

Navy to Christen Amphibious Transport Dock Ship Richard M. McCool Jr.



The future USS Richard M. McCool Jr., launched earlier this year at Ingalls Shipbuilding Division. *HII*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will christen its newest amphibious transport dock, the future USS Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29), during a 9 a.m. CDT ceremony Saturday, June 11, at the HII Ingalls Division shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the Defense Department said June 10.

The principal speaker is Undersecretary of the Navy Erik Raven. Additional speakers include Lt. Gen. David Bellon, commander, United States Marine Corps Reserve and Marine Corps Forces, South; Vice Adm. Randy Crites, deputy chief of naval operations for integration of capabilities and resources; and Kari Wilkinson, president of Ingalls Shipbuilding. In a time-

honored Navy tradition, the ship's sponsors and granddaughters of its namesake, Shana McCool and Kate Oja, will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

The ship is named in honor of Navy veteran and Medal of Honor recipient, retired Capt. Richard Miles McCool Jr., who was awarded the Medal of Honor for the heroism he displayed June 10 and 11, 1945, in coordinating damage control and rescue operations after a series of Japanese kamikaze aircraft attacks during the Battle of Okinawa. On June 10, 1945, his leadership efforts greatly assisted in evacuating survivors from a sinking destroyer. After his ship was struck by a kamikaze June 11, then Lt. McCool Jr., despite suffering from shrapnel wounds and painful burns, led vigorous damage control efforts to save his ship from destruction and personally rescue Sailors trapped in blazing compartments. McCool passed away on March 5, 2008.

"Tomorrow we christen the future USS Richard M. McCool Jr., recognizing a Medal of Honor awardee and true American hero for his unwavering devotion to duty and service to our country," said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. "This historic occasion brings us one step closer to 'manning the rails' with the men and women who will carry on the proud naval tradition of defending our nation and working towards a more peaceful world."

The future Richard M. McCool Jr. is the 13th San Antonio-class ship, designed to support embarking, transporting, and bringing elements of 650 Marines ashore by landing craft or air-cushion vehicles. A flight deck hangar further enhances the ship's capabilities, which can support the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft.

San Antonio-class ships can support a variety of amphibious assault, special operations, or expeditionary warfare missions, operating independently or as part of Amphibious Readiness Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups or joint task

forces. These capabilities allow the U.S. Navy to protect America's security abroad and promote regional stability and preserve future peace.

Navy Accepts Delivery of Ship-to-Shore Connector LCAC 104



The Navy accepted delivery of Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 104 on June 9. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – The Navy accepted delivery of the next generation landing craft, Ship-to-Shore Connector, Landing Craft, Air

Cushion (LCAC) 104, June 9, Team Ships Public Affairs said in a release.

LCAC 104's delivery follows the completion of acceptance trials with the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey to test the readiness and capability of the craft and to validate requirements.

"These next generation craft provide our Navy and Marine Corps team with essential agility and speed to complete their missions," said Capt. Jason Grabelle, program manager, Amphibious Assault and Connectors Programs, Program Executive Office Ships. "The reliability and flexibility of the LCAC make them an essential asset to the fleet, protecting the maritime domain now and in the future."

LCACs are built with similar configurations, dimensions and clearances to the legacy LCAC, ensuring the compatibility of this next-generation air cushion vehicle with existing well deck-equipped amphibious ships.

The LCAC program is currently in serial production on LCACs 105 – 116 at Textron Systems.

Four Crew Members Survive MH-60S Crash



An MH-60S Seahawk Helicopter flies over the Pacific Ocean in this 2018 photo. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – A Navy MH-60S Seahawk helicopter crashed June 9 near El Centro, California, but all four crew members on board survived and were safely recovered, commander, Naval Air Force Pacific public affairs office, said in a release. One crew member suffered non-life-threatening injuries.

The MH-60S was assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron Three based at Naval Air Station North Island, California. HSC-3 is the fleet replacement squadron for the U.S. Pacific Fleet's MH-60S squadrons.

CNO Hosts Israel's Head of

Navy, Focused on Partnership and Maritime Security



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday meets with Commander in Chief of the Israeli Navy Vice Adm. David Saar Salama during an office call at the Pentagon, June 8. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class T. Logan Keown*
WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday hosted the commander in chief of the Israeli Navy, Vice Adm. David Saar Salama, in Washington, D.C., for a formal counterpart visit, June 8-9, the CNO's public affairs office said in a release.

The two leaders discussed several topics of shared interest including force design, strategic competition, unmanned technologies and regional security efforts.

The two-day visit included a full honors ceremony, meetings with senior U.S. Navy leadership and a visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

“Our strategic partnership with Israel is ironclad and enduring,” said Gilday. “United by our commitment to a rules-based international order, free and open seas, and advancing collective capabilities, our two navies have never been more aligned than they are today. I look forward to working closely with Adm. Salama to strengthen our partnership and interoperability.”

“The cooperation between the Israeli Navy and the U.S. Navy, led by my friend Adm. Mike Gilday, is another testament to the strength of the strategic partnership and friendship between the two navies,” said Salama. “The joint work with the U.S. Navy, especially with the 5th and 6th Fleets, will continue to yield many achievements for Israel and overall maritime security. Together, we will continue to face the challenges ahead in order to maintain stability at sea.”

U.S. Navy and Israeli Naval Forces regularly operate together around the world, particularly in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet Area of Operations. Most recently, the U.S. Navy and the Israeli Navy participated in Intrinsic Defender 22, a bilateral exercise focused on maritime security operations, explosive ordnance disposal, health topics and unmanned systems integration.

On Sept. 1, 2021, the U.S. Department of Defense officially reorganized Israel within the area of responsibility of U.S. Central Command.

This was the first meeting between Gilday and Salama.

Navy SSBN PEO: Data Clearly Supports Building More than 12 Columbia Subs



General Dynamics Electric Boat welder Maria Betance-Pizarro welds the initials of the sponsor of the future U.S. Navy ballistic missile submarine District of Columbia onto a metal plate at a ceremony at the Electric Boat facility in Quonset Point, Rhode Island, June 4. Looking on are the ship's sponsor, U.S. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-District of Columbia), and officials from Electric Boat, other members of Congress, and officers of the U.S. Navy. *U.S. NAVY / GENERAL DYNAMICS ELECTRIC BOAT*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of building the Navy's next-generation nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine said there may be an advantage to building more than the 12 planned boats.

“I have clear data that says, ‘It clearly makes more sense to

have more than 12 [Columbia-class SSBNs] to meet the current requirements that [U.S.] Strategic Command has defined for us,'" said Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, program executive officer for Strategic Submarines, speaking during a June 9 Hudson Strategic Forces Seminar in Washington.

"I have the data that will show the risks of what the current program of record is, and here is how those risks are mitigated if I go to 13 or 14 or 15 or 16, how that affects those requirements," Pappano said. "It's probably a late '20s decision, sometimes before the end of the next block that we are doing."

The current U.S. Nuclear Posture Review defines the requirement for "at least" 12 Columbia-class SSBNs.

Pappano said building extra SSBNs would not be a technological problem but a matter making decisions early enough to keep submarine programs on schedule.

"It's really getting both the cadence for the Columbia class and to be able to get back on cadence for Virginia [attack submarine]," he said.

The contract for building the first new SSBN, the future USS District of Columbia, calls for delivery 84 months of formal program start. Pappano's goal is to deliver the boat in 78 months. With the construction started during the COVID-19 pandemic, construction "got a little bit slower start than we wanted" so it was lagging slightly behind 78 months but still ahead of the required maximum of 84 months.

"It's not only delivering [the lead ship] on time ... but we've got to get the cadence right for the rest of the class," he said. "We have to be delivering Columbia class at a one-per-year cadence [in fiscal 2026]."

With the future USS District of Columbia and USS Wisconsin under contract, the Navy originally had planned to build the

next three boats in the next block to get economic order quantity of the SSBNs and the Virginia-class SSNs.

“We’re working right now with our stakeholders to include five boats in the second block,” he said, to make that block buy in 2026 and “at least a five-ship block” for the third block.

The 12 Columbia-class SSBNs will be replacing the 14 Ohio-class SSBNs that each are scheduled to be retired at 42 years of service. The first of the Ohio SSBNs to be retired will be inactivated in 2027.

“There is going to be a period of time [for] much of the ‘30s we have to have 10 ships ready for sea, out of a depot period, and we’re going to have exactly 10 for a lot of that time,” Pappano said. “If you look at it month by month, there are periods where we might dip below nine.”

He said the Navy is looking at starting advance procurement for each boat “a little bit early... about six monthsish” for Columbia boats two through 12, a plan supported in the 2023 budget request.

The first Columbia-class SSBN is required to be on patrol in the first quarter of fiscal 2031. Pappano said the Navy is looking at squeezing more service life out of five Ohio-class boats with short service-life extensions of the boats that are in the best condition. The admiral said that fiscal 2026 would be the time to make the decision, with the first Ohio extension completed in fiscal 2029, and each taking three years.

Pappano said one advantage of extending an Ohio-class boat is during the 2036-2039 time frame, a submarine will be needed to test-launch the D5LE2 version of the Trident ballistic missile in support of the Strategic Systems Program. This would avoid having to take a submarine off the strategic deterrence patrol cycle to test the missiles.

Navy Awards L3Harris \$205M for New Passive E0/IR Capability



The Arleigh-Burke class destroyer USS Decatur (DDG 73), approaches the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) for a refueling at sea. A team led by L3Harris Technologies will provide the Shipboard Panoramic Electro-Optic/Infrared system to destroyers and other ships. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Justin McTaggart*

MELBOURNE, Fla. – A team led by L3Harris Technologies has been selected to provide the Shipboard Panoramic Electro-Optic/Infrared (SPEIR) system to the U.S. Navy that will provide improved fleet protection, the company said June 7.

The initial \$205 million contract has a potential value of \$593 million if all options are exercised through March 2031.

L3Harris will serve as systems integrator and prime contractor, delivering capabilities for mission areas including anti-ship cruise missile defense, counter-unmanned aerial systems, counter-fast attack craft/fast in-shore attack craft, mobility, anti-terrorism/force protection and

operational tasking visual information. This new system is targeted for installation on destroyers, carriers, frigates, amphibious and landing helicopter assault ships to provide a critical warfighting capability.

The team includes Lockheed Martin and BAE Systems and will provide an L3Harris solution known as Spatial that provides a scalable 360-degree E0/IR passive automatic detection and tracking solution, enhancing combat systems and navigation capabilities to the U.S. Navy.

The program was awarded by the Program Executive Office Integrated Warfare Systems 2.0.

“The SPEIR program leverages the technologies demonstrated as part of the Office of Naval Research’s Future Naval Capability effort known as CESARS [Combined E0/IR Surveillance and Response System] and a strong heritage of maritime electro-optical sensor systems combined with L3Harris internal investment to provide a SPEIR capability to the fleet faster, with less risk and cost than other solutions,” said Sean Stackley, president, Integrated Mission Systems, L3Harris.

“Passive persistent surveillance capability is a significant step forward in protecting the surface fleet, safe navigation and force protection by enabling operations in an emissions-controlled environment.”

BAE Systems employs image processing development from CESARS that provides a fully automated image processing detection capability that reduces operator workload.

“BAE Systems is leveraging our expertise in machine learning and automation capabilities to maritime defense systems,” said Frank Crispino, director of Active Protection Solutions for BAE Systems.

Lockheed Martin brings combat system interface experience to ease integration into existing ship systems.

“The SPEIR program builds on Lockheed Martin’s legacy of proven integrated combat system and electro-optical sensor solutions for PEO IWS,” said Rick Cordaro, vice president, Lockheed Martin Advanced Product Solutions.

Navy Satellite Center Disestablished, Transferred to U.S. Space Force



Vice Adm. Ross Myers, commander, U.S. Fleet Cyber Command/U.S. 10th Fleet, left, shakes hands with U.S. Space Force Lt. Gen. Stephen Whiting, commander, Space Operations Command, during the Naval Satellite Operations Center disestablishment ceremony. *U.S. NAVY / Ensign Drew Verbis*

POINT MUGU – Naval Satellite Operations Center, onboard Naval Base Ventura County, transferred to the U.S. Space Force under Space Delta 8 and was designated as the 10th Space Operations Squadron during a historic Disestablishment and Assumption of Command Ceremony June 6, said Naval Base Ventura County Public Affairs in a June 8 release.

Vice Adm. Ross Myers, commander of U.S. Fleet Cyber Command and U.S. 10th Fleet, presided over the ceremony.

“For 60 years NAVSOC has advocated and advanced American maritime superiority,” said Myers. “NAVSOC enabled satellite communications to afford the United States and her allies the crucial ability to provide defensive measures, conduct over the horizon monitoring and targeting, and project combat power in areas of conflict and instability around the globe.”

NAVSOC was the first military space operations command in history, commissioned in April 1962 as the Navy Astronautics Group. Tasked with operating the Navy’s satellites, the unit commanded TRANSIT, the world’s first satellite navigation system. Navy Astronautics Group was re-designated as NAVSOC in June 1990.

“As we look toward the future of space operations, we see the domain is both crowded and growing,” said Myers. “To lead this next phase of the space race, the United States established the Space Command with the budget and authorities to consolidate joint-capabilities and harness cross-cutting disciplines and services.”

The Space Force is a separate and distinct branch of the armed services, organized under the Department of the Air Force in a manner very similar to how the Marine Corps is organized under the Department of the Navy.

“It’s hard to overstate how impactful this mission is and the critical role this team plays in linking the force across air, land, and sea,” said U.S. Space Force Lt. Gen. Stephen

Whiting, commander, Space Operations Command. "This activation marks the beginning of the Department of Defense' consolidation of all narrow-band, wide-band, and protected SATCOM to include all associated responsibilities for training, acquisition, and sustainment activities under a single military service for the first time in history."

In addition to the command operation center, NAVSOC transferred the Laguna Peak Facility (three miles from the Point Mugu), which supports the Space-Ground Link System and satellite TT&C operations, and 13 satellites to include 1-FLTSAT, 5-UFO, 5-MUOS and 2-POLAR.

According to Space Delta 8, the new unit is intentionally numbered the 10th Space Operations Squadron to pay honor to its heritage under U.S. 10th Fleet.

"Space has become highly contested," said U.S. Space Force Col. Matthew Holston, commander, Space Delta 8. "Our adversaries recognize our reliance on space, and they are actively seeking ways to create vulnerabilities to take away our competitive advantage. It is the 10th Space Force Operation Squadron that is on the front lines to guaranteeing our American way of life."

The Space Force is expected to grow from 2,400 active-duty service members to 6,400 by the end of the year, according to a statement made by Chief of Space Operations Gen. John Raymond.

"Today we complete the first chapter in military space operations," said Myers. "Our military stands better connected, more informed, faster, and able to operate with greater precision because of NAVSOC."

Navy Air Reserve Begins Transition to P-8A Poseidon Aircraft



A P-8A and P-3C fly over Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, in 2010. *U.S. NAVY / Liz Goettee*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy Air Reserve has begun to retire its P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft and upgrade to the P-8A Poseidon MPA.

Current and former members of Patrol Squadron 62 (VP-62), based at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, gathered June 4 at the squadron's hangar to bid farewell to the squadron's P-3Cs as the squadron begins its transition to the P-8A.

The transition will leave VP-69 at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, as the last reserve VP squadron to operate the

Orion. VP-69 is scheduled to begin transition to the P-8A in fiscal 2023.

The 12 active-component fleet VP squadrons began transition in 2012 and completed the upgrade to the P-8A in 2020.

For many years, the Navy was uncertain as to whether the two reserve VP squadrons would be able to upgrade to the P-8A. Eventually, the Navy's program of record was increased to procure enough P-8As to equip the two reserve squadrons.

The two reserve VP squadrons are very active in augmenting the fleet squadrons in operations and exercises. With more than 300 Sailors assigned, VP-62 is manned by a staff of full-time support personnel, selective reservists and a few active-component personnel.

At the height of the Cold War, the Navy Reserve fielded 13 VP squadrons equipped with Orions.

Munsch Nominated for Admiral, Command of Naval Forces Europe/Africa



Vice Adm. Stuart B. Munsch. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced June 8 that the president has nominated Navy Vice Adm. Stuart B. Munsch for a fourth star and assigned commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe; commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Africa; and commander, Allied Joint Forces Command,

Naples, Italy.

Munsch is currently serving as director for Joint Force Development, J-7, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.

Munsch, a native of North Dakota, graduated from the Naval Academy in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering. At Annapolis, he was brigade commander of his class and an All-American and national champion pistol shooter. Selected for a Rhodes Scholarship, he attended Oxford University and earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in philosophy, politics and economics.

He then was assigned to four consecutive sea duty assignments, serving on 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). In 1999, Munsch reported ashore to U.S. Pacific Command, where he served in the Plans and Policy Directorate (J5) prior to becoming deputy executive assistant to the commander. He then was selected for a White House Fellowship and served as special assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Munsch 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).

Munsch commanded Submarine Development Squadron (DEVRON) 5 from 2008 to 2010 and then returned to the Pentagon to head the Navy Strategy branch (OPNAV N513). Selected for flag rank, he was reassigned as deputy director, Undersea Warfare (OPNAV N97).

Sent overseas to Japan and Bahrain, Munsch commanded Submarine Group 7 and Task Forces 74 and 54 from 2013 to 2015, followed by duty in the Pentagon as the senior military assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. In 2017 Munsch reported to

OPNAV N3/N5 as the assistant and in 2018 became the deputy chief of naval operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy. In 2019 he established and served as the initial deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Development, N7. He assumed his role as director for Joint Force Development (J7) in 2020.

Chief of Navy Reserve: Top Budget Equipment Priority is C-130J Transport Aircraft



A C-130T Hercules, assigned to the “Condors” of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 64, recovers at Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Benjamin Ringers*

WASHINGTON – The admiral in charge of the Navy’s reserve force told Congress his top budget equipment priority is to acquire C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft to recapitalize the legacy C-130T fleet.

Testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee’s Defense subcommittee, Vice Adm. John B. Mustin, chief of Navy Reserve, said the C-130J is necessary to replace the C-130Ts and KC-130Ts – with an average age of more than 30 years – serving in five of the Navy Reserve’s fleet logistics support squadrons.

“Procurement of the more capable C-130J aircraft variant to replace the three-decade-old C-130 airframes is the Reserve’s number one equipment priority,” Mustin said. “Last year, Navy Reserve fleet logistics squadrons flew 26,000 hours and moved 24 million pounds of cargo at a cost avoidance of a billion dollars. However, the current C-130 fleet is challenged to meet sustained fleet logistics requirements. Modern KC-130Js will realize an additional \$200 million in annual transportation cost savings.

The five Navy Air Reserve fleet logistics squadrons operate 19 C-130Ts and 11 KC-130Ts. Five other KC-130Ts are operated by the two Navy test wings to support test and evaluation activities. The KC-130Ts were transferred from the Marine Corps Reserve when its two reserve Marine aerial refueler/transport squadrons upgraded to the KC-130J, a process completed in April 2021.

“There is no active-duty counterpart to what we do [with the C-130] in the reserve force,” Mustin said. “That’s our intra-theater lift. Certainly, working with the Air National Guard and the Air Force, we’re able get from CONUS into theater whether that’s in the EUCOM area or INDO-PACOM. Once there, however, transition to strike groups and distributed U.S. Navy is impossible without C-130s.

“We’ve got C-40s – smaller capability – but if we want to transfer an F-35 engine, we’ve got to have the C-130s,” he said.

Mustin noted that with the age of the C-130 aircraft “our mission-capable rates are lower, and we struggle to maintain given that we are the only service – active or reserve – to continue to fly what is called the Tango variant [C-130Y/KC-130T]. The incessant demand from not only our fleet commanders but combatant commanders drive my urgency to recapitalize there.”