

CNO and Connecticut Congressman Visit Commands and Industry Partners



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday departs from the Virginia Class submarine USS South Dakota (SSN 790) after a tour of the submarine. Gilday and Connecticut Rep. Joe Courtney visited the Naval Submarine Base New London waterfront and Naval Submarine School after touring nearby General Dynamics Electric Boat Shipyard submarine construction facilities. *U.S NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Maxwell Higgins*

GROTON, Conn. – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday and Connecticut Rep. Joe Courtney traveled to Rhode Island and Connecticut to visit with Sailors, tour Navy commands and meet with industry partners on Feb. 28, the CNO's Public Affairs office said in a release.

Together, they visited General Dynamics Electric Boat shipyards at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, and Groton, Connecticut, where they received updates about Virginia-class and Columbia-class submarine construction.

"These submarines need to be delivered on time, on budget, and ready for the fight – we have no margin to fall behind," Gilday said. "Columbia-class is our number one acquisition priority, and Virginia-class submarines are our advantage at sea. Working together with our industry partners, we will get them into the fleet where they belong."

"Activity around the globe and calls for support from our allies has really put eastern Connecticut in the spotlight in terms of delivering on the most important needs of the U.S. Navy," said Courtney. "Our region's shipbuilders and manufacturing industries keep our Navy unrivaled on and beneath the waves. Today CNO Gilday saw the high-tempo production in southern New England that is meeting the Navy's demand signal. Our region's manufacturing and building trades workforce continues to illustrate that the Navy's targeted investments are paying off, and preparing us for tomorrow's challenges."

Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) are the nation's future Sea-Based Strategic Deterrent and will provide the most survivable leg of the Nation's strategic triad. As set forth in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the program will consist of a minimum of 12 submarines to meet U.S. strategic deterrent force structure requirements.

Columbia SSBNs are replacing Ohio-class SSBNs and will be a vital part of the fleet, remaining in service until 2080. The Ohio-class SSBNs will begin to reach their end of service life in 2027.

During the visit, Gilday visited Quonset Point and Groton facilities and interacted with employees.

"The work being done here in partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat is shaping the future of the Navy and will deliver cutting edge capabilities and strategic deterrence," said Gilday.

During the visit he spoke with employees and told them, “You are like world-class Olympic athletes, with your unrelenting dedication and expertise to build the world’s best submarines. Thank you for your efforts to make sure tomorrow’s Sailors have what they need to deter aggression and win the fight.”

Gilday and Courtney also visited the Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS South Dakota (SSN 790) at Naval Submarine Base New London, where they ate lunch with the crew, talked with Sailors and toured the submarine.

Next, Gilday and Courtney visited the Undersea Warfighting Development Center to hear a tactics brief and the Naval Submarine School Submarine attack center where they met with Sailors.

Atlantic Fleet Name a No-Go, for Now



Vice Adm. James Kilby, deputy commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, departs the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG-64), following a visit to the ship, Feb. 10. Plans to redesignate Fleet Forces Command as the U.S. Atlantic Fleet appear to have been abandoned. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jacob Milham*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Just over a year ago, the president approved the proposal to re-designate the U.S. Fleet Forces Command as the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. The proposal – for now, at least – is in the dustbin of history.

In January 2021, shortly before leaving office, the re-designation was approved by then-President Donald Trump. Now, more than a year later, the proposal has not been enacted.

“From my understanding, that proposal was not forwarded following the Global Posture Review,” said Capt. Jereal Dorsey, special assistant for public affairs for the secretary of the Navy, in response to a query from *Seapower*.

The Defense Department’s Global Posture Review was ordered by President Joe Biden on Feb. 4, 2021, and its recommendations

were approved by him in November 2021. The Navy said in the interim that the renaming proposal for U.S. Fleet Forces Command would depend on the results of that review.

The original commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet staff, had a long pedigree that began in 1906, when the North Atlantic Squadron and South Atlantic Squadron were combined. The fleet existed in various forms until 2006, when the chief of naval operations renamed Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, to Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, which assumed the duties of the former fleet plus the mission of the former Commander, Fleet Forces Command, which was “to serve as the primary advocate for fleet personnel, training, requirements, maintenance and operations issues,” according to the U.S. Fleet Forces Command website.

The re-designation plan originally was announced by then-Navy Secretary Kenneth J. Braithwaite, testifying Dec. 2, 2020, before the Readiness and Management Support subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, noting the changing world requires that the Navy must evolve to meet the threat.

Atlantic Theater Challenges

“Our existing structure operates on the premise that we still live in a post-9/11 state, where NATO’s flanks are secure, the Russian Fleet is tied to the pier, and terrorism is our biggest problem,” Braithwaite said. “That is not the world of today. As the world changes, we must be bold, evolved, and change with it. Instead of perpetuating a structure designed to support Joint Forces Command, we are aligning to today’s threat.

“To meet the maritime challenges of the Atlantic Theater, we will rename Fleet Forces Command as the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and will refocus our naval forces in this important region on their original mission, to controlling the maritime approaches to the United States and those of our allies,” he said. “The

Atlantic Fleet will confront the reassertive Russian navy, which has been deploying closer and closer to our East Coast with a tailored maritime presence, capability and lethality.”

Speaking Jan. 11, 2021, in a webinar of the Surface Navy Association convention, CNO Adm. Michael Gilday discussed the pros of the redesignation.

“It underscores the importance of the Atlantic in a way that the title ‘Fleet Forces’ doesn’t,” Gilday said. “It actually is a testament to recent tangible decisions that we made to increase our power in that body of water, to include bringing 2nd Fleet back, standing up SubGru 2 [Submarine Group 2]. It will also include standing up [NATO’s] Joint Force Command Norfolk, which is focused on the Atlantic.”

Gilday said, “in a day and age when the homeland is no longer a sanctuary, and homeland defense is at the fore of every plan the combatant commanders have put together, the name ‘Atlantic Fleet’ always carries some gravitas with respect to defense of the nation.”

He noted the complexity of the re-designation, saying the command “also has responsibilities as a component [command] for [U.S.] Northern Command and the Eastern Pacific that extend up to the Arctic as well as their role as component of the [U.S.] Strategic Command. They really have a global responsibility with respect to the command and control of our SSBNs [ballistic-missile submarines].”

Adm. Christopher W. Grady, then-commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, seconded the complexity in a Jan. 13, 2021, webinar at the convention, noting the downside “might be that we would lose emphasis on what we do for the homeland. Indeed, I control forces in both the Pacific and down south [in U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility].

“So, we will balance all that, and in the end the name change

is an important branding opportunity, and we will move out on that," Grady said.

Grady is now vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

SECNAV Names Future T-AO USNS Thurgood Marshall, Sponsors for USS Doris Miller



Aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) performs a replenishment-at-sea with the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Pecos (T-AO 197). A future John Lewis-class replenishment oiler will be named USNS Thurgood Marshall, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced Feb. 25. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Negron*

WASHINGTON – During Black History Month, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced on Feb. 25 the sponsors for the USS Doris Miller and that a future John Lewis-class replenishment oiler (T-AO) ship will be named USNS Thurgood Marshall to honor the former Supreme Court justice and civil rights activist.

The future USNS Thurgood Marshall (T-AO 211) will be the first naval vessel to bear this name. However, it is not the first U.S. Navy ship to be named after a Supreme Court justice.

“It is my pleasure to recognize the tremendous lifelong contributions of the Honorable Thurgood Marshall by naming T-AO 211 after him. This naming selection enables a legacy of continued conversations and visibility, essentially a living memorial to be seen around the world, of a historic figure in the continued fight for civil and human rights, and I am pleased to share this decision during Black History Month,” said Del Toro. “Continued diversity and inclusion efforts are critical to the mission success of the Navy and Marine Corps team. Selecting Thurgood Marshall as the namesake aligns with the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts that I have implemented in my strategic guidance since serving as secretary.”

The name selection follows the naval tradition of honoring people who have fought for civil and human rights. Born in 1908, Thurgood Marshall was a civil rights leader turned Supreme Court justice. Marshall made history as the first Black justice to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court when he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1967. Of his 25-year tenure on the Supreme Court, he is most noted for his work toward affirmative action, stopping Jim Crow segregation and the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The future T-AO 211 is the seventh of the TAOs awarded to the Navy, with the first delivered in 2021. The class and lead ship is named in honor of Rep. John Lewis (D-Georgia).

T-AOs are fleet oilers designed to transfer fuel to the Navy's operating carrier strike groups. The oilers have the ability to carry a load of 162,000 barrels of oil, maintain significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and a speed of 20 knots. NASSCO designed the vessels with double hulls that protect against oil spills and strengthened cargo and ballast tanks. The John Lewis-class T-AO measures 742-feet in length with a full load displacement of 49,850 tons.

Ship Sponsors

Along with announcing the ship's name, Del Toro also announced the sponsors for the future USS Doris Miller (CVN 81) as Charlene Austin and Taya Miller, who in their role as the ship's sponsors will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

Charlene Austin is not only the spouse of Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, but possesses an extensive history of professional and volunteer work supporting initiatives for military families. Taya Miller is the great-niece of Doris "Dorie" Miller, and was selected by the Doris Miller family to represent the family on behalf of the late Doris Miller and her late mother, Vickie Miller. Matrons of Honor for the USS Doris Miller are represented by members of the Dorie Miller family: Lakisha Bledsoe-Stansberry, Carra Miller Boykins, Tina Shedd and Selena James.

Navy Launches Design Efforts for Modernize VLF System for

C-130 Aircraft



A Lockheed EC-130Q Hercules, which previously handled the Navy's TACAMO work. The Navy has now decided to acquire the C-130J-30 Super Hercules as its platform for communicating with deployed ballistic-missile submarines. *WIKIPEDIA / Alain Rioux*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded a developmental design contract to an aerospace company for very low frequency communications systems modernization for integration into C-130 aircraft.

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded Collins Aerospace of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a \$48.3 million contract for “developmental design and risk reduction engineering efforts for airborne very low frequency systems modernization in support of Airborne Strategic Command, Control, and Communications Program Office (PMA-271) program capability requirements,” according to a Feb. 22 Defense Department contract announcement.

The VLF system would be installed on C-130 aircraft, which is planned by the Navy to assume the TACAMO strategic communications role from the E-6B Mercury aircraft.

The communications role called TACAMO by the Navy – a term meaning “Take Charge and Move Out” – has been performed for three decades by the E-6 Mercury, a variant of the Boeing 707 airliner. After the Cold War, the Airborne National Command Post role previously performed by Air Force EC-135 “Looking Glass” aircraft was incorporated into the E-6 with the installation of the Airborne Launch Control System, combining the TACAMO and ALCS in one platform.

The Navy has performed the TACAMO mission since 1963, beginning with four C-130G (later EC-130G) Hercules aircraft, later augmented by eight newer EC-130Q Hercules. The E-6 replaced the EC-130s, giving the two TACAMO squadrons, VQ-3 and VQ-4, a faster, quieter, more comfortable platform for the long missions.

The TACAMO aircraft are equipped with a long trailing-wire antenna used to relay very low frequency radio messages to submerged ballistic-missile submarines. The airframes go through considerable stress as they maintain high angle of bank for prolonged periods to maintain tight orbits to wind the trailing-wire antenna into a vertical position, needed for the radio waves to penetrate the water most effectively.

A request for information issued Dec. 18, 2020, by PMA-271 announced the Navy “intends to negotiate and award sole-source contracts to Lockheed Martin Corporation, Marietta, [Georgia], for the efforts associated with the procurement of up to three C-130J-30 “Stretch” green airframes in [fiscal 2022/2023] for testing and analysis.

The C-130J is the current, much more modern version of the C-130 and is flown by the Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, as well as many foreign air forces. The C-130J-30 is

similar but has a 15-foot-longer fuselage. The rugged C-130J is able to operate from many more airfields than the current E-6B Mercury.

“Specifically, this contract provides non-recurring engineering effort to address size, weight, and power cooling in the components, systems, subsystems, or weapons replaceable assembly, model-based systems engineering development, weight reduction analysis, cyber security risk assessment and logistics analysis,” the announcement said.

The contract work is expected to be completed in March 2024.

Navy Decommissions Coastal Patrol Ship USS Firebolt



Sailors assigned to the coastal patrol ship USS Firebolt (PC 10) salute during the ship's decommissioning ceremony, Feb. 23 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Mark Thomas Mahmod*
BAHRAIN – The crewmembers of Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship USS Firebolt (PC 10) marked the end of the ship's U.S. Navy service during a decommissioning ceremony Feb. 23 at Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

The nearly 27-year-old ship was one of 10 patrol craft currently forward-deployed to the Middle East in support of regional maritime security operations. Firebolt commissioned in June 1995 and began conducting routine coastal patrol operations under U.S. 5th Fleet in 2003.

"The crew is what makes Firebolt special to me," said Senior Chief Engineman Paul Dixon, who completed two tours aboard Firebolt. "The history behind Firebolt makes everything we do more meaningful."

Prior to operating from Bahrain, the ship helped secure New York City's harbor immediately following the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. Months later, Firebolt conducted coastal patrols in the Arabian Gulf during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In 2004, two Firebolt Sailors and a Coast Guardsman were killed as Firebolt provided security for the Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal in the Northern Arabian Gulf. After spotting a suspicious vessel, Firebolt deployed a rigid-hull inflatable boat and the suspicious vessel exploded in an apparent suicide attack.

"We thank the hundreds who served on this great ship and honor the brave Sailors and Coast Guardsman killed in the 2004 terrorist attack at sea. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S.

Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces.

Firebolt has conducted several major rescue operations during its storied service. In 2005, the ship's crew rescued 89 people off the coast of Somalia after their boat sank. Additionally, Firebolt rescued an Iranian mariner from a capsized fishing vessel in 2012.

"We have so many memories here," said Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Pedro Benitez. "We would be here working late hours in engineering, but still smiling and joking. It's stuff like that that's irreplaceable."

During the decommissioning ceremony, Lt. Cmdr. Raymond W. Miller, Firebolt's commanding officer, expressed appreciation for his team.

"They've proven their dedication to mission success over and over again," said Miller. "They've never let me or each other down."

CNO Is 'Sighted on a Bigger, More Capable Navy'



Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday speaks with ROTC members during WEST 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Cmdr. Courtney Hillson*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Addressing the topic of future force structure after it submerged again into the depths of analysis, the Navy’s top officer laid out his views for a “bigger, more capable Navy” in the future informed by a series of exercises over the last year, estimating a requirement for a fleet of more than 500 manned and unmanned ships, including 12 aircraft carriers.

“We’re going through another force-structure assessment right now, based on the hard work we’ve done over the last five or years in really thinking about how we would fight differently in terms of in a distributed fashion, across a wide, vast ocean like the Pacific, in terms of integrating all domains simultaneously,” said Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking Feb. 18 at the West 2022 Symposium sponsored in San Diego by the U.S. Naval Institute and the Armed Forces Communications and

Electronics Association.

"In thinking about what the future fleet looks like, we spent time taking a look at a couple of different force structures assessments in 2019 and 2020," the CNO said. "The one that I base my best advice on is the one that we finished up in 2020 that we did along with the Marine Corps, but it was actually led by OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense]. I found that to be an important stakeholder in that process because this wasn't just Marine Corps-speak or Navy speak or Department of the Navy-speak, but it was more broadly supported by OSD.

"Based on that [and] large-scale exercises like we did last summer – leveraging live virtual construct [LVC]– based on the integrated battle problem we just did over in 5th Fleet with some 100 unmanned platforms over the past few weeks, I've concluded, constant with the analysis, we need a naval force of over 500 ships," he said.

Gilday said his view on carrier aviation "remains unchanged. I think we need 12 carriers."

The CNO also said "we need a strong amphibious force to include probably nine big-deck amphibs and another 19-20 [medium amphibious warfare ships] to support them [and] perhaps 30 or more smaller amphibious ships to leverage maritime littoral regiments – and the punch that they're going to provide in places close inside the fight – to 60 destroyers and probably 50 frigates; 70 attack submarines; a dozen ballistic-missile submarines; to about 100 support ships. And probably, looking to the future, 150 unmanned [vessels].

"We're doing a lot of work inside the FYDP [future years defense plan] now. I think it speaks out to the vulnerabilities that we hear called out by the Joint Staff and the chairman in his risk assessment," Gilday said. "So, in the long term, I'm sighted on a bigger, more capable Navy. We're working our way through that with respect to budgets but

certainly not taking our eye off the ball with respect to requirements. We do think differently because the future is now in terms of bringing more capability out of the force that we have.”

U.S. Navy Reestablishes Submarine Squadron 8



Capt. Brian Hogan, commodore, Submarine Squadron 8, renders a salute to sideboys as he departs his command's reestablishment ceremony at Naval Station Norfolk, Friday, Feb. 18. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Cameron Stoner*
NORFOLK – The U.S. Navy reestablished Commander, Submarine Squadron (COMSUBRON) 8 during an official ceremony at Naval

Station Norfolk, Virginia, on Friday, Feb. 18, commander, Submarine Force Atlantic said in a release.

COMSUBRON 8's reestablishment is intended to distribute and align the responsibility for command and control of submarines assigned to Commander, Submarine Squadron 6, also based in Norfolk, during the submarines' sustainment phase and maintenance shipyard periods.

COMSUBRON 8 was initially disestablished in a ceremony on April 28, 2011, and the squadron's original roles and responsibilities were merged with COMSUBRON 6.

This move returns the control of new submarine construction and ongoing submarine operating maintenance schedules of Los Angeles-class attack submarines and Virginia-class submarines homeported in Norfolk to COMSUBRON 8.

COMSUBRON 6 retains the operational responsibility of preparing Norfolk-based submarine crews in all facets of operations, to include tactical and operational readiness for war, inspection and monitoring duties, nuclear and radiological safety, and the development and control of submarine operating schedules and logistical support coordination of all submarine operations in the Virginia Capes operating areas.

Vice Adm. William Houston, commander, Submarine Forces, was the keynote speaker for the establishment ceremony.

"Normally we have a change of command which can be upsetting as it means someone is moving on, but this ceremony is nothing but good news as we are reestablishing a squadron," said Houston. "The reestablishment will give us a squadron that can concentrate on maintenance and new construction and that skillset, while we have another squadron that is focused on operational units."

Capt. Brian Hogan took command of submarines previously under COMSUBRON 6, relieving Capt. Jason Pittman, commodore, COMSUBRON 6, of responsibility of new submarine construction and ongoing submarine operating maintenance schedules.

"I would first like to congratulate Brian on assuming command of Submarine Squadron 8," said Pittman. "He brings to the team a wealth of invaluable experience and I cannot think of anyone more right for the job than him. It is an important day for the entire submarine force and the entire Navy. We are building a dedicated team that will lean in and learn new and innovative ways to build and repair our submarines."

After assuming command of COMSUBRON 8, Hogan gave remarks on reestablishing the squadron.

"Submarine Squadron 8 was established back in the 1940s, so we are simply restoring Submarine Force normalcy by reestablishing it here today," said Hogan. "This time around, Squadron 8 is focused on shipyard readiness. It is difficult to transition a submarine and its crew into the shipyard and back out as the boat and crew both transform themselves for operational readiness. It is important we get these transitions right, and it is now our job to do it successfully."

COMSUBRON 8 will step in to provide administrative, manning, logistical, training, operational planning and readiness support for Los Angeles-class attack and Virginia-class fast attack submarine during periods of maintenance and improvement.

Fast-attack submarines are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security and deterrence. They are designed to excel in anti-submarine

warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare. Fast-attack submarines project power ashore with special operations forces and Tomahawk cruise missiles in the prevention or preparation of regional crises.

Mississippi, Maine Delegations Urge Support for Destroyers in Navy's Next Budget



The Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) makes a brief stop for logistics in Singapore Feb. 18. Lawmakers from Mississippi and Maine would like to see three more destroyers of the class included in the fiscal 2023 defense budget. *U.S. NAVY / Leslie Hull-Ryde*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sens. Roger Wicker and Cindy Hyde-Smith, and Representatives Steven Palazzo and Trent Kelly, all Republicans from Mississippi, joined lawmakers from the Maine congressional delegation in a letter urging Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro to include funding for three Arleigh Burke-class destroyers in the fiscal 2023 budget, Wicker's office said in a release.

"As you work to finalize the Department of the Navy's [fiscal] 2023 budget, we write to respectfully request support for a robust shipbuilding budget, and to include the procurement of three Arleigh Burke-class destroyers," began the lawmakers. "We urge the Navy to develop a multi-year procurement program of 15 destroyers which maximizes the procured number of ships

under the contract, with the understanding that if adequately funded, the industrial base can support at least three ships per year.”

The lawmakers highlighted the importance of Arleigh Burke-class ships to national defense – including their value in countering the growing threat of China – and the impact of the shipbuilding efforts on Mississippi and Maine communities. These ships are currently built at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Mississippi and Bath Iron Works in Maine.

“Furthermore, to address the growing threat of China and its increasing fleet size, hedge against a belligerent Russia and assure allies, we urge you to mature and submit the department’s acquisition plan for the next large surface combatant,” continued the lawmakers. “A strategy closely tied to the industrial base and with extensive oversight will help prevent the issues of cost increases, program delays and end-product reliability issues seen in other ship classes.

“These issues are imperative to maintaining our National Defense Strategy and advantage in the maritime commons, and sustaining our military-industrial base,” the lawmakers concluded.

In addition to the Mississippi lawmakers, the letter was signed by U.S. Sens. Angus King (I-Maine), and Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Representatives Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden, both Democrats.

The Mississippi and Maine congressional delegations have long championed funding for both Ingalls Shipbuilding and Bath Iron Works. In the recent 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, the lawmakers secured authorization of \$3 billion for the procurement of two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers at Ingalls Shipbuilding. Last month, Wicker, Hyde-Smith and Palazzo joined Del Toro at Ingalls Shipbuilding, where the secretary toured the facilities and saw the importance of the work being

done at the shipyard.

Navy's CMV-22B Achieves Initial Operational Capability Designation



Senior military leadership cross the flight deck to depart Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), Feb. 9. Vinson is currently conducting routine maritime operations in U.S. 3rd Fleet. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Megan Alexander*

The Navy announced initial operational capability for the CMV-22B Osprey, confirming the platform's operational readiness following the successful completion of its first deployment on Feb. 17, Naval Air Systems Command said Feb. 18.

The aircraft was formally declared IOC on Dec. 14, 2021, aligning with the scheduled first-quarter fiscal year requirement.

“The CMV-22’s maiden deployment with Carrier Air Wing [CVW] Two and the [USS Carl] Vinson [CVN 70] team is an operational success, giving me the confidence necessary to make the declaration,” said Rear Adm. Andrew Loiselle, director, Air Warfare Division, N98, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. “As we continue to deliver the advanced platforms that will make up the Air Wing of the Future, the CMV-22B provides the necessary support and more to carry our future force.”

Loiselle’s designation marks a key milestone in the design, development, acquisition and testing of the CMV-22B and confirms its relevance and readiness to meet the needs of the Navy’s carrier onboard delivery mission. The aircraft transports personnel, mail, supplies and cargo from shore bases to aircraft carriers at sea, and will eventually replace the C-2A Greyhound.

“IOC designation is more than a stamp of approval,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Brian Taylor, V-22 Joint program manager. “It is a vote of confidence from top Navy leadership that the design, testing and production of this aircraft meet the logistical needs of the carrier air wings designated to fly the CMV-22B.”

This past summer marked the first deployment for the CMV-22B. Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30 embarked on the USS Carl Vinson alongside the F-35C Lightning II and E-2D Advanced Hawkeye squadrons. The first deployed detachment has executed a mission completion rate of 98% and a mission-capable rate of 75%. The CMV-22B is a crucial element of future carrier airwings due to the cargo capacity needed to transport F-35 power modules and additional logistics support for future carrier air wing deployments with next-generation

platforms.

“This aircraft went from first flight to first deployment in 19 months, a feat possible through the dedication of the Navy’s acquisition, engineering, test and operational communities, as well as industry, all working in tandem, toward a common goal,” said Taylor.

With 50% more internal fuel than the Marine Corps’ Osprey variant, CMV-22B can transport up to 6,000 pounds of cargo and personnel over a 1,150 nautical mile range. The Navy redesigned the forward sponson fuel tanks and added two wing fuel tanks to add capacity and extend the flight range.

“As our fighter/attack and surveillance aircraft expand in both capability and size to extend the range of the carrier air wing, we must also evolve our support aircraft, in tandem, to supply those platforms. The CMV-22B will transport cargo and personnel to outfit the most advanced aircraft carrier strike groups as we continue to meet the needs of our missions worldwide,” said Taylor.

The program will continue to refine and test capabilities on the aircraft, addressing the agile needs of the fleet. To date, Bell Boeing has delivered 14 aircraft with 44 on contract and full operational capability expected in 2023.

U.S. Pacific Fleet Will Leverage Knowledge, Expertise

of Naval Postgraduate School With New Nimitz Research Group



The Naval Postgraduate School and U.S. Pacific Fleet announced the establishment of the Nimitz Research Group on Feb. 16. Under the aegis of NPS' Naval Warfare Studies Institute, the new organization will leverage NPS' interdisciplinary education and research capabilities and institutional knowledge in new ways to meet the needs and emerging challenges of the Pacific Fleet. *U.S. NAVY*

MONTEREY, Calif. – The Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, California, and Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet are joining forces to harness educational and research knowledge and expertise specifically as it pertains to the Indo-Pacific region with a new effort, the Nimitz Research Group.

Nimitz Research Group will fall under NPS' Naval Warfare Studies Institute, which will provide NPS faculty and students who will “serve as an extension of the PACFLT staff in Hawaii by participating in fleet exercises and events and providing additional research capacity and subject matter expertise,”

according to an Naval Postgraduate School press release.

The Nimitz Research Group was launched Feb. 16 by the NPS president, retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau, and Adm. Samuel Paparo, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

“The establishment of the Nimitz Research Group marks a further evolution in our outstanding partnership with the U.S. Pacific Fleet,” said Rondeau. “We have always seen NPS as a center of excellence and innovation, a place where our faculty and students work together to solve the operational challenges of our fleet and force. Through the Nimitz Research Group, we will be able to provide those solutions by deploying our talent and our experience in direct support of our Pacific Fleet partners.”

According to NPS spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Ed Early, the Nimitz Research Group is modeled after Naval Warfare Studies Institute’s Bucklew Research Group, which already provides similar support to Naval Special Warfare. Early said the Navy SEAL officers who are Bucklew scholars attending NPS on a two-year master’s degree program serve as an extension of Naval Special Warfare Group commands, who in turn benefit from the SEALs’ education, research efforts, interactions with the academic community, and proximity to Silicon Valley.

“The example set by the Bucklew Research Group proved to be an ideal model for PACFLT’s requirements.,” Early said. “As a result, the Nimitz Research Group was conceived with the goal of providing coherence and unity of action for NPS’ support to PACFLT.”

Paparo, himself a graduate of NPS’ Systems Analysis program, wanted to leverage the Bucklew Research Group model to focus the unique capabilities of Naval Postgraduate School faculty members as well as the operational experience of NPS’ 2,500 mid-career officers, senior noncommissioned officers and civilians to support the commander of Pacific Fleet’s

priorities and research needs.

“The Nimitz Research Group links the intellectual rigor of NPS, its key location in the nation’s hub of technical innovation and the expertise of innovative warfighters in the Pacific Fleet to research, develop and implement new and dynamic combat capabilities,” said Paparo. “Together we will build critical advantages over our competitors to maximize our strengths – battlespace awareness, agility, maneuverability and collective capabilities of the joint forces.”