FROM WTC TO SEA

Evoking the spirit and pride of legions that have gone before, “Never Forget” was the theme underlying the christening of the USS New York, an amphibious transport dock ship (LPD 21) in New Orleans on Mar. 1. The ship is the fifth landing platform dock in the San Antonio Class, which is the newest addition to the U.S. Navy’s 21st-century amphibious assault force. LPD 21 also is the fifth ship to bear the New York moniker—one notable predecessor, battleship USS New York, served as flagship in World War I and participated in the invasion of Okinawa in World War II. The new craft, though not a battleship, will continue this heritage and is expected to play a part in the war on terror. Of the thousands of tons of steel used in its production, 7.5 tons were recovered from the World Trade Center (WTC) towers destroyed on Sept. 11, 2001. This steel now makes up part of the bow stem. The Northrop Grumman-built LPD 21 will transport and land Marines, equipment and supplies and can facilitate “O” maintenance and landings for combinations of CH-53Es, CH-46s, MV-22s or UH/AH1s. One AV-8B Harrier can land on deck.

Mike Petters, president of the company’s shipbuilding division, notes that the thousands of tons of steel in the ship symbolize the legions of stories of those intimately caught up in 9/11—police, firefighters, private citizens. He, too, employed the motto of the day and the ship: “Never Forget.”

Milans in South Africa

MBDA has delivered the first series production batch of its advanced Milan ADT firing post to South Africa, along with upgraded Milan 3 multirole anti-tank missiles and a training simulator. The post, which features improved optics, an integrated thermal imager and a digitized localizer, is currently in troop trials in South Africa. The new firing system and missiles were developed under a Franco-German cooperative program.

Rafale in Greece

Rafale International, a joint venture of Dassault Aviation, Thales and Snecma, has opened an office in Athens to sell fourth-generation Rafale fighters to the Greek air force. The office also will serve to expand technology exchange and cooperation with Hellenic Aerospace Industry and other Greek defense companies. In November, Dassault completed delivery of Mirage 2000-5 combat aircraft to Greece.

Reinforcing arms exports is a major objective under French President Nicolas Sarkozy (AW&ST Mar. 3, p. 33).

Poland Purchase

The Polish air force will receive the Rockwell Collins F-16C modular simulated aircraft maintenance trainer in April. The system-specific device is made up of off-the-shelf hardware and employs both immersive and interactive virtual image-based approaches to teaching. The design supports classroom-based training for novice and advanced F-16 maintenance workers. This marks the company’s second foreign sale for this trainer; the Egyptian air force opted for the system last year.

Ametek in Singapore

Component-maker Ametek will open an 18,000-sq.-ft. maintenance facility in Singapore by the end of this month to cut turnaround times for Asian customers. Initial work will include maintenance and repair of pneumatic and hydraulic parts. Company executive Richard Madamba says the move is partly a response to the growth of the aerospace industry in Singapore. “If you look at the concentration of businesses that have expanded here, we felt we needed to be near our customers, both airlines and other third-party repair facilities,” he says.

Ametek has been building up its maintenance operations since 2006, when it bought Tulsa, Okla.-based Southern Aeroparts. It has since purchased businesses in Britain and France and another in the U.S., Wichita, Kan.-based B&S Aircraft Parts & Accessories. The maintenance shop in Singapore will be located near Changi airport.

Rolls-Royce in Pusan

Rolls-Royce has opened its first University Technology Center in Asia at Pusan National University in South Korea. The focus will be thermal management, specifically development of high-efficiency lightweight heat exchangers.

Catia Hits the Road

The National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) at Wichita State University in Kansas, working in collaboration with V5 Engineering, will take courses for the institute’s computer-aided three-dimensional interactive applications (Catia) program on the road this spring. Two large semi-trailers are being refurbished into classrooms and a mobile display for trade shows, says Brian Barsamian, owner of V5 Engineering. Plans call for using the mobile classrooms to teach V5’s clients in the California area, followed later by locations throughout the U.S. The rolling laboratory will house more than 12 workstations and is scheduled to be completed by the end of this month. Courses include 3D modeling, simulation and manufacturing, says Shawn Ehrstein, manager of NIAR’s CAD/CAM operations. He says the lab is seeking grants to eventually take the classroom to remote areas. “All we need is a parking lot.”