Corps Requests Proposals for Tropical Uniforms; Plans to Field Later This Year

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) on April 14 released a request for proposals to industry for new tropical uniforms for Marines to wear while training or embarking on missions in warm-weather climates, MCSC public affairs said in a release.

The Marine Corps Tropical Combat Uniform (MCTCU) is a rapid-dry, breathable uniform that can sustain for prolonged periods in hot, humid and wet environments. The MCTCU will provide an alternative to the current combat utility uniform and combat boot.

"This new tropical uniform allows Marines to be more comfortable and less fatigued while focusing on the mission at hand," said Lou Curcio, MCSC's MCTCU project officer.

The MCTCU is made up of trousers, a blouse and a pair of boots. The trousers and blouse – the focus of the RFP – are made of the same blend of cotton and nylon as the current combat utility uniform and features the same camouflage pattern. The difference is in the weave and weight, resulting in a lighter material that dries more quickly.

Both pieces of clothing are treated with permethrin to provide protection from insects.

The boots, awarded on a separate contract, are also lightweight, with self-cleaning soles to improve mobility in a tropical environment. They are more than a pound lighter than the current boot fielded by the Marine Corps.

"MCTCU will bring many advantages during training and combat

in tropical environments," Curcio said. "For all the sacrifices and challenges they endure, Marines deserve a uniform like this one."

Between June and September 2017, hundreds of Marines participated in various user evaluations to assess the durability, fit and function of a prototype tropical uniform. The prototype was made up of a fabric blend of nylon and cotton, designed to dry faster and keep Marines cooler in warm climates.

MCSC's Program Manager for Infantry Combat Equipment leveraged this feedback to inform industry solicitations and other decisions.

"Many Marines said the MCTCU feels like pajamas, appreciating how lightweight it is," Curcio said. "They also noted how quickly the uniform dries upon getting wet."

Based on January 2020 market research and responses to a November 2019 request for information, the Marine Corps should see a potential cost reduction of at least 25% and as much as 60% per uniform.

MCSC plans to purchase 70,000 trousers, blouses and pairs of boots for the MCTCU to support fleet training or operating in tropical climates. The command procured more than 10,000 sets of blouses and trousers under a manufacturing and development effort.

Fielding of the MCTCU is slated for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2020.

Navy Awards $99.8 Million to Rebuild Earthquake-Damaged China Lake Facilities

SAN DIEGO – Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southwest on April 14 awarded a $99.8 million task order for the design and construction of 25 new ordnance magazines and an inert storage facility at Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, California, according to NAVFAC Southwest public affairs.

Last July, two major earthquakes struck the China Lake area. The task order will fund the demolition of an inert storage facility and 32 critically damaged magazines and design and construct 25 new modern magazines as well as an inert storage facility.

Construction will include electrical, telecommunications, intrusion detection systems, roadway and apron paving, a bridge crane and positive drainage for the new magazines and storage facility.

The task order is part of a multiple award construction contract. The awardee, Reyes Construction of Pomona, California, was one of multiple companies to submit proposals.

“This is the first major new construction project awarded in support of the NAWS China Lake earthquake recovery effort and is an important part of restoring the installation to its full operational capability,” said Capt. Mike Oestereicher, commanding officer of NAVFAC Southwest.

“Mission-critical operations and RDT&E support to the fleet were adversely impacted by the damaged magazines, with ordnance being jam-stowed in the handful of remaining adequate

magazines or shipped off-base to other sites," Oestereicher said. "This project will restore that lost capability and help bring NAWS China Lake back up to full readiness."

"Award of this project in such a short time represents a tremendous team effort with support from a myriad of stakeholders and support organizations," said Cmdr. Dan Stokes, NAVFAC Southwest assistant operations officer.

"We are eager to move forward into the construction phase to help restore full mission capability to the base and to provide support to the fleet."

NAWS China Lake is in the western Mojave Desert region of California, about 150 miles north of Los Angeles. China Lake's mission is to support the Navy's research, testing and evaluation missions to provide cutting-edge weapons systems to the warfighter.

The installation is the Navy's largest single landholding. In total, its two ranges and main site cover more than 1.1 million acres, an area larger than Rhode Island.

"This critical investment will bring our weapons storage capability into the modern era and will support testing programs for current and future weapons systems," said Capt. Jason "Sherm" Sherman, Navy Munitions Command Pacific, CONUS West Division commander and Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach commanding officer. "Importantly at China Lake, these new magazines will be seismically rated to modern standards for increased environmental resiliency."

The project is scheduled for completion by August 2022.

BAE Wins DARPA Contract to Develop Machine Learning Analytics

BURLINGTON, Mass. – BAE Systems was awarded a contract by the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to develop machine learning analytics as a service – a first-of-its-kind, cloud-based model for the government, the company said in an April 21 release.

This new technology model seeks to provide an automated service that aims to leverage commercial and open source data, including satellite imagery, to deliver continuous worldwide situational awareness for a diverse range of challenges, including anomaly detection and prediction.

As part of DARPA's Geospatial Cloud Analytics (GCA) program, the BAE Systems FAST Labs research and development team aims to use the company's Multi-INT Analytics for Pattern Learning and Exploitation (MAPLE) technology.

This approach seeks to apply automated analytics to a problem, freeing operators to query the data to answer specific questions about important mission issues at hand while removing the traditional need to conduct extensive manual analysis. For the purposes of this program, the BAE team seeks to apply MaaS to a proposed maritime challenge to automatically and reliably detect vessels that are engaging in illegal fishing.

Our technology can be used across a number of domains and can be leveraged in the cloud, making it an extremely flexible and easily scalable solution that provides operators with worldwide vigilance. Our goal is to automate analytics in a new way so that we can take the incredible capabilities of machine learning to discover nuanced patterns in both sparse

and large data volumes to solve extremely complicated problems that could threaten our nation’s security.

Research on the GCA program leverages BAE’s machine learning and artificial intelligence capabilities such as adaptive reasoning and analysis in its autonomy technology portfolio. The GCA program is one of several fields BAE Systems is researching, including current work on DARPA’s Hallmark Tools, Capabilities, and Evaluation Methodology program, and represents several years of research on various other programs with DARPA as well as the Air Force Research Lab.

Coast Guard Cutter Offloads 1,300 Pounds of Marijuana

The Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore crew offloaded about 1,300 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated $1.1 million, on April 13 at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach. U.S. Coast Guard/Ensign Bruna Pavan

MIAMI – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kathleen Moore crew offloaded about 1,300 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated $1.1 million, on April 13, at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach, according to the Coast Guard's 7th District.

The drugs were interdicted by the Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane in the Caribbean from a suspected drug smuggling vessel.

Numerous U.S. agencies from the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security cooperated in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, play a role in counter-drug operations.

During at-sea interdictions, a suspect vessel is initially detected and monitored by allied, military or law enforcement personnel coordinated by Joint Interagency Task Force-South based in Key West, Florida.

The Harriet Lane is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter home ported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The Kathleen Moore is a 154-foot fast-response cutter home ported in Key West.

On April 1, U.S. Southern Command began enhanced counter-narcotics operations in the Western Hemisphere to disrupt the flow of drugs. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Caribbean is conducted under the authority of the 7th Coast Guard District, headquartered in Miami. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Special Operations Command Accepts Submersible with General Atomics LiFT Batteries

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced April 21 that the first Dry Combat Submersible (DCS) featuring its lithium-ion fault tolerant (LiFT) battery system as an energy source was accepted by the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

The DCS is a long-endurance delivery vehicle capable of transporting personnel in a dry environment. GA-EMS is under contract with Lockheed Martin Corp. to provide LiFT batteries

to power the DCS propulsion and internal support systems.

“With demonstrated performance through sea trials and the confidence of USSCOM, our LiFT battery system is becoming a go-to technology when performance is essential for mission assurance,” said Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS.

“The acceptance of the first DCS with LiFT technology represents a solid leap toward meeting the demand for battery systems that offer greater reliability, capability and safety to support critical undersea operations. We are proud to be the provider of this energy source and look forward to seeing DCS vehicles with LiFT battery systems onboard achieve USSOCOM acceptance.”

The LiFT battery system’s modular design and single-cell fault tolerance is designed to prevent uncontrolled and catastrophic cascading lithium-ion cell failure, improving the safety of personnel and platforms while keeping power available for high mission assurance.

LiFT battery systems have undergone at-sea testing by the U.S. Navy and have been classified for use on undersea vehicles by Det Norske Veritas Germanischer Lloyd (DNV-GL), an international accredited registrar and classification society for the maritime industry.

Second Unsafe Intercept by Russia Reported in U.S. 6th

Fleet AOR

MEDITERRANEAN SEA – For the second time in four days, Russian pilots flew in an unsafe and unprofessional manner while intercepting a U.S. Navy P-8A maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft April 19 in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility (AOR), according to a release from the 6th Fleet.

A P-8A aircraft flying in international airspace over the Mediterranean Sea was intercepted twice by a Russian SU-35 over a period of about 100 minutes. The first intercept was deemed safe and professional. The second intercept was determined to be unsafe and unprofessional due to the SU-35 conducting a high-speed, high-powered maneuver that decreased aircraft separation to within 25 feet, directly in front of the P-8A, exposing the U.S. aircraft to wake turbulence and jet exhaust.

In response, the P-8A, which was operating at a constant altitude and airspeed, descended to create separation and ensure safety of both aircraft.

The unnecessary actions of the Russian SU-35 pilot were inconsistent with good airmanship and international flight rules, seriously jeopardizing the safety of flight of both aircraft.

This incident follows an April 15 interaction over the same waters, where a Russian SU-35 flew inverted within 25 feet of the U.S. P-8A.

In both cases, the U.S. aircraft were operating consistent with international law and did not provoke this Russian activity.

Rite-Solutions Selected in $74 Million Undersea Weapon Systems Navy Contract

Middletown, R.I. – Rite-Solutions recently was selected as one of 17 companies that will participate in a five-year, $73.7 million contract to help the U.S. Navy develop future generations of its Undersea Weapons Family of Systems (FoS), the company said in an April 20 release.

The contract, announced by the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) in Newport, Rhode Island, will develop core technologies in 12 functional areas such as payloads, propulsion, power storage and conversion, vehicle control and command and control.

“We were awarded two functional areas where we have outstanding core capabilities: software development, and modeling and simulation,” said Dennis McLaughlin, president and CEO at Rite-Solutions. “We are very pleased that NUWC recognizes our strengths in building high-performing teams and innovative software-based solutions, as reflected in this award.”

NUWC will release task-order requests for proposals in specific or combined functional areas that companies that received awards may bid on. Unlike contracts that source a finished product from a single company, NUWC will receive components from multiple companies.

“This contract is very similar to the approach NUWC used with the Unmanned Undersea Vehicles (UUVs) Multiple Award Contract,” adds Mike Coffey, Rite-Solutions executive vice

president.

“NUWC is taking a best-of-breed approach to acquiring technologies that will enable them to develop, build and support these complex systems. They will integrate and test the different technologies in the prototype phases of weapons development, which will establish the blueprints for future production.”

As with the UUV FoS contract, Rite-Solutions is a prime contractor alongside other companies with demonstrated expertise in undersea warfare. “We are pleased to be included on this contract, with some of the biggest and most reputable companies in the aerospace and defense industry,” Coffey said.

Attack Submarine USS Vermont Commissioned

A photo illustration of the Virginia-class attack submarine USS Vermont. U.S. Navy

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy commissioned USS Vermont (SSN 792), the 19th Virginia-class attack submarine, on April 18, the Navy said in a release.

Although the traditional public commissioning ceremony was canceled due to public health restrictions on large public gatherings, the Navy commissioned USS Vermont administratively and transitioned the boat to normal operations. Meanwhile, the Navy is looking at a future opportunity to commemorate the special event with the ship's sponsor, crew and commissioning committee.

"This Virginia-class fast-attack submarine will continue the proud naval legacy of the state of Vermont and the ships that have borne her name," said acting Navy Secretary James E. McPherson.

Vice Adm. Daryl Caudle, the Navy's commander of

submarine forces, said Vermont's entry to service marks a new phase of American undersea warfare dominance for a global submarine force that is ready to deter, defend and defeat threats to our nation, allies and rules-based international order.

"This warship carries on a proud Vermont legacy in naval warfare and unyielding determination stretching back to the birth of our nation," Caudle said.

"To her crew, congratulations on completing the arduous readiness training to enter sea trials and prepare this ship for battle. I am proud to serve with each of you! Stand ready to defend our nation wherever we are threatened – honoring your motto – FREEDOM AND UNITY. May God bless our Submarine Force, the people of Vermont, and our families! From the depths, we strike!"

> *"This warship carries on a proud Vermont legacy in naval warfare and unyielding determination stretching back to the birth of our nation."*
>
> *Vice Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander of submarine forces*

USS Vermont's sponsor, Gloria Valdez, former deputy assistant secretary of the Navy (Ships), offered her gratitude to everyone who played a role in delivering USS Vermont to service. She said she is proud to represent the crew and the first Block IV Virginia-class submarine to enter service.

"I am very proud of the Sailors and families of USS Vermont, who worked so hard to bring her to life, and also feel extremely grateful to everyone who played a role preparing her to defend our nation for generations to come," Valdez said. "I look forward to commemorating this special occasion together with the crew in the future."

Vermont's commanding officer, Cmdr. Charles W. Phillips III,

highlighted Vermont's accomplishments over the past several weeks getting through initial sea trials. The hard work and dedication of the entire team the past few years was evident in the successful execution of at-sea testing, he said.

Phillips added he is especially thankful to the crew and their families, ship sponsor Valdez and the USS Vermont Commissioning Committee, led by Debra Martin, for all their hard work and support of the crew.

"We recognize just how important the submarine force is during this era of Great Power Competition," Phillips said. "As part of the nation's maritime asymmetric advantage over our competitors, we are ready to perform whatever duty is most needed."

"The crew is hungry to hone our skills at-sea and become an effective fighting unit, and we will work tirelessly to justify the nation's confidence in us," he added. "Today marks the culmination of six years of dedicated work by the men and women who constructed the nation's newest and most capable warship. We are all honored to be part of this historic moment."

USS Vermont is the third U.S. Navy vessel to bear the name of the Green Mountain State. The first Vermont was one of nine 74-gun warships authorized by Congress in 1816. The second Vermont, Battleship No. 20, was commissioned in 1907 and first deployed in December that year as part of the "Great White Fleet." She was decommissioned in June 1920.

The USS Vermont is 377 feet long, has a 34-foot beam and will be able to dive to depths greater than 800 feet and operate at speeds in excess of 25 knots submerged. The boat's construction began in May 2014, and it will provide the Navy the capabilities required to maintain the nation's undersea superiority well into the 21st century.

Vermont is the first the first of 10 Virginia-class Block IV

submarines. Block IV submarines incorporate design changes to reduce total ownership cost, as well as allow the Navy to increase the time between maintenance stops and the number of deployments.

DOT Announces Nearly $20 Million in Funding to Small Shipyards

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) has awarded $19.6 million in discretionary grants to 24 small U.S. shipyards through the Small Shipyard Grant Program, according to an April 20 release from MARAD. The funding will help modernize America's small shipyards, making them more efficient in constructing commercial vessels.

"This $19.6 million federal government investment in the nation's small shipyards will help maintain the U.S. shipyard infrastructure of our country," U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao said.

MARAD's Small Shipyard Grant Program provides funding to assist eligible shipyards in modernizing operations, improving efficiency and reaping the benefits of increased productivity by investing in emerging technologies and a highly skilled workforce. Projects under the program include capital and related improvement projects that foster efficiency, competitive operations and quality ship construction, repair and reconfiguration. In addition, the program can fund training projects that foster employee skills and enhance productivity.

“Small shipyard grants play a significant role in supporting local communities by creating jobs for working families,” Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby said. “These shipyards are a tangible investment in our nation’s maritime infrastructure and the future of our maritime workforce.”

The economic footprint of American shipyards is nearly 400,000 jobs, $25.1 billion of labor income and $37.3 billion in gross domestic product.

Navy Cybersecurity Director: ‘No Relaxation of Defenses’ During Telework Time

Sailors stand watch in the Fleet Operations Center at the

headquarters of U.S. Fleet Cyber Command. U.S. Navy
ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy is maintaining a vigilant cyber watch over its data networks as it balances network security and protecting the health of its Sailors amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a Navy admiral said.

"We're trying to balance two different priorities," Rear Adm. Kathleen Creighton, director of cybersecurity in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, said during an April 17 webcast that was part of the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space 2020: Virtual Edition. "One is keeping our Sailors and civilians safe and to enable them to work remotely and second is to ensure operational readiness."

To register and then watch this Sea-Air-Space 2020: Virtual Edition webinar live online, click here.

Creighton said the Navy has had to go through a big cultural shift from working in offices to "ensuring as many people as possible can work from home remotely."

She said that, in addition to Defense Department partners, the Navy's industry partners had taken a "first responder-type approach to helping the Navy" by adding infrastructure to handle the ballooning demand for secure telework.

> *"We're trying to balance two different priorities. One is keeping our Sailors and civilians safe and to enable them to work remotely and second is to ensure operational readiness."*
>
> *Rear Adm. Katherine Creighton*

The admiral cited the need for significant expansion of capacity, the need to maximize collaboration capabilities, and determination of any need to change cybersecurity policy "to ensure we can take advantage of remote telework options."

She said that "on any given day probably only a few thousand people accessed the Navy's network remotely … before COVID-19.

Now, we are seeing upwards of 150,000 or more people accessing the network remotely."

The great increase in telework required an expansion in capacity requirement for laptop computers, mobile phones, iPads and the VPN servers that they connect to as well as an expansion of Microsoft Outlook 365 use. Circuitry also had to be added to handle the increased use of devices as well as more people manning the help desk for the network.

Creighton said the Navy "has been on a road to modernize and to start using more collaboration capabilities, and this crisis has pushed us to roll those out faster. We're using some temporary capabilities, and we're looking to accelerate our permanent capabilities."

She said the Navy is discovering where the bottlenecks in the network are and fixing them on a piece-by-piece basis. In addition to expanded circuitry, the Navy has been cleaning up user accounts and increasing licenses.

"Every time we increased the capacity, it was used. It filled right up," she said. "So, the Navy is taking working from home very seriously, trying to protect our Sailors and civilians."

"Our adversaries in cyberspace know we were doing business differently, so they are responding in kind," she said, "so we have made sure that anything we have done has not relaxed our cybersecurity standards."

"There has been no relaxation of any defenses," she said. "We are securely connecting with that same network from home."

Creighton said a temporary cloud is being set up to handle a faster roll-out of Office 365.

Looking to the future after the COVID-19 pandemic, Creighton said she believes "there would be a desire to continue a greater level of telework than we saw in the past, so we need

to be sure that our network has the capacity to do that, that we have the procedures in place to do it, but most importantly we’re able to do it securely to protect our information and our people’s identity and other things we value as a Navy.”