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 bae 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 bae 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.

Navy Hypersonic Rocket Motor Moves Closer to Flight Testing

The U.S. Navy, in collaboration with the U.S. Army, conducts a static fire test of the first stage of the newly developed 34.5” common hypersonic missile that will be fielded by both services. *U.S. NAVY / NORTHROP GRUMMAN*

WASHINGTON – The Navy Strategic Systems Programs successfully conducted a second test of the First Stage Solid Rocket Motor (SRM) Oct. 28 in Promontory, Utah, as part of the development of the Navy’s Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS) offensive hypersonic strike capability and the Army’s Long Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW), the Navy’s Office of the Navy Chief of Information said Oct. 29. The offensive weapon systems will enable precise and timely strike capability against deep inland targets in contested environments.

”Today’s successful test brings us one step closer to the design validation of our new hypersonic missile that will be fielded by both the Navy and the Army,” said Vice Adm. Johnny R. Wolfe Jr. director, Navy’s Strategic Systems Programs, which is the lead designer for the common hypersonic missile. ”We are on schedule for the upcoming flight test of the full common hypersonic missile. Our partners across government, industry, and academia are continuing the excellent work that is essential to providing a hypersonic capability to our warfighters as quickly as possible.”

This SRM test is part of a series of tests validating the newly developed common hypersonic missile. This live fire test follows previous tests of the First and Second Stages on May

27 and August 25, 2021. This static fire test marked the first time the First Stage SRM included a thrust vector control system. The thrust vector control system is a key component of the missile booster that allows the rocket motors to be maneuverable in flight.

U.S. peer competitors are weaponizing and fielding hypersonic capabilities, creating warfighting asymmetry that must be addressed. These tests are vital in developing a Navy-designed common hypersonic missile that the Navy and Army will field. The common hypersonic missile will consist of the first stage SRM as part of a new missile booster combined with the Common Hypersonic Glide Body (CHGB).

The Navy and Army are on track to test the full common hypersonic missile that will be a catalyst for fielding the CPS and LRHW weapon systems. The services are working closely with government national laboratories and industry to continue developing and producing the common missile.

“This test continues to build momentum to deliver hypersonics capability for our warfighters in support of the National Defense Strategy,” said Lt. Gen. L. Neil Thurgood, director of Hypersonics, Directed Energy, Space and Rapid Acquisition. “Fielding hypersonic weapons is one of the highest priority modernization areas the Department of Defense is pursuing to ensure our continued battlefield dominance, and the joint team did a tremendous job executing this test and keeping us on schedule.”

Information gathered from ongoing tests will further inform the services offensive hypersonic technology development. Hypersonic weapons are capable of flying at speeds greater than five times the speed of sound (Mach 5), are highly maneuverable and operate at varying altitudes. The common hypersonic missile design for sea and land-based applications provides economies of scale for future production and relies upon a growing U.S. hypersonics industrial base.

Japan, U.S. form Surface Action Group in South China Sea

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Murasame-class destroyer JS Yudachi (DD 103), left, and Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Jackson (LCS 6) sail together in the South China Sea. *JMSDF*

SOUTH CHINA SEA – Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) Murasame-class destroyer JS Yudachi (DD 103) and Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Jackson (LCS 6) operated bilaterally in the South China Sea, said Lt. Cmdr. Lauren Chatmas, U.S. Navy, Destroyer Squadron Seven Public Affairs.

Joining to form a Surface Action Group (SAG) while transiting, the ships practiced a range of surface warfare tactics to include flight operations, communications drills and coordinated tactical maneuvering, all designed to enhance interoperability and enabling the ships to practice bilateral tactics in close proximity to one another.

“Meeting our JMSDF allies in the South China Sea allowed both of our teams to build readiness as we sail in the Indo-Pacific,” said Cmdr. Michael Root, Jackson Gold Crew commanding officer. “The complex maneuvering and operations we accomplished without meeting face-to-face reflects the strong friendship and maritime professionalism that our nations and navies share.”

Coming together with partners and allies at sea allows the

U.S. Navy to operate closely with other navies and in ways shore exercises do not allow. It further provides the crews with real-life situations to practice their everyday watchstanding and communication skills with foreign vessels.

“On our way to the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters to engage counter piracy mission, we met with USS Jackson, and conducted various tactical training,” said Cmdr. Wakushima Hidetaka, JMSDF JS Yudachi commanding officer. “Despite COVID-19, Japan and U.S. naval forces are working closely in any sea area, making full use of the characteristics of the naval force.”

Attached to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 7, Jackson is on a rotational deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of security and stability in the region, and to work alongside allied and partner navies to provide maritime security and stability, key pillars of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As the U.S. Navy’s forward-deployed destroyer squadron in Southeast Asia, DESRON 7 serves as the primary tactical and operational commander of littoral combat ships rotationally deployed to Singapore, functions as Expeditionary Strike Group 7’s Sea Combat Commander, and builds partnerships through training exercises and military-to-military engagements.

Under commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with 35 maritime nations in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Navy Selects BAE's 57mm Mk110 Gun for Constellation-Class Frigates

The Mk 110 57mm Gun Weapons System (GWS) is fired as part of a regular operational exercise aboard Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Charleston (LCS 18), July 11. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Adam Butler*

BAE Systems has received a $26 million contract to equip the U.S. Navy's Constellation class frigates with the fully automatic 57mm Mk 110 naval gun, the company said in an Oct. 28 release.

The contract, awarded earlier this month, includes engineering support and calls for two Mk 110s for the USS Constellation (FFG 62) and USS Congress (FFG 63). The new Constellation class of multi-mission guided-missile frigates is designed to operate in blue water and in the littorals, for an increased forward naval presence.

The Mk110 gun system, known internationally as the Bofors 57 Mk 3, is the deck gun of choice for the Constellation class. It is a multi-mission, medium-caliber shipboard weapon, effective against air, surface, or ground threats without requiring multiple round types. The system is capable of firing up to 220 rounds per minute at an effective range of more than nine nautical miles using BAE Systems' six-mode programmable, pre-fragmented, and proximity-fused (3P) ammunition.

"The selection of the Mk 110 for the U.S. Navy's Constellation class frigates signifies confidence in the gun system and its ability to meet current and future needs in shipboard defense," said Brent Butcher, vice president of the weapon systems product line at BAE Systems "The Mk110 gun system

provides this next-generation frigate with the continued performance that our surface fleet has come to expect from its intermediate caliber guns.”

This contract also includes providing a Mk110 system to the U.S. Coast Guard’s third Argus Class Offshore Patrol Cutter, USCGC Ingham. Deliveries are expected to begin in 2023 under the contract with Naval Sea Systems Command Integrated Warfare Systems 3C (NAVSEA IWS).

The 57mm Mk 110 is currently in service on the Navy’s Littoral Combat Ship and the U.S. Coast Guard’s National Security Cutter. To date, BAE Systems is providing 39 Mk110 guns to the Navy and 15 to the Coast Guard. Worldwide, 103 Mk110/57 Mk 3 naval gun systems are under contract with nine nations.