GD Bath Iron Works Awarded $719 Million for Planning Yard Services for DDG 51s

BATH, Maine – General Dynamics Bath Iron Works, a subsidiary of General Dynamics, has been awarded a Navy contract to continue providing planning yard services for DDG 51 Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers. The contract is valued at $126 million for the first year with four option years, which, if exercised and fully funded by the Navy, would bring the total value of the contract to $719 million.

Planning yard services include design, material kitting, logistics, planning and execution. The majority of the planning yard services work will be performed in Maine.

Bath Iron Works also currently manages post-delivery maintenance and modernization activities for DDG 1000-class ships and LCS-class ships.

Navy Orders Two Utility Landing Craft from Swiftships

WASHINGTON – The Navy has awarded contract for the second and third utility landing craft (LCU) of a new class.

The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded a $26.7 million contract modification to Swiftships LLC of Morgan City, Louisiana, for LCU 1701 and 1702. The craft will follow the prototype of the LCU 1700 class, which is replacing the old LCU 1610 class on a

one-for-one basis.

“LCU 1700 will be a similarly rugged steel craft, which will recapitalize the LCU 1610 capabilities and have a design life of 30 years,” the contract announcement said. “LCU 1700 craft will be a highly reliable and fuel-efficient heavy-lift platform whose capability will be complementary to the faster air cushion landing craft, which have a significantly shorter range, smaller payload capacity, no habitability and operating hour limitations.”

The Navy’s amphibious warfare ships equipped with well decks routinely deploy with LCUs embarked.

Work on the two craft is expected to be completed by May 2021.

Navy Secretary Names Independence-Variant Littoral Combat Ship After South Dakota’s Capital

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer announced that the next Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship will be named USS Pierre (LCS 38), his public affairs officer said in a Feb. 5 release. The future USS Pierre is named in honor of the capital city of South Dakota and is the second ship to bear the name.

“I am proud to name a future Independence-variant LCS after the capital city of South Dakota,” Spencer said. “The citizens of Pierre and the entire state of South Dakota have a great

history of service in the Navy and Marine Corps team, and that legacy will live on in the future USS Pierre.”

The future USS Pierre will be built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama. This ship will be 419 feet long, with a beam length of 104 feet and capable of operating at speeds in excess of 40 knots.

The Navy has accepted delivery of 17 littoral combat ships (LCSs). Including the recent contract modifications, a total of 35 LCSs have been procured with 11 ships under construction (LCS 17, 19-26) and seven more ships in preconstruction stage (LCS 29 – 32, 34, 36, 38).

The LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship, designed to support focused mine countermeasures, antisubmarine warfare and surface warfare missions. LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future mission capability from deep water to the littorals.

Coast Guard Offloads 34,780 Pounds of Cocaine in Port Everglades

MIAMI – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Forward (WMEC-911) offloaded approximately 34,780 pounds of cocaine Feb. 5 in Port Everglades worth an estimated $466 million wholesale seized in international waters in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a release of the same date.

The drugs were interdicted off the coasts of Mexico, Central, and South America and represent 21 separate suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The cutter Forward was responsible for eight cases seizing an estimated 14,207 pounds of cocaine. The Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton (WMSL-753) was responsible for five cases, seizing an estimated 9,460 pounds of cocaine. The Coast Guard Cutter Campbell (WMEC-909) was responsible for four cases, seizing an estimated 6,153 pounds of cocaine. The Coast Guard Cutter Alert (WMEC-630) was responsible for two cases, seizing an estimated 5,736 pounds of cocaine. The Coast Guard Cutter Venturous (WMEC-625) was responsible for one case, seizing an estimated 1,565 pounds of cocaine. The Coast Guard Cutter Confidence (WMEC-619) was responsible for one case seizing an estimated 553 pounds of cocaine.

“The interdiction and disruption of more than 17 tons of cocaine is a result of the collaboration and coordination of multiple Coast Guard and interagency assets to address the complex maritime challenge of transnational criminal organizations,” said Cmdr. Michael Sharp, commanding officer of the cutter Forward. “I am extremely proud of all the women and men that contributed to the mission success, it is a direct reflection of how the U.S. Coast Guard delivers mission excellence anytime, anywhere.”

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, 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. The fight against transnational organized crime networks in the Eastern Pacific requires unity of effort in all phases from detection, monitoring and interdictions, to prosecutions by U.S. Attorneys in Florida, California, New York, the Gulf Coast, Puerto Rico and

elsewhere.

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

The cutter Forward is a 270-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, Virginia. The cutter Hamilton is a 418-foot national security cutter homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. The cutter Campbell is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The cutter Alert is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Astoria, Oregon. The cutter Venturous is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg, Florida. The cutter Confidence is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Port Canaveral, Florida.

Blue Blasters Hornet Sundown Ceremony Marks the End of an Era

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 34 hosted a sundown ceremony and fly-over for the legacy F/A-18C Hornet aircraft at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach,

Virginia, Feb. 1.

Active-duty service members, aviation leadership, local media and visitors were in attendance to commemorate the aircraft's 35 years of active service in the fleet.

"Today our VFA-34 family and the operational farewells an old friend," said Cmdr. William Mathis, commanding officer of VFA-34. "Born more than 40 years ago, the Hornet entered operational service for the U.S. Navy in 1984, and for the next 35 years she proudly served the nation from the flight deck of aircraft carriers in all the seas across the globe."

The Blue Blasters of VFA-34 were the last fleet squadron in the Navy flying the Hornet, most recently joining USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) to conduct freedom of navigation patrols in the South China Sea in 2018.

"First, it's a great feeling being the last squadron to take these hornets into combat because we made history," said Master Chief Gene Garland, command master chief of VFA-34. "Secondly, this represents the ending of an era because these jets have been around for a long time, and the professionals you see all around you in this squadron maintained our Hornets and kept them flying. I thank God for the mindset of my Sailors. They are hard-workers, dedicated and they truly are a reflection of the culture of our squadron. This final flight means we and the legacy Hornets have accomplished the mission."

Lt. Frank McGurk, who piloted one of the three hornets that were part of the ceremony alongside the squadron's Commanding Officer and Operations Officer, shared some details of the historical experience.

"We went out to one of our working areas over the ocean about 80-100 miles out," said McGurk. "From there, we left the area and flew northbound along the coast up past the [Wright Brothers] First Flight Memorial around Kitty Hawk, North

Carolina, where we took a few photos over the area then made our way back to Oceana for the fly-over."

Lt. McGurk also spoke on how he felt regarding the Hornet's last flight.

"This aircraft has been super reliable for us and has proven itself over the years," he said. "I believe there are many aviators out there who know how good of an airplane this is to fly. Although I've only had a taste of it, I can feel the history and lineage of that. There were a lot of people who came here to this base to see this old bird take her last flight, and I think that's pretty cool."

The F/A-18C Hornet is being replaced by the F/A-18E Super Hornet, which is capable of executing the same missions as the Hornet, but with significant advancements in mission systems that will dramatically enhance its effectiveness.

"The Hornet is known as many things," said Cmdr. Mathis. "Legacy, highly reliable, multirole attack fighter … but to us, she will always be an old friend. The Hornet will continue to serve with the Marine Corps and Navy support units but for the operational Navy, it is time to say goodbye. So from the men and women who flew and maintained the legendary F-18 Hornet, we say thank you for your service and job well done."

Coast Guard Cutter Diligence Returns Home Following

Counter-Drug Interdictions

Wilmington, N.C. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Diligence returned to Wilmington, North Carolina, Feb. 2 following a 42-day patrol in the Caribbean, the Coast Guard 5th District said in a Feb. 3 release.

The crew of the Diligence performed counter-drug operations and participated in international engagements in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South.

In concert with JIATF South, the crew of the Diligence worked alongside interagency and international partners to prevent and respond to illegal maritime migration and narcotic smuggling from Central and South America. The crew of the Diligence facilitated the transport of six suspected drug smugglers, 1,200 pounds of marijuana and 50 kilograms of cocaine apprehended by other Coast Guard assets.

The crewmembers of the Diligence also conducted an engagement coincidental to operations with the Honduran Navy in Roatán, Honduras. The crew shared their expertise in engineering and law enforcement with the Honduran Navy.

“The crew of Diligence adapted and worked together to achieve operational success while enhancing key partnerships in Central America,” said Comdr. Robert S. Mohr, commanding officer of the Diligence. “I am extremely proud and truly impressed with the crew’s unwavering devotion to duty throughout this dynamic patrol.”

Coast Guard Cutter Diligence is a 54-year-old, 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Wilmington. The Diligence’s primary missions consist of counter-drug and migrant interdiction, federal fisheries enforcement, and search and rescue.

USS South Dakota Commissioned

NEW LONDON, Conn. – USS South Dakota (SSN 790) became the newest and 17th Virginia-class fast-attack submarine in the U.S. Navy during her commissioning ceremony at Naval Submarine Base New London, Feb. 2, Submarine Force Public affairs said in a release of the same date.

The U.S. Navy, with assistance from Deanie Dempsey, the ship's sponsor, gave the command, "Man our ship and bring her to life!" spurring the crew into action and all ship's systems to be tested, including alarms, bells, radars and scopes.

USS South Dakota's commanding officer, Cmdr. Craig Litty, highlighted South Dakota's capability to dominate the undersea domain and enable military success in any engagement.

"South Dakota was built to be on scene and unseen, forward-deployed and ready to take the fight to our adversaries and protect our shores here," said Litty. "We do that through executing the seven mission areas that the United States Submarine Force, which focus primarily on antisubmarine warfare and antisurface warfare, but we are also very capable of reconnaissance operations and operations in littoral waters. As the commissioning crew, we've developed a special bond with the ship itself, which we will use to maximize our capability on our first deployment."

"South Dakota will soon enter the fleet with stealth, flexibility and endurance," said Vice Adm. Chas Richard, commander, addressing the crew and attendees. "Traveling silently through the world's oceans undetected, collecting information, preparing for battle and, if necessary, striking from the deep swiftly without warning; answering the nation's

call. To the South Dakota crew, as your motto attests, ‘Under the Sea, We Rule,’ because the nation the Navy and the Mount Rushmore state are depending on you.”

Dempsey expressed what the moment and her role as the ship’s sponsor means to her.

“It is my privilege to be the sponsor of USS South Dakota,” said Dempsey. “I’ve been here from the very beginning, watching both the boat and her crew grow, and that gives me a tremendous sense of pride. When I said those words and the Sailors responded ‘Aye, aye, ma’am!’ it gave me goosebumps.”

The first South Dakota (ACR 9), a U.S. Navy Pennsylvania-class armored cruiser, laid down on Sept. 30, 1902, by the Union Iron Works, San Francisco and launched

on July 21, 1904, was sponsored by Grace Herreid, daughter of Charles N. Herreid, governor of South Dakota.

The second South Dakota’s (BB 57) keel was laid down on July 5, 1939, at Camden, New Jersey, by the New York Shipbuilding Corp. She was launched on June 7, 1941, sponsored by Harlan J. Bushfield, wife of the governor of South Dakota. The lead ship of her class, South Dakota was considered to be the most efficient battleship designed under the limitations of the Washington Naval Treaty during World War II.

Though in their nineties, some of the Sailors from the submarine’s namesake made it out to the event to see that the history and traditions were passed on to the next generation.

“It is very impressive, and I am very honored to be a part of this,” said Richard Hackley, a Seaman 1st Class (Radar Striker) aboard the battleship USS South Dakota during World War II. “I’ve got fond memories from serving on South Dakota, and to be included in the new South Dakota is quite an honor for me.”

South Dakota is the seventh of eight Block III Virginia-class submarines to be built. The Block III submarines are made with the new Virginia Payload Tubes designed to lower costs and increase missile-firing payload possibilities.

The first 10 Block I and Block II Virginia-class submarines have 12 individual 21-inch diameter vertical launch tubes able to fire Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAMS). The Block III submarines are built with two-larger 87-inch diameter tubes able to house six TLAMS each. “It is flattering to be chosen to a part of this tradition,” said Sonar Technician (Submarines) 2nd Class Casey Strickland, a South Dakota plankowner. “It sets us aside from other boat crews, and I think it is an honor to be part of this.”

South Dakota is a flexible, multimission platform designed to carry out the seven core competencies of the submarine force: antisubmarine warfare; antisurface warfare; delivery of special operations forces; strike warfare; irregular warfare; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and mine warfare.

The submarine 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. It will operate for over 30 years without ever refueling. Construction on South Dakota began 2013; the submarine’s keel was authenticated during a ceremony on April 4, 2016; and the submarine was christened during a ceremony Oct. 14, 2017.

General Atomics Awarded

Contract for Prototype LiFT Battery System for LDUUV

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced today that it has been awarded a contract from Advanced Technology International (ATI) to develop and demonstrate a prototype Lithium-ion Fault Tolerant (LiFT) battery system for the U.S. Navy's prototype "Snakehead" Large-Displacement Unmanned Undersea Vehicle (LDUUV), GA-EMS announced in a Feb. 4 release.

The LiFT battery system will power the LDUUV's propulsion and support systems. The Snakehead LDUUV is intended to increase endurance, range, and payload hosting capabilities to support a variety of future mission and operations requirements.

"Our LiFT battery systems are designed to withstand the rugged marine environment and provide safe, reliable power that is critical to keeping propulsion and support systems operating throughout a mission cycle," said Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS. "We look forward to expanding our efforts to develop and demonstrate prototype LiFT battery systems to support the LDUUV as we continue to provide LiFT systems for various other critical manned and unmanned underwater platforms used by the Department of Defense."

"LiFT batteries are designed with passive safety features not found in other solutions," stated Rolf Ziesing, vice president of programs at GA-EMS. "Some lithium-ion battery systems rely on an active forced water cooling system to cool batteries and mitigate thermal events. Active systems add more equipment, weight and certification requirements to qualify a platform for use in a maritime environment. LiFT battery systems eliminate those complexities, simplifying installation, operation, and maintenance without compromising safety and reliability."

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. The flexible architecture of the high-energy-density LiFT battery system can be configured to meet the most demanding needs of manned and unmanned underwater vehicles. LiFT battery systems have undergone at-sea testing, including use in other undersea vehicles that have been classified by Det Norske Veritas Germanischer Lloyd, an international accredited registrar and classification society for the maritime industry.

Navy Secretary Names Independence-Variant Littoral Combat Ship USS Kingsville

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer announced that the next Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship will be named USS Kingsville (LCS 36), the secretary's public affairs officer said in a Feb. 4 release.

The future USS Kingsville (LCS 36) is named in honor of the city of Kingsville, Texas, and is the first ship to bear the name.

"I am pleased to name a future Independence-variant LCS USS Kingsville," said Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer. "The citizens of Kingsville have been steadfast partners to the Navy and Marine Corps team, and their enduring support of our future strike fighter pilots have helped make the city of Kingsville the gateway for naval aviators. I am confident this

ship will continue that legacy of service for decades to come.”

The future USS Kingsville will be built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama. This ship will be 419 feet long with a beam length of 104 feet and be capable of operating at speeds in excess of 40 knots.

The Navy has accepted delivery of 17 littoral combat ships (LCS). Including the recent contract modifications, a total of 35 LCSs have been procured with 11 ships under construction (LCS 17, 19-26) and seven more ships in preconstruction (LCS 29 – 32, 34, 36, 38).

Coast Guard Cutter Alert Returns Home Following Counter-Drug Patrol, $83 Million Worth of Cocaine Seized

ASTORIA, Ore. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Alert returned home Feb. 1 following a 60-day counter-drug patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, seizing more than $83 million worth of cocaine during the deployment, the Coast Guard Pacific area said in a Feb. 4 release.

The crew interdicted two suspected drug smuggling vessels, yielding more than 5,700 pounds of seized cocaine while patrolling international waters in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South. Seven suspected drug traffickers

were apprehended during the two interdictions.

The Alert crew received support from the U.S. Navy, Customs and Border Protection and Coast Guard maritime patrol aircrews, who provided the cutter with reconnaissance and over watch leading up to and during the interdictions.

“Coast Guard men and women operating under Joint Interagency Task Force-South, a U.S. Southern Command component, use military hardware and law enforcement authority to interdict smuggling vessels and bring the suspects to justice,” said Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz. “This disrupts key funding sources for these dangerous criminal networks and diminishes their influence in the Western Hemisphere. Aviation forces from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and others all support this crucial effort.”

A Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) aircrew and an MH-65 dolphin helicopter from Jacksonville, Florida, deployed aboard Alert throughout the patrol to assist the cutter’s boarding teams during the interdictions. When not in pursuit of suspect vessels, the HITRON team helped qualify multiple Alert crewmembers during training evolutions launching and landing helicopters from the cutter’s flight deck while underway.

Deployed since early December, Alert’s crew spent the holidays at sea. Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Jason M. Vanderhaden called the cutter to speak with crew members.

“We are fortunate to have such a high-spirited crew, happily celebrating Christmas and New Year’s Eve together, at sea for 32 days between liberty stops,” said Cmdr. Tobias Reid, Alert’s commanding officer. “Between the holidays, two very interesting smuggling cases and our equator crossing ceremony, we had a very full and satisfying patrol. But, above all, we are thankful for the incredible generosity from the Astoria,

Warrenton/Hammond and Seaside communities, who provide such tremendous support to our families while we were on patrol.”

Commissioned in 1969, Alert is one of 14 remaining 210-foot reliance-class medium-endurance cutters built for the Coast Guard and one of three reliance-class cutters stationed on the West Coast. The cutter and crew perform search and rescue, living marine resource and environmental protection, and counter-drug missions throughout the Pacific Ocean from the U.S.-Canadian border to south of the Galapagos Islands. The fleet of aging medium-endurance cutters are operating beyond the original service lifespan and are becoming increasingly more expensive to maintain and operate.

The Coast Guard will be phasing out medium-endurance cutters with the addition of the 360-foot offshore patrol cutter (OPC). Acquisition of OPCs is one of the Coast Guard’s highest investment priorities. The OPC will provide a capability bridge between the 418-foot national security cutter, which patrols the open ocean, and the 154-foot fast response cutter, which serves closer to shore. The OPCs will feature state-of-the-art technology to meet the service’s long-term need for cutters capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups to conduct law enforcement, search and rescue, homeland security, and defense missions. The first OPC is scheduled for delivery in 2021.

The OPC will provide the tools to effectively enforce federal laws, secure our maritime borders, disrupt transnational criminal organizations and respond to 21st century threats,” said Schultz. “OPCs will be the backbone of the Coast Guard’s strategy to project and maintain an offshore presence.”