

Navy Orders Long-Lead Materials for Two Fleet Oilers, One Expeditionary Sea Base



General Dynamics NASSCO has been awarded two contracts for long-lead materials for two fleet replenishment oilers and one

expeditionary sea base ship. *GENERAL DYNAMICS NASSCO*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded two contracts totaling \$600 million for long-lead materials for three ships to be built by General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego. The materials will be used to build two fleet replenishment oilers and one expeditionary sea base ship.

The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. a \$500 million contract modification for long-lead-time material in support of the seventh and eighth John Lewis-class fleet replenishment oilers T-AO 211 and 212, according to a June 28 Defense Department contract announcement. The company also was awarded a \$100 million contract modification for long-lead-time material in support of Lewis B. Buller-class expeditionary sea base (ESB) 8, the sixth ship of the class.

The Lewis B. Puller class ESB is a development of the Montford Point-class mobile landing platform ship. The 784-foot-long ESB is equipped with a 52,000 square-foot flight deck that can handle H-1, H-53 and H-53 helicopters and V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft. The ship is a capable platform to support mine-countermeasures missions, special operations forces, patrol boat support and unmanned systems.

Three ESBs are serving in the fleet – USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), USS Hershel “Woody” Williams (ESB 4) and the USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5) – and two more, the future USNS John L. Canley and USNS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7), are under construction.

NASSCO is scheduled to deliver later this year the lead ship of the new 742-foot-long, 49,850-ton fleet oiler class, the John Lewis (T-AO 205). Three more are under construction – the future USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), the future USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), and the future USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208) – and two more are under contract. The oilers each will have a fuel capacity of 157,000 barrels of oil as well as other dry stores to replenish ships at sea.

“NASSCO shipbuilders are honored to build T-AO 211, T-AO 212 and ESB 8,” Dave Carver, president of General Dynamics NASSCO, said in a release. “The NASSCO team is excited to work with our Navy partners to ensure the success of both historic programs which are critical in supporting the Navy’s forward presence.”

NASSCO said the construction of the three ships is planned for third quarter of 2023 and continue into 2027. The company sees the contracts as helpful in sustaining and growing its workforce.

CNO, Japanese Chief of Staff Meet to Discuss Maritime Security



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday meets with Chief of Staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Adm. Ryo Sakai during an office call at the Pentagon on June 28. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Chief Amanda Gray*

WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday hosted the chief of staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Adm. Ryo Sakai, in Washington, D.C., for an office visit on June 28, the CNO’s public affairs office said in a release.

The two leaders discussed maritime security and ongoing efforts to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

“The alliance between Japan and the United States is the cornerstone of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific,” said Gilday. “Our bond with Japan has never been stronger. We share a common vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and, together, we will work tirelessly to ensure and maintain security and stability in one of the world’s most important regions. Adm. Sakai’s visit provides a great opportunity to gain his first-hand strategic insights into regional security issues as well

as engage in productive discussions on how our navies can accelerate critical advances in interoperability.”

“The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force will be celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, and our history has always been with the U.S. Navy, protecting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific Region,” said Sakai. “The importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance is growing by the day, and today Adm. Gilday and I confirmed our strong bond and will to realize our common values of peace and stability in Indo-Pacific region.”

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss how Japan and the U.S. can increase readiness, deter and counter malign gray-zone activities in the Indo-Pacific, and focus on interoperability and interchangeability between the two forces.

JMSDF and U.S. naval forces regularly operate together around the globe. This year the two navies participated in exercises such as Noble Fusion, Sea Dragon, Resilient Shield, and numerous other bilateral engagements.

This is the first opportunity for the two leaders to meet since Sakai became JMSDF’s chief of staff in March 2022.

Navy Confirms Wreck Site off Philippines Coast that of USS Samuel B. Roberts



The U.S. Navy destroyer escort USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE-413) circa June 1944, while off Boston, Massachusetts. *NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND*

WASHINGTON – Seventy-eight years after its loss during World War II, the U.S. Navy confirmed on June 25 the location of USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE 413), the Naval History and Heritage Command said June 27.

As announced on Twitter June 24 by retired naval officer and underwater explorer Victor Vescovo, he and a team from the undersea technology company Caladan Oceanic located the destroyer escort ship more than four miles beneath the surface in the Philippine Sea.

Vescovo tweeted, “With sonar specialist Jeremie Morizet, I piloted the submersible Limiting Factor to the wreck of the Samuel B. Roberts [DE 413]. Resting at 6,895 meters, it is now the deepest shipwreck ever located and surveyed. It was indeed

the 'destroyer escort that fought like a battleship.'"

USS Samuel B. Roberts was the first ship named for Coxswain Samuel Booker Roberts Jr., who was killed in the Battle of Guadalcanal. Commissioned April 28, 1944, the destroyer escort was lost that same year during the Battle off Samar when it, along with several other U.S. warships, engaged Japanese forces off the Philippine coast and selflessly put itself in harm's way to protect U.S. invasion forces in Leyte Gulf.

"USS Samuel B. Roberts was lost in one of the most valiant actions in the history of the U.S. Navy," said Naval History and Heritage Command Director Samuel Cox, a retired rear admiral. "The gallantry of her crew serves to inspire U.S. Navy personnel today, knowing they are entrusted with upholding the legacy and example of this ship and crew."

Now that USS Samuel B. Roberts has been positively identified, the wreck site is considered a Department of the Navy sunken military craft protected from unauthorized disturbance by the Sunken Military Craft Act. Violations of the act can carry penalties of up to \$100,000 a day, confiscation of the vessel used to disturb the sunken military craft and liability for damages caused. Permission to disturb U.S. Navy sunken military craft for archaeological, historical, or educational purposes is sought from the Naval History and Heritage Command. There are no plans to disturb USS Samuel B. Roberts.

"The site of the wreck marks the location of a hallowed war grave," Cox added. "It serves to remind all Americans of the great cost born by previous generations for the freedom we should not take for granted today."

More than 40 years after the ship's historic actions in WWII, the story of DE 413 and its crew's heroism inspired another generation of Sailors serving on a ship with the same name.

A bronze plaque commemorating the crew of DE 413 was aboard the Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigate USS

Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) when the ship struck an Iranian mine in the Persian Gulf April 14, 1988. The mine blew a 15-foot hole in the hull of the ship, breaking its keel. Because of the fast actions of the crew, after a five-hour effort to purge water and fight fires, the ship was saved. The captain of the vessel, Cmdr. Paul Rinn, noted that while running to their stations to save the ship, the FFG crew would touch the plaque for good luck to honor and recognize the bravery of the crew of DE 413.

The plaque is now in the collection at the National Museum of the U.S. Navy at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. It reads: "In Memory of Those Who Have Sailed Before Us/USC Samuel B. Roberts (DE-413)/LCDR R. W. Copeland, Commanding Officer." The remainder of the plaque includes the names of the original crew of the USS Samuel B. Roberts.

Two DDGs from Truman Strike Group Return Home



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gravelly (DDG 107) returns to Naval Station Norfolk after a regularly scheduled deployment in support of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts, June 23. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Nathan T. Beard*
ARLINGTON, Va. – The USS Gravelly (DDG 107) returned to Naval Station Norfolk June 24, becoming the first ship of the strike group to return home. USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109) followed on June 26, returning to its homeport of Naval Station Mayport, Florida.

USS Gravelly participated in numerous exercises during its time in European waters, including Neptune Strike 2022, Cold Response, Operation Songwright, Dynamic Manta, Neptune Shield 2022, and Hedgehog 22 with forces from Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom, according to a release.

“Exercises with our allies and partners allowed for a more cohesive alliance and fluid operations,” Cmdr. Hunter Washburn, Gravelly’s commanding officer said in the release. “Operating with allies and partners is paramount to further

developing our communication and operational capabilities to ensure mission readiness at a moment's notice.”

USS Jason Dunham also operated in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility, but also spent part of its deployment perated with the U.S. 5th Fleet in the Middle East. The DDG escorted ships through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait multiple times.

During operations in U.S. 6th Fleet, the DDG operated with Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe ships, the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 and the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group.

“In the Mediterranean, Jason Dunham took part in NATO-led activity Neptune Shield 22, demonstrating NATO's ability to integrate the high-end maritime warfare capabilities of allied aircraft carrier strike groups, amphibious ready groups and marine expeditionary units to support the defense of the alliance,” according to a release.

U.S. 5th Fleet Gains First LCS, USS Sioux City, in Historic Deployment



Littoral combat ship USS Sioux City (LCS 11), arrives at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, June 25. *U.S. Army / Sgt. Terry Vongsouthi*

MANAMA, Bahrain – USS Sioux City (LCS 11) arrived at Bahrain for a scheduled port visit, June 25, marking the completion of a 10,000-mile journey while becoming the first littoral combat ship to operate in the Middle East, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said June 25.

The ship and crew of 75 personnel departed Mayport, Florida, in April. While in the U.S. 5th Fleet region, Sioux City has provided maritime security presence enabling the free flow of commerce in key corridors of trade.

“We’re thrilled to have Sioux City’s crew here helping us understand how to integrate the LCS platform into our operations, and we’re exercising every one of the ship’s support capabilities,” said Capt. Robert Francis, commander of Task Force 55. Task Force 55 oversees U.S. surface forces operating in the Middle East.

After arriving in the Middle East in May, Sioux City operated in support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 153 and focused on maritime security and partner capacity building in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden. CTF 153 is one of four multinational task forces organized under Combined Maritime Forces, the largest international naval partnership with 34 nations. Led by the United States, Combined Maritime Forces is headquartered in Bahrain with U.S. 5th Fleet.

“I’m incredibly proud of our Sailors for executing every mission we’ve been tasked with,” said Cmdr. Scott Whitworth, commanding officer of USS Sioux City. “We are forging a new frontier for littoral combat ships.”

Sioux City is deployed with an MH-60 Seahawk helicopter from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 22.

The U.S. 5th Fleet region includes 21 countries, the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb and Suez Canal.

Munsch Assumes Command of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa



The change of command ceremony of Allied Joint Forces Command Naples (JFC Naples) from Adm. Robert P. Burke to Adm. Stuart B. Munsch took place at JFC Naples, Italy, June 27, 2022. The Change of Command Ceremony at JFC Naples symbolizes the continuity and unity that is NATO and comes during a time of a changed security environment in Europe. *U.S. Marine Corps / Master Sgt. Scott McAdam*

ALLIED JOINT FORCES COMMAND NAPLES, Italy – U.S. Navy Adm. Stuart B. Munsch relieved Adm. Robert P. Burke as commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) during a change of command ceremony held onboard Joint Forces Command (JFC) Naples Headquarters in Naples, Italy, June 27, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs said in a release.

U.S. Army Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, commander, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), and U.S. Air Force Gen. Tod D. Wolters, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and commander, U.S. European Command (EUCOM), served as the presiding officers of the ceremony.

Townsend commenced the official remarks and reflected on Burke's steadfast leadership as the commander of U.S. Africa Command's maritime component.

"At U.S. Africa Command, we fully appreciate how important sea lines of communication are to Western economies and to our ability to project power," said Townsend. "It is also apparent to me that our adversaries appreciate these facts as well. Every day, they are competing with us, the United States, NATO and our other allies and partners to gain an edge in the maritime domain."

Townsend spoke to NAVAF's critical role in stemming malign activities in Africa, highlighting Burke's unwavering support to African partners to promote maritime security and stability across the continent.

"In the face of these challenges, and arguably a more complex portfolio than Europe, Bob Burke ensured that NAVAF was always at the right place at the right time to maximize our strategic impact and provide seamless support to our allies and our partners," said Townsend.

Townsend noted that despite heavy operational demands and fiscal pressures, Burke didn't just hold the line, he advanced America's interests in Africa and every facet of the maritime domain.

During his remarks, Townsend also welcomed the incoming commander, Munsch.

"You have an impressive resume of operational experience, and your time at key strategic positions in the Pentagon is going to pay off for us here," said Townsend. "I know that NAVAF has steady hands on the helm."

Wolters also praised Burke and his wife Barbara for 39 years of dedicated service during the ceremony.

“Barbara, we know that you have delivered to us, one of the most spectacular commanders in the history of conflict, and we thank you so much for facilitating the extraordinary accomplishments of your husband, and we thank you so much for the sacrifices that you’ve made in the past,” said Wolters. “Bob, I am so proud of you. We’re old shipmates, I’m going to miss you. We talked a lot on the phone because there has been a lot of late night duty and the one thing that you knew about Bob Burke is that 1000 percent of the time, he was going to be ready. Bob, we wish you and Barbara the calmest of seas and the bluest of skies, as you press back to Florida and congratulations on 39 years of superior service. Well done my friend.”

Wolters acknowledged the tremendous responsibilities that Burke managed during his tenure as commander of NAVEUR-NAVAF as well as his many NATO duties as the commander of JFC Naples, chief among them being Operation Allies Welcome and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which he called Burke’s most important task.

“For me as the SHAPE Commander, the single human being on planet earth that is most responsible for deterring our sovereign soil and the effectiveness that we’ve been able to sustain to this point is Bob Burke,” said Wolters.

Burke touched on his role in the current geopolitical situation in Europe, underscoring the gravity of the moment and the continued work that will be required from the NAVEUR-NAVAF team.

“We are living through a seminal moment in trans-Atlantic security. You have been front and center for the U.S. response to that reality, playing key roles in the most fundamental recalibration of the U.S. Navy in Europe I’ve seen in 40 years of service,” said Burke. “I am so grateful for your commitment to service, teamwork, learning and innovation – all of which ensures this inspiring team of teams stands ready to fight and

win should the need arise.”

During his tenure, Burke assumed operational responsibility for naval forces and activities in a wide expanse of territory, including 93 countries from the North Pole to the Cape of Good Hope and eastward from the mid-Atlantic to the Caspian Sea. In addition to overseeing units and personnel typically assigned to Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central and U.S. Sixth Fleet, Burke also led multiple carrier strike groups as well as amphibious ready groups and marine expeditionary units. Burke and the NAVEUR and SIXTHFLT teams established Task Force 61 Naval Amphibious Forces Europe/2d Marine Division (TF-61/2) to synchronize Navy and Marine Corps efforts across Europe and Africa.

Under Burke’s leadership, Naval Forces Europe enhanced interoperability with NATO allies and partners through some of the largest and most successful multinational exercises and activities, including BALTOPS, Formidable Shield, and the Project Neptune Series, Allied multi-carrier operations, and unprecedented support to NATO enhanced air policing missions.

As the commander of Naval Forces Africa, he bolstered relations throughout the African continent, spearheading projects like Women, Peace and Security and the expeditionary sea base USS Hershel “Woody” Williams’ (ESB 4) circumnavigation of the African continent. Williams’ circumnavigation also featured the first voyage repair availability of the ESB platform in South Africa. Additionally, NAVAF facilitated the regional Express Series exercises, Obangame in Western Africa, Cutlass in Eastern Africa and Phoenix in Northern Africa, as part of a comprehensive strategy to provide collaborative opportunities amongst African forces and international partners that addresses maritime security concerns, including interdiction operations.

“Together, you are maintaining an unprecedented level of

activity throughout the European Command and Africa Command areas of responsibility and demonstrating that our collaborative network at sea remains the Joint Force's asymmetric advantage," said Burke.

Munsch, a native of North Dakota, recently served as director for Joint Force Development, J-7, Joint Staff, Washington D.C. Other notable assignments include serving aboard USS Will Rogers (SSBN 659), USS Jefferson City (SSN 759), USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63), on the staff of Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group 5, and USS Tucson (SSN 770). He also commanded USS Albuquerque (SSN 706) from 2002 to 2005, followed by duty in the Pentagon as the military assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and then as executive assistant to the Director, Submarine Warfare, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV N87).

"In some way, this tour represents coming full circle for me. My father was in the Navy for one enlistment, but it gave him a lifetime of stories," said Munsch. "And his favorite place to visit was always Italy, and in particular, Naples because of the people and of course because of the food."

Munsch thanked Burke for his enduring contributions and outlined his goals upon assuming command as NAVEUR-NAVAF and JFC Naples.

"I would like to thank the Burkes, you have been most gracious both professionally and personally to ease us into this transition. Thank you so much," said Munsch. "I look forward to working with [JFC Naples and NAVEUR-NAVAF] to deter and defend, to advance our interoperability and strengthen our alliance."

In closing, Burke thanked Sailors and leadership for their extraordinary work and urged all hands to continue to confront emerging challenges with steadfast resolve.

"Our two headquarters here in Naples continue to punch well

above their weight. It's what we've needed and what we'll continue to rely on as our margins for error are getting thinner and two revisionist powers continue to exploit their perceived advantages," said Burke. "Uncertainty is the new normal, leaving us with the imperative to always press the advantages that we have while staying ready for anything, from any direction, at any time."

For over 80 years, NAVEUR-NAVAF has forged strategic relationships with allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the EUCOM and AFRICOM areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

Navy to Commission Virginia-Class Fast Attack Submarine Montana



The U.S. Navy submarine USS Montana (SSN-794) conducts initial sea trials in the Atlantic Ocean Feb. 1. *HII / Ashley Cowan*
ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will commission the future USS Montana (SSN 794), the newest Virginia-class fast attack submarine, during a 10:00 a.m. EST ceremony on Saturday, June 25, at Naval Station Norfolk, the Defense Department said June 24.

Gov. Greg Gianforte of Montana will deliver the principal address. Additional speakers include U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia's 3rd District; Undersecretary of the Navy Erik Raven; Adm. James Caldwell, director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program; and Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding.

The submarine's sponsor is Sally Jewell, former Secretary of the United States Department of Interior. Montana was christened at Newport News Shipbuilding, a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries, in Newport News, Virginia, on Sept. 12, 2020. Jewell will give the order to "man our ship and bring her to life."

The future USS Montana (SSN 794) honors the Treasure State and will be the second commissioned warship bearing the name. The first USS Montana (ACR-13), an armored cruiser, was also built at Newport News Shipbuilding and commissioned in July 1908. ACR-13 served in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, landed Marines during unrest in Haiti in 1914, and escorted convoys during World War I. The Navy decommissioned the first USS Montana in 1921, and two other vessels named after the state never saw commissioned service.

“This boat is a true treasure of the U.S. Navy, and will play an integral part in protecting and promoting American prosperity and security abroad,” said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. “I am so proud of the brave men and women who will man this submarine, and I look forward to their success on the high seas.”

Montana is the third Block IV Virginia-class submarine to enter service, designed to carry out the core missions of the submarine force: antisubmarine warfare; anti-surface warfare; delivery of special operations forces; strike warfare; irregular warfare; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and mine warfare. These capabilities allow the submarine force to operate anywhere, at any time, and contribute to regional stability and the preservation of future peace.

Montana 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 has a crew of approximately 136 Navy personnel.

The ceremony will be live-streamed at: <https://www.dvidshub.net/webcast/28926>. The link will become active at 9:45 a.m. EST.

**Navy to Christen
Expeditionary Sea Base Ship
USS John L. Canley**



Retired U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Major John L. Canley, the 300th Marine Medal of Honor recipient, poses for a command board photo at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, Oct. 18, 2018.

U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Morgan Burgess

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will christen its newest expeditionary sea base, the future USS John L. Canley (ESB 6),

during a 9:00 a.m. PDT ceremony Saturday, June 25, at General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (GD-NASSCO) shipyard in San Diego, the Defense Department said June 24.

The principal speaker is Lt. Gen. Michael Langley, commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, and commander, Marine Forces Command and Marine Forces Northern Command. Additional speakers include Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations, Energy, and Facilities Robert Thompson; Vice Adm. Ross Myers, commander, U.S. Fleet Cyber Command/commander, U.S. 10th Fleet; Thomas Kiss, director of ship management, Military Sealift Command; Sgt. Maj. David Wilson, command sergeant major, First Marine Division; and David Carver, president of GD-NASSCO.

In a time-honored Navy tradition, the ship's sponsor, Patricia Sargent, daughter of Sgt. Maj. Canley, will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

The ship is named for Medal of Honor recipient, retired Sgt. Maj. John L. Canley. Canley, who served in the Marine Corps for 28 years, was awarded the nation's highest honor 50 years after his actions while serving as Company Gunnery Sergeant, Company A, First Battalion, First Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam during the Battle of Hue City. Initially awarded the Navy Cross for his actions, his award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor in 2018. Canley passed away on May 11, 2022.

"Tomorrow we christen the future USS John L. Canley, recognizing a pioneer in the Marine Corps and a devoted patriot, who earned our nation's highest honor for his gallant actions in the Battle of Hue City," said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. "Sgt. Maj. Canley is an example to the men and women who will proudly serve aboard this ship and he will be remembered every day ESB 6 operates."

ESBs are highly flexible platforms used across a broad range

of military operations, supporting multiple operational phases and directly contributing to American prosperity and security abroad. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are a part of the critical access infrastructure that supports the deployment of forces and supplies to provide prepositioned equipment and sustainment with adaptable distribution capability.

Navy Orders Two More MQ-4C Triton UAVs



An MQ-4C Triton takes to the skies over the California desert as the Triton low-rate initial production schedule progresses. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has ordered two more MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles

from Northrop Grumman, the Defense Department said June 22.

The Naval Air Systems Command, Patuxent River, Maryland, awarded Northrop Grumman Systems a \$248.2 million contract modification to procure two MQ-4Cs as an addition to Lot 5 low-rate initial production.

The contract modification follows two other contracts awarded in June to Northrop Grumman for the Triton program.

The Naval Air Systems Command awarded Northrop Grumman a \$15.1 million contract modification on June 14 to incorporate production engineering change proposals that modify MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft system production UAVs to an integrated functional capability 4.0 multiple intelligence configuration for the Navy and the government of Australia.

Another contract issued June 16 awarded the company \$20.5 million to incorporate IFC-4 for MQ-4Cs construction numbers B13 through B15.

The MQ-4C's IFC-4 is designed to bring an enhanced multi-mission sensor capability as part of the Navy's Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Targeting transition plan. The Triton in the IFC-4 configuration is designed to complement the Navy's P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft and eventually will enable the Navy to retire its EP-3E Orion electronic reconnaissance aircraft. The initial operational capability for the Triton will be declared in 2023 when IFC-4-configured Tritons are deployed in enough quantity to field one complete orbit.

Work on the two additional UAVs is expected to be completed in February 2027.

Navy's RQ-4A BAMS-D UAVs End 13-Year Mideast Deployment



The Broad Area Maritime Surveillance Demonstrator returned from 5th Fleet to Patuxent River, Maryland, June 17 after accruing more than 42,500 flight hours and over 2,000 oversea missions during a 13-year deployment. *NORTHROP GRUMMAN* ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has brought home from the Middle East its last deployed RQ-4A Global Hawk Broad-Area Maritime Surveillance – Demonstrator (BAMS-D) unmanned aerial vehicle, culminating a 13-year span of operations that began as a six-month experiment.

According to a June 22 release from the Naval Air Systems Command, the RQ-4A returned to its home base, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, from the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility on June 17.

The Navy had deployed the RQ-4A to Southwest Asia since 2009 as a component of the BAMS-D program. Five Block 10 RQ-4As were acquired from the U.S. Air Force and were based at Patuxent River and operated in sequence over the years by detachments of Patrol Reconnaissance Wings 5, 2, and 11. The

detachment kept at least one RQ-4A in the rotation to a base in the Persian Gulf region. One was lost in a mishap in Maryland in June 2012. Another was shot down June 19, 2019, in an unprovoked attack in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz by an Iranian surface-to-air missile.

“BAMS-D has been a singular force multiplier for 5th Fleet and U.S. Central Command and has provided invaluable insights into the use of unmanned air systems as part of an overall concept of operations for naval ISR,” said Dave Seagle, BAMS-D deputy program manager, who has led the program since its inception, in the release.

BAMS-D provided more than 50% of maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in theater accruing over 42,500 flight hours in 2,069 overseas missions, the Navy said.

“By 2013, BAMS-D had ramped up its capabilities to 15 24-hour missions every month, supplementing its first deployed aircraft with a second aircraft,” Seagle said. “Through the next nine years, BAMS-D provided uninterrupted operations and collected almost 1.4 million ISR scenes, highlighted over 11,500 targets of interest and provided the fleet with over 15,000 tactical reports, becoming an indispensable asset for the warfighter. One of many notable achievements occurred as recently as August 2021 when BAMS-D provided ISR coverage to non-combatant evacuation operations during the U.S. drawdown in Afghanistan.

“Despite the aging of the system and limited spares available, BAMS-D’s incredible operations and maintenance team achieved an overall mission availability rate of 96%, with more than 94% of scheduled missions completed,” he said.

The BAMS-D Integrated Sensor Suite featured electro-optical/infrared, synthetic aperture radar, ground moving target indicator and wide-area search modes retained from the

Air Force production system. To improve performance in the maritime environment, LR-100 electronic surveillance sensors, Automatic Identification System receiver, inverse synthetic-aperture radar, and maritime search and maritime moving target indicator radar modes were integrated into the demonstrator system. The ground segment consisted of three launch and recovery elements, two mission control elements and a Navy-designed tactical auxiliary ground station.

In the Navy's 2022 budget request, divestment of the RQ-4A Global Hawk Broad-Area Maritime Surveillance-Demonstrator UAV had been planned for acceleration from 2023 to 2022, with the savings invested in higher priorities.

The BAMS-D is being replaced by a Global hawk derivative, the MQ-4C Triton, which has been deployed to the Western Pacific in an Early Operational Capability deployment. The Triton with an upgraded sensor capability will be deployed in 2023.