

# USCG Extends Radio Upgrade Partnership with Thales

## BACKGROUND

The Coast Guard awarded a 10-year, \$32 million indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contract to Thales Communications Inc., Clarksburg, Md., in 2005 to upgrade communications equipment in all of the service's 270-foot cutters with the Series 5000 HF (High-Frequency) system that includes transceivers, power amplifiers, couplers, Automatic Link Establishment modems and associated spares. Under a secondary Determination and Finding (D&F) contract signed Nov. 22, Thales will install medium-powered HF radios during the next five to seven years on any cutters not upgraded under the original contract.

## SCOPE

Thales has installed radio equipment on 28 cutters, including the 378-foot, 270-foot and 210-foot ships. The D&F contract covers installation of HF radios on National Security Cutters, Fast Response Cutters and Ocean Patrol Cutters built during the duration of that contract.

## TIMELINE

Under the original contract, Thales radio systems are being integrated on 75 cutters. Work under the D&F contract will be done on a ship-by-ship basis, beginning with the Fast Response Cutter, the first of which is scheduled to be delivered in early 2011.

## WHO'S WHO

Aaron Brosnan is director of Naval and Maritime Programs at Thales Communications. He has been with the company since 2004.



LISA NIPP

“ These radios give the Coast Guard capabilities that it's never had before in terms of the automatic link establishment. That helps from the point of view of reducing workload aboard the ships.

Without link establishment, you had to have highly trained HF engineers who knew how HF propagation worked, and they would have to work comprehensive plans to make sure they had the right frequencies, depending on the time of day. With automatic link establishment, you just needed somebody who knows how to push some buttons on the front of a radio and it would automatically find the most effective frequencies. It was a workload reduction.

In addition to that, we gave [the Coast Guard] some capabilities in its remote controls on the radios. In the past, if you needed to change frequencies, you would have to run down the radio room and tweak knobs and turn things. Now, because you can remotely control it on a PC on the network, or via what we call remote-control units, you can put these things up on the bridge, you can put them in the combat center, you can put them anywhere around the ship.

The older cutters had a Near Vertical Incident Scattering [NVIS] antenna, but they never used it because it was so unreliable. It was called a “towel bar” because that's what they used it for, to hang cloths on it to dry.

The NVIS solution, through the Series HF 5000 system [with a flexible, modular design capable of supporting the newest generation waveforms] that we came up with on the 210-foot cutters, became the Coast Guard's preferred medium for HF communications [and] it works for them like a charm.

The Coast Guard partnership to us is huge. It's a partnership we have had for 15 years. We enjoy working with them because it is a partnership we don't have with anybody else. ”