

Phase I Complete for Navy's Range Support Aircraft Replacement

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Tactical Airlift Program Office (PMA-207) Commercial Modifications and Range Support (CMARS) Team accepted delivery of its newest commercial-derivative aircraft platform on July 30, Naval Air Systems Command said in a Sept. 6 release.

The Gulfstream G550, with structural modifications, was further modified to house specialized telemetry equipment, unique to the Navy's application. The G550 is slated to serve as the replacement for one of the aging P-3 range support aircraft operated out of Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division in Point Mugu, California. The aircraft's structural modifications allow room for installation of a telemetry system and additional equipment to support future missions.

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Gulfstream executives and PMA-207 leadership, Program Manager Capt. Steven Nassau spoke to the complexity of this acquisition.

"Just getting to this point has been a process," Nassau said. "The team had to coordinate with AIR-5.0 Test and Evaluation leadership, AIR-2.0 Contracts, AIR-5.2 Ranges and AIR-5.1 test squadrons for mission equipment and airframe expertise, as well as AIR-6.0 Logistics for sustainment to keep this acquisition on schedule. Delivering the aircraft under cost and on schedule is a major milestone for such a complicated project."

PMA-207 CMARS Integrated Program Team Lead Chris Mullaney said credit should not only be given to those currently working on this project, but to those who have in the past as well.

“One of the original leads for this project was Jaimie Grubb. She, along with her Range Support Aircraft Team, had impressive foresight and solid planning at the beginning of this endeavor that paved the way for the successes we are seeing here today – delivery of a high-quality product on cost and on schedule,” said Mullaney.

From here, the Phase II Integrator, Raytheon, will receive the G550 aircraft as government-furnished property and will develop, procure and integrate systems that will give the aircraft a multirole capability in telemetry data collection, range safety and surveillance and communications relay. This modern, phased-array telemetry system will have the capability to support major programs in complex, robust and dynamic test environments for many years.

The aircraft is projected to be delivered for initial operating capability by August 2021.

Rising Accident Rates Taking Toll on Navy, Marine Aircraft Availability

RENO, Nev. – The accident rate for the major Class A mishaps in naval aviation is “trending up” and there has been a “major increase” in the more minor Class C accidents, which is aggravating the lack of aircraft availability the Navy and Marine Corps have been struggling to overcome, the Naval Safety Center commander reported.

The naval services are taking a series of steps to reverse the jump in Class C mishaps and aggressively working to develop

better analytical tools to help prevent the major accidents, which result in the loss of aircraft or personnel or multi-million dollars in damage, Rear Adm. Mark Leavitt said Sept. 8.

Also, following a year-plus of multiple studies and corrective actions, naval aviation has made "good progress" in stopping the surprising increase in physiological episodes, or apparent shortage of oxygen in flight. "But it does remain our No. 1 safety concern," Rear Adm. F. R. "Lucky" Luchtman, the head of the recently created Physiological Episode Action Team, said at the same forum during the annual Tailhook Convention of aircraft carrier aviators.

Leavitt said the Class A accidents in naval aviation this year have "exceeded last year's numbers," with 14 mishaps. "The rate is trending up."

The Marines, however, "are doing much better this year, down to five" Class As, compared to 12 last year, he said.

Although some members of Congress have blamed the higher Class A rates to the age of aircraft and poor maintenance due to the budget reductions, Leavitt said the accident investigations are "still finding between 60 to 70 percent causal factors are human errors. We've not seen a spike of material problems."

In the Class C mishaps, "this is not a good news story," Leavitt said, but did not provide numbers for what he called a "major increases."

Although the C mishaps inflict damages costing a comparatively low \$50,000 to \$500,000, they can take an aircraft out of service for months, which is aggravating the problems of too few available planes, he said.

Service studies have attributed the increase in the aviation version of fender benders to violations of established procedures by squadron maintenance personnel, which may

reflect a lack of experience in the midgrade enlisted maintainers because of faster advancement in rank during a drive to keep more Sailors in service, he said.

The studies also indicate a "breakdown in team work," which has led to efforts to get more "khaki leadership out on flight line, the flight deck," Leavitt said, referring to chief petty officers and commissioned officers.

In an effort to reduce the major mishaps, Leavitt said the Safety Center has created a new office focusing on developing analytic tools to provide more data on causes and related factors, which can be shared with squadron commanders to help avoid accidents, he said.

The physiological episode team Luchtman leads is attacking the alarming number of incidents in which pilots in the F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets, EF-18G Growlers and the T-45 and T-6 training aircraft have reported in-flight conditions similar to hypoxia or oxygen shortage.

Luchtman said intensive studies by the Safety Center, NASA and others led to some modifications to the aircraft oxygen supply systems and indications that poorly fitted pilot's equipment cause some of the incidents.

They also are adding systems to the aircraft that can measure the quality of oxygen being provided to the pilots, he said and are seeking even better devices to monitor the oxygen flow. They are working with the Air Force and allies who fly similar aircraft and have had some of the same problems.

Rolls-Royce to Power Boeing MQ-25 UAV for U.S. Navy

INDIANAPOLIS – Rolls-Royce engines have been selected by Boeing to power the U.S. Navy's new MQ-25 Stingray unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), which will provide unmanned, carrier-based air-to-air refueling, Rolls-Royce announced in a Sept. 6 release.

The U.S. Navy has awarded the MQ-25A engineering and manufacturing contract to Boeing to provide four aircraft. The MQ-25 is designed to provide the Navy with a much-needed refueling capability and extend the range of combat aircraft from carriers.

Each MQ-25 aircraft will be powered by a single Rolls-Royce AE 3007N engine, manufactured in Indianapolis. The AE 3007N, the latest variant of the Rolls-Royce AE family of engines, will provide more than 10,000 pounds of thrust and additional electrical power to the aircraft.

“Congratulations to Boeing for being selected to develop this historic aircraft in support of the U.S. Navy,” said Jarrett Jones, Rolls-Royce executive vice president, Customer Business, Government Relations and Sales. “For Rolls-Royce, it will expand our UAV expertise with unmanned aircraft in the U.S. Navy fleet, which includes the Triton and Fire Scout aircraft.”

The proven Rolls-Royce AE family of engines includes turbofan, turboprop and turboshaft variants, and the total AE engine fleet has accumulated more than 74 million engine flight hours. AE engines power aircraft for the US Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, and a variety of military and civilian aircraft in service around the world. Rolls-Royce has delivered nearly 7,000 AE engines from the company's advanced

manufacturing facility in Indianapolis.

The AE 3007H turbofan engine powers the Navy's Triton and the Air Force Global Hawk, as well as commercial and business aviation aircraft. The AE 2100 turboprop powers the Lockheed Martin C-130J and LM-100J, as well as the C-27J and Saab 2000; and the AE 1107C turboshaft powers the Bell-Boeing V-22 Osprey operated by the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force. The MT7, a marinized variant of the AE 1107, will power the Navy's Ship-to-Shore Connector hovercraft.

CNO Richardson: Columbia SSBN Program on Track, Help on Margin Needed

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's top officer said the program schedule to build the Navy's next-generation ballistic-missile submarine (SSBN) is very tight and some more margin in the program would help.

"What I am pushing the team to do is stay on track," said Adm. John M. Richardson, chief of naval operations (CNO), answering a reporter's question while speaking Sept. 5 at the Defense News Conference. "But it is right on track. We need to find some margin in that program, largely in schedule, in particular."

The Columbia-class SSBN is being built to replace the Ohio-class SSBN as the platform for the Navy's contribution to the national nuclear deterrent, the Trident D5 ballistic missile. The Navy plans to build 12 boats to succeed the 14 Ohio SSBNs as they reach the end of their service lives. Critical is the

need for the first Columbia to be ready to deploy for its first ballistic-missile patrol in fiscal 2031.

“In a program of this complexity, it’s just a fact of life that there are going to be things that will surprise us going forward,” Richardson said. “So we need to build in enough margin to accommodate those surprises and also – very important – we make sure that the entire team – the industrial base, the Navy, everybody – understands that a program of this importance, with that little margin, perhaps requires increased oversight so that we’re not making mistakes and eating into a program that has very thin margins already.

The Columbia-class SSBN program is expected to cost \$128 billion for acquisition.

CNO Selects Fleet Master Chief Smith as 15th MCPON

ARLINGTON, Va. – Following a comprehensive review of potential candidates, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John Richardson selected Fleet Master Chief Russell Smith to be the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Aug. 29, the Navy’s Office of Information said in a release of the same date.

“After a thorough and deliberate review process, I am confident that Fleet Master Chief Smith is the right leader to be our Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy,” said Richardson. “I look forward to working with him to advocate for our Sailors and their families selflessly serving around the world.”

As the Navy's 15th MCPON, Smith will serve as the senior-ranking enlisted leader and adviser to the CNO.

Coast Guard Repatriates Migrants to the Dominican Republic

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier repatriated five of 12 migrants to the Dominican Republic Aug. 23 after Caribbean Border Interagency Group law enforcement authorities interdicted a boat just off the coast of Desecheo Island, Puerto Rico, the 7th Coast Guard District said in a release.

Six of the interdicted migrants, five Dominican and one of Mexican nationality, were brought ashore to Puerto Rico where they face potential federal criminal immigration charges for attempted illegal re-entry into the United States. One other Dominican migrant, also brought ashore, is undergoing further immigration processing.

“The coordination and swift response by the Caribbean Border Interagency Group law enforcement authorities involved in this case led to a rapid interdiction and safe removal of all 12 migrants,” said Cmdr. Christopher Douglas, Sector San Juan chief of response. “Migrants should not take to the sea, they not only risk going to jail, but also endanger their lives by entrusting smugglers to bring them across the dangerous waters of the Mona Passage aboard grossly overloaded makeshift boats with little or no lifesaving equipment onboard.”

During a routine patrol in the Mona Passage Aug. 21, the crew

of a Customs and Border Protection maritime patrol aircraft detected a 20-foot migrant boat just off Desecheo Island traveling without navigational lights toward the west coast of Puerto Rico. Coast Guard Sector San Juan watchstanders diverted Joseph Napier to interdict the vessel and alerted Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action of the situation. An MH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Borinquen also responded to support the interdiction and provide any needed rescue assistance.

Shortly thereafter, the Puerto Rico Police marine unit came alongside and stopped the migrant vessel as Joseph Napier arrived on scene. The crew of Joseph Napier safely embarked all 12 migrants, 10 men and a woman of Dominican nationality and another man who was a Mexican national.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Ramey Sector Border Patrol Agents in Puerto Rico took custody of the migrants facing prosecution, while the Joseph Napier transported the remaining migrants to Dominican Republic waters, where they embarked a Dominican Republic Navy patrol boat.

Joseph Napier is 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan.

HII Announces Leadership Changes to Submarine

Construction Programs

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) announced in an Aug. 22 release leadership changes to the submarine construction programs at its Newport News Shipbuilding division.

Jason Ward has been promoted to vice president of Columbia-class submarine construction. Dave Bolcar, who served as vice president of all submarine construction, encompassing both the Virginia- and Columbia-class submarine programs, has assumed the role of vice president of Virginia-class submarine construction.

“These changes reflect the significant growth and opportunities our submarine programs bring to the business,” said Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin. “The Virginia-class program is one of our largest programs, and the Columbia-class program has significantly increased in design, planning, material procurement, cost estimating, facility design and early manufacturing. The increased scope of responsibility for these critical programs now requires full and dedicated leadership attention.”

Ward, who joined Newport News in 2014, previously served as director of Columbia-class submarine construction, where he has responsibility for the design, engineering, program management, planning and construction of the Navy’s next ballistic-missile submarine. He has held several leadership positions, including director of integrated digital shipbuilding and program manager of AP1000 shield building fabrication at Newport News Industrial. Ward earned an MBA from the College of William and Mary and a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from Pennsylvania State University.

Bolcar joined Newport News in 1988 as an engineer in the Los

Angeles-class submarine engineering division. Since then, he has held several positions of increasing responsibility, including director of the Columbia-class program, manager in Ford-class component engineering and Columbia-class propulsion engineering, and director of submarine engineering. Bolcar earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Pennsylvania State University.

Both will report to Ken Mahler, Newport News' vice president of Navy programs.

Navy's Faller Nominated for U.S. Southern Command

ARLINGTON, Va. – A Navy admiral has been tapped to be the next commander of U. S. Southern Command. Vice Adm. Craig S. Faller, currently serving as the senior military assistant to the secretary of defense, also has been promoted to the rank of admiral by Defense Secretary James N. Mattis, according to the Aug. 16 Defense Department announcement.

If confirmed, Faller, a nuclear-qualified surface warfare officer, would succeed Adm. Kurt W. Tidd, also a surface warfare officer.

U.S. Southern Command is responsible for all Defense Department operations and security cooperation in the 45 nations and territories of Central and South America and the Caribbean Sea, an area of 16 million square miles, according to the command's website.

Faller, a native of Fryburg, Pennsylvania, is a 1983 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the Naval Postgraduate School.

Below are excerpts from his official biography:

“At sea, he served as reactor electrical division officer, electrical officer and reactor training assistant aboard USS South Carolina (CGN 37); operations officer aboard USS Peterson (DD 969); station officer aboard USS Enterprise (CVN 65); and executive officer of USS John Hancock (DD 981). As commanding officer of USS Stethem (DDG 63), he deployed to the Arabian Gulf and participated in maritime interception operations in support of United Nations sanctions against Iraq. During his tour as commanding officer of USS Shiloh (CG 67), he assisted victims of the devastating tsunami off Indonesia. Finally, as commander, Carrier Strike Group 3, he deployed to the Middle East supporting Operations New Dawn (Iraq) and Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan).

“Ashore, Faller was assigned to chief of legislative affairs for the secretary of the Navy; served as deputy chief of naval operations (Plans, Policy and Operations); served as a legislative fellow on the staff of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy; served as head of Surface Nuclear Officer Programs and Placement at Navy Personnel Command and served as executive assistant to the chief of naval operations.

“Finally, he served as commander, Navy Recruiting Command; as executive assistant to the commander, U.S. Pacific Command and commander, U.S. Central Command; and as director of operations, U.S. Central Command.”

Navy Set to Establish First

CMV-22B COD Squadron at NAS North Island

ARLINGTON, Va. – The chief of naval operations has set a date for the establishment of a new carrier-onboard-delivery (COD) squadron that will be the Navy's first squadron to operate the new CMV-22B Osprey tiltrotor transport aircraft. A CMV-22B training group also will be established.

Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron 30 (VRM-30) will be established at Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island, California, on Oct. 1, according to an internal Navy directive. When equipped with CMV-22Bs, VRM-30 will deploy detachments of CVM-22Bs with each carrier air wing from the West Coast and Japan, succeeding the C-2A Greyhound COD aircraft of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 30 (VRC-30).

To support the Navy's transition from the C-2A to the CMV-22B, the Naval Aviation Training Support Group (NATSG) will be established the same date at Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina, where the Marine Corps' V-22 fleet replacement squadron, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron 204 (VMMT-204) is based. The NATSG will "liaise with the United States Marine Corps, and oversee United States Navy pilot, aircrew, and aircraft maintenance personnel through the training pipeline at VMMT-204," the directive said.

Currently a detachment of Commander, Airborne Command & Control and Logistics Wing, the type wing for the two VRC squadrons as well as the E-2D squadrons, supervises the Navy's V-22 training at New River.

Eventually, a new type wing will be established at North Island as the reporting command for the two planned VRM squadrons, VRM-30 and VRM-40, the latter squadron being planned to replace VRC-40, the C-2A squadron based at Norfolk,

Virginia.

Also, a third squadron VRM-50, eventually will be established at North Island as the fleet replacement squadron for the CMV-22B community when the training shifts from New River.

Industry Offers Alternatives to Achieve 38 Amphibious Warships, Recapitalize MSC Fleet

QUANTICO, Va. – Three of the Navy’s biggest shipbuilders offered alternative plans they said would enable the Navy to get the 38 amphibious warships it needs and to recapitalize the Military Sealift Command’s (MSC) ancient fleet faster and cheaper than what the Navy now plans.

Their proposals included moving up construction starts for the two newest classes of amphibious ships, to avoid creating a cold shipyard, to gain the efficiency of block buys, and to drop the concept of a single common hull design to replace all of MSC’s widely different ship classes and instead adapt several of the amphibious and auxiliary ships currently being built.

Speaking Aug. 9 at the closing day of the Seabasing Operational Advisory Group’s 2018 session, the officials from Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII), General Dynamics NASSCO and Austal also agreed that the U.S. shipbuilding industrial base is capable and ready to make the major increase in construction that would be necessary for the Navy to reach its

goal of a 355-ship fleet.

They were joined in that view by Jeff LeLeux representing Swiftships, which builds a variety of patrol craft and has the contract for the Landing Craft Utility 1700, formerly called the ship-to-shore connector program.

Congress and others have expressed concern that the industry could not ramp up production enough to help the Navy reach its 355-ship goal.

Jon Padfield of HII said the “amphibious ship availability doesn’t seem to be getting any better and may be getting worse,” despite the Navy’s commitment to meeting the long-standing requirement for 38 amphibs.

To avoid making the situation even worse, the Navy should accelerate construction start on LHA-9, the fourth in the America-class amphibious assault ships, and the LPD-17 Flight II replacements for the aged Dock Landing Ships, Padfield said.

The first three America-class LHAs are operational, being built or set to start construction next year, he said. But there is a multi-year gap between construction of LHA-8 and the planned start for LHA-9, which would force HII to close the line. “In order to keep the production line hot and to get to 38, we need to accelerate LHA-9,” Padfield said.

He also said the Navy could save money by moving up production of LPD-31 and 32, the second and third of the Flight II ships, formerly called LX(R).

General Dynamic’s Tom Wetherald and Austal’s Larry Ryder criticized the Navy’s proposed Common Hull, Auxiliary Multi-purpose Platform (CHAMP) concept to replace MSC’s fleet, which includes maritime prepositioning (MPS), strategic sealift, crane, Marine Corps aviation maintenance, submarine tenders, command and hospital ships.

Wetherald said the CHAMP concept made sense for the large MPS ships, but suggested the expeditionary transport dock and expeditionary seabase ships that NASSCO builds would be better fits for other types. He joined Ryder in proposing variations of Austal's expeditionary fast transports as more reasonable forms for other MSC ships.

They also proposed the LPD class as a better platform for some of those auxiliary ships than the CHAMP idea, to which Padfield nodded agreement.

Later in the day, two MSC officials highlighted the problems the command has with its outdated fleet, most of which are steam-powered, which are difficult to maintain and take larger crews to operate. But they indicated they had not been involved in creating the CHAMP concept.