



NAVY LEAGUE

of the United States

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Leg. Affairs Weekly Round-Up – November 23

Coast Guard Authorization

Tuesday evening the House of Representatives passed a two-year Coast Guard re-authorization bill by a voice vote, and it will now head to the president for his signature. The legislation included the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA), one of the Navy League's key priorities for 2018!

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Shipbuilding Hearing

Tuesday afternoon the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower held a hearing examining the Navy's Shipbuilding strategy. The committee heard from Assistant Secretary of the Navy James "Hondo" Geurts, the services acquisition chief, [regarding the Navy's 30-year shipbuilding plan](#) and maintenance backlog. Senators challenged Secretary Geurts along with Vice Admiral William Merz, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfare Systems, on their plans to reduce the backlog which left [attack submarines "idling while waiting to enter ship yards for maintenance"](#) according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Navy officials told the committee the issue is a lack of workers, and although it will take time it is being addressed. Admiral Merz also warned that if Budget Control Act (BCA) caps returned the Navy's plans would be difficult to execute.

Secretary Geurts informed the committee that the Navy continues to negotiate with Huntington Ingalls regarding a [potential two-ship block buy](#) of the Ford-class CVN 80 and 81, and the *Enterprise* CVN 19 will be launched in late 2019. He also said the Navy plans to issue a final Request for Proposal (RFP) at the end of Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) for the service's [future frigate program](#) FFG(X). Admiral Merz reported that

the [Zumwalt \(DDG-1000\) is on track for deployment](#) and "The ship is doing fine, on track to be operational in 2021 in the fleet." The Zumwalt's Advanced Gun System (AGS) projectile program was canceled after it was determined not to meet the range and far exceeded cost expectations, and replacements are in development. For the Navy's highest priority program, the [Columbia-class ballistic-missile submarine](#), the service is attempting to fund it outside the Shipbuilding and Conversion (SCN) account to take pressure off other programs. The decision lies with the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and the Navy's job is to provide the best information possible, said Geurts. The Navy intends to complete [another Force Structure Assessment in 2019](#), but Admiral Merz said he doesn't anticipate many changes other than helping to establish capability requirements, and possibly increasing slightly.

You can watch the full hearing here: <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/18-11-27-navy-shipbuilding-programs>

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Icebreaker/Maritime Strategy Hearing

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation held a hearing Thursday to review recent GAO reports on the icebreaker and a new Maritime Strategy. After issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the icebreaker earlier this year, Coast Guard Rear Admiral Michael J. Haycock, Assistant Commandant for Acquisition & Chief Acquisition Officer told the committee they plan to award a Detail Design and Construction (DD&C) contract in Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19), with delivery by end of FY23. The GAO found risk areas in the program's cost, schedule, and performance baselines because the Coast Guard estimates didn't follow standard best practices. GAO made six recommendations as part of the study which the Coast Guard is working to incorporate into the program, said RADM Haycock. He told the committee the Integrated Program Office with the Navy continues to help the Coast Guard learn and leverage lessons, and they are on pace to award contracts for three heavy Polar Security Cutters in FY19 at a cost of \$615 million per ship for design and construction of

a three-ship acquisition.

Thursday's hearing also focused on the delays from the Department of Transportation on issuing a National Maritime Strategy, which Congress required in 2014. The 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (FY19 NDAA) extended this to 2020. Subcommittee Chairman Bryan Mast (R-FL) said the strategy is critical to addressing the challenges facing the U.S. flag fleet, including a potential shortage of mariners and the decreasing number of U.S. flag vessels. Maritime Administration Administrator Mark Buzby told the committee the lack of a strategy "limits decision-makers' ability to make policy choices" in a comprehensive fashion.

The full hearing is available to watch here:

<https://transportation.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=402915>

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GOP Committee Heads Selected

The Republican House Steering Committee made selections for committee leadership in the 116th Congress Thursday, with the full conference voting today. [Congresswoman Kay Granger \(TX-12\)](#), a strong supporter of the Navy League as previous Defense Subcommittee Chair, was selected to lead the powerful House Appropriations Committee. She replaces the retiring Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11), and will be part of an all-female Appropriations leadership with Democrat Nita Lowey (NY-17 for the first time). Rep. Sam Graves (MO-06) was selected the ranking Republican on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, and Rep. Mac Thornberry (TX-13) will continue as the top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee.

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Second Fleet Commander at CSIS

Tuesday morning the Center for Strategic and International Studies held a discussion as part of its Maritime Security Dialogue series featuring Vice Admiral Andrew "Woody" Lewis, Commander, U.S. Second Fleet. The event focused on the return of Great Power competition, specifically on VADM Lewis' role in countering Russia in

the Arctic and Atlantic. The Second Fleet was reestablished in August after being shut down in 2011 because of receding Russian activity. VADM Lewis noted that the Atlantic and North Atlantic are critical to maritime security, and with the previous setup of numbered fleets the US was not equipped to best compete in that space. As [Russian submarine activity in the Atlantic surges](#) NATO defense ministers approved the Joint Forces Command (JFC) with the U.S. in June. It will be headquartered in Norfolk, VA along with the Second Fleet. As head of the fleet, Admiral Lewis said he will focus on improving command and control structure in the Atlantic and arctic to ensure unity of effort and reduce blind spots. It will be the Navy's maneuver arm in those regions, conduct disaster relief, participate in joint exercises and conduct homeland defense. VADM Lewis reported that he has deeply studied the history of the previous second fleet, and [promised it would be lean](#), focused on operations and heavy on intelligence. The new Second Fleet will reach operational capability in 2019.

You can watch the full event here:

<https://www.csis.org/events/maritime-security-dialogue-return-great-power-competition-and-second-fleet-vadm-andrew-woody>

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Congressional Defense report

A Congressionally mandated study of the 2018 National Defense Strategy says the United States could lose a fight against a rival, [partially because of a shrinking submarine fleet](#). The report, produced by the U.S. Institute of Peace, urged the Navy to recapitalize its sealift and submarine fleet or risk taking heavy losses in a fight. The co-chairs of the commission that studied the NDS told Congress this week a "lack of stable, consistent, predictable funding" has devastated readiness. They also criticized the Pentagon's [outdated acquisition systems](#) and warned of a [degradation of civilian voices](#) and control of the military. [The report said](#) "We believe that the NDS points the Department of Defense and the country in the right direction, but it does not adequately explain how we should get there."

You can watch the full hearing here: <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/18-11-27-findings-and-recommendations-of-the-commission-on-the-national-defense-strategy>

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to your councils, as well as friends and potential Navy League members!



181126-N-NZ935-0039 BOSTON (Nov. 26,2018) Members of the 1804 Concord Independent Battery render honors as the future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) arrives in Boston, Mass. Thomas Hudner arrived in Boston to hold the commissioning ceremony for the U.S. Navy's newest ship scheduled for later this week. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Joshua Hammond/Released)

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Other stories of interest:

Top Stories

[Will looming budget cuts bust up the Navy's plans for an enormous fleet? - Defense News/Nov 16](#)

WASHINGTON - After several years of increasing spending and virtually unprecedented shipbuilding budgets, the U.S. Navy's party could be coming to a screeching halt in the 2020 budget, according to analysts and insiders who spoke to Defense News.

[INSIGHTS: Rear Admiral Mark H. Buzby, USN \(Ret\) - MarineLink/Nov 16](#)

Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby was appointed by President Donald Trump and sworn in as Maritime Administrator on August 8, 2017. Prior to his appointment, Buzby served as president of the National Defense Transportation Association, a position he has held since retiring from the U.S. Navy in 2013 with over 34 years of service. A 1979 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Buzby earned his Bachelor of Science in Nautical Science and U.S. Coast Guard Third Mate License. He was commissioned in the US Navy in June 1979, is a graduate of the Joint Forces Staff College and holds master's degrees from the U.S. Naval War College and Salve Regina University in Strategic Studies and International Relations respectively.

[CNO: 'No Surprises' in GAO Report on Submarine Readiness Challenges - USNI News/Nov 26](#)

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said there are "no surprises" in a recent Government Accountability Office report that found the Navy has lost more than \$1.5 billion and thousands of operational days over the past decade due to attack submarines caught in maintenance delays or sitting idle while awaiting an availability.

[The US Navy sent a cruiser to challenge China in the South China Sea, and Beijing is not happy about it - Business Insider/Nov 29](#)

Beijing responded with a formal diplomatic protest, CNN reported, citing multiple US officials.

[Blue Water Navy Bill Sinking in Senate Despite Late-Hour Talks - Military.com/Nov 29](#)

As many as 90,000 ailing "Blue Water Navy" veterans are likely to have to wait for a new Congress to see legislation passed that would make them eligible for Agent

Orange-related disability compensation and Department of Veterans Affairs-paid health care.

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Seapower

[DoD Official: U.S. Needs to Develop New Counters to Future Hypersonic Missiles - USNI News/Nov 16](#)

Existing radars don't provide the almost-split-second warning needed to keep Guam, carrier strike groups in the Pacific and Kadena Air Base in Okinawa from being held hostage to a future hypersonic attack, the Pentagon's chief technology officer said this week.

[China Has Built 'Great Wall of SAMs' In Pacific: US Adm. Davidson - Breaking Defense/Nov 17](#)

HALIFAX: By turning reefs and atolls in the disputed South China Sea into fortified artificial islands, complete with anti-aircraft Surface-to-Air Missiles, China has transformed "what was a great wall of sand just three years ago [into] a great wall of SAMs," the US commander in the Pacific said here today.

[China may boost carrier fleet to seven by mid-2020s: expert - Asia Times/Nov 26](#)

The Liaoning is the People's Liberation Army's sole operational aircraft carrier at present, but Beijing plans to add three more carriers to the PLA naval fleet by 2025 and may also deploy three amphibious assault ships capable of carrying combat aircraft.

[Navy must meet Russia's challenge in Europe, CNO Richardson says - Stars and Stripes/Nov 20](#)

A resurgent Russia is "challenging a lot of the system of rules and norms that have existed here in Europe and around the world for so long," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson said after an all hands meeting with sailors at the Navy's base in Naples. "So it is very important that as this dynamic emerges that we learn and respond to that as a nation."

[Navy's oldest shipyard prepares for 20-year upgrade effort - Federal News Network/Nov 27](#)

"Shipyard optimization plan is a program that's been estimated at about \$21 billion over the next 20 years," Mosman said on Agency in Focus: Navy. "It's going to be fed into the refurbishment of the facilities, dry dock recapitalization and capital

equipment improvements across all four of the [Navy] shipyards. So we all get a piece of that."

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Surface and Submarine Warfare

['Substantial' Columbia-class Missile Tube Weld Fix Will Cost \\$27 Million, Take a Year - USNI News/Nov 7](#)

BWX Technologies, the sub-contractor building missile tubes for Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) prime contractor General Dynamics Electric Boat, discovered the welding problems over the summer. Electric Boat had not yet installed the tubes in submarine hulls, Rex Geveden, chief executive of BWX Technologies, said while speaking with Wall Street analysts during a Wednesday morning conference call. The fixes might not be finished until the summer of 2019.

[U.S. Navy officer could face questions in Norwegian frigate collision - Washington Post/Nov 17](#)

The American officer, who has not been identified, was onboard the Norwegian navy frigate as part of a military personnel exchange, according to U.S. and Norwegian officials. The sailor's role on the ship remains unclear.

[China Has More Nuclear Subs Than the West Believed - Defense One/Nov 20](#)

Western observers have likely underestimated the number of Chinese nuclear submarines in development, but overestimated how many are operational, a new analysis suggests. In particular, only half of China's nuclear-armed SSBNs appear to be in operation.

[The Sea of Azov won't become the new South China Sea \(and Russia knows it\) - Defense News/Nov 28](#)

ORLANDO, Fla., and MOSCOW - Russia's brazen seizure of three Ukrainian navy ships on Sunday set off a firestorm of finger-pointing and appeals to international law on both sides. But the clash over the Kerch Strait and access to the Sea of Azov isn't likely to become a long-running international spectacle like the ongoing maritime feud between the U.S. and China over China's claims in the South China Sea.

[Navy Pushes Live, Virtual, Constructive Training - National Defense/Nov 27](#)

The service is facing a "more lethal and complex battlefield" that now includes space and cyber operations, Adm. Christopher Grady said during a keynote

address at the Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference in Orlando, Florida, which is hosted by the National Training and Simulation Association. NTSA is an affiliate of the National Defense Industrial Association.

[The US Navy wants electronic weapons that "go to 11" - Quartz/Nov 29](#)

The US Navy is courting proposals from defense contractors to design the next generation of electronic warfare (EW) technology. It's looking for devices that can be used to jam enemy radar and missile systems and deceive hostile forces-and the service branch wants equipment that "goes to 11."

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Aviation

[How industry, government can partner to meet the Pentagon's fighter readiness goal - Defense News/Nov 21](#)

Secretary of Defense James Mattis' directive to reach 80 percent mission-capable rates across all tactical fighter fleets represents a major challenge. It is one we at Lockheed Martin fully support and embrace. American fighter jets are delivering exceptional capability for our men and women in uniform today, and we must ensure they are always mission-ready when it matters most.

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Expeditionary Warfare

[How Navy satellites give Marines smartphone-like comms - C4ISR.NET/Nov 7](#)

The Mobile User Objective System, or MUOS satellites, use 3G protocols in place of legacy satellite connections. Planners say a military standard waveform on a software defined radio will deliver enhanced mobility, higher data rates and improved operational availability.

[This is why US Marines will be pitted against British Royal Marines in a force-on-force battle - MarineTimes/Nov 17](#)

For too long, but for good reason, Marine training exercises have focused on counterterrorism or counterinsurgency adversaries. While those opponents present their own threats, they can't match the firepower of a Russian or Chinese force, which is where larger U.S. military strategy is shifting.

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Homeland

[White House Fills Two Vacant Seats on Federal Maritime Commission - Maritime Exec/Nov 16](#)

Maffei, a former Democratic congressman, departed the FMC on June 30 when his initial term expired; at the time, the White House declined to renew it. Rep. Maffei had been appointed by the Obama administration in 2016, and while FMC commissioners ordinarily serve for five years, they may only serve for two unless confirmed, a process that is initiated by the White House. After his departure, the five-seat Commission had only two members, prompting concerns from shippers about its effectiveness.

['Making a Sailor' documentary reveals what boot camp is like in modern-day Navy - Stars and Stipes/Nov 19](#)

Filmmakers followed four recruits from their homes to the Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill., to observe their trials and tribulations over three months on the road to graduation.



[The carriers and escorts of the USS Ronald Reagan and USS John C. Stennis strike groups](#) have teamed up for high-end exercises in the Philippine Sea, a relatively rare gathering of naval power in the Western Pacific. It comes at a time of heightened tensions between the U.S. and China over contested Chinese claims in the nearby South China Sea - including a recent "unsafe" [encounter](#) between an American destroyer and a Chinese warship near China's fortified outposts in the Spratly Islands.

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