

Navy Awards Billion-Dollar Sonobuoy Contract



Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Jason Rosemond loads sonobuoys into a P-8A Poseidon aircraft at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam during Rim of the Pacific exercise last year. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kevin A. Flinn Arlington, Va. – The U.S. Navy’s increasing focus on anti-submarine warfare is reflected in a recent mega-contract award for its primary air-dropped sensor, the sonobuoy.

Naval Air

Systems Command has awarded to ERAPSCO, a joint venture of Sparton and USSI based in Columbia City, Indiana, a \$1 billion contract to manufacture and deliver a maximum of 37,500 SSQ-36B sonobuoys as well as 685,000 SSQ-53Gs, 120,000 SSQ-62Fs and 90,000 SSQ-101Bs for fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1RLKPiS24c>

This video shows the MH-60R helicopter’s sonobuoy launch capability.

“Sonobuoys

are air-launched expendable, electro-mechanical anti-submarine warfare acoustic

sensors designed to relay underwater sounds associated with ships and

submarines,” according to a July 18 Defense Department release.

On a typical

ASW mission, a P-3 Orion or P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol

aircraft can launch a few dozen sonobuoys while tracking submarines. Sonobuoys also are dropped by MH-60R helicopters.

In a new era of "Great Power Competition," anti-submarine warfare has taken on increasing importance as the Navy and those of allied nations ramp up efforts to track and, should it become necessary, counter the submarine forces of Russia, China, Iran or North Korea.