

# Navy Scaling Back Planned Triton Deployable Sites from Five to Three



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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy is planning to reduce the number of planned deployment sites for its MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles in accordance with its planned reduction in the number of Tritons being procured.

“FY24 quantity is being reduced from four to two aircraft; a total program of record procurement is being reduced from 70 aircraft to 27,” said a Navy spokesperson in response to a query from Seapower. “This quantity reduction is based on the Joint Requirements Oversight Council re-evaluation of worldwide ISR&T [intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and

targeting] requirements that resulted in direction to reduce total MQ-4C deployable locations (orbits) from five to three.”

The Navy had originally planned to establish orbits in Jacksonville, Florida; Whidbey Island, Washington; Sigonella, Sicily; Guam; and a base in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The Navy did not specify which three sites were still planned for the Triton.

At five orbits and four Tritons per orbit – able to keep an aircraft on station 24/7 – the 20 aircraft required was far lower than the planned for procurement of 70. The original planned procurement would have allowed the Navy to purchase them at economic quantities, keep some in storage, and to sustain Triton operations over many years as the early aircraft reached the end of their service lives.

With three orbits, the total number of 12 Tritons required to sustain them would leave 15 available for attrition, training, and depot-level maintenance.

“When determining the number of air vehicles for a program of record, attrition is a part of the equation when considering the lifespan of the program,” the spokesperson said.

Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19, home-based at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, deployed two MQ-4Cs to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam in 2020 to provide MISR&T for the U.S. 7th Fleet while developing the concept of operations and the tactics to refine the Triton’s operations. The detachment operated from Guam; Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan; and Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, the Navy said in a March 16 release. The detachment returned from deployment in March.

The two deployed Tritons were of the baseline Integrated Functional Capability (IFC) 3 configuration. The squadron has since received newer versions in the IFC 4 configuration,

which are equipped with a more capable sensor suite that will allow them to replace the Navy's fleet of EP-3E Orion electronic reconnaissance aircraft. The MQ-4C will supplement the Navy's P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.

VUP-19 is bringing the Triton to Initial Operational Capability in 2023 with the establishment of an orbit in Guam in support of the 7th Fleet's Task Force 72.

Northrop Grumman delivered the fourth IFC 4 Triton to the squadron in May to complete the set of aircraft for the Guam orbit while the first aircraft for the second orbit is scheduled to deliver in June, according to Rho Cauley-Bruner, director, Triton program.

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## **HII is Awarded Advance Procurement Contract Modification For Virginia-class Block V Submarines**



Montana SSN 794 Alpha Sea Trials  
[Release from General Dynamics Electric Boat](#)

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NEWPORT NEWS, Va., May 24, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) announced today that its Newport News Shipbuilding division has received a \$305.2 million contract modification from General Dynamics Electric Boat to procure long-lead-time material for two additional Block V *Virginia*-class submarines.

The contract modification brings the overall contract value to \$10.2 billion.

“These funds are critically important to stabilizing and providing predictability to the thousands of suppliers across the country who support the *Virginia*-class program,” said Jason Ward, NNS vice president of *Virginia*-class submarine construction. “The submarine industrial base is crucial to our shipbuilding success and we look forward to continuing to build these vital national security assets that will deliver to the U.S. Navy with the latest technology.”

NNS is one of only two shipyards capable of designing and building nuclear-powered submarines for the U.S. Navy. The advanced capabilities of *Virginia*-class submarines increase firepower, maneuverability and stealth.

A photo accompanying this release is available at:  
<https://hii.com/news/hii-awarded-advance-procurement-contract-modification-virginia-class-block-v-submarines/>.

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**SECNAV awards MSGs for  
successful evacuation from  
Khartoum**



[Release from U.S. Marine Corps Communications Directorate](#)

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Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Carlos Del Toro, visited Marine Corps Embassy Security Group Headquarters at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., on May 19 to personally thank the Marines with Marine Security Guard Detachment Khartoum for their exceptional performance during the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan.

The primary role of an MSG is to protect personnel, classified information, and government property at U.S. diplomatic facilities around the globe. When fighting occurred within Sudan between two militant groups on April 15, the Marines continued their daily duties. As the conflict drew nearer and became more aggressive, the Marines received their orders to begin preparation for an evacuation.

Throughout the operation, the Marines continued to stand both of their posts, which are manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Additionally, the Marine standing Post One provided command and control for the evacuation and provided real-time updates and information to and from the Chief of Mission and embassy personnel. When the evacuation was completed on April 23, the Marines said the feeling was bittersweet.

“It’s a humble feeling being back in the heart of it all, and it reminds you that the greater mission of MCESG is ongoing and we must continue to support that mission,” said Staff Sgt. Derek Ferrari, the Detachment Commander for Detachment Khartoum. “The detachment is deactivated but not disbanded yet, and I continue to be impressed with my Marines’ ability to remain engaged and take care of one another the same way they did in Khartoum.”

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## **French Warship Seizes \$108 Million in Drugs during Indian Ocean Seizures**



[Release from U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs](#)

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By U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | May 24, 2023

MANAMA, Bahrain – A French warship operating in support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 conducted four illegal drug seizures between April 19 and May 18 worth a total estimated U.S. street value of \$108 million from fishing vessels transiting international waters in the Indian Ocean.

The warship seized 2,265 kilograms of heroin and 242 kilograms of methamphetamine from four different vessels while patrolling regional waters. CTF 150 is one of five task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the largest multinational naval partnership in the world.

In 2023, maritime forces supporting CTF 150 have seized illegal drugs worth a combined estimated U.S. street value of \$203 million, adding to record-breaking drug interdictions by U.S. and international naval units in 2021 and 2022 totaling

more than \$1 billion in value.

“It’s been a pleasure working with the French sailors to achieve our mission’s aims together,” said United Kingdom Royal Navy Lt. Francis Henry, a CTF 150 staff officer responsible for coordinating the task force’s counter-narcotics efforts.

CTF 150 conducts maritime security operations in the Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean to disrupt destabilizing activity, promote international rules-based order and help ensure the free flow of commerce.

The task force is headquartered in Bahrain with Combined Maritime Forces, which is led by the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet.

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## **Navy Orders Ninth John Lewis-Class Fleet Replenishment Oiler**



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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has ordered construction of the ninth fleet replenishment oiler of the new John Lewis class for the Military Sealift Command.

The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded to General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Co., San Diego, California, a \$736 million contract modification for the detail design and construction of T-AO 213. Work is expected to be completed by March 2028, the Department of Defense said in a May 22 announcement.

NASSCO delivered the lead ship of the class, USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), in 2022, the first of six ordered under a 2016 contract. Two more were ordered under a 2022 contract modification, with an option for a third. That option was exercised with the contract award T-AO 213.

Five ships of the class currently are under construction: Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), which will be delivered this year;

Earl Warren (T-AO 207); Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208); Lucy Stone (T-AO 209); and Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210). Future ships include Thurgood Marshall (T-AO 211) and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (T-AO 212). The Navy plans to procure a total of 20 ships of the class.

The John Lewis class is replacing the Henry J. Kaiser class of fleet replenishment oilers. The new ships can carry 57,000 barrels of oil as well as some dry cargo and frozen stores. They can operate at 20 knots.

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# **Cargo Preference Essential Element For Us Merchant Marine, National Security**

Rear Admiral Mark H. Buzby, USN (Ret)

Recently, there have been renewed calls by some to do away with – or greatly diminish – the requirements that govern the sea transportation of cargo that is owned, procured, furnished, or financed by the US Government – better known as Cargo Preference.

A removal of the current 50% requirement would have immediate and devastating effect on the US flag fleet. I state this with the confidence of having observed multiple US flag ships “flag out” of US registry when a change to Cargo preference statutes in 2013 reduced the required US carriage percentage of non-DOD government cargo from 75% to 50%. Doing away with Cargo preference requirements would directly result in the reduction in the size of the already small US flag deep sea fleet, adversely impact the size of the correspondingly small pool of

US citizen seafarers, and jeopardize our Nation's ability to execute sealift of US forces in times of crisis or conflict.

As MARAD Administrator, I testified often of the "three-legged stool" of maritime policy that underpins and supports the U.S.-flag merchant marine: the Jones Act, the Maritime Security Program (and newly enacted Tanker Security Program), and Cargo preference. Cargo preference is the least understood of the three, and it is under direct attack now. Short-sighted detractors are now pushing to end cargo preference for food aid programs like Food for Peace, in which American-grown food is moved on American-flagged ships to help those in need in some of the poorest parts of the world. This has been a successful program for nearly 70 years helping to provide much needed food and aid to families starving and suffering from famine and conflict. At the same time, these programs support American farmers, American truckers, American rail operators, American manufacturers, American milliners, American oil and flour producers, American longshoremen, and American mariners. Currently, only half of all those cargos must travel in US flagged vessels.

We should not underestimate the strong signal that a US flag ship delivering life saving food and aid sends to everyone that the US is there and engaged. Putting food aid on flags of convenience says nothing...just another government hand out. Cargo preference is an important component of global engagement, non lethal and peaceful.

Other Cargo preference statutes date back to 1904, stipulating that 100% of Department of Defense cargo must travel in US flagged vessels, ensuring a safe and secure means to deliver our fighting forces and their sustainment around the globe. Imagine if such a statute was not in place and the movement of military cargos was dependent on the whims of a foreign flag carrier during times of heightened tension or crisis. I don't think we want to go there.

Lacking a comprehensive national maritime strategy that coherently and comprehensively ties together the contributions of our civilian merchant marine and our uniformed sea services (Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and NOAA) to our national defense and economic security, the individual elements of maritime policy which are "sailing in loose formation" today are susceptible to attack from special interests not aware of the important role each plays in support of the other. The attacks on Cargo preference are a perfect example; a seemingly detached policy focused on moving food aid and other government cargos helps sustain a sizeable percentage of the US Flag fleet, which provides jobs for the maritime work force, which is the same pool of mariners the US government will depend upon to activate and sail our Ready Reserve Force sealift fleet to transport and sustain US and allied forces in times of national emergency. The math is simple: reduced cargo equals reduced ships, fewer ships equals fewer crews, and fewer crews means we cannot man our sealift ships.

President Xi and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have made their interest in dominating the maritime sector perfectly clear: they construct 80% of ship to shore cranes, 86% of intermodal chassis, and 95% of the world's shipping containers. Their shipyards turnout 47% of the world's shipbuilding tonnage, and PRC companies operate over 5,500 merchant ships. They subsidized their shipbuilding industry by over \$132 billion from 2010-2018. The CCP knows what the British Empire knew, what the Founding Fathers knew, what Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan postulated in 1890: control the seas, control the world.

I want to be clear: ending cargo preference will create national security risks, and lack of cargo will continue to shrink the size of the US maritime fleet and reduce US sealift capability at a time when we cannot afford to give up one ship or lose a single mariner. The adverse ripple effect will extend to the shore side maritime and shipbuilding industry as

well. I encourage Congress to reject misguided and unwise proposals that will make us even more dependent on the Chinese Communist Party for our economic health and instead support a robust US maritime policy that will sustain the US commercial sealift needed to support US national security.

*Rear Admiral Buzby served as Maritime Administrator from 2017-2021. He retired from the US Navy in 2013 after 34 years of service which included command of the US Navy's Military Sealift Command. Prior to serving as MARAD Administrator, he was President of the National Defense Transportation Association.*

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## **U.S. Navy Awards Saic \$249 Million Contract To Support Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division Instrumentation Platform**

[Release from SAIC](#)

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*Company will provide combat instrumentation platform support*

RESTON, Va. – Science Applications International Corp. (NYSE: [SAIC](#)) has been awarded an Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract with a \$249 million ceiling from the U.S. Navy to continue supporting the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD)'s combat instrumentation platforms

used for training and test evaluation ranges.

“SAIC’s expertise in systems integration and engineering provides solutions to support the U.S. Navy’s testing and training needs,” said Bob Genter, president, Defense and Civilian Sector at SAIC. “We are excited to build on our progress and continue our work at the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division.”

Under the new contract, SAIC will perform systems design and integration, hardware and software upgrades or modifications for the Combat Environment Instrumentation Systems (CEIS). SAIC will also provide services to support global position system-based range equipment, airborne electronic warfare (EW) systems, warning & countermeasures systems and range Radio-Frequency/Electro-Optical Tracking systems. The company will deliver test support and instrumentation for unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and telemetry systems.

SAIC will continue supporting NAWCWD with products and services associated with CEIS EW systems, interfaces and auxiliary equipment. The company will also continue providing field service support to more than nine test locations within the Navy’s testing and evaluation domain.

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**Military Sealift Command  
Honors Merchant Mariners Past  
And Present With National**

# Maritime Day Celebration



Norfolk, Va. (May 22, 2023) – Cmdr. Robert Jones, CHC, USN Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Deputy Command Chaplain, USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), delivers the invocation during Military Sealift Command’s National Maritime Day ceremony aboard Comfort May 22, 2023. National Maritime Day honors the thousands of dedicated merchant mariners who served aboard United States vessels around the world. (U.S. Navy photo by Ryan Carter)

[Release from Military Sealift Command](#)

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[By Jennifer Hunt](#)

22 May 2023

Norfolk, Va. – Military Sealift Command (MSC) hosted a National Maritime Day celebration aboard hospital ship USNS

Comfort (T-AH 20), May 22, honoring United States Merchant Mariners.

The event commenced with remarks from Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, MSC Commander, and featured keynote speaker Mr. Dave Yoho, World War II Merchant Marine Veteran.

“The Department of Defense depends on the Merchant Marine to support 90 percent of our sealift requirements in national emergency, crisis or conflict,” said Wettlaufer. “Long serving as our nation’s ‘fourth arm of defense,’ American mariners bravely faced combatants and pirates, pandemics and natural disasters. They answer the call to serve their fellow Americans in ways and in places many of our fellow citizens don’t know about.”

“Today, and every day, we honor our American mariners, especially our MSC Civil Service Mariners, past and present, courageous women and men who serve our nation.”

In 1944, Yoho enlisted in the United States Merchant Marines at just 16 years old. He was assigned to a T/2 Tanker ship, often referred to as a fleet oiler, which was sent to the South Pacific during World War II.

There was a great wave of patriotism after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which inspired thousands to join the United States Merchant Marines. These mariners would become a part of the 250 thousand who served during World War II, said Yoho.

“They moved 15 million tons of goods to Europe and the United Kingdom, eight million tons of goods to the Mediterranean, 13 million tons of goods to the Pacific Ocean, and five million tons to Russia.”

During his speech, Yoho recalled his experience as a young Merchant Marine during wartime.

“We were in great trouble when the war started. We were outmanned, outmaneuvered, out-gunned, and out-financed, but we took a collective stand,” said Yoho.

“I was a fireman water tender. I [asked an officer], ‘Sir, what’s the best way to get out of here if we take a hit?’ He said, ‘Kid, if we take a hit, you don’t get out of here.’ That’s the first time I realized we could get killed.”

“The Merchant Marine had the highest mortality rate of any of the services. One out of 26 of us died,” said Yoho. “I bring you my story in hopes that you will tell others. Tell them about [mariners], and say we gave up our yesterdays for their tomorrows. Tell them this is from a 16-year-old boy in a 95-year-old man’s body.”

After Yoho’s speech, the ceremony ended with a moment of silence for fallen mariners and the ringing of eight bells.

On May 20, 1933, Congress designated May 22 of each year as “National Maritime Day” to commemorate the first transoceanic voyage by steamship S.S. Savannah in 1819. The S.S. Savannah was the first steam-powered ship to successfully cross any ocean. Today, National Maritime Day celebrates the thousands of merchant mariners who serve on United States vessels around the world.

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# Marine Corps Receives First

# of Two C-40A Transport Aircraft



The Marine Corps' first C-40A aircraft, assigned to Marine Transport Squadron (VMR) 1, Marine Air Group 41, 4th Marine Air Wing, Marine Forces Reserve, lands at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth Texas, May 19, 2023. VMR 1 will use these aircraft to support the Marine Corps and joint services with assault support in the form of air logistics, providing time-, place- or mission-sensitive, long-range, multipurpose air transport and critical logistical support of key personnel and cargo between and within combatant commands and theaters of war. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Ashley Corbo)

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps has taken delivery of its first Boeing C-40A Clipper transport aircraft, the first of two that will be operated by the Marine Forces Reserve.

The C-40A arrived at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth Texas on May 19, the Marine Forces Reserve said in a release. It will be operated by Marine Transport Squadron One (VMR-1), a unit of Marine Aircraft Group 41, 4th Marine Air Wing.

“VMR-1 will use these aircraft to support the Marine Corps and joint services with assault support in the form of air logistics, providing time-, place- or mission-sensitive, long-range, multipurpose air transport and critical logistical support of key personnel and cargo between and within combatant commands and theaters of war,” the release said.

VMR-1 flew two C-9B Skytrain II aircraft from Joint Base Andrews-NAF Washington, Maryland, until 2017, when the squadron moved to NAS-JRB Fort Worth to provide crews to share C-40A Clipper transports with Navy Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 59. According to the 2022 Marine Corps Aviation Plan, VMR-1 will move to Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, by fiscal 2024 to replace the two C-20G Gulfstream IV transports there that support the Indo-Pacific Command.

The two Marine C-40As were not new-build aircraft but were converted from two used Boeing 737 airliners. The Navy Air Reserve operates 17 C-40As – the first of which was delivered in 2001 – in six fleet logistics support squadrons for Navy-unique fleet-essential airlift missions.

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**World War II U.S. Merchant  
Mariners Honored during**

# National Memorial Day Concert



WASHINGTON – On Sunday, May 28, during the National Memorial Day Concert on the U.S. Capitol grounds, the Public Broadcasting Service and Capital Concerts will honor more than 9,500 U.S. Merchant Marine men and women who were killed in action during World War II. WWII Merchant Marine veterans, representing the American Merchant Marine Veterans organization, will be honored in a special segment of the concert.

David Yoho, a WWII Merchant Marine veteran, will be a featured spokesman during the Concert. He will give a vivid and heartfelt interview about our Nation's fallen heroes and the value of the Merchant Marine that has been recognized by U.S. Presidents and America's senior military leaders. Mr. Yoho's moving description of his wartime experience as a teenager and his respect for all his Merchant Marine shipmates will be a highlight of the show.

In addition to Mr. Yoho's interview, the four Merchant Marine WWII veterans, William Balabanow, John Laughton, Charles Mills, and George Worsham, will honor their fallen shipmates during the show. In particular, Mr. Laughton and Mr. Worsham survived enemy attacks that sank their ships and killed many of their fellow Merchant Mariners.

On September 14, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said,

“It seems to me particularly appropriate that Victory Fleet Day this year should honor the men and management of the American Merchant Marine. The operators in this war have written one of its most brilliant chapters. They have delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult and dangerous transportation job ever undertaken. As time goes on, there will be greater public understanding of our merchant fleet’s record during this war.”

More than 240,000 U.S. Merchant Mariners served during WWII. They faced torpedoes, bombings, kamikaze attacks, ice, and storms to deliver millions of troops and the necessary military goods for the Allies’ war effort. According to the U.S. War Shipping Administration, the U.S. Merchant Marine suffered one of the highest casualty rates of any service during WWII. Officially, a total of 1,554 merchant ships were sunk due to war conditions. Also, over 1,800 U.S. Naval Armed Guard shipmates were killed or missing in action during WWII, while manning guns on merchant ships.

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY honors 142 cadet midshipmen who died during WWII. Because of their supreme sacrifice, Kings Point is the only one of the Nation’s five federal service academies authorized to carry a Battle Standard flag as part of its Color Guard.

Captain Dru DiMattia, president of American Merchant Marine Veterans, said, “I appreciate the decision to honor U.S. Merchant Marine WWII casualties during the National Memorial Day Concert, as valued contributors to the Allies’ victory. This is a historical event for the U.S. Merchant Marine and our country. Our organization is honored by support from President Biden, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Rep. Jimmy Panetta, the Department of Defense, the Maritime Administration, the National Park Service, and the Friends of the National WWII Memorial.” Capt. DiMattia is available for advance interviews.

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