

NAVY NEWS WEEK 13-1

25 March 2018

Nigeria suffered 41 piracy attacks in 2017 —NIMASA

NIGERIA recorded 41 piracy attacks on vessels calling at her ports in the whole of 2017, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) stated in its '**Nigeria's Maritime Industry Forecast 2018-2019**'. This is even as the agency said the nation suffered 135 piracy attacks between 2015 and 2017. According to data sourced from the agency's industry forecast document, the highest number of attacks occurred in the last quarter of 2017, with 16 attacks occurring within the nation's waters. "In the first quarter of 2017, nine reported attacks occurred within Nigerian waters. Out of the nine reported attacks, three were successful while the remaining six attacks were not successful. In the second quarter of 2017, eight vessels were attacked within Nigerian waters. Out of the eight vessels attacked, four were successful and the other four attacks were unsuccessful. *"Also in the third quarter of 2017, eight vessels were attacked and four were successful while another four were unsuccessful. In the last quarter of 2017, 16 vessels suffered piracy attacks within Nigerian waters and six of those attacks were successful, while the remaining 10 attacks were unsuccessful. "For vessel movement in 2016, the nation recorded the highest number of piracy attacks within her waters as 77 attacks were recorded on vessels in the year under review. In the first quarter of 2016, 27 vessels were attacked by pirates and 14 of those attacks were successful, while the remaining 13 attacks were unsuccessful. 'In the second quarter of 2016, another 27 vessels were attacked, and this time, 17 of those attacks were successful while the remaining 10 attacks were not successful. In the third quarter of 2016, there was a reduction of piracy attacks within the nation's waterways as only eight vessels were attacked, and only four of those attacks were successful. "In the last quarter of 2016, piracy on waters within Nigerian waters rose again as 15 vessels suffered attacks at different locations within the nation's waterways. Out of the 15 attacks in the last quarter of 2016, five were successful while 10 were not successful. "For 2015, eight vessels were attacked in the first quarter of the year under review and five of those attacks were successful, and the remaining three attacks were not successful. In the second quarter of 2015, five piracy attacks occurred within Nigerian waters, and one out of the five was successful, while the remaining four attacks were not successful. "There was no recorded piracy attack for the third quarter of 2015. However, piracy activities resumed in the last quarter of the year under review with four different attacks on vessels within the nation's waters. Two out of the four attacks were successful while the remaining two were unsuccessful, thereby bringing to a total of 135 piracy attacks on vessels within Nigerian waters between 2015 and 2017,"* information from Nigeria's Maritime Industry Forecast 2018-2019 revealed.

Source: Tribute

Seychelles Strategy: Why A Base On Assumption Island Is Crucial For Securing The Indian Ocean Region

by [Jaideep A Prabhu](#)

- Mar 20, 2018, 7:56 am



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Seychelles president James Michel at a joint press conference. (Business Standard)

Snapshot

New Delhi has recently made a sound move by agreeing to work in tandem with similarly-minded powers to protect the Indian Ocean. The acquisition of its own assets in the Indian Ocean Region is a bonus and will retain some autonomy for India.

The small, out-of-mind archipelago of Seychelles has been in the Indian news cycle an inordinate amount. Part of this is due to a prospering Indian public starting to take greater interest in the geopolitics of their region. Another reason is the recent agreement signed between India and Seychelles for the construction of a military base on Assumption Island, one of the 115 islands of the African country. Originally signed in 2015 during a visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the country, work could not begin on the strategic asset as the deal was not ratified by the Seychelles parliament during the term of the previous president, James Michel. Controversy was stirred recently when the present President of the South Indian Ocean country, Danny Faure, declared in 2017 that the agreement would have to be renegotiated as it did not serve the interests of the Seychellois. Then, a recent leak of the text of the newly-negotiated agreement also stoked the controversy in that it was alleged that Victoria has sold off Assumption Island to India; Faure's administration rushed to clarify that this was not the

case and stressed that India would not be developing infrastructure on Assumption Island for military purposes. Ostensibly, the facilities are meant to support patrolling against illegal fishing, piracy, and drug and human trafficking. Under the agreement, India will renovate the airstrip on Assumption Island, renovate the jetty and build living quarters for the Seychelles Coast Guard. The entire project is expected to take a quarter of the tiny island that measures barely 6.7 km in length and 2.9 km in width and cost approximately \$550 million. Several things were clarified and modified between the 2015 agreement and the 2018 revision. The deal was extended to 20 years from 10 years with an option to further extend the arrangement by another 10 years; it was clarified that the island was still under the sovereignty of Seychelles, meaning that Indians stationed on Assumption Island will face Seychellois justice if accused of a crime; the obligations of each party were explicitly spelled out as were technical details pertaining to the jetty and airstrip; conditions for the storage of arms have been made more stringent (military exercises, guarding the facilities, and self-defence in case of internal disturbances). As in the 2015 agreement, India has agreed not to use the base in times of war or allow vessels with nuclear weapons to use the facilities. Third parties may be allowed use of the facilities upon joint agreement by both governments. Although Seychelles has been at pains to emphasise that the agreement with India is not military in nature, the terms indicate otherwise or at least hold open the strong potential for use for security purposes. Victoria, however, does not wish to invite Great Power rivalry – not just between India and China but potentially the United States and France as well – into its living room and has made a public relations (PR) decision to highlight the benefits it receives from the development of



infrastructure on Assumption Island in the enforcement of domestic law and order.

India strengthening its surveillance capacity.

The deal is seen as important for India because it enhances its surveillance capabilities over the Indian Ocean. In concert with a coastal surveillance radar station already operating in Seychelles, a naval base at Agalega in Mauritius, a coastal

radar station in Madagascar, an array of radars in Maldives, and a strong presence in the littoral waters of Mozambique, Delhi's acquisition of facilities on one of the 67 raised coral islands of the Aldabra group will create an impermeable surveillance net in the southwestern and central Indian Ocean. Assumption Island's position dominating the Mozambique channel, a key sea lane for merchant ships, adds to India's kitty a second potential choke point after the Strait of Malacca; the latter is dominated by India's augmented presence in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands chain as well as with naval agreements with Vietnam and Singapore. India's strategic assets in its ocean, important as they are on their own, have an added multiplier effect: New Delhi has recently signed a logistics support agreement with the US and France, allowing the navies of those countries to share naval facilities with the Indian Navy. This extends India's reach even further from the French base at Reunion – perhaps even Paris' services in Djibouti – and the US base at Diego Garcia. Together, it is possible for the three countries to establish a sound surveillance system (SOSUS) line array to closely monitor the movement of all ships and submarines through the region. It is rumoured that India is seeking Japanese assistance in setting up a similar surveillance line from Indira Point to Sumatra, which will then connect with a similar existing US-Japanese network in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean Rim. Between these two arrays, New Delhi's knowledge of movement in the Indian Ocean will see a marked increase and make its naval deployments more efficient. An agreement with Australia for access to its Indian Ocean Territories, Cocos Islands and Christmas, is tempting but the geography and size of the islands is not an insignificant [obstacle](#) to overcome. There has been some opposition to India's presence in the archipelago that range from geopolitical to economic and environmental. However, with approximately 10 per cent of the population tracing its roots back to India, there is, so far, general goodwill towards India. Unlike its larger northeastern neighbour China, India has avoided giving hard loans or flooding client states with Indian labour and instead preferred joint development. India's previous assistance to the archipelago also puts it in good standing with the Seychellois. In June and September 1986, India helped suppress two coups in the country, the first by deploying the **INS Vindhyagiri** (which, to be fair, was already on its way to the island on a routine visit) and the second by then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi loaning Air India One to Seychelles president France-Albert René. India has also helped Seychelles patrol its exclusive economic zone and provided equipment such as Dornier Do 228s and Chetak helicopters to meet the security needs of the island chain. The Indian Navy has frequently assisted Seychelles in anti-piracy operations in the past decade, and New Delhi has also helped train the Seychellois own armed forces. At present, India is economically and militarily incapable of facing Chinese encroachment into the Indian Ocean. Beijing has been candid about its String of Pearls for over a decade and yet little was done to augment India's ability to respond to the threat, either diplomatically or otherwise. Despite its jarring paeans to non-alignment, strategic autonomy, and other such dated misadventures, New Delhi has recently made a sound move by agreeing to work in tandem with similarly-minded powers to protect the Indian Ocean. The acquisition of its own assets in the Indian Ocean Region is a bonus and will retain some autonomy for India.

Jaideep A. Prabhu is a specialist in foreign and nuclear policy; he also pokes his nose in energy and defence related matters.

Source: <https://swarajyamag.com>

Paul Allen Exploration Team Finds Yet Another Famous WWII Shipwreck – USS Juneau

March 22, 2018 by [gCaptain](#)



The **USS Juneau** In New York Harbor, 11 February 1942. Courtesy the U.S. National Archives via Paul Allen

The exploration crew aboard Microsoft billionaire Paul Allen's **RV Petrel** has located yet another famous World War II in the South Pacific. The team announced this week that it had discovered the wreckage of the **USS**

Juneau (CL-52) on March 17, 2018 – St. Patrick's Day – at a depth of about 4,200 meters (about 2.6 miles) off the coast of the Solomon Islands. The **Juneau** was sunk by a Japanese torpedo during the Battle of Guadalcanal, ultimately killing 687 men, including the five Sullivan brothers who had all been assigned to the Atlanta-class cruiser. "We certainly didn't plan to find the **Juneau** on St. Patrick's Day. The variables of these searches are just too great," said Robert Kraft, director of subsea operations for Paul Allen. "But finding the **USS Juneau** on Saint Patrick's Day is an unexpected coincidence to the Sullivan brothers and all the service members who were lost 76 years ago." The wreck of the **Juneau** was first identified using side scan sonar data acquired by the **Petrel**'s autonomous underwater vehicle. Later, the **Petrel** crew deployed a remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) on March 18

to verify the wreckage using video.



The prop of the **USS Juneau**. Photo: Paul Allen

The **USS Juneau** sank on November 13, 1942 after being hit by a second torpedo on its port side, causing an explosion that caused the vessel to break in half and sink in just a matter of minutes. Although approximately 115 of **Juneau**'s crew are believed to have survived the explosion and sinking, most later died because American forces were forced to retreat. Ten men were eventually rescued from the water eight days after the sinking.



The Sullivan Brothers pictured aboard the **USS Juneau**. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph

Despite a naval policy that prevented siblings from serving in the same units, the five Sullivan brothers, George, Francis "Frank," Joseph, Madison "Matt" and Albert, all refused to serve unless assigned to the same ship. The finding of the **USS Juneau** adds to what is now a long list of WWII shipwreck discoveries by Allen-led expeditions.

In addition to the **Juneau**, the team is also credit with the discovery of the **USS Lexington** (March 2018), **USS Indianapolis** (August 2017), **USS Ward** (November 2017), **USS Astoria** (February 2015), the Japanese battleship **Musashi** (March 2015), and the Italian WWII destroyer **Artigliere** (March 2017). His team was also responsible for retrieving the ship's bell from the **HMS Hood** for presentation to the British Navy. Allen's expedition team was permanently transferred to the newly

acquired and retrofitted **RV Petrel** in 2016 with a specific mission around research, exploration and survey of historic warships and other important artifacts. The 250-foot **RV Petrel** is fitted with state-of-the-art subsea equipment capable of diving to 6,000 meters (or three and a half miles).

Source: <http://gcaptain.com>

Navy eyes block buy of two Ford class aircraft carriers



Huntington Ingalls Industries delivered the first-in-class aircraft carrier **Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78)** to the U.S. Navy on May 31, 2017 Matt Hildreth/HII

MARCH 19, 2018 – The Navy today issued an RFP to Huntington Ingalls Industries Newport News Shipbuilding Division seeking detailed pricing on the costs of a block buy in FY2019 of the next two Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers. *"In keeping with the National Defense Strategy, the Navy*

developed an acquisition strategy to combine the CVN 80 and CVN 81 procurements to better achieve the Department's objectives of building a more lethal force with greater performance and affordability," said James F. Geurts, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research Development and Acquisition. *"This opportunity for a two-ship contract is dependent on significant savings that the shipbuilding industry and government must demonstrate. The Navy is requesting a proposal from HII-NNS in order to evaluate whether we can achieve significant savings."* The two-ship buy is a contracting strategy the Navy has effectively used in the 1980s to procure Nimitz-class aircraft carriers and achieved significant acquisition cost savings compared to contracting for the ships individually. While the CVN 80/81 two-ship buy negotiations transpire, the Navy is pursuing contracting actions necessary to continue CVN 80 fabrication in fiscal year (FY) 2018 and preserve the current schedule. The Navy plans to award the CVN 80 construction contract in early FY 2019 as a two-ship buy pending Congressional approval and achieving significant savings. Enterprise (CVN 80) is the third ship of the Gerald R. Ford class and the numerical replacement for **USS Eisenhower (CVN 69)**. CVN 81, not yet named, will be the fourth ship of the class and will be the numerical replacement for **USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70)**. CVN 80 began advanced planning and initial long-lead-time material procurement in May 2016. The move was applauded by Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-01) and U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, R-Miss. Wittman and Wicker serve as Chairmen of the House and Senate subcommittees that oversee the Navy and Marine Corps. *"The RFP released by the Navy today is a great step towards strengthening the Fleet. A dual procurement allows the U.S. Navy to build to a fleet of 12 aircraft carriers more quickly as prescribed by the FY18 National Defense Authorization Act – which established that the Navy should maintain 355 ships, including 12 aircraft carriers,"* Rep. Wittman said. *"This dual buy would be beneficial to both the taxpayers and to our maritime industrial base as it shows that Congress is committed to the thousands of workers who build and maintain aircraft carriers every day. Smart acquisition has the potential to save \$2.5 billion. We need to give the Fleet the ships it needs to meet the challenges of today and prepare for the threats of tomorrow."* *"The bottom line is that this block buy will save billions for taxpayers, and the Navy is now on an accelerated timeline to meet its 12-carrier requirement,"* Sen. Wicker said. *"I want to congratulate Secretary Spencer and his team for their bold leadership on setting this plan in motion. They have my full support, and I am confident that America's world-class shipbuilders and suppliers are up to the task."* Source: <http://www.marinelog.com>

Two Canadian naval vessels arrive in Ghana

Updated Mar 19, 2018 at 3:46pm



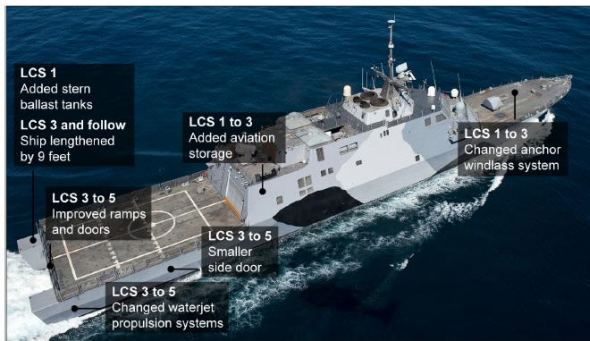
Two Canadian naval vessels, **HMCS Kingston** and **HMCS Summerside** have arrived in Ghana. This is to strengthen the already bilateral relationship in tackling illegal migration and human trafficking along the Gulf of Guinea. Bilateral relations between Ghana and Canada spans a sixty year period. The two Ships prior to arriving in Ghana have visited other Countries like Cote D' Ivoire, Benin and Liberia who are members of **Operations Obangame**.

Obangame Express conducted by US Naval Forces in Africa is an at-sea Maritime exercise designed to improve cooperation among member Country to increase Maritime safety and Security along the Gulf of Guinea. The Canadian High Commissioner, Heather Cameron said, the visit by the two Sister Canadian Ships is providing a different type of training between the military and the navy through the Canadian Defence Attache'. She also mentioned areas to dominate the G-7 meeting in Canada to include, Oceans and climate change, clean energy and gender equality. The Captain of **HMCS Kingston**, Matthew Woodburn, said Ghana is the last of seven Countries that the crew from the vessels will be engaging in military and the naval exercise. While in the Country, the crew will be involved in Community outreach programmes by donating books to some schools in Ashaiman and in Nima. **HMCS Kingston** and **HMCS Summer side** will host young Ghanaian women to help harness and strengthen their leadership potential. Source: <http://www.gbcghana.com>

LCS: The USA's Littoral Combat Ships

Mar 20, 2018 04:55 UTC by Defense Industry Daily staff

Figure 2: Major Design Changes among Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Seaframes



Source: GAO analysis of Navy data; U.S. Navy (image).

Freedom variant

Grow a pair



Source: GAO analysis of Navy data; U.S. Navy (image).

Independence variant

March 20/18: Mission modules Northrop Grumman will deliver services in support of littoral combat ship (LCS) mission modules for the US Navy. Valued at \$46.7 million, the [contract modification](#) was announced by the Pentagon last Wednesday, March 15, and tasks Northrop with providing engineering, technical and sustainment services for the Navy's littoral combat ship mission modules—which are designed for naval operations against asymmetric threats and anti-access obstacles in littorals near the coastline. Work will take place Bethpage, New York, San Diego, California, and several other US locations with contract completion scheduled for March 2019.

GENERAL DYNAMICS Littoral Combat Ship

Maximum Warfighting Capability Per Dollar



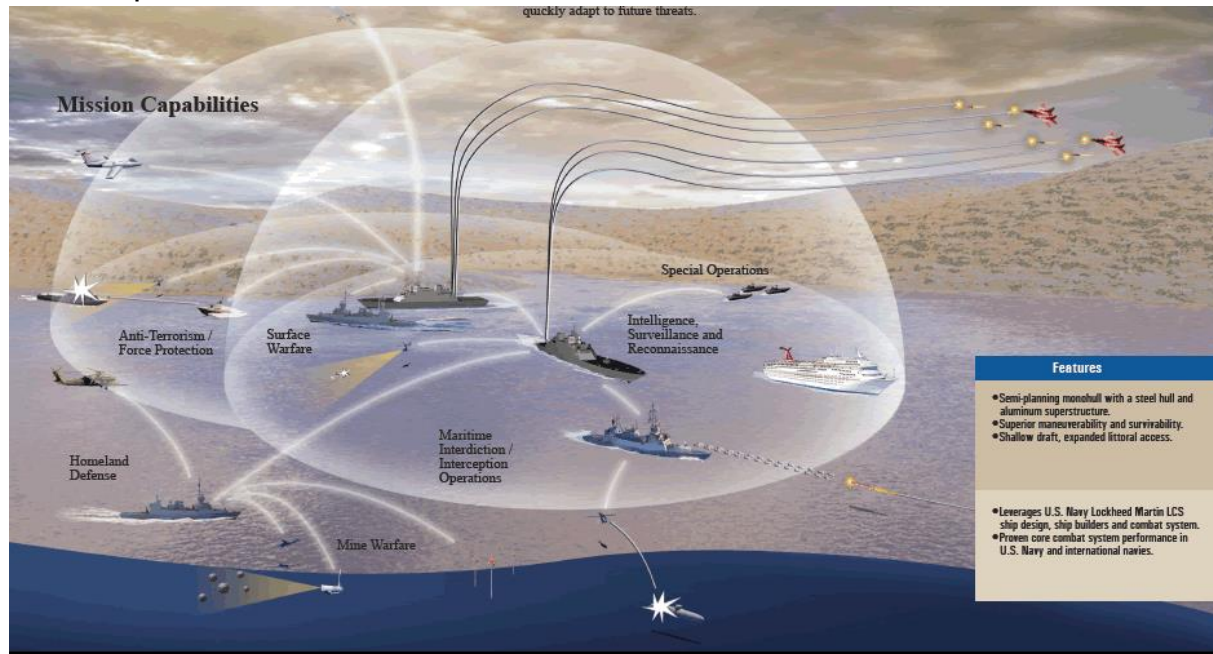
Austal Team Trimaran LCS Design

Exploit simplicity, numbers, the pace of technology development in electronics and robotics, and fast reconfiguration. That was the US Navy's idea for the low-end backbone of its future surface combatant fleet. Inspired by successful experiments like Denmark's

Standard Flex ships, the US Navy's \$35+ billion "Littoral Combat Ship" program was intended to create a new generation of affordable surface combatants that could operate in dangerous shallow and near-shore environments, while remaining

affordable and capable throughout their lifetimes. It hasn't worked that way. In practice, the Navy hasn't been able to reconcile what they wanted with the capabilities needed to perform primary naval missions, or with what could be delivered for the sums available. The LCS program has changed its fundamental acquisition plan 4 times since 2005, and canceled contracts with *both* competing teams during this period, without escaping any of its fundamental issues. Now, the program looks set to end early. This public-access FOCUS article offer a wealth of research material, alongside looks at the LCS program's designs, industry teams procurement plans, military controversies, budgets and contracts.

LCS: Concept & Needs



LCS-I missions

Ultimately, the US Navy is trying to replace 56 vessels: 30 [FFG-7 Oliver Hazard Perry Class](#) frigates, 14 [MCM Avenger Class](#) mine countermeasures vessels, and 12 [MHC-51 Osprey Class](#) coastal mine hunters. The LCS requirement has been identified as part of a broader surface combatant force transformation strategy, which recognizes that many future threats are spawning in regions with shallow seas, where the ability to operate near-shore and even in rivers will be vital for mission success. That requires the ability to counter growing “*asymmetric*” threats like coastal mines, quiet diesel submarines, global piracy, and terrorists on small fast attack boats. It also requires intelligence gathering and scouting, some ground combat support capabilities, and the ability to act as a local command node, sharing tactical information with other Navy aircraft, ships, submarines, and joint units. At the same time, however, the US Navy needs ships that can act as low-end fillers in other traditional fleet roles, and operate in the presence of missile-armed enemy vessels and/or aerial threats. Given the diversity of possible missions in the shallow-water and near-shore littoral zones, and the potential threats from forces on land, any ship designed for these tasks must be both versatile and stealthy. History also suggests that they need to be able to take a punch. Meanwhile, the reality of ships that are expected to remain in service for over 30 years gives rise to a need for electronic longevity. As the saga of the USA’s cost-effective but short-lived FFG-7 frigates proved, “future-proofing” and upgradeability for key systems, electronics, and weapons will be critical if these small surface combatants are to remain useful throughout their mechanical lives. While a ship’s hull and design makes a number of its performance parameters difficult to change, the Americans believed they may have a solution that lets them upgrade sensors and key systems. Denmark’s [Standard Flex 300 corvettes](#) pioneered a revolutionary approach of swappable mission modules, based on ISO containers. In contrast to the traditional approach, which is to cram a wide-ranging set of bolted-in compromise equipment into fixed installations, “*flex ships*” can radically changes the ships’ capabilities, by swapping in a full breadth of equipment focused on a particular need. Swappable modules also give the Navy new options over time. One option is technology-based, via spiral development that focuses on rapid insertions of new equipment. This creates a long series of slight improvements in the mission modules, and hence the ship’s capabilities. Over time, the cumulative effect can be very significant. The 2nd benefit is cost-related, since upgrades require far less work and cost to install when mission technologies evolve. The 3rd benefit is risk-related. The ability to do low-cost, spiral upgrades encourages frequent “refreshes” that remain within the existing state of the art, rather than periodic upgrade programs that must stretch what’s possible, in order to handle expected developments over the next 25 years.

LCS: Designs & Teams

Base Config.	LCS-1 Freedom Class, LCS 5+ Monohull	LCS-2 Independence Class, LCS 6+ Trimaran
Length	115.3 meters / 378.3 feet	127.6 meters / 418.7 feet
Beam	17.5 meters / 57.4 feet	31.6 meters / 103.7 feet at widest
Draught	3.9 meters / 12.8 feet	4.0 meters / 13.1 feet
NAL Full Load	3,550.0 tons 3,482.7 tons	3,188.0 tons 3,156.7 tons
Power	Rolls Royce MT30 turbine Colt-Pielstick PA6B-STC diesel engines	2 x GE LM2500 turbines MTU 8000 series diesel engines
Speed, Top Economical	40+ knots 17 Knots	40+ knots 13 knots
Fuel	111,846 gal	179,592 gal
Range	less than LCS-2	4,300 nmi @ 18 knots May trade fuel capacity for weight.
Personnel	98: 60 core + 23 aviation + 15 mission package.	98: 60 core + 23 aviation + 15 mission package.
Aviation	2 MH-60 equivalent	2 MH-60 equivalent or TERN UAV Up to a CH-53 on deck (not fully tested)
Flight Deck	5,200 square feet	7,300 square feet
Helo Hangar	4,680 square feet	3,500 square feet
Combat System	LMCO COMBATSS-21	ICMS (from Thales' TACTICOS)
Key Sensors	EADS TRS-3D Mine detection sonar	Saab Sea Giraffe AMB Mine detection sonar
Weapons	Mk.110 57mm gun Mk.49 RAM: 21 RIM-116 missiles 4 x .50 cal machine guns	Mk.110 57mm gun SeaRAM: 11 RIM-116 missiles 4 x .50 cal machine guns
VLS option	up to Mk.41 Strike length (largest type)	up to Mk.41 Tactical length
Defensive	WBR-2000 ESM system Mk53 Nuika missile decoys ALEX, incl. SRBOC (chaff)	ES-3601 ESM system Mk53 Nuika missile decoys ALEX, incl. SRBOC (chaff)
Other Features	6,500 square foot mission bay	15,300 square foot mission bay
Key Issues	Ship weight control & stability. Radar & combat system performance. ESM system performance. Structural cracking. Persistent mechanical failures. Still very undermanned at 88 crew.	Weight control - very low margins. Communication & computing issues. Fire suppression systems. Corrosion protection was missing, fixed. Manning issues not tested yet.

Sources: Manufacturers, CRS, GAO, NPS, DID coverage.

2014, Defense Industry Daily

Source: www.defenceindustrydaily.com

Indo-French naval exercise 'Varuna-18' begins off Goa coast

Updated: Mar 19, 2018, 08.39 PM IST

PANAJI/NEW DELHI: The navies of India and France are currently engaged in a joint bilateral exercise, "**Varuna-18**", in the Arabian Sea off the Goa coast, which commenced days after the leaders of the two countries decided to further deepen their maritime. The two countries would explore the measures to facilitate the operational-level interactions between their respective armed forces and increase mutual cooperation, considering the common global threats, the official added. Rear Admiral M A Hampiholi, Flag Officer Commander, Western Fleet of the Indian Navy, said "**Varuna-18**" would be conducted in three sea areas – the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the South Western Indian Ocean. The first phase would see the participation of the French Navy's anti-submarine frigate, **Jean de Vienne**, he added. "*It is noteworthy that the progress of the 'Varuna' series of naval exercises has found a mention in the joint statement of the Prime Minister of India and President of France on March 10,*" he said. The harbour phase of the exercise had commenced on March 15 and it ended today, while the sea phase would be conducted from March 20-24, the Indian Navy said in a statement. The second leg of the exercise will be held off the Chennai coast in April and the third near the La Reunion Island in May. The exercise commenced three days after French President Emmanuel Macron left India. Macron was in the country from March 9-12, during which India and France decided to step up their cooperation, especially in the maritime domain. The exercise also comes at a time when the Indian Ocean is witnessing an increased Chinese naval presence. Besides the French Navy's **Jean de Vienne**, the Indian Navy's destroyer, **INS Mumbai**, and frigate **INS Trikand** are among the vessels participating in the exercise. The Indian Navy's submarine, **Kalvari**, P8-1 and Dornier maritime patrol aircraft and MiG 29K fighter aircraft are also participating in the exercise. Real Admiral Didier Piaton, who is heading the French side for the exercise, said India was a major partner of France in the Indian Ocean region. "*Maritime cooperation between India and France will be crucial in order to maintain the safety of international sea lanes for unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with the international laws, for countering maritime terrorism and piracy and building maritime domain awareness. Maritime security is a priority in our defence and security policy, along with the fight against terrorism,*" he added. The naval forces of India and France have been conducting joint bilateral exercises since 1993. Since 2001, these exercises are called "**Varuna**" and 15 editions of the same have been held till date. In 2017, the "**Varuna**" was conducted in three sea areas in the European waters. "*The Varuna series of exercises has grown in scope and complexity over the years and provide an opportunity to both Navies to increase interoperability and learn from each other's best practices,*" the statement from the Navy said.

Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>



The German frigate F 215 FGS *Brandenburg* in assistance of the tugs *Union Kodiak* and *Union Grizzly* by leaving the city of Antwerp, Belgium. Photo : Paul Struyf ©

Russia's submarine fleet capable of countering any threats, naval experts say

Russia's modern submarine fleet is capable of countering any possible threats in the World Ocean through its intensive development and renewal, according to experts polled by TASS on the eve of Submariner Day. The submarine fleet's constant development and renewal are a guarantee of Russia's security at all the sea borders, Vice-Admiral Oleg Burtsev, who held the post of the first deputy chief of the Russian Navy's Main Staff in 2004-2011, said. *"Everything depends on the possibilities of our shipbuilding sector and other branches of industry. This is because the plans of the leadership of our country and our army are to ensure that we are capable of worthily countering any probable enemy from all directions,"* the vice-admiral stressed. The Russian submarine fleet *"has gotten out of the crisis, in which it was"* in the 1990s, Burtsev noted. Russia is commissioning new-generation Borei-class strategic nuclear-powered submarines armed with Bulava ballistic missiles and building Yasen-class multipurpose submarines furnished with cruise missiles, the vice-admiral said. *"Also, work is underway to modernize the projects that were built among the last in the Soviet Union. For example, this refers to the Project 971 Gepard multipurpose nuclear-powered submarine and Project 949 submarines, which are being heavily upgraded for new weapon systems,"* Burtsev said. Russia is also extending the service life of third-generation strategic underwater cruisers (Project 667BDRM), which will enable these submarines to operate reliably until all the eight Borei subs enter service, the vice-admiral pointed out. *"Diesel-electric submarines have also undergone heavy upgrade. We are now receiving the newest Project 636 subs, which are being built for the Pacific Fleet and are already operational in the Black Sea Fleet,"* Burtsev said. Russia must maintain its submarine fleet at a proper level amid threats at sea emanating from many nuclear powers possessing nuclear-powered and conventional submarines, Black Sea Fleet ex-commander (1998-2002) Admiral Vladimir Komoyedov believes *"I believe that the qualitative level of our fleet is quite high now but its quantity is not yet enough. This is because we are confronted not only by the United States with its submarine fleet but also by the United Kingdom and other NATO countries, which have submarine fleets. Besides, the intensive construction of conventional submarines is underway, for example, in Germany,"* he added. Russia is also developing breakthrough submarines and underwater vehicles, Burtsev said. Specifically, in his recent State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly, Russian President Vladimir Putin highlighted the most advanced underwater drone, on which the domestic defense industry was working. *"We all watched the use of long-range Kalibr cruise missiles by our submarines. I believe that this is a worthy response to Tomahawk missiles installed on US surface ships and submarines,"* Burtsev noted. According to former commander of the Pacific Fleet (2001-2007) Admiral Viktor Fyodorov, the southern direction linked with the protection of Russia's interests in the Mediterranean and Black Seas is a strategically important area for Russia. *"We have got a good possibility to draw attention to our Black Sea Fleet, which can now develop in a full-fledged manner. We have set up quite a powerful operational grouping in the East Mediterranean, which protects Syria from the flank and takes part in delivering strikes against terrorists,"* Fyodorov said. The buildup of the Black Sea Fleet's combat potential with the most advanced submarines and surface ships armed with Kalibr cruise missiles allows *"ensuring the protection of our country from this most important southern direction,"* the admiral said. His view is shared by Admiral Komoyedov. *"The fifth squadron of the Soviet Navy (and subsequently the flotilla) was permanently present in the Mediterranean Sea to contain, among other things, the whole fleet (the US Navy's sixth fleet). In the Mediterranean Sea, everything converges: Africa, the Middle East and Europe. This is a focus area of all politics,"* Komoyedov said. During the Soviet period, the Pacific Fleet was one of the Navy's strongest taskforces, the experts polled by TASS said. It was the Pacific Fleet that tested the most advanced weapons of strategic submarines and took the mass delivery of new combat ships and underwater cruisers. The Pacific Fleet's personnel were at the forefront of defense during the Cold War period. *"The Pacific Fleet is the main one for me because during the Soviet period it was one of the most powerful fleets and had its presence not only in the Pacific Ocean. The zone of the Indian Ocean still remains the area of its responsibility. Two squadrons were in operation: the 17th squadron was based in Vietnam and the eighth squadron in the Indian Ocean. Powerful naval taskforces could really accomplish any missions linked with the security of an enormous country,"* Admiral Fyodorov said. As the Pacific Fleet commander, Fyodorov numerously took part in various working meetings and workshops of fleet commanders and navy commanders-in-chief from 22 countries of the north-western part of the Pacific Ocean. These countries included the United States, India, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and others. As he recalls, the joint work was purely professional, despite any political developments. *"I established good human relations actually with all the commanders. We did not only discuss various military issues. First of all, these were the issues of security: the fight against*

terrorism and piracy at sea and the provision of humanitarian aid during earthquakes. We also had many hotlines," Fyodorov said. Today the fleets of all the countries in the Pacific Region need as never before to restore such form of international cooperation, the admiral believes. "People should necessarily meet and reach agreement. We respected each other and we had dialogue. I would very much want this trend to restart today. We need qualitative expert assessments, the understanding of professionals in the military sphere, the recognition of mutual interests and the maintenance of parity and security," the ex-commander said. Not a single super-modern underwater cruiser can do without a well-trained and coherent crew, Admiral Komoyedov said. "Sailors-submariners are our golden fund. We need to respect it, care about it, nurture it and prepare those who will succeed them," he added.

Submariner Day

The date for celebrating Submariner Day was not chosen accidentally. It was on March 19, 1906 (March 6, old style) that Russian Emperor Nicholas II included new combat ships - the submarines - into the classification of naval vessels. The submarines Forel, Som and Osyotr were the first to join the Russian Navy. After 1917, Submariner Day was not celebrated. It was reinstated in 1996.

Source : Tass

Amphibious transport dock USS Green Bay rounds off Wasp ARG



Amphibious assault ship **USS Wasp** (LHD 1) and the amphibious transport dock **USS Green Bay** (LPD 20) are moored to the pier at White Beach Naval Facility. **Photo: US Navy**

US Navy amphibious transport dock ship **USS Green Bay** (LPD 20) joined the rest of the Wasp amphibious ready group (ARG) in Okinawa, Japan, arriving at White Beach

Naval Facility to load elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The forward-deployed **Green Bay** joined the group after just completing a 5-month maintenance period and intensive training cycle in parallel to shipboard upgrades. After embarking more than 2,300 marines and equipment of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), the three ships of the Wasp expeditionary strike group (ESG) departed Okinawa on March 19. The ESG and the MEU are now deployed together for a routine patrol in the Indo-Pacific region meant to strengthen regional alliances and be postured forward in the event of a contingency. "Once again the ARG [Amphibious Ready Group]-MEU team has come together as a well synchronized force to embark the MEU and deploy," said Capt. Ed Thompson, commodore, Amphibious Squadron 11, the squadron overseeing the ESG. "The persistent nature of the close relationship of the ARG and the 31st MEU is our core competency. Having the MEU embarked enables our ships to be fully mission ready." As part of the initial phase of the patrol, the ships of the ESG and the MEU will practice these missions to ensure proficiency and integration in working together.

Source: Naval Today

Port of Mossel Bay positioned to be a catalyst for economic development of the Garden Route

19th March 2018



Despite being the smallest of the commercial [ports](#) along the [South Africa](#) coast, the [Port of Mossel Bay](#) is an important contributor to the economy of the Garden Route and [Southern Cape](#) says [Nico Walters](#), General Manager: Strategy at [Transnet](#) National [Ports](#) Authority (TNPA). Delivering his keynote address at the Garden Route Investment Conference held recently at the [Oubaai Hotel](#) and Resort in George under the theme Creating Opportunity in Global Uncertainty, Walters acknowledged the important role of [ports](#) in the local economy. The event was attended by delegates from

countries including [Sweden](#), [China](#) and [Singapore](#) and showcased the investment potential and opportunities within the Garden Route area to an audience of national and international investors. "The immense potential of small [ports](#) and

harbours to contribute to economic growth is acknowledged in government's pursuit of using small harbours to attract investment in state coastal maritime, develop [infrastructure](#) and properties, grow businesses, create jobs and redistribute wealth," said Walters. "Transforming our [ports](#) into People's [Ports](#), where local communities and businesses have access to and are able to participate in [port](#) activities is a goal of TNPA. The [Port of Mossel Bay](#) is among the [ports](#) earmarked for investment under **Operation Phakisa**." The Operation Phakisa strategy, designed to unlock the ocean's economy, has resulted in major upgrades and new facilities for ship repair as well as the development of facilities to serve the [oil and gas](#) industry, to ensure that [South Africa](#) attracts its share of this [business](#). "The Ocean's Wealth translates into skills development, jobs, [innovation](#), entrepreneurship and changing the country for the better," says Walters. The development of The Small Harbours and [State Coastal Property Development](#) unit (SH&SCPD), within the National Department of Public Works is part of the Oceans Economy strategy within Operation Phakisa. Hundreds of state properties along [South Africa's](#) coast are to become sites of new [business](#) opportunities and catalysts for economic growth and job creation. Skills development and job creation targets within these strategies will facilitate opportunities for [port](#) communities. "TNPA prioritises the promotion of Radical Economic Transformation, localisation and supplier development through our procurement programmes," says Walters. "We aim to create a smart, safe and secure [port system](#) with the [infrastructure](#) and capacity to promote economic growth, job creation, transformation and [sustainable](#) benefits for [port](#) communities. [Training](#) people to join the [marine](#) and dredging divisions is part of the organisation's transformation agenda and a supplier development aspect is integral to every tender awarded by [Transnet](#). Contractors are committed to supplier development initiatives that include encouraging local small [business](#), capacity generation, IP transfer and [training](#)/bursaries for local South Africans," he added. TNPA's Section 56 programme and leasing policy also support transformation, opening up participation in [port](#) activities to businesses owned by historically disadvantaged individuals. This promotes access to new entrants, ushering in a new era where [ports](#) are able to serve communities more inclusively and sustainably. Developmental plans for the [Port of Mossel Bay](#) will ensure that it continues to create economic growth in the region. These include the establishment of a mixed-use waterfront development that will include retail, commercial and [industrial](#) facilities. This, in addition to the cruise vessel facility that brings in thousands of tourists to the Garden Route, and the fact that the [Port of Mossel Bay](#) is the only [port](#) operating two off-shore mooring points providing underwater vessel inspection, hull [cleaning](#) and salvage. The slipway upgrade that is in the pipeline will also support the local fishing and other industries. "The [Port of Mossel Bay](#) holds a special place in South African maritime history as the first recorded [harbour](#) used regularly along the [South African coast](#) by European seafarers journeying to the East. We want to ensure that it continues to take its rightful place in the South African [ports system](#)," said [Port of Mossel Bay](#) Manager, [Shadrack Tshikalange](#). He said the reintroduction of [the Mossel Bay Dias & Port Festival](#), held in partnership with the [Mossel Bay Municipality](#), aimed to bring the public into the [port](#), grow awareness of the role the [ports](#) play in the economy and promote career and [business](#) opportunities amongst local communities. Learnerships exist and TNPA has an 'adopted schools' programme that fosters the development of maths and science in learners from historically disadvantaged primary and high schools, with a view to creating a pipeline of students that qualify for tertiary [education](#) for careers in the maritime and [engineering](#) fields.

Source: <http://www.engineeringnews.co.za>

Workhorses of the sea



The **Normand Reach** departed from IJmuiden assisted by the Port Towage Amsterdam operated tug **Saturnus** Photo : Jan Plug ©