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INSIDE THE PENTAGON 21 OCT 04

Defense Officials Say Littoral Combat Ships Could Defend U.S. Shores

By John T. Bennett

PANAMA CITY, FL -- The Navy's Littoral Combat Ships might be deployed for homeland defense tasks, a move that would expand the vessels' mission beyond offensive shallow-water combat operations, two top Pentagon officials say.

"Many of the aspects associated with [its] littoral capability makes the LCS . . . an ideal candidate for consideration with regards to homeland defense" missions, Paul McHale, assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense, said here Oct. 19 during a National Defense Industrial Association-sponsored conference.

Defense Department officials should "take a hard look at what kinds of solutions are needed to support the homeland . . . to determine whether the LCS, or some [similar] platform, is . . . appropriate . . . for the execution of warfighting close to our shores" -- especially since several U.S. allies have expressed interest in purchasing the littoral ships to guard their coastlines, he added.

A draft version of the Pentagon's "Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support," crafted by McHale's office, recommends a comprehensive assessment by U.S. Northern Command to determine the required platforms and capabilities needed to protect the United States from future terrorist attacks. The draft was first obtained by Defense News. The final version of the strategic blueprint could be finalized "in six or eight weeks," McHale noted.

The Navy envisions LCS as a fleet of ships that can operate close to the shore, where many of today's warships cannot venture. The coastal combatants will be built to deploy separate mission modules designed to defeat mine, surface ship and submarine threats, according to service

and industry plans. In late May, the Navy selected two industry teams -- one led by General Dynamics and the other by Lockheed Martin -- to build the first four littoral warships. During the selection, the service rejected a Raytheon design.

Construction of the first littoral warship is slated to begin this fiscal year; the boat is scheduled to join the fleet in 2007.

Navy officials already have held "initial discussions" to examine how they might squeeze an already tight shipbuilding budget in future years to make funds available for more littoral ships than currently planned -- should NORTHCOM designate LCS as a homeland defense requirement, Navy acquisition czar John Young told Inside the Pentagon later during the conference. Those talks also have covered how the service would find dollars to finance an effort to put together a potential fourth LCS mission module designed specifically for homeland defense missions, he added.

While Young's comment shows the Navy is at least mulling how it would tinker with its shipbuilding coffers to pay for extra littoral ships, the ultimate decision on employing the shallow-water vessels for patrolling U.S. waters -- and the requirements for a homeland defense mission package -- lies with NORTHCOM leaders, McHale told ITP. He declined to comment on what specific systems likely would be included in such a module.

A NORTHCOM spokesman confirmed Oct. 20 that command officials expect to use LCS vessels for homeland defense, but they have not decided how many would be needed for the job.

During an Oct. 14 Naval Sea Systems Command forum in Washington, Rear Adm. William Landay, the Navy's program executive officer for littoral and mine warfare, said his office

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has not yet been tasked with putting together a homeland defense-specific mission module. Young indicated during the conference that deploying an LCS to guard the United States against future attacks might not require putting together an entire fourth mission package, a task that would require expending already scant resources.

“I think it’d be overstated to call” the platforms LCS vessels would carry for homeland defense missions “a module [because] just with the basic self-defense system that we want aboard an LCS, [the ships] would be able to do a lot of basic maritime defense work,” Young told ITP.

NORTHCOM officials do not expect homeland defense-assigned LCS vessels would require a mission module tailored for the role, the command spokesman said.

Echoing McHale, Young touted other nations’ interest in the new class of warships for coastal

protection as evidence the vessels would fit well into U.S. homeland defense efforts. LCS is “set up to [patrol and defend] foreign coasts, [so] it could easily do that here off the U.S. shores,” he noted.

“Maritime traffic is clearly a means terrorists are using,” Young said. To combat their aims, “we need to have a fast ship, a capable ship that can do some [maritime defense] work, and then do the mine warfare and the near-land” combat missions originally prescribed for LCS, he said.

“We’d rather not use a billion-dollar DDG [destroyer] to board ships,” Young continued.

Meanwhile, McHale also called for an expanded role for Naval Reserve forces in homeland defense operations, saying DOD leaders should consider placing a crew of reservists aboard an LCS assigned to homeland defense missions.

SECNAV Visits The U.K.

By Journalist 2nd Class Lily Daniels,
Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe Public
Affairs

LONDON -- Secretary of the Navy
(SECNAV) Gordon R. England presented
awards to Sailors stationed at Commander, U.S.
Naval Forces Europe (CNE), Oct. 21.

The SECNAV presented awards for
achievements, including support during
Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Olympics.
Nine Sailors received the various awards
ranging from the Legion of Merit, Navy/Marine
Corps Commendation Medals, Navy/Marine
Corps Achievement Medals, and Letters of
Appreciation.

Chief Hospital Corpsman (CAC/FMF)
Brian S. Hashey explained why it was a
privilege for him to receive his Navy/Marine
Corps Commendation Medal from the
SECNAV.

“The actual citation reads, ‘The Secretary
of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting...’ To
actually have the SECNAV present me my
award is the perfect way to end my tour here,”
he said.

England congratulated the awardees and
thanked everyone for their contribution to the
security of our nation and the world.

“The Navy just celebrated its 229th
birthday, and for those 229 years, our nation has
been sorely tested,” said England. “The military
is doing a great job for America.”

During his two-day visit, England is also
meeting with senior CNE leaders, as well as
attending a traditional Royal Navy Trafalgar
Night dinner aboard HMS Victory. He will
present three Legion of Merit awards to British
naval personnel in Portsmouth, England.

Falluja Sheiks Demand End To Airstrikes To Save Talks

By Edward Wong

CAMP FALLUJA, Iraq - Tribal sheiks and clerics in the insurgent stronghold of Falluja met Thursday to discuss reopening negotiations with the interim Iraqi government to forestall an expected American invasion.

The leaders released a statement demanding that the interim government led by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi arrange a halt to the almost daily American airstrikes in the city and to help families who have fled Falluja return to their homes. If the government met those conditions, the leaders said they would continue talks.

But around 4 p.m., witnesses said explosions were heard in the southern districts of Falluja as aircraft flew overhead. The attack lasted about an hour. No casualties were reported immediately.

Violence also flared in Baghdad, 35 miles to the east, as gunmen opened fire on a bus carrying female employees of Iraqi Airways to the airport, killing at least one person and injuring 14 others, a hospital official and an airline employee said.

The attack took place in the morning on the highway to the Baghdad airport, one of the most dangerous stretches of road in Iraq. The sound of a nearby explosion caused the driver of the bus, which was carrying two dozen women, to stop. Men wearing scarves over their faces then pulled up in a Toyota sedan and opened fire.

After being grounded for 14 years because of economic penalties and war, Iraqi Airways resumed commercial service last month, flying to Damascus, Syria, and Amman, Jordan, with a single Boeing 737-200. Executives have said they intend to expand the fleet and add routes to Dubai and Tehran, Iran. Despite the morning attack, the airline did not cancel flights.

The American military said that the commander of the 343rd Quartermaster Company, some of whose members refused orders to transport fuel through a dangerous area last week, had been relieved of duty. A

statement said she had asked for the change, but Pentagon officials described it as a disciplinary action. The military declined to name the commander, citing privacy.

The sheiks and clerics met in Falluja just three days after the lead negotiator for the city, Khalid al-Jumali, said his team had broken off talks with the Iraqi government and the American military, in part because of the continuing American airstrikes. Dr. Allawi's recent demand that city leaders turn over the Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had also chilled the talks, he said, maintaining that Mr. Zarqawi was not in the city.

"It's a common saying that if you want your orders to be followed, you must order something that people are capable of," Abdullah al-Janabi, the leader of the mujahedeen council in Falluja, said in an interview broadcast by Al Jazeera, the Arab satellite network.

Marines aboard a transport helicopter that landed Thursday morning here at Camp Falluja, the main American base in the area, said they were ready to take the fight to the mujahedeen. The marines withdrew from the city last May after turning over control to an Iraqi militia that later dissolved. Since then, militants have built up defenses and allowed groups like One God and Jihad, led by Mr. Zarqawi, to thrive.

Dr. Allawi, who was holding talks with city leaders in the northern city of Mosul, said the government was still committed to pacifying Falluja through political means.

"We are expending all political efforts so that the brothers and the honorable residents of Falluja stick to the decisions of the government," he said, according to a pool report. "When political patience runs out, that will be another matter."

"The important thing is that they stick to the sovereignty of the law, disband illegal armed organizations and hand over heavy and medium weapons," Dr. Allawi said. "We are determined that this happens across the country."

Pentagon Board Finds U.S. May Need More Troops

By Tony Capaccio

The U.S. military lacks sufficient troops for post-combat "stability and reconstruction" operations, and should consider adding "significant" numbers, a review by the Pentagon's Defense Science Board found.

The report lists four main options for addressing what it calls an "enduring shortfall" of troops: enlarging the military, shifting combat troops to post-combat duties, turning to the United Nations or allies for assistance, or scaling back "the number and/or objectives of stabilization missions."

"We simply don't have enough forces for our overseas commitments," said Loren Thompson, a defense analyst and vice president of the Lexington Institute, a Washington research center, who was briefed by the Pentagon on the report. "The implication is that money will have to be taken out of Navy and Air Force investment accounts to increase the size of the force."

In Iraq, slow progress on reconstruction has helped fuel discontent with the U.S. occupation. Former U.S. administrator in Iraq Paul Bremer said earlier this month that the U.S. committed too few troops after the fall of Baghdad to maintain order and stop looting. President George W. Bush, who has been criticized by Democratic nominee John Kerry for failing to adequately plan to "win the peace in Iraq," has said the all-volunteer military is sufficient to meet current and future needs.

The U.S. Army has 482,000 troops, of which 255,000 are serving abroad in 120 countries, including 15 of the service's 34 combat brigades. These numbers include about 138,000 troops in Iraq and 17,000 in Afghanistan and the biggest call-up of Reserve and National Guard troops since the Vietnam War.

Bush also has identified Iran and North Korea as countries the U.S. may have to confront over their efforts to build nuclear weapons. The U.S. Congress as part of the \$422 billion fiscal 2005 defense bill awaiting President Bush's signature increased the Army's

authorized strength by 20,000 to 502,400 troops. This increase would occur next year. It was spurred by lawmaker's concerns that Iraq operations were spreading U.S. forces too thin.

Lawmakers also agreed to add another 10,000 troops by 2009 and 9,000 Marines by 2009 for a total force of 184,00, up from 175,000 today.

The review was commissioned in January to determine how well the military was structured to make the transition from combat to more complex post-conflict operations. The Defense Science Board is a board of independent experts set up in the Department of Defense.

The study assumed the U.S. would embark on new operations abroad approximately every 18 months, which has been the trend since the U.S. sent troops to Bosnia in 1998.

About 4,000 U.S troops remain in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia as part of the ongoing multinational force enforcing UN resolutions guaranteeing the safety of Muslim refugees. They perform vehicle searches and reconstruction work such as road repairs and landmine clearance, for example. They also participate in searches for suspected war criminals such as Radovan Karadzic.

The review concludes the "current and projected force structure will not sustain our current and projected global stabilization commitments," according to Science Board briefing charts obtained by Bloomberg News.

Pentagon officials are being briefed on the report today before its public release, the Board said in a statement.

Details of the Science Board report were first disclosed by Senator Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat, during a Sept. 23 hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and subsequently reported on by the Los Angeles Times.

The report is undergoing a security review that normally takes one month before release but "we are pressing to expedite the process and it appears we have cooperation," the Science Board said in an e-mail statement. The report

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will be released ``very shortly after it comes out of security review," it said.

``It is not clear that our capabilities will suffice if we maintain the current pace of stabilization operations" which ``can be as resource-intensive as major combat operations and last much longer."

The Pentagon must treat these operations as ``an explicit mission in force planning and not as a lesser-included case."

U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said at the Sept. 23 hearing that ``the study was a good one and I thought it was sufficiently interesting that I have had it briefed to the chiefs, and I believe the combatant commanders."

At a subsequent press conference, Rumsfeld said, ``We have the capabilities of

fulfilling the missions that the United States military is called upon to perform and likely to be called upon to perform."

In its current issue, the magazine *The National Review*, which had supported the war in Iraq, criticized the postwar planning.

``The U.S. military has to take a more lively interest in-post combat stability operations, if problems of the first year-and-a-half in Iraq are to be avoided elsewhere," wrote editor Richard Lowry in a piece entitled ``What Went Wrong."

Overall, ``the Bush administration didn't know what it was getting into in Iraq and then found itself stumbling into exactly the sort of heavy-handed occupation many American officials wanted to avoid," he wrote.

Released Detainees Rejoining The Fight

By John Mintz

At least 10 detainees released from the Guantanamo Bay prison after U.S. officials concluded they posed little threat have been recaptured or killed fighting U.S. or allied forces in Pakistan and Afghanistan, according to Pentagon officials.

One of the repatriated prisoners is still at large after taking leadership of a militant faction in Pakistan and aligning himself with al Qaeda, Pakistani officials said. In telephone calls to Pakistani reporters, he has bragged that he tricked his U.S. interrogators into believing he was someone else.

Another returned captive is an Afghan teenager who had spent two years at a special compound for young detainees at the military prison in Cuba, where he learned English, played sports and watched videos, informed sources said. U.S. officials believed they had persuaded him to abandon his life with the Taliban, but recently the young man, now 18, was recaptured with other Taliban fighters near Kandahar, Afghanistan, according to the sources, who asked for anonymity because they were discussing sensitive military information.

The cases demonstrate the difficulty Washington faces in deciding when alleged al Qaeda and Taliban detainees should be freed, amid pressure from foreign governments and human rights groups that have denounced U.S. officials for detaining the Guantanamo Bay captives for years without due-process rights, military officials said.

"Reports that former detainees have rejoined al Qaeda and the Taliban are evidence that these individuals are fanatical and particularly deceptive," said a Pentagon spokesman, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Flex Plexico. "From the beginning, we have recognized that there are inherent risks in determining when an individual detainee no longer had to be held at Guantanamo Bay."

The latest case emerged two weeks ago when two Chinese engineers working on a dam project in Pakistan's lawless Waziristan region were kidnapped. The commander of a tribal militant group, Abdullah Mehsud, 29, told

reporters by satellite phone that his followers were responsible for the abductions.

Mehsud said he spent two years at Guantanamo Bay after being captured in 2002 in Afghanistan fighting alongside the Taliban. At the time he was carrying a false Afghan identity card, and while in custody he maintained the fiction that he was an innocent Afghan tribesman, he said. U.S. officials never realized he was a Pakistani with deep ties to militants in both countries, he added.

"I managed to keep my Pakistani identity hidden all these years," he told Gulf News in a recent interview. Since his return to Pakistan in March, Pakistani newspapers have written lengthy accounts of Mehsud's hair and looks, and the powerful appeal to militants of his fiery denunciations of the United States. "We would fight America and its allies," he said in one interview, "until the very end."

Last week Pakistani commandos freed one of the abducted Chinese engineers in a raid on a mud-walled compound in which five militants and the other hostage were killed.

The 10 or more returning militants are but a fraction of the 202 Guantanamo Bay detainees who have been returned to their homelands. Of that group, 146 were freed outright, and 56 were transferred to the custody of their home governments. Many of those men have since been freed.

Mark Jacobson, a former special assistant for detainee policy in the Defense Department who now teaches at Ohio State University, estimated that as many as 25 former detainees have taken up arms again. "You can't trust them when they say they're not terrorists," he said.

A U.S. defense official who helps oversee the prisoners added: "We could have said we'll accept no risks and refused to release anyone. But we've regarded that option as not humane, and not practical, and one that makes the U.S. government appear unreasonable."

Another former Guantanamo Bay prisoner was killed in southern Afghanistan last month after a shootout with Afghan forces. Maulvi Ghafar was a senior Taliban commander when he was captured in late 2001. No information has emerged about what he told interrogators in

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Guantanamo Bay, but in several cases U.S. officials have released detainees they knew to have served with the Taliban if they swore off violence in written agreements.

Returned to Afghanistan in February, Ghafar resumed his post as a top Taliban commander, and his forces ambushed and killed a United Nations engineer and three Afghan soldiers, Afghan officials said, according to press accounts.

A third released Taliban commander died in an ambush this summer. Mullah Shahzada, who apparently convinced U.S. officials that he had sworn off violence, rejoined the Taliban as soon as he was freed in mid-2003, sources with knowledge of his situation said.

The Afghan teenager who was recaptured recently had been kidnapped and possibly abused by the Taliban before he was apprehended the first time in 2001. After almost three years living with other young detainees in a seaside house at Guantanamo Bay, he was returned in January of this year to his country,

where he was to be monitored by Afghan officials and private contractors. But the program failed and he fell back in with the Taliban, one source said.

"Someone dropped the ball in Afghanistan," the source said.

One former detainee who has not yet been able to take up arms is Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane, a Dane who also signed a promise to renounce violence. But in recent months he has told Danish media that he considers the written oath "toilet paper," stated his plans to join the war in Chechnya and said Denmark's prime minister is a valid target for terrorists.

Human rights activists said the cases of unrepentant militants do not undercut their assertions that the United States is violating the rights of Guantanamo Bay inmates.

"This doesn't alter the injustice, or support the administration's argument that setting aside their rights is justified," said Alistair Hodgett, a spokesman for Amnesty International.

USS Vandegrift To Take Part In Exercise In Intercepting WMD

By Nancy Montgomery

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan —

The USS Vandegrift will be heading off to Sagami Bay, just north of Yokosuka, next week to participate in a multinational maritime exercise in intercepting weapons of mass destruction.

The exercise, under the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), hosted for the first time by Japan, also will include naval and coast guard vessels from Japan, Australia and France, as well as observers from numerous other countries.

Tuesday's exercise will simulate interception of a freighter carrying chemical weapons, according to Japanese officials. It's unclear what role the Vandegrift, a guided missile frigate, will play.

The exercise is the 12th of its kind since September of last year, after President Bush led a group of countries to form the PSI and, through shared intelligence and military cooperation, to stop ships suspected of carrying WMD.

The exercise is in part meant to warn North Korea, and those who might buy arms from it, that North Korea is being watched for possible attempts to move WMD by sea, according to The Australian newspaper.

Masamitsu Nagano, a spokesman for the Japanese foreign ministry's Non-Proliferation, Science and Nuclear Energy Division, disagreed.

"The purpose of PSI exercises is to crack down on the spread of weapons of mass destruction and missiles," Nagano said. "Weapons of mass destruction and missiles are a global issue and the exercises are not conducted with specific areas in mind."

Lt. Cmdr. Marc Boyd, a 7th Fleet spokesman, spoke along similar lines.

"It's not directed at any one country," he said. "It gives all the countries the chances to work together and handle a situation."

But John R. Bolton, U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, said something a little different in remarks

prepared for a Tuesday speech to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

"The threats posed by proliferation from North Korea in the Asian region are obvious," Bolton said. "In addition to training, these exercises serve a useful deterrent to companies that otherwise might be tempted to do business with proliferators like North Korea."

PSI, with 15 core members, has the support of 60 countries, according to Bolton. The legality of interdictions has been questioned because the International Law of the Sea strictly limits what can be intercepted on the high seas.

According to Bolton's remarks earlier this week, though, there is "ample authority to support interdiction actions at sea, in the air, and on land."

But he told the Arms Control Association last year that, "We understand that there are circumstances in which our authorities may be ambiguous or open to question, and there are almost certainly circumstances where authority under current national and international interpretation doesn't exist."

In those cases, he said, PSI countries were seeking additional authority through means such as amendments to conventions on laws of the sea.

Additionally, the United States has sought bilateral agreements to facilitate the boarding of ships suspected of carrying WMD and has signed agreements with the two largest flag registries, Liberia and Panama, as well as the Marshall Islands. Negotiations with some 20 others are ongoing, Bolton said.

Since the initiative began, its most notable success was the October 2003 intercept of the BBC China, loaded with nuclear components for Libya. That interdiction included help from Britain, Germany and Italy, and, according to Bolton's remarks, "... helped convince [Libyan leader Moammar] Gadhafi that the days of his undisturbed accumulation of the instruments of destruction were over."

Critics point out that years before the creation of PSI, at least two shipments of missile components and missile-related products

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to Libya were seized by Indian and British authorities, and that although Pakistan is thought to be among the world's worst proliferators of WMD, it's a current U.S. ally and is not targeted.

But the effort is generally applauded. In June, Russia signed on to the initiative and for the first time will send a representative to next week's exercise to observe.

Japan also invited China and South Korea to the drill, but they decided not to join, officials said.

The initiative is going to be getting special attention in Asian waters for the next year, according to 7th Fleet Commander Vice Adm. Jon Greenert.

"Our vision is sharing information on maritime travel," Greenert said in an interview with Stars and Stripes last month. "Who is who? Are they licensed? What do they carry?"

The Malaysians and Indonesians have had concerns about the initiative: "They don't want a heavy-handed patrol," Greenert said. "Our view is we're only interested now in sharing information."

North Korea has criticized the upcoming exercise as a "wicked attempt by the U.S. Bush regime to further intensify and block our republic," according to news reports.

Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.

EA-18G PDR Wraps Up Today, Boeing Says

By Lorenzo Cortes

The preliminary design review (PDR) for the EA-18G electronic attack version of Boeing's [BA] F/A-18F Super Hornet strike fighter wraps up today, according to a company spokeswoman.

Boeing program personnel worked the PDR all this week, company spokeswoman Pat Frost told Defense Daily yesterday.

Also today, Boeing begins work on the forward fuselage of the first EA-18G being built under the \$1 billion systems development and demonstration (SDD) contract the Navy awarded Boeing late last year (Defense Daily, Jan. 6). The aircraft, designated EA-1, is slated to be one of two aircraft for the SDD phase of

the EA-18G.

The contract award covers the five-year SDD phase, which includes all laboratory, ground and flight tests, including component level testing through the full-up EA-18G weapons system performance flight testing.

The EA-18G will carry as many as five ALQ-99 jamming pods, with two AIM-120 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM) and a pair of AGM-88 High-speed

Anti-Radiation Missiles (HARM), both produced by Raytheon [RTN].

The EA-18G would eventually replace current EA-6B Prowlers in Navy service. Northrop Grumman [NOC] is the prime contractor for the Prowler fleet

Boeing, Navy Demo SLAM-ER Flex Targeting At China Lake

Boeing [BA] said yesterday that the Navy demonstrated the flexible targeting capability of the Standoff Land Attack Missile-Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) during a recent test at the Naval Air Warfare Center in China Lake, Calif.

“The warfighter community is always extremely positive about SLAM-ER--it’s the only weapon that can engage fixed or moving targets on the land and sea providing our customers with a distinct advantage,” Mark McGraw, Boeing’s director of naval weapons

programs, said in a statement. “And we continue to work with the Navy to define future upgrades.”

The missile was launched from an altitude of 10,000 feet, 45 nautical miles from its target. While in flight, simulated intelligence data revealed the primary target was destroyed so the SLAM-ER was retargeted using SLAM-ER’s Land Midcourse Update. Pilots took control of the missile, guiding it to impact within 8 feet of the target.

Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough

Elaine's celebration

Elaine Donnelly had lots to celebrate when she convened her annual Center on Military Readiness reception earlier this month in Washington.

As supporters munched tapas at the National Guard Association of the USA building not far from the Capitol, Mrs. Donnelly proudly announced a final victory. The Supreme Court earlier this year had denied any further appeals in the dismissal of a libel suit against Mrs. Donnelly brought by a female former Navy pilot.

Mrs. Donnelly long has argued she was only trying to maintain the Navy's pilot training standards when she exposed what she believed was special treatment given some female pilot candidates.

Eight years (and hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees) later, Mrs. Donnelly and her pro-military group are still standing.

Mrs. Donnelly honored several supporters: The Shelby Cullom Davis Foundation; George

Neumayr, managing editor of the American Spectator; and Sen. Zell Miller, Georgia Democrat. Mr. Miller, who could not attend the reception because of Senate business, received the Sentinel Award for "his unfailing support of America's Armed Forces."

Mrs. Donnelly noted that during Senate debate on the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, Mr. Miller said, "No one wants to hear this ... but there should also be some serious questioning of having male and female soldiers serving side by side in these kinds of military missions."

Diversity

The White House is not the only Washington institution seeking Hispanic support. The Pentagon wants it, too.

The Army and Navy have started Spanish-language Web sites. The Army has "cyber recruiters" who can chat in Spanish with would-be recruits. The Pentagon is running ads directed at Hispanic youths.

Hispanics make up 16 percent of the U.S. population, but only 9.9 percent of the 1.4 million active-duty force.

SEAL Faces Murder Charge

By Jon Frank

VIRGINIA BEACH — Navy SEAL buddies Ronald J. Gasper and Bradley J. Jondahl had been drinking at a bar on July 31 when they left to return to Gasper's house in Bayside.

There, they continued drinking whiskey until Gasper got highly intoxicated.

That's when something happened between the two commandos, who were trained to kill the enemy but bound by honor and tradition to protect each other.

According to testimony Thursday at a preliminary hearing in General District Court, Gasper drunkenly told police that Jondahl began "acting ... up."

"So I shot him," Gasper told police.

Gasper also told police at the time that he expected Jondahl to survive "because I only shot him once in the gut, not in the head. Just once in the gut."

Jondahl died later that day, and Gasper was charged with first-degree murder.

No further details about motive emerged from Thursday's hearing into the shooting at Gasper's house in the 4400 block of Hinsdale St .

Judge Pamela Hutchens certified charges against Gasper to the grand jury. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison.

Gasper, 30, works at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base's Dam Neck Annex, home of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group, a highly secretive arm of the Navy's commando operations.

Jondahl, 24, was assigned to another SEAL team and lived in a Chesapeake Beach

apartment. He was buried Aug. 12 in his hometown of Aberdeen, S.D., with full military honors.

Police learned of the shooting when Gasper called 911 to report that he had shot an intruder.

Police Officer John Kozlowski responded to the call at about 4 a.m.

When Kozlowski arrived, he found Gasper swinging the garage door open. Jondahl was on the garage floor, still breathing but wounded. Gasper suggested that Kozlowski perform CPR on the shooting victim.

Jondahl was taken to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, where he died during surgery.

Kozlowski said he noticed a small amount of blood on Gasper's hand and also found blood splatters inside the house, along with open whiskey bottles. He said Gasper smelled heavily of alcohol and slurred his words as he related events leading to the shooting.

In the house, Kozlowski said he found a 9 mm handgun , which was the weapon used to shoot Jondahl.

Gasper's attorney, Norfolk lawyer James O. Broccoletti, argued that the charge should be reduced to second-degree murder or voluntary manslaughter because there was no premeditation.

Hutchens denied the request but let Gasper remain free on a \$30,000 surety bond, a rarity for murder defendants. Gasper was granted the bond in General District Court, and the decision was upheld on appeal to Circuit Court .

Gasper returned to his job after he posted bond.

He will remain free on bond until his trial. No trial date has been set.

USS San Antonio Rite To Be In Ingleside

By Sig Christenson

The Navy's first ship to bear the name San Antonio will be commissioned in Ingleside as part of a Gulf Coast swing.

The USS San Antonio, christened more than a year ago during a festive ceremony in New Orleans, will officially join the fleet after the commissioning.

A senior Navy official revealed Thursday that Ingleside will be the site for the commissioning, but added "we don't know what the time frame is" because the ship's delivery date is uncertain.

Word of the decision to launch the ship in Texas was celebrated in Washington.

"I am proud to be the sponsor of the most advanced amphibious ship ever built," Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, said Thursday. "The USS San Antonio represents the future of the Navy and the next generation of our military capabilities."

The San Antonio is a ship of firsts. It's the Navy's first stealth ship, using fewer angles from protruding pieces of steel and a pair of eight-sided twin masts to reduce its radar signature.

It's the fleet's first "gender-neutral" ship, with living quarters and showers for women. Women, additionally, will be able to reach controls on the bridge and other parts of the San Antonio as easily as men will.

It's the first designed entirely on a computer. It also is the first of 12 San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ships being built under an ambitious \$10 billion program.

The new ship was christened July 20, 2003, on the west bank of the Mississippi River. It will

replace four aging classes of amphibious combat vessels, one of them the Cleveland.

Jim Berg, co-chairman of the USS San Antonio Commissioning Committee, served with a battle group that included the Cleveland when he was a Marine helicopter pilot in 1969 during the Vietnam War. He was 24 at the time.

"It's special for me if for no other reason because I was a Marine," said Berg, the 59-year-old owner of Matson Multi Media, an Alamo City audio-video production company.

The San Antonio likely will pay a port call on Galveston before the commissioning. Dignitaries and "friends of the Navy" will join the ship there, if all goes well, for the sojourn to Ingleside, he said. Norfolk, Va., Naval Station will be its homeport.

In some ways, the \$850 million San Antonio doesn't differ much from 22 other amphibious transport vessels in the Navy's fleet of 295 ships. Like those other vessels, its main mission is to ferry troops and their weapons overseas on short notice — a prime function of the Marine Corps' role as the nation's expeditionary ground force.

The commissioning committee, headed by former Navy aviator Richard "Tres" Kleberg III, aims to raise \$200,000 to \$300,000 to help send off the San Antonio in style.

Berg said a commemorative book will be used to raise part of that money.

"When you get a ship named after your city, especially a ship this size and this important to the Navy/Marine team, this is the big leagues," he said. "This is a big thing."



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Navy To Commission Submarine Virginia

The Navy will commission the USS Virginia, lead ship of the latest class of attack submarines, Saturday, Oct. 23, 2004, during an 11 a.m. EST ceremony at Naval Station Norfolk in Norfolk, Va.

As the Navy's next-generation attack submarine, the Virginia Class is the first submarine class specifically designed to counter post-Cold War threats and provides the Navy with the capabilities it requires to meet the threats of the 21st century.

Virginia has improved stealth, sophisticated surveillance capabilities and special warfare enhancements that enable it to meet the Navy's multi-mission requirements. With a modular design, the Virginia class will be able to accommodate technology upgrades throughout the life of the class.

Sen. John Warner of Virginia will deliver the ceremony's principal address. Lynda Johnson Robb, wife of former Sen. Charles Robb of Virginia and daughter of former President Lyndon Baines Johnson, will serve as the ship's sponsor. In the time-honored tradition of commissioning U.S. naval ships, Robb will give the order to "man our ship and bring her to life!"

This is the ninth ship of the Navy to carry the name Virginia since the original Virginia was commissioned in 1777. The last Virginia was a nuclear powered guided missile cruiser, which was decommissioned in 1994.

Virginia can attack targets ashore with highly accurate Tomahawk cruise missiles and

conduct covert long-term surveillance of land areas, littoral waters and other sea forces.

Virginia also has superior anti-submarine and anti-ship warfare capabilities, is able to provide special forces delivery and support, and can conduct mine delivery and minefield mapping.

With enhanced communications connectivity, Virginia will also provide important battle group and joint task force support with full integration into carrier strike group operations.

Capt. David Kern, a native of Binghamton, N.Y., and a Naval Academy graduate, will become the first commanding officer of the ship, leading a crew of approximately 134 officers and enlisted sailors. Virginia will be homeported in Groton, Conn., as a unit of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

Virginia is 377 feet in length, has a waterline beam of 34 feet, a navigational draft of 32 feet, displaces approximately 7,800 tons submerged, can dive to depths greater than 800 feet, and can sustain speeds of more than 25 knots when submerged.

She is also designed with a reactor plant that will not require refueling during the planned life of the ship – reducing lifecycle costs while increasing underway time.

The superior capabilities of the Virginia class will help ensure the Navy maintains undersea dominance well into this century.