HII Hosts PAE Maritime Christopher Miller at Ingalls Shipbuilding

From HII

PASCAGOULA, Miss., April 09, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) hosted Christopher Miller, the U.S. Navy's portfolio acquisition executive for maritime (PAE Maritime), at its Ingalls Shipbuilding division Wednesday. During the visit, Miller met with company leadership and received updates on current ship programs, facility investments and Ingalls' expanding production capacity to support the Navy's current and future fleet requirements.

"Ingalls is fully committed to our partnership with the Navy and the Marine Corps and our shared mission to strengthen the fleet with urgency," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Blanchette said. "The skill and determination our shipbuilders apply to every destroyer and amphibious ship are essential to that mission, and we were honored to show Mr. Miller firsthand

the commitment they bring to accelerating the Navy's needs."

HII has invested more than $1 billion in infrastructure, facilities and advanced tools at Ingalls to prepare for next-generation shipbuilding requirements. These investments, combined with the shipyard's expanding distributed shipbuilding network across the Gulf Coast, ensure Ingalls is ready to support the Navy's "Golden Fleet" of advanced surface combatants while continuing to deliver destroyers and amphibious assault ships.

The visit marked Miller's first trip to Ingalls since assuming the PAE Maritime role in March 2026. In addition to meeting with leadership, he toured several areas of the shipyard, including amphibious transport dock *Harrisburg* (LPD 30), currently under construction.

"The critical work happening at Ingalls reflects the strength and technical expertise of our nation's shipbuilding industrial base," Miller said. "As the Navy prepares for future demands, our industry partners and their experienced workforce are pivotal to delivering the platforms and capacity needed. The maritime industry is critically important to our national defense and I am committed to supporting the industrial base efforts needed to deliver at speed and scale."

Miller also visited HII's Newport News Shipbuilding division at the end of March, where he met with leadership and toured construction progress on aircraft carrier programs at the shipyard. Together, the visits reinforced the shared commitment between HII and Navy leadership to deliver the platforms that strengthen the fleet, advance future capability and ensure sailors and Marines have the ships they need.

Virginia Senators Encourage Navy to Work with Virginia's Ship Repair Industry to Balance Delayed Workloads

From the office of Senator Mark R. Warner, D-Virginia

WASHINGTON – In light of the extended deployment of Virginia-based Navy ships, including the USS *Gerald R. Ford*, U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine (both D-VA) sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Navy John Phelan encouraging him to use the appropriate tools and authorities to ensure ship repair workloads in the Commonwealth remain level, and that the Navy works with industry to prepare for upcoming maintenance demand. The *Ford's* near historic deployment, emergency repairs, and compressed maintenance cycle have disrupted the ship's scheduled servicing, which also impacts Virginia's skilled tradespeople who repair and modernize ships.

The senators began, "We write to request, in light of the Navy's surge of deployments in the Caribbean and to the Middle East, that your Department utilize all appropriate tools and authorities to manage resulting maintenance needs, and work with industry to appropriately align demand with repair yard planning and capacity."

The senators encouraged the Navy to coordinate closely with industry to balance foreseeable demand and award contracts for known but stalled maintenance periods to mitigate delays that may result from the changes to operational schedules. The Navy should work with industry on the planning, ship checks, purchasing long-lead time materials, and any prefabrication efforts to ensure ships get back into operations quickly.

The senators continued, "Virginia is home to a storied shipbuilding and repair industry, one that has created and sustained many of America's greatest military and merchant ships. Virginia remains an ideal partner for the Navy to build and repair these ships, with capable shipyards and repair facilities, a talented and agile workforce, and a robust industrial base dedicated to keeping the military, maritime industry, and American economy afloat. Please keep the yards

level-loaded and our tradespeople working without fear of layoffs during this significant operational period for our Navy."

Read the full letter here and below.

Dear Secretary Phelan,

We write to request, in light of the Navy's surge of deployments in the Caribbean and to the Middle East, that your Department utilize all appropriate tools and authorities to manage resulting maintenance needs, and work with industry to appropriately align demand with repair yard planning and capacity.

This operational tempo has had repercussions on the fleet, with the USS Gerald R. Ford now on a ten-month deployment, missing her original maintenance window and needing emergency repairs after an onboard fire. Deployments approaching historic lengths, compressed maintenance cycles, and ongoing operational demands have disrupted scheduled ship repairs in Virginia, as well as across the country. Not only do these extended deployments impact our servicemembers and their families, but we also note that these disruptions are borne by thousands of skilled tradespeople, regional economies, and the maritime industrial base across the country who repair and modernize our ships and get them ready to fight.

We encourage the Navy to be forward leaning in its strategy to manage this foreseeable demand, and work closely with industry to prepare for and balance the workload. To the greatest possible extent, the Navy should be utilizing available authorities and flexibilities to award contracts for known but

delayed maintenance periods to mitigate delays that may result from the changes to operational schedules. The Navy should use this time to work with industry on the planning, ship checks, purchasing long-lead time materials, and any prefabrication efforts to ensure these ships get back into operations quickly.

Virginia is home to a storied shipbuilding and repair industry, one that has created and sustained many of America's greatest military and merchant ships. Virginia remains an ideal partner for the Navy to build and repair these ships, with capable shipyards and repair facilities, a talented and agile workforce, and a robust industrial base dedicated to keeping the military, maritime industry, and American economy afloat. Please keep the yards level-loaded and our tradespeople working without fear of layoffs during this significant operational period for our Navy.

We urge you to continue to coordinate closely with ship repair industry leaders, and please do not hesitate to bring us into conversation to ensure the Navy and Virginia's ship repair industry has the authority, funds, and policies in place to support sustained, balanced, and coordinated ship repairs for the Navy.

George Whittier Returns as

CEO to Lead Fairbanks Morse into New Era of Growth

From Fairbanks Morse Defense

BELOIT, Wis. – Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD) today announced that George Whittier is returning to lead FMD as its Chief Executive Officer.

Across the defense and industrial sectors, Whittier is widely recognized as a trusted and highly respected leader. Having

spent more than a decade at FMD, including six years as its CEO, Whittier is uniquely situated to lead the company through this pivotal period as he brings a deep understanding of the business and its critical role within the defense industrial base.

“Fairbanks Morse has been integral to America’s industrial and defense strength for more than a century, and I am deeply honored to be asked to again lead this remarkable team and company forward,” Whittier said. “The maritime defense sector is where my heart has always been, and I look forward to working alongside our team to build on this legacy, strengthen our role in the American industrial base, and lead the company into its next phase of growth.”

Whittier brings a powerful combination of strategic vision, commercial expertise, and operational discipline, along with extensive relationships across industry and government. Throughout his career, including leadership roles at Precision Castparts Corporation, Regal Beloit Corporation and The Morey Corporation, he has consistently aligned strategy with execution, built high-performing teams and organizations, and delivered sustained growth.

George’s leadership positions the company to move faster, think bigger, and execute with even greater precision. He will play a pivotal role as we scale our operations, strengthen our impact within the defense industrial base, and deliver the next generation of solutions our customers rely on every day.

About Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD)

Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD) builds, maintains and services the most trusted naval power and propulsion systems on the planet. For nearly a century, Fairbanks Morse Defense has been a principal supplier of a growing array of leading marine technologies, OEM parts and turnkey services to the U.S. Navy,

U.S. Coast Guard, Military Sealift Command, and Canadian Coast Guard. FMD stands ready to rapidly support the systems that power military fleets without compromising safety or quality. In times of peace and war, the experienced engineers, sailors and technicians of FMD demonstrate our commitment to supporting the mission and vision of critical global naval operations wherever and whenever needed. FMD is a portfolio company of Arcline Investment Management.

HURREX 2026: U.S. Navy Launches Major Hurricane Drill to Test Fleet and Shore Readiness

From U.S. Fleet Forces Command, April 10, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFFC) and Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) will launch their annual hurricane preparedness and disaster response exercise, HURRICANE EXERCISE/CITADEL GALE (HURREX/CG) 2026, from April 13-24.

The two-week exercise ensures the Navy's severe weather readiness and exercises response protocols to damaging weather events along the U.S.'s Southern and Eastern coasts. It provides a focused training event for afloat and shore-based

commands using simulated hurricane scenarios to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season, ensuring the fleet remains ready for global tasking and a credible deterrent.

Ensuring the resilience of our assets ashore is a critical component of national defense. HURREX/CG 2026 demonstrates the Navy's commitment to maintaining uninterrupted operational readiness, ensuring that our forces can deploy worldwide, undeterred by environmental threats. The exercise sends a clear message to any potential adversary: the U.S. Navy is resilient, protected, and always ready.

"Naval power underpins national security and economic prosperity. That strength begins at our homeports, where a warship's readiness is forged from our shore-side infrastructure and the dedicated professionals who sustain it during calm weather and heavy storms," said Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command. "HURREX/CG 26 ensures we can harden our installations to protect them and our personnel during the upcoming hurricane season, and to ensure our forces remain ready for global tasking regardless of the environment."

A new element for this year's exercise is the focus on public works scenarios designed to test the Navy's recent Shore Command and Control Realignment. This realignment places Public Works Departments directly under Installation Commanding Officers and CNIC for immediate operational response and maintenance. NAVFAC retains its role focusing on large-scale restoration, major construction, and technical acquisition. HURREX 2026 will be the first exercise to test this new integrated command structure, with scenarios challenging CNIC-led installation teams to respond to infrastructure damage and exercise energy resilience capabilities, such as coordinating the refueling of critical generators.

“Our installations are the bedrock that enables naval power projection, and this year’s exercise places that foundation under a microscope,” said Vice Adm. Scott Gray, Commander, Navy Installations Command. “By stress-testing our new command and control structure for public works, we are validating our capacity to maintain essential services like power and water in a crisis. This proves our shore enterprise is more than just infrastructure; it is a resilient and indispensable component of the Navy’s warfighting team, enabling our Sailors and civilians to remain focused and ready.”

The exercise is structured in two distinct phases. The first week focuses on preparedness and response, simulating an approaching hurricane to drill decision-making timelines for setting Tropical Cyclone Conditions of Readiness (TCCOR), evacuating aircraft, and, if necessary, issuing sortie orders for ships to get underway.

The second week shifts to recovery operations. Following the simulated storm’s passage, commands will exercise post-storm damage assessments, mustering personnel via the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS), and restoring base operations. This phase heavily emphasizes coordination with local, state, and federal partners to ensure a unified recovery effort.

Our people are our greatest warfighting advantage, and Sailors and their families are at the center of this readiness effort. All personnel are encouraged to log into the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) at https://navyfamily.navy.mil to verify and update their contact information, which is essential for personnel accountability in a crisis.

While measures have been taken to minimize disruptions, the public may notice increased activity on and around naval installations as commands execute their response plans.

For more details on any potential local impacts, residents are encouraged to visit their respective Navy installation’s website and social media channels.

Ecuador and U.S. Navies Conduct Bilateral Maritime Engagement in Pacific Ocean

Ecuadorian navy Esmeralda-class missile corvettes BAE Manabi (CM 12) and BAE Loja (CM 16) conduct formation maneuvering alongside Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gridley (DDG 101), part of Nimitz Carrier Strike Group (NIMCSG), in the Pacific Ocean, April 8, 2026. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Class Gina Gallia)

From the U.S. 4th Fleet, April 9, 2026

PACIFIC OCEAN – The Ecuadorian and U.S. Navies conducted a bilateral maritime engagement as part of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet's Southern Seas 2026 deployment in the Pacific Ocean, April 7-8.

The engagement, focused on increasing interoperability between the two navies, included participation by the Ecuadorian Esmeraldas-class missile corvettes BAE Manabi (CM 12) and BAE Loja (CM 16), Ecuadorian A-29 Super Tucano aircraft, Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gridley (DDG 101), and F-18 Super Hornets and MH-60 Sea Hawks assigned to Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17.

"Engaging with partners like Ecuador ensures that when the need arises, we can work together as a proficient warfighting team, built with trust and experience," said Rear Adm. Cassidy Norman, commander of Carrier Strike Group 11. "Training on the high seas with Ecuadoran naval forces gave us the chance to hone our critical skills while also continuing to build a relationship that is already strong and enduring."

Training conducted included subject matter expert exchanges, simulated maritime interdiction operations scenarios, a live-fire gunnery exercise, maneuvering in formation and an air defense exercise.

Nimitz also hosted a visit of senior Ecuadorian government and military leaders including Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabriela Sommerfeld, Minister of Defense Giancarlo Loffredo, and Chief of Defense Gen. Henry Delgado. The delegation was accompanied by U.S. Charge d'Affaires a.i. in Ecuador Lawrence Petroni.

The visit was one of many planned opportunities for distinguished visitors to observe aircraft carrier operations

during Southern Seas 2026.

While aboard, the Ecuadorian delegation met with Norman and Capt. Joseph Furco, commanding officer of Nimitz. The leaders discussed the Southern Seas 2026 mission and the strong security partnership between Ecuador and the U.S.

Visitors also observed flight operations and an air power demonstration from Nimitz' flight deck.

The visit and bilateral training demonstrated the Southern Seas 2026 mission to strengthen existing regional partnerships and encourage the establishment of new relationships through the exchange of maritime mission-focused knowledge and expertise.

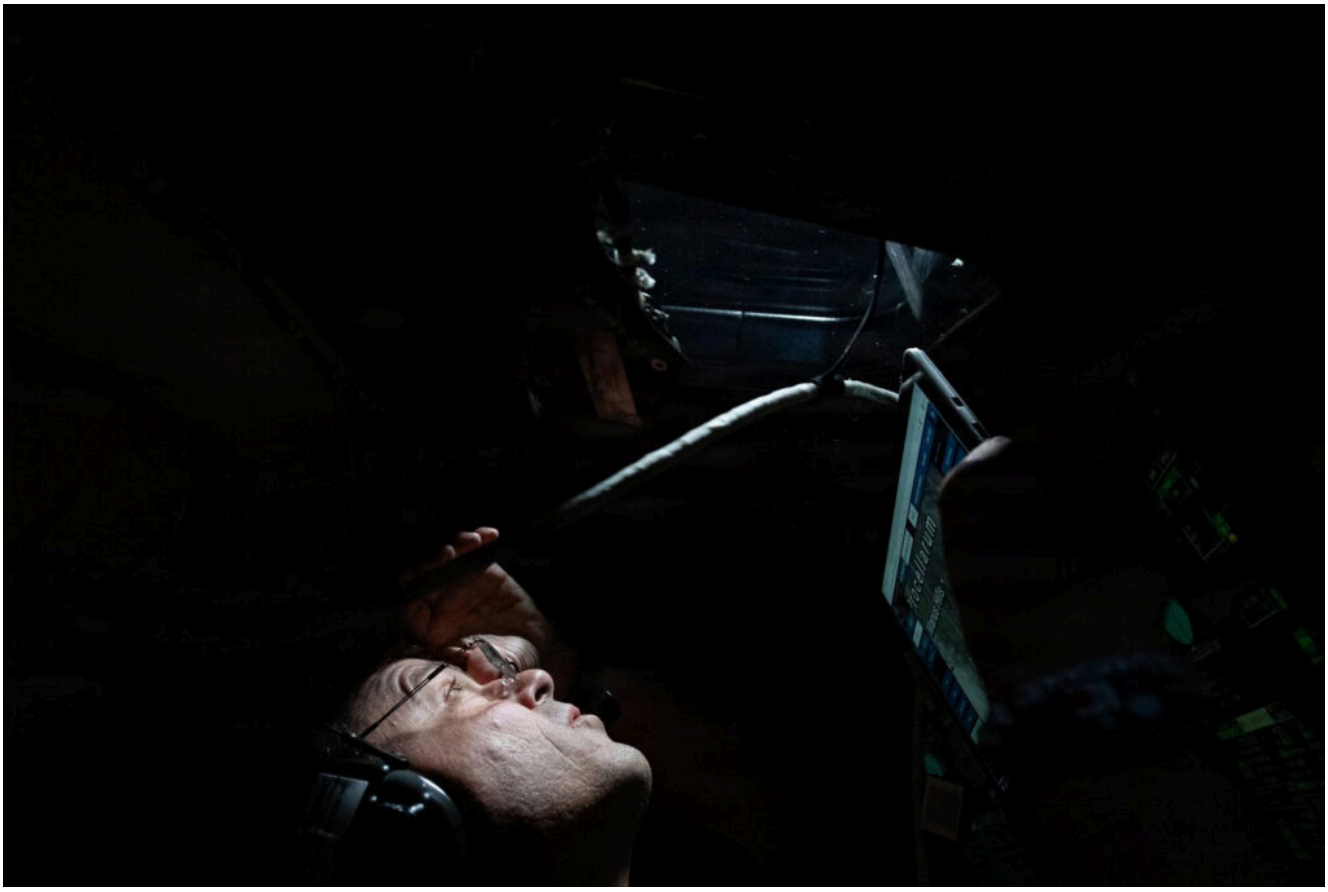
Southern Seas 2026 marks the 11th iteration of the exercise to the region since 2007. Like the previous deployments, Southern Seas 2026 is designed to foster goodwill, strengthen maritime partnerships to counter threats, and build the U.S. Navy's team alongside partner nation maritime services.

During the deployment, Nimitz Carrier Strike Group (NIMCSG) is scheduled to conduct passing exercises and operations at sea with partner nation maritime forces as the ships circumnavigate the continent of South America.

NIMCSG consists of Nimitz, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 9, and Gridley.

USNAVSOUTH/FOURTHFLT is the trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South America maritime forces improving regional unity and security.

Naval Postgraduate School Alumni Lead Artemis II Homebound



NPS alumnus and Artemis II mission commander retired U.S. Navy Capt. Reid Wiseman peers out the window of the Orion spacecraft just as his first lunar observation period of the day begins. Throughout the course of the sixth day of the mission, Wiseman and his crewmates took turns at the windows, capturing images and video of the Moon, along with recorded observations. (Credit NASA)

Naval Postgraduate School Alumni Lead Artemis II Homebound

April 8, 2026 | By Daniel Linehan, DoW News

Next stop – Earth.

After a historic lunar flyby at a record-setting distance, the Artemis II crew is now on its return journey, with splashdown

expected April 10 in the Pacific Ocean, approximately 50-60 miles off the coast of San Diego.

Awaiting their arrival will be the amphibious transport dock ship USS John P. Murtha, positioned to recover the astronauts and capsule.

Mission commander and Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, retired Navy Capt. Reid Wiseman, now focuses on the most critical phase of the mission – bringing the crew home safely.

“We are locked in,” Wiseman said. “We are definitely excited for the second half of this mission. And we are on guard. We are the first crew to fly this vehicle. We are ready for any contingency and any scenario. We are going to stay locked in every second until we are back on that Navy ship, at home reunited with our families.”

Wiseman and spacecraft pilot, Navy Capt. Victor Glover – also an NPS alumnus – use their years of experience as Navy test pilots to guide the spacecraft, coined Integrity by the crew. Their advanced education and astronaut training will ensure a safe return to Earth.

As our blue planet grows steadily larger in the capsule’s windows, the mission’s significance is clear. Their journey around the moon has generated critical insights that will inform future Artemis missions and advance NASA’s long-term goal of human exploration beyond lunar orbit.

On the sixth day of the mission, the crew entered the moon’s sphere of influence – the point at which lunar gravity overtakes Earth’s pull – marking a key milestone in the mission. For hours, the astronauts conducted detailed observations of the moon’s near and far sides, capturing new imagery and data.

Wiseman and Glover, alongside crewmates Christina Koch and

Jeremy Hansen, passed within 4,070 miles of the lunar surface and experienced a 40-minute communications blackout, another defining moment of the mission.

That moment was made even more meaningful by a prerecorded message from Apollo 8 and Apollo 13 astronaut Jim Lovell, a fellow naval aviator and test pilot, who died in 2025 at 97.

“Hello Artemis II. This is Apollo astronaut Jim Lovell. Welcome to my old neighborhood,” the message read. “I’m proud to pass that torch to you as you swing around the moon and lay the groundwork for missions to Mars for the benefit of all. … Good luck and Godspeed from all those here on the good Earth.”

The symbolism was powerful. Lovell, commander of Apollo 13, held the previous record for the farthest distance traveled from Earth at 248,655 miles. Artemis II surpassed that mark, reaching 252,760 miles, more than 4,000 miles farther than any human spaceflight before it.

During the moon flyby, the crew worked in rotating pairs for six hours, observing the lunar surface. They witnessed Earth set behind the moon, then rise again. They also saw an extremely rare view of a solar eclipse as the moon passed between the spacecraft and the sun, a first for human eyes.

While the Artemis II crew observed the moon, another spacecraft was watching them.

NASA’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, a robotic spacecraft, captured images of the Integrity capsule as it swung around the moon. The orbiter’s mission includes mapping the moon’s surface, identifying potential resources such as water and ice and helping determine safe landing sites for future missions.

NPS faculty and students contributed to the orbiter’s fast attitude maneuvering control system, which enables the

spacecraft to precisely reorient, capabilities essential for tracking and imaging.

Data from the Artemis II and imagery from the orbiter are now being processed and are anticipated by researchers at NASA and partner institutions.

This collaboration reflects a broader, enduring partnership between NASA and NPS that advances both cutting-edge research and the education of future operational leaders and astronauts. The ability to connect real-world missions with graduate-level education remains a hallmark of the NPS experience.

Since first putting humans in space, the Navy, NPS and NASA have had an inseparable bond in space education and research; from naval aviators turned astronauts to Navy ships and sailors returning the astronauts home after splashdown; and to the scientists, engineers and leaders filling every space in-between.

With seven NPS alumni in the active NASA astronaut corps, the Navy and NPS remain vital contributors to America’s future lunar missions and space exploration.

USS John P. Murtha to Support NASA’s Artemis II Mission

Sailors assigned to amphibious transport dock ship USS John P. Murtha (LPD 26) and NASA engineers prepare to release a crew module test article from the ship’s well deck, Jan. 26, 2026. John P. Murtha is underway in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of operations performing a just-in-time training in support of U.S. Space Command’s human space flight recovery mission to retrieve NASA’s Artemis II crew and spacecraft following their splashdown in the Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jomark A. Almazan)

From Petty Officer 1st Class Jomark Almazan, April 6, 2026

SAN DIEGO – Amphibious transport dock ship USS John P. Murtha (LPD 26) is slated to serve as the recovery ship for the Orion spacecraft and its crew upon their return from the historic Artemis II mission.

The ship is named in honor of the late and long-serving Pennsylvania Congressman John P. Murtha.

“It is a fitting tribute to Congressman Murtha, who dedicated his life to serving our nation, that the ship bearing his name will be integral to this historic moment in space

exploration," said U.S. Navy Capt. Erik Kenny, commanding officer of John P. Murtha. "He was a champion for our military and a visionary. We are honored to carry on his legacy by supporting NASA and the Artemis II mission."

The Artemis II mission is the first crewed flight of NASA's Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and Orion spacecraft, sending four astronauts on an approximately 10-day journey that will take them beyond the Moon. This mission will mark humanity's first crewed voyage to the vicinity of the moon in over 50 years.

Upon completion of their mission, the Orion capsule will splash down in the Pacific Ocean, where John P. Murtha and its crew will be prepared to recover the astronauts and the spacecraft.

The U.S. Navy's amphibious transport dock has unique advantages, including a well deck, helicopter pad, onboard medical facilities, and communication capabilities needed to support the mission. The platform gives NASA the ability to recover the Orion space capsule and collect critical data to help ensure it's ready to recover the astronauts and capsule during future Artemis missions.

MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23 will provide imagery support for NASA by tracking the Orion space capsule as it travels through Earth's atmosphere. After splashdown, HSC-23 helicopters will recover the astronauts once they exit the capsule and bring them to the ship for assessment and then transport them to shore.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group (EODGRU) 1 will provide Navy divers to recover and transport the Orion space capsule from the ocean to the ship's well deck. Navy divers are experts in mobile diving, salvage, towing, and open water, small boat operations. In addition to the Navy divers, EODGRU-1 will

support the recovery mission with a dive medical team to assess and assist the astronauts following their exit from the capsule.

Artemis II is NASA’s first crewed mission in a series of missions around and to the lunar surface where crew can build and test systems needed to prepare for the challenge of future missions to Mars. The mission launched from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida, April 1, with four astronauts onboard.

Mr. Peter Reddy named NAVSEA Warfare Centers Executive Director

By NAVSEA Warfare Centers Public Affairs, April 8, 2026

WASHINGTON – Mr. Peter Reddy has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA)

Naval Surface and Undersea Warfare Centers.

Reddy most recently served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, Test and Engineering (DASN (RDT&E)), under the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition (ASN (RDA)). In that role, he was responsible for executive oversight of all matters related to RDT&E budget activities, science and engineering, advanced research and development, prototyping and experimentation, and test and evaluation. He was also responsible for management and stewardship of the Naval Research and Development Establishment (NR&DE), which includes naval laboratories and warfare centers, Office of Naval Research, Naval Postgraduate School, five University Affiliated Research Centers, and the Navy's Federally Funded Research and Development Center.

Jason Potter, who is performing the duties of ASN (RDA), congratulated Reddy for assuming his critical new role at the NAVSEA Warfare Centers and called him a champion for the Department of the Navy engineering workforce, with an encyclopedic knowledge of the NR&DE and the intricacies of the Navy Working Capital Fund.

Reddy became a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES) in November 2019 with his appointment as Executive Director of Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Atlantic, part of the Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR), where he served until January 2025.

A seasoned aerospace and systems engineer, Reddy brings extensive technical and engineering leadership expertise, forged through a distinguished career as both a senior civilian executive and a commissioned officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served for 30 years before retiring from active duty in May 2014. He has a proven track record of managing a broad portfolio, including information systems technology; command, control, communications, computers,

intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR); and cyber systems.

In a message to the NAVSEA Warfare Centers' workforce, Acting NAVSEA Executive Director Thomas A. Perotti noted, "Mr. Reddy's leadership and vision will be instrumental as we continue to accelerate the delivery of decisive combat power for our Navy and our nation."

The NAVSEA Warfare Centers are the Navy's principal research, development, test and evaluation assessment activity for surface ship and submarine systems and subsystems and supply the technical operations, people, technology, engineering services and products needed to equip and support the fleet and meet the warfighters' needs. The Warfare Centers comprise 10 divisions: Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Carderock, NSWC Corona, NSWC Crane, NSWC Dahlgren, NSWC Indian Head, Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) Keyport, NUWC Newport, NSWC Panama City, NSWC Philadelphia, and NSWC Port Hueneme.

Navy UAS Surpass 1 Million Hours in ISR Operations

A Textron MQ-19 Aerosonde Unmanned Aircraft System launches from the expeditionary sea base ship USS Hershel “Woody” Williams (ESB-4).
From *the Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program Office,* April 9, 2026

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program Office announced its Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Services UAS have surpassed 1 million flight hours supporting operations on land and at sea.

Sailors achieved the milestone during routine mission support in the U.S. 6th Fleet.

Since the program’s inception in 2005, the program office has completed more than 50 UAS installations aboard Navy and

Military Sealift Command (MSC) ships and operated from more than 50 land-based locations worldwide. The ISR Services team ensures ships across the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th fleets, as well as land-based operations worldwide, are equipped to provide day-and-night ISR support to joint force and coalition partners.

“Every hour flown represents more than mission success—it reflects the resilience of our people, the trust of our partners and the impact we’ve had on history,” said Gregg Skinner, program manager. “Together, we’ve supported operations in every corner of the globe, advanced unmanned systems into the fight and stood ready in times of uncertainty.”

More than a dozen ships are currently equipped with ISR Services UAS, enabling naval vessels to launch and recover aircraft in support of missions. Sea- and land-based systems include the Boeing Insitu MQ-27 ScanEagle and the Textron MQ-19 Aerosonde, both providing day-and-night surveillance and around-the-clock mission support to the warfighter.

UAS installations are optimized to help transfer full-motion video and other sensor data to personnel in critical locations. The information gathered by these systems plays a vital role in tactical operational decision-making and long-term intelligence gathering, strengthening the Navy and Marine Corps’ ability to maintain maritime domain awareness and operational readiness.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Rescues Family Missing for 7 Days in Micronesia

U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Stephanie Jocis, operations officer aboard Legend-class cutter USCGC Midgett (WMSL 757), observes a 23-foot single-outboard skiff vessel, carrying three members of a missing family in the waters of Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia, in Midgett's search light during the early hours of April 6, 2026. The crew of Midgett rescued the family after the vessel went missing on March 30 in the waters of Chuuk State. U.S. Coast Guard missions in the Indo-Pacific focus on issues directly supporting and advancing our regional partners' efforts to protect fish stocks and ensure the safety of life at sea, ensuring a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Seaman Lauren Taber)

From U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia, April 7, 2026

SANTA RITA, Guam – A family of three was returned to Chuuk State, part of the Federated States of Micronesia, following

search and rescue operations conducted by the Legend-class cutter USCGC Midgett (WMSL 757) crew on April 6, 2026.

The Midgett crew located the missing family after receiving a report on Easter Sunday from authorities in the Federated States of Micronesia and the U.S. Embassy that the vessel was overdue.

“Our U.S. Coast Guard colleagues’ swift and courageous actions in this successful search and rescue mission not only reflect the highest standards of professionalism and humanity but also reinforce the deep and enduring partnership between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia,” said Jennifer Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia. “This mission exemplifies the spirit of cooperation and mutual support at the heart of the Compact of Free Association, underscoring how our close relations translate into real, life-saving outcomes for our people.”

At night, the crew of Midgett visually located the 23-foot single-outboard skiff carrying the missing family, two men and one woman, in the waters off the coast of Chuuk State. The family departed Fananu Island on March 30 for the short passage to Murillo Island, but never arrived due to a failure of their single outboard engine. At the height of search planning, the predicted search area exceeded 14,000 square nautical miles in rough seas with waves reaching 10 feet.

All three survivors were rescued and uninjured. They were then safely delivered to Weno in Chuuk State for further transport to Fananu Island.

“National Security Cutter crews spend most of their time executing maritime law enforcement missions, often with our international partners,” said Capt. Brian Whisler, commanding officer of Midgett. “SAR cases like this one are not routine for our platform. Our bridge watchstanders spotted the small skiff in rough seas just after midnight, and that kind of

situational awareness does not happen by accident. It is what this crew trains for, and I could not be prouder of how they performed.”

During the SAR operation, watchstanders from the U.S. Coast Guard Joint Rescue Sub-Center Guam at U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam developed the search patterns and coordinated with U.S. Coast Guard District Oceania and Air Station Barbers Point personnel to launch an HC-130 Hercules airplane and crew from Hawai’i to support the search and directed the launch of the USCGC Frederick Hatch (WPC 1143) crew from Guam. The Midgett crew, already conducting a Western Pacific patrol, diverted following a bilateral maritime law enforcement boarding with two embarked officers from the FSM in their exclusive economic zone, approximately 200 nautical miles south of Fananu Island.

“This rescue reflects the strategic value of maintaining a capable surface presence across the region’s vast maritime expanse,” said Lt. Cmdr. Derek Wallin, the U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue mission coordinator. “Without the Midgett’s proximity, coordinating a search across more than 14,000 square nautical miles of open ocean would have required significantly more time and resources. Time the three missing people may not have had.”

Throughout its current Indo-Pacific region patrol, Midgett’s crew is scheduled to engage with regional partners and participate in joint operations to enhance maritime safety and security. While deployed to the region, Midgett is assigned to Destroyer Squadron 15, the Navy’s largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet’s principal surface force. DESRON 15 regularly assumes tactical control of surface units operating in the area.

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