maritime Electronic Warfare Program, the company said in a release.

Elbit Systems UK's role in the project, known as Maritime Electronic Warfare System Integrated Capability Increment 1, will be to provide end-to-end delivery of this EW capability, including in-service support over the course of 13 years.

Under the program, Elbit Systems UK will design, manufacture and deliver maritime EW suites comprised of fully digital full-spectrum radar electronic support measures and EW command and control systems. These latest generation technologies will enhance the situational awareness and anti-ship missile defense of front-line platforms and improve their capability to exploit the electromagnetic environment.

Elbit Systems UK's Electronic Warfare capabilities have been deployed by Five Eyes nations since 2016, referring to an intelligence alliance of the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The Royal Navy will use the latest generation of this technology, developed after years of ground-breaking advancements and innovation in this domain.

"It is clearly the case that both conventional and asymmetric threats are increasingly present in the maritime operating environment and the pace of change in technology means our adversaries will continue to exploit it," said Martin Fausset,



CEO of Elbit Systems UK. "As such, it is operationally vital that the Royal Navy has the latest capabilities that can evolve in line with and, ahead of, existing technologies. Elbit Systems UK is proud to be working with the Royal Navy as we prepare to confront and overcome the threats of today and tomorrow by providing world-leading solutions."

---

## **Military Sealift Command Selects GE Power Conversion for Ships**



Dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE 14) prepares to go alongside the amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) during a replenishment-at-sea in November. Military Sealift Command has awarded GE Power Conversion a contract to



maintain the electric and hybrid power and propulsion systems on its vessels, including T-AKE ships. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class John McGovern*

BOSTON – The U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command (MSC) has awarded GE Power Conversion an indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract to maintain the electric and hybrid electric power and propulsion systems aboard its vessels, the company said Nov. 10. The five-year contract potentially could be worth \$125 million.

The contract covers maintenance, modernization and upgrades, training, repairs, parts, remote technical support and program management on 35 vessels, with more ships to be added as they are built and turned over to MSC after commissioning. The vessels operate throughout the world, and GE's support is expected around the clock, 365 days per year.

The contract also includes planned maintenance industrial assist for shipyard maintenance, industrial control system cybersecurity services support and hardware and software configuration management.

As the original equipment manufacturer, GE Power Conversion received a three-year maintenance contract from MSC in 2012 covering just a few ships. Later, the contract was renewed, and more ships added, with GE earning excellent reviews for both contracts in the contractors past performance rating system.

"We have demonstrated in the past that we are a responsive and knowledgeable service provider, long after equipment delivery," said Mike Kircher, MSC fleet manager for GE Power Conversion. "This long-term contract is the result of customer confidence earned over years of demonstrated value for the range of service support we can provide."

One benefit of the GE contract is the modernization upgrades it supports. "This contract covers the most technologically advanced electric and hybrid power and propulsion systems in



the MSC fleet; these systems allow a level of vessel control and agility that is without parallel, increasing ship handling confidence and safety,” Kircher said. “Looking ahead, the advantage our equipment gives to future ship classes is significant.”

---

## **Austal USA to Lease San Diego Facility to Repair Navy Ships**

SAN DIEGO – Austal USA received approval from the San Diego Port of Commissioners to assume the lease of Marine Group Boat Works in the Port of San Diego. Austal USA and Marine Group Boat Works are entering a 45-day exclusive period to close the agreement, the company said in a Nov. 9 release.

Austal USA will use the 15-acre site to focus on ship repair for U.S. Navy, Military Sealift Command, and U.S. Coast Guard ships. The site, immediately adjacent to U.S. Naval Base San Diego, will include a newly built dry dock designed specifically to handle small surface combatants and other small to medium size ships. Marine Group Boat Works will focus on their yacht repair business in their Chula Vista shipyard.

“This investment marks a major milestone in Austal’s focus on growing our services business and anchors our commitment to servicing Navy, Military Sealift and Coast Guard ships in the Indo-Pacific Command region. This facility expands our commitment to our customers to ensure they are receiving the Austal USA brand quality throughout the lifecycle of the ships we deliver,” Austal USA President Rusty Murdaugh said. “As the industry leader for on-schedule and on-budget delivery to the U.S. Navy, Austal USA has made continuous improvement a



cornerstone of our culture and operations.”

Austal USA will establish a full-service ship repair capability providing maintenance and modernization for small surface combatants, autonomous vehicles, and other vessels. The site will include a dry dock optimized to execute availabilities on littoral combat ships and other small surface combatants. Services include technical and material support, topside work, and dry-docking availabilities.

---

## Retired Adm. James ‘Jamie’ Foggo Hired as Dean of Think Tank Focused on Maritime Thought Leadership



Adm. Mike Gilday, U.S. Navy chief of naval operations, speaks with retired Adm. James G. Foggo during the Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Center of Excellence (COE) Future



Maritime Warfare Symposium 2021 in April. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joshua M. Tolbert*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy League of the United States – a nonprofit civilian, educational and advocacy organization that supports America’s sea services: the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S.-flag Merchant Marine – announced today it has launched a new think tank, the Center for Maritime Strategy, with retired Adm. James “Jamie” Foggo as its dean. This organization will conduct and support policy research and advocacy efforts across a broad spectrum of issues that impact the United States’ position as a maritime nation.

“Policy development and advocacy are the main reasons for the Navy League’s existence, and we are stepping up our activity in these areas to meet the requirements of 21st century maritime power,” said Navy League National President David Reilly.

The development of the Center for Maritime Strategy was led by a steering committee drawn from Navy League leadership. The committee was chaired by former Chief of Naval Operations and current Navy League National Vice President Adm. John Richardson. Other members of the committee included retired U.S. Fleet Forces commander Adm. John Harvey, former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy and current Navy League CEO Mike Stevens, Frank Russo of Forctis Advisory, and Fulton Homes CEO Doug Fulton. This committee will remain in place to provide general oversight and advice to the center’s dean.

“The Navy League’s Center for Maritime Strategy will be the go-to place for maritime strategic thought, policy recommendations and informed advocacy.” Richardson said. “The new organization will include a vibrant media operation to amplify it’s work. I’m excited about this initiative to boost the Navy League’s citizen voice and help strengthen the United States as a maritime nation.”



---

# Hypersonics Pose ‘Huge Physics Challenge’ for Weapon Design



The U.S. Navy, in collaboration with the U.S. Army, conducts a static fire test of the first stage of the newly developed 34.5" common hypersonic missile that will be fielded by both services. *U.S. NAVY / NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Arming hypersonic weapons with the advanced fuzing needed to give the weapon the desired effects is one of the more significant challenges facing the armaments industry, an industry official said.

Hypersonic fuzing “is a huge physics challenge,” said Charlie Zisette, executive director of the National Armaments Consortium, a trade association of manufacturers of



explosives, propellants, materials, fuzing, and other technologies related to armaments.

“Here we’re trying to push the state of the art with fuzing now having to go on the front end of hypersonic weapons, which is a new problem statement for us in terms of the environment that the fuze has to function in ... including hard-target penetration,” Zisette told *Seapower*. “We now can miniaturize things that we weren’t able to do before. Size and volume are critically important because we’ve got to be able to miniaturize and yet still take very significant accelerations that are as high as 10,000 Gs.

“The ability to both miniaturize and harden our electronics will open up an opportunity to do some things that will help the hypersonics, that will help some of these long-range weapon systems that we’re trying to develop to support the warfighter,” he said.

Zisette said “one of the advantages we have today in trying to solve that is we’ve really improved our modeling and simulation capabilities. That’s an important aspect in solving some of these very difficult fuzing problems at high rates of speed and rates of closure, in particular for things like hypersonic fuzing for ground-launched missiles.

“An advantage we have today is people who have entered into our armaments ecosystem that are coming from what I would call a nontraditional defense contractor world who are very capable in computational analysis and modeling and simulation and bringing that to our arena within the armaments sector,” he said. “That has been very beneficial. So, we can do a lot of work before we actually have to get to the bench and start prototyping hardware where we can do a fair amount of advanced design through modelling and simulation.”

The National Armaments Consortium membership includes 950 companies and universities.



---

# Coast Guard, Partners Complete Cooperative Pacific Surveillance Operation



The Coast Guard Cutter William Hart participates in the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's Operation Kurukuru off American Samoa, Oct. 29, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

HONOLULU – The Coast Guard and its partners successfully completed the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency's (FFA) Operation Kurukuru in the Pacific, Nov. 5, the Coast Guard 14th District said Nov. 9.

Operation Kurukuru is an annual coordinated maritime



surveillance operation with the goal of combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This year the crews of the Coast Guard Cutter William Hart, Coast Guard Cutter Myrtle Hazard and an Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules participated in the joint endeavor.

“The operation included 15 Guardian Class and Pacific Patrol Boats from Pacific nations operating alongside five Australian Navy, French Navy and United States Coast Guard vessels,” said Allan Rahari, the FFA Director Fisheries Operations. “Seven aircraft from the FFA, quadrilateral and regional partners provided air surveillance, as well as satellite surveillance and use of other emerging technologies.”

This year’s Operation Kurukuru was conducted over the course of 12 days, involving 15 Pacific FFA member nations and Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group (Australia, France, New Zealand, and U.S.) partners while covering over 8,9 million square miles.

During the operation, 300 vessels were remotely sensed by satellites or sighted by ships and aircraft while 78 vessels were boarded either at sea or in port. Of those 300 sightings, the Coast Guard contributed 63.

While the operation was ongoing, the Air Station Barbers Point Hercules aircrew also diverted to Starbuck Island in Kiribati to assist with an ongoing missing persons case.

Kurukuru is a Japanese term meaning round and round relating to the highly migratory nature of targeted species such as tuna which annually travel throughout the Pacific providing an important renewable resource for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICT).

IUU undermines PICT efforts to conserve and manage fish stocks, presenting a dire threat to protecting these vital



resources for generations to come.

“Combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing really is a team effort out here in the Pacific,” said Lt. j.g. Tyler Peterson, an operations planner at the Coast Guard 14th District. “Because of fish migratory habits, they frequently travel between different countries’ exclusive economic zones, so no one country can protect the fish stocks on their own. This is why joint efforts like Operation Kurukuru are so important. We are able to work with our partners towards our mutual goal of preserving this vital resource.”

Along with participating in large scale operations like Operation Kurukuru, the Coast Guard also works individually with nations to counter IUU through the use of bilateral law enforcement agreements.

Bilateral law enforcement agreements allow partner PICTs to embark their law enforcement officers aboard Coast Guard vessels to enforce laws within their exclusive economic zone. The Coast Guard maintains 11 bilateral ship rider agreements throughout the Pacific, combating not only IUU but also promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific.

---

## **Roundtable Sees NATO Taking a Global Approach to Maritime Security**





NORFOLK, Va. – The Combined Operations From the Sea Centre of Excellence (CJOS COE), based in Norfolk, conducted its annual maritime security regimes roundtable as a virtual event last week. CJOS is one of the 27 NATO accredited centers of excellence.

About 250 people representing 30 countries from around the world took part in the conference.

“It’s not about having the numbers we have online, but about having the right people. We strive for tangible outputs and actions,” said Commodore Guy Thomas, the CJOS COE deputy director. “Talking and awareness is good, but action is better – a lot better.”

Welcoming remarks were delivered by Vice Adm. Daniel Dwyer, director of the CJOS COE, and U.K. Royal Navy Vice Adm. Keith Blount, who commands NATO’s Allied Maritime Command, delivered the keynote address.

Blount talked about the importance of the physical presence of NATO navies at sea, and the strategic affect that creates. He said that demonstrable credibility is a fundamental part of deterrence.

Blount said NATO has had to address a recent resurgence by Russia. Russia constitutes a spectrum of threats, from nuclear



submarines and highly capable high-speed missiles to hybrid warfare forces occupying territory, he said. "After having been in the doldrums for many years following the Cold War, we see a different Russia emerging."

He also called attention to the importance of protecting a increasingly vulnerable network of undersea infrastructure, including communication cables and energy pipelines.

Speakers during the roundtable discussed asymmetric threats such as terrorism, piracy, climate change and transnational crime, but there was also a lively conversation about China. Although not part of NATO's traditional area of responsibility, the rise of China will be an important part of NATO's future.

The forum underscored the importance of embracing multi-domain warfighting and capabilities. However, Blount said, "It's not so much about the individual capabilities but about integration."

In the view of some of the speakers, while Russia must still be reckoned with, there are only two superpowers – the United States and China. While China does not border any NATO nation, what happens with China in the South China Sea does affect the western world and NATO.

The discussions alluded to NATO's new focus of blue-ocean warfare in the North Atlantic, to include the standing up of Joint Forces Command Norfolk and the reestablishment of the U.S. 2nd Fleet (whose commander, Dwyer, is also the director of CJOS COE).

Speakers brought the participants up to date with maritime security operations around the globe, including Operation Orion in Colombia, NATO Operation Sea guardian in the Mediterranean, EU NAVFOR Mediterranean IRINI and the arms embargo off Libya and EU NAVFOR Atalanta in the Indian Ocean.



Presenters also addressed the growing use of new technologies, especially unmanned and autonomous systems, to help create larger and more effective sensor networks.

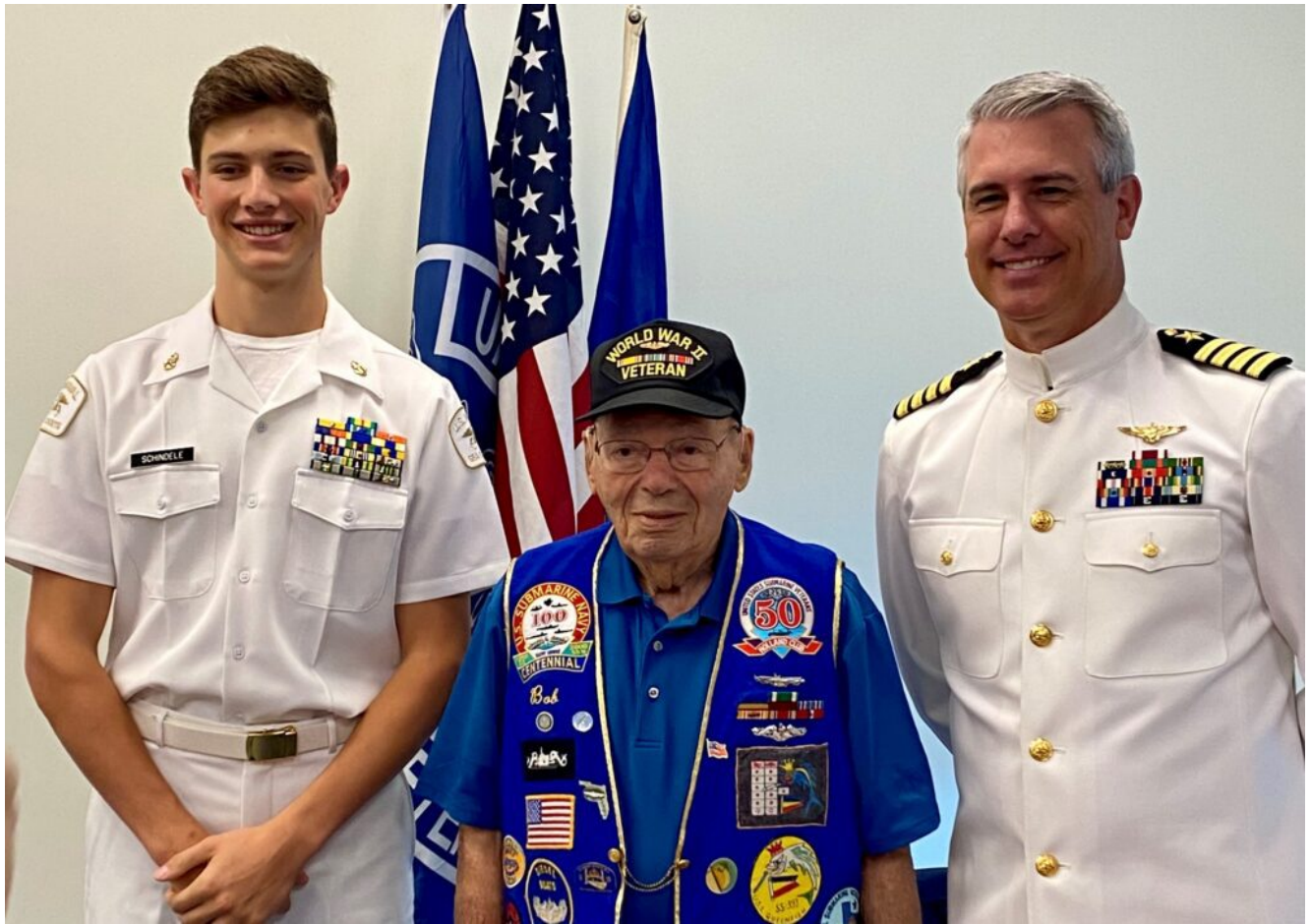
Matthew Searle, chief technology officer with Maritime Arresting Technologies, was one of the technology speakers. “I was impressed by the diversity of the presenters, who covered all aspects of maritime security from high level strategy and global issues down to specific threats,” he said.

Searle’s company makes maritime security barriers both above and below the water, specializing in rapidly deployable port security booms. “The event was a great opportunity to discuss the use of non-kinetic effectors in grey zone encounters with many stakeholders,” he said.

---

## **U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps Florida-Based Battalion Dedicated to Preserving World War II History Through Personal Stories**





Sea Cadet Chief Kurt Schindele, retired Gunners Mate Chief Bob Dickenson and retired Navy Capt. Matthew Robinson, representing the Navy League, at Schindele's interview with Dickenson about his World War II experiences. *GARY SCHINDELE*  
CLERMONT, Fla. – U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Chiefs representing the Clermont Battalion have picked up the mantle of responsibility to document personal stories of World War II veterans residing in central Florida, with their first interview taking place Nov. 6.

Sea Cadet Chief Kurt Schindele, who just turned 18, interviewed Gunners Mate Chief Bob Dickenson, a 96-year-old submarine veteran who served multiple tours in the Pacific theater.

The Clermont Battalion, one of 400 units nationwide, has more than 40 Sea Cadets in the unit dedicated to preserving the history of service and tradition of the U.S. Navy, one story at a time.



Clermont Battalion Commanding Officer Lt. Gary Schindele, USNSCC, Kurt's father, said he is proud of his son and his unit for taking on this responsibility.

"We can only learn from history if we know about that history. With the ever-decreasing number of World War II veterans alive, I feel that it is more important than ever to capture as much information about that era as possible when it is still available to receive a first-hand account," Schindele said. "It is also the chief's responsibility to preserve and pass on the history of the Navy, and these interviews serve as an excellent history and heritage teaching moment for our Sea Cadets."

Dickenson discussed and shared the mementos he has saved from his service, which include commendation letters from Adm. Chester Nimitz and Adm. James Forrestal. During his service, Dickenson survived four successful war patrols onboard the USS Queenfish (SS-393) and contributed to destroying 45,000 tons of enemy shipping, personally sinking two enemy ships using the USS Queenfish's 3-inch deck gun.

Dickenson served at Recruit Training Center, Newport, Rhode Island; Naval Base, Newport News, Virginia; Naval Submarine Base New London, Groton, Connecticut; USS Queenfish (SS393), Office New Construction, Mare Island, California, and USS Remora (SS-487).

Dickenson received the following citations and awards during his Naval career: American Campaign Ribbon, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Ribbon, World War II Victory Medal, Philippine Liberation Campaign Ribbon, Navy Commendation Medal, Qualified Submarine Warfare (Dolphins) and Good Conduct Medal.

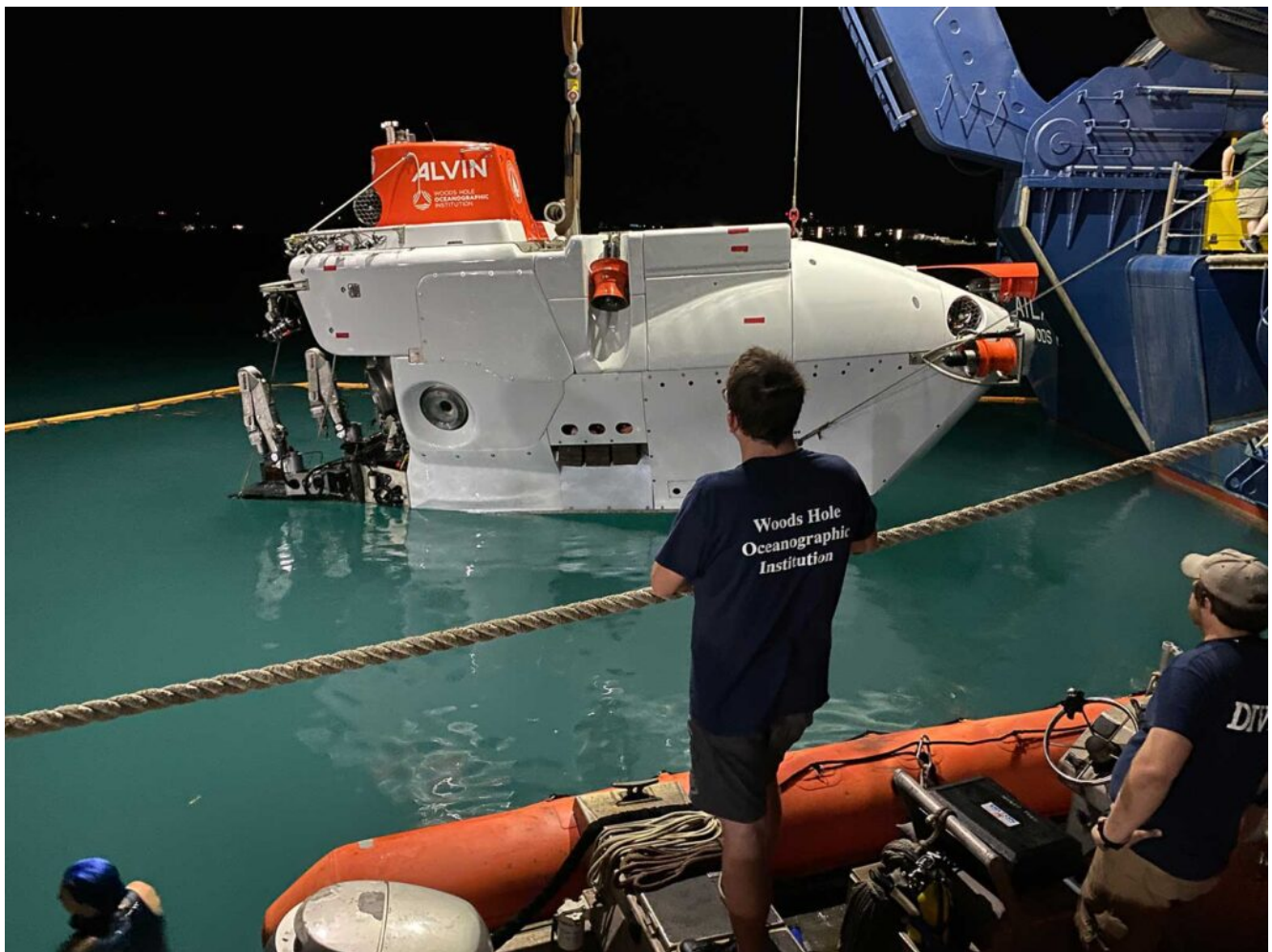
The full interview is available for viewing on [www.Southlaketv.com](http://www.Southlaketv.com) and its corresponding official Facebook page, [@TVSouthLake](https://www.facebook.com/TVSouthLake). The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps provides life-changing programs that instill the values of teamwork,



discipline, camaraderie and service to young men and women aged 10 to 17. Run by a dedicated volunteer force, the Sea Cadet program relies on strong partnerships with the Navy League and our nation's armed forces. To learn more about the Sea Cadets, visit [www.seacadets.org](http://www.seacadets.org).

---

## Navy-Owned Deep-Diving Alvin Being Certified for Operations to 6,500 Meters



Alvin undergoing certification in Bermuda on Nov. 2. *WHOI / Ken Kostel*



The deep-diving Human Occupied Vehicle Alvin is being certified for return to service following completion of a series of modernization and improvements. Alvin is currently undergoing certification dives near Bermuda.

Thanks to Alvin's three-inch-thick titanium sphere, researchers can study the deep ocean while safe from the crushing pressure and deadly cold.

Alvin is owned by the U. S. Navy Office of Naval Research and operated by the National Deep Submergence Facility (NDSF) at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) and was last certified in 2013 to dive to 4,500 meters. Although a \$50 million overhaul was conducted between 2011 and 2013, some of the necessary improvements to certify the vehicle to conduct deeper dives were not yet available. An \$8 million upgrade was commenced last year. Alvin's upgrade and operations are largely funded by the National Science Foundation.

According to Andy Bowen, a principal engineer of applied ocean physics and engineering at WHOI and director of the NDSF, the most recent overhaul will extend Alvin's depth certification from 4,500 to 6,500 meters.

"This increase in depth capability involves a wide range of improvements from a new titanium personnel sphere, variable ballast system, hydraulic power plant and upgraded floatation," he said. "There has also been a myriad of improvements to the vehicle's propulsion system, imaging capabilities and overall electronic upgrades.

"We are engaged in the early stages of sea trials to verify performance of all the vehicle systems, including life support, stability, variable ballast, manipulation and hydraulic components," Bowen said. "Progress in verifying performance has been steady with initial dives tethered to the support vessel RV Atlantis accomplished with satisfactory results. We expect to complete the first untethered dives this



week in the harbor here in St. Georges, Bermuda. Once this has been accomplished, Atlantis and Alvin will move into open ocean and continue with a series of deeper dives until we have achieved our full depth of 6,500 meters."

Alvin will make its first 6,500-meter dive, or 21,325 feet – nearly four miles below the ocean's surface – in mid-November. It takes about three and a half hours to reach that depth. Missions can last as long as 10 hours, although most missions do not travel to the vehicle's maximum depth.

Atlantis completed its own one-year, \$50 million overhaul in July.

"We planned to do the one-year refit of Atlantis to coincide with the work on Alvin, so the mothership and sub would be done in parallel," said Tim Schnoor, a contractor supporting ONR's research ship programs. "The work on Atlantis included improvements to and recertification of Alvin's launch and recovery system, and the upgrades to the storage hangar where Alvin is kept between missions."

Brian Pelletier, assistant program manager for advanced undersea systems at Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), said the certification process will ensure Alvin can be operated safely with people on board. "We ensure the system is safe for manned operations per the manual for deep submergence systems. Our NAVSEA team has been observing the November test dives in the Bahamas, and engineers from Team SUB will provide independent representatives to make sure the tests are being performed in accordance with the requirements of NAVSEA P9290, which is the Navy's system certification procedures and criteria manual for deep submergence systems."

After the certification dives, Bowen said Alvin will move into a brief series of test dives to prove its scientific capabilities in the waters around Puerto Rico. "With these accomplished, Alvin's first scientific dives will be in



support for Dr. Craig Young from the University of Oregon,” he said.

Alvin usually operates with a pilot and carries two scientists, and can be fitted with the appropriate instruments and science payload for the mission being conducted.

ONR is responsible for acquisition and life cycle support, with funding also provided by the National Science Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Alvin’s operations are managed by the NDSF and scheduling is coordinated by the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System.

In addition to Alvin, the NDSF also operates the Navy-owned remotely operated vehicle Jason and autonomous underwater vehicle Sentry for the ocean science community.

While researchers can learn a lot from unmanned systems, Bowen said there is no substitute for the human. “Humans are still the most effective means for exploring the unknown,” he said.

---

# **Future USNS Harvey Milk Christened at General Dynamics NASSCO San Diego**





Military Sealift Command's newest ship, fleet replenishment oiler USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), slides into the water during the christening ceremony at General Dynamics NASSCO, San Diego. The ship honors Navy veteran and LGBT activist Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay candidates elected to public office as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1978. *U.S. NAVY*

SAN DIEGO – Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), the Military Sealift Command's newest ship, was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, Nov. 7, Navy spokeswoman Sarah Burford said in a release.

The event was attended by the family of the ship's namesake as well as other dignitaries included Carlos Del Toro, secretary of the Navy; former Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus; Vice Adm. Jeffery Hughes, deputy chief naval operations for Warfighting Development; Rear Adm. Stephen Barnett, commander, Navy Region Southwest; Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, commander, Military Sealift Command; Capt. James White, Milk's civil service master; Todd Gloria, mayor, San Diego; former Rep.



Susan Davis; Jen Campbell, San Diego Council president; Anne Kronenberg, activist and Milk's former campaign manager; members of the Harvey Milk Foundation, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The ship honors Navy veteran and LGBT activist Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay candidates elected to public office as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1978. He was assassinated Nov. 10, 1978, 10 months after he was sworn in, by fellow City Supervisor Dan White. Milk was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for his activism. USNS Harvey Milk is the first ship named for an openly gay person.

"The secretary of the Navy needed to be here today, not just to amend the wrongs of the past, but to give inspiration to all of our LGBTQ community leaders who served in the Navy, in uniform today and in the civilian workforce as well too, and to tell them that we're committed to them in the future," Del Toro said, noting that Milk resigned his commission and was discharged from the Navy for being gay. "For far too long, sailors like Lt. j.g. Milk were forced into the shadows or, worse yet, forced out of our beloved Navy. That injustice is part of our Navy history, but so is the perseverance of all who continue to serve in the face of injustice."

"My uncle never dreamed of having a ship, or a street, or a park, or a school named after him," said Stuart Milk, Harvey's nephew and the keynote speaker at the ceremony. "What we celebrate today is that the Navy honors the difference between tolerance and acceptance."

The 746-foot Milk is the second ship in the new John Lewis-class previously known as the TAO(X). This class of oilers has the ability to carry 162,000 barrels of diesel ship fuel, aviation fuel and dry stores cargo. The upgraded oiler is built with double hulls to protect against oil spills and



strengthened cargo and ballast tanks, and will be equipped with a basic self-defense capability, including crew served weapons, degaussing, and Nixie Torpedo decoys, and has space, weight, and power reservations for close in weapon systems such as SeaRAMs and an antitorpedo torpedo defense system. The Lewis-class of oilers will replace the current Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oilers and they age out of the MSC fleet.

“A Navy veteran and tireless advocate for equality and universal rights, having Harvey Milk as the namesake for this ship as she adds to our nation’s strategic advantage in agile logistics is absolutely awesome,” said Wettlaufer. “With enhanced capabilities in storage and delivery of fuel and cargo, Harvey Milk will support our Navy in the away game as we keep our country safe far from home and protect the sea lines of communication. Important to our economic vitality and assuring allies and partners, this ship will help promote freedom of access to international seas and the rules based international order that has sustained the peace over the last 70 years.”

Speaking before breaking a bottle of champagne across the ship’s hull, the ship’s sponsor, Paula Neira, clinical program director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Transgender Health and a Navy veteran, said, “When Harvey Milk sails, she’ll send a message both domestically and around the globe to everybody that believes in justice and freedom and liberty, that there is a place for you in this family.”

Following the traditional champagne christening, Milk slid into the water with its horn blowing, streamers flying and music from the Navy Band Southwest playing.

Five more Lewis-class oilers are on order for the Navy. In July 2016, then-Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said he would name the Lewis-class oilers after prominent civil rights



activists and leaders including Earl Warren, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone and Robert F. Kennedy.