

MCPON: Sailors Must Be 'Qualified, Astute Technicians'

WASHINGTON – The Navy needs to capture the best talents resident in its Sailors to meet the needs of a future fight, the service's senior enlisted adviser said.

The Navy needs to "find ways to best capture that talent and set it up for success in the fleet," said Master Chief Petty of the Navy (MCPON) Russell L. Smith, speaking Jan. 10 along with Sgt. Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green at an event sponsored by the U.S. Naval Institute at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Smith pointed out that the Navy needs recruits who are comfortable with high technology.

"The Navy is a STEM service," he said, referring to science, technology, engineering and math as the skills Sailors need to man the ships, aircraft, weapons, networks and other electronic systems used in the modern Navy. "We have to be qualified, astute technicians."

Smith said "bringing that [STEM] talent forward is one of our biggest lines of effort."

He also emphasized that sea-going skills such as damage control and firefighting remain just as important now as ever, noting that Sailors must "first meet the mission, then save their shipmates."

Smith noted that the Navy is in stiff competition with other military services and the other high-tech sectors of the U.S. economy for tech-savvy young adults. However, Smith said that the Navy's retention of Sailors is the highest it has ever

been, upward of 70 percent, better even than after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Green said the Marine Corps, which recruits 30,000 people each year, continues to achieve its quotas, attributing that to the ethos of the Marine Corps that attracts people looking to be something special.

Green said that while the Marine Corps is adopting new technology, the focus is "maximizing lethality and not compromising the standard."

He said that the Corps' focus is on the lethality and readiness of the individual Marine.

"The robot is not kicking in the door, the Marine is," Green said.

Smith said that child care for Sailors' families is becoming a conundrum for the Navy. Green seconded that, noting that 49 to 50 percent of today's Marines are married, a situation much different from decades ago.

Navy Awards General Dynamics Voice Systems Engineering Contract

FAIRFAX, Va. – The U.S. Navy's Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) Atlantic has awarded its Navy Secure Voice Systems contract to General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT), the company announced in a Jan. 9 release.

The single-award, indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity

contract holds a ceiling of \$91.2 million. It includes a five-year base period with one four-year option as well as one six-month option period. GDIT will submit proposals for individual task orders to provide next-generation solutions for the Navy's voice systems.

"GDIT continues to expand our platform of next-generation services and solutions for the Navy," said Rich Farinacci, vice president and general manager for GDIT's Naval and Training Solutions Sector. "Our secure voice systems portfolio will provide robust engineering support to the Navy worldwide. Together, we will fortify this support and enable the Navy to remain focused on their important mission."

GDIT has supported SPAWAR Atlantic under this program since 2001. Through this contract, GDIT will provide systems engineering and life-cycle sustainment support for the Navy's secure voice systems, which includes VINSON/ANDVT Crypto Modernization, Automated Digital Network System, Defense Red Switch Network, Tactical Shore Gateway, and other secure voice systems and equipment. Work will be performed worldwide and is expected to be completed by November 2023. If all options are exercised, work could continue until June 2028.

MBDA Demonstrates Anti-Surface Capabilities of the Mistral Missile

PARIS – MBDA successfully demonstrated the use of the Mistral missile against fast boats such as fast inshore attack craft during tests conducted at the end of the year, the company said in a Jan. 9 release.

A number of foreign delegations attended the demonstration firing that was performed from a SIMBAD-RC automated naval turret firing from the land against a fast-moving, remotely controlled semi-rigid boat more than 3 kilometers off the coast. The scenario was intended to be representative of the self-protection of a vessel against an asymmetric threat (commando or terrorist attack).

In its latest version currently in service with the French armed forces, the Mistral is an air-defense missile equipped with an imaging infrared seeker with advanced image processing capabilities that allow it to engage low thermal signature targets from a long distance (such targets include unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), missiles and fast boats), while at the same time offering excellent resistance to countermeasures.

The SIMBAD-RC is a remotely-controlled very short-range naval air defense system that provides highly efficient capacities against a wide range of threats, from combat aircraft through anti-ship missiles to small-sized threats such as UAVs.

The system is easy to install and thus provides small units or support vessels with a true self-defense capacity or can even ensure reinforced defense for the other types of surface vessels. Each turret supports two ready-to-fire Mistral missiles. The turret is remotely operated, allowing the operator to remain under cover in the vessel's operation center, and thus ensures longer operational availability in case of a combat alert.

"MBDA is constantly striving to help armed forces make optimum use of their investments in our products," said Antoine Bouvier, MBDA CEO. "The demonstration of the SIMBAD-RC Mistral combination against surface targets reflects our policy of giving our systems additional capacities to supplement those they were originally designed to provide."

Additional TROPHY Active Protection Systems Provided to Army and Marine Corps

ARLINGTON, Va. – Leonardo DRS Inc. has been awarded an undefinitized contract action initially worth \$79.6 million to provide the U.S. Army and Marine Corps with additional TROPHY Active Protection Systems, Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. said in a Jan. 9 release. This brings the total funded value of the program to over \$200 million.

Developed by long-time partner Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. of Israel, TROPHY provides combat-proven protection against anti-armor rocket and missile threats, while at the same time locating and reporting the origin of the hostile fire for immediate response.

“Leonardo DRS is proud of the confidence shown by the Army in deciding to field TROPHY to even more U.S. combat brigades,” said Aaron Hankins, vice president and general manager of the Leonardo DRS Land Systems division. “Together with our Rafael partners, we are fully committed to meeting our customers’ demands and are working in parallel to further address the urgent protection needs of other U.S. platforms.”

The DRS and Rafael team led a successful demonstration featuring a new, lighter TROPHY VPS variant on a Bradley Fighting Vehicle in Israel in August. The team will also be participating in the Army’s Stryker Expedited APS demonstration “rodeo” in February.

“Rafael does not stand still. TROPHY VPS provides the same capabilities and performance as TROPHY in a significantly

smaller package,” said Moshe Elazar, executive vice president and head of Rafael’s Land and Naval Division. “We are also leveraging our global leadership in both active protection (close to 1,500 TROPHY systems) and medium-caliber remote weapons systems (over 1,000 systems), to offer the mature, reliable, lightweight Samson turret, which combines both capabilities. Given our wide customer base and existing production lines for both, Samson is a capable, affordable, low-risk solution for the U.S. Army’s Next Generation Combat Vehicles, other programs in Israel and other markets.”

Coast Guard, HSI, CBP Interdict Suspected Smuggler, Migrants, Drugs

MIAMI – The Coast Guard, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) interdicted a sport fisher boat with a suspected smuggler, two migrants, a U.S.-Bahamas dual citizen and 7 kilograms of cocaine Jan. 7 north of Miami, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

At approximately, 5:25 a.m. Coast Guard Sector Miami watchstanders received a report from the Coast Guard Cutter Bernard C. Webber crew stating that they spotted an unlit 46-foot sport fisher boat approximately eight miles east of Dania Beach. The Bernard Webber crew interdicted the vessel to find one Bahamian suspected smuggler, two Bahamian migrants and the dual citizen aboard.

The Bernard C. Webber crew embarked the four persons while one of their small-boat crews drove the sport fisher boat to Coast

Guard Station Fort Lauderdale. The Coast Guard, HSI and CBP jointly searched the boat and located 7 kilograms of cocaine. The Bernard Webber crew later transferred the persons to CBP custody.

“Our partnerships with Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security Investigations were crucial in the success of this interdiction,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Emily Wilhite, the command duty officer for Coast Guard Sector Miami. “We were able to stop the illegal smuggling of migrants and drugs and will continue to maintain a strong presence in the Florida Straits and Caribbean Sea.”

Federal prosecution has been accepted in the Southern District of Florida.

Army Corps Awards Contract to Widen, Deepen Corpus Christi Ship Channel



CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been awarded a contract to deepen the Port of Corpus Christi ship channel.

Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co. received a \$93 million construction contract on Jan. 4, to deepen and widen the Corpus Christi Ship Channel from the Gulf of Mexico to Harbor Island, as part of the first phase of the port’s \$326 million Channel Improvement Project (CIP).

Corpus Christi is the largest crude oil port in the United

States and handles both imports and exports. The port exports about 100 million tons annually.

Charles W. Zahn, chairman for the Port of Corpus Christi Commission said the deeper channel “will allow larger vessels access to much needed export facilities, safely and responsibly.”

The dredging will deepen the entire ship channel to 54 feet from 45 feet and widen it to 520 feet from 400. The full project, which will be completed in phases and take about five years, will permit two-way supertanker traffic, including very large crude carriers (VLCCs), which can carry up to 2 million barrels of crude oil. Great Lakes will start this first phase later this year, which will take about a year to complete.

“We commend the Army Corps of Engineers for progressing the highly anticipated Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvement Project, and the selection of Great Lakes Dredge & Dock to perform on this first contract is an extraordinary step forward in positioning the United States as the largest exporter of energy in the world,” said Sean Strawbridge, CEO for the Port of Corpus Christi.

The CIP will result in the first shore-based VLCC terminal in the U.S. The only other terminal is located offshore.

Based in Oak Grove, Illinois, Great lakes is America’s largest dredging contractor, although much of its work is international.

“We are confident that this will drive the much-anticipated future investment and development in the port,” said Lasse Petterson, CEO of Great Lakes. “It all starts with dredging.”

U.S. Coast Guard Assists Haitian Coast Guard in Stopping Illegal Migrant Voyage

MIAMI – The U.S. Coast Guard assisted the Haitian Coast Guard in stopping approximately 70 Haitian migrants Jan. 6 approximately 26 miles north of Cap Haïtien, Haiti, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

At approximately 1:30 a.m., the Coast Guard Cutter Vigilant crew sighted a roughly 40-foot Haitian freighter. The Vigilant crew launched a small-boat crew to question the people aboard. Upon detection, the freighter changed course back south to Haiti. The Vigilant crew continued to shadow the vessel while 7th District watchstanders contacted the Haitian Coast Guard. A Haitian Coast Guard marine unit arrived on scene at approximately 9:30 a.m. and relieved the Vigilant crew.

“This case highlights a critical component to the success of curbing illegal immigration in the Caribbean and that is of our international partners, and in this case specifically, the Haitian Coast Guard,” said Capt. Aldante Vinciguerra, chief of response for the 7th District. “The close cooperation between both U.S. Coast Guard and Haitian Coast Guard operational teams in this instance helped prevent a dangerous and ill-advised illegal migrant voyage from potentially capsizing and ending tragically as we unfortunately have seen happen recently.

“The U.S. Coast Guard has maintained a continual presence in the Florida straits and Caribbean basin and will continue to do so to detect, deter, and stop these illegal and unsafe voyages.”

SECNAV Names New Destroyer in Honor of U.S. Senator from Alaska

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer has named a future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer in honor of U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, who represented Alaska from 1968 to 2009, the secretary's public affairs officer said in a Jan. 5 release.

“Sen. Stevens was a staunch supporter of a strong Navy and Marine Corps team who served our nation with distinction as a pilot during World War II, and later as a Senator of Alaska,” Spencer said. “I am pleased that his legacy of service and dedication to national security will live on in the future USS Ted Stevens.”

Stevens served as a pilot in the Army Air Corps from 1943 to 1946 and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross before being discharged in 1946. Stevens was elected as a state representative in Alaska in 1964, re-elected in 1966, and in 1968 he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the U.S. Senate. In 1970, Stevens was elected to the seat in a special election and was subsequently re-elected five times. He left office in 2009 as the then-longest serving Republican U.S. Senator in history.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers conduct a variety of operations from peacetime presence and crisis response to sea control and power projection. The future USS Ted Stevens (DDG 128) will be capable of fighting air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously, and will contain a combination of offensive

and defensive weapon systems designed to support maritime warfare, including integrated air and missile defense and vertical launch capabilities.

The ship will be constructed at Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls shipbuilding division in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The ship will be 509 feet long, have a beam length of 59 feet and be capable of operating at speeds in excess of 30 knots.

CENTCOM Issues Statement on Death of USS Cole Bombing Operative

TAMPA, Fla. – U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) spokesman Capt. Bill Urban released the following statement Jan. 6 on the death of Jamal al-Badawi.

“U.S. Central Command has confirmed that Jamal al-Badawi was killed in a precision strike in Marib governate [Yemen] on Jan. 1.

“Jamal al-Badawi was a legacy al Qaeda operative in Yemen involved in the USS Cole bombing. U.S. forces confirmed the results of the strike following a deliberate assessment process.

“Jamal al-Badawi was indicted by a federal grand jury in 2003, charged with 50 counts of various terrorism offenses, including murder of U.S. nationals and murder of U.S. military personnel; was wanted by the U.S. for his role in the Oct. 12, 2000, terrorist attack against USS Cole; and was also charged with attempting with co-conspirators to attack a U.S. Navy

vessel in January 2000.”

USS Cole was attacked during a brief refueling stop in the harbor of Aden, Yemen. The suicide terrorist attack killed 17 members of the ship’s crew, wounded 39 others and seriously damaged the ship. After 14 months of upgrades and repairs, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer returned to the fleet, departing Pascagoula, Mississippi, April 19, 2002.

General Dynamics Awarded Navy Cyber Mission Engineering Contract

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) has been awarded the Navy Cyber Mission Engineering Support contract by the U.S. Navy’s Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center (SPAWARSCEN) Atlantic, the company announced in a Jan. 7 release.

The multiple-award, indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract holds a shared ceiling of \$898 million. It includes a five-year base ordering period, with one two-year option ordering period, and one six-month option-to-extend-services option ordering period. GDIT will compete for individual task orders to provide state-of-the-art solutions for the Navy and Marine Corps’ warfighting needs.

“This contract offers a new platform to showcase GDIT’s next-generation cyber and electronic warfare solutions to reinforce the Navy’s important mission,” said Senior Vice President Leigh Palmer, head of GDIT’s Defense Division. “As electronic warfare continues to evolve, maintaining relevancy and

technological superiority is critical. GDIT will support the Navy by utilizing our decades of engineering and technical experience to build mission-focused electronic warfare capabilities across the Navy's warfighter domains."

Through this contract, GDIT will support SPAWARSCEN Atlantic by providing complex engineering and technical services in support of national security mission capabilities. This will include research, development, test, evaluation, production and fielding for command; control; communications; computers; combat systems; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; information operations; identity operations; enterprise information services; and space capabilities.