Navy to Christen Expeditionary Sea Base USNS Miguel Keith

The newest expeditionary sea base will be named in honor of Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Miguel Keith during a ceremony on Nov. 4. U.S. Navy

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy will christen the Expeditionary Sea Base USNS Miguel Keith during a 10 a.m. PDT ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 19, at General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego, according to the Defense Department.

The ship is named in honor of Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Lance Cpl. Miguel Keith and is the first ship to bear the name.

Retired Marine Gen. Walter E. Boomer, the 24th assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, will deliver the ceremony's principal address. Keith's mother, Eliadora Delores Keith, who serves as the ship's sponsor, will break a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow to formally christen the ship.

"USNS Miguel Keith honors the dedicated and heroic service of a fellow Marine," Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said. "This dedication will live on in the ship and her crew as they deploy around the world bringing additional capability to our fleet. This christening cannot be achieved without the dedication demonstrated by the men and women who worked tirelessly to build this ship."

Keith was born in San Antonio, Texas, in 1951. He left North High School in Omaha, Nebraska, in December 1968 and enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve at Omaha on Jan. 21, 1969. He was discharged and enlisted in the regular Marine Corps on May 1, 1969.

In 1969, Keith served as a machine gunner with Combined Action Platoon 132, III Marine Amphibious Force in Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam. He was promoted to the rank of lance corporal on April 1, 1970.

He was severely wounded on the morning of May 8, 1970, when his platoon came under a heavy-ground attack. Despite being injured in the attack and open to hostile fire, he continued to engage the enemy with heavy machine gun fire.

Keith's efforts resulted in him killing three attackers and dispersing two remaining adversaries. Despite receiving further serious injuries caused by an enemy grenade, he continued to advance upon an estimated 25 enemy soldiers, killing four and dispersing the rest.

Keith was mortally wounded, but his performance in the face of overwhelming odds contributed, in no small measure, to the success of his platoon defeating a numerically superior enemy force.

ESB class ships are flexible, modular platform optimized to support a variety of maritime-based missions, including special operations forces and airborne mine countermeasures support operations, in addition to humanitarian support and sustainment of traditional military missions.

Built by General Dynamics NASSCO, the Montford Point-class is comprised of five ships across two variants: expeditionary transfer dock and expeditionary sea base. USNS Montford Point, USNS John Glenn, USS Lewis B. Puller and USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams have been delivered to the fleet. Miguel Keith is the third platform of the ESB variant and is scheduled to deliver later this year.

The platform has an aviation hangar and flight deck that include four operating spots capable of landing MV-22 and MH-53E equivalent helicopters and accommodations, workspaces and ordnance

storage for an embarked force. The platform will also provide enhanced command and control, communications, computers and intelligence capabilities to support embarked force mission planning and execution. The reconfigurable mission deck area can store embarked force equipment including mine sleds and rigid hull inflatable boats.

Coast Guard Offloads $92 Million Worth of Cocaine in San Diego

The Coast Guard Cutter Alert's crew on Oct. 16 in San Diego offloads some of the more than 6,800 pounds of cocaine – worth an estimated $92 million – seized in the eastern Pacific Ocean. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray

SAN DIEGO – The Coast Guard offloaded more than $92 million worth of seized cocaine in San Diego on Oct. 16, according to a release from the Coast Guard's 11th District.

The cocaine was seized in international waters of the eastern Pacific Ocean. The contraband represents four suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions by the crews of three Coast Guard cutters off the coasts of Mexico and Central and South America between late July and early October by the following Coast Guard cutters:

- Alert (WMEC-630) was responsible for two cases, seizing 4,000 pounds of cocaine
- Robert Ward (WPC-1130) was responsible for one case, seizing 1,500 pounds of cocaine

- Seneca (WMEC-906) was responsible for one case, seizing 1,400 pounds of cocaine

Numerous U.S. agencies from the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security are involved in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, U.S. 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.

“I am extremely proud of this crew for doing their part to keep these dangerous drugs off the streets,” said Cmdr. Tyson Scofield, Alert’s commanding officer. “The eastern Pacific Ocean is a challenging environment, especially on a ship that is in her 50th year of service, yet this crew persevered to disrupt the illegal flow of narcotics that fuels instability in Central and South America.”

The Coast Guard increased the U.S. and allied presence in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean, which are known drug transit zones off Central and South America, as part of its Western Hemisphere Strategy. During at-sea interdictions, a suspect vessel is located and tracked by allied, military or law enforcement personnel. The interdictions, including the actual boarding, are led and conducted by the Coast Guard. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District headquartered in Alameda.

SECNAV Names Future Destroyer

in Honor of U.S. Navy Medal of Honor Recipient

A photo illustration announcing that Arleigh-Burke class destroyer, DDG 134, will be named USS John E. Kilmer. U.S. Navy illustration/Mass Communication Specialist Paul L. Archer
WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer named a future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, DDG 134, in honor of U.S. Navy Hospitalman John E. Kilmer, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service during the Korean War, the secretary's Public Affairs office said in an Oct. 16 release

"Hospitalman Kilmer was a hero whose efforts during the Korean War continue to inspire," Spencer said. "His dedication to his teammates represents everything good about our integrated Naval force."

A medical field technician with the Fleet Marine Force, Kilmer was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on June 18, 1953. He was killed Aug. 13, 1952, as a result of enemy action while caring for the wounded during the attack on Bunker Hill. He shielded another man from enemy fire with his body and was mortally wounded.

From Kilmer's Medal of Honor citation, "With his company engaged in defending a vitally important hill position well forward of the main line of resistance during an assault by large concentrations of hostile troops, Kilmer repeatedly braved intense enemy mortar, artillery and sniper fire to move from one position to another, administering aide to the wounded and expediting their evacuation."

Kilmer was born in Highland Park, Illinois, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1947 as an Apprentice Seaman in Houston. Kilmer was serving with a Marine rifle company in the First

Marine Division at the time of his death. He had previously served aboard USS Repose (AH 16) and at multiple locations in California.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis response to sea control and power projection. The future USS John E. Kilmer (DDG 134) will be capable of fighting air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously and will contain a combination of offensive and defensive weapon systems to support maritime warfare, including integrated air and missile defense and vertical launch capabilities.

USS John E. Kilmer will be constructed at Bath Iron Works, a division of General Dynamics in Bath, Maine. The ship will be 509 feet long, have a beam of 59 feet and be capable of operating in excess of 30 knots.

Navy's VP-40 Brings P-3 Home From Its Last Active-Duty Patrol Squadron Deployment

Aviation Structural Mechanic (Equipment) 3rd Class Johnathan Hay, attached to Patrol Squadron (VP) 40, signals a P-3C Orion aircraft. VP-40 is deployed to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security. VP-40 is the last active-duty patrol squadron deployment to fly the P-3C Orion aircraft and after this deployment will transition to the P-8 Poseidon. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jakoeb Vandahlen

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's last active-duty patrol squadron

to operate the Lockheed P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft has returned from deployment and soon will begin transition to the Boeing P-8A Poseidon.

Patrol Squadron 40 (VP-40) completed its return to Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island, Washington, on Oct. 10 from its deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet and U.S. 5th Fleet areas of operations.

VP-40 is the last of the existing 12 VP fleet squadrons to operate the P-3C. It will join those squadrons in flying the P-8A as it begins its transition with the fleet replacement squadron, VP-30 at NAS Jacksonville, Florida.

Cmdr. Matthew McKerring, commanding officer of the “Fighting Marlins” of Patrol Squadron VP-40, is welcomed home by his family during a homecoming ceremony at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island on Oct. 9. The homecoming marked the final active-duty deployment of the P-3C Orion. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Marc Cuenca

VP-40 had the distinction of retiring the Navy’s last flying boats, the SP-5B Marlins, in 1967 following a deployment to the Philippines and South Vietnam.

Although it is no longer in the regular fleet deployment cycles, the P-3 will continue for several more years to be operated by several units, including two reserve VP squadrons, VP-62 and VP-69, as well as VP-30, Special Projects Patrol Squadron Two, Scientific Development Squadron One, and Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 30.

The EP-3E electronic reconnaissance version will continue to deploy from NAS Whidbey Island with detachments of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One until the MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial vehicle is deployed in sufficient numbers with signals intelligence capability.

Navy Satellite Communications System Successfully Completes Key Test and Evaluation Phase

Army soldiers assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, participate in a test of the Navy's Mobile User Objective System (MUOS), a next-generation narrowband satellite communications capability. U.S. Navy

SAN DIEGO – The Navy's next-generation narrowband satellite communications system completed a critical test and evaluation phase and was assessed as operationally effective, operational suitable and cyber survivable, Naval Information Warfare Systems Command Public Affairs said in an Oct. 16 release. The successful completion of this testing demonstrates the system's full operational capability and its readiness for forces to transition it into unrestricted operations.

Known as the Mobile User Objective System (MUOS), it is a Navy-led effort that provides essential narrowband satellite communications for the Department of Defense (DoD) and other U.S. government organizations. The recent required completion of Multiservice Operational Test and Evaluation to evaluate measures of effectiveness, suitability and performance in an operationally representative environment means it is now ready for full operational use. Commander, Operational Test and Evaluation Force, the Navy's operational test agency, led the multi-month effort that included participants from the Army and Marine Corps.

> *"This is the last critical milestone before turning MUOS over for full operations, and I am very proud of the entire team that contributed to this outstanding achievement."*

Capt. Chris DeSena, program manager, Navy Communications Satellite Program Office

“Sailors and Marines can already use MUOS in situations like humanitarian response, disaster assistance and training,” said John Pope, who leads the Navy’s Program Executive Office Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence and Space Systems (PEO C4I and Space Systems). “Now, these same advanced communications capabilities will be available in the tactical warfare environment. The advantages MUOS provides will help the warfighter compete, deter and win on the battlefield.”

The MUOS program falls into the program portfolio of the Navy Communications Satellite Program Office at PEO C4I and Space Systems.

Each of the five satellites in the MUOS constellation carries two payloads. The legacy communications payload was designed to maintain DoD legacy narrowband communications during the transition to the advanced MUOS Wideband Code Division Multiple Access (WCDMA) capability. The MUOS WCDMA payload interfaces with the MUOS ground system through the MUOS WCDMA waveform that is integrated into end-user radios, adapting commercial cellular technology. This capability allows warfighters to communicate beyond line of sight more securely and reliably than ever before, with 10 times the capacity and significantly improved quality of service compared to the legacy narrowband constellation.

While the legacy capability continues to support unrestricted operations, the WCDMA capability will dramatically increase effectiveness, information security and global reach for missions across the spectrum of operations.

The WCDMA payloads were approved by U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) for Early Combatant Command Use in July 2016, paving the way for testing, training, exercises and concept of

operations development across the services. In July 2018, USSTRATCOM expanded WCDMA use to include all noncombat operations.

MUOS provides global connectivity to terminals, platforms, tactical operators and operations centers to support global voice and data communications requirements. Operators today with MUOS WCDMA radios are able to transmit simultaneous voice, video and mission data on an Internet Protocol-based system that connects to military networks.

“This is the last critical milestone before turning MUOS over for full operations, and I am very proud of the entire team that contributed to this outstanding achievement,” said Capt. Chris DeSena, program manager, Navy Communications Satellite Program Office. “The capability MUOS brings to the warfighter is revolutionary in terms of narrowband communications, and I look forward to seeing the potential of MUOS fully realized.”

Global C-130J Fleet Surpasses 2 Million Flight Hours

Two KC-130J Super Hercules aircrafts assigned to Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (3rd MAW), conduct a ceremonial formation flight for the VMGR-352 75th anniversary above Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. The squadron held a battle color ceremony, which consisted of a reading of the unit’s citations and awards, a color guard, performance by the 3rd MAW band and a ceremonial formation flight. U.S. Marine Corps/Lance Cpl. Clare J. McIntire

The global community of C-130J Super Hercules operators

recently surpassed 2 million flight hours, Lockheed Martin announced in an Oct. 15 release. These hours were logged beginning with the C-130J's first flight on April 5, 1996, through the end of July 2019.

Twenty-two operators from 18 nations contributed to this achievement, adding hours through multiple missions including combat, transport, aerial refueling, special operations, medevac, humanitarian relief, search and rescue, weather reconnaissance, firefighting and commercial freight delivery.

> *"The C-130J has earned a reputation as the world's workhorse, and this most recent achievement is a powerful reminder of the Super Hercules' unmatched global reach."*
>
> *Rod McLean, vice president and general manager of the Air Mobility & Maritime Missions line of business at Lockheed Martin*

Rod McLean, vice president and general manager of the Air Mobility & Maritime Missions line of business at Lockheed Martin, announced the milestone at the Hercules Operators Conference, the annual C-130 operator-industry event held in Atlanta.

"The C-130J has earned a reputation as the world's workhorse, and this most recent achievement is a powerful reminder of the Super Hercules' unmatched global reach," McLean said. "Crews continue to exemplify the C-130J's proven capability and versatility with every mission they fly. The Lockheed Martin team is proud of the work of the Super Herc crews who rely on the C-130J to support vital missions, both home and abroad."

Countries with military variant C-130Js contributing to these flight hours include (in order of delivery) the United Kingdom, United States (the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard), Australia, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Canada, India, Qatar, Iraq, Oman, Tunisia, Israel, Kuwait, South

Korea, Saudi Arabia, France, and Bahrain. Also contributing is Lockheed Martin Flight Operations, whose crews are the first to fly every C-130J produced.

The U.S. Air Force maintains the largest C-130J fleet, with Super Hercs flown by Air Mobility Command, Air Combat Command, Air Education and Training Command, Special Operations Command, and Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve units. In addition, Defense Contract Management Agency crews support C-130J test flights at Lockheed Martin's Aeronautics site in Marietta, Georgia, home of C-130 production.

The C-130J Super Hercules is the current production model of the legendary C-130 Hercules aircraft.

Coast Guard Repatriates 45 Dominican Migrants Following 3 At-Sea Interdictions

A group of migrants is waiting to be embarked aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) during one of three separate illegal voyages, of 49 migrants, in the Mona Passage this past weekend. The interdictions were a result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG). U.S. Coast Guard

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) repatriated 45 of 49 Dominican migrants to a Dominican Republic Navy vessel Oct. 14 just off the Dominican Republic, following the interdiction of three separate illegal migrant voyages near Puerto Rico, the Coast

Guard 7th District said in an Oct. 16 release.

Four other migrants remain in Puerto Rico to face possible federal prosecution on charges of attempting to illegally reenter the United States, which carries a potential maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years and a fine of up to $250,000.

The interdictions were a result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

“These are illegal and perilous ventures which greatly endanger the lives of migrants, who often embark grossly overloaded makeshift boats with little or no lifesaving equipment,” said Capt. Eric King, Commander of Coast Guard Sector San Juan. “In addition to enforcing U.S immigrations laws, these interdictions help prevent the unnecessary loss of life.”

The first interdiction took place on the morning of Oct. 11 after a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operations DHC-8 marine patrol aircraft crew sighted a migrant boat near Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico. A Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit arrived on scene and interdicted the makeshift vessel with six men aboard. The Coast Guard Cutter Diligence (WMEC-616) arrived on scene shortly thereafter and embarked the migrants.

The second interdiction took place Saturday morning after Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents detected an inbound migrant vessel near Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Two responding Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine units interdicted the makeshift vessel with 26 Dominican migrants aboard, 24 men and two women.

The third interdiction took place during the night of Oct. 12 after the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry detected a 20-foot migrant vessel transiting the Mona Passage towards

Puerto Rico. Cutter Heriberto Hernandez diverted and interdicted the makeshift vessel with 17 men aboard.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

Cutter Heriberto Hernandez is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while the cutter Diligence is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Miguel Keith Completes Acceptance Trials

ESB 5 is named in honor of Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Miguel Keith. U.S. Marine Corps and Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO – The Navy's newest Expeditionary Sea Base (ESB), Miguel Keith (ESB 5) successfully completed acceptance trials on Oct. 11, the Naval Sea Systems Command said in an Oct. 15 release.

The trials were conducted off the coast of Southern California after departure from the General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. (GD-NASSCO) shipyard in San Diego. During the week of trials, the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey conducted comprehensive tests to demonstrate and evaluate the performance of all the ship's major systems.

"Our ESBs are bringing tremendous operational capability to our combatant commanders," said Capt. Scot Searles, Strategic Sealift and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive

Office Ships. “These ships are supporting a wide variety of mission sets in the 5th and 6th Fleet and more recently have demonstrated their ability to integrate mine countermeasure mission packages. These sea trials demonstrated the high quality of this ship and its readiness to join the fight.”

ESBs are highly flexible, modular platforms that are optimized to support a variety of maritime based missions including Special Operations Force and Airborne Mine Countermeasures support operations in addition to humanitarian support and sustainment of traditional military missions, according to the Navy.

> *“Our ESBs are bringing tremendous operational capability to our combatant commanders.”*
>
> *Capt. Scot Searles, Strategic Sealift and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Office Ships*

ESBs include a four-spot flight deck and hangar and a versatile mission deck and are designed around four core capabilities: aviation facilities, berthing, equipment staging support, and command and control assets. ESBs will operate as the component commander requires providing the U.S. Navy fleet with a critical access infrastructure that supports the flexible deployment of forces and supplies.

Miguel Keith is the third platform of the ESB variant and is scheduled to deliver in early fiscal 2020. GD-NASSCO is also under contract for detail design and construction of ESB 6 and 7, with an option for ESB 8.

AeroVironment Launches New Puma LE UAS

The new Puma LE unmanned aircraft. Aerovironment

AeroVironment Inc. has launched the Puma LE (Long Endurance), the next generation in its Puma All Environment small unmanned aircraft system product line, the company said in an Oct. 14 release. The updated platform has increased range and expanded payload capacity, according to the company. Puma LE features an integrated Mantis i45 gimbaled electro-optical/infrared sensor and night-vision goggle-visible laser illuminator, to provide imagery for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) during day, night and low-light operations on land and in maritime environments.

Delivering Group 2 capabilities in a Group 1 footprint, the aircraft weighs 22.5 pounds (10.4 kilograms) and is launchable by hand or bungee. Onboard batteries provide 5.5 hours of flight endurance, doubling the time on station of Puma 3 AE, with an operational range of 60 kilometers when used with AeroVironment's Long-Range Tracking Antenna (LRTA). Puma LE's dual-case mission pack contains everything needed to perform two complete 5.5-hour missions with a single aircraft and ground control system.

According to AeroVironment, Puma LE is built for multimission operations with up to 5.5 pounds of total payload capacity. The aircraft's ruggedized secondary payload bay enables the integration of third-party payloads, with a dedicated power supply providing 18-24 volts at up to 5 amps, and an Ethernet connection port for payload communications.

"Puma LE is the next generation of the combat-proven Puma AE small UAS, delivering immediate tactical ISR, extended

endurance and a dedicated secondary payload bay to dramatically expand its mission capabilities," said Rick Pedigo, vice president of sales and business development for AeroVironment. "With Puma LE, AeroVironment expands the envelope of small unmanned aircraft systems, and enables our customers to proceed with certainty in ever-changing operational environments."

Puma LE can be operated manually or autonomously with AeroVironment's common GCS.

DHS, Coast Guard Extend Limited Contract Relief for Offshore Patrol Cutter

WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security, in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard, granted extraordinary relief to the Eastern Shipbuilding Group (ESG) for the offshore patrol cutter (OPC), Coast Guard Headquarters announced in an Oct. 11 release.

ESG submitted a request June 30, 2019, for extraordinary relief after its shipbuilding facilities sustained significant damages from Hurricane Michael, a Category 5 storm, in October 2018.

Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin K. McAleenan made the decision to grant extraordinary contract relief limited to the first four hulls on the basis that ESG's performance on the OPC contract is vital to the national defense. The Coast Guard will immediately transition to a follow-on competitive contract for the remaining OPC program of record.

The Coast Guard, supported by DHS and the Navy, conducted an extensive analysis of ESG's request guided by law and federal acquisition regulation. This review included an assessment of the cost, schedule and performance impacts on the existing contract. The review was overseen by a Contract Adjustment Board chaired by the DHS Deputy Under Secretary for Management.

"Eastern Shipbuilding's request for extraordinary relief was carefully considered," said Coast Guard Vice Commandant Adm. Charles W. Ray. "This review validated the essential contributions the OPC will provide to our national security and determined that limited relief, in parallel with immediate recompete, is the best option in this exceptional situation. Doing so is consistent with the law, fiscally responsible, and the most expeditious means to deliver this essential national capability."

The Coast Guard intends to release a Request for Information to gauge industry interest in re-competing the remainder of the OPC program of record. This information will inform the acquisition strategy for the follow-on procurement.

The OPC will replace the fleet of medium-endurance cutters, commissioned between 1964 and 1991, providing a critical capability between the National Security Cutter and the Fast Response Cutter. OPC acquisition will expand the Coast Guard's capability to secure the U.S. border and approaches, disrupt drug cartels and other illicit actors, prevent unlawful immigration and enhance national preparedness. This decision will ensure critical capabilities are delivered to the fleet as expeditiously and responsibly as possible.