US Navy to Christen Future USNS Billy Frank Jr.

From the U.S. Navy Office of Information, March 27, 2025

MOBILE, Ala.—The U.S. Navy will christen the future USNS Billy Frank Jr. (T-ATS 11) during a ceremony on Saturday, March 29, at 10:00 a.m. CDT at Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama.

The Honorable William Frank III, former chairman of the Nisqually Tribe and son of the ship's namesake will deliver

the principal address followed by remarks from Dr. Brett Seidle, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition; Rear Adm. Thomas Anderson, program executive officer, Program Executive Office, Ships; Rear Adm. Mark Haigis, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command; and Michelle Kruger, president of Austal USA.

In a time-honored Navy tradition, Ship Sponsor Peggen Frank will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow. Frank is the executive director of Salmon Defense and daughter-in-law of the ship's namesake.

The ship is named in honor of Korean War veteran and Nisqually tribal member Billy Frank Jr., who received an Albert Schweitzer Prize for humanitarianism; a Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award; and, posthumously, a Presidential Medal of Freedom for his over 30-years of service to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

The Navajo-class ship is a multi-mission, common hull platform that will deploy to support a range of missions such as towing, rescue, salvage, humanitarian assistance, oil spill response, and wide-area search and surveillance. Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems.

Heritage Congratulates Brent Sadler on Maritime Administrator Nomination

From the Heritage Foundation, March 27, 2025

WASHINGTON – The Heritage Foundation released the following statement in response to President Donald Trump's nomination of Brent Sadler (Captain, U.S. Navy, Retired) as the next Maritime Administrator in the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD). MARAD supports America's maritime transportation infrastructure – including ships and shipping, port and vessel operations, national security, environment, and safety.

Brent joined Heritage after a 26-year Navy career that included numerous operational tours on nuclear-powered submarines, staffing of senior Defense Department leaders, and as a military diplomat in Asia. As a Senior Research Fellow, Brent has focused on maritime security and the technologies shaping our future maritime forces.

Heritage Vice President of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy Victoria Coates commented:

“We are deeply proud to see Brent Sadler nominated for this critical position related to America’s national and economic security. His comprehensive and successful Naval career as well as his policy work at Heritage position him well to serve this role with excellence and integrity. We will miss him, but he is the best candidate for this role.”

Heritage Director of the Allison Center for National Security Robert Greenway added:

“Having worked alongside Brent for several years, I’ve seen firsthand his leadership, passion, and knowledge related to the maritime domain and the revolution in shipping required to transform a vital industry. His nomination is a testament to the Trump administration’s unwavering commitment to addressing America’s depleted maritime sector amid global uncertainty.”

Bollinger Shipyards Gets Coast Guard Contract Modification for Polar Security Cutter Program

Since acquiring the facilities in 2022, Bollinger has nearly tripled its Mississippi production workforce

From Bollinger Shipyards, March 25, 2025

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Tuesday, March 25, 2025 – Bollinger Shipyards announced today it has received a $951.6 million Fixed-Price-Incentive-Firm Target (FPIF) contract modification from the United States Coast Guard, advancing the Detail Design and Construction phase of the Polar Security Cutter (PSC) Program. This milestone underscores Bollinger's integral role in strengthening America's maritime presence and operational capabilities in the Arctic.

"Securing this contract modification has truly been a herculean effort and underscores the incredible trust the U.S. Government has placed in Bollinger to build and deliver the first heavy polar icebreaker in half a century," said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. "We wouldn't be in the solid position we're in today without the leadership and the tireless efforts of the entire team at

Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding. Their hard work and dedication have successfully put the PSC program on a strong path forward after a rocky start under the previous, foreign-owned builder. We now look forward to receiving the green light to begin full production."

Bordelon also expressed gratitude for the role of national and state leadership in moving this program forward.

"I am also grateful for the leadership of President Trump and his Administration in recognizing the urgent need for American-made icebreakers. Because of his foresight and commitment to rebuilding America's shipbuilding capabilities, this historic project is now moving forward."

Bordelon also acknowledged Mississippi's leadership for championing the PSC Program and state as a dominant force in shipbuilding.

"I also want to thank Governor Reeves and Mississippi's Congressional Delegation for their leadership and support, especially as we leverage ongoing state and local investments to ensure Bollinger Mississippi remains the premier example of American shipbuilding."

"As the Arctic grows as an arena of great power competition, the United States will require far more icebreaking capability from the U.S. Coast Guard to defend our interests in the region. Today's award is a testament to the good work that Bollinger continues to do on the Polar Security Cutter program and the growing urgency with which their platforms are needed to boost our national defense," said U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "The Mississippi Gulf Coast will not only benefit from even more national security-focused quality jobs and economic development, but it will also continue to be a national player and powerhouse in mission-critical innovation and military capability."

“Mississippi continues to prove its status as the premier destination for American shipbuilding—driving both national defense and commercial maritime strength,” said U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS). “This milestone not only reinforces the Gulf Coast’s strategic importance, but it also reflects the value of returning critical shipbuilding programs to experienced, American-owned hands. Under Bollinger Shipyards’ strong leadership and investment, a once-stalled program will move forward with renewed urgency. I fully support this effort, which brings more high-quality jobs to Mississippi and ensures the Coast Guard is able to meet the growing challenges in the Arctic and beyond.”

Bollinger’s continued investment and growth on the Mississippi Gulf Coast reflect the skills, strength and talent of Mississippi’s workforce,” said Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves. “This announcement reinforces Mississippi’s pivotal role in American shipbuilding and solidifies Mississippi’s reputation as a national leader in maritime innovation and excellence.”

“Bollinger Mississippi Shipyards has a strong track record in American shipbuilding, and their role in the Polar Security Cutter program is another important step. This historic milestone strengthens national security, supports the domestic shipbuilding workforce, and enhances our Arctic presence. Ensuring the U.S. Coast Guard has the tools it needs is critical, and I look forward to seeing this project move forward,” said U.S. Rep. Mike Ezell (R-MS-04).

As Bollinger continues to enhance its operations in Mississippi into world-class shipyards, the company remains committed to making strategic investments to modernize and expand its capabilities. Additionally, the contract modification ensures Bollinger continues to provide its workforce with industry-leading wages throughout the life of the PSC program. Since acquiring foreign-owned VT Halter in November 2022, Bollinger has made a significant economic

impact in the state through targeted investments and workforce expansion. To date, Bollinger has invested $76 million across its Mississippi facilities, including Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding (BMS), Bollinger Mississippi Repair (BMR), Bollinger Gulfport Shipyard (BGS), and CHAND Gulf Coast.

Since the acquisition in 2022, Bollinger has increased its Mississippi workforce by over 61%, with production roles at BMS alone increasing by more than 178%. These numbers are expected to rise as the program reaches full production over the coming years. A key driver of this growth has been Bollinger's innovative Bootcamp workforce development programs, which continue to strengthen the skilled labor pipeline.

"Our investment in developing the next generation of skilled American workers not only strengthens our competitive edge in the shipbuilding industry but also underscores our commitment to fostering economic growth and American innovation," added Bordelon. "We are committed to providing high-quality careers that positively impact the families and communities we support along Mississippi's Gulf coast."

This contract modification primarily supports operations at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding, with additional project contributions from facilities located in Massachusetts, Illinois, Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, and other regions. Completion of the first Polar Security Cutter is anticipated by May 2030.

The Polar Security Cutter will provide the United States with enhanced operational capability in polar regions, playing a critical role in safeguarding national security, economic stability, and supporting vital maritime and commercial interests.

USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul Departs for First Deployment

The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21), along with the “Valkyries” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50 Detachment 3 and embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment, departed from Naval Station Mayport March 26, beginning her maiden deployment to support U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations.
From Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two, 26 March 2025

MAYPORT, Fla. – The Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21), along with the “Valkyries” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50 Detachment 3 and embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment, departed

from Naval Station Mayport March 26, beginning its first deployment to support U.S. 4th Fleet area of operations.

USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul's primary mission will be to support counter-illicit drug trafficking in the Caribbean. Minneapolis-Saint Paul operations will involve practical exercises and exchanges with partner nations, supporting U.S. 4th Fleet interoperability, and reinforcing the U.S. position as the regional partner of choice.

Among the key accomplishments, USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul certified in Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) operations, enabling the ship to conduct Maritime Interdiction Operations and support for the embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment.

This capability is vital for countering illicit drug trafficking and ensuring the safety of international waters. In addition, the ship embarked its aviation detachment, which includes the MH-60 R helicopter. This addition significantly enhances the ship's ability to conduct reconnaissance, track contacts of interest, and engage in maritime interdiction operations. The MH-60 R will serve as the ship's eyes in the sky, providing real-time intelligence and provide capabilities to effectively conduct our mission.

"I have watched this crew tackle a challenging and condensed schedule to ensure we are prepared for our [first] deployment to the 4th Fleet. We have overcome every obstacle in our path and have demonstrated that we are a resilient team ready to execute our mission," said Cmdr. Steven Fresse, USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul's commanding officer. "This will be USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul's first deployment, as well as the first for many of my crew members. However, we are eager to accomplish the mission we have been rigorously training for. I am very proud of this crew, and I am confident they will continue to exceed my expectations."

The crew also completed multiple certifications in a range of critical warfare areas, including Air Warfare, Electronic Warfare, Intelligence, Surface Warfare, Cyber Warfare, and Search and Rescue. These certifications showcase the team's proficiency across multiple domains, proving that they are well-equipped and prepared to handle the complex and multifaceted nature of modern naval operations. This remarkable achievement demonstrates that the Minneapolis Saint Paul is not only combat-ready but also adaptable to a wide spectrum of missions. All of which resulted in the ship exiting the basic phase and entering the advanced phase of the ship's life cycle.

Deploying an LCS to the region aims to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to international cooperation, security, freedom and prosperity. The ship's size, speed, and agility make LCS ideal for narcotics interdictions, partner engagements and port access.

"It has been an honor to watch this crew adjust and adapt to every task we have had to accomplish as a team and get prepared for our first deployment", said Master Chief Ariel Ampier, USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul's command master chief. "I am excited to be a part of a team that has been diligently working through every phase to maintain the readiness and success of this ship!"

LCS are a fast, agile, mission-focused platform designed to operate in near-shore environments defeat 21st-century coastal threats. The LCS is capable of supporting forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence.

USS Minneapolis-Saint Paul will operationally be assigned to U.S. 4th Fleet. It is homeported in Mayport, Florida and assigned to Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 2.

Navy Seeks Ways to Streamline Shipbuilding

March 25, 2025 | By David Vergun, DoD News

The United States projects its presence around the globe through its warships, impacting geopolitical decisions daily while maintaining the American way of life, said Brett A.

Seidle, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

Seidle testified today before the Senate Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on seapower regarding the state of conventional surface shipbuilding.

"We have fielded the finest Navy ever assembled in the history of the world, and I believe that is still true," he said.

The backbone of a strong Navy is its shipbuilding enterprise, Seidle added. Those who build ships are passionate about what they do and their role in supporting national security.

He said there's a need to reinvigorate the nation's industrial might, particularly in shipbuilding. Various challenges hinder more ships from being delivered on time and budget. Costs are rising faster than inflation, and schedules on multiple programs are delayed one to three years.

"We need increased modernization, infrastructure investment, better workforce hiring and retention, and improved supply chain performance," Seidle noted, adding that the assistance of Congress and the Navy's industrial partners will be key to solving these challenges.

Navy Vice Adm. James P. Downey, commander of Naval Sea Systems Command, also testified.

Downey said Navsea is committed to appropriately evaluating cost, schedule and technical requirements to deliver the right capabilities to the warfighters.

He said the command continually reviews its shipbuilding military specifications and is committed to collaborating with industry to simplify and streamline wherever possible. Also, the command is transitioning design plans into digitized formats, thereby reducing the burden on shipbuilders.

Downey said Navsea continues to face mounting challenges, from

shifting demographics and workforce shortages to supply chain disruptions that collectively continue to pressurize shipbuilding contracts.

“We need strategic solutions to improve waterfront productivity, and we are evaluating contracting approaches and incentives while also centralizing that data to better access what levers are needed to improve shipbuilding performance,” the vice admiral said.

Currently, the Navy has 92 ships under contract, with 56 vessels actively in construction. In addition to these prime shipbuilding contracts, Navsea has several shipyards that outsource work. Downey said the process results in a more distributed shipbuilding model with somewhat more complex oversight required.

He said Navsea is committed to helping industry create productive and safe workspaces on the waterfront to attract and retain the skilled workforce needed to build the Navy the nation needs.

“When you visit the shipyards and speak to the workers, whether it’s welders, machinists, front office staff or engineers, you understand what it means to them to build a great ship from the keel up, to start with nothing, and then to deliver a fully capable warship – that’s the product of teamwork in its purest form of execution,” he said.

Ingalls Shipbuilding Launches

Destroyer Future USS Jeremiah Denton (DDG 129)

From HII, March 25, 2025

PASCAGOULA, Miss., March 25, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII's (NYSE: HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division successfully launched future USS *Jeremiah Denton* (DDG 129) today, the third Flight III *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer to be built at the shipyard.

Shipbuilders transferred DDG 129 from land to the company's dry dock using translation railcars to support the ship during the move. Once in the dry dock, the ship was floated and moved by tugboats to a pier at the shipyard.

"The launch of DDG 129 is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our Ingalls shipbuilders and a collaborative achievement with our Navy partners," Ingalls Shipbuilding DDG Program Manager Ben Barnett said. "The future USS *Jeremiah Denton* will now undergo final outfitting, systems activation,

and testing before entering the fleet."

DDG 129 is named for former U.S. Sen. Jeremiah Denton Jr., a Vietnam War veteran who was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism as a prisoner of war. Following his Navy career, he was elected to the U.S. Senate representing his home state of Alabama in 1980.

Photos accompanying this release are available at: http://hii.com/news/hiis-ingalls-shipbuilding-launches-guided-missile-destroyer-future-uss-jeremiah-denton-ddg-129/.

An Arleigh Burke-class Flight III destroyer features the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) and the Aegis Baseline 10 Combat System that is required to keep pace with the threats well into the 21st century. Ingalls Shipbuilding has five Flight IIIs currently under construction including Ted Stevens (DDG 128), Jeremiah Denton (DDG 129), George M. Neal (DDG 131), Sam Nunn (DDG 133) and Thad Cochran (DDG 135).

Silver Ships Delivers 25th Assault Amphibian Safety Boat to U.S. Marine Corps

From Silver Ships, March 24, 2025

MOBILE, Ala. (March 24, 2025) – Silver Ships, a leading manufacturer of military aluminum workboats, has completed, tested and delivered a new Assault Amphibian Safety Boat (AASB) for the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy. Silver Ships has now delivered 25 of 31 AASB on time since production has been in place. A noteworthy achievement of this project is that the first hull was built and tested less than nine months after the initial contract was awarded.

The AASB is used for the U.S. Marine Corps amphibious training with Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV) and the follow-on Amphibious Combat Vehicles (ACVs) in the continental United States and overseas. The vessels can carry 28 passengers and have tailored communications, safety and rescue equipment to support offshore and nighttime operations.

AASBs feature a 2-foot draft which allows the vessel to navigate through shallow waters quietly. The vessel's full load weight is 16,195 pounds and it holds 250 gallons of fuel.

The vessel features twin 250 HP Mercury SeaPro Outboard engines that allow it to reach its destination quickly and efficiently. The vessel is 39 feet long, with a 10-foot beam and 25-degree deadrise, allowing it to cut through harsh waters with ease.

“The AASB project has been tremendously rewarding for Silver Ships due to the teamwork and cooperation we have fostered. We made this project a top priority for rapid production because our U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy customers had an urgent operational need for the boats to be built quickly. We worked closely with our U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy partners to deliver a reliable and very rugged boat that can stand up to continuous use in harsh marine environments,” said Shawn Lobree, Silver Ships Director of Federal Programs.

For more than 35 years, Silver Ships has collaborated with the U.S. Military to design and build mission-specific boats. Silver Ships takes great pride in supporting the U.S. Military and are committed to fulfilling all operational requirements while ensuring the highest level of crew safety and exceptional performance.

A MUSt DO: REPMUS is Primary Means for NATO to Develop Maritime Uncrewed Capability

At Robotic Experimentation and Prototyping using Maritime Uncrewed Systems 2024, the Portuguese Navy tested a prototype of an offshore artificial island, designed to provide a base for forward deploying and sustaining autonomous capabilities. *Photo credit: Lee Willett*

NATO navies are steadily increasing their use of maritime uncrewed systems, or MUS, aided by an extensive exercise process that covers the development of vehicles, payloads, capabilities and supporting architecture through various phases.

These phases include research and development, test and evaluation, operational experimentation and integration into frontline assets and task groups.

One exercise that has evolved to cover at least the first three phases in this process is the Portuguese navy-led Robotic Experimentation and Prototyping using Maritime Uncrewed Systems, which takes place annually off the Tróia

peninsula in southern Portugal. Established in 2010, it is hosted by the navy's Tróia-based Navy Operational Experimentation Center, or CEOM.

REPMUS originally focused on the research and development and test and evaluation phases. However, in recent years, especially due to the accelerating requirement to integrate MUS capabilities into frontline operations, the operational experimentation phase has become an equally crucial part of the REPMUS process.

The exercise's operational importance is underlined by the fact that NATO's Allied Maritime Command has developed and attached Dynamic Messenger – the alliance's first and primary MUS operational experimentation exercise – to REPMUS.

The two exercises were run in tandem in 2022 and 2023, co-hosted by CEOM and MARCOM; Dynamic Messenger will return to Tróia for REPMUS 2025.

The significance of REPMUS is underlined by the fact that several other major international MUS development activities now seek to support, draw on or understand the REPMUS process:

• Representatives from the Australia-U.K.-U.S. strategic partnership are focused on advanced maritime technology capability.

• NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic construct assesses, tests and develops startup technology to demonstrate potential defense capability and deliver it more quickly to frontline operators.

• The European Defence Agency is developing concepts and capabilities tested in and around REPMUS.

• NATO's Norfolk, Virginia-based Allied Command Transformation branch and La Spezia, Italy-based Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation's in-house laboratory have been testing

concepts, technologies and capabilities at REPMUS for several years.

The increasing importance of REPMUS was demonstrated in the 2024 exercise as more than 100 MUS vehicles were involved, more than 700 experimentation serials were conducted, and 30 countries participated, NATO allies and partners alike.

One partner of note was the Ukrainian Navy. Ukraine's experience of operating and countering uncrewed systems in both offensive and defensive operations in its ongoing war with Russia underscores the role uncrewed systems play today in conflict.

Thus, REPMUS has become a more important tool for NATO and its navies, providing capability development from research and development and test and evaluation to operational experimentation and accelerating the generation of MUS capabilities for operations.

"The NATO defense planning process is the primary means for identifying NATO's minimum capabilities requirements, the apportionment of those capabilities among allies and progress assessment," Captain António Mourinha, the Portuguese Navy's CEOM director and REPMUS chief of staff, told Seapower in an interview in December.

"Through this process, NATO allies are working together to develop and procure innovative maritime solutions and applications to increase operational effectiveness, limit risk to human life and reduce operational costs. In this context, and in the evolving landscape of maritime operations, MUS are seen as revolutionary and a dynamic force multiplier in the composition of our future fleets.

"These systems may increase, at fast pace, the mass, reach and flexibility of our maritime capabilities, improving operational effectiveness, efficiency and safety and thereby maximizing the potential of these fleets in a new manned-

unmanned teaming construct," Mourinha said.

The role REPMUS plays here is in capability development, evolving and improving the MUS systems to meet operational requirements, including for interoperability between the MUS vehicles themselves, building creweduncrewed teaming and supporting multidomain operations.

"REPMUS provides a cooperative environment where academia, industry, national armed forces and NATO can work together to foster advances in MUS capabilities, with a focus on interoperability … [it] allows for an exchange of innovative ideas and knowledge, thereby accelerating the development of new capabilities and the testing of such systems in a realistic operational setting," Mourinha said.

Uncrewed air vehicles work with crewed surface vessels at Robotic Experimentation and Prototyping using Maritime Uncrewed Systems 2022. REPMUS is an exercise in which NATO navies build capacity to deliver crewed-uncrewed teaming in multidomain operations. *Photo credit: NATO | Fran S. Dzioba*

Rolling Process

REPMUS is a rolling process, with capability developments and lessons learned taken forward into the following year's exercise.

REPMUS 2024 addressed national and NATO MUS capability development through focusing on technology, doctrine, training, interoperability and crewed-uncrewed teaming.

The REPMUS process also focuses on MUS use in all major warfare domains, including anti-air, anti-surface and anti-submarine operations, plus more specific taskings like mine countermeasures, force protection, harbor security, maritime security and critical undersea infrastructure protection.

At REPMUS 24, MUS use was tested in various conceptual and technological contexts, and Mourinha highlighted several examples.

The exercise tested and developed the requirements for NATO Standardization Agreement 4817, a mainstay STANAG for underwater communications in particular, building multidomain command and control for underwater operations involving, for example, uncrewed underwater vehicles.

"STANAG 4817 is a key feature for allied interoperability in using MUS," Mourinha said. Alongside being used for sharing the common operational picture, 4817 was used at REPMUS 24 to conduct MUS command and control for the first time, he said.

Several of the serials focused on underwater tasks. Reflecting what was an emerging operational requirement for NATO, but now is an enduring one, critical underwater infrastructure protection serials were conducted using maritime uncrewed systems.

Here, "blue force" surface ships, uncrewed surface and underwater vessels and acoustic sensors were used to detect

and prevent “red force” disruption activities.

For mine warfare, the exercise tested the use and coordination of MUS alongside the development of a visualization and command and control tool that enables holographic presentation of the mine threat area.

With Russian submarine activity continuing to increase across the Euro-Atlantic theater, MUS — especially uncrewed surface vehicles and uncrewed underwater vehicles — are central to NATO’s development of its anti-submarine warfare barrier concept, for which multistatic acoustic detection was tested in REPMUS 24.

“The barrier is a defensive ASW concept, using MUS extensively to detect, track and, if necessary, neutralize adversary submarines attempting to penetrate strategic areas, like naval bases, choke points or shipping lanes,” Mourinha said.

The impact of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on NATO operational requirements is reflected in the REPMUS work on countering uncrewed systems. At REPMUS 24, counterdrone work encompassed testing capabilities and tactics in all maritime domains.

“This is an important area of development, since many actors can cause disruptive effects, even with the simplest of uncrewed systems,” Mourinha said.

REPMUS also tests NATO navies’ ability to integrate other concepts and technologies to enhance MUS capabilities, such as through exploiting artificial intelligence. In this context, a concept called “silicon sailor” was tested, involving experimenting with how AI can assist with accessing naval operational manuals and protocols, providing fast access to critical information, supporting decision-making processes and enhancing personnel training. Scenarios included maritime navigation and rescue tasks.

A notable REPMUS 24 development was the establishment of an

artificial island – located in the Sado Estuary Natural Reserve, offshore from the main exercise base and CEOM headquarters at Tróia – designed as a prototype for a future, larger island construct designed to support MUS operations and wider surveillance and ocean monitoring.

“The structure was created … to test the requirements for MUS operation, ocean sensing, energy production and management, and efficient data processing and storage, with the testing of an underwater computer and server,” Mourinha said. Drawing on data gathered and lessons learned from the prototype, the navy intends to develop the larger artificial island to deploy it close to the deep waters of the Setubal Canyon on the peninsula’s seaward side.

Experimentation around these themes will continue at REPMUS 2025, with additional focus areas of persistent surveillance and data exploitation – reflecting Dynamic Messenger.

At REPMUS 2022, a REMUS UUV is deployed from a Royal Canadian Navy Kingston-class maritime coastal defense vessel. REPMUS is a core exercise process for developing NATO maritime uncrewed systems capabilities. *Photo credit: Estonian navy | NATO*

Testing Zone

The testing conducted at REPMUS is enabled and supported by

the fact that CEOM and the wider Tróia exercise area sit in the middle of a Portuguese government “technological free zone,” which the navy and Portugal’s naval industry can exploit.

The zone covers more than 1,000 square miles and permits testing and operational experimentation of new technology in a secure, at-sea space free from other users, enabling technology readiness levels to be developed to the point where the technologies can be presented to regulatory authorities for certification.

“The idea is to increase the use and efficiency of CEOM in a more cooperative way, by bringing more countries, international industry and research centers to experiment at CEOM in a concept closer to the one used in REPMUS, Mourinha said. The zone provides capacity for multiple stakeholders to be present at the same time to conduct testing, with this combined presence enabling synergies to be achieved and information to be exchanged, he said.

In 2025, CEOM will increase engagement with both Portuguese industry and NATO allies to increase their experimentation presence around the peninsula.

Allied presence at REPMUS 25 may also increase, possibly including one of the U.S. Navy’s latest MUS capability and operational development organizations, the U.S. 6th Fleet’s Task Force 66.

Dr. Lee Willett is an independent writer and analyst specializing in naval and maritime matters. With a 25-year professional background,he has spent time at sea on submarines,aircraft carriers and other craft. This article was first published in the February-March issue of Seapower.

DON Authorizes Attendance at Sea-Air-Space 2025 for Military, Civilian Personnel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 25, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – Travel for the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space Symposium has been authorized for all Department of Navy military speakers, moderators, and panelists, and attendance at the event has been approved for all National Capital Region (local) Navy federal civilian employees and uniformed military personnel.

A memo released by acting Under Secretary of the Navy Terrence

Emmert, dated 20 March 2025, says, “I approve the Department of the Navy’s attendance at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Symposium, 6-9 April 2025, at National Harbor, Maryland.”

Sea-Air-Space, the nation’s largest maritime national security symposium, is critical, as it “provides a platform for the professional development of Department of the Navy personnel on the latest developments in naval warfare, as well as an opportunity for Navy engagement with representatives from a broad cross-section of government, industry, academia, and the international community.” (GENADMIN released 24 MARCH 2025).

The Navy League of the United States, the host for Sea-Air-Space, is offering federal active-duty and civilian employees admission and transportation to the event, as well as one complimentary meal event. The Navy League also offers them discounted parking and meals for purchase at a discounted rate. Local bus services to and from the Gaylord National Harbor is also available for all federal civilian employees and uniformed military. Please see website, www.seaairspace.org for further details. Attendees not opting for these services are responsible for their own commuting costs to the event.

Newly confirmed 79th Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John C. Phelan, will address Sea-Air-Space attendees on his priorities for the Department, including ways to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding, strengthen warfighting culture, and recruit America’s best and brightest. Top speakers also include acting Commandant of the United States Coast Guard Admiral Kevin Lunday, Acting Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jim Kilby, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Eric Smith.

To register for Sea-Air-Space, click here.

Saildrone Deploys New Technology to Operate in GPS-denied Environments

A Saildrone Voyager USV equipped with hardware and software to operate in a GPS-denied environment at sea during IMX 2025. US Navy Photo by Chief Petty Officer Arif Patani.

The Saildrone Voyager platform has been equipped with new hardware and software algorithms, making it capable of operating in areas of GPS jamming and spoofing.

From Saildrone, March 25, 2025

AQABA, Jordan – Saildrone, the world leader in maritime autonomy, has successfully demonstrated operations in the Middle East with new hardware and software capabilities that allow saildrones to operate in a GPS-denied environment.

The US Navy established Task Force 59 in 2021 as part of the

US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) and US Fifth Fleet to advance the operational employment of unmanned systems and artificial intelligence in fleet operations. Due to recent regional events, GPS jamming and spoofing have hindered unmanned operating systems in the area.

Following intensive development and testing by Saildrone engineers to create a resilient positioning system, Saildrone now has the ability to autonomously operate in GPS-denied or spoofed maritime environments. Saildrone's innovative solution leverages multiple forms of localization, ensuring seamless operation without relying exclusively on satellite systems, and allowing operations to continue in contested environments. This was notably demonstrated during IMX 2025, where Saildrone was the only unmanned platform able to navigate and provide persistent surveillance in a denied environment.

"Satellite positioning and connectivity can no longer be relied upon in potential future conflicts," said Richard Jenkins, Founder and CEO at Saildrone. "It is essential that our unmanned systems can continue to operate in denied environments, and Saildrone once again leads the way with demonstrated resilience in real operational missions with US Navy."

Saildrone USVs are actively conducting wide-area surveillance in the CENTCOM AOR, enhancing maritime domain awareness and supporting US Navy operations. US forces have been engaged in the region supporting Operation Prosperity Guardian since December 2023, safeguarding commercial shipping and countering regional threats.

Saildrone is now in its fourth year of operations with the US Navy, with USVs on the water in the Middle East, Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific Oceans.