Leonardo's Contender for U.S. Navy Training Helicopter Performs First Flight

ROME – Leonardo has successfully completed the initial flight test of the TH-119 instrument flight rules (IFR) training helicopter Dec. 20, the company said in a release.

The TH-119, Leonardo's bid to replace the U.S. Navy's aging fleet of TH-57 Sea Ranger training helicopters, is a variant of the successful AW119, manufactured in the United States with strong local supplier base. By completing this important milestone, the TH-119 remains on track to achieve full FAA IFR certification early this year, making it the only single-engine IFR-certified helicopter in production in decades.

The TH-119 was flown by Leonardo pilot Patrick McKernan at the company's Philadelphia plant where all variants of AW119s are built. The helicopter performed excellently during the flight which included an assessment of general handling and avionics systems. If selected by the U.S. Navy, a fleet of over 125 TH-119s will be built in Philadelphia utilizing the plant's existing AW119 manufacturing and support facility.

"Already made in USA, the TH-119 is an affordable, off-the-shelf teaching helicopter that combines proven performance, flexibility and safety," said Andrew Gappy, Leonardo director of U.S. government sales. "It is built to accomplish every current Navy undergraduate training mission and flight skill maneuver with plenty of room to grow over the venerable TH-57."

A variant of the successful AW119 specifically configured for military training, the TH-119 is the only modern single-engine helicopter certified to operate in actual instrument conditions, resulting in more available training days. The

TH-119 is a full-spectrum training helicopter, meaning that with a single-variant configuration the Navy can accomplish fundamental training flights like sliding landings, hovering and full autorotations (without offloading any of them to simulation) equally as well as advanced training flights including NVG, instruments, navigation, tactics, hoist, external cargo and search and rescue.

The TH-119's dual-display Genesys Aerosystems advanced glass cockpit allows instruction from either pilot seat with full IFR capabilities including flight director and 3-axis full autopilot. Its unique 180-degree adjustable observer seat offers student pilots full view of the cockpit providing a better learning environment even while riding as a passenger. The TH-119 combines exceptional power margins, thanks to its popular and reliable 1,000-shaft-horsepower Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6-B engine, with the durability of a cocoon-type metal airframe and reinforced shock stabilized skids for touchdown maneuver training. To minimize time on the ground and maximize operational flexibility the TH-119 can "hot" pressure refuel.

Future USS Paul Ignatius Successfully Completes Acceptance Trials

PASCOGOULA, Miss – The future USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117) successfully completed acceptance trials on Dec. 20, returning to Huntington Ingalls Industries' (HII's) Pascagoula shipyard after spending two days at sea in the Gulf of Mexico, Naval Sea Systems Command said in a Dec. 21 release.

During acceptance trials, the ship and its crew performed a series of demonstrations for review by the U.S. Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). These demonstrations are used by INSURV to validate the quality of construction and compliance with Navy specifications and requirements prior to delivery of the ship to the U.S. Navy.

"The ship performed very well, which is a testament to the preparation and commitment of the Navy-shipbuilder team," said Capt. Casey Moton, DDG 51 class program manager, Program Executive Office Ships. "The ship also previously performed a successful SM-2 shoot during builder's trials, further demonstrating the readiness of the ship's Aegis weapon system and ship's force. These trials put the ship on a solid path towards delivery to the Navy."

The DDG 51-class ships currently being constructed are Aegis Baseline 9 Integrated Air and Missile Defense destroyers with increased computing power and radar upgrades that improve detection and reaction capabilities against modern air warfare and ballistic missile defense threats. When operational, DDG 117 and its sister ships will serve as integral assets in global maritime security.

The future USS Paul Ignatius is expected to be delivered to the Navy early next year. HII's Pascagoula shipyard is also currently in production on the future destroyers Delbert D. Black (DDG 119), Frank E. Peterson Jr. (DDG 121), Lenah H. Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123) and Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), the first Flight III ship. HII was recently awarded a contract for the design and construction of six additional DDG 51 class Flight III ships.

Navy Orders Five Ospreys from Bell-Boeing

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has ordered five more V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft under a modification to a multiyear contract.

Naval Air Systems Command awarded to Bell Boeing a $367 modification for five Ospreys on Dec. 28, an addition to a $4.2 billion contract for 78 Ospreys awarded on June 28.

Under the new order, Bell Boeing will deliver three CMV-22B carrier-onboard-delivery aircraft for the Navy and two MV-22B assault transport aircraft for the Marine Corps by October 2023.

The Ospreys ordered in June include 39 CMV-22Bs for the Navy, 34 MV-22Bs for the Marine Corps, one CV-22B for the Air Force and four MV-22Bs for the government of Japan.

LRASM Reaches Early Operational Capability Status on U.S. Air Force B-1B

ORLANDO, Fla. – Lockheed Martin has delivered the first Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles (LRASM) to U.S. Air Force operational units, achieving early operational capability (EOC) status ahead of schedule.

After successfully completing the required integration, flight testing and modeling and simulation, warfighters accepted the

first of many tactical production units, meeting key criteria for the EOC declaration milestone.

“This event is the culmination of successful partnerships with the U.S. Air Force, Navy and DARPA,” said David Helsel, LRASM director at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. “This milestone serves as a great example of collaboration to bring critical capabilities to the warfighter at accelerated acquisition timelines.”

LRASM is designed to detect and destroy specific targets within groups of ships by employing advanced technologies that reduce dependence on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, network links and GPS navigation in contested environments. LRASM will play a significant role in ensuring military access to operate in open ocean/blue waters, owing to its enhanced ability to discriminate and conduct tactical engagements from extended ranges.

LRASM is a precision-guided, anti-ship standoff missile based on the successful Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile–Extended Range. It is designed to meet the needs of U.S. Navy and Air Force warfighters in contested environments.

The air-launched variant, integrated onboard the U.S. Air Force’s B-1B, provides an early operational capability meeting the offensive anti-surface warfare Increment I requirement. LRASM is on schedule to achieve EOC on the U.S. Navy’s F/A-18E/F Super Hornet in 2019.

CNO: U.S. 2nd, 3rd Fleets to

Become Expeditionary

ARLINGTON, Va. – Two of the Navy's U.S.-based numbered fleets will become expeditionary, backed up at home by their respective training carrier strike groups (CSGs), the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John Richardson aid. The move is a reflection on the need to increase the agility of naval forces in a return of an era of peer competitors.

The initiative is one of the CNO's goals in an updated version, 2.0, of his document "A Design for Maritime Security.

"Commander, 2nd Fleet (C2F) and Commander, 3rd Fleet (C3F) will be expeditionary: they will have the capability to command and control their forces while deployed forward," the CNO said in the document.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, established in August to operate in the North Atlantic Ocean, is expected to reach full operational capability in 2019.

As a backstop for sustaining training of the fleet's units in their at-home cycles, the fleets' respective carrier strike group staffs in charge of fleet work-ups will be charged with building up deploying forces while the fleet staffs are deployed.

"In order to retain the capability for force generation while C2F and/or C3F are deployed, Carrier Strike Group (CSG)-4 and CSG-15 will develop the capability and capacity to generate forces, reporting directly to Commander, Fleet Forces Command, and Commander, Pacific Fleet, respectively," the document said.

CNO’s Revised ‘Design for Maintaining Maritime Security’ Pushes Columbia SSBN Schedule

ARLINGTON, Va. — The chief of naval operations (CNO) is pushing to accelerate the development of the Navy’s next-generation ballistic-missile submarine (SSBN) so that it is ready to deploy “as quickly as possible.” He also is pushing the more rapid acquisition timeline of new ships, aircraft, weapons, and networks.

In the new “Version 2.0” of his “A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority” strategy document, Adm. John M. Richardson emphasized the Navy’s No. 1 acquisition priority, the Columbia-class SSBN, as necessary to sustain the nation’s nuclear strategic deterrent force.

Richardson stated his goal is to “be ready to deploy USS Columbia (SSBN 826) as quickly as possible — beating the current schedule — in order to preserve our ability to defeat the threat. Refresh and fortify the nuclear command and control system. Develop the nuclear capabilities directed in the Nuclear Posture Review.”

Construction of the first Columbia-class SSGN is scheduled to begin by 2021, with strategic certification expected in 2026, the first patrol in 2031 and complete replacement of the Ohio class by 2039. The tight schedule for the new submarine is dictated by the need for a seamless phase-out of the 14 Ohio-class SSBNs as they reach the end of their 42-year service lives and the nuclear deterrent patrols are assumed by the Columbia class.

With the new era of peer competition in the maritime arena,

Richardson also is calling for rapidly acquiring other key platforms and payloads, as listed in the document.

Ships:

■ Award the Future Frigate contract in 2020 to deliver as soon as possible (ASAP).

■ Award the Large Surface Combatant contract in 2023 to deliver ASAP.

■ Award the Large Unmanned Surface Vehicle contract in 2023 to deliver ASAP.

■ Award the Future Small Auxiliary contract in 2023 to deliver ASAP.

■ Award the Future Large Auxiliary contract in 2023 to deliver ASAP.

Underwater Unmanned Vehicles:

Contract for and field the family of Underwater Unmanned Vehicles (Orca, Snakehead, Razorback, Knifefish) ASAP, and no later than (NLT) 2025.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Aircraft, Weapons:

■ Reach MQ-25 first flight in 2021 and initial operating capability ASAP.

■ Reach MQ-4C Triton initial operating capability in 2021.

■ By the end of 2019, identify requirements across the family of systems to replace the F/A-18E/F and EA-18G by 2030.

■ Develop and field an offensive hypersonic weapon by 2025.

■ Develop and field the family of laser weapons (low-power lasers, high-power lasers, Surface Navy Laser Weapons System) beginning in 2019 and NLT 2025.

Networks:

Improve the performance of our current enterprise networks in 2019. Modernize these networks under the NGEN-R contract.

Rite-Solutions Awarded Navy Combat Systems Engineering Services Contract

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – Rite-Solutions has won a five-year, $20.3 million contract with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWCDIVNPT). The company will provide engineering, technical expertise, and program services including hardware and software engineering, systems engineering, system integration and test, fleet support, and lab support for Submarine Combat Control Systems.

In addition, Rite-Solutions will support the advanced development of new capabilities for these systems.

“For the U.S. submarine force and select allies, we will be studying new concepts and requirements, and supporting the development for these future systems as well upgrades and modifications for current systems in the fleet,” said Ken Haner, senior vice president and director of engineering services at Rite-Solutions.

This award comes on the heels of several other Navy contract and task awards to Rite-Solutions supporting the Navy’s efforts in undersea warfare (USW).

“We are extremely pleased to be able to support NUWCDIVNPT USW Combat Systems Department as they continue to improve our

nation’s undersea warfare capabilities,” said Mike Coffey, executive vice president and general manager at Rite-Solutions. “This award recognizes the value of Rite-Solutions’ unique blend of small business agility and responsiveness, and large business quality and reliability.”

Navy Awards Austal USA Contracts for LCS 36 and 38

MOBILE, Ala. – After delivering three Independence-variant littoral combat ships (LCSs) this year, Austal USA was awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy Dec. 17 to build two additional hulls – bringing the total to four of LCSs awarded to company in 2018. The specific value of each contract is under the congressional cost cap of $584 million per ship.

“To be awarded two more LCS contracts before the end of the year is beyond exciting,” said Austal USA President Craig Perciavalle. “This contract directly reflects the confidence the U.S. Navy has in Austal USA and our supplier base of over 10,000 nationwide and our ability to build highly capable ships at an affordable cost.”

With eight delivered, six under construction, and three awaiting start of construction, these two additional ships represent Austal USA’s 18th and 19th ships in the class.

“The skill, hard work, and dedication of our employees is second to none and strengthens as we continue to play an important role in helping build the Navy’s 355-ship fleet,” said Perciavalle.

As the role of the LCS continues to take shape as a key

component to the Navy's ability to gain sea control through distributed lethality, Austal USA continues to deliver ships on-time and on-budget to support the needs of the fleet. The Independence-variant LCS, along with Austal USA's expeditionary fast transport, are designed, constructed, and well positioned to meet the needs of the fleet today and into the future.

Navy Awards General Dynamics SeaPort NxG Contract

FAIRFAX, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT) announced Dec. 17 it will support the U.S. Navy through a new contract vehicle known as SeaPort NxG. The multiple-award, indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract holds a total value of $5 billion. It includes a five-year base period with one five-year option.

"We are excited to expand our firm relationship with the Navy and deliver cutting-edge technologies and services through this new contract vehicle," said Senior Vice President Leigh Palmer, head of GDIT's Defense Division.

Through this contract, GDIT will compete for individual task orders supporting Naval Sea Systems Command, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, Naval Supply Systems Command, Military Sealift Command, Naval Facilities Command, the Office of Naval Research and the U.S. Marine Corps. GDIT will perform a variety of engineering services and program support as required by the individual task orders.

Virginia-Class Submarine Delaware is Launched

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries has launched the recently christened Virginia-class submarine Delaware (SSN 791) into the water for the first time at the company's Newport News Shipbuilding division.

During a three-day process that began Dec. 12, the 7,800-ton submarine was moved out of a construction facility and into a floating dry dock using a transfer car system. The floating dry dock was submerged, and the submarine was launched into the James River. Once in the water, the boat then was moved to the shipyard's submarine pier for final outfitting, testing and crew certification.

"Successfully launching Delaware into the water the first time is a proud moment for the Virginia-class submarine team and the thousands of dedicated shipbuilders involved in constructing the ship," said Dave Bolcar, Newport News' vice president of submarine construction. "With this significant key event behind us, we look forward to completing construction and sea trials next year so this great warship can join the fleet and defend our nation."

Delaware is the 18th Virginia-class submarine built as part of the teaming agreement with General Dynamics Electric Boat and the ninth to be delivered by Newport News. More than 10,000 shipbuilders from Newport News and Electric Boat have participated in Delaware's construction since the work began in September 2013. The submarine was christened by Jill Biden, the former Second Lady of the United States and the ship's sponsor, during a ceremony in October.

Following testing, Delaware is scheduled to be delivered to the U.S. Navy next year.