

Future USNS Harvey Milk Christened at General Dynamics NASSCO San Diego



Military Sealift Command's newest ship, fleet replenishment oiler USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), slides into the water during the christening ceremony at General Dynamic NASSCO, San Diego. The ship honors Navy veteran and LGBT activist Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay candidates elected to public office as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1978. *U.S. NAVY*

SAN DIEGO – Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), the Military Sealift Command's newest ship, was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, Nov. 7, Navy spokeswoman Sarah Burford said in a release.

The event was attended by the family of the ship's namesake as well as other dignitaries included Carlos Del Toro, secretary

of the Navy; former Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus; Vice Adm. Jeffery Hughes, deputy chief naval operations for Warfighting Development; Rear Adm. Stephen Barnett, commander, Navy Region Southwest; Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, commander, Military Sealift Command; Capt. James White, Milk's civil service master; Todd Gloria, mayor, San Diego; former Rep. Susan Davis; Jen Campbell, San Diego Council president; Anne Kronenberg, activist and Milk's former campaign manager; members of the Harvey Milk Foundation, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The ship honors Navy veteran and LGBT activist Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay candidates elected to public office as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1978. He was assassinated Nov. 10, 1978, 10 months after he was sworn in, by fellow City Supervisor Dan White. Milk was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for his activism. USNS Harvey Milk is the first ship named for an openly gay person.

"The secretary of the Navy needed to be here today, not just to amend the wrongs of the past, but to give inspiration to all of our LGBTQ community leaders who served in the Navy, in uniform today and in the civilian workforce as well too, and to tell them that we're committed to them in the future," Del Toro said, noting that Milk resigned his commission and was discharged from the Navy for being gay. "For far too long, sailors like Lt. j.g. Milk were forced into the shadows or, worse yet, forced out of our beloved Navy. That injustice is part of our Navy history, but so is the perseverance of all who continue to serve in the face of injustice."

"My uncle never dreamed of having a ship, or a street, or a park, or a school named after him," said Stuart Milk, Harvey's nephew and the keynote speaker at the ceremony. "What we celebrate today is that the Navy honors the difference between tolerance and acceptance."

The 746-foot Milk is the second ship in the new John Lewis-class previously known as the TAO(X). This class of oilers has the ability to carry 162,000 barrels of diesel ship fuel, aviation fuel and dry stores cargo. The upgraded oiler is built with double hulls to protect against oil spills and strengthened cargo and ballast tanks, and will be equipped with a basic self-defense capability, including crew served weapons, degaussing, and Nixie Torpedo decoys, and has space, weight, and power reservations for close in weapon systems such as SeaRAMs and an antitorpedo torpedo defense system. The Lewis-class of oilers will replace the current Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oilers and they age out of the MSC fleet.

“A Navy veteran and tireless advocate for equality and universal rights, having Harvey Milk as the namesake for this ship as she adds to our nation’s strategic advantage in agile logistics is absolutely awesome,” said Wettlaufer. “With enhanced capabilities in storage and delivery of fuel and cargo, Harvey Milk will support our Navy in the away game as we keep our country safe far from home and protect the sea lines of communication. Important to our economic vitality and assuring allies and partners, this ship will help promote freedom of access to international seas and the rules based international order that has sustained the peace over the last 70 years.”

Speaking before breaking a bottle of champagne across the ship’s hull, the ship’s sponsor, Paula Neira, clinical program director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Transgender Health and a Navy veteran, said, “When Harvey Milk sails, she’ll send a message both domestically and around the globe to everybody that believes in justice and freedom and liberty, that there is a place for you in this family.”

Following the traditional champagne christening, Milk slid

into the water with its horn blowing, streamers flying and music from the Navy Band Southwest playing.

Five more Lewis-class oilers are on order for the Navy. In July 2016, then-Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said he would name the Lewis-class oilers after prominent civil rights activists and leaders including Earl Warren, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone and Robert F. Kennedy.

Navy to Christen Future USNS Harvey Milk



A photo illustration announcing that Military Sealift Command fleet oiler, T-AO 206, will be named USNS Harvey Milk. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will christen the John Lewis-class replenishment oiler, the future USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), during a 9 a.m. PDT ceremony Saturday, Nov. 6, in San Diego, California, the Defense Department said Nov. 5.

Stuart Milk, cofounder of the Harvey Milk Foundation and Milk's nephew, will deliver the principal ceremonial address. Remarks will also be provided by the Carlos Del Toro, secretary of the Navy; Vice Adm. Jeffrey Hughes, deputy chief

of naval operations for Warfighting Development; and Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, commander, Military Sealift Command. The ship's sponsors are U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, and Paula Neira, Navy veteran and clinical program director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Transgender Health. Neira will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow in a time-honored Navy tradition.

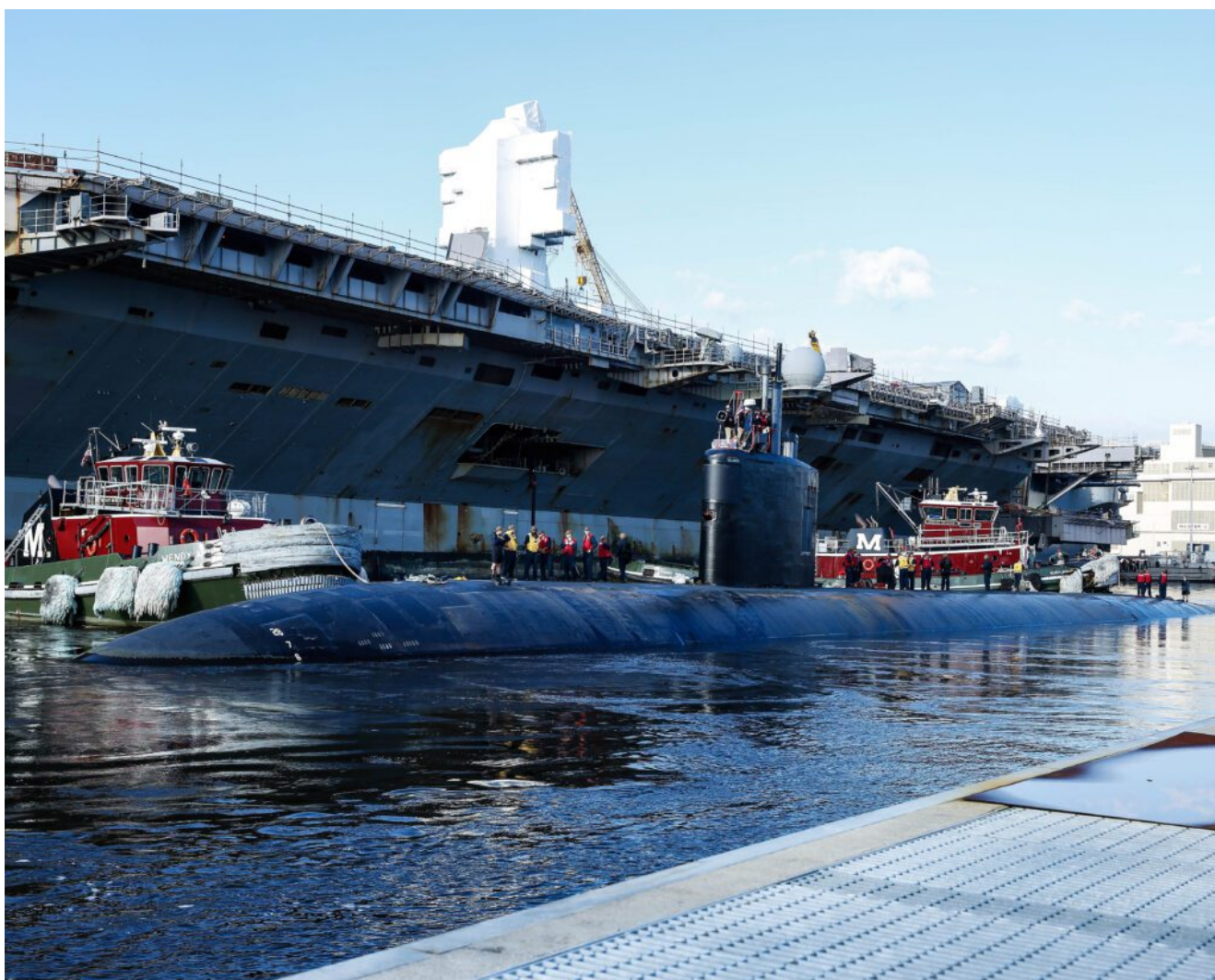
"Tomorrow we christen the future USNS Harvey Milk," said Del Toro. "Leaders like Harvey Milk taught us that diversity of backgrounds and experiences help contribute to the strength and resolve of our nation. There is no doubt that the future Sailors aboard this ship will be inspired by Milk's life and legacy."

The Navy's Military Sealift Command will operate the future USNS Harvey Milk, the second ship in its class. The ship is named in honor of the late politician and civil and human rights activist, who served in the Navy during the Korean War as a diving officer. After his naval career, Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977, becoming the first openly gay elected official in California. Milk was assassinated on Nov. 27, 1978.

The John Lewis-class ships are based on commercial design standards and will recapitalize the current T-AO 187-class fleet replenishment oilers to provide underway fuel replenishment to Navy ships at sea. Fleet replenishment oilers are part of the Navy's Combat Logistics Force.

In June 2016, the Navy awarded a \$3.2 billion contract to General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego to design and construct the first six ships of the Future Fleet Replenishment Ship, the John Lewis-class (T-AO 205), with construction commencing in September 2018. The Navy plans to procure 20 ships of the new class.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard Returns USS Pasadena to the Fleet



USS Pasadena (SSN 752) returned to the fleet Oct. 31 following successful completion of its Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY). *NNSY / Tony Anderson*

NORFOLK NAVAL SHIPYARD, Portsmouth, Va. – USS Pasadena (SSN 752) returned to the fleet Oct. 31 following successful completion of its Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability (DSRA) at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY), said Michael

Brayshaw, NNSY deputy public affairs officer for Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

The Los Angeles-class attack submarine spent just over a year at NNSY to replace, repair and overhaul components throughout the boat, as the shipyard's first DSRA in a decade.

Pasadena served as NNSY's pilot project leveraging the Naval Sustainment System–Shipyards (NSS-SY) program. NSS-SY is underway at all four public shipyards, leveraging industry and government best practices on shipyard processes to drive quick and visible improvements in ship maintenance. During the overhaul, Navy leaders such as then-Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas Harker visited NNSY and met with the Pasadena team to pledge their support and discuss the drive to “get real, get better,” encouraging shipyarders to candidly discuss any constraints so they can be resolved.

NSS-SY initiatives included establishing an Operations Control Center to drive project team communications and resolve barriers in work execution, and “crew boards” to track jobs supporting the boat's overhaul. Deputy Project Superintendent Mike Harrell was brought onto the project for standing up the center and was instrumental in breaking down barriers to ensure non-stop execution of the critical chain of work, driving through issues and constraints to completion. While Pasadena did not meet its original completion date, these improvements helped deliver the boat back to the Fleet and are being implemented on other NNSY overhauls, to include USS Toledo (SSN 769) and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).

“Following a tremendous amount of effort and teaming on a very challenging availability, Pasadena has returned to the fleet to meet its significant operational commitment for our Navy and nation,” said Shipyard Commander Capt. Dianna Wolfson. “The Pasadena project team met our Navy leadership challenge to ‘get real, get better’ in several significant ways, and their efforts will pay off as we leverage their

learning across America's shipyard and our NAVSEA enterprise."

Project Superintendent Frank Williams said the project team stayed focused throughout all phases of the availability on knowledge sharing and maintaining schedule. Beyond NSS-SY improvements, Pasadena's team incorporated lessons learned from Portsmouth Naval Shipyard's USS Newport News (SSN 750) DSRA in planning the availability and executing similar jobs. Additionally, when Pasadena missed its original undocking date in the spring, the project team worked to perform more jobs with the boat on keel blocks to condense the schedule following undocking.

"Sailors and ships are meant to be at sea and not in a repair environment and throughout all phases of the availability, it's been our job to get them back there," said Williams. "The project team has done a great job keeping focused on this throughout the past 13 months. Thanks to all the efforts of our team and Ship's Force, we have now gotten Pasadena back to sea where she belongs."

USS Connecticut Leadership Relieved by Fleet Commander



The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton for deployment, May 27. *U.S. NAVY / Lt. Mack Jamieson*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The leadership of the Seawolf-class attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) has been relieved and replaced by an interim leadership team, the Navy said Nov. 4.

The USS Connecticut grounded an uncharted seamount on the afternoon of Oct. 2 while submerged in the South China Sea, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. There were no life-threatening injuries. The submarine made a transit to the naval base in Apra Harbor, Guam, for an assessment of the damage.

“Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, relieved Cmdr. Cameron Aljilani as commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Patrick Cashin as executive officer, and Master Chief Sonar Technician Cory Rodgers as chief of the boat,” the release said.

Loss of confidence in the leadership team was the reason the

Navy cited in the release.

“Thomas determined sound judgement, prudent decision-making and adherence to required procedures in navigation planning, watch team execution and risk management could have prevented the incident,” the Navy said.

Capt. John Witte will assume duties as interim commanding officer, Cmdr. Joe Sammur will assume duties as interim executive officer and Command Master Chief Paul Walters will assume duties as interim chief of the boat, the Navy said.

The Navy said the Connecticut is undergoing damage assessment in Guam and will be repaired at Bremerton, Washington.

In January 2005, the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS San Francisco (SSN 711) struck a sea mount while submerged southeast of Guam. The submarine’s bow sonar dome was crushed, but the pressure hull was not compromised. Dozens of crewmen were injured, and one later died of injuries. The submarine was repaired and returned to fleet service in 2009 with the bow from the ex-USS Honolulu installed.

The Connecticut, commissioned in 2005, is the second of the three-boat Seawolf class.

**Ingalls Shipbuilding
Successfully Completes
Builder’s Trials for LPD Fort**

Lauderdale



Huntington Ingalls Industries has announced that its Ingalls Shipbuilding division recently completed the first round of sea trials for San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28). *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES PASCAGOULA, Miss.* – Huntington Ingalls Industries’ Ingalls Shipbuilding division recently completed the first round of sea trials for San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), the company said Nov. 2.

“Shipbuilding is about teamwork. Our shipbuilders work as a team with our Navy partners to make these ships ready to join the fleet,” said Steve Sloan, Ingalls’ LPD program manager. “The success we achieved this week will propel us into a strong finish as we prepare for acceptance trials later this year. We are proud of the work our shipbuilders have accomplished so far and look forward to finishing strong.”

LPD 28 is named Fort Lauderdale to honor the Florida city’s

historic ties to the U.S. Navy, which date back to the 1830s and include an important naval training center during World War II.

Ingalls has delivered 11 San Antonio-class ships to the Navy and has three more under construction including Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29) and Harrisburg (LPD 30). Ingalls was awarded a \$1.5 billion contract for the construction of LPD 31 in 2020.

The San Antonio-class is the latest addition to the Navy's 21st-century amphibious assault force. The 684-foot-long, 105-foot-wide ships are used to embark and land Marines, their equipment and supplies ashore via air cushion or conventional landing craft and amphibious assault vehicles, augmented by helicopters or vertical takeoff and landing aircraft such as the MV-22 Osprey. The ships support a Marine Air Ground Task Force across the spectrum of operations, conducting amphibious and expeditionary missions of sea control and power projection to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions throughout the first half of the 21st century.

SOCOM Commander: Navy SEALs to Focus on Strategic Reconnaissance, Working with Partners



A U.S. Navy SEAL throws an M18 colored smoke grenade during a sweep of a training compound during Sentry Rescue IV, a joint command initiative to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for personnel recovery scenarios, Arkansas, Aug. 26, 2021. *U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD / Tech. Sgt. Brigette Waltermire*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The commander of the nation’s special operations forces said the Navy’s SEALs will have an important role in the future in enabling commanders to understand the enemy’s capabilities and intentions.

The SEALs, along with the special operations forces of the other U.S. military services, have had a super-sized role in the Southwest Asian wars since 9-11, serving at the forefront of U.S. and coalition forces in the low-intensity conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and other locations.

With U.S. focus on deterring a future conflict with China and shifting the focus to high-end operations, the 70-000-strong special operations forces (SOF) also are shifting focus.

Speaking to the Military Reporters and Editors at a symposium

in Arlington, Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, said the SOF are “more integrated than ever before,” including with inter-agency partners.

Clarke said he sees Navy SEALs as ‘working with partners, able to train, and also to conduct another key mission or activity, which is strategic reconnaissance. They can get in places that no one else can get they can be in the littorals – in subsea/subsurface domain – and are critical.”

Clarke said SOF are more than just a direct-action raid force, but the force will still maintain that capability, one which “we have honed to an exquisite degree.”

The commander said the SOF benefits from working closely with the general-purpose forces and that his command will look for every opportunity to leverage high-end training for its forces.

Submarine USS Connecticut Grounded on Uncharted Seamount, 7th Fleet Says



The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for sea trials following a maintenance availability in this 2016 photograph. *U.S. NAVY / Thiep Van Nguyen II*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The nuclear-powered attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) “grounded an uncharted seamount,” 7th Fleet Public Affairs said in a Nov. 1 statement.

The Connecticut’s incident occurred on the afternoon of Oct. 2 while submerged in the South China Sea, while operating in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region. There were no life-threatening injuries. The submarine made a transit to the naval base in Apra Harbor, Guam, for an assessment of the damage.

“The submarine remains in a safe and stable condition,” the Navy said at the time. “USS Connecticut’s nuclear propulsion plant and spaces were not affected and remain fully operational.”

“The command investigation for USS Connecticut (SSN 22) has

been submitted to Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet for review and endorsement,” the Navy said in the Nov. 1 statement. “Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet will determine whether follow-on actions – including accountability – are appropriate.”

In January 2005, the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS San Francisco (SSN 711) struck a sea mount while submerged southeast of Guam. The submarine’s bow sonar dome was crushed, but the pressure hull was not compromised. Dozens of crewmen were injured, and one later died of injuries. The submarine was repaired and returned to fleet service in 2009 with the bow from the ex-USS Honolulu installed.

The Connecticut, commissioned in 2005, is the second boat of the three-boat Seawolf class.

Editor’s note: The original version of this article incorrectly described the Connecticut as having a 100-foot extension section for enhanced payloads. That submarine is the USS Jimmy Carter.

**Adm. Christopher Grady
Nominated for Vice Chairman
of JCS**



Adm. Christopher W. Grady, appointed as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Command. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III announced Nov. 2 the president has nominated Navy Adm. Christopher W. Grady for reappointment to the rank of admiral, and assignment as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Washington, D.C.

If confirmed, Grady, a surface warfare officer currently serving as commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia, would be the first Navy officer to serve as vice chief since Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr. retired in 2015.

As commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Grady is responsible for training, certifying and providing “combat-ready Navy forces to combatant commanders that are capable of conducting prompt, sustained naval, joint and combined operations in support of U.S. national interests,” according to the command’s mission statement. The command also supports U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Element North American Aerospace Defense Command, and U.S. Strategic Command.

Below are excerpts from Grady’s official biography:

Adm. Christopher W. Grady is a native of Newport, Rhode Island. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned an ensign through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program. Grady is a distinguished graduate of Georgetown University where he earned a Master of Arts in National Security Studies while concurrently participating as a fellow in Foreign Service at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is also a distinguished graduate of the National War College earning a Master of Science in National Security Affairs.

He assumed command of U.S. Fleet Forces Command/U.S. Naval Forces Northern Command on May 4, 2018, and assumed duties of commander, U.S. Naval Forces Strategic Command and U.S. Strategic Command Joint Force Maritime Component Commander on Feb. 1, 2019.

In his most recent assignment, he was the commander, U.S. 6th Fleet and the commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, while simultaneously serving as the deputy commander,

U.S. Naval Forces Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Africa.

At sea, Grady's initial tour was aboard USS Moosbrugger (DD 980) as combat information center officer and antisubmarine warfare officer. As a department head, he served as weapons control officer and combat systems officer in USS Princeton (CG 59). He was commanding officer of Mine Countermeasures Rotational Crew Echo in USS Chief (MCM 14) and deployed to the Arabian Gulf in command of USS Ardent (MCM 12). Grady then commanded USS Cole (DDG 67), deploying as part of NATO's Standing Naval Forces Mediterranean. As commander, Destroyer Squadron 22, he deployed to the Arabian Gulf as sea combat commander for the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Ashore, Grady first served on the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then as naval aide to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). He also served on the staff of the CNO as the assistant branch head, Europe and Eurasia Politico-Military Affairs Branch (OPNAV N524). He then served as executive assistant to the Navy's Chief of Legislative Affairs. Next, he served as the deputy executive secretary of the National Security Council in the White House. He then went on to serve as the executive assistant to the CNO.

Additional flag assignments include director of the Maritime Operations Center (N2/3/5/7), Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Commander, Carrier Strike Group One/Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group, where he deployed for nearly 10 months to the Western Pacific and the Arabian Gulf conducting combat operations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve; and Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic.

Fluor Receives \$1.16 Billion Contract Extension for Navy Nuclear Propulsion Work



Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) participates in a strait transit exercise with Carrier Strike Group 9 in this 2007 photo. Fluor Marine Propulsion has received a DoN contract extension for naval nuclear propulsion work. *U.S. NAVY*

IRVING, Texas – Fluor Marine Propulsion LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fluor, has received a Department of the Navy contract extension fiscal year 2022 for its part of its naval reactors work in a joint program overseen by the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration and the Department of the Navy, the company said Nov. 1.

The contract includes naval nuclear propulsion work at the Navy Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) sites in New York, Pennsylvania and Idaho. The one-year, cost-plus-fixed-fee option is valued

at \$1.16 billion.

Fluor won the initial base Navy contract in a joint Department of Energy and Department of Navy competition in July 2018. The two contracts have an original potential value of \$30 billion over 10 years if all options are exercised.

For more than 70 years, NNL has developed advanced naval nuclear propulsion technology, provided technical support, and trained world-class nuclear operators to ensure the safe and reliable operation of the Navy's submarine and aircraft carrier fleets. The NNL is solely dedicated to the naval nuclear propulsion program and is comprised of nearly 8,000 engineers, scientists, technicians and support personnel.

USS Billings Returns Home After U.S. 4th Fleet Deployment



The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) transits the Caribbean Sea, July 10, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Austin G. Collins*

MAYPORT, Fla. – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) returned to Mayport, Florida, Oct. 30, following its successful first deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, said U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs.

Billings (Gold crew), along with the “Snowmen” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28, Detachment 5, deployed June 30, to conduct U.S. Southern Command and Joint Interagency Task Force South’s counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean Sea.

During their deployment, Billings, with its embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), assisted in disrupting an estimated 1,597 kilograms of cocaine worth over an estimated street value of over \$111.8 million and removed 13 suspected drug traffickers from the narcotics trade.

When a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti Aug. 14, 2021, Billings joined in humanitarian assistance and disaster

relief (HADR) efforts as part of the Joint Force Maritime Component Command. Billings provided support as an afloat refueling base for Joint Task Force-Haiti aircraft and utilized its MH-60S Sea Hawk from HSC-28 to move personnel and transport life-saving aid to remote areas in need.

“I am incredibly proud of the Sailors on Billings for everything they accomplished this deployment,” said Cmdr. Brett Seeley, commanding officer aboard Billings. “The incredible work ethic, professionalism, and resiliency of this team was crucial in conducting real world operations. Taking narcotics off the streets, easing suffering of the people of Haiti through HADR, and building partnerships in this part of the world has had tangible impacts and sets the stage for those who sail after us. I could not have asked for a better maiden deployment for our mighty warship and the Thundercat crew.”

Billings conducted three bilateral maritime exercises with Jamaica and the Dominican Republic to strengthen partnerships and build interoperability between forces.

During a port visit to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, the ship hosted a reception onboard, welcoming Dominican Republic President Luis Rodolfo Abinader, Vice President Raquel Peña and Chargé d’Affaires of U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo Robert W. Thomas.

Upon arriving in U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations, Billings also participated in a surface training exercise with USS Sioux City (LCS 11) and USS Wichita (LCS 13), marking the first time three Freedom-variant LCS ships have been deployed and operating together at the same time.

Throughout the deployment, Billings partnered with other U.S. Navy warships, as well as numerous U.S. agencies from the departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security, in the effort to combat transnational organized crime.