

# U.S. Navy Awards MEDUSA Contract to Advance Innovative Unmanned Technology



By Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) Public Affairs, Oct. 25, 2024

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy competitively awarded a contract to General Dynamics Mission Systems Inc., to develop the Mining Expendable Delivery Unmanned Submarine Asset (MEDUSA) System. The contract underscores the Navy’s commitment to developing a manned-unmanned hybrid fleet to enhance operational effectiveness and mission agility across all maritime environments.

MEDUSA is a mining system utilizing an expendable Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) that can be deployed from a submarine. It is a cutting-edge unmanned system designed to meet the Navy’s requirement for an advanced maritime mining system. The tasks under this contract include program

management, design, systems engineering, fabrication, and testing and integration of the MEDUSA system for employment from Navy submarines.

“The award of the MEDUSA contract represents our commitment to advancing unmanned technology and integrating it into Navy operations,” said Capt. Matthew Lewis, program manager of the unmanned maritime systems program office. “Innovation is critical to our national security and directly contributes to the readiness of our fleet. This contract enables us to invest in future operational capabilities and to push the boundaries of what we thought possible.”

The base contract, currently valued at \$15.9 million, will provide for program management, design, systems engineering, fabrication, testing and integration activities through September 2026. However, if contract options are exercised, work will continue through 2032 and the total contract value could reach \$58 million. This strategic investment in unmanned technology is vital for maintaining maritime superiority and ensuring the readiness of our naval forces in an evolving security landscape.

“MEDUSA is an exciting leap forward for our Navy, aligning with CNO’s updated NAVPLAN and the evolving nature of warfare,” said Rear. Adm. Kevin Smith, Program Executive Officer, Unmanned and Small Combatants. “This innovative mining system enhances our capabilities, allowing us to stay one step ahead in a rapidly changing environment. By empowering our warfighters with cutting-edge unmanned technology like MEDUSA, we’re ensuring they have the tools they need to thrive in complex situations and protect our interests at sea.”

The Navy’s unmanned maritime systems program office is a part of the Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants portfolio, which designs, develops, builds, and delivers the Navy’s unmanned maritime systems; mine warfare systems;

special warfare systems; expeditionary warfare systems; and small surface combatants.

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# Austal USA Breaks Ground on New Manufacturing Facility for Submarine Modules



From Austal USA

Mobile, Ala. – Austal USA celebrated the start of construction for a new manufacturing facility for submarine modules (MMF3) today. This new building, scheduled to be fully operational in late 2026, will significantly increase Austal USA's capacity to support the U.S. Navy Submarine Industrial Base (SIB).

The new building will provide 369,600 square feet of indoor manufacturing space purpose-built to manufacture submarine modules. The production from this building will support the U.S. Navy's goal of delivering one Columbia-class and two Virginia-class submarines annually. It will include a material storage area, machine shop, assembly area, and waterfront improvements to support the shipment of the completed modules via barge.

This project, combined with the recent groundbreaking for another manufacturing building, represent over \$750M in expansion of Austal USA's Mobile facility further solidifying Austal USA's role as a major contributor to Alabama's economy. The two buildings, when fully operational, will add over 2,000 new jobs. In 2023, Austal USA's contracts were supported by 259 Alabama-based suppliers accounting for over \$115 million of business. This includes 185 small businesses, over 50 percent of the total spend.

"Austal USA's continued expansion in Mobile is a testament to Alabama's growing leadership in the defense industry and our commitment to supporting our nation's security needs," Governor Kay Ivey said. "This new facility for submarine module manufacturing reinforces Austal's vital role in delivering the advanced capabilities required by these vital submarine programs. The creation of 2,000 jobs and the investment in cutting-edge manufacturing technologies further demonstrates Austal's dedication to both Alabama's economy and our national defense."

"Austal USA is committed to supporting national security initiatives like the Navy's Virginia and Columbia-class submarine programs, evidenced by our aggressive infrastructure and workforce expansion efforts," commented Austal USA President Michelle Kruger. "The key to our success is the strong partnerships we have built with not only our customers but also our employees and the amazing community surrounding us. We are grateful for the unending support we continue to

receive from the city and county of Mobile and the great state of Alabama.”

In July Austal USA started construction on a new assembly building to enable the erection of large steel modules for Navy and Coast Guard ships, including the Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) and TAGOS-25 programs. The building will occupy four and a half acres providing over 192,000 square feet of new indoor manufacturing space. This project will include a shiplift system that features an articulated lifting platform approximately 450 feet long by 125 feet wide. The shiplift will provide a safe and reliable system to launch ships as they are completed in the assembly buildings and will also enable bringing ships back on the land-side facility for repair and maintenance.

Upon completion of these buildings, Austal USA’s Mobile, Ala. ship manufacturing facility will include a 117,000 square-foot steel panel line, two module manufacturing facilities totaling over one million square feet of covered manufacturing space optimized for serial production, and seven assembly bays providing over 400,000 square feet of indoor erection space. In all, the Mobile facility covers 180 acres and, when this project is complete, over 1.5 million square feet of indoor manufacturing space.

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## **USCGC Resolute Crew Returns Home, Offloads \$115M Worth of Drugs in St. Petersburg**



he crew of Coast Guard Cutter Resolute unload interdicted narcotics onto Sector St. Petersburg South Moorings, Florida, Oct. 23, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Riley Perkofski)

From Public Affairs Detachment Tampa Bay, Oct. 23, 2024

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Resolute offloaded approximately 9,690 pounds of cocaine and 5,490 pounds of marijuana, worth an estimated \$115 million, in their homeport of St. Petersburg, Wednesday.

In addition to the contraband, Resolute's crew previously transferred five suspected smugglers ashore to face federal prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Resolute's crew deployed to the Caribbean Sea for 38 days in support of Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South), an interagency and international task force that conducts counter-illicit trafficking and security

cooperation operations in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. During their patrol, the Resolute crew was strategically positioned to deny drug trafficking organizations access to maritime smuggling routes from Central and South America to prevent harmful narcotics from reaching the United States.

Early in the patrol, Resolute's crew launched two small boat crews to pursue a go-fast vessel across 40 nautical miles of open ocean in six-foot seas. Despite the vessel's significant horsepower, the Resolute crew worked with a Dutch aircraft to disrupt the go-fast vessel, forcing the smugglers to jettison their illicit contraband. Two weeks later, the Resolute crew located a suspicious sailing vessel traveling through the central Caribbean. During the late-night boarding, Resolute's law enforcement boarding team discovered nearly 1,653 pounds of cocaine in a hidden compartment. The boarding team seized the contraband and detained the suspected smugglers onboard. The crew's efforts in both cases prevented an estimated \$58.1 million worth of contraband from reaching the United States.

"Time and time again, the crew demonstrated their professionalism, cohesion and excellence in mission execution," said Cmdr. Ian Starr, commanding officer of Resolute. "I am so incredibly proud of their efforts and their ability to achieve success in conditions where success is never guaranteed."

As part of the international partnerships under JIATF-South, the Resolute crew worked with the Royal Netherlands Navy ship HNLMS Holland and their embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 102 from Tactical Law Enforcement Team Pacific to transfer custody of seized contraband and suspected smugglers for future prosecution in the United States. Holland's crew transferred more than 5,000 pounds of marijuana and 4,409 pounds of cocaine to Resolute, promoting

diplomatic relations through the shared efforts to stem the flow of illegal narcotics through the Caribbean joint operating area.

In support of Homeland Security Task Force-Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry, Resolute's crew also worked with the crews of Coast Guard cutters William Trump and Reliance to interdict an overloaded and unseaworthy vessel with 181 migrants off the coast of Haiti. Resolute's crew worked throughout the night to safely transport Haitian migrants to Coast Guard Cutter Reliance, allowing the crew to provide timely shelter and care to dozens of men, women and children.

Resolute also conducted flight operations with an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Miami, successfully completing their Aviation Standardization Inspection. During the assessment, Resolute completed 30 helicopter evolutions including in-flight refueling, vertical replenishment and shipboard launch and recovery operations to enhance mission readiness.

The Resolute crew was permitted to return home early to reunite with their families following the devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene, but almost as soon as they arrived, they went back underway again for storm avoidance before Hurricane Milton made landfall on the west coast of Florida. The Resolute crew provided offshore search and rescue support to Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg in the wake of Hurricane Milton, along with Coast Guard Cutter Thetis and Coast Guard Cutter Pablo Valent.

The fight against drug cartels in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean requires a unity of effort in all phases, from detection and monitoring to interdiction and apprehension, through criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. attorneys' offices in districts across the nation. Joint Interagency Task Force-South in Key West,

Florida conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. The law enforcement phase of operations in the Caribbean is conducted under the authority of the [Seventh Coast Guard District](#), headquartered in Miami, and cases in the Eastern Pacific Ocean are conducted under the authority of the [Eleventh Coast Guard District](#) headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard.

These interdictions relate to Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiatives and designated investigations. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Resolute is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium endurance cutter homeported in St. Petersburg. The cutter's primary missions are counter drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. Resolute is under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area based in Portsmouth, Virginia. U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goCoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer, and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

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# SECNAV Visits Georgia Tech Research Institute, Underscoring Commitment to Innovation and Collaboration



From SECNAV Public Affairs, 23 October 2024

ATLANTA – Oct. 23, 2024 – The Secretary of the Navy Hon. Carlos Del Toro visited the Georgia Tech Research Institute today to highlight the vital role of research and development in maintaining naval dominance and warfighting excellence. The Secretary addressed Georgia Tech students and faculty, and Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps students from Georgia Tech, Spelman College and Morehouse College, emphasizing the importance of their contributions to national security.

The Secretary's visit underscored the Navy's commitment to fostering strategic partnerships with academic institutions

like Georgia Tech. GTRI, the applied research division of Georgia Tech, plays a crucial role in developing cutting-edge technologies for the Department of the Navy and the Department of Defense.

“Georgia Tech is a powerhouse of innovation, and GTRI’s research is critical to ensuring our Sailors and Marines have the technological edge they need to prevail in any conflict,” said Secretary Del Toro. “The work being done here, particularly in areas like artificial intelligence, cyber-physical systems, and electromagnetic spectrum operations, is directly aligned with the Navy’s strategic priorities.”

The Secretary highlighted GTRI’s contributions to the DON, including:

**Collaborative Research:** GTRI works closely with the Office of Naval Research (ONR) and other DoD entities to address specific technological needs.

**R&D Contributions:** GTRI develops advanced systems such as autonomous vehicles, millimeter wave radar technologies, and electronic warfare solutions.

**Prototyping and Testing:** GTRI provides facilities for testing and validating new technologies to meet military specifications.

**Technology Transition:** GTRI focuses on translating research outcomes into practical applications, enhancing operational capabilities for the Navy and broader defense community.

The Secretary’s remarks also emphasized the importance of innovation in the face of evolving global challenges.

“To win the fight of the future, we must embrace and implement emerging technologies,” said Del Toro. “We are in an innovation race, and it is one we must win.”

The Secretary highlighted several DON innovation initiatives,

including:

**The Naval Science and Technology Strategy:** This strategy guides the Navy and Marine Corps' investments in science and technology research.

**The Naval Innovation Center (NIC) at the Naval Postgraduate School:** The NIC accelerates the innovation process by bringing research concepts out of the lab and into the field faster.

**The Department of the Navy's Science and Technology Board:** This board provides independent advice and counsel on matters relating to science, technology, and acquisition.

**The Disruptive Capabilities Office (DCO):** The DCO identifies and implements already-available or emerging technologies to address the fleet's capability gaps.

"With today's enemies developing more advanced technological threats, we are grateful that the Secretary of the Navy made time to visit our Atlanta Region NROTC Midshipmen," said Atlanta Region NROTC Commanding Officer Capt. Jesus Rodriguez. "Our future Naval officers were provided with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity when the Secretary personally impressed on them the importance of continued studies in science and technology. Our Midshipmen and NROTC staff are all appreciative for the opportunity to meet with and listen to our Navy's leadership emphasize the importance of our students' initiative in technological development during their Naval careers."

The Secretary concluded by issuing a call to action to the students in attendance.

"Innovation must permeate every aspect of our department's approach to deliver technologies and capabilities at a speed and scale necessary for our Navy and Marine Corps to confront the challenges of today and the future."

Read Secretary Del Toro's remarks [here](#).

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# Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk Returns Home From 62-Day Migrant Interdiction Operations Patrol



A Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC 913) small boat crew rescues 25 migrants from a disabled vessel, Aug. 20, 2024, while underway in the Florida Straits. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Ensign Brian Morel)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Oct. 23, 2024

KEY WEST, Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk (WMEC 913) returned to their homeport of Key West, Oct. 11, following a 62-day migrant interdiction operations patrol in the Florida Straits.

Mohawk's crew deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast (HSTF-SE) and Operation Vigilant Sentry (OVS) while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility. While on patrol, crew members worked alongside additional Coast Guard units and partner agency crews to detect, deter and intercept unsafe and illegal migrant ventures bound for the United States.

While at sea, Mohawk crew members interdicted and rescued 41 migrants from unseaworthy vessels. Of these, Mohawk's crew rescued 25 migrants aboard a single disabled vessel found taking on water in the Florida Straits on Aug. 20. Throughout the deployment, Mohawk cared for a total of 53 migrants, providing shelter, sustenance, hydration and medical care before conducting safe repatriation back to their country of origin.

On Oct. 3, Mohawk's crew conducted a rescue of four personnel stranded on the remote island of Cay Sal, Bahamas after their seaplane was disabled. Mohawk coordinated with a U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon airplane and a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane to vector in Mohawk's small boat crew for the rescue.

Most recently, the crew of Mohawk extended their deployment in response to the approach of Hurricane Milton. Mohawk sortied alongside other Key West-based Coast Guard cutters to avoid

potential storm damage and ensure response readiness after the hurricane. Mohawk's crew also conducted a tow of the Isaac Mayo during the sortie for several days of rough seas as the cutter was disabled due to scheduled maintenance.

Of note, this patrol marked a significant historical event for the Coast Guard's Famous-class medium endurance cutter fleet. Mohawk was the last in its class to fire the onboard Mk 75 mm gun weapon system. The largest caliber weapon in the Coast Guard inventory, it has been utilized by Famous-class cutters like Mohawk since they were first commissioned in the 1980's. Now, large caliber weapon systems onboard Famous-class cutters are being modernized for a service life extension program.

To successfully conduct the migrant interdiction mission, Mohawk partnered with U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations air and boat crews as well as additional Coast Guard units to include Coast Guard Cutters Charles Sexton (WPC 1108), Raymond Evans (WPC 1110), Isaac Mayo (WPC 1112), Maple (WLB 297), Coast Guard Station Key West, Coast Guard Sector Key West and Coast Guard Air Station Miami.

“Outstanding work by the Mohawk crew. I am very proud of our ability to secure our nation's maritime borders while maintaining the safety of life at sea,” said Cmdr. David Ratner, commanding officer of Mohawk. “We understand the importance of deterring unlawful and dangerous maritime migration attempts on often overloaded and unseaworthy vessels. One such vessel with 25 migrants on board was disabled with insufficient fuel to make it to land and was taking on water.”

Mohawk is a 270-foot, Famous-class medium endurance cutter with a crew of 100. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, enforcement of federal fishery laws as well as search and rescue in support of Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere. Mohawk falls under the command of U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic

Area, which is based in Portsmouth, Virginia. U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area oversees all Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains to the Arabian Gulf.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.goatguard.com) to learn about active duty and reserve, officer and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

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## US, Australian Naval Forces Conduct Bilateral Operations



BAY OF BENGAL (Oct. 20, 2024) – Royal Australian Navy Communication Information Systems Specialist Able Seaman Karl Jamieson (left), from Albany, Australia, talks with U.S. Navy Information Systems Technician Caleb Jones, from Phoenix, on a

missile deck aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey (DDG 105) while operating in the Bay of Bengal, Oct. 20, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Greg Johnson)  
By MC1 Gregory Johnson. Oct. 24, 2024

STRAIT OF MALACCA – The U.S. Navy (USN) and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) conducted bilateral operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific in the Strait of Malacca, Oct. 20-23.

Participating ships included the USN Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey (DDG 105) and the RAN Anzac-class frigate HMAS Stuart (FFH 153). The two ships took part in exercise Malabar 2024 earlier in October.

“This exercise further builds on our existing interoperability and combined readiness we have with the Royal Australian Navy,” said Vice Adm. Fred Kacher, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet. “Every time we operate together, we strengthen our capabilities and shared commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

Over four days, the ships engaged in a formation sailing exercise, an air defense exercise, maritime communications training, personnel cross-decks and visit, board, search and seizure drills.

“Conducting a joint sail with USS Dewey has been of great value, with multiple different activities conducted between the ships, including personnel exchange, boarding practices, manoeuvring in close company, and warfare drills,” said Cmdr. Warren Bechly, commanding officer, HMAS Stuart. “Whether it is large scale exercises, or ships in transit between the same ports, working with our allies and partners is always a valuable opportunity to build closer ties and enhance interoperability.”

The U.S. Navy regularly operates alongside our allies in the

Indo-Pacific region as a demonstration of our shared commitment to the rules-based international order.

Bilateral operations such as this one provide valuable opportunities to train, exercise and develop tactical interoperability across allied navies in the Indo-Pacific.

Dewey is forward-deployed and assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

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## **Navy's Third Operational F-35C Lightning II Squadron Achieves Safe For Flight Certification**



An F-35C Lightning II from VFA-86 performs a touch and go aboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68) in the Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Carson Croom)

From Lt. John Choi, Oct. 23, 2024

VFA-86 has earned a Full Safe for Flight certification on the F-35C.

The F-35C enhances the carrier strike group's ability to project power, supporting U.S. national security and integrating seamlessly with other carrier air wing assets.

"I couldn't be more proud of the Winder Team for this achievement," said Cmdr. Nathan Staples, VFA-86 Commanding Officer. "Our team has excelled since the transition began in February 2023, and I look forward to our future achievements and the standards we set for the Lightning II community."

The squadron's transition from the F/A-18, flown for 36 years, began in September 2023. Nearly 200 personnel completed training at Eglin AFB, Fla., and NAS Lemoore, while nine

pilots finished their flight syllabus with VFA-125, the Navy's F-35C Fleet Replacement Squadron, while simultaneously executing tactical training events with Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center and TOPGUN.

After achieving several key milestones, including a perfect score on the Conventional Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection and the highest Maintenance Program Assist inspection score, VFA-86 earned Interim Safe for Flight certification in June 2024. In July, they conducted their first embarked operations aboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68), culminating in Full Safe for Flight certification.

"Our success is due to proactive management, engaged leadership, and a can-do attitude," said AFCM Rich Brickey, VFA-86 Maintenance Master Chief. "Our Sailors have excelled in every metric and will continue to do so whenever called upon."

Established in 1951, VFA-86 has flown nine different aircraft and supported combat operations in Vietnam, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. As the Navy's newest F-35C squadron, the Sidewinders remain committed to their motto: "When diplomacy fails... 86 'em!"

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## **Coast Guard Offloads \$3.5M in Seized Cocaine, Transfers Smugglers to Puerto Rico**



Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier crewmembers offload 664 pounds (301 kgs) of seized cocaine and transfer custody of six smugglers to Coast Guard Investigative Service and FBI Special Agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Oct. 19, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, Oct.22, 2024

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier offloaded 664 pounds (301 kgs) of seized cocaine and transferred custody of six smugglers to Coast Guard Investigative Service and FBI Special Agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Saturday.

The interdiction is the result of multi-agency efforts in support of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force, while the seized cocaine is estimated to have a wholesale value of approximately \$3.5 million.

The apprehended smugglers are facing federal prosecution in Puerto Rico on criminal charges including conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance

aboard a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. The charges carry a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of imprisonment for life. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Helena B. Daniel and Maria L. Montañez, Deputy Chief of the Transnational Organized Crime Section are prosecuting the case.

During the afternoon of October 13, 2024, the crew of a Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft detected a suspicious 25-foot go-fast vessel in international waters north of Dorado, Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted the cutter Joseph Napier to interdict the suspect vessel. A Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine multi-role enforcement aircraft also responded and maintained aerial surveillance of the suspect vessel. Once on-scene, the cutter Joseph Napier crew launched the cutter's Over the Horizon boat to stop the suspect vessel. During the pursuit, the passengers aboard the suspect vessel were observed jettisoning suspected contraband cargo overboard. Shortly thereafter, the cutter boat crew stopped the go-fast vessel. Following the interdiction, cutter Joseph Napier's crew recovered six bales and a single package of the jettisoned cargo which tested positive for cocaine. The six persons onboard the vessel were apprehended.

"This successful narcotics interdiction highlights the importance of interoperability with our Caribbean Corridor Strike Force and Caribbean Border Interagency Group partners." said Lt. Matthew Carmine, Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier's commanding officer. "I am humbled by the professionalism and seamless coordination between multiple Coast Guard units including, Station San Juan, Air Station Miami, TACLET South, Sector San Juan Boarding Team, in conjunction with our interagency partners from Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations. Everyday my crew and I are proud to stand the watch alongside our Department of Homeland Security partners as we continue to

relentlessly combat drug trafficking and illegal migration throughout the waters of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.”

This interdiction, seizure and prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations. The specific mission of the Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF) is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations. The CCSF is comprised of agents and officers from the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, United States Coast Guard Investigative Service, and United States Marshals Service, and prosecution is being led by the Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Joseph Napier is 154-foot fast response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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## **SECNAV Names Future SSN 813 for Atlanta**

From SECNAV Public Affairs, 23 October 2024

ATLANTA (Oct 23, 2024) – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that the future Virginia-class Nuclear-Powered

Attack Submarine SSN 813 will be named USS Atlanta. Del Toro made the announcement during a ship naming ceremony at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, in Atlanta, on Oct. 23.

The future USS Atlanta honors the city of Atlanta, and the crews of the five previous Navy vessels named Atlanta.

The naming selection of the future USS Atlanta (SSN 813) continues the trend of naming Virginia-class submarines after cities. Secretary Del Toro previously named USS Long Island (SSN 809), USS San Francisco (SSN 810), USS Miami (SSN 811), and USS Baltimore (SSN 812).

“The city of Atlanta shares a storied and historic relationship with our Navy. Since the founding of our great nation, Atlantans from all walks of life have answered the call to service, including President Jimmy Carter, who helped advance our nuclear submarine program alongside Admiral Rickover, “the Father of the Nuclear Navy,” said Del Toro. “It has been 25 years since the Navy has had a ship named after the proud legacy of the city of Atlanta. Today, it is my honor and privilege to name the next Virginia-class submarine, SSN 813, USS Atlanta.”

Congresswoman Nikema Williams, from Georgia’s 5th Congressional District joined Secretary Del Toro for the ceremony honoring Atlanta.

“The naming of this ship is a testament to Atlanta’s history as the cradle of the civil rights movement,” said Williams. “As this vessel sails across the globe, it will carry with it the legacy of civil and human rights leaders like Congressman John Lewis and President Jimmy Carter, embodying Atlanta’s unbreakable spirit and the fight for justice that continues today.”

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens also served as a guest in the official party and highlighted the honor and meaning behind

the naming of the Navy's newest submarine.

"Thank you, Secretary Del Toro for allowing Atlanta to take its place among the great American cities with namesake vessels," said Dickens. "We envision the future USS Atlanta sailing and submerging as a testament to some of the same values that this city holds...protecting this nation with courage and strength.

Secretary Del Toro also named the ship sponsor at the ceremony, former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms.

"The ship's sponsor fills a vital role throughout the life of a warship, serving as the bond between the ship, her crew, and the nation they serve," said Del Toro. "I am honored that Mayor Bottoms accepted the invitation to serve as ship sponsor. As a leader and champion for the people of Atlanta, she represents the best of our nation, and I thank her for her lifelong commitment to our Navy, to our service men and women, and to the United States of America."

The city of Atlanta has strong ties to American history. Founded in 1836, the city (originally named Terminus) was incorporated as Atlanta in 1847. Following its destruction in the Civil War, Atlanta rapidly rebuilt, became the state capital in 1868, and is now an important center of industry, finance, and transportation. The greater Atlanta region was home to Naval Air Station Atlanta (1943-2009) and hosted squadrons from Reserve Carrier Air Wing 20, and Marine Aircraft Group 42.

The first *Atlanta*, a screw gunboat (1858-1859) was renamed *Sumpter* after commissioning. The second, a protected cruiser (1886-1912) primarily served in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico and as a barracks ship. The third *Atlanta* (CL-51), a light cruiser (1941-1942), screened Task Force 16 carriers *Enterprise* and *Hornet* during the Battle of Midway, supported the Guadalcanal campaign in July and

August, and defended *Enterprise* at the Battle of the Eastern Solomons on 24 August 1942. From 12-13 November 1942, *Atlanta* took part in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, during which she helped sink the Japanese destroy *Akatsuki*, and later received the Presidential Unit Citation and the embarked Flag Officer, Rear Admiral Norman Scott, was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor. Suffering extensive torpedo damage, she was scuttled. The fourth *Atlanta* (CL 104), a light cruiser (1944-1970) served off Japan with the Fast Carrier Task Force where she conducted shore bombardment missions. The fifth *Atlanta* (SSN 712), a nuclear fast attack submarine (1982-1999), homeported in Norfolk, VA, completed multiple deployments and fleet readiness exercises during the Cold War before being decommissioned.

Attack submarines are designed to seek and destroy enemy submarines and surface ships; project power ashore with Tomahawk cruise missiles and Special Operation Forces (SOF); carry out Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions; support battle group operations; and engage in mine warfare.

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## **Navy Warfare Center Drives First Naval Strike Missile Launch Demo from Destroyer**



USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) conducts the first demonstration firing of a Naval Strike Missile from a U.S. Navy destroyer during RIMPAC.

From Thomas McMahon, Oct. 23, 2024

PORT HUENEME, California – Among the flurry of fleet activities in the recent Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in Hawaii was a milestone that Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD) spearheaded – the first demonstration firing of a Naval Strike Missile (NSM) from a U.S. Navy destroyer.

USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) fires the first naval strike missile from a U.S. destroyer while participating in RIMPAC 2024. (MC2 Jordan Jennings)

Working under a compressed timeline, NSWC PHD and its partners installed the first Over-the-Horizon (OTH) Weapon System on a destroyer, USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62), in time for it to launch an NSM at a decommissioned ship on July 18 during RIMPAC.

Other major players in the effort included Program Executive

Office Integrated Warfare Systems (PEO IWS) 3H, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD) China Lake, General Dynamics Mission Systems and Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace AS.

“This was a high-visibility requirement for the Navy,” said Eric Romero, customer advocate for OTH with NSWC PHD in Port Hueneme, California.

OTH is a long-range surface-to-surface warfare system that launches NSMs, which are anti-ship guided missiles. The Navy has added the system to about a dozen Independence-variant littoral combat ships over the past five years.

In late September 2023, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations challenged PEO IWS, which in turn tasked NSWC PHD, with installing an OTH on Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Fitzgerald in time to demonstrate it at RIMPAC 2024. That left only about nine months before the biennial international fleet exercise.

“We knew we were working on an aggressive schedule, but we had all the right personnel on the team to make sure we were successful in executing it,” Romero said.

NSWC PHD employees took on various projects to pull off the endeavor at this accelerated pace, from developing ship installation drawings to getting cybersecurity approval to installing and testing the equipment.

The overall effort encompassed nearly 20 organizations, including five program offices, four warfare centers and a dozen external entities, according to Todd Jenkins, platform integration lead with NSWC PHD in San Diego.

“We were expecting a great deal of roadblocks due to the compressed timeline, but everyone came together to accomplish

this monumental event,” Jenkins said.

Typically, this type of first-of-class installation takes at least two years, according to Robert “Tony” Honeycutt, Alteration Installation Team manager at NSWC PHD’s Virginia Beach Detachment in Virginia. A key factor in speeding up the process was proposing the OTH as a temporary change to USS Fitzgerald, which reduced the requirements for documentation and drawings compared to a permanent change.

Beyond streamlining the paperwork, Honeycutt and Jenkins met frequently with stakeholders from PEO IWS 3H and NAWCWD China Lake to overcome obstacles and stay on schedule.

“Basically, we were just driving it as hard as we could,” Honeycutt said. “As soon as we ran into a problem, we had a group powwow and figured out the solution.”

Another task that the team sped up was securing the cybersecurity accreditation known as authority to operate (ATO) for the OTH software that would be installed on the ship. The rigorous six-step process typically takes about a year, but in this case it had to be completed much quicker so the installation could start.

“We had to do the cyber ATO in two months,” Romero said.

The team installed the OTH on USS Fitzgerald at Naval Base San Diego from mid-March to late May. The main components of the system are the launcher and an operator interface console. To make it compatible with the destroyer, the system also required a navigation adapter.

After installing the OTH, NSWC PHD trained crew members and helped them test the system while underway.

“We made sure they were trained up, such as to be self-

sustaining as operators," Romero said.

In Hawaii for RIMPAC in July, USS Fitzgerald participated with other ships and aircraft in a sinking exercise, known as a SINKEX. The target was a decommissioned amphibious ship about 50 nautical miles off the coast of Kauai.

With NSWC PHD team members monitoring remotely, USS Fitzgerald launched its first NSM from the OTH. The NSM successfully searched the target area, detected and prosecuted the target.

"It was a successful NSM live-fire shot launched from the OTH Weapon System," Romero said.

Following the inaugural firing at RIMPAC, NSWC PHD personnel will help prepare USS Fitzgerald to go on deployment with the OTH.

While the new weapon system is still authorized as a temporary installation on USS Fitzgerald, the team is working to secure approval for it to stay on the ship indefinitely.

"We're migrating the ship change document to a permanent change, as we want to keep the system aboard DDG 62," Romero said.

The work done on DDG 62 will help inform the way forward on providing this capability to other DDGs.