

USS Whidbey Island Decommissioned after Nearly 38 Years of Service



A landing craft air cushion from Assault Craft Unit 2, currently embarked aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), passes the Spanish landing platform dock Castilla (L-52), during a bilateral Spanish Amphibious Landing Exercise, June 21. *U.S. NAVY / Petty Officer 1st Class Rachael L. Leslie*

NORFOLK – Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship namesake, USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41) held a decommissioning ceremony at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia, on July 22 before its inactivation next month, the Navy said in July 25 release.

The ship's decommissioning ceremony was held on the quay wall, alongside the moored USS Whidbey Island. The ceremony was attended by nine of her previous commanding officers and over 50 plankowners. "The last crew of Whidbey Island performed with great dignity and resiliency," said Cmdr. Matt Phillips,

the ship's final commanding officer. "It's been a privilege and an honor to lead this crew in executing her final mission."

Whidbey Island was commissioned Feb. 9, 1985, at Lockheed Shipyard in Seattle. The first ship in a class designed specifically to interface with the landing craft, air cushion, assisted in the operational and developmental testing of the amphibious assault craft from July to September 1985 and again in May and July 1986.

Whidbey Island was the first amphibious ship from the East Coast to deploy to the European Theater with LCACs. In September and October 1989, it participated in Hurricane Hugo disaster relief operations in the Caribbean Sea.

In August 1994, Whidbey Island rescued and transported over 8,100 Cuban migrants from the Straits of Florida during Operation Able Vigil and participated in the restoration of the legitimate government to Haiti during Operation Uphold Democracy.

In June 2006, Whidbey Island deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While in-port Aqaba, Jordan in July of 2006, the ship was recalled through the Suez Canal to support contingency operations due to the crisis in Lebanon. Whidbey Island subsequently participated in the largest non-combatant evacuation conducted by the U.S. Navy since Vietnam. During July and August, the ship evacuated 817 American citizens via LCAC with personnel transport module.

On Feb. 16, 2007, Whidbey Island was awarded the 2006 Battle "E" award.

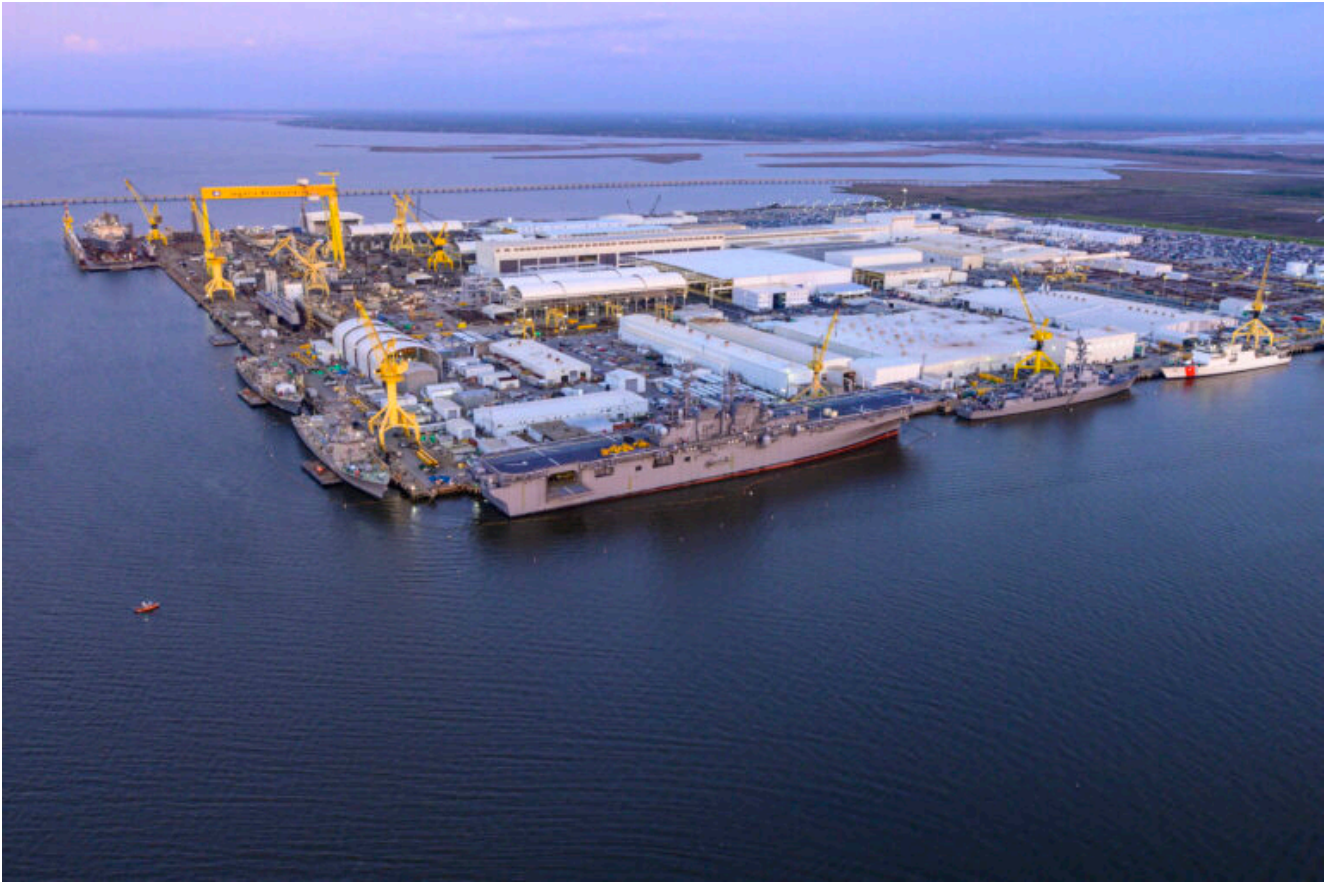
On June 24, 2016, USS Whidbey Island deployed from Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, for what would be its final deployment. It conducted eight Theater Security Port Visits, country visits vital to reassuring host nations of the commitment of the United States to their partnership. On July

21, 2016, USS Whidbey Island transited the Bosphorus Strait during a time of tension following the failed 2016 Turkish coup d'état attempt.

Rear Adm. Tom Williams, commander, Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 2 presided over the ceremony, which included the remaining ship's crew, several of its previous commanding officers, including the ship's first commanding officer, Captain Pat Muldoon and many other special guests in attendance.

"I am humbled to be with you on this bittersweet day as we gather here at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek – Fort Story to commemorate this ship's near 38 years of commissioned service," said Williams.

HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding Awarded DDG(X) Design Engineering Contract



An aerial image of HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding. Ingalls was awarded a design engineering contract from the Navy for the Next-Generation Guided-Missile Destroyer program. *HII* PASCAGOULA, Miss. – HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division has been awarded a cost-plus-incentive-fee contract for engineering and design from the U.S. Navy for the next-generation guided-missile destroyer (DDG(X)) program, the company said July 22.

"We are excited to continue on this path with our Navy and industry partners," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson said. "It provides us a tremendous opportunity to bring best practices and innovation from our experienced engineering team to the design of this important future surface combatant."

Ingalls Shipbuilding is a major contractor and shipbuilding partner in the Arleigh Burke-class (DDG 51) program that has been in production for three decades. Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are multi-mission ships that can provide offensive and defensive capabilities, and can conduct a variety of

operations, from peacetime presence and crisis management to sea control and power projection, all in support of the United States military strategy.

DDG(X) will be the next generation large surface combatant for the U.S. Navy, and is being designed by a Navy-industry collaborative team consisting of the Navy and both large surface combatant shipbuilders.

CNO Travels to RIMPAC, Meets with Exercise Participants



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday meets with Sailors aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) during Rim of the Pacific 2022, July 21. *U.S. NAVY / Chief Mass Communication Specialist Amanda R. Gray*

HONOLULU – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday traveled to Hawaii June 20-23 to visit participants of the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, the CNO's public affairs office said July 23.

Gilday visited several U.S. and partner nation ships, where he spoke with Sailors and observed the ongoing exercise.

"RIMPAC is the premier international maritime exercise and the largest multinational exercise," Gilday said. "The complex warfighting exercise in this unique training environment across all combat domains strengthens our ability to work together, hone our skills and foster trust among nations."

"Building interchangeability among like-minded allies and partners demonstrates our solidarity, RIMPAC truly demonstrates the value of maritime partnership," he said.

While on Oahu, Gilday met with U.S. Indo-Pacific Commander Adm. John Aquilino and U.S. 3rd Fleet and RIMPAC 2022 Commander Vice Adm. Michael Boyle.

Gilday also spent multiple days underway aboard ships participating in the exercise. He visited USS Essex (LHD 2), USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force helicopter destroyer JS Izumo (DDH-183) and the Republic of Korea navy amphibious assault ship ROKS Marado (LPH 6112), to thank Sailors, meet with leadership and observe the exercise first-hand.

Gilday met with Commander of Combined Task Force (CTF) 176, Republic of Korea Rear Adm. Sangmin An, when he was aboard Essex. Additionally, he met with vice commander of Combined Task Force for RIMPAC, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Rear Adm. Toshiyuki Hirata, while aboard the Izumo.

"Complex combined operations drive readiness, build confidence, and enhance interoperability among a diverse and highly capable international team," Gilday said. "We are

joined in our commitment to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

Unmanned systems are being used in different ways from humanitarian assistance to high-end warfighting. This year, more than 30 experiments were planned using multiple unmanned platforms from U.S. and partner nations.

“We need to continue to put ourselves in a position where we can scale and really make unmanned assets on, below and above the sea an important part of the fleet,” said Gilday. “Unmanned systems provide Sailors with cutting edge capability now and into the future. It’s no longer a luxury. It’s a necessity if we want to operate in a distributed manner.”

In its 28th iteration, the biennial event is the world’s largest international maritime exercise, providing a unique training opportunity to foster and sustain cooperative relationships critical to ensuring security on the world’s oceans. Capabilities exercised during RIMPAC range from disaster relief and maritime security operations to sea control and complex warfighting.

This was Gilday’s first time attending RIMPAC as CNO.

Austal USA Delivers the Future USS Santa Barbara to the U.S. Navy



Austal USA delivered the future USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32) to the U.S. Navy on July 21. *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA delivered the future USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32) to the U.S. Navy on July 21, the company said July 22. LCS 32 is the 16th Independence–variant littoral combat ship delivered by the company.

Delivery documents were signed on board the ship and followed the successful completion of acceptance trials during which the ship's major systems and equipment were tested to demonstrate mission readiness. The ship's pre-commissioning unit will now prepare the ship for fleet introduction.

“Delivering the future USS Santa Barbara is a proud moment for Austal USA shipbuilders who worked extensively with Navy teammates and suppliers from across the nation to produce a capability that will serve our country for years to come,” said Rusty Murdaugh, president of Austal USA. “The fact that we’re delivering that capability on time and on schedule demonstrates our commitment to the warfighter and our nation’s defense.”

LCS are built to operate in near-shore environments and support forward presence, maritime security, sea control and deterrence missions. Several Austal USA built Independence-variant LCS have deployed to the western Pacific within the

last year including USS Jackson (LCS 6), USS Tulsa (LCS 16) and USS Charleston (LCS 18).

Austal USA is currently constructing three LCS including the recently launched future USS Augusta (LCS 34). Final assembly is underway on the future USS Kingsville (LCS 36) and modules are under construction for the future USS Pierre (LCS 38).

GD Mission Systems Awarded \$272.9M Contract for US, UK Sub Fire Control Systems



An artist's conception of the Columbia-class submarine. *U.S.*

NAVY

PITTSFIELD, Mass. – General Dynamics Mission Systems was awarded a U.S. Navy contract to support development, production and installation of fire control systems for the Columbia- and Dreadnought-classes of ballistic missile submarines, the company announced July 20.

The contract as awarded has a value of \$272.9 million over the next six years. This contract is the second for General Dynamics Mission Systems and is comprised of development, production and installation support for U.S. and U.K. submarine strategic weapons systems and subsystems. It will also support strategic weapons systems upgrades on currently fielded U.S. and U.K. strategic ballistic missile submarines. Work will primarily be performed in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and is expected to be complete by July 2028.

General Dynamics Mission Systems' Maritime and Strategic Systems line of business will deliver the fire control system for the U.S. Navy's second and third Columbia-class submarine and the third U.K. Dreadnought class submarine as well as installation support and pre-deployment planning for both U.S. and U.K. sites. This contract also includes Columbia and Dreadnought design completion scope and continuation of design activities for the first planned refresh of the Columbia and Dreadnought fire control system.

"The U.S Columbia and U.K. Dreadnought class submarines are of strategic importance to our nation and our allies. General Dynamics has been supporting previous submarine programs for more than 65 years and we are extending our support through the development, production and installation of mission critical systems for this new fleet of submarines," said Carlo Zaffanella, vice president and general manager at General Dynamics Mission Systems.

Navy Awards L3Harris \$380 Million Contract for Cooperative Engagement Capability



L3Harris Technologies will produce and support the Cooperative Engagement Capability for the U.S. Navy under a contract worth up to \$380 million. *U.S. NAVY*

MELBOURNE, Fla. – The U.S. Navy awarded L3Harris Technologies a contract worth up to \$380 million for the production, repair, and sustainment of the Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC) system with an initial award of \$15 million, the company said in a July 19 release.

The CEC system enables high-quality situational awareness and

integrated fire control capability for the battle force. It is designed to enhance the anti-air warfare capability of U.S. Navy ships, U.S. Navy aircraft, U.S. Marine Corps Composite Tracking Network and allied nation units and is a key element of the U.S. Navy's integrated sensors and networked communications solution set.

"L3Harris is the trusted global provider of resilient, all-domain communications networks, and with this CEC agreement, the Navy has affirmed we deliver best-in-class capabilities to employ mission critical data for their most important missions," said Brendan O'Connell, president of Broadband Communication Systems at L3Harris.

"The CEC enables the Navy, Marine Corps and coalition forces to sense, defend and strike earlier than the threat, increasing the survivability of the battle force and the overall speed of communication as they maneuver in a complex, multi-domain battlespace."

Ship to Shore Connector LCACs Get Lift of Opportunity Aboard Future USS Fort Lauderdale



The Navy's newest amphibious transport dock ship is transporting the Navy's newest connectors to their new homeport, highlighting the significant capabilities being delivered to the Navy from the Gulf Coast. *U.S. NAVY / Ronnie Newsome*

WASHINGTON – The Navy's newest amphibious transport dock ship is transporting the Navy's newest connectors to their new homeport, highlighting the significant capabilities being delivered to the Navy from the Gulf Coast.

Ship to Shore Connector, Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 103 and 104, received a lift of opportunity aboard future USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), July 16, Team Ships Public Affairs said July 19.

During LPD 28's transit from Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls Shipbuilding Division in Pascagoula, Mississippi, to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where the ship will soon be commissioned, the newest LPD worked with Assault Craft Unit 4 (ACU 4) as LCAC 103 and 104 entered the well deck. The craft

will remain aboard the ship as it transits to its homeport in Norfolk after commissioning.

“As the future USS Fort Lauderdale readies for commissioning, the L00 [lift of opportunity] provides the opportunity to further demonstrate a capability that will be essential to the future amphibious fleet for years to come,” said Capt. Cedric McNeal, program manager, Amphibious Warfare Program Office, Program Executive Office Ships. “We welcome the opportunity to bring together key Navy and Marine Corps next generation capabilities as we look to strengthen and advance the amphibious maritime mission.”

LCAC 103 and 104, delivered to the Navy by Textron Systems in December 2021 and June 2022 respectively, have been at Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division receiving post-delivery upgrades and participating in test and trials events. Once the craft are in Norfolk, they will proceed to ACU 4 in Little Creek, Virginia, where they will join LCAC 101 and 102 to continue post-delivery test and trials and fleet introduction.

LCACs/SSCs are used primarily to transport vehicles, heavy equipment, and supplies through varied environmental conditions, from amphibious ships to over the beach. Delivery of this craft will significantly enhance the Navy’s and Marine Corps’ capability to execute a broad spectrum of missions well into the 21st century, from humanitarian assistance and disaster response to multidimensional amphibious assault.

CNO, Commander-in-Chief of

the Chilean Navy Discuss Partnership



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday meets with Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Navy Adm. Juan Andrés de la Maza Larrain at the Pentagon for an office call on July 18. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Michael B. Zingaro*

WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday welcomed Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Navy Adm. Juan Andrés de la Maza Larrain at the Pentagon for an office call, July 18, the CNO's public affairs office said in a release.

The two leaders discussed maritime security, cyber defense, unmanned technology and their shared commitment to deepening partnership through future exercises and combined naval presence.

“As we face shared global maritime security challenges, we

must partner with like-minded nations and create opportunities to increase collaboration, enhance interoperability, and build our collective capacity,” said Gilday. “Chile is a longstanding and trusted partner, and the U.S. Navy will continue to work with Chile and other regional maritime forces to deepen our security cooperation and pursue opportunities to promote peace and stability throughout the Americas.”

“I am very pleased to greet today Admiral Gilday, whom I had not had the opportunity to meet in person, due to the pandemic that forced to suspend this important meeting,” said de la Maza.

“Taking advantage of the visit we will make to the frigate Lynch deployed at RIMPAC [Rim of the Pacific Exercise], we have arranged this meeting where I can mention that the various cooperation and exchange activities with the United States Navy, as Admiral Gilday mentions, have been carried out for many years. We have common challenges and we must face them in a combined manner, because they are global problems that require solutions in which all countries participate.”

Gilday added, “My meeting today with Admiral de la Maza was very productive and I look forward to seeing him in Hawaii as we observe the RIMPAC exercise.”

The U.S. Navy and Chilean Navy operate regularly together around the globe. Chile regularly participates in RIMPAC and is represented in this year’s iteration by the Chilean Navy frigate Almirante Lynch (FF 07).

The Chilean Navy also participates annually in the UNITAS multinational maritime exercise in the waters of the Eastern Pacific and South Atlantic, and leads the biennial Teamwork South maritime exercise.

This was the first in-person meeting between the two heads of navy since de la Maza assumed command in 2021.

Navy's F-5 Modernization Completes Engineering Phase; Moves into Production, Deployment



The ARTEMIS program will blend commercial-off-the-shelf solutions and industry partner investments to reduce potential safety risks by adding necessary upgrades to instrumentation increasing safety and capability. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy's Specialized and Proven Aircraft program office (PMA-226) F-5N+/F+ Avionics Reconfiguration and Tactical Enhancement/Modernization for

Inventory Standardization (ARTEMIS) program successfully reached Milestone C decision June 28, effectively moving into production and deployment, the Naval Air systems Command said July 14.

To meet the Navy and Marine Corps requirement to increase fleet adversary training capacity with high-altitude tactical fighters, the PMA-226 Adversary Team is inducting 22 repatriated, former Swiss Air Force F-5E/F aircraft into the ARTEMIS modification program. This program will reconfigure the airframe and incorporate a block upgrade consisting of emerging and existing commercial technology while capitalizing on industry's private investment and lessons learned to upgrade necessary safety and capability features on the aircraft. The program office will reconfigure the airframes and convert the F-5E/F engines to the Navy and Marine Corps standard F-5N/F. Once that is complete, the program will integrate the block upgrade, which consists of a new glass cockpit and avionics suite that uses technology found in more modern aircraft to improve safety and capability.

Subsequent to this upgrade, the 22 aircraft will be in the F-5N+/F+ baseline configuration. The Adversary Team and industry partner Tactical Air Support Inc. (Tactical Air Support) will execute the F-5N+/F+ ARTEMIS program. Tactical Air Support owns and operates F-5AT aircraft currently supporting PMA-226 tactical fighter training and has performed similar modernization and safety upgrades on its own fleet of aircraft. Tactical Air Support assisted in the validation of the block upgrade F-5N+/F+ configuration on two of the prototype Navy F-5Ns completed earlier this year.

Capt. Gregory Sutton, PMA-226 program manager said, "This program will provide a fleet of upgraded, safe and modernized adversary aircraft, providing the realistic and relevant tactical training that our aviators need to win in the fight."

To improve and enhance aircraft safety and mission effectiveness and to meet existing and emerging requirements and obsolescence issues, the ARTEMIS program integrates fully digitized avionics instrumentation and provides increased safety and capability upgrades. These upgrades will also add tactical capabilities designed to improve air-to-air training.

“PMA-226’s Adversary Team drove to a successful milestone decision by challenging norms to tailor the program requirements using a blend of commercial solutions and the lessons learned by our industry partners with a focus on desired outcomes and risk mitigation,” said Boyd Forsythe, PMA-226 F-5 Adversary Team lead.

Given the significant use of commercial-off-the-shelf components with well-defined maintenance and support equipment requirements that are used for the F-5N+/F+ configured aircraft, the product support strategy will be to execute Navy and Marine Corps maintenance procedures at the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) maintenance facility, with fleet support teams within close proximity to the OEM facility to assist. The program’s preventive maintenance will consist of inspections, cleaning and scheduled maintenance tasks.

Xerox Elem Additive and U.S Navy Deploy First Metal 3D Printer at Sea



The amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2), shown here in 2018, now has an ElemX liquid metal printer onboard. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. A. J. Van Fredenberg*

NORWALK, Conn. – Xerox Elem Additive Solutions announced July 18 that an ElemX liquid metal printer was recently installed onboard USS Essex (LHD 2), making it the first metal additive manufacturing machine deployed on a U.S. naval vessel.

The ElemX was placed on the ship earlier this month in Pearl Harbor, with at-sea trials beginning immediately. The installation is the latest step in the U.S. Navy's strategy of using additive manufacturing to increase operational readiness for the fleet. It also builds on the relationship between the U.S. Navy and Xerox Elem Additive that began with the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, receiving the first installation of the ElemX in 2020.

"The military supply chain is among the most complex in the world, and putting the ElemX on USS Essex means Sailors can now bypass that complexity and print parts when and where they need them," said Tali Rosman, GM of Elem Additive. "We are

proud to continue our partnership with the Navy to help them advance their additive manufacturing capabilities and execute their long-term vision.”

The ElemX leverages Xerox’s liquid metal additive manufacturing technology that uses standard aluminum wire. Unlike other metal 3D printing technologies, there are no hazardous metal powders with ElemX and no need for special facility modifications or personal protective equipment to operate the machine. The printer also requires minimal post-processing and therefore provides a faster time-to-part. This ability to produce reliable replacement parts on-demand reduces the dependency on complex global supply chains for deployed forces.

To withstand various sea states and environmental challenges that U.S. naval warships encounter, the ElemX was installed in an industrial shipping container to ruggedize it. Trials have already begun to establish operational guidelines and technical feasibility studies to determine applications and use cases. A team on USS Essex will design and print shipboard items and provide feedback to NPS and Commander, Naval Surface Force Pacific.

The ElemX 3D printer was commercially introduced in February 2021, and since then Elem Additive Solutions has expanded operations, including opening an Additive Manufacturing Center of Excellence in Cary, North Carolina. The ElemX is a safer and simpler metal 3D printer, addressing supply chain resiliency for transportation, aerospace, defense and industrial manufacturing.