Navy Secretary Names Two Littoral Combat Ships

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer has announced the names of two future littoral combat ships (LCSs), the secretary's public affairs office announced in two Oct. 9 releases. The Freedom-variant LCS 29 will be named USS Beloit and the Independence variant LCS 32 will be named USS Santa Barbara.

The future USS Beloit (LCS 29) is named in honor of Beloit, Wisconsin, and is the first ship to bear the name.

"The city and citizens of Beloit have been a steadfast supporter of the Navy and Marine Corps," Spencer said. "From building engines for Freedom-variant LCSs to manufacturing components for the Ford-class aircraft carriers, the contributions of Beloit citizens make our Navy stronger, more capable and more lethal. I am proud to name the next ship in honor of the city and citizens of Beloit."

USS Beloit will be constructed by Lockheed Martin with Marinette Marine in Marinette, Wisconsin. This ship will be 387 feet long, have a beam length of 57.4 feet and travel at speeds in excess of 40 knots.

The future USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32) is named in honor of Santa Barbara, California, and is the third ship to bear the name.

"I am pleased to name the next Independence variant LCS after the city of Santa Barbara," Spencer said. "This city's innovative workforce and longstanding support of our Navy and Marine Corps team, whether active duty, reserve force, civilian or Veterans, the support from this community strengthens our Navy and nation."

The future USS Santa Barbara will be built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama. This ship will be 421 feet long with a beam length of 103.7 feet and be capable of operating at speeds in excess of 40 knots.

The Navy has accepted delivery of 16 LCSs. Including the recent contract modifications, a total of 32 LCSs have been procured with 10 ships under construction (LCS 15, 17, 19-26).

Navy Awards General Dynamics Contract Increase to Modernize Personnel and Pay System

FAIRFAX, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) a contract ceiling increase from $177 million to $270.2 million for the Personnel Modernization (PERSMOD) contract, which supports the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS), the company said in an Oct. 8 release.

NSIPS is the primary human resource system for the Navy, performing personnel management, pay and entitlement transactions and leave for over $34 billion worth of the Navy's annual personnel budget. The Navy will leverage GDIT's solutions and alliance partnerships to help drive down sustainment costs through the accelerated consolidation, migration and de-customization of legacy systems.

"GDIT's ongoing support of NSIPS allows us to rapidly advance new solutions and help the Navy maintain momentum on this

important initiative," said Senior Vice President Leigh Palmer, head of GDIT's Defense Division. "Through the PERSMOD contract, we have already completed modernization updates and collapsed one legacy HR system, with a second system's retirement in progress. We are excited to leverage these milestones for the Navy and continue to upgrade this program."

Through this increase, GDIT will accelerate the support and transformation of the Navy's integration of Oracle's PeopleSoft Global Payroll product as well as the implementation of the Treasury Direct Disbursing (TDD) process. These updates will improve financial reporting and eliminate errors at the source for the Navy.

This contract increase includes an immediate award of $93.2 million with the potential to award two preapproved six-month increments. If awarded, these increments will extend the ordering period by an additional year and increase the contract ceiling by an additional $95.7 million to approximately $366 million. The indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract was originally awarded to SRA International Inc., a managed affiliate of GDIT, in June 2014. It included a five-year ordering period through June 2019. Up to one year of additional ordering may be permitted through June 2020.

Over the past four years, GDIT has successfully collapsed one legacy human resources system, Reserve Headquarters System, with the retirement of a second system, known as the Inactive Manpower and Personnel Management Information System, currently in progress. At the same time, GDIT supported the successful rollout of the Blended Retirement System, eliminated significant manual processes with addition of Retirements and Separations functionality, and additional automation to Reservists' drill processing with a major update to the Enhanced Drill Management (EDM) system in NSIPS. The EDM also provided self-service functionality allowing the individual sailor to schedule/reschedule drills, which

eliminated the need for paper from the process and significantly reduced human error. The system can now handle the entire gamut of drill scheduling and processing.

Saalex Solutions Awarded U.S. Navy OLSS Contract

CAMARILLO, Calif. – Saalex Solutions Inc. has been awarded the SeaPort Ordnance Logistics Support Services (OLSS) contract by the U.S. Navy, valued at $5.7 million over five years, the company said in an Oct. 4 release.

The work will support the Navy Munitions Command Pacific CONUS West Division (NMCPAC CWD). Saalex will provide technical and support services at Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Seal Beach and NWS Fallbrook for the NMCPAC CWD mission of Fleet Ordnance Support.

Saalex's contract services include administrative and inventory support, truck driving and heavy equipment operations, key custodianship and magazine access for NMCPAC CWD, USB and DET FB. Support specific to the Surface Launched Missiles Division at USB includes support of the Standard Missile, Evolved SeaSparrow Missile, Tomahawk Missile and Vertical Launch systems material coordination, movement, and tracking. Support specific to the Air Launched Missiles Division includes support of the Navy Sidewinder, Maverick, Hellfire and Air Force Maverick material coordination, movement and tracking.

"Saalex is proud to be awarded this contract and once again support the Navy," said Travis Mack, president and CEO of Saalex. "We have a longstanding commitment to serving the Navy

in its efforts to maintain the security of the United States and are honored to expand that relationship even further with this contract.”

L3 OceanServer Successfully Participates in Advanced Naval Technology Exercise

FALL RIVER, Mass. – L3 OceanServer successfully participated in the Advanced Naval Technology Exercise (ANTX), an annual event held at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, Rhode Island, where the future of naval technologies is demonstrated, the company announced in an Oct. 4 release. L3 OceanServer’s presence included 12 Iver unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), the largest UUV showing at ANTX.

Iver vehicles successfully completed seven missions at the event, including three customer-operated missions, showcasing new technology payloads and advanced command and control capabilities. One successful exercise integrated the Marine Magnetics internal magnetometer into an Iver UUV for the collection of magnetometer data over a simulated minefield.

Notably, an Iver4 concept vehicle demonstrated battery power endurance and system efficiency by completing a long ingress/egress mission. The vehicle started its mission with a 15-nautical-mile ingress, was retasked on arrival to survey a simulated minefield and finished with a 3-nautical-mile egress. On mission completion, 57 percent of battery power remained.

“As undersea missions evolve, our dialogue with naval

customers has consistently reiterated the need for a portable vehicle that can complete long-duration missions," said Daryl Slocum, L3 OceanServer's general manager. "The Iver4 offers a broad range of innovative technologies, including various power options, to execute these demanding missions."

L3 OceanServer is part of the Maritime Sensor Systems sector within L3's Communications & Networked Systems business segment. Since its inception in 2003, L3 OceanServer has sold more than 300 autonomous underwater vehicles worldwide, providing highly capable solutions to a broad array of military, commercial and international customers.

Naval Aviation Leaders: Readiness Improving, but 'Still Not Where We Need to Be'

WASHINGTON – The combat readiness of naval aviation is improving, but it is not where it needs to be, the Navy and Marine Corps top aviation leaders said Oct. 5.

Vice Adm. DeWolfe Miller, commander of Naval Air Forces, said his readiness has increased from the one-third availability reported by his predecessor a year ago, "to about 50 percent, on average. We're still not where we need to be."

"I have 260 airplanes [ready] on average. We need 341," Miller told a Center for Strategic and International Studies forum.

Miller noted that when he was director of Air Warfare in the

Pentagon last year, the feeling was they could fix readiness quickly and move on to modernizing the force. When he moved to the fleet as air boss, he said, “we found the hole is a little bit deeper than we thought.”

But, Miller said, “the entire naval air enterprise is being aligned toward this recovery,” and there is “a sense of urgency” throughout that enterprise.

After a lot of analysis by industry and military experts, “It comes down to people and parts,” he said.

Marine Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, the deputy commandant for Aviation, had a similar conclusion on what it will take to fix the Corps’ aviation readiness, which had been lingering around 25 percent in some aircraft types.

Rudder did not give a readiness number, saying the Marines used different metrics, but said the Corps made a decision that they needed to “fully fund the accounts for keeping aircraft up, and we did.” He said they gave money to the supply system to buy the parts required, to the Fleet Readiness Centers and aviation depots that repair aircraft, and to the program managers so they could “help a particular community to get out of the hole.”

He said later that they were taking steps to reverse personnel decisions made when the Marines were reducing end strength and created shortages of experienced maintenance noncommissioned officers on the flight lines.

And, he said, “we put money back into the flight-hour program so we can fly. We’re not where we should be, but we are seeing some increases” and “seeing higher percentage of up aircraft.”

Rudder said Marine pilots had averaged 13.5 hours a month in fiscal 2016, 15.4 hours in fiscal 2017 and “we’re closing out ’18 averaging 17.9. Our readiness is creeping up. It will take time, because some of our aircraft are old. … But we’re moving

in the right direction.”

Asked about complaints about the material condition of the new F-35Bs they are receiving, Rudder acknowledged that he was not satisfied with the quality of some of the planes delivered by Lockheed Martin.

But, he said, “if the taxpayers give the Marine Corps new airplanes, we’re going to use them.”

He noted that the Corps has 33 operational F-35Bs, and 22 are forward deployed in Asia, and in the Central Command where the Marine Lightning IIs reportedly conducted their first combat missions.

Miller said the Navy’s first squadron of carrier-capable F-35Cs was in transition and expected to make its first deployment in fiscal 2021. He said the Navy was preparing for that deployment by using tactics developed by the Top Gun air combat training unit and applying lessons from the Marines’ experience with their F-35s on the amphibious ships to the F-35s.

Both of the aviation leaders said they no longer used old metrics of whether aircraft were “full mission capable” or lower readiness status.

“It’s going to be very simple. We’re going to have an airplane that’s ready to fight, or it’s not,” Miller said, adding that the aircraft being deployed are the best they can be.

And both listed a variety of programs they are using to retain qualified pilots, including a new Navy program that would allow some midgrade aviators to opt out of the normal quest for command positions and remain as “permanent pilots” in training units.

Navy to Christen Guided-Missile Destroyer Frank E. Petersen Jr.

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will christen the newest guided-missile destroyer, the future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) Oct. 6 at Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, the Defense Department said in an Oct. 4 release.

The future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. is the first ship named in honor of Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen Jr., the first African-American Marine Corps aviator and the first African-American Marine Corps officer promoted to brigadier general. When he retired in 1988 after 38 years of service, he was, by date of designation, the senior-ranking aviator in the Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy.

At the ceremony, the principal speaker will be Gen. Alfred Gray, 29th commandant of the Marine Corps. D'Arcy Neller, wife of Gen. Robert Neller, commandant of the Marine Corps, and Dr. Alicia J. Petersen, widow of Frank E. Petersen Jr., will serve as ship's sponsors. In a time-honored Navy tradition, the two sponsors will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

"The future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. will serve for decades as a reminder of Lt. Gen. Petersen's service to our nation and Navy and Marine Corps team," said Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer. "This ceremony honors not only Petersen's service but also the service of our nation's industrial partners, who, for centuries, have helped make our Navy the greatest in the

world.”

The future Frank E. Petersen Jr. will be the 71st Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, and is the fifth of 21 ships currently under contract for the DDG 51 program. The ship will be configured as a Flight IIA destroyer, which enables power projection, forward presence, and escort operations at sea in support of low-intensity conflict/coastal and littoral offshore warfare, as well as open ocean conflict.

Navy Air Warfare Director: C-2 Aircraft Retirement Moved Up to 2024

WASHINGTON – The replacement of the Navy’s C-2A Greyhound carrier on-board delivery (COD) aircraft with the CMV-22B Osprey tiltrotor transport aircraft has been moved up three years because of accelerated procurement of the needed Ospreys, a Navy admiral said.

“The initial plan was to sundown the C-2 in 2027,” Rear Adm. Scott D. Conn, director of Air Warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, testified Sept. 28 before the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee. “With additional adds [CMV-22Bs] we’ve been able to push that left to FY ’24. The CMV-22 will IOC [reach initial operational capability] in the Navy in 2021. That is mapped to our first F-35 deployment for [F135] engine [transport] considerations. Transition will be complete by FY ’24.”

The Navy operates two squadrons of C-2As (for a total of 34 aircraft) which send out detachments of two aircraft with each

carrier deployment.

Conn noted that the C-2A is more than 30 years old and is accordingly more difficult to sustain.

“We have gone from a 32 percent mission-capable rate in 2017 to 40 percent in ’18, so the trend is in the right direction, but it is nowhere near where we want it to be,” he said. “We’re going to continue to make those investments to make sure those aircraft are safe to get airborne until the end of its service life. I have to fully fund that aircraft until I’m completely done with it.”

He said the CMV-22 on a hot tropical day fully loaded with 10,000 pounds of cargo will be able to fly in excess of 1,100 nautical miles, “which meets our requirements for combat operations.”

The first CMV-22B in being built at the Boeing plant in Ridley, Pennsylvania, and will be delivered in 2020.

Conn said the CMV-22 will enjoy a shortened test program because its modifications are slight.

“We have to do a modified operational test,” he said. “The only thing we’re testing are that things that are different on the CMV-22 as compared to the MV-22. That’s going to be a very compressed test.

“We then IOC and get our first three aircraft to deploy in 2021,” he said. “There is no means by which I can accelerate that any further when you look at the [facilities construction], the training that’s required for our Sailors to operate and maintain, and the aircrew that have to fly it and get the hours they need. We’re going as fast as we can go. Any additional aircraft at this point would relieve or provide a shock absorber during the transition as we go from transition to deployment to follow-on detachments until we’re completely divested of our C-2.”

Navy Awards Northrop Grumman New AARGM Contract

LOS ANGELES – The U.S. Navy has awarded Northrop Grumman Corp. a $171 million contract for Lot 7 full-rate production (FRP) of the AGM-88E Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile (AARGM). The contract will deliver advanced capability to U.S. warfighters as well as the Italian Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force to counter the accelerating proliferation of surface-to-air threats.

“The rapid proliferation of today’s threats requires the most advanced solution to detect and defeat surface-to-air-threats and protect our nation and allies,” said Cary Ralston, vice president and general manager, defense electronic systems, Northrop Grumman. “AARGM is an affordable, game-changing solution and we are proud to provide this capability to the warfighter.”

AARGM is a supersonic, air-launched tactical missile system, upgrading legacy AGM-88 HARM systems with capability to perform destruction of enemy air defense missions. AARGM is the most advanced system for pilots, with in-cockpit, real-time electronic order of battle situational awareness against today’s modern surface-to-air threats. It is able to rapidly engage traditional and non-traditional advanced land- and sea-based air-defense threats, as well as striking, time-sensitive targets.

AARGM is a U.S. Navy and Italian Air Force international cooperative major acquisition program with the U.S. Navy as the executive agent. AARGM is currently deployed and supporting operational requirements for the U.S. Navy and U.S.

Marine Corps. The missile is integrated into the weapons systems on the FA-18C/D Hornet, FA-18E/F Super Hornet and EA-18G Growler aircraft.

The Italian Air Force recently completed operational testing of AARGM on its Tornado Electronic Combat and Reconnaissance aircraft. A series of flight tests culminated with direct hits on critical air defense threat targets, confirming the operational effectiveness and suitability of AARGM on the Italian Air Force Tornado and allowing the Italian Air Force to transition AARGM into operational squadrons.

New Navy Unit to Replace Special Projects Patrol Squadron

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has established a new unit to sustain a special mission capability in its maritime patrol community with the coming retirement of the P-3 Orion aircraft.

A Sept. 10 internal directive from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directed the establishment on that date of Fleet Support Unit One at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Florida, one of two sites that serve as home bases for the Navy's P-8A Poseidon maritime patrols aircraft.

According to the directive, Fleet Support Unit One "will configure and operate P-8 aircraft to provide a follow-on special mission capability in place of [special] projects patrol squadron (VPU) P-3 aircraft due to sundown in 2019."

The mission of the unit will be to provide "oversight, training, operations, maintenance, and configuration management for the P-8 quick reaction capability aircraft," according to the directive.

Fleet Support Unit One will have an officer in charge rather than a commanding officer, who will report to commander, Patrol Reconnaissance Wing 11, at Jacksonville.

The Navy's sole VPU squadron, VPU-2, operates several specially configured P-3C Orion aircraft from Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. The squadron is scheduled for deactivation in fiscal 2019 in concert with the phase-out of the P-3C from operational active-duty patrol squadrons.

Navy Nuclear Reactor Chief: Industrial Base Healthy, but Sustainment Requires High Energy

WASHINGTON – The Navy's nuclear propulsion industrial base is meeting the needs of the Navy, but it requires a lot of attention to sustain it to ensure its availability.

"The [nuclear industrial] base is small," Adm. James F. Caldwell, director, Navy Nuclear Propulsion Program, said Oct. 2 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "The base is healthy and capable of supporting our Navy nuclear propulsion needs. It's sustainable through the program of record but it takes a lot of energy to sustain that."

Caldwell noted that the nuclear vendors, particularly the principal vendors, share the culture of the Navy nuclear propulsion program.

“What matters the most to the Navy nuclear propulsion program is a stable 30-year shipbuilding plan and a stable budget,” he said. “These are the things that stimulate our commercial vendors to support us. If they know that they’re going to have the business, they will invest their facilities and stay the course with us.”

Caldwell noted that “in the 1990s, when the force structure went down, it resulted in our major suppliers operating significantly below capacity. We were worried that the demise of the nuclear industrial base would result in the loss of the last critical skills that we needed. Since then we focused on right-sizing the industrial base to sustain the critical skills and facilities that we need, and the optimal words were low-rate production, consolidation and down-sizing as appropriate to sustain the skills that we need.”

He also said that “since the 1970s, the Navy nuclear propulsion program has been the sole source that has been driving [the delivery of] new reactors. We’ve done so through first-tier suppliers who don’t specifically rely on commercial business for their business. We have commissioned some 99 vessels since 1979.

“Today, our industrial base is made up of hundreds of vendors of various sizes, but we’re focused mostly on about 28 principal vendors,” he said. “Many of these have been with us for 40 or 50 years and some going on even 60 years. The portion of Navy work for these vendors ranges from 15 percent to 95 percent, some even a little more; the average is around 60 percent. Many of them are seeking opportunities to grow their business in the commercial sector.”

Caldwell regards the nuclear industrial base in three levels:

reactor plant heavy components; flow components such as valves and pumps; and reactor instrumentation.

He said the Navy is down to one vendor for reactor plant heavy components, for which the Navy's requirements are very stringent.

"In the flow control [components], there's some degree of competition, but the barriers for entry are high," he said. "It does take many years to develop vendors to be able to develop the equipment. Probably the most competition is in reactor instrumentation and control. A lot of our vendors have other government business. In this area we have structured our approach to maintain a level of competition while also preserving some redundancy in the vendor base."