Vigor Lays Keel for Army's Next-Generation Landing Craft



An artist's rendering of the U.S. Army's next-generation landing craft, the MSV(L). Rendering courtesy of Vigor

VANCOUVER, Wash. – Representatives from the U.S. Army and federal and local elected officials joined Vigor employees for a keel laying ceremony on Sept. 16, celebrating the first milestone in the construction of the Army's next-generation landing craft, the Maneuver Support Vessel (Light) or MSV(L), according to a release from Vigor.

The nearly billion-dollar contract to build MSV(L) was awarded to Vigor in October 2017. The new design, developed in partnership with BMT, dramatically improves the capabilities of the current LCM-8 and provides the optimal combination of performance, operational flexibility and life-cycle cost while maintaining the reliability and versatility of the Army's current craft.

The MSV(L) prototype is named in honor of Staff Sgt. Elroy F. Wells, an Army watercraft operator killed in action in 1970 in Vietnam.

The event began with a welcome from Vigor CEO Frank Foti. Remarks were delivered by Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Wash.), Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Timothy Goddette, U.S. Army Program Executive Office, Combat Support & Combat Service Support and Col. (P) Jered P. Helwig, the Armys chief of transportation. Helwig also gave the dedication honoring the service of Staff Sgt. Elroy F. Wells.

The ceremonial welds performed by Beutler and Helwig marked not only the start of the MSV(L) program but also the beginning of a new era in shipbuilding at Vigor's recently acquired state-of-the-art all aluminum fabrication facility in

Vancouver. Vigor expects the site to employ up to 400 workers by 2023 building high-performance military craft, workboats and aluminum fast ferries in addition to MSV(L).

Once the Staff Sgt. Elroy F. Wells is completed and testing and refinements have occurred, the schedule calls for four vessels in the low-rate production phase, followed by up to 32 vessels once full production is underway. Vigor's MSV(L) team consists of partners such as BMT, Gladding-Hearn and Northrop Grumman.