

# Asia Pacific Procurement Update



## AUSTRALIA Upgraded Light Armoured Vehicles for Australia

The Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV) upgrade has been granted second pass approval by the government. The upgrade, announced by the Australian Minister for Defence, Senator John Faulkner, will enhance the combat protection levels of the ASLAVs deployed in the Middle East Area of Operations since 2004.

The upgrade is part of LAND 112 Phase 4 - ASLAV Enhancement, and will cost an estimated A\$302.8 million. The plans will see the ASLAV receive enhanced armoured protection against a wider range of threats including Improvised Explosive Devices through the improvement of ballistic, fragmentation and blast protection capabilities.

113 upgraded vehicles are to be delivered starting in April 2012, with the government currently considering options for significant expedition of the programme to get the upgraded vehicles into theatre more quickly.

There are also plans to improve suspension, driveline and engine during the upgrade to keep the ASLAV in top condi-

*The planned ASLAV enhancement programme focuses on force protection © Australian DoD*

tion for the remainder of its service life. Pre-modification and refurbishment work, including the installation of upgrade kits and the redesign and manufacturing of mine blast belly plates will be carried out by General Dynamics Land Systems - Australia in South Australia.

## RAN Collins Class submarines to receive Pacific Marine Batteries battery sets

Pacific Marine Batteries of Australia has received a contract to provide replacement batteries and technical support of batteries for the RAN's Collins Class Submarines.

Greg Combet of the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) made the announcement following a visit to the company's facilities in Adelaide. The Acquisition contract, worth an approximate A\$81 million, will see the provision of five Collins Class submarines battery sets over the next six years.

The Standing Offer contract will see

Pacific Marine Batteries provide short notice technical support over the next seven years for the Collins Class battery sets. This will include the ongoing provision of an Environmental Protection Authority approved storage facility for four battery sets, with two in storage and two ready for disposal.

Under the contract, Pacific Marine Batteries will also ensure cells are kept well-conditioned using specialist equipment in anticipation of short-notice installation, and will undertake the decommissioning and disposal at the end of each battery set life.

## RAAF receives first two Wedgetail AEW&C aircraft

The first two Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft have been received by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) at RAAF Base Williamtown in Newcastle by Minister for Defence Materiel and Science, Greg Combet.

The Wedgetail aircraft delivery comes more than a decade after the programme was initiated, with the project suffering scheduling delays, and requiring intensive effort from the government to get the programme back on track.

The aircraft are the first two of six units that will be delivered under the programme, and will bring a major boost to the ADF's surveillance capabilities. Each Wedgetail aircraft is capable of covering a four million square kilometre area on a typical 10 hour mission, and an area of 400,000 square kilometres at any one time.

The aircraft, with sophisticated mission systems and advanced radar, will be primarily tasked with air threat detection, air defence coordination, as well as supporting naval fleets, and carrying out search and rescue operations and border protection missions.

Formal training and operational capability preparation is now to be undertaken over a 12 month period by the ADF along with Boeing in order to bring the fleet up to full operational readiness.

## Australia seeks purchase of Shadow UAVs

Australia has initiated the possible purchase of two RQ-7B Shadow 200 Unmanned

Aircraft Systems (UAS) under a Foreign Military Sale (FMS) with the US government.

Along with the two UAS the Australian government has requested communication equipment to include 4 Ground Control Stations, support equipment, spare and repair parts, tools and test equipment, technical data and publications, personnel training and training equipment, US government and contractor engineering, technical and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support, at a combined estimated cost of \$218 million.

If approved, the sale will greatly enhance Australia's ongoing ground operation capabilities within Afghanistan, as well as giving the Australian Defence Force greater humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and stability operation capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region.

The proposed sale will see prime contractor AAI Corporation deliver the systems in-country.

### Australia reaches communications project milestone

Australia's Joint Project 2043 High Frequency Modernisation project has reached what Greg Combet, Minister for Defence Materiel and Science, called a 'milestone', with the final Fixed Network system being recently formally accepted from prime contractor, Boeing Australia.

The High Frequency Modernisation (HFMOD) programme will provide Australian armed forces with a secure command and control information exchange capability. The system is a 'primary survivable system', and will act as a parallel system to satellite communications.

The Modernised High Frequency Communications System consists of a network of HF radio stations, and a central network management facility located in Canberra. When complete the project will significantly modernise and enhance the ADF's high frequency communications capability, and greater levels of automation.

### Thales SATCOM equipment selected for AWDs

Australia's Air Warfare Destroyers (AWDs) are to be fitted with Thales satellite communication (SATCOM) equipment under a contract announced by Greg Combet, Minister for Defence Materiel and Science, worth an approximate \$9 million.

The Hobart class destroyers, the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN's) newest and most capable all-purpose war ships, are due to enter service with the RAN in 2013, and will provide air defences for accompanying ships, land forces, and infrastructure in coastal areas.

According to Combet, the Thales equipment will provide 'world-wide coverage of

high-speed broadband for multiple users for both voice and data services'; giving the fleet the necessary communications system capable of meeting 'not only the operational needs of a modern warship, but also allowing the ship's crew to keep in touch with family and friends via email and internet services'.

The selected system will incorporate equipment from leading SATCOM suppliers including ViaSat, SITEP and Thrane & Thrane. In the interests of training and maintenance support, some of this equipment is already deployed on RAN warships.

Thales will undertake design and fabrication work in Sydney at its Garden Island facility and installation will take place at Techport Australia in Adelaide.

### Australian troops to receive new body armour

The Australian Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, has announced that a new light-weight combat body armour system for soldiers will begin trials by the end of 2010 during a three day visit to Afghanistan.

The new system, called the Tiered Body Armour System (TBAS), was demonstrated by troops at Multinational Base Tarin Kowt. It is lighter than the current Modular Combat Body Armour System (MCBAS), and likely to be issued to key elements of the next rotation of Australian troops deployed to Afghanistan during '2011'.

## MALAYSIA

### Second Scorpene Submarine sails home to Malaysia

The second of two Scorpene-type submarines commissioned for the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) has left Toulon, France, for the two month journey home to Malaysia. The submarine will make several ports of call during the trip, and will first arrive in Malaysia in the port of Lumut, then head for its base at Kota Kinabalu on Borneo island.

Following its arrival in Malaysia the vessel, named KD Tun Razak, will undergo scheduled maintenance and tropical climate sea trials.

The first Scorpene submarine, the KD Tunku Abdul Rahman, arrived in the country in September 2009. The contract for the two Scorpene submarines, designed by DCNS and jointly developed by DCNS and Spanish naval shipbuilder Navantia, was signed between the



The delivery of the second submarine completes Malaysia's Scorpene acquisition © DCNS

Malaysian government and DCNS in June 2002.

The agreement included associated logistics and training, and the Malaysian government signed a further contract with DCNS earlier this year for the delivery of a training and navigation safety and combat simulator system and associated services as part of the Royal

Malaysian Navy's (RMN's) Scorpene submarine programme, enabling the RMN to enhance their training practices with the submarines.

Each Scorpene submarine has a displacement of 1,550 tonnes and a length overall of 67.5 metres. Each boat requires a crew of just 31 and has a maximum endurance of 45 days.

## INDIA

### India to acquire Ultra Light Howitzers and new AW-101 helicopters

The Indian Army is to acquire Ultra Light Howitzers (ULHs) as per the provisions of Defence Procurement Procedure 2008.

The Indian Defence Minister, Shri AK Antony, announced the prospective procurement that is being sought via the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) with the US Government. A formal request was made to the US with a Letter of Request in May 2009.

The Defence Minister also announced that the Indian Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Agusta Westland Limited, United Kingdom, for the procurement of 12 AW-101 helicopters for VIP transportation. No other details of the contract were released.

### Indian Army orders a further 124 MBT Arjun

The Indian Army is to order a new batch of 124 Main Battle Tank Arjuns following successful desert trials of the vehicle. The order follows an initial order of 124 for the indigenously built MBT Arjun.

The additional order will put to rest long persisting doubts about the Arjun, with critics suggesting the tank would not meet the tough operational requirements of the Indian Army. The tank is reported to have performed 'superbly' during trials, effectively driving cross-country over rugged sand dunes, detecting, observing and quickly engaging targets, accurately hitting stationary and moving targets with pin pointed accuracy.

The gestation of the Arjun MBT stretches back over 35 years to 1974 when

the government approved design and development plans for the home-grown vehicle, aiming to provide an 'indigenous cutting edge' to Indian Mechanised Forces.

Trials are also believed to have confirmed the Arjun's superior fire-power, based on accurate and quick target acquisition capability during day and night in all types of weather, and shortest possible reaction time during combat engagements.

### IAF's Light Combat Helicopter takes flight

India's long-awaited indigenous Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) has undertaken its maiden flight in a display attended by the Defence Secretary RK Singh, Vice Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal PK Barbora, Chairman HAL, Ashok Nayak and senior officials of Defence ministry and the forces at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) airport on 23 May.

The aircraft, manufactured by HAL, is a dedicated attack helicopter with narrow fuselage and tandem seating for pilot and co-pilot, designed with low detection characteristics including reduced visual, aural, radar and infrared signatures. The aircraft features hinge-less rotors and Shakti engines for enhanced manoeuvrability.

The aircraft also features chin mounted canon and helmet mounted sighting systems giving greater range of target acquisition, and advanced sensor suite including CCD Camera, Forward looking infrared imaging technology and Laser range finder. The maiden flight of the LCH marks India's entry into the very few countries in the world capable of producing attack helicopters.

## NEW ZEALAND

### New Zealand accepts HMNZS Wellington into Navy

The Royal New Zealand Navy has formally accepted the seventh and final Offshore Patrol Vessel HMNZS Wellington commissioned under Project Protector in a ceremony in Melbourne.

The vessel was received by Chief of Navy, Rear-Admiral Tony Parr and Ministry of Defence Project Director Gary Collier. The delivery marked a new phase of the Royal New Zealand Navy, with the full Project Protector fleet now complete, boosting New Zealand's offshore patrol capabilities including delivering the full range of operations from combat and security missions to peace-keeping, border patrol and humanitarian and disaster relief.

Along with sister ship Otago, HMNZS Wellington will perform Exclusive Economic Zone patrols, surveillance and military operations around New Zealand, the southern ocean and the Pacific, with their helicopter capability, sea-boats and embarked forces.

HMNZS Wellington and Otago are OPVs capable of extending the reach of the Navy's Inshore Patrol Vessels, able to go undertake missions further offshore, for longer duration, conducting patrol and surveillance operations around New Zealand's maritime areas.

The vessels feature strengthened hulls capable of enduring the icy conditions of southern waters, and carry a Seasprite SH2G helicopter for helicopter operations, and Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats for boarding operations.

HMNZS Wellington will now undergo safety and operational preparations in advance of her delivery voyage to New Zealand.

## VIETNAM

### Vietnam Navy orders first ever western-built aircraft

The Vietnam Navy is to receive its first ever western-built aircraft following the finalisation of a purchase agreement with Canadian company Viking Air for the purchase of six DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400 aircraft.

The contract follows a thorough procurement process including an extensive

evaluation and configuration phase and several years of collaboration between the Vietnamese Navy, the GAET Company from the Ministry of Defence, Viking, and its local representative, Canam Active Enterprises Inc.

The DHC-6 Twin Otter fleet will form the initial fixed-wing aircraft air wing of the Vietnam Navy, and three of the aircraft will be designated 'Guardian 400' mar-

itime patrol variants, equipped for amphibious operations, carrying out transport, resupply, maritime surveillance and search and rescue operations throughout Vietnam's 3400 km coastline and coastal regions.

With convertible interiors, the remaining three aircraft will be configured for VIP, commuter and utility operations. The aircraft will be delivered between 2012 and 2014.



The USS McInerney in USN service © DoD

## PAKISTAN

### Pakistan Air Force poised for F-16 fleet upgrade

Pakistan is a step closer to its long-awaited F-16 fleet upgrade, following the graduation ceremony of eight Pakistani air force pilots from the international F-16 training unit with the Arizona Air National Guard in the United States.

The pilot training is a vital component of Pakistan's preparation for the arrival of the first batch of four F-16 aircraft scheduled for delivery June 26 at Shahbaz Air Base in Pakistan.

The Block 52 versions of the multi-role fighter will bring a much-needed upgrade to the existing 30 year old A-model Pakistani fleet. The new aircraft brings a significant increase in capabilities, including night operations and the ability to enhance the use of precision munitions.

The existing F-16 fleet will undergo a mid-life upgrade in 2011, following the completion of delivery of the new fleet, which will be staggered throughout the remainder of 2010. When upgraded the original fleet will feature upgraded cockpit and avionics, bringing them up to F-16C/D standards.

The Pakistani pilots have spent 10 months in upgrade training on the newer C/D model aircraft, including two months at the Defense Language Institute at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and seven months in flight training at Tucson International Airport. As the C/D-models used for training in Arizona are Block 25 F-

16s, the pilots will now undergo two weeks of additional Block 52 instruction before returning to Pakistan.

### Pakistan Navy to acquire USS McInerney

The Pakistan Navy is to take delivery of USS McInerney after its planned decommission from the US Navy this summer, following a meeting between the Pakistan and US Navies hosted by VSE Corporation, the global engineering, industrial and logistics group.

The agreement was finalised with a letter of Offer and Acceptance, signed by Pakistan Navy Captain Abdul Rehman, Attache for Defense Procurement (Air Force/Navy) and accepted by Naval Sea Systems Command representative, US Navy Captain Chris Pietras.

Under the agreement, the VSE's Naval Ship Transfer and Repair team will undertake a shipyard industrial availability contract to make ship repairs to upgrade and extend the service life of USS McInerney, as well as providing maintenance and operational training for the Pakistani crew. Initial training will be carried out by the US Navy until the ship is officially transferred to the Pakistan Navy in late August.

Following the transfer, VSW Ship Training and Assistance Team (STAT) will conduct underway training for the crew, and US Navy Afloat Training Group will carry out a final evaluation of the Pakistani crew's ability to operate the ship and all its

equipment. The crew will sail the ship back to Karachi, Pakistan accompanied by the VSE Transfer Assistance Team.

### Pakistan Army receives Bell 412 EP Helicopters

Pakistan has taken delivery of two Bell 412 EP helicopters from the US government in a signing ceremony at Qasim Army Air Base near Rawalpindi, Pakistan, attended by US Army Brig. Gen. Michael Nagata and Indian Army Brig. Gen. Tippu Karim, 101 Army Aviation commander.

The enhanced-performance utility transport helicopters will bring new power to Pakistan's counterinsurgency efforts. The US will also provide associated spare parts, special tools and other supporting equipment, at a combined cost of \$20 million.

The US has taken great strides in recent years to support Pakistan's interests, and develop a long-term strategic partnership with the country, to the tune of more than \$4 billion. Specifically, assistance for national defence enhancement has included 14 F-16 fighter aircraft, 10 Mi-17 helicopters, more than 450 vehicles for Pakistan's Frontier Corps, hundreds of night vision goggles, day/night scopes, radios, and thousands of protective vests and first-aid items for Pakistan's security forces.

The US has also provided civilian and humanitarian support to the country in the form of medical aid, food distribution, and vital infrastructure reconstruction and development.