

# Commandant Stresses Marine Corps Must Change to Meet Peer Threats

The return to an era of 'great power competition' and the emergence of peer military threats "demands in no uncertain terms that the services need to change to meet the challenges of the new world." For the Marine Corps, that change means redesigning the Corps into a naval integrated force, the commandant of the Marine Corps said Oct. 3.

Although the details of what the future Marine Corps must become will be developed through a period of experimentation, wargaming and testing, "in broader terms, it is an integrated naval force. To be competitive in the Indo-Pacific region and in the Mediterranean and elsewhere around the world requires a truly integrated naval force," Gen. David H. Berger said at a Heritage Foundation forum.

"We have not focused on that aspect for 20 years. We have to get creative" and examine "what can the Marine Corps ... do to help a naval commander fight his fleet. How does that contribute to a joint fight?"

Berger described Marines seizing land within the enemy's "weapons engagement zone" and using long-range precision fires – or putting Marine weapons on Navy ships – to help the naval commander fight for sea

control.

Redesigning the Corps is his primary focus, Berger said, and the process will be to look at the threat in 2030 and plan back from there to determine how the Corps must change.

“The strategic realities will cause us to think differently. The realities of the world cause us to throw out old assumptions and start afresh. We cannot assume that today’s equipment, the way that we’re organized, how we train, how we select leaders, all of our warfighting concepts, we cannot assume they will remain relevant in the future. My assumption is they will not,” the commandant said.

*Commandant of US Marine Corps @Heritage “We have to operate inside the enemies threat envelope”. “We have to be there to reassure friends and allies.” [pic.twitter.com/3MGB2xmfNB](https://pic.twitter.com/3MGB2xmfNB)*

– James Jay Carafano (@JJCarafano) [October 3, 2019](#)

Based on his observation and that of others, Berger said the current Marine Corps “is not optimized for great power competition. It is not optimized to support a naval campaign. It is not optimized to support the fleet through missions like sea denial. And it is not optimized to deter a pacing threat.”

Because the fiscal 2021 defense budget has been submitted to the White House, any major changes will not show up until the following year or later, he said. And his assumption is that those future

budgets “will be flat or declining, not rising.”

In his sweepingly provocative planning guidance released shortly after he took over as commandant, Berger said he was willing, if needed, to cut the size of the Corps to have money for the modernization of equipment that will be needed to counter a peer threat.

In his speech and answers to questions, he repeated his focus on shifting from reliance on the few, large, relatively expensive amphibious warships, which he said would be vulnerable to interdiction by Chinese long-range precision weapons, to a large number of smaller, less expensive manned ships and a wide range of unmanned surface, subsurface and aerial systems.

“Mass will have a quality all its own. ... And low cost doesn’t mean cheap,” Berger said.

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## **Elbit Subsidiary Wins \$23 Million Order for Marine Corps Squad Binocular Parts**

HAIFA, Israel – Elbit Systems Ltd.’s U.S. subsidiary, Elbit Systems of America LLC, was awarded delivery order valued at about \$23 million for the supply of systems and various spare components to the U.S. Marine Corps, the company said in an

Oct. release. The order will be executed in Roanoke, Virginia, and will be supplied over the next 10 months.

This order is part of the \$249 million five-year Squad Binocular Night Vision Goggles Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity contract from Sept. 6 that was awarded to the Night Vision business of L3Harris Technologies several days before the finalization of the acquisition of that business activity by Elbit Systems of America.

Under this contract, the U.S. Marine Corps will be supplied with a Squad Binocular Night Vision Goggle system that consists of a high-performance, white phosphor image intensifier binocular, a modular uncooled thermal imaging sensor, and a common external power supply – providing Marines improved mobility and situational awareness during night operations.

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## **Explosive Ordnance Technology Division Announces Partnership With Grey Ops**

INDIAN HEAD, Md. – Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technology Division (NSWC IHEODTD) announced the signing of a public-private partnership with Grey Ops.

Under this five-year agreement, NSWC IHEODTD and GreyOps will jointly manufacture an explosive desensitizing agent known as Silent Spring, which is a liquid safing fluid (LSF) intended to desensitize primary explosive hazards, most commonly homemade explosives, to allow the explosive ordnance disposal

(EOD) warfighter the ability to safely move explosive materials, increase opportunities for forensic analysis and minimize damage to existing infrastructure.

“This partnership will provide the first responder community access to this unique technology and reduce the hazards faced by EOD personnel during explosive neutralization and removal activities,” said Capt. Scott Kraft, commanding officer of NSWC IHEODTD.

This Navy-patented technology has been in development since 2012. Laboratory and field testing was facilitated through collaboration with the FBI, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Applied Research Associates. This partnership will provide the first responder community access to this technology and reduce the hazards faced by EOD personnel during explosive neutralization and removal activities.

“These two organizations are leveraging each other’s strengths and creating a better outcome than they could have achieved on their own,” said Tommy Luginbill, co-founder of Grey Ops.

“These types of agreements leverage existing capability, and the transfer of federally developed technology also can have a positive effect on the greater scientific research community, the commercial sector, the economy, consumers and the public,” said Ashley Johnson, NSWC IHEODTD’s technical director.

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**NAVFAC Awards \$49.8 Million  
Contract for Facility to**

# Support Littoral Combat Ships at NS Mayport

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast last month awarded a \$49.8 million contract to Walsh Federal LLC to build a littoral combat ship (LCS) logistics facility at Naval Station Mayport, Florida, NAVFAC Southeast public affairs announced in a release.

As NS Mayport is going to receive 14 LCSs to the base, construction of an improved logistics facility is expected to support personnel and crew assigned to these ships. The facility will support the LCS program, which includes the LCS operational trainer facility (LTF).

“The LTF is a vital tool for training our Sailors in simulated real-world situations they may encounter while underway,” said Cmdr. Patricia Tyler, NS Mayport’s executive officer. “The new facilities allow teams to effectively train in a safe and controlled environment, providing immediate feedback and lessons learned to our warfighters.”

The contract provides for construction of a new four-story building and renovations to an existing building. Together, the two buildings will house the ashore component of administrative functions for deployed and in-port littoral combat ships as well as a portion of the training component.

The project also includes adjacent road improvements that will connect the logistics facility directly to a new parking garage that is being designed and constructed under a separate contract.

The work started Oct. 1 and is expected to be completed by August 2021.

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# Future Aircraft Carrier John F. Kennedy Establishes Crew



The upper bow unit of the future aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy is fitted to the primary structure of the ship on July 10 at Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding. Huntington Ingalls Industries/Matt Hildreth  
NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Forty-three Sailors assigned to the future aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy attended a ribbon-cutting in Newport News, Virginia, on Oct. 1 to establish the ship's crew and open the building where they will work during the ship's construction, Naval Air Forces Atlantic public affairs said in a release.

"Today, we celebrate a truly historic event," said Capt. Todd Marzano, commanding officer of the pre-commissioning unit. "It marks the grand opening of Building 608, where we will work out of until our spaces on the ship are ready [as well as] the official stand-up of our command. And I couldn't be more excited, more motivated and more honored to be standing with you here today as we make naval history."

The ribbon was cut by Marzano with the help of Cmdr. David Skarosi, Kennedy's executive officer, and Master Chief Information Systems Technician Erica Barnett, Kennedy's acting command master chief, in front of Building 608.

"Today is a huge milestone," Marzano said. "We are now one step closer to accomplishing our mission. We will deliver to the fleet a combat-ready aircraft carrier, manned with properly trained warriors, in support of our nation's needs. We'll have a lot of hard work ahead of us, a lot of challenges, and a lot of long days, but with our skills,

talents and dedication, we will be successful in building the best command in the United States Navy.”

Pride in the event and the command was shared by many in attendance, including Information Systems Technician 1st Class Chandler Ragland, the first Sailor to be assigned to the Kennedy.

“The legacy of this ship is going to be around for a very long time, and to be able to say that I was the first plank owner is incredibly rewarding,” Ragland said. “I get to tell my daughter and family members down the road that I was the first one.”

Despite the small size of the crew, productivity among Kennedy’s Sailors is already high.

“Every member of the crew that’s come in after me has put forth everything they’ve got,” Ragland said. “I don’t see people turning down tasks and saying ‘no, that’s out of my realm.’ They’re always willing and ready to lend a hand and get the mission done. Everyone has the same work ethic, and it’s a long road, but we’re going to keep charging down it.”

Marzano added, “These Sailors have been screened and handpicked due to their outstanding professional records. Big Navy realizes the tremendous challenge and hard work we have ahead of us in standing up an aircraft carrier. It’s great for me as the CO, because I get a true A-team of folks.”

The event concluded with the observance of colors and then a cake-cutting.

John F. Kennedy, the second aircraft carrier in the Gerald R. Ford class, is under construction at Huntington Ingalls Industries’ Newport News Shipbuilding.

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# Navy to Christen Newest Attack Submarine Oregon



The attack submarine USS John Warner arrives at Naval Submarine Base Groton in Groton, Connecticut. The latest of the Virginia class, the USS Oregon, is set to be christened on Oct. 5 in Groton. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Steven Hoskins

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy will christen its newest attack submarine, the future USS Oregon, during a ceremony Oct. 5 at General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, the Defense Department said in a release.

Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.) will deliver the ceremony's principal address. The submarine's sponsor is Dana Richardson. She will highlight the ceremony by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow to formally christen the ship, a time-honored Navy tradition.

"The future USS Oregon will play an important role in the defense of our nation and maritime freedom," said Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer. "She stands as proof of what teamwork – from civilian to contractor to military – can accomplish. I am confident USS Oregon and her crew will ensure our Navy remains safe and strong to proudly serve our nation's interest for decades to come."

Oregon, a Virginia-class submarine designated SSN 793, is the third Navy ship to honor the state. The first USS Oregon was a brigantine ship purchased in 1841 and used for exploration until 1845.

The second Oregon (Battleship No. 3) was commissioned on July

15, 1896. Known for one of the most dramatic voyages ever undertaken by a Navy ship, Oregon sailed more than 14,000 miles in 66 days, leaving San Francisco in 1898 and travelling south through the Straits of Magellan until finally arriving at Jupiter Inlet, Florida, where she reported for battle in the Spanish-American War. While the ship demonstrated the capabilities of a heavy battleship, it also eliminated any opposition to the construction of the Panama Canal, as the country could not afford two months to send warships from one coast to another in times of emergency. Decommissioned in 1906, she was later recommissioned in 1911 and remained in the reserve, until stricken from the Navy list in 1942.

The new attack sub Oregon is the 20th in the Virginia class and the second Block IV boat in the class. The ship began construction in fall 2014 and is expected to be delivered next fall. Block IV subs include design changes to reduce total ownership cost and increase operational availability by decreasing the planned number of depot availabilities from four to three.

Virginia-class submarines are built to operate in the world's littoral and deep waters while conducting anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface ship warfare; strike warfare; special operation forces support; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; irregular warfare; and mine warfare missions.

Their inherent stealth, endurance, mobility and firepower directly enable them to support five of the six maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security and deterrence.

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# Navy to Commission Littoral Combat Ship Cincinnati During Oct. 5 Ceremony



The future littoral combat ship USS Cincinnati underway during acceptance trials. U.S. Navy

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will commission its newest Independence-variant littoral combat ship, the future USS Cincinnati, during a ceremony on Oct. 5 on west pier in Gulfport, Mississippi, the Defense Department said in a release.

The principal speaker will be Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio). Former Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker will serve as the ship's sponsor. The ceremony will be highlighted by a time-honored naval tradition when Pritzker gives the first order to "man our ship and bring her to life!"

"USS Cincinnati and her crew will play an important role in the defense of our nation and maritime freedom," Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said.

"She stands as proof of what teamwork – from civilian to contractor to military – can accomplish. This fast, agile platform will deliver her motto, 'Strength in Unity' worldwide thanks to their efforts."

The future USS Cincinnati is the fifth U.S. Navy ship to honor Ohio's third largest city. The first was a stern-wheel casemate gunboat that served during the Civil War and was sunk by Confederate fire on two separate occasions. Raised both times and returned to service, she was decommissioned following the war.

The second Cincinnati was a cruiser commissioned in 1894. She

served extensively in the Caribbean before, during and after the Spanish-American War before being decommissioned in 1919.

The third ship to bear the name was a light cruiser commissioned in 1924 that served around the world and earned a battle star for World War II service that included convoy escort and blockade duty. She was decommissioned in 1945 after the war ended.

The fourth Cincinnati was a Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine commissioned in 1978. The boat served for 17 years before being decommissioned in 1995.

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## **Most Sealift Vessels Measured Up in 32-Ship 'Pressure Test,' Army General Says**

Most of the ships mobilized in a severe "stress test" of the Maritime Administration's and Military Sealift Command's ability to get their aged fleets under way in a crisis did "pretty well," but the commander of the U.S. Transportation Command wants to accelerate the programs to modernize that crucial force.

"If it were up to me, we'd be doing it faster," and he discussed that objective with Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer, Army Gen. Stephen R. Lyons, commander of U.S. Transportation Command, said Oct. 2.

"We're in the process of working with the Navy."

In late September with little advance notice, MARAD and MSC mobilized 32 of their transport and support ships from both the forces normally on alert status and those in the Ready Reserve, which take more time and effort to get under way.

The exercise was a test of the capability of ships that are considered ancient by commercial standards and the availability of civilian mariners qualified to operate such ships, which include some of the last steam-powered vessels in the world. Independent analysts and some Navy officers have warned that the aged vessels and the declining numbers of qualified mariners could hobble the Navy's ability to transport and sustain forces committed to an overseas conflict.

Of the 32 ships activated, "I would say most of them did pretty well. We're waiting for final results. But in terms of sea trials, initial reporting, it was in the 80% to 85% range" of activating ships to task, Lyons told a Defense Writers breakfast. "Of those 32 ships, the average is 43 years old. In commercial industry it's about 15."

He added: "It was a great pressure test. We'll look at the numbers, also get the quality assessment" in a detailed report that could be available by the end of October.

Asked if he was making any progress on the three-tiered program Congress has approved to modernize the sealift and prepositioning fleets – by upgrading the newest ships, building some new ones

and buying a lot of used commercial ships – Lyons said “yes,” but he wants to accelerate the effort.

“What I’d like to do in the authorization to acquire used vessels is to accelerate that. ... I know there is work now at the [Navy] Department to fund the seven,” which include two new and five used. “I’m pushing to accelerate. The Navy program now needs to be plussed up. ... But the secretary and others are in favor of finding the money.”

Lyons also expressed concern with the progress on efforts to solve a far different problem that has drawn widespread criticism from Congress and service families – the perpetual failure of commercial movers hired by the services to get household goods from one home to another in a reasonable time and in good condition.

The command issued a request for proposals two weeks ago and has gotten a lot of interest from firms willing to take on what would be a nationwide contract to provide the tens of thousands of household moves every year, Lyons said. The major failure in the existing program was the inability to hold contractors accountable and to lack of a national system with common standards and the ability to inform managers in different regions of a poor performing contractor elsewhere.

“Inside the Department, we don’t have clear lines to hold them accountable for delivering the service. ... And most of all, we have to have a consistent pattern of quality of delivery,” he said.

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# VT Group Acquires DELTA Resources

CHANTILLY, Va. – VT Group has acquired DELTA Resources Inc., a firm that specializes in naval systems engineering and technical services for critical U.S. Navy shipbuilding and fleet modernization programs, VT Group said a release.

Founded in 2000 and headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, DELTA Resources provides Naval Sea Systems Command and the Navy's program executive offices (PEOs) with C5I and weapons systems engineering, integrated product support and other technical services. DELTA Resources also delivers information technology, cloud implementation and cybersecurity engineering services to a customer base that also includes the U.S. Army and the Defense Information Systems Agency.

"I am excited to welcome the DELTA Resources team to VT Group," said John Hassoun, VT Group's president and CEO.

"This acquisition adds differentiated technical expertise to our portfolio of fleet modernization capabilities and positions VT Group as a leading provider of full life-cycle naval engineering services for the next generation of naval platforms and weapons systems."

DELTA Resources founder and CEO Maria Proestou added: "I am immensely proud of the DELTA Resources team, their commitment to our customers and the business we've built together. This combination is the next chapter in our story." Proestou will continue to lead DELTA Resources as a subsidiary of VT Group.

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# Submarine Group Two Reborn as Response to ‘Great Power Competition’

NORFOLK, Va. – Taking another step in response to the re-emergence of the ‘great power competition,’ the U.S. Navy re-established Commander, Submarine Group (SUBGRU) Two in Norfolk, Virginia, on Sept. 30 following its hiatus since August 2014, U.S. Submarine Forces public affairs said in a release.

The move follows the re-establishment of commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet, in 2018 and is aimed at enhancing the Navy’s capacity to command and control its undersea warfare forces seamlessly across all of the Atlantic area, from the U.S. eastern seaboard to the Barents Sea and even into the southern Atlantic.

“The security environment continues to grow more challenging and complex – particularly in the North Atlantic,” said Vice Adm. Charles Richard, commander of Submarine Forces.

“To maintain America’s undersea superiority, we must increase naval power and our readiness for high-end blue water warfare. How we’re organized to command that employment will be a driving factor in our success – that’s why we’re re-establishing Sub Group Two today.”

SUBGRU 2 is commanded by Rear Adm. James Waters, who also assumed duties as commander, Task Force 84. CTF 84 is the theater anti-submarine warfare commander for U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

“Our motto, ‘Praeparavit Regnatura,’ means ready to dominate. We will prepare forces to control the undersea domain through rigorous competitive training and a thorough understanding of our adversaries and the environment where we both operate,” Waters said. “Further, we will innovate and advance the art of theater anti-submarine warfare through complex fleet exercises and war games.”

Additionally, the command can operate as an embedded CTF within C2F when it is activated as a Maritime Command Element and to serve as the TASW commander for commander, U.S. 4th Fleet, as assigned. SUBGRU 2 will have more administrative control responsibilities delegated from Commander, Submarine Force Atlantic.

“As you carry out your day-to-day duties, you must understand that winning decisively in a potential ‘Fourth Battle of the Atlantic’ should be your guiding vision,” said Adm. Christopher Grady, commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command. “The best way to prevent a fight is to be prepared to win decisively should anyone choose to threaten us. We believe in power for peace.”