

Navy Orders YRBM Barges from Conrad Shipyard



A Yard, Repair, Berthing and Messing barge. *CONRAD SHIPYARD LLC*

MORGAN CITY, La. – Conrad Shipyard LLC has been awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy for the design and construction of up to eight Yard, Repair, Berthing and Messing (YRBM) barges, the company said in a release.

YRBM barges provide a temporary home away from home and workplace for service men and women whose vessels are in port for repairs or maintenance. Conrad's design incorporates functional spaces which allow the Sailors to work, sleep, and eat comfortably.

The fixed-price contract, a small business set-aside, has a potential value of more than \$140 million. Conrad expects to deliver the first YRBM barge to the Navy in late 2023. If the Navy exercises options for the additional barges, peak production is expected to occur from 2023 through 2025.

"We are excited to enter into this partnership with the Navy to help modernize its fleet," said Conrad Shipyard CEO Johnny Conrad. "Not only will this contract provide an abundance of jobs for our workforce in the Morgan City area, but it will

also help to support a multitude of small businesses. I know our dedicated and hardworking men and women at Conrad are proud to work on this project which will ultimately benefit the brave service men and women of the U.S. Navy.”

The YRBM barge is an ABS A1 Accommodation Barge with a footprint of roughly 151 feet by 49 feet by 14 feet. The vessel provides pier-side living accommodations capable of berthing 199 mixed gender personnel, messing for 300 personnel, and includes spaces for medical offices, classrooms, workspaces, laundry rooms, storerooms and lounge areas.

Navy Decommissions Two More Patrol Ships



Sailors assigned to the coastal patrol ship USS Whirlwind (PC 11) salute during the ship's decommissioning ceremony on March 21 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Dawson Roth*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy decommissioned two more Cyclone-class coastal patrol ships in March, bring to five the number of PCs retired from the U.S. 5th Fleet this year, all within a one-month period, according to the fleet's public affairs office.

USS Whirlwind (PC 11) was decommissioned in ceremonies held in Bahrain on March 21. A week earlier, USS Squall (PC 7) was decommissioned on March 14. The recent PC force reductions began on Feb. 23 with the decommissioning of USS Firebolt (PC 10), followed by Typhoon (PC 2) on Feb. 28 and Tempest (PC 2) on March 7.

All of the above decommissioned PCs will be made available for foreign military sales.

The reductions leave the Navy's last five PCs on strength

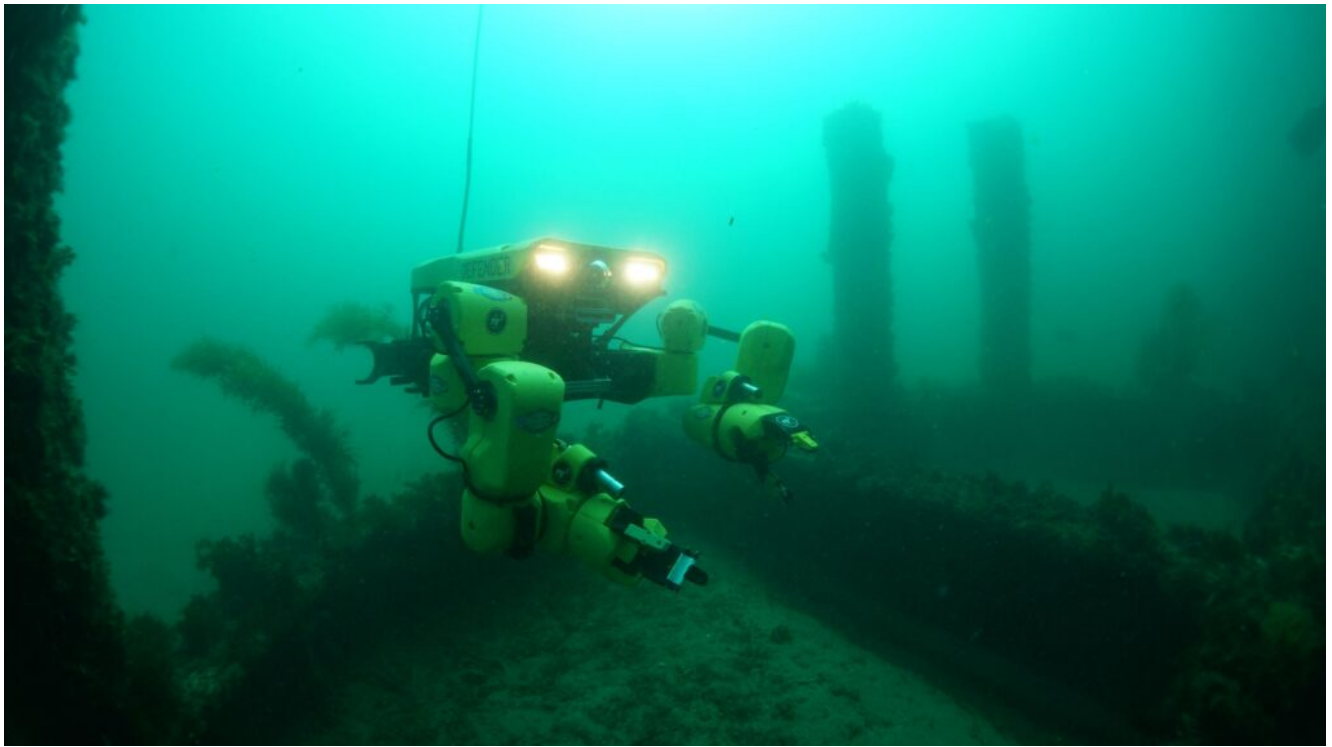
still in service with the 5th Fleet: USS Hurricane (PC 3), USS Monsoon (PC 4), USS Sirocco (PC 6); USS Chinook (PC 9) and USS Thunderbolt (PC 12).

USS Squall – like its sister ships, it was built by Bollinger Shipyards – was commissioned on July 4, 1994. It was based at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, California until late 2005, when it was moved to Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Virginia. In 2013. Squall was assigned to the 5th Fleet.

USS Whirlwind was commissioned on July 1, 1995. It was stationed at Little Creek from which it supported operations in the U.S 4th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility. The Whirlwind also provided homeland security near New York City's harbor following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the city. The ship was transferred to the 5th Fleet in 2013.

“Our patrol coastal ships have made a lasting impact here in the region supporting naval operations and safeguarding maritime security,” said Capt. Robert Francis, commander of Task Force 55 at U.S. 5th Fleet, in the March 21 5th Fleet release. “This was only made possible by the dedicated Sailors who served aboard these ships for nearly three decades.”

ONR-Sponsored RE2 Robotics, VideoRay ROV Achieve New Depth Milestone



RE2 Robotics' Sapien Sea Class underwater robotic arms, coupled with VideoRay's Defender remotely operated vehicle, make up the Maritime Mine Neutralization System. *RE2 ROBOTICS* PITTSBURGH and POTTSTOWN, Pa. – RE2 Robotics, a leading developer of intelligent mobile manipulation systems, announced March 22 that its Maritime Mine Neutralization System reached an unprecedented depth milestone of more than 1 kilometer during a recent open-water demonstration for the U.S. Navy's project sponsor, the Office of Naval Research.

M2NS is an underwater autonomous mine neutralization system composed of RE2 Sapien Sea-class underwater robotic arms mounted onto VideoRay's inspection-class Defender remotely operated vehicle. M2NS also uses RE2's advanced computer vision and autonomy software, RE2 Detect and RE2 Intellect, to enable the precise, autonomous, and clandestine neutralization of a target.

During the test event, which took place in the Pacific Ocean with support from the Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific in Point Loma, California, four successful dives exceeding 1,000 meters of depth were completed. The dives were conducted using supervised autonomy, which allows human operators to monitor the robotic system's autonomous movements and make

corrections if necessary.

“These tests allowed us to demonstrate the continuing success of the M2NS project for the U.S. Navy,” said Jack Reinhart, vice president of project management, RE2 Robotics. “The progress we made during these deep dives shows that we could successfully complete an underwater supervised autonomous mission at depths of more than 1,000 meters without any damage to the system. The M2NS system succeeded where no other system of this class has before.”

All onboard electronics remained operational during the deep dives, including the ROV’s camera feed and data to the support vessel, proving the survivability of the complete system to a depth of more than 1,000 meters.

“We have proven the ability to deploy the Defender with a large payload to depths of 3,500 feet [1,000-plus meters] from a small deck footprint,” said Marcus Kolb, chief technology officer, VideoRay. “We performed complex, autonomous manipulation tasks with the RE2 system while station-keeping a few feet off the bottom. We are excited about the direction of this program and how it will help accelerate commercial solutions.”

Following the success of these dives, RE2 Robotics and VideoRay are planning future demonstrations for ONR to test the system’s autonomy capabilities using a tetherless ROV at extended depths. OceanComm Inc., a provider of high-speed wireless underwater communication technology, will provide wireless acoustic modems for future dives.

CNO Visits Norfolk for Carrier Aviation Centennial Celebration



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday during a visit to Naval Submarine School in February. On March 20-21, he visit Hampton Roads, Virginia, to celebrate a century of U.S. aircraft carrier aviation. *U.S. NAVY / Charles E. Spirtos*

NORFOLK, Virginia – U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday traveled to Hampton Roads, Virginia, for the 100 Years of Carrier Aviation Celebration, to visit local commands and to meet with Sailors and industry partners, March 20-21, the CNO's public Affairs office said in a release.

Gilday delivered remarks during the centennial celebration ceremony, hosted by the Navy League, held to honor the legacy of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and aviation.

“For 100 years aircraft carriers have been the most survivable and versatile airfields in the world,” said Gilday. “Perhaps no single military platform distinguishes what our nation is ... and what it stands for ... more than the aircraft carrier.”

While in Hampton Roads, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith joined Gilday to meet with Sailors and leadership at Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 121 and Board of Inspection and Survey, where they spoke to the “get real, get better” call to action.

The get real, get better mindset seeks to reduce the gap between the Navy’s least and most capable performer, cement dynamic learning and innovation into Navy culture, and build better leaders and teams ready to solve problems more effectively.

“Our Sailors need to be self-assessing, finding and fixing problems, and embracing the red,” said Gilday. “We need to expand and empower this across the fleet, we have no room for complacency – each ship, squadron and command must hold themselves accountable. We need to continue to get real and get better.”

Gilday also met with Virginia congressional Democratic Reps. Bobby Scott and Elaine Luria for a working lunch and discussion at Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center. During lunch, they received updates about ship maintenance.

Finally, Gilday visited BAE Systems Norfolk Ship Repair for a tour and discussion about shipbuilding and maintenance progress and initiatives.

“The work being done here in Norfolk, in partnership with BAE Systems, is helping to ensure our Navy is ready and has

cutting edge capabilities,” said Gilday. “Working together with industry partners, we will drive down maintenance delays that reduce our readiness, while we continue to make sure our Sailors have what they need to fight and win.”

The Hampton Roads area has the largest concentration of fleet headquarters administrative and communication facilities outside of Washington, D.C. It is home to more than 82,000 personnel and several major tenant commands: U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Joint Staff Hampton Roads, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, Naval Submarine Forces, Atlantic, and Naval Reserve Forces Command.

U.S. Navy Selects Leidos for Undersea Warfare Systems Contract



The ocean surveillance ship USNS Able (T-AGOS 20) prepares to moor at Fleet Activities Yokosuka in 2014. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brian G. Reynolds*

RESTON, Va. – Leidos has been awarded a prime contract by the U.S. Navy's Naval Information Warfare Systems Command to support the service's undersea warfare systems, the company said March 17.

This single-award, Seaport Next Generation task order has a total estimated value of \$84 million. It includes a one-year base period, as well as four one-year options. Work will be performed in Virginia and Japan.

"Ensuring our Sailors have the most advanced capabilities to defeat advancing threats is a top priority for our company," said Will Johnson, Leidos senior vice president, Logistics and Mission Support. "We look forward to continuing our longstanding support of the Program Executive Office – Undersea Warfare Systems as they work to keep the seas open and free."

Through this contract, Leidos will provide operations and maintenance crews aboard USNS Tactical Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance (T-AGOS) platforms and contract vessels. Additionally, the company will provide a cadre of field support team engineers to provide engineering, logistics and technical support to the Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System fleet and IUSS (Integrated Undersea Surveillance System) Operations Support Center.

U.S., Japan Navy Chiefs Conduct Call, Discuss Defense Cooperation



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday speaks with Japan

Chief of Staff Adm. Hiroshi Yamamura during a video teleconference in 2021. The leaders met virtually again on March 17, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Chief Mass Communication Specialist Nick Brown*

WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday met virtually with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff Adm. Hiroshi Yamamura on March 17, the CNO's Public Affairs office said in a release.

During the video conference, the two addressed common challenges and discussed strategies to keep the seas open and free.

"Today's maritime challenges emphasize the importance of interoperability with our partner nations," said Gilday. "The alliance between Japan and the United States is the cornerstone of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Together, we will continue to work to keep the maritime commons open and free."

According to Gilday, meetings like this reaffirm the special relationship between the two navies and allow for continued collaboration and cooperation.

"The JMSDF and U.S. navies agreed to further strengthen relationships to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific, and recognized the unique strength of navies to continue defense cooperation in a contactless manner even during a pandemic," said Yamamura.

Gilday expressed condolences for the recent earthquake off the coast of Fukushima. He told Yamamura that the U.S. Navy stands with the people of Japan, as the U.S. Navy did following the earthquake in 2011.

The JMSDF and U.S. navies operate together regularly in the Indo-Pacific region and around the globe. Most recently, U.S. and JMSDF navies conducted anti-submarine warfare torpedo training in Tokyo Bay.

Gilday and Yamamura have met numerous times during their tenures.

U.S. Navy Concludes ICEX 2022



Nick Savage, assigned to Naval Undersea Warfare Center Newport, surfaces from beneath the Arctic ice after successfully retrieving a test torpedo during Ice Exercise 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Cameron Stoner*

U.S. NAVY ICE CAMP QUEENFISH – The U.S. Navy is concluding its Ice Exercise 2022 this week, wrapping up nearly three weeks of research and training on, above and below Arctic Ocean ice,

said Lt. Seth Koenig, commander, Submarine Force Atlantic Public Affairs, in a March 17 release.

In addition to Ice Camp Queenfish, a temporary encampment built on a sheet of ice 160 nautical miles offshore, the exercise involved two operational Navy fast attack submarines and a support team stationed in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

“The Navy maintains a presence on, under and above Arctic waters, and it’s important that we continue to train in this challenging environment to not only stay ready to operate here, but also gain efficiency and look for new ways to innovate,” said Rear Adm. Richard Seif, commander of the Navy’s Undersea Warfighting Development Center in Groton, Connecticut, and ranking officer at ICEX 2022.

“The Arctic is an unforgiving, rapidly changing region. Several chokepoints near or above the Arctic Circle – such as the Bering Strait, Bear Gap between the Norwegian and Barents seas, and the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap – are seeing increases in commercial maritime activity,” he continued. “By training in this extreme cold-weather environment, we’re best prepared to rapidly respond to any crises in these regions and ensure common domains in the far north remain free and open.”

Joining the U.S. armed forces for ICEX 2022 were personnel from the Canadian air force and navy, and the United Kingdom Royal Navy.

During ICEX, participating fast attack submarines under the Arctic sea ice fired exercise torpedoes, which Navy divers then recovered from the frigid water. The exercise also provided an opportunity for Navy specialists and civilian scientists to conduct research from the floating ice camp, collecting data on the Arctic conditions and how equipment responds to the extreme temperatures.

ICEX allows the Navy to assess its operational readiness in the Arctic, increase experience in the region, advance understanding of the Arctic environment, and continue to develop relationships with other services, allies and partner organizations.

ICEX 2022 is taking place in the Arctic region at the same time as U.S. Northern Command's Arctic Edge, a biennial exercise designed to provide realistic and effective training for participants using the premier training locations available throughout Alaska, ensuring the ability to rapidly deploy and operate in the Arctic. Arctic Edge takes place over the course of three weeks and will have approximately 1,000 participants, including U.S. and Canadian service members, U.S. Coast Guardsmen, and government employees from the U.S. Department of Defense and Canada's Department of National Defence.

Budget Funds 37 F-35s for U.S. Naval Aviation in 2022



An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the "Black Knights" of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, prepares to land on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Michael Singley*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The fiscal 2022 budget, finally signed into law almost halfway through the fiscal year, provides for 37 F-35 Lightning II strike fighters for the Navy and Marine Corps, as well as 12 FA-18 Super Hornet strike fighters.

Of the overall 85 F-35s funded in the budget, the 37 for naval aviation include 17 F-35B short-takeoff/vertical-landing versions and five carrier-capable F-35Cs for the Marine Corps and 15 F-35Cs for the Navy, according to the F-35 Joint Program Office. The rest of the 2022 lot is comprised of 48 F-35As for the Air Force.

The Marine Corps currently fields five F-35B and one F-35C fleet squadrons, while the Navy fields two F-35C fleet squadrons.

Still in low-rate initial production after more than 15 years, the F-35 has not yet completed its initial operational test and evaluation.

The Navy's program of record for the F-35 totals 353 F-35Bs for the Marine Corps, 67 F-35Cs for the Marine Corps and 273 F-35Cs for the Navy.

Congress, concerned about a continuing strike fighter shortage, also funded 12 more F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighters for the Navy, continuing production for yet another year even though the service has been trying to stop the program for a few years. The Navy's program of record for the Super Hornet through fiscal 2021 totaled 678 F/A-18E/Fs (379 F/A-18Es and 299 F/A-18Fs). The model breakdown of the 12 fiscal 2022 Super Hornets is not yet available.

Carrier Aircraft Operate Over Yellow Sea in Response to North Korean ICBMs



An F/A-18E Super Hornet, assigned to the “Tophatters” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 14, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) on March 15. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes*

ARLINGTON, Va. – U.S. Navy and Marine Corps operated over the Yellow Sea off the west coast of North Korea in a demonstration in response to North Korean launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), deployed in the Western Pacific region, launched F-35C Lightning II and F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighters assigned to Carrier Air Wing Nine into international airspace over the Yellow Sea, which was described as “a demonstration of our resolve and commitment to our regional allies,” in a March 15 release from U.S. 7th Fleet.

The flights were in response to the launch of two ICBMs by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on Feb. 27 and March 5, respectively.

The F-35Cs are assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, which have taken the Marine Corps' F-35Cs on their first deployment.

In addition, the U.S. Air Force aircraft based in the region also participated.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command has increased reconnaissance and surveillance collection efforts in the Yellow Sea, while U.S. forces in Korea have increased the posture of ballistic-missile defense in South Korea,

"The ICBM launches by DPRK are a brazen violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions – as well as its international commitments – and pose a threat to regional neighbors and the international community," the release said.

"We have made clear our growing concern over the significant increase in DPRK's missile testing, and we will continue to take all necessary measures to ensure the security of the United States and our allies. We remain in close coordination with our allies and partners to address the threats posed by the DPRK. Our commitment to the defense of the Republic of Korea and Japan remains ironclad."

Congress Orders Navy to 'Buy American' for Some Ship Components



The new budget bill calls for the 11th and subsequent Constellation-class guided-missile frigates to have many of its components purchased from American companies. *U.S. NAVY*
ARLINGTON, Va. – Buried deep in the text of the 2022 budget bill signed into law March 15 by the president are certain provisions to force the Navy to “buy American,” purchasing from U.S. companies many of the components and systems that will be installed on some new-construction ships for the U.S Navy and Military Sealift Command.

For the 11th Constellation-class guided-missile frigate and subsequent, the Navy is forbidden to award new contracts unless the following components are manufactured in the United States: air circuit breakers; gyrocompasses; electronic navigation chart systems; steering controls; pumps; propulsion and machinery control systems; totally enclosed lifeboats; auxiliary equipment pumps; shipboard cranes; auxiliary chill water systems; and propulsion propellers, provided that the Navy “shall incorporate United States-manufactured propulsion engines and propulsion reduction gears into the [frigate] program beginning not later than with the eleventh ship of the program.”

For the seventh and subsequent John Lewis-class fleet replenishment ships, for example, the Navy is forbidden to fund purchase of the following components unless they are

manufactured in the United States: auxiliary equipment (including pumps) for shipboard services; propulsion equipment (including engines, reduction gears, and propellers); shipboard cranes; spreaders for shipboard cranes; and anchor chains.

Similarly, for the T-ARC(X) cable-laying ship and T-AGOS(X) ocean surveillance ship programs, the Navy is forbidden to use funds for a new contract for "requirements development, performance specification development, concept design and development, ship configuration development, systems engineering, naval architecture, marine engineering, operations research analysis, industry studies, preliminary design, development of the Detailed Design and Construction Request for Proposals solicitation package, or related activities ... unless these contracts include specifications that all auxiliary equipment, including pumps and propulsion shafts, are manufactured in the United States."