USS Mitscher Returns to Norfolk After Surge Deployment



A Sailor assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57) embraces his wife after the ship's return to homeport, Naval Station Norfolk, April 16. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan Seelbach

NORFOLK, Va. – Nearly 300 Sailors arrived home to Naval Station Norfolk aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57) on April 16 following a surge deployment to the European theater of operations, said the ship's public affairs.

Mitscher rapidly deployed in January to join the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (HSTCSG) in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations.

This was the ship's second homecoming in several months. Mitscher returned from an extended nine-month deployment with the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group in September 2021.

While deployed, the ship conducted presence operations and defense of the HSTCSG with the Greek, Italian, Norwegian and Turkish navies.

"No nation can confront today's challenges alone," said Cmdr. Thomas McCandless, commanding officer of Mitscher. "A more resilient and rapidly innovating Navy, combined with a robust set of allies and partners, demonstrate NATO's commitment to a free and open global commons. I can say without a doubt that our crew rose to the task. With a 10-day notice, Mitscher was able to onload ammunition and deploy with ease."

The crew enjoyed one port visit to Aksaz, Turkey, where they toured several historical sites and experienced local hospitality.

"We arrived in theater and seamlessly integrated with forces who were already on station," said McCandless. "Mitscher did indeed 'seize the day.'"

U.S., Iceland Wrap Up Exercise Northern Viking 2022



From left to right, the Norwegian Fritdjof Nansen-class frigate HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl (F314), French F70 type frigate FS Latouche-Tréville (D646) and German Sachsen-class airdefense frigate FGS Sachsen (F219) sail in formation in the North Atlantic Ocean in support of exercise Northern Viking 22. FRENCH NAVY

ICELAND – At sea, French, German and Norwegian surface combatants were joined by American and German maritime patrol aircraft in a hunt for adversary submarines while small boats conducted visit, board, search and seizure missions on suspect vessels.

On land, near Keflavík Air Base, an Icelandic coast guard rescue helicopter transported trapped and injured citizens to a temporary medical facility staffed by members of 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit's Shock Trauma Platoon and host nation medical personnel for triage and treatment.

For the last two weeks, allied nations have exercised these capabilities and more, coming together to hone their skills and enhance cooperation during the Iceland-hosted, U.S. 6th

Fleet-executed exercise Northern Viking 22, U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs said April 16.

"Northern Viking 22 has been incredibly successful for us and for the participating Allies," said Cmdr. Marvin Ingólfsson, Deputy Commander of Keflavík Air Base. "We have learned from each other these last two weeks and we have shared tactics and procedures, improving our ability to operate together in the defense of Iceland and of the lines of communication that run through this area."

The exercise, which began April 2 and concluded April 14, initially focused on protecting the critical infrastructure of Keflavík Air Base. Exercise participants established temporary secondary refueling positions for Allied aircraft while working to neutralize security threats to the base and its personnel.

"Northern Viking is really important for our cooperation in the high north seas and to our country in defense of law enforcement scenarios," said Lt. Ásgeir R. Gudjonsson, the Icelandic coast guard improvised explosive device disposal specialist. "It's good to have a go at actual events and the training is vital for us. We learned that [different EOD teams] differ a bit, but they're close – so we can work really well together."

The first week of the exercise also included air defense scenarios, coordinated shiphandling evolutions and hydrographic and airfield surveys. Throughout the exercise, allied maritime forces practiced a variety of evolutions to enhance their cooperation and coordination in defending Iceland and the sea lines of communication in the Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom (GIUK) gap.

Participants shifted their focus during the latter half of the exercise to the Marines of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit and Royal Marine Commandos as they conducted multiple ship-toshore operations, a natural progression in complexity of the overall exercise. Marines and Sailors from the USS Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group and 22nd MEU participated in a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, simulated raids on illicit compounds and visit, board, search and seizure operations.

Northern Viking 22, led by the U.S. 6th Fleet as a maritimefocused event for the first time in decades, established a framework for future iterations of the Northern Viking exercise. As units and personnel depart Iceland for their own national taskings and future missions, the planning cycle for Northern Viking 24 is right around the corner. With lessons learned and invaluable training experiences and opportunities to look back on, exercise planners look forward to building on the successes of Northern Viking 22.

CMS: The Navy's Seven Operational Imperatives for This Decade



A Boeing unmanned MQ-25 aircraft is given operating directions on the flight deck aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77). Its initial operating capability as an aerial refueling tanker will extend the range, operational capability and power projection of the carrier air wing and carrier strike group. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Roberson

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday laid out a 500-ship force earlier this year ahead of the current defense budget submission. The service has worked to balance between recapitalizing for a new, 2045 force structure, and what it needs for the so-called "fight tonight," approaching period of 2027-2030 when China may attempt reunification with Taiwan by force.

Grouping these by operational level of war problems can help the Navy prioritize between what it needs today in case of Chinese or additional Russian aggression now, and what the service needs as it moves toward its future force structure. These are not in a specific priority, but the final imperative

is the most vital.

- 1. Readiness of the existing force: Some experts would suggest that the only "ready" navy units are those currently deployed and those coming to relieve them. While not as exciting as new construction, the funding for regular scheduled overhaul and updating of current Navy ships, the training of their crews and their outfitting in terms of spare parts, fuel and above all ammunition is of vital importance. Only 30% of the total cost of any new ship is incurred in its building with a full 70% devoted to the upkeep and maintenance of the ship across its lifetime. Like a car that does not receive regular dealer service, a warship that does not undergo regular maintenance starts to decline in overall readiness. Paying these readiness bills on time ensures that the existing force is ready in the event of hostile action.
- 2. Logistics, logistics, logistics: The bogged-down Russian invasion of Ukraine again shows that amateurs do tactics and experts think about logistics. Current U.S. naval combat logistics and sealift forces are small, aged in years and designed around a "just in time, hub and spoke" delivery method that maximizes peacetime efficiency but is ill-suited to fleet-level combat. This is especially true in terms of the Navy's "distributed maritime operations" doctrine that needs a distributed logistics force for resupply during extended combat operations. Rebuilding both combat logistics and sealift to include delivery "over the beach" of fuel and supplies to Marines must remain a top operational imperative.
- 3. Get the M/Q-25A in the air before 2025: The Navy and Marine Corps have made great strides in carrier air wing aircraft readiness since 2016, but the services must go the extra mile to further reduce the burden on the F/A-18 E/F force and extend the range of the carrier air

wing in general. Carrier aircraft have adopted "buddy tanking" for years to extend the range of strike aircraft in an increasingly dangerous Indo-Pacific menaced by People's Republic of China missiles and aircraft. Getting the M/Q-25A drone tanker integrated into the airwing not only extends its strike range now but is a bridge to using the drone as a potential unmanned strike aircraft.

- 4. Scouting the bridge to unmanned futures: There is still uncertainty surrounding projected Navy unmanned systems. Congress does not seem fully convinced the Navy can make them work in combat, and many questions remain on the network connectivity and reliability of these platforms over extended periods of time at sea. However, one aspect of unmanned systems is proving itself in the here now. Unmanned units employed as long-term and distributive sensors are operating commercially with great success in measuring current, temperature and a host of other environmental factors. The U.S. Navy 5th Fleet, located in the Persian Gulf region, just completed a very successful experiment with an unmanned intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms called Task Force 59. ΤF 59's unmanned units successfully operated over time and provided commanders with real-time information crucial to targeting opponent ships, submarine sand aircraft. Naval tactics expert Wayne Hughes said being able to "attack Capt. effectively first" depended on effective scouting that found opponents without revealing one's own force locations. Expendable unmanned scouting units can fulfill that function and serve as an operational bridge to further unmanned systems development.
- 5. Train to Fight: Perhaps a subset of the readiness and scouting imperatives, but it's still vital to train to fight at expected levels of organization and chaos. Throughout much of the post-Cold War era individual Navy carrier strike or amphibious ready groups ventured alone

as deployed assets, secure in general U.S. sea control over wide areas of the world's oceans. The rise of the PRC's navy and the return of a revanchist Russia has ended that blanket level of security and U.S. naval forces will again have to fight for sea control before undertaking other missions. Training to fight at larger levels of organization such as the three-carrier battle force gets Sailors and Marines used to operating in these larger formations. As Russia's ground force mishaps in Ukraine have shown, if forces do not train and get used to fighting in larger formations it is unlikely that they will perform well in combat in those groupings.

- 6. Stay ahead in the undersea environment: Many documents extol the U.S. lead in undersea systems, especially in its nuclear attack and ballistic missile submarine designs. Since the days of the Walker Spy ring in the 1980s, however, the Russians and others have sought to duplicate or steal elements of the U.S. undersea advantage. No such advantage can be taken for granted as well and the U.S. Navy should seek to expand its undersea capabilities with supporting unmanned systems and forward-deployed infrastructure to support undersea operations. The Navy had 11 deployable submarine tenders at the end of the Cold War and today has only two. If operations (including submarines) fleet must be distributive, then submarine maintenance and logistics, especially weapons reloading, should be equally dispersed as needed. The only way to get there is by adding more submarine tenders to the fleet.
- 7. It's time to take the maritime strategy "off the shelf." Back in June 1990 during his confirmation hearings before the Senate Armed Services Committee as Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Frank Kelso was asked by Sen. John McCain what the Navy intended to do with its maritime strategy to globally fight the Soviet Union now that the communist state appeared in full retreat and

the Cold War over. Kelso responded, "Military strategy needs a specific enemy," and with the end of the Cold War, "the issues before us seem to be ones of naval policy and not strategy." Kelso further stated the maritime strategy for combatting a global great power opponent should be "put on the shelf" and could be "taken down" when needed if another global opponent reappeared. The U.S. now faces two nuclear-armed great power opponents and it's time to pull a maritime strategy down from Kelso's shelf. It will not be the same as its 1980s predecessor, but only a servicegenerated blueprint that serves as a guide, and not a directive for combatant commanders to follow can integrate all these operational imperatives in a single, authoritative source. A strategy that gives Congress and the American people an idea of what their Navy does in peace and what it could do in war is vital to securing public support for the other operational imperatives. It should speak in terms of numbers of ships, maps, geographic lines of effort that show what the Navy might do, which allies and partners might join the U.S. war effort, and suggest what goals the U.S. would pursue in great power war to have a definition of how such a conflict might end. Open-ended commitments in the Middle East over decades have soured the public on any extensive military operations and telling them "how wars end" is just as important as how the military means to wage them.

All these operational imperatives are important, but the strategy is perhaps the most valuable as it ties together all of the imperatives in a single package for both Congress, American citizens and the industrial organizations that can bring the other imperatives to life. Q&A: Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Forces, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet



Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, speaks with Hospitalman Shakeelah Jordan aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile-destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) during a ship visit. Kitchener visited Hampton Roads commands and ships in June 2021 and hosted a commander's call with waterfront leadership. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Milham Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener assumed command of Naval Surface

Forces and Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet in August 2020, and as a type commander he has guided the forces as he continues to man, train and equip the forces for duty in the fleet and service to the U.S. combatant commands. A native of Trumbull, Connecticut, and a 1984 graduate of Unity College with a Bachelor of Arts in political science, he attended the Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, and received his commission in 1985. He also attended the Naval Post Graduate School where he specialized in Western Hemisphere studies and earned a Master of Arts in national security affairs.

As a surface warfare officer, he deployed around the world and commanded destroyers, cruisers and an expeditionary strike group. At sea he served as a division officer aboard USS Dewey (DDG 45); operations and training officer for Special Boat Unit 26, Republic of Panama; combat systems and weapons officer aboard USS San Jacinto (CG 56); executive officer aboard USS Cowpens (CG 63); and operations officer and chief of staff for Commander, Carrier Strike Group 11. He commanded USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53) and USS Higgins (DDG 76) during the Navy's Sea Swap Initiative, and also commanded USS Princeton (CG59) and Expeditionary Strike Group 2.

Ashore, Kitchener served as the Surface Warfare Directorate's Naval Surface Fire Support program officer on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations; combat systems instructor at Surface Warfare Officers School; ballistic missile defense operations chief at the Cheyenne Mountain directorate at Commander, U.S. Northern Command; and vice commander of Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command. He served as the chief of staff at numerous commands, to include commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet; commander, Naval Surface Forces; commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and U.S. deputy military representative to the NATO Military Committee. Most recently, he was commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Kitchener responded to questions about the surface Navy fleet from Senior Editor Richard R. Burgess.

The surface Navy is better armed today than it was decades ago, when it was primarily an anti-air and antisubmarine escort force. How has that improvement affected the morale and professionalism of surface warriors?

KITCHENER: No doubt, we have seen tremendous improvements in our network and sensors that give our ever-improving weapons better speed, range and precision. However, I would propose it is our training investments that have had the most impact on the professionalism of the force. The surface force develops leaders, warriors, mariners and managers, and each of these roles requires training, education and mentoring. A welltrained Sailor is a confident Sailor. That is why we have dedicated more than \$5 billion to the Surface Training Advanced Virtual Environment for Surface Force training. Approximately 200 STAVE projects are supporting training in all areas of individual and waterfront training, including navigation and seamanship, engineering, damage control and combat systems. Furthermore, nearly 66% of all afloat billets benefit from STAVE. This training and the human factor programs that we have in place directly contribute to improving our Sailors' professionalism and morale.

The surface Navy has had few combat actions at sea since World War II. How confident are you that today's surface warriors are trained and conditioned to maneuver and fight as well as execute damage control should they fight a peer competitor?

KITCHENER: We are highly confident in the training and professionalism of our surface force. As previously stated, we have dedicated a significant amount of resources to ensure our force is trained and ready to meet today's operational challenges. In addition to investing in STAVE, we are also building the physical and digital infrastructure to support this vast amount of training we are providing to our force.

Most notably, the Mayport [Florida] and Sasebo [Japan] Shiphandling Trainers opened for business in 2021, bringing the number of learning sites to 10 overall and ensuring a site in nearly every fleet concentration area. The Mariner Skills Training Centers in San Diego and Norfolk began hosting a twophase Officer of the Deck [00D] course, which shifted from a JOOD [Junior 00D] course to a two-phase 00D curriculum. The change freed up the Advanced Division Officer Course to expand its focus on maritime warfare. ADOC is now providing junior officers with three weeks of maritime warfare training instead of one, allowing us to lay the warfighting foundation earlier in an officer's career.

Regarding specific warfighting training, we are installing virtual operator trainers, or VOTs, in all homeports to provide Sailors with training for the AV-15 sonar system and Aegis Baselines 9 and above. In Yokosuka, Pearl Harbor and San Diego, the sonar trainers are up and running and the Aegis VOTs in Yokosuka and Pascagoula are soon to follow.

Finally, we have worked with the numbered fleet commanders to retool and enhance the high end, at-sea training ships receive prior to deploying to ensure they are ready to defeat current day threats. Never before has our force possessed this quality of warfighting training systems in our homeports, and they are available to commanding officers to build their teams' skills.

Has the seamanship of the force been improving to meet your expectations in the five years since the McCain and Fitzgerald incidents?

KITCHENER: Yes. We have made significant investments to increase the amount and depth of training that junior surface warfare officers receive before they report to their ship.

We introduced and implemented a revised SWO training and assessment continuum that employs navigation, seamanship and ship handling assessments across all career milestones. We also implemented NSS/go/no-go assessments with four no-go criteria established for a SWO career path, which means that no one gets a pass simply due to experience. We assessed all officers at every level, from brand new ensign to major commander. Those who do not pass their proficiency tests do not assume command of ships at sea. Our standard: To be a professional mariner is more rigorous now than ever.

For our younger officers, the two-phased OOD course provides advanced practical instruction in navigation, seamanship, and ship handling in high-end simulators, emphasizing rules of the road, high-density shipping, in-extremis maneuvering and watch team management.

How are simulators making better surface warriors?

KITCHENER: With the number and complexity of systems and platforms planned to join the fleet in the next decade, the requirement for clear and innovative operational concepts is critical. Simulators provide our surface warriors with a controlled environment to develop and refine their mariner skills. By perfecting these skills in a teachable setting, Sailors can enter the fleet with the most advanced knowledge.



Sonar Technician (Surface) 1st Class Kendall Cochran, assigned to the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (PCU) Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21), trains using computer-generated simulations during Surface Training Advanced Virtual Environment scenarios at Surface Combat Systems Training Command Detachment Southeast, LCS Training Facility, Nov. 9, 2021. U.S. NAVY / Chief Mass Communication Specialist David Holmes

What are the chief challenges to improving force readiness?

KITCHENER: The completion of depot level maintenance on time continues to be a significant challenge. We have invested in analytics to help us improve in this area.

As I said at SNA [Surface Navy Association convention] earlier this year, we have seen improvements in two key metrics that we are using to gauge our progress: days of maintenance delay and on-time completion rates. Since 2019, we have reduced our days of maintenance delay by 41%. Our on-time completion is steadily increasing, from 34% in fiscal year 2019 to a projected 59% for all 2021 avails, including those ongoing that began in fiscal year 2021. We still have more to do, but it has been satisfying to see that the process is working.

Overcoming this challenge is even more important as we deliver modernization upgrades to the fleet, capability that is essential to maintaining our warfighting advantage. The SPY-6 radar and AN/SLQ-32(V)7 electronic warfare suite are a couple of examples of the extensive modernization programs that we will introduce to the fleet. The effective and timely execution of our maintenance and modernization packages during depot avails will be even more important to force readiness as we install this vital capability.

You have spoken about reimagining fleet introduction. What do you mean by that?

KITCHENER: Historically, NAVSEA's [Naval Sea Systems Command's] fleet introduction team provided oversight on the acquisition process and integrated the various program offices in the delivery of a new ship. Independently, the type commander's fleet introduction team would be responsible for actually integrating the ship into the fleet. We feel that a good look at this process will provide us a better process. Reimagining means thinking differently about this process so that the type commander is more engaged in the acquisition process overall, and that the program offices can deliver new ships and capabilities that integrate with the fleet more effectively and efficiently. We anticipate that this review should have significant positive impact and therefore I've asked Rear Adm. Brendan McLane at CNSP [commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet] to take on this task.

We are introducing at least 10 new or modernized platforms to the force in the next decade, and believe that effective fleet introduction is critical to maintaining a competitive advantage.

What is the role of Task Force LCS that stood up last spring?

KITCHENER: We stood up Task Force LCS to consolidate efforts

and drive actions across the LCS [littoral combat ship] program. Experts across the Navy are working together to analyze, develop and rapidly implement improvements to LCS platform reliability, sustainability, lethality and operational employment. The task force, led by Rear Adm. Robert Nowakowski, continues to provide databased recommendations and solutions to improve the reliability and sustainability of the LCS program.

What will be the role of the unmanned surface vessel division standing up this summer? How has Surface Development Squadron One been pushing the envelope in unmanned systems?

KITCHENER: This summer, USV Division One will stand up and grow to 103 Sailors in 2022 to provide dedicated support to USV operations. The command will be led by an 05 SWO commander and will report to SURFDEVRON [Surface Development Squadron] One and operate out of Port Hueneme, California. USVDIV 1 will be focused exclusively on USV experimentation and fleet advocacy with our program offices. The division will be a cornerstone in building the foundational knowledge required for Sailors to operate and maintain the USV fleet and spearhead the development of the processes required for USV operations and sustainment.

With the Zumwalt class to be armed for hypersonic weapons, do you expect them to deploy before their conversion? When do you expect the first conversion to start and what is the planned IOC year for them with conventional prompt strike?

KITCHENER: The Navy's Conventional Prompt Strike Program is developing a non-nuclear hypersonic weapons system that will enable precise and timely strike capability in contested environments. Fielding hypersonic weapons is a top technical research and engineering priority and the Navy continues to accelerate the development of hypersonic capabilities. The Navy is on track to field the CPS on Zumwalt-class destroyers in fiscal 2025. In support of the Zumwalt class, being the first platform to deliver CPS capability, the Navy commenced engineering design planning that will allow for integration of CPS during a planned fiscal 2024 dry-docking selected restricted availability. The ship's relatively large volume and timing of her already scheduled dry docking availability are key enablers to rapidly field CPS capability in USS Zumwalt.

Looking on the success of the DDG 51 class, what capabilities do you want to see in DDG(X)?

KITCHENER: The DDG(X) class will capitalize on the success of the DDG 51 class by improving an already exceptional craft. DDG(X) will utilize a variant of the DDG-51 FLT III combat system integrated into a new hull form with flexibility for upgrades, an efficient integrated power system and greater endurance, reducing the fleet logistics burden.

State Dept. Approves Possible Sale of AH-1Z Helicopters to Nigeria



Airman Kory Vogel signals an AH-1Z Viper on the flight deck of amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8), April 13. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Nadia Lund WASHINGTON — The U.S. State Department has approved a possible Foreign Military Sale to Nigeria of 12 Bell AH-1Z attack helicopters and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$997 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in an April 14 release.

The sale would make Nigeria the third foreign nation to order the AH-1Z, the others being Bahrain and the Czech Republic. The main operator of the AH-1Z is the U.S. Marine Corps.

Nigeria has requested to buy 12 AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters as well as associated avionics, sensor systems, and spare engines and parts. The deal also includes 2,000 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) guidance sections for 2.75-inch rockets.

The announcement said the possible sale also would include

"tools and test equipment; technical data and publications; personnel training and training equipment; mission planning system; U.S. government and contractor engineering; technical, and logistics support services; U.S. government and contractor assistance and oversight of facilities construction to include the provisioning of plans, drawings and specifications."

"The proposed sale will better equip Nigeria to contribute to shared security objectives, promote regional stability and build interoperability with the U.S. and other Western partners," the announcement said. "This sale will be a major contribution to U.S. and Nigerian security goals. Nigeria will have no difficulty absorbing the equipment and services into its armed forces."

The principal contractors will be Bell Helicopter, Textron, of Fort Worth, Texas, and General Electric Co., of Lynn, Massachusetts.

USS Forrest Sherman Returns to Norfolk from Surge Deployment



The USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98) returned to Naval Station Norfolk on April 13 after a surge deployment. U.S. NAVY NAVAL STATION NORFOLK – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98) returned home to Naval Station Norfolk on April 13 following a surge deployment, the U.S. 2nd Fleet said.

Forrest Sherman operated with NATO Allies and partners in the Eastern Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea over the past three months.

The crew conducted over 200 hours of flight operations, 11 drills with NATO Allies and partners, six strait transits and six replenishments-at-sea. The drills required close coordination of maneuvering operations, cross-deck flight operations, and flashing light and flag-hoist drills with navies from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland and Sweden.

During the deployment, Forrest Sherman completed port visits

to Stockholm, Sweden, and Gdansk, Poland, strengthening the U.S. commitment to security in the region. While in port Stockholm, the crew hosted Ambassador Erik Ramanathan, the U.S. ambassador to Sweden; Rear Adm. Ewa Skoog Haslum, chief of the Swedish navy and commander maritime component command; and several Swedish flag officers. In port Gdansk, members of the crew volunteered in a community relations event where they assisted in the packing, loading, sorting and distribution of donations to Ukrainian refugees in the Gdansk region.

"The Forrest Sherman crew displayed their relentless fighting spirit during this deployment," said Cmdr. Greg Page, commanding officer of the ship. "Their dedication to executing the mission is evident in their hard work. They are deeply committed to each other and this ship, which was evident when they were tasked to prepare for this deployment under a condensed certification timeline. The crew was excited to showcase our ship's capabilities while operating with NATO Allies and European partners in theater."

U.S. 2nd Fleet, re-established in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime forces ready to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied and partner interests.

Erik K. Raven Sworn in as Undersecretary of the Navy



Erik K. Raven, left, is sworn in as the 34th undersecretary of the Navy by Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro April 13. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class T. Logan Keown

WASHINGTON – Erik K. Raven was sworn into the Department of the Navy as undersecretary of the Navy during a private ceremony at the Pentagon on April 13, the Navy announced.

It is such an honor to join the Navy and Marine Corps team after spending the last 24 years on Capitol Hill," said Raven. "Throughout my career, I have established some great relationships within the Department of the Navy and I look forward to building more. I am thrilled to join Secretary Del Toro, the assistant secretaries of the Navy, the chief of naval operations, commandant of the Marine Corps and everyone else in the department on our shared priorities of strengthening our maritime dominance, building a culture of warfighting excellence and strengthening our relationships with strategic partners."

Born in San Francisco, Raven graduated from College of Marin with a Bachelor of Arts in international relations from

Connecticut College and a Master of Arts degree in international history from the London School of Economics.

Raven began his career in the offices of Sens. Dianne Feinstein, Edward Kennedy and Robert Byrd, serving in a variety of staff roles. In 2006, Raven became a professional staffer for the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations. He has since served as principal adviser to the Democratic chairs and vice chairs of the Committee on Appropriations and Subcommittee on Defense on budget matters relating to the Department of Defense and intelligence community.

On Dec. 13, 2021, President Biden nominated Raven to be the next undersecretary of the Navy and he was confirmed by the Senate on April 7.

"The Department of the Navy welcomes Undersecretary Raven with open arms. I have no doubt he will utilize his extensive congressional experience to benefit the Sailors, Marines and civilians in the Department," said Del Toro. "I also want to thank Assistant Secretary for Energy, Installations and Environment Meredith Berger for performing the duties of undersecretary these last eight months. Her professionalism, thoughtfulness and recommendations have been critical when we announced the AUKUS partnership, collectively responded to the situation impacting Red Hill and the people of Hawaii, rolled out the [fiscal year 2022-2023] budget and handled countless other issues both internal and external to the department."

Navy Recovers E-2D from

Wallops Island Chincoteague



and

A Navy E-2 Hawkeye conducts field carrier landing practice at Wallops Flight Facility at its ribbon-cutting ceremony in 2013. U.S. NAVY

NORFOLK, Va. — The Navy successfully recovered the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye that crashed in the vicinity of Wallops Island and Chincoteague, Virginia, April 12, the service announced.

U.S. Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2 recovered the aircraft with collaboration from other interagency partners, as well local and federal actors. MDSU 2 specializes in salvage, a Navy mission area that includes recovery of submerged objects.

"As Navy divers, we stand ready to conduct diving and salvage

operations in any environment," said Cmdr. Steve Cobos, commanding officer of MDSU 2. "We are grateful we could use our salvage expertise to help clear the site and safely recover the aircraft for the community and the surrounding environment."

Safety of personnel and preservation of the environment and surrounding wildlife were top priorities in salvage efforts and the Navy consulted with various local, state and federal entities to ensure salvage efforts were safe for personnel, the environment and the community.

Navy divers recovered the E-2D by cutting the aircraft into sections and preparing each section to be lifted with a sling. A crane lifted each section out of the water and barges transported the aircraft pieces offsite. MDSU 2 also surveyed the site and surrounding area to identify and recover aircraft debris.

The E-2D aircraft, attached to Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 120, crashed March 30. The mishap, which left one service member dead and two injured, remains under investigation.

"We really appreciate the support from MDSU 2 and from the numerous local and state officials who assisted with recovery operations," said Cmdr. Martin Fentress Jr., commanding officer of VAW-120.

Destroyer Frank E. Petersen

Jr. Sailed Away From Ingalls Shipbuilding



Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) departed HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division on Friday, April 8. *HII*

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) departed from HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division on April 8, the company said April 13. Frank E. Petersen Jr. will be commissioned next month in Charleston, South Carolina, before sailing to its homeport at Hawaii's Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

"I'm very grateful for the resilient and dedicated shipbuilders on our team, each is world class," said Kari Wilkinson, president of the Ingalls Shipbuilding.

"Watching Frank E. Petersen Jr. sail away demonstrates what this shipyard is capable of, even in the face of a pandemic," said Donny Dorsey, Ingalls vice president of operations and previously DDG 121 ship program manager. "The Ingalls Shipbuilding team, and all those that contribute to the mission, are the best. Despite challenges, the hard work of the entire shipbuilding team enable this very proud day – watching the Navy sail this ship and join the fleet to support the defense of our nation."

Frank E. Petersen Jr. is the 33rd destroyer Ingalls has built for the U.S. Navy, with five more currently under construction at Ingalls, including Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123), Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), Ted Stevens (DDG 128), Jeremiah Denton (DDG 129) and George M. Neal (DDG 131). Ingalls is working with the Navy to keep the destroyer line strong as the Navy transitions to the next generation of guided missile destroyers.

Frank E. Petersen Jr. is named to honor the U.S. Marine Corps' first African American aviator and general officer. After entering the Naval Aviation Cadet Program in 1950, Petersen went on to fly more than 350 combat missions during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are highly capable, multimission ships and can conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis management to sea control and power projection, all in support of the United States military strategy. Guided missile destroyers are capable of simultaneously fighting air, surface and subsurface battles. The ship contains myriad offensive and defensive weapons designed to support maritime defense needs well into the 21st century.

Czech Republic Chief of

Defense Signs Beams of AH-1Z and UH-1Y



Czech Republic Chief of Defense Gen. Aleš Opata signs an H-1 aircraft beam. *BELL TEXTRON* AMARILLO, Texas – Bell Textron Inc. completed another step in the production of AH-1Z and UH-1Y helicopters for international customers, the company announced April 14.

Czech Republic Chief of Defense Gen. Aleš Opata and delegates visited Bell's Amarillo Assembly Center in a landmark meeting to observe the Czech Republic H-1 aircraft production line.

"Hosting Gen. Opata at our Amarillo Assembly Center allows us to showcase the significant progress Bell has made in aircraft production to support this vital international program and customer," said Mike Deslatte, H-1 vice president and program director. "We are honored to continue our great relationship with the Czech Republic as we prepare to provide them with leading defense aircraft and continue the success of the H-1 program." During the visit, Gen. Opata signed the beams of the first AH-1Z and UH-1Y aircraft that will be delivered to the Czech Republic. Production continues on schedule with all 12 aircraft expected to be complete in 2023.

"In military operations today, one of the key requirements is to be able to win in both aircraft capabilities and logistics support," said Nate Green, H-1 program manager. "There is no better example of two complementary aircraft regularly operating from expeditionary locations and completing as many missions together as the AH-1Z and UH-1Y."

The Bell AH-1Z and UH-1Y offer advanced capabilities for defense missions and decrease the maintenance and operational footprint due to their 85% commonality. Bell is actively producing AH-1Zs for the U.S. Marine Corps and expects to complete deliveries this year, followed by production for international operators. Bell recently completed the first delivery of four AH-1Z helicopters to the Bahrain Defence Force and expects to complete the first international delivery of the AH-1Z this year.