Return of Great Power Competition Demands Shift to 'Culture of Excellence'

ARLINGTON, Va. – The return of great power competition requires the Navy's surface forces to move from "a culture of compliance to a culture of excellence," one that recognizes standards as the baseline, strives to be the best of the best and focuses on owning the fight, the commander of Naval Surface Forces said Jan. 15.

While compliance is important, a culture of excellence is essential to bringing "superior performance and winning," and a "sense of urgency in all we do," Vice Adm. Richard J. Brown, who also is commander of Naval Surface Forces Pacific, told the opening session of the Surface Navy Associations annual symposium.

That sense of urgency is required because the national security and national defense strategies, and the Navy Strategy from Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson, are all maritime strategies "that call for sea control whenever and wherever we need it, requiring our surface navy to deter, but if necessary, fight and win the battle for sea control now in an age of great power competition," Brown said.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the Navy had "unfettered access and control of the sea to go wherever we wanted to go and do whatever we wanted," the admiral said. But now Russia has re-emerged to challenge the Navy in the Atlantic and the eastern Mediterranean and China is "in full challenge mode inside the first island chain" in the Pacific.

Meeting those challenges requires the surface force to not only shift to a culture of excellence, but to "embrace the concept of mission command," that requires combat-ready ships,

with full system redundancy "to go to sea and support sustained combat operations.

It also requires tough, battle-minded crews and bold, confident commanding officers "driven to win and hungry for the challenge of command," he said.

Brown said the surface force also needed "an integrated combat system that doesn't care if it is on a cruiser, a destroyer, a frigate or an amphib, but that provides for rapid capability upgrades and fleet commonality. It also needs advanced long-range, multimission weapons; small, medium and large unmanned surface vessels; a capable frigate and a new large surface combatant, he said.

The surface naval force is making the changes needed, with 2018 focused on raising standards, improving training, tightening up qualifications, re-emphasizing certifications and reasserting the primacy of command, Brown said. In 2019, "we must turn readiness into lethality … through unrelenting pursuit of excellence."

Brown also touted the role of a surface warfare development command that can take risks and develop concept of where the surface navy should go in the future.

Moran Stresses Speed, Urgency in Building Navy of the Future

ARLINGTON, Va. – Speed and a sense of urgency will be the keys to delivering the Navy of the future "for all the young

officers and Sailors” now working their way up through the ranks, Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO) Adm. Bill Moran said during his keynote address at the Surface Navy Association annual symposium Jan. 15.

After asking for the young Sailors and Midshipmen in the audience to stand and be recognized, Moran noted, “I hope you are excited about the future. … There is a lot to look forward to.”

Addressing more senior military and industry leaders, he then emphasized that, “The mission we have is to deliver a Navy that’s bigger and more capable, a Navy focused on innovating and iterating the current force while growing new platforms and capabilities for the future.

“These young men and women deserve a Navy that moves faster, buys and delivers faster, orients and decides faster and, ultimately, puts a weapon on target faster than our adversaries. They deserve a Navy that places an aggressive, determined and unrelenting focus on readiness and warfighting in the here and now.

“Let’s do this together and take full advantage of the time we spend here this week to do something to ensure that we build and maintain a Navy worthy of the young men and women in the audience today,” he said.

Recent history has presented challenges in accomplishing that goal, Moran noted, with sequestration, continuing resolutions and spending caps compounded by nearly 20 years of land- and air-based operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and an expanding mission profile for the fleet worldwide that have stretched resources thin and established a “mindset of scarcity” that has been hard to shake.

“We’ve garnered a whole bunch of experience meeting urgent requirements. Yet I would argue we have very little memory of the strategic long game. We became accustomed to staring a 1-

meter targets instead of preparing for future uncertainties," he said.

"In this new age of rising competition, meeting near-term mission at the expense of long-term investment in people and equipment will no longer be an option. It won't prepare us for the high-end fight, and it won't allow us to grow and maintain the Navy our Sailors and American people deserve."

The larger budgets of the past couple years have allowed the service to address maintenance backlogs and manning shortfalls and improve training, but it has taken time to make wise investments in readiness, he said, time the Navy can ill afford. But the tide does seem to be turning.

"After a year of run-time and lessons learned, and an unrelenting focus on process improvements and a greater sense of urgency, we are now seeing concrete signs of progress. Our leaders are thinking different, planning for the future and owning readiness again," Moran said.

"We've got a long way to go, but we're on the right path," he said. "There is renewed energy in the force about doing things the right way, re-establishing good habits, raising the bar and doing things better than we've done for some time and, ultimately, better than ever. This builds confidence, and confidence is essential in an uncertain world," one where great power competition on the open seas is back in play.

The VNCO stressed that speed remains one of the biggest challenges for service leaders, noting "it will determine how we position ourselves in a world where everything is moving faster than the way our system was built to respond or anticipate."

But, he said, "believing in our Sailors, their ingenuity, their intellect and courage to innovate," can help overcome this challenge. "Our success depends on their imagination. Our reliance on their ability to create, to think critically, to

imagine and unknown future is truly the only certainty that we have for tomorrow.

“I don’t think I’ll ever be satisfied that we are fast enough in any domain. But I am very encouraged by the amount of collaboration and cooperation … in the effort to get at pace.”

Boeing to Deliver Second Batch of Net-Enabled Harpoons to Navy in 2020

ARLINGTON, Va. – Boeing will be delivering a second production run of Block II+ kits for the Navy’s AGM-84 air-launched Harpoon cruise missiles in 2020, a company official said.

Jim Bryan, director of Cruise Missile Systems for Boeing Missile & Weapon Systems, in a Jan. 16 conversation at the Surface Navy Association symposium, said the second batch will follow the 15 missiles delivered in 2018. The quantity to be delivered in 2020 will depend on options selected by the Navy.

The Block II+ version of the Harpoon is a net-enabled weapon that can receive target updates via data link to more refine the missile’s radar acquisition. Bryan said a Block II+ kit runs in the range of a couple hundred thousand dollars, much cheaper than delivering a new missile.

The Block II+ kits are being delivered to Naval Air Systems Command for airborne weapons. Bryan said Boeing stands ready to build kits for the surface-launched and submarine-launched versions of the Harpoon should the Navy determine a requirement.

Last summer, the Navy launched a Harpoon from the submarine USS Olympia during the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise for the first time in almost two decades. Bryan said that the Navy pulled it out of storage and Boeing inspected and recertified the missile for the shot.

He said the company would be interested in a contract to conduct similar re-certifications on other submarine-launched Harpoons and modernize them as well.

Six Harpoon missiles were fired during RIMPAC and all six were successful shots.

Bryan also pointed out the long shelf life and reliability of the existing Harpoon inventory.

He said the Navy's plan to increase the size of its battle force to 355 ships offers opportunities to Boeing to sell more Harpoons. The Harpoon is under tough competition from other cruise missiles with passive seekers, but he pointed out that only an active radar can give a sea-skimming missile a true all-weather capability.

The Harpoon is now fielded by more than 30 nations. The Block II, version which is not net-enabled, is marketed to international customers. Bryan said Boeing has the largest order backlog in the Harpoon program's history and will be meeting demand by expanding its manufacturing facilities.

Program Manager: Zumwalt Class Will Influence Future

Surface Combatant Designs

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Zumwalt DDG 1000-class destroyers are still early in their evolution, with questions remaining on how they will be armed, what size crew will be needed and how the novel "tumblehome" hull performs in heavy sea and wind conditions, but they are expected to influence the design of future surface combatants, the program manager said Jan. 16.

"The Navy considers this ship to be a game changer in the Pacific," Capt. Kevin Smith told reporters during a Naval Sea Systems Command briefing at the annual Surface Navy Association symposium.

Years later than expected, one of the massive warships – bigger than World War II heavy cruisers – has been commissioned but is more than a year from operational status, the second has yet to start the second phase of equipping, and the third and final ship is still under construction at the Bath Iron Works shipyard in Maine.

Initially intended as a land-attack warship providing long-range precision fire support for Marines ashore, the Zumwalts now are designated as surface strike platforms, with some anti-submarine capabilities. The status of the two 155 mm advanced guns systems (AGS) installed for the land-attack mission is in doubt after the long-range munitions developed for them proved to be too expensive.

Smith noted the separate testing of other munitions, including hypersonic guided projectiles fired last year from the standard 5-inch naval guns, that could be used with the AGS. But tests on Zumwalt are planned with Standard Missile-6 missiles and Smith said the program also is looking at the naval-strike Tomahawk missile.

USS Zumwalt is in San Diego preparing for activation of its combat systems, which were installed there as the second phase

of the construction and equipping process. The basic construction, called hull, mechanical, electrical, was completed at Bath before the ship transitioned to San Diego. Activation and testing of the Mk57 combat system, the SPY-3 X-band radar and associated systems must be conducted before Zumwalt can start the comprehensive operational testing that would qualify it for operational status, not expected until 2020.

Even before that, the ship has been getting underway regularly for testing and crew training, including three at-sea refuelings from a Navy oiler and "doing things with the fleet," Smith said.

During its design stage, the Zumwalt's hull form – which gets narrower at the top rather than at the waterline – was criticized as inherently unstable and dangerous. Smith and Capt. Drew Carlson, the current commanding officer, said the ship has proven to be more stable in turns than ships with conventional hulls in early at-sea trials. But Carlson said it sails differently, sliding through turns and "wants to go straight." It has yet to be tested in extreme sea conditions.

Meanwhile, the second ship, named for Medal of Honor recipient Michael Monsoor, a Navy SEAL killed in Afghanistan, is now in San Diego preparing to start combat system installation. It is scheduled to be commissioned Jan. 26. And the final ship, Lyndon B. Johnson after the former president, is completing construction at Bath.

U.S. 6th Fleet Commander: No

Fixed Boundaries Between 6th, 2nd Fleets

ARLINGTON, Va. – The commander of the U.S. Navy's fleet in Europe and African waters said there will be no hard distinction between the respective areas of responsibility of the U.S. 6th Fleet and the newly established U.S. 2nd Fleet.

2nd Fleet was established in August and is scheduled to reach initial operational capability in mid-year. An earlier iteration of the 2nd Fleet, a fixture of the Cold War, was disestablished in September 2011. It operated primarily in the North Atlantic.

"Our idea is not to make a line in the water, because when you make lines, adversaries exploit them," Vice Adm. Adm. Lisa M. Franchetti, commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, Jan. 16 at the Surface Navy Association symposium. "Our idea is to work together between myself and [2nd Fleet Commander Vice Adm. Andrew L. "Woody"] Lewis to be able to figure out how to flow forces and work together to address whatever challenges come our way.

During the Cold War, 6th Fleet was much larger than its current force and mostly operated in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Over the last five years, it has expanded its operations to include the Baltic Sea and North Atlantic and Arctic Ocean and off West Africa.

Franchetti said that until recently 6th Fleet had a relatively quiet existence, but the resurgence of Russian activity in the region has changed since 2014. Russian naval forces have been increasingly present in the Eastern Mediterranean, often in support of the Syrian forces in that country's civil war, and in the Baltic and North Atlantic, the latter reminiscent of the submarine activity during the Cold War.

"We are rebuilding muscle by dusting off the books [of the

Cold War],” she said.

“The 6h Fleet has been operating at flank speed,” Franchetti said. “Operationally, it’s night and day different in 6th Fleet. The days of lengthy port visits and wine and cheese events have long since disappeared.”

CIAT Trains its First Ship

SAN DIEGO – Over 40 crew members of the guided-missile destroyer USS Rafael Peralta were the first to pilot the updated Advance Warfare Training (AWT) curriculum inside the Navy’s newest combat systems trainer, Combined Integrated Air and Missile Defense/Anti-Submarine Warfare Trainer (CIAT), onboard Naval Base San Diego (NBSD), Jan. 8-11.

The Center for Surface Combat Systems (CSCS) officially opened the CIAT during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in December and is planned to deliver tactical training to all San Diego-based Baseline 9 warships.

“The overall purpose of CIAT is to capitalize on advances in virtual technology to deliver a warfighting laboratory that is realistic, relevant, and just as complex as the threat environment our deployed ships are sailing into,” said Lt. Cmdr. Reisheid Dixon, CSCS Det. San Diego’s officer in charge.

The CIAT facility currently provides Navy watchstanders a state-of-the art training environment to detect and engage the entire spectrum of naval combatants. With an emphasis on realism, it is engineered in every detail to replicate a naval warship’s actual combat suite. The feedback from Rafael Peralta is overwhelmingly positive.

“We are honored and thrilled to be the first warship through CIAT,” said Cmdr. Aaron DeMeyer, commanding officer. “It’s clear that even this first iteration of the CIAT curriculum is far better than any training we could develop on the ship.”

Moving away from pre-packaged training scenarios, the virtualization of the trainer is completely customizable by CSCS instructors. Evaluators can now employ advanced enemy tactics, reduce visibility, degrade weapons systems, overwhelm the radars with clutter returns, and in the end, force every single watchstander in the combat information center to adapt. The first CIAT students were able to experience these advanced training capabilities.

“This is by far the most realistic level of complexity and integration that our ship’s training team has faced,” said Lt. j.g. Anthony Pronchilo, fire control officer.

Chief Operations Specialist Anna Penrod, anti-air warfare coordinator, has been through the AWT curriculum in the past, but not like this.

“The CIAT has so many features,” she explained. “This was our team’s first opportunity to combat a reactive threat or fight through an electronic attack. I know full well the next time we see this challenged battlespace may be on deployment.”

“There is a steep learning curve for every training event in CIAT,” said Lt. Aaron Van Driessche, CSCS Det. San Diego’s course supervisor for AWT. “Many of our students are seeing complex enemy tactics for the first time but it’s critical that they face these combat challenges now. We need to begin training ships for the worst case scenarios because when a ship leaves the pier, its mission could depend on it.”

The CIAT is also equipped with a full debrief room capable of replaying all scenarios. CSCS instructors can break-down, in exact detail, every choice made by a ship’s combat team.

“The debrief room allowed us to articulate the full PBED process – plan, brief, execute and debrief,” said Lt. Wayne Badstuebner, tactical action officer evaluator. “With the ability to relive every scenario in the debrief, the feedback loop was instantaneous, and their team was maturing with every run.”

This multimission and shore-based trainer also executes training at a lower cost compared to training live on shipboard systems.

“CSCS’ CIAT is a game changer,” said Capt. David Fowler, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 23. “It provides the most realistic combat systems training of any system to date. The full potential of CIAT’s capabilities are yet to be experienced.”

Navy Commissions LCS USS Wichita

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT, Fla. – The U.S. Navy commissioned USS Wichita (LCS 13) – the nation’s seventh Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) – at Naval Station Mayport Jan. 12 before a crowd including active-duty and veteran sailors. This milestone places the ship, built by the Lockheed Martin-led team into active service.

“We are confident that LCS 13 will be what the Navy needs, when the fleet needs it, and we are proud to mark this day with her crew as the Navy welcomes its newest combat ship,” said Joe DePietro, vice president, Small Combatants and Ship Systems, Lockheed Martin. “We remain focused on delivering these ships as quickly as possible with increasing capability

and lethality.”

The LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship, designed to support focused mine countermeasures, anti-submarine warfare and surface warfare missions. It is enabled with the COMBATSS-21 Combat Management System, built from the Aegis Common Source Library, which drives commonality among the fleet. The Freedom-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future mission capability from deep water to the littorals.

“Like a proud parent, I am so excited to share with you how awesome this ship really is,” said LCS 13’s Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Nathan Rowan. “People ask me about littoral combat ship. Is it a new cruiser or destroyer? Actually, it’s neither. It’s an entirely new category of warship. The LCS packs quite a hefty punch for such a small package.”

There are seven ships in various stages of production and test at Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Wisconsin, where the Freedom-variant LCS is built. The next Freedom-variant in the class is LCS 15, the future USS Billings, slated for delivery this spring.

“We consider it a privilege to support the men and women who will sail this great ship, protecting the United States and our allies,” said Jan Allman, president and CEO of Fincantieri Marinette Marine. “On behalf of the 2,000 individuals that crafted the LCS 13, we congratulate the U.S. Navy and the outstanding crew of the USS Wichita.”

Navy to Deploy Two Littoral Combat Ships This Year; East Coast LCSs to Deploy in 2020

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will restart overseas deployments of its littoral combat ships (LCSs) this year after a hiatus of more than a year, the Navy's surface warfare boss said. Two LCSs will deploy this year from San Diego, followed by two from the East Coast in fiscal 2020.

"It's happening," Vice Adm. Richard A. Brown, commander, Naval Surface Forces, and Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, told reporters in a Jan. 11 teleconference, noting that from then on "there will always be LCS forward-deployed."

Brown said that the Independence-variant LCSs USS Montgomery and USS Gabrielle Giffords will deploy this year. These deployments will mark the second and third for the Independence variant. He declined to narrow down the deployment windows for operations security reasons.

Brown said the first LCS deployments from the East Coast, departing from Naval Station Mayport, Florida, would be undertaken by the Freedom-variant LCS USS Detroit in 2020, followed by sister ship USS Little Rock.

For all of these deployments, the ships will carry the full Surface Warfare mission package, Brown said.

He said the naval component commanders of the regional combatant commands were asking for the LCSs to deploy.

The gap in LCS deployments after the deployments of USS Freedom, USS Fort Worth and USS Coronado was the result of the Navy taking time out to revamp its operational and crew concepts for the LCS. In September 2016, the Navy announced

several significant changes to the LCS program based on operational experience.

The original 3:2:1 crew concept – three crews, two ships, one deployed – was changed to a Blue/Gold concept similar to that used by the ballistic-missile submarine force, with two crews dedicated to each LCS. The mission package detachments are merging with the LCS crews. The ships are being organized in four-ship divisions specializing in a single warfare specialty, with three deployable ships and the fourth a dedicated training ship that will remain in local waters to train and certify the crews.

The first four LCSs will be dedicated to research, development, test and evaluation and, like the training ships, they will be single-crewed, but could be deployed as fleet assets if needed on a limited basis.

The Navy also decided to base the LCSs according to class, with the Independence variant based in San Diego and the Freedom variant in Mayport. The decision to base the Freedom variant on the East Coast was a matter of pier support. The Freedom class, due to its size, is a better fit for the port loading requirements of Mayport.

Alion Awarded SeaPort Next Generation Contract

WASHINGTON – The Department of Navy has awarded Alion Science and Technology, headquartered in McLean, Virginia, an indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity, multiple-award SeaPort Next Generation contract vehicle, the company said in a Jan. 10 release.

This contract has a five-year base period of performance, with an additional five-year ordering period option. Under this vehicle, Alion will compete for individual task orders for engineering and program management support services.

Engineering services consist of supporting the research and development of new and existing naval platforms and systems. Innovative warfighting capabilities are introduced through the design and complex integration of hardware and software into ships, submarines and aircraft during new construction, maintenance and modernization availabilities. These efforts include the analysis and evaluation of foreign as well as nondevelopmental systems, equipment and technologies.

Program management services consist of the application of acquisition, business, financial, technical and quality-control expertise within large and small Navy programs. These services enable Navy leaders to manage the design, development, production, training, deployment, sustainment and disposal of equipment, systems and platforms.

“Alion has been a trusted partner of the Navy for many years and as a company we are humbled and thrilled to be able to continue this work so vital to our country.” said Vince Stammetti, Alion senior vice president. “In concert with our Navy customers, our singular mission is to ensure that fleet assets are on station and our Sailors, Marines and Airmen are equipped to do the nation’s bidding – simple as that.”

MCPON: Sailors Must Be

‘Qualified, Astute Technicians’

WASHINGTON – The Navy needs to capture the best talents resident in its Sailors to meet the needs of a future fight, the service’s senior enlisted adviser said.

The Navy needs to “find ways to best capture that talent and set it up for success in the fleet,” said Master Chief Petty of the Navy (MCPON) Russell L. Smith, speaking Jan. 10 along with Sgt. Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green at an event sponsored by the U.S. Naval Institute at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Smith pointed out that the Navy needs recruits who are comfortable with high technology.

“The Navy is a STEM service,” he said, referring to science, technology, engineering and math as the skills Sailors need to man the ships, aircraft, weapons, networks and other electronic systems used in the modern Navy. “We have to be qualified, astute technicians.”

Smith said “bringing that [STEM] talent forward is one of our biggest lines of effort.”

He also emphasized that sea-going skills such as damage control and firefighting remain just as important now as ever, noting that Sailors must “first meet the mission, then save their shipmates.”

Smith noted that the Navy is in stiff competition with other military services and the other high-tech sectors of the U.S. economy for tech-savvy young adults. However, Smith said that the Navy’s retention of Sailors is the highest it has ever been, upward of 70 percent, better even than after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Green said the Marine Corps, which recruits 30,000 people each year, continues to achieve its quotas, attributing that to the ethos of the Marine Corps that attracts people looking to be something special.

Green said that while the Marine Corps is adopting new technology, the focus is “maximizing lethality and not compromising the standard.”

He said that the Corps’ focus is on the lethality and readiness of the individual Marine.

“The robot is not kicking in the door, the Marine is,” Green said.

Smith said that child care for Sailors’ families is becoming a conundrum for the Navy. Green seconded that, noting that 49 to 50 percent of today’s Marines are married, a situation much different from decades ago.