Acting SECNAV Appoints Rear Adm. Jonathan Rucker to Lead PAE Maritime

WASHINGTON – Acting Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao announced today that Rear Adm. Jonathan Rucker has been appointed Portfolio Acquisition Executive (PAE) Maritime. PAE Maritime is the Navy organization responsible for delivering surface ships to the Fleet.

“President Trump has given me a clear mandate: build the Golden Fleet,” said Cao. “Admiral Rucker is the right leader at the right time to bring accountability to and accelerate our American shipbuilding system.”

Rucker has served as the Director of Design and Construction for Direct Reporting Portfolio Manager, Submarines since April 2026, where he has been responsible for the design and construction of all submarines. Prior to this, Rucker served as the Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Attack Submarines, Program Manager of the COLUMBIA Class Submarine Program and Program Manager of the Unmanned Maritime Systems Program.

As PAE Maritime, Rucker is charged with leading the Navy’s surface ship acquisition efforts across the shipbuilding enterprise. He will work with the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities, Navy Warfare Centers, shipyards, and industry partners to move ship programs through requirements, design, construction, delivery, and operational sustainment in the Fleet.

“We owe it to our Sailors and Marines to deliver the ships they need at speed with capability and quality to ensure they maintain our competitive advantage,” said Rucker. “I am eager to build the Fleet America needs now.”

Rucker brings operational experience and more than two decades of Navy acquisition experience to PAE Maritime. He deployed to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving as Chief Engineer in charge of jamming systems supporting counter improvised explosive device efforts. In addition to his leadership positions as PEO and program manager, he served as Lead Ship Coordinator, Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Groton and Military Assistant for the Undersecretary for Defense for Acquisition, Technology, & Logistics.

Rucker holds a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Duke University, a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Naval Engineer degree and master’s degree in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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