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.

ONR Recognizes 2019 Young Investigators

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Office of Naval Research (ONR) recognized 25 awardees of the 2019 Young Investigator Program (YIP) Dec. 17. These recipients will share $16.5 million in funding to conduct naval-relevant scientific research with direct benefits for Sailors and Marines.

“To meet the demand signal from the National Defense Strategy, we must attract the best and brightest minds to work on naval warfighting challenges. The Young Investigator Program does just that, and I’m honored to announce the recipients for 2019,” said Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. David Hahn. “Since 1985, this program has attracted outstanding scientists and engineers from across academia to support our Navy and Marine Corps – and in this era of great power competition, that is more important than ever before.”

The ONR YIP is a highly competitive program in which academic achievements and potential for scientific breakthroughs are major factors in the evaluation process. The winning candidates were selected from more than 260 applicants – all of whom are college and university faculty and obtained a PhD within the past seven years.

Awardees represent 23 academic institutions nationwide, supporting efforts related to aerodynamics, autonomy, energetics, power and energy, machine learning, sensing and sensors, quantum materials and undersea-breathing

technologies. The YIP awards support laboratory equipment, graduate student stipends and scholarships, as well as other expenses critical to ongoing and planned research. Typical grants range between $500,000 to $750,000 over a three-year period.

Established in 1985, the ONR YIP is one of the nation's oldest and most selective basic research early career awards in science and technology. Its purpose is to fund tenure-track academic researchers, or equivalent, whose scientific pursuits show outstanding promise for supporting the Department of Defense, while also promoting their professional development.

Navy Marks Establishment of the First CMV-22B Squadron

SAN DIEGO – The Navy held a ceremony Dec. 14 at Naval Base Coronado to commemorate the establishment of Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30, the Navy's first CMV-22B squadron, commander, Naval Air Forces Public Affairs, said in a release.

VRM-30 was established to begin the Navy's transition from the C-2A Greyhound, which has provided logistics support to aircraft carriers for four decades, to the CMV-22B, which has an increased operational range, greater cargo capacity, faster cargo loading/unloading, increased survivability and enhanced beyond-line-of-sight communications compared to the C-2A.

"Where no instructions existed, no patch existed, no 'here's how we are going to perform our duties everyday' existed, this team will define that. And it's exciting because we can establish right off the bat those best practices," said Vice

Adm. DeWolfe H. Miller III, commander, Naval Air Forces. “This platform is our future and when you look at the nature of the future fight, we need that versatility, that flexibility that’s going to be provided in every subsequent squadron that transitions.”

The first CMV-22B aircraft are scheduled to be delivered to the squadron in fiscal 2020. While VRM-30 awaits the arrival of the CMV-22B, Navy pilots and maintainers will train with the U.S. Marine Corps, which has flown the MV-22 since 2007. As the C-2A squadrons stand down, their pilots and aircrew will transition to the CMV-22B. The final C-2A squadron is scheduled to stand down in 2024.

The CMV-22B is the U.S. Navy version of the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.

Littoral Combat Ship St. Louis Christened and Launched

MARINETTE, Wis. – The Lockheed Martin-led shipbuilding team launched littoral combat ship (LCS) 19, the future USS St. Louis, into the Menominee River at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine Shipyard. Ship sponsor Barbara Broadhurst Taylor, the daughter of a decorated World War II aviator, christened LCS 19 just prior to launch.

“LCS 19 is the second ship we’ve christened and launched this year,” said Joe DePietro, Lockheed Martin vice president and general manager of Small Combatants and Ship Systems. “Our shipbuilding team has truly hit its stride. We completed trials on three ships and delivered two more. Once delivered to the Navy, LCS 19 will be on its way to independently

completing targeted missions around the world. We remain focused on delivering these affordable ships to the fleet as quickly as possible and increasing capability with each hull."

The Freedom-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future missions from deep water to the littorals. LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship, designed to support focused mine countermeasures, anti-submarine warfare and surface warfare missions. LCS 19 is targeted to support the mine countermeasures mission.

Lockheed Martin is in full-rate production and has delivered seven ships to the U.S. Navy. There are seven ships in various stages of production and test at Fincantieri Marinette Marine. This year, the Lockheed Martin-led team began construction on two ships, delivered two ships, completed sea trials for three ships and saw one delivered ship commissioned. LCS 13, the future USS Wichita, is slated for commissioning in Mayport, Florida, on Jan. 12.

"I am thrilled and very honored to be the sponsor of the future USS St. Louis. The combination of my family's military background and the enduring spirit of the great city of St. Louis make this incredibly meaningful," Taylor said. "This is the seventh ship to bear the name St. Louis, and I know that the people of our great city are extremely proud that this distinguished legacy will continue."

"We are proud to be building LCS 19 and her sister ships at the heartland's only naval shipyard," said Jan Allman, Fincantieri Marinette Marine president and CEO. "Today's launch and christening is a testament to the hard work of more than 2,000 workers who pass through the shipyard's gates, put on their hard hats and build American warships."

Comfort Returning to Norfolk After Completing Mission in South and Central America

NORFOLK, Va. – The U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort is scheduled to return to Naval Station Norfolk Dec. 18, after completing a deployment to South and Central America, Military Sealift Command announced in a Dec. 14 release.

Returning to Norfolk signifies the conclusion of Comfort's 11-week medical support mission to the region as part of U.S. Southern Command's Operation Enduring Promise initiative.

Comfort's embarked medical team worked with health and government partners in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Honduras, providing care both aboard the ship and at land-based medical sites, helping to relieve pressure on national medical systems caused partially by an increase in cross-border migrants. The deployment reflected the United States' enduring promise of friendship, partnership and solidarity with the Americas.

The ship's crew included more than 465 U.S. and partner nation military doctors, nurses and corpsmen. In addition, about 90 medical and dental professional volunteers from nongovernmental organizations were aboard to support the medical assistance mission. The mission was supported by a team of civil service mariners who oversaw the ship's operation and navigation. During the mission, Comfort visited Esmeraldas, Ecuador, Paita, Peru, Turbo, Colombia, Riohacha, Colombia, and Trujillo, Honduras.

Health services provided during Comfort's deployment included general surgery, ophthalmologic surgery, dermatology, medical

evaluation and treatment, preventive medicine, dental screenings and treatment, optometry screenings, eyewear distribution, and general public health. Medical capabilities aboard the hospital ship include surgical and post-surgical rooms, a CAT-scan unit, four X-ray machines, a dental suite, an optometry lab, a physical therapy area, two oxygen-producing plants and a 5,000-unit blood bank.

During the port visits, Comfort's medical team treated over 26,000 patients and conducted approximately 600 surgeries to include cataracts, hernias, cleft palates and more. Additionally, Comfort hosted approximately 1,000 distinguished visitors and guests during 53 distinguished visitor and media days to include the president of Honduras and prime minister of Peru.

Comfort's Enduring Promise mission demonstrated U.S commitment to the Americas and is part of a continuum of support provided by U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). SOUTHCOM-sponsored civic assistance and humanitarian missions were conducted in close cooperation with partner nations in the region as well as with U.S. interagency partners at the U.S. Department of State and USAID. Similar missions include Continuing Promise, New Horizons, Beyond the Horizon, medical readiness training exercises and the Medical Civil Action Program.

This mission marked the sixth time the hospital ship has provided medical assistance in the region. Since first deploying to the region on a similar mission more than a decade ago, the hospital ship has visited 18 nations in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. During those missions, military medical professionals worked with host nation and civilian

partners to provide medical treatment to nearly 390,000 people, including more than 6,000 surgeries.