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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gilday and Yamamura have met numerous times during their tenures.

U.S. Navy Concludes ICEX 2022

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

U.S. NAVY ICE CAMP QUEENFISH – The U.S. Navy is concluding its Ice Exercise 2022 this week, wrapping up nearly three weeks of research and training on, above and below Arctic Ocean ice, said Lt. Seth Koenig, commander, Submarine Force Atlantic Public Affairs, in a March 17 release.

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

“The Navy maintains a presence on, under and above Arctic waters, and it’s important that we continue to train in this challenging environment to not only stay ready to operate here, but also gain efficiency and look for new ways to

innovate," said Rear Adm. Richard Seif, commander of the Navy's Undersea Warfighting Development Center in Groton, Connecticut, and ranking officer at ICEX 2022.

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

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

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

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

ICEX 2022 is taking place in the Arctic region at the same time as U.S. Northern Command's Arctic Edge, a biennial exercise designed to provide realistic and effective training for participants using the premier training locations available throughout Alaska, ensuring the ability to rapidly

deploy and operate in the Arctic. Arctic Edge takes place over the course of three weeks and will have approximately 1,000 participants, including U.S. and Canadian service members, U.S. Coast Guardsmen, and government employees from the U.S. Department of Defense and Canada's Department of National Defence.

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

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

ARLINGTON, Va. — The fiscal 2022 budget, finally signed into

law almost halfway through the fiscal year, provides for 37 F-35 Lightning II strike fighters for the Navy and Marine Corps, as well as 12 FA-18 Super Hornet strike fighters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), deployed in the Western Pacific region, launched F-35C Lightning II and F/A-18 Super Hornet strike fighters assigned to Carrier Air Wing Nine into international airspace over the Yellow Sea, which was

described as “a demonstration of our resolve and commitment to our regional allies,” in a March 15 release from U.S. 7th Fleet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Congress Orders Navy to ‘Buy American’ for Some Ship Components

The new budget bill calls for the 11th and subsequent Constellation-class guided-missile frigates to have many of its components purchased from American companies. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. — Buried deep in the text of the 2022 budget bill signed into law March 15 by the president are certain provisions to force the Navy to “buy American,” purchasing from U.S. companies many of the components and systems that will be installed on some new-construction ships for the U.S Navy and Military Sealift Command.

For the 11th Constellation-class guided-missile frigate and subsequent, the Navy is forbidden to award new contracts unless the following components are manufactured in the United States: air circuit breakers; gyrocompasses; electronic navigation chart systems; steering controls; pumps; propulsion and machinery control systems; totally enclosed lifeboats; auxiliary equipment pumps; shipboard cranes; auxiliary chill water systems; and propulsion propellers, provided that the Navy “shall incorporate United States-manufactured propulsion

engines and propulsion reduction gears into the [frigate] program beginning not later than with the eleventh ship of the program."

For the seventh and subsequent John Lewis-class fleet replenishment ships, for example, the Navy is forbidden to fund purchase of the following components unless they are manufactured in the United States: auxiliary equipment (including pumps) for shipboard services; propulsion equipment (including engines, reduction gears, and propellers); shipboard cranes; spreaders for shipboard cranes; and anchor chains.

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

Future Attack Submarine USS Montana delivered to U.S. Navy

The future USS Montana was delivered to the Navy on March 12. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES / Ashley Cowan*

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – The Submarine Force's newest attack submarine, the future USS Montana (SSN 794), delivered to the U.S. Navy on March 12, Team Submarines Public Affairs said March 14.

PCU Montana is the 21st Virginia Class submarine co-produced by General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries' Newport News Shipbuilding through a long-standing teaming agreement. Montana is the 10th Virginia-class delivered by the shipbuilding team and the third Block IV configured submarine.

"The delivery of this ship reflects an enormous effort across the Navy and Industry shipbuilding teams," said Capt. Todd Weeks, the Virginia-class program manager who rode the boat during sea trials. "This is an exciting time for the program, Montana's crew and the Navy. This is the second Virginia-class submarine to deliver in less than a month and it is in excellent condition. Continued deliveries of attack submarines

are critical to the fleet and our National Maritime Strategy.”

Virginia-class aubmarines are built to operate in the world’s littoral and deep waters while conducting anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface ship warfare; strike warfare; special operations forces support; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; irregular warfare; and mine warfare missions. Their inherent stealth, endurance, mobility and firepower directly enable them to support five of the six maritime strategy core capabilities — sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security, and deterrence.

The submarine’s sponsor is Sally Jewell, former secretary of the United States Department of Interior.

Montana is the second U.S. Navy ship to honor the state. The first USS Montana (ACR 13), an armored cruiser, was also built at Newport News Shipbuilding and commissioned July 1908. It served in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, landed Marines during unrest in Haiti in 1914 and escorted convoys during World War I. It was decommissioned in 1921. Two other battleships (BB 51 and 67) were to have been named Montana but were canceled in 1922 and 1943, respectively.

Navy Accepts Delivery of the Future USS Fort Lauderdale

Pre-Commissioning Unit Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) Commanding Officer Capt. James Quaresimo (front center), Command Master Chief James Magee (front left) and Acting Executive Officer Cmdr. Charles Marshall pose with the crew in the well deck after accepting delivery of the ship. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Dustin Knight*

WASHINGTON – The Navy accepted delivery of the future USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), the 12th San Antonio class-amphibious transport dock ship, from Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding Division, March 11, Team Ships Public Affairs said March 14.

Delivery of LPD 28 represents the official transfer of the ship from the shipbuilder to the Navy. Prior to delivery, the ship successfully conducted a series of at-sea and pier-side trials to demonstrate its material and operational readiness.

"Following successful builder's and acceptance trials, LPD 28 will soon be ready to join the fleet to provide critical readiness and capacity to our Sailors," said Capt. Cedric McNeal, program manager, Amphibious Warfare Program Office, Program Executive Office Ships. "This ship will help expand

our advantage in the maritime domain and brings critical capability now and in the future.”

The San Antonio-class is designed to support embarking, transporting, and landing Marines and their equipment by conventional or air-cushioned landing craft. The ship’s capabilities are further enhanced by its flight deck and hangar, enabling the ship to operate a variety of Marine Corps helicopters and the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. Because of the ships’ inherent capabilities, they are able to support a variety of amphibious assault, special operations, expeditionary warfare, or disaster relief missions, operating independently or as part of Amphibious Readiness Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups or Joint Task Forces.

In addition to LPD 28, HII’s Ingalls Shipbuilding Division is currently in production on the future USS Richard S. McCool (LPD 29) and the future USS Harrisburg (LPD 30), with start of fabrication for future USS Pittsburgh (LPD 31) planned for later this spring.

Submarine Program ‘Alive and Well,’ Lawmakers Tell Industry Leaders

The future USS Oregon (SSN 793) heading out from Groton, Connecticut, on sea trials in December 2021. *GENERAL DYNAMICS ELECTRIC BOAT*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Navy new submarine construction is on track, members of the Submarine Industrial Base Council were told by federal lawmakers during a visit to Washington.

Virginia-class submarines and the new Columbia class are moving forward, thanks in part to the efforts of the council, said Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Connecticut), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee's Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee and co-chair of the Submarine Caucus.

"The submarine program is alive and well. Your presence here today to make sure that Congress understands that … I think that's a really big part of why that success is actually happening today," Courtney said. "If you look at the momentum, in terms of both full funding for two per year for Virginia, and the eye-watering progress with Columbia."

Courtney, whose district includes the General Dynamics Electric Boat Shipyard in Groton, Connecticut, acknowledged the progress with the fiscal year 2022 defense budget, which is going to show a 6% increase in spending. Courtney said the broad, bipartisan support the Columbia program enjoys is evident because its funding was exempted from the effects of the continuing resolution, which freezes spending at previous-year levels.

Courtney talked about the importance of maintaining a high-tempo submarine production rate, possibly going even higher. He mentioned the aspirational goal of three Virginia-class Block V submarines per year, which his committee approved.

AUKUS Opportunity

In addition to U.S. submarine programs, Courtney said the Australia-U.S.-U.K nuclear submarine program called AUKUS will also provide opportunities for American companies. By law, sharing nuclear technology with other nations must be approved by Congress, something that was done for the United Kingdom in 1958, and will be required for Australia – Courtney said he's confident that will happen.

AUKUS will be a huge program and a boon to Australia's industrial base, he said. But Courtney, who also chairs the Friends of Australia Caucus, said some of that capability and capacity will need to be provided here in the U.S.

"Australia is an incredible ally. But it isn't reasonable to expect that a country of 30 million people can do it all by themselves. The spirit is there, but it's probably a reach that they just can't get to with their own indigenous workforce," he said.

While the technicalities of an agreement with Australia need to be worked out, Courtney said it is his personal opinion that Australian naval officers should already be training at

the Nuclear Power School in Charleston, South Carolina.

“They have good submariners, but they’re obviously familiar with diesel electrics, and they need to start getting people over to South Carolina and connected with the system,” he said. “You can’t just snap your fingers and have nuclear trained submariners.”

Courtney talked about major investments in infrastructure at Electric Boat’s shipyard in Groton and facility in Quonset Point, Rhode Island, as well as Huntington Ingalls Newport News Shipbuilding, where work is being performed on the Virginia and Columbia classes.

Courtney said he takes a keen interest in workforce development nor only because of the necessity of having a trained employment base to support submarine construction, but also because he’s on the education and labor committee. He said the current omnibus spending package will include 30% more funding for registered apprenticeships, which can support defense companies, as well as workforce development money in the defense budget on top of that.

“We’re also slated to update the large federal job training plan called the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act, WIOA. It’s a five-year reauthorization process that’s coming up this year and will support pre-apprenticeship programs,” he said. “Giving young people a pathway to a skill and a job is almost existential for our economy right now.”

Courtney said that some of the new shipyard structures literally change the local skyline. “It’s just unbelievable what’s happening. But the fact is, we need more, in my opinion.”

General Dynamics Electric Boat delivered the nuclear-powered attack submarine Oregon (SSN 793) to the U.S. Navy on Feb. 26. *GENERAL DYNAMICS ELECTRIC BOAT*

Budget Issues

Rep. Elaine Luria (D-Virginia), vice chair of the House Armed Services Committee and the Seapower and Projection Forces and Readiness subcommittees, said bureaucratic and legislative foot-dragging is having an impact on getting the defense budget completed.

Luria represents the Hampton Roads area, which conducts 25% of the shipbuilding and repair in the United States.

“It’s 42% of our local economy,” she said. “So, we’ve got to get this defense bill passed.”

She talked about hearing consistent testimony from Navy

leadership about the threat, particularly from China in the Indo-Pacific region.

“In order to confront that threat, we need to grow our Navy, and the place we maintain that strategic advantage is our submarine fleet,” she said. “But the budget we got wanted to decommission more ships than we proposed to build.”

The Navy proposed decommissioning seven Ticonderoga class cruisers, which Luria said represents the loss of more than 400 vertical launch system cells that can fire Tomahawk land attack missiles.

“In an environment where we are confronting a rising and increasingly aggressive China, it made absolutely no sense,” she said.

Luria reiterated Courtney’s comments on the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine to replace the aging Ohio-class fleet.

“We all understand that the Columbia-class submarine is the cornerstone of our national defense. As we sit today, we see the importance of that capability with the other events that are happening in the world. And we have to keep the Columbia class program on track. It’s absolutely essential.”

Luria also followed up on Courtney’s remarks about the AUKUS nuclear submarine program.

“It’s a huge opportunity. It’s also a huge risk. If you think about it, it’s a huge message to the Chinese. It’s a message to the Chinese that we are collaborating with Australia – that the U.S., Britain and Australia are cooperating, we’re building nuclear submarines, and we’re going to have this presence in the Pacific.”

Luria told the industry representatives they will be part of that effort to develop the plan and deliver support to

Australia to build those submarines. The risk lies in the size of the project, she said.

“As you know, there is not the infrastructure, the training or the industrial base within Australia to just start from scratch and build a nuclear submarine program akin to what either we or the British have,” she said.

Although the U.S. is investing in infrastructure upgrades, including shipyards, Luria said the nation needs to make more investments in its public yards. She cited issues with the Norfolk Naval Shipyard where the drydocks are old and rising sea levels are affecting ship maintenance.

“The infrastructure there needs to really be brought up into the 21st century,” Luria said.

Asked about the Navy’s long-term shipbuilding plans, Luria said the service’s 30-year shipbuilding plan is usually obsolete by year five. The plan needs to be more compelling, she said.

“We need maritime strategy that lays out why we need a Navy, and this is where we need the Navy to be and be deployed,” she said.

China Deterrent

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Alabama), the ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, told the attendees about the importance of the Indo-Pacific region and the need for the nation to build a modern, credible deterrence to counter ongoing Chinese aggression.

“Effective military strength in the Indo-Pacific is essential to the security of our allies, global trade and democracy,” he said. “The strength of our Navy is central to that effort.”

Rogers said China is rapidly growing and modernizing its navy.

“Our fleet of 296 ships has already been eclipsed by the Chinese fleet of 350 ships and submarines. China is no longer far off threat; they are a pacing threat,” he said. “China is rapidly modernizing its navy, and building a fleet to project power far beyond the South China Sea. By the end of this decade, China could equal our numbers of ballistic missile submarines and have a substantial fleet of attack submarines.”

Rogers said the U.S. “must recapitalize our submarine fleet to maintain our strategic advantage, and we should be expanding and modernizing our naval capabilities.”

Unfortunately, he said, the Navy’s shipbuilding budget doesn’t come close to meeting the strategic requirements. He agrees with the assessments that the Navy needs 500 ships, both manned and unmanned vessels.

“This includes increasing our attack submarine fleet from 49 to 66, and building a ballistic missile fleet of at least 12,” he said. “Our attack submarine fleet will be on the front lines in any conflict that we have with China.

“We need to expand our industrial base to support three attack submarines per year,” Rogers said. “Doing that with multi-year construction contracts will save money and deliver the capability we need quicker. We’ve got to also fully fund the Columbia class. Columbia class is going to cost over $110 billion – and that’s a lot of money – but they are a central part of our [nuclear] triad.”

“We need this administration to publicly commit to rapidly expanding our submarine and surface fleet,” Rogers said. “And we need to see that reflected in the shipbuilding plan.”

CNO Gilday Announces Next Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy

Fleet Master Chief James Honea, selected to be the 16th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday announced his selection for the 16th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, during the Navy Flag Officer & Senior Executive Service symposium at the United States Naval Academy

on March 10, CNO’s Public Affairs office said in a release.

Fleet Master Chief James Honea, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command senior enlisted leader, will assume responsibilities from MCPON Russell Smith during a change of office ceremony scheduled for Sept. 8.

“I selected Fleet Master Chief Honea because he has saltwater in his veins, embodies Navy values in every fiber of his being, and is the right leader to inspire and motivate our Chiefs Mess to continue to be the best in the world,” said Gilday. “I know he and I will work together to take care of our Sailors and ensure our Navy is the most formidable across the globe.”

Honea was selected based on career performance, progression and his experience leading Sailors. According to Gilday, he is the most capable person to advocate on behalf of Sailors, the fleet, and their families.

During this time of strategic competition, Honea’s fleet experience, which spans nearly every area of responsibility, will help our people to maintain our competitive advantage.

Honea enlisted in 1987 and rose through the ranks as a Boatswain’s Mate, serving at sea aboard USS Juneau (LPD 10), USS Dubuque (LPD 8), and USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6). His command master chief tours include USS Gridley (DDG 1010), USS New Orleans (LPD 18), Naval Support Activity South Potomac and U.S. Naval Forces South Korea. Most recently he served as fleet master chief of U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Smith assumed duties as the 15th MCPON on August 29, 2018.