

Navy Orders Construction of Two Fleet Oilers, One Expeditionary Sea Base



General Dynamics NASSCO has been awarded two contracts for detailed design and construction for two fleet replenishment oilers and one expeditionary sea base ship. *GENERAL DYNAMICS NASSCO*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has awarded two contracts totaling \$1.4 billion for the detailed design and construction of three ships to be built by General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego: two fleet replenishment oilers and one expeditionary sea base ship.

The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. (NASSCO) an \$890 million contract modification for detailed design and construction of the seventh and eighth John Lewis-class fleet replenishment oilers T-AO 211 and 212, according to an Aug. 4 Defense Department contract announcement. The company also was awarded a \$535 million contract modification for detailed design and construction of Lewis B. Buller-class expeditionary sea base (ESB) 8, the sixth ship of the class.

The T-AO contract modification also includes an option for the detail design and construction of T-AO 213 which, if exercised would bring the cumulative value of that contract modification to \$1.63 billion.

In June, the Naval Sea Systems Command awarded NASSCO a \$500 million contract modification for long-lead-time material in support of the T-AO 211 and 212, according to a June 28 Defense Department contract announcement. The company also was awarded a \$100 million contract modification for long-lead-time material in support of ESB 8.

On July 27, NASSCO delivered to the Navy the lead ship of the new 742-foot-long, 49,850-ton fleet oiler class, the John Lewis (T-AO 205). Three more T-AOs are under construction – the future USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), the future USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), and the future USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208) – and four, T-AO 209 through 212, are under contract. The oilers each will have a fuel capacity of 157,000 barrels of oil as well as other dry stores to replenish ships at sea.

The Lewis B. Puller-class ESB is a development of the Montford Point-class mobile landing platform ship. The 784-foot-long ESB is equipped with a 52,000 square-foot flight deck that can handle H-1, H-53 and H-53 helicopters and V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft. The ship is a capable platform to support mine-countermeasures missions, special operations forces, patrol boat support and unmanned systems.

Three ESBs are serving in the fleet – USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), USS Hershel “Woody” Williams (ESB 4) and the USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5) – and two more, the future USNS John L. Canley and USNS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7), are under construction.

NASSCO said the construction of the three newly contracted ships is planned for third quarter of 2023 and continue into 2027. The company sees the contracts as helpful in sustaining and growing its workforce.