First East-Coast-Assigned Navy CMV-22B OSPREY Arrives in Norfolk

By Commander, Naval Air Force Public Affairs, April 5, 2024

NORFOLK, Va. – The first East Coast-assigned Navy tiltrotor vertical/short takeoff and landing (V/STOL) CMV-22B Osprey aircraft, assigned to Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 40, arrived to Naval Station Norfolk on April 5.

“Naval Aviation is ecstatic to welcome the first CMV-22B Osprey to Norfolk,” said Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic (CNAL). “This first aircraft’s arrival symbolizes an evolution and change in Naval Aviation as we look toward the future. The event represents the hard work and stamina of our aviators, aircrewmen, maintainers and sustainment personnel in the VRM community.”

The CMV-22B will provide the fleet's medium-lift and long-range aerial logistics capability, eventually replacing the C-2A Greyhounds of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40 over the next several years. The squadron's relocation to Naval Station Norfolk is part of their permanent duty station change from Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island in preparation to provide fleet logistic aviation assets to the Atlantic Fleet beginning in 2025.

The VRM-40 "Mighty Bison" were established aside their existing sister squadron, VRM-30, and the training squadron, VRM-50, aboard NAS North Island in March 2022.

All squadron personnel have been officially stationed in Norfolk since Feb. 1, 2024. The remaining VRM-40 aircraft will begin to arrive to Hampton Roads in the summer of 2024.

VRM-40's leadership consists of Cmdr. Matthew Boyce, commanding officer; Cmdr. Mason Fox, executive officer, and Command Master Chief Bradley Wissinger.

"We are proud to join the Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic team and eager to lean forward into our next phase of stand-up," Boyce said.

Fox discussed the importance of standing up a new squadron on the East Coast.

"We're excited to be in our permanent home at Naval Station Norfolk and focused on continuing to build the squadron to execute our mission – delivering high priority people and parts to carrier strike groups at sea," Fox said. "The Osprey is an extremely capable aircraft and will be critically important to the way the Navy fights for many years to come."

In addition to VRM-40, a type wing detachment was established onboard Naval Station Norfolk earlier in 2023 to provide local representation of Commander, Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Wing (CVRMW), based at NAS North Island.

CVRMW’s mission is to provide Pacific and Atlantic Fleet VRM squadrons the ability to sustain lethality for carrier strike groups of the future through the timely, persistent air logistics missions our nation demands any place in the world. The CMV-22B is the Navy’s long-range/medium-lift element of the intra-theater aerial logistics capability responsible for transporting personnel, mail and priority cargo from shore logistics sites to ships at sea.

Naval Air Force Atlantic is responsible for sven nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, 55 aircraft squadrons, 1,200 aircraft and 52,000 officers, enlisted and civilian personnel with priorities focused on warfighting, people, and readiness by providing combat ready, sustainable naval air forces with the right personnel, properly trained and equipped, with a focus on readiness, operational excellence, interoperability, safety, and efficient resourcing.

USS Leyte Gulf Takes Down Semi-Submersible Vessel

ATLANTIC OCEAN (March 22, 2024) – The Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), embarked U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) and Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50 work together to intercept a self-propelled semi-submersible drug smuggling vessel (SPSS), in the Atlantic Ocean, March 22, 2024 (U.S. Coast Guard Courtesy Photo)

By USNAVSOUTH/4TH FLEET PUBLIC AFFAIRS, April 8, 2024

ATLANTIC OCEAN – The Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), with an embarked U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), has made multiple drug interdictions in the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) area of operations (AOR).

In March, while on patrol in the Atlantic Ocean, the crew detected a self-propelled semi-submersible drug smuggling vessel (SPSS). With assistance from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 50, the crew acquired the location of the SPSS

and LEDET members launched a rigid-hull inflatable boat (RHIB) to intercept the vessel. The LEDET detained the individuals aboard the SPSS and seized approximately 2,370 kilograms of cocaine. Then the crew conducted a sinking exercise (SINKEX) on the SPSS.

“Spotting this vessel was like finding a needle in the haystack,” said Lt. Commander Travis Lee, Leyte Gulf’s senior aviator. “I’ve been doing this for seven years and not once been able to find and acquire such an asset until now.”

Taking down the SPSS was only the latest success for USS Leyte Gulf on this deployment.

In February, while on patrol in the Caribbean Sea, the ship intercepted three different vessels using coordinated air and surface operations involving both U.S. and partner nation forces.

During the interdictions, the LEDET boarded and took positive control of each vessel. On Feb. 6, the ship recovered 520 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated $12.8 million. On Feb. 15, they recovered 600 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated $15.25 million. Then on Feb. 28, the crew recovered another 600 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated $15 million.

“Our Leyte Gulf team was ready when called upon to execute all three interdictions,” said Commanding Officer Capt. Nathan Diaz. “The successful seizure of more than $42 million in illicit drugs is a testament to the interoperability of our partner nations, the Coast Guard and the Leyte Gulf team.”

“It was an exciting day to be the Officer of the Deck running the bridge for one of our interdiction operations,” said Lt. j.g. Jayden Hodgson, an officer of the deck and public affairs officer aboard the ship. “Leyte Gulf prevented the illicit importation of drugs that day and we are only getting

started."

USS Leyte Gulf is currently deployed in the USSOUTHCOM AOR to support bilateral and multinational maritime operations with partners in the region, conduct Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) port visits, and to support JIATF-South in countering illicit-drug trafficking.

LEDETs are deployable specialized forces of the U.S. Coast Guard that enforce U.S. laws and treaties in the maritime domain.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command's joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American region.

Learn more about USNAVSOUTH/4th Fleet at https://www.fourthfleet.navy.mil, https://www.facebook.com/NAVSOUS4THFLT and @NAVSOUS4THFLT.

April 6 Red Sea Update

U.S. Central Command, April 7, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – Between approximately 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (Sanaa time) on April 6, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed one mobile surface-to air missile system in Houthi controlled territory of Yemen. CENTCOM forces also shot down one unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) over the Red

Sea.

Additionally, at approximately 6:00 p.m. (Sanaa time), a Coalition vessel detected and successfully engaged and destroyed one inbound anti-ship missile.

There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition, or commercial ships. It was determined that these systems presented a threat to U.S. and coalition forces and merchant vessels in the region. CENTCOM is dedicated to protecting the freedom of navigation and making international waters safer and more secure for Coalition and merchant vessels.

CMF's Combined Task Force 150 Seizes Nearly 400 Kilograms in Illegal Narcotics in the Arabian Sea

Bags of illegal narcotics seized from a vessel are stacked on the deck of the U.S. Coast Guard Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) in the Arabian Sea, April 4. (Photo by U.S. Coast Guard)

By U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | April 08, 2024

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Coast Guard cutter, working in direct support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 of Combined Maritime Forces, seized nearly 400 kilograms of illegal drugs from a dhow in the Arabian Sea, April 4.

Crewmembers from the Sentinel-class fast response cutter USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) discovered and seized 15 kilograms of heroin and 375 kilograms of methamphetamine aboard the dhow. After weighing and documenting the haul, the crew properly disposed of the narcotics.

“This is the second major interdiction of the USCGC Glen Harris and the CTF-150 team with a combined total of 1,160 kg of drugs seized to date, denying income to criminal and

terrorist organizations from the profits of illicit narcotics," said Capt. (N) Colin Matthews, commander of CTF-150. "This exceptional multinational cooperation between our two teams is an example of the impacts we can make when we work together."

On March 5, Glen Harris, working in support of CTF 150, seized 770 kilograms of methamphetamines from a dhow in the Arabian Sea.

Glen Harris is forward deployed to Bahrain. The fast response cutter is part of a contingent of U.S. Coast Guard ships forward-deployed to the region under Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA). PATFORSWA deploys Coast Guard personnel and ships alongside U.S. and regional naval forces throughout the Middle East.

CTF 150 is one of five task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the world's largest international naval partnership. CTF 150's mission is to deter and disrupt the ability of non-state actors to move weapons, drugs and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Combined Maritime Forces is a 42-nation naval partnership upholding the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

COMPACFLT Holds Change of

Command Ceremony in Pearl Harbor

Adm. Stephen Koehler addresses the audience after becoming the commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet during the COMPACFLT change of command ceremony onboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, April 4. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jeremy R. Boan)

From Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs, Apr 4. 2024

Adm. Stephen Koehler assumed command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) during a change of command ceremony on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, April 4. He relieved Adm. Samuel Paparo, who took over as commander of PACFLT in May 2021.

Adm. John Aquilino, commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, opened the ceremony by thanking Adm. Lisa Franchetti, chief of naval operations, for sending her best leaders to U.S. Pacific Fleet.

“You are looking at the world’s greatest warfighters sitting behind me,” said Aquilino. “In the world’s most concerning theater, against our world’s most dangerous adversaries, what has been chosen to run this theater are our best warfighters. That is not by accident.”

Adm. Lisa Franchetti, chief of naval operations, presided over the ceremony. She welcomed Koehler and praised Paparo for his leadership during his time as the PACFLT commander.

“Sam, you understood that the most powerful tool we have – our true strategic advantage – comes from our strong relationships with our allies and partners,” said Franchetti. “And that our shared values and common interest bind us together, and put more ready players on the field – every single day. Sam, I cannot be more proud of the work that you’ve done as the Pacific Fleet commander, and I’m excited about what is yet to come as you head up the hill (to Camp Smith), and become the 27th commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command next month.”

Franchetti welcomed Koehler saying: “You know how to build strong teams to get after our vital mission here in the Indo-Pacific at this critical time in our nation’s history. There is no one more ready to lead this Fleet. I am absolutely confident that you are the right person at the right time to lead our Sailors in the Indo-Pacific. And I look forward to seeing all that this Fleet will accomplish on your watch.”

While under Paparo’s command, PACFLT qualified as a joint task force, established Task Force 504, a task force focused on combat sustainment; Fleet Information Warfare Command Pacific; expanded opportunities for deployed ship repair in India; and completed numerous joint and combined multi-lateral operations across the region with allies and partners.

“These accomplishments and many more have demonstrated our capability and our will to our would-be adversaries. These accomplishments have deterred conflict and preserved the peace,” said Paparo.

He took a moment to address the Sailors, chief petty officers, civilians and officers across the Fleet, both at sea and ashore.

“The best part of my job has been watching this team in action,” Paparo said. “I appreciate all that you have done over the last three years. And as I utter these words, your efforts continue. Every day you continue building a more effective fighting force. I am honored to remain your teammate as I take up my next duty, and I am proud to turn over command to Adm. Stephen “Web” Koehler.”

Koehler comes to the historic Pearl Harbor headquarters from Washington, D.C., where he served as director for Strategy, Plans and Policy, J5, Joint Staff.

“I could not be more excited and honored to assume command of the finest fleet in the world, whose capabilities are second to none,” said Koehler. “The U.S. Pacific Fleet answers our nation’s call to compete with unity of purpose, without hesitation, and with a powerful and resolute force.”

Koehler is the 38th commander since the Fleet’s Pearl Harbor headquarters was established in February 1941. He commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) at University of Colorado at Boulder in 1986, and was designated a naval aviator in March 1989. He has flown over 3,900 hours in the F-14 Tomcat and F-18 E/F/G Super Hornet with 600 carrier landings.

“Success during competition will require a bias for action, constant drive for excellence, continued vigilance, and the

ability to rapidly transition to seizing the initiative and holding it," said Koehler. "Success will require teamwork with precise execution and mastery of the basics, and then stretching ourselves operationally and tactically as a team of teams. Success will require cooperation across the supporting elements of the Navy, collaboration across numbered fleets, joint integration, and teamwork with allies and partners."

U.S. Pacific Fleet is the world's largest fleet command with an area of operations that encompasses 100 million square miles, nearly half the Earth's surface, from Antarctica to the Arctic Circle and from the West Coast of the United States into the Indian Ocean. The U.S. Pacific Fleet consists of approximately 200 ships and submarines, nearly 1,200 aircraft, and more than 130,000 Sailors and civilians.

HII Completes Dry Dock Work for Aircraft Carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) Refueling and Complex Overhaul

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., April 08, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII's (NYSE: HII) Newport News Shipbuilding division has completed the dry dock portion of the refueling and complex overhaul (RCOH) of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74).

Following the recent flooding of more than 100 million gallons of water into the dry dock, USS John C. Stennis was successfully moved to an outfitting berth at the shipyard, where the remainder of the RCOH work and testing will be completed.

"Witnessing Stennis leave the dry dock and return to the water is a testament to the hard work of our shipbuilders, the crew and our government partners," said Rob Check, NNS vice president of in-service aircraft carrier programs. "We remain laser focused on the work ahead during this RCOH period and look forward to preparing this mighty aircraft carrier for the next half of its operational life."

Photos accompanying this release are available at: https://hii.com/news/hii-aircraft-carrier-uss-john-c-stennis-cvn-74-refueling-and-complex-overhaul-drydock/.

During the dry dock phase of the RCOH, USS John C. Stennis received significant upgrades and began an extensive overhaul process, both inside and outside the ship. In addition to defueling and refueling its power plant, NNS shipbuilders preserved tanks and replaced thousands of valves, pumps and piping components. On the outside, they performed major structural updates to the island, mast and antenna tower; upgraded all aircraft launch and recovery equipment; painted the ship's hull, including sea chests and freeboard; restored the propeller shafts; and installed refurbished propellers and rudders.

During the next phase of RCOH, shipbuilders will complete the overhaul and installation of the ship's major components and test its electronics, combat and propulsion systems. This period will also focus on improving the ship's living areas, including crew living spaces, galleys and mess decks.

"Our focus remains steadfast to get our ship back into the fight and to foster the professional and personal development of our sailors," said Capt. J. Patrick Thompson III, the ship's commanding officer. "We look forward to continue working with our industry partners to complete remaining production and test work and redeliver Stennis back to the fleet."

USS John C. Stennis is the seventh Nimitz-class aircraft to undergo its RCOH – the mid-life refueling overhaul and maintenance availability that produces a recapitalized carrier capable of supporting current and future Navy requirements. Once the RCOH is complete, USS John C. Stennis will be equipped to operate in the fleet for the second half of her 50-year expected service life.

Naval Supply Systems Command introduces Naval Sustainment System- Supply 2.0

The guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) transits through the Mediterranean Sea in 2023. NSS-Supply is helping meet fleet readiness goals using an agile framework driven by data analytics. CREDIT: U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Omar Rubi

By Kirk Engler and Melissa Olson

Naval Sustainment System-Supply (NSS-Supply) 2.0 is focused on delivering fleet outcomes and supply's contribution to fleet readiness, whereas NSS-Supply's original focus was to capture supply chain value.

Navy fleet readiness goals fall into three categories: Subsurface, Surface, and Aviation, allowing NAVSUP to focus on supply's contribution to meeting fleet readiness goals.

How? NSS-Supply uses the “Agile” framework driven by data analytics. NSS-Supply is currently analyzing data to see what supplies are keeping the Surface Warfare community from reaching their North Star readiness target of 75 mission capable ships. A good example is the targeting of on-board sparing for systems that have outdated spares modeling. Getting the right mix of spares on board increases readiness and improves endurance.

Simply stated, NSS-Supply 2.0 moves away from a monetized-value calculation to a readiness calculation directly linked to fleet readiness goals.

NSS-Supply is built on the CNO’s priorities of warfighting, warfighters, and the foundation that supports them. The essential element is the Agile approach which quickly assesses problem areas and rapidly deploys innovation into the E2E supply chain using the Get Real, Get Better mindset to deep-dive supply chain issues that accelerate the Navy’s warfighting advantage.

Initiatives are built from the Chief of Naval Operations, Navigation Plan Implementation Framework (NIF) priorities and objectives. Additionally, Performance-to-Plan (P2P) is inculcated in the NSS-Supply culture to drive baseline Get Real readiness performance and NSS-Supply is the Get Better engine that allows accountable commanders to implement world-class readiness solutions across the Navy’s E2E supply chain.

NSS-Supply has undertaken 33 initiatives since 2021. The following examples provide a few highlights:

- Achieved average RTAT reduction of 40% in aviation and 30% in maritime repairs.
- Established first Regional Maintenance Center reoccurring repair agreements to repair 104 parts for wholesale stocking.

- Increased nuclear submarine capabilities through improved spares pool health and enhanced policies to increase critical submarine parts inventories.
- Engaged key suppliers to improve contract performance, expanded contract strategies, and improved inventory performance.
- Built and implemented E2E Naval Shipyard Supply Chain Management tool to significantly improve submarine material support.

NSS-Supply continues to tackle supply chain initiatives directly supporting the warfighter as a multi-year journey to transform the end-to-end supply chain and provide the sustainment outcome the fleet needs that responds to the VCNO directive that designated the Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command as the Navy's E2E Navy Supply Chain Integrator.

CDR Kirk Engler is director of Naval Sustainment System – Supply, Naval Supply Systems Command and Melissa Olson is deputy director.

L3Harris Moves Ahead with Disruptive Capabilities

L3Harris successfully launched a recovered a Iver4 UUV from a submarine. Photo Credit: L3Harris

L3Harris (Booth 1037) hopes to use its expertise in autonomy software, uncrewed surface vessels and uncrewed underwater systems to help the Navy counter the looming threat of China and get more systems into service.

The company has a lot of interest in what Jon Rambeau, president of L3Harris' Integrated Mission Systems segment, called "disruptive capabilities," which includes moving airborne ISR capabilities from military aircraft to business jets and focusing on passive sensing and targeting for autonomous surface and subsurface vehicles.

"In the maritime domain … [we do] a lot of work around autonomous surface and subsurface vessels, and also a focus on passive sensing and targeting for the surface to allow the manned fleet to operate without having to light up their radars so often," Rambeau told Seapower in an interview. "We think that's a capability that can be deployed very rapidly, it's very mature and it's also very low cost."

The company also recently successfully deployed and recovered an uncrewed underwater vessel from a submarine's torpedo tube,

using one of its Iver4 vehicles.

“We were the first company to be able to demonstrate the capability to retrieve a UUV through a submarine torpedo tube while it was underway,” Rambeau said. “A pretty big accomplishment. Others had tried and failed and we were able to be successful on our first try, which was pretty impressive and not only that, but twice in one day, so pretty neat. That team just won our corporation’s top technology innovation award this year across the entire company.”

Replicator

The U.S. Department of Defense last year announced the Replicator program, a still largely undefined effort to launch thousands of attritable, autonomous aerial and surface systems to help counter China’s growing fleet.

“That’s something we’re very interested in being a part of,” Rambeau said. “I think some of those decisions are still being made about who and how we’ll participate, but we know there’s an initiative, obviously, to drive the large-scale deployment of unmanned systems, and we think the work we do is right in the heart of that. We’ve deployed hundreds of small, undersea vessels, we’ve deployed hundreds of small surface vessels over a number of years, some in the commercial side, some in the military side of our business, and that’s where a lot of our concentration has been, small and medium vessels for subsurface and surface operations, and a lot of work particularly around the autonomy capability.”

L3Harris has an in-house autonomy development team, a capability Rambeau said is very mature, and had two autonomous ships deployed under an urgent operational needs statement with Task Force 59 out of Bahrain, which has been demonstrating uncrewed surface vessel capabilities. The submarine-launched UUV effort also stemmed from an urgent needs requirement.

“One of the areas that we continue to focus on is that we know the customer pull is there for these, I would say disruptive capabilities, we have the technology well matured,” Rambeau said. “I think the question is, how do we quickly get from proof of concept to prototyping to production as fast as possible? Initiatives like Replicator are designed to try to move that along, and we’re hopeful that there will be opportunities for us to be part of that.”

Passive Sensing

Some of the passive sensing and targeting capabilities the company has developed for uncrewed systems can also be deployed on manned vessels, and L3Harris is planning to do some prototyping work with the Navy on that later this year.

“We’re still working through the details of how and where and when that will take place,” Rambeau said, “but we are looking to prove out the ability to sense and target an adversary without having to use a radar onboard a ship at all. That is our hope.”

Rambeau said he is seeing growing interest from the military in manned-unmanned teaming, a concept that has been around for years but which could gain new potency under a Replicator-type effort.

“I won’t speak for the Navy, but from my point of view I think that being able to link a small group of unmanned surface vessels with the manned fleet and allow those to be companions to get out ahead a little bit, do some reconnaissance, feed information back, there certainly are a lot of opportunities to employ the vessels in that way,” he said.

“… With the ability now to launch and recover an unmanned vessel from a submarine, that really gives an opportunity to extend the reach of the submarine fleet and also to provide greater survivability, because they may not have to go into harm’s way as deeply to gather data if they have an appendage

that can be set free and then recovered back with some information. Minehunting, that sort of thing."

Insitu Going Strong at 30, Focusing on Maritime Operations

Insitu's FLARES system carries an Integrator SUAS aloft to launch it. Photo Credit: Insitu

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – Insitu, one of the most experienced companies in the small unmanned aerial systems (SUAS) market, will mark 30 years of operations in May.

The company (in parent company Boeing's Booth 1337), noted for its ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) services and sales of modular SUAS such as ScanEagle and Integrator, especially for U.S. and allied operations in Afghanistan, is emphasizing maritime deployment of its SUAS with the shift of U.S. focus to the Indo-Pacific region, Diane Rose, president and CEO of Insitu, said in an interview with Seapower.

The Integrator UAS gets VTOL capability using the FLARES system. Photo Credit: Insitu

Insitu's SUAS have flown 175,000 sorties, accumulating 1.5 million flight hours, including 70,000 hours of maritime operations, Rose said. The SUAS are operated by or for 40 customers – to include 20 navies and coast guards – in 35 countries. The SUAS have been operated from 28 classes of naval vessels.

Insitu's SUAS have been provided to Ukraine via Foreign Military Sales and have been "very successful in that space," she said, and Insitu will "continue to support that effort."

Insitu continues to manufacture air vehicles and provide spare parts, system upgrades, and training to users. Modular sensors, provided by partner companies, can be swapped in the field to flexibly meet mission requirements.

“Our architecture allows us to integrate very quickly third-party sensors and payloads,” Rose said. “With the customer’s interests and missions in mind, we have a unique capability to offer solutions that support whatever the customer’s needs may be.”

Rose said there was a downtick in ISR services at land-based sites for the United States military since the end of the war in Afghanistan, but an uptick in international interest in Insitu’s products and services, especially focused on the maritime domain in the Indo-Pacific region, with an associated evolution in technology to satisfy emerging and changing customer needs.

The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard continue to use Insitu’s ISR services. The Navy also has procured Insitu SUAS. Navy units continue to use the RQ-21A Blackjack version of the Integrator, while Navy Special Warfare units use the RQ-27B version of the ScanEagle.

“Maritime operations are hard, and this is what 30 years of experience gives us,” Rose said. “Shipboard movement, shipboard radars and antennas, the EMI [electro-magnetic interference] environment, the harsh weather conditions, global logistics – how do you re-supply your systems, how do you meet the ships at the various ports?

“There’s a lot to supporting maritime operations, and I think that’s really why you see the success of our systems’ enduring,” she said, speaking of the long service of ScanEagle in the ever-evolving field of uncrewed aerial systems.

For customers who procure Insitu SUAS, the company provides training on how to operate the systems and also operates a

24/7 Operations Action Center, which provides customers engineering support and responses to trouble reports.

This year at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space (SAS) Expo, Insitu will be highlighting its vertical takeoff capability in the FLARES (Flying Launch and Recovery System (FLARES) octocopter, which it introduced at the 2023 SAS. FLARES can carry an Integrator UAS aloft 500 feet and launch it on its mission, enabling the Integrator to maintain its range, endurance, and payload capacity. The octocopter alleviates the need for a launch rail, reducing the footprint of the system and making shipboard and expeditionary operation easier. The recovery method remains the same.

Rose said Insitu has one customer so far for FLARES that carries a ScanEagle aloft.

At Sea-Air-Space, Insitu will highlight its FLARES systems, which provides VTOL capability to fixed-wing UAS Photo Credit: Insitu

She said the 570-employee company is interested in growing its

technical talent but emphasizes lean and efficient operations in a highly competitive industry.

Insitu continues to press forward to address battlespace challenges, including SUAS operations in a GPS-denied environment and with kinetics. The company has conducted inert-drop flight tests from Group2/3 SUAS.

Gaming to Win and Learn at Sea Air Space

The Center for Maritime Strategy “Gaming to Win” event is in its second year at Sea Air Space and offers a little for everyone within the wider wargaming community.

It features the presidents of the Naval Postgraduate and Naval War College and directors of wargaming from NWC and the Marine Corps University Krulak Center. It also highlights top-flight wargames and their designers who will invite participants to

play along, and then be part of a panel on the design and use of games.

The first panel on wargaming will Tuesday, April 9 from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m., followed by an interactive wargaming demonstration from 3:45 to 5:00 p.m. and a second panel from 5:00 to 5:45 p.m., all in the Cherry Blossom Ballroom.

Discussion at last year's inaugural wargaming eventDiscussion at last year's inaugural wargaming event. Photo Credit: Dan Goodrich

While the panel is called "Gaming to Win," that is really not what wargames actually do for military commanders and civilian leaders. They perform a vital role in testing assumptions that commanders might possess, as well as offering them the opportunity to explore multiple "what if" scenarios. The late Peter Perla, a famous wargamer, described them as "a dynamic representation of conflict or competition, in a synthetic environment in which people make decisions and respond to the consequences of those decisions." Wargames do not answer the question of which side will win, or what weapon system(s) are

most effective in war. War games build confidence or raise doubts in existing plans. They are a useful tool in evaluating plans but come with limitations that are not always apparent.

Limitations on Wargaming

Some wargame results are interpreted as the “sure path to victory,” or the “inevitable road to defeat” depending on who reads the results and how they interpret them. Wargame results are sometimes seen as either confirming the rise of a specific weapon system or the condemnation of another to obsolescence. These are false interpretations of game results. First, wargames are only as “good” as their input data. That not only includes order of battle being correct, but also, when available, aspects of gaming that the Naval War College calls “the intangible aspects of military planning.” How “ready is any one opponent ship, aircraft, or submarine in terms of material readiness? Can that platform perform its intended mission as designed?

The board at last year’s wargaming event. Photo Credit: Dan

Goodrich

What looks good on paper is not always what it appears. The Russian missile cruiser Moskva was generally rated by Cold War and 1990s-era wargames as able to sustain at least four hits from a medium-sized cruise missile like the U.S. Harpoon weapon and remain afloat. In the real world, the Moskva was sunk by two such weapons, with some reports suggesting the Russian crew immediately abandoned the stricken vessel and did not undertake damage control actions to save her.

Another intangible aspect of wargame design and conduct is the leadership and conduct of the Red Cell, the team of experts who simulate what the opposing forces do. This has in some cases been a past challenge. From the late 1940s to the late 1970s, U.S. Navy leaders believed the growing force of Soviet submarines had only one main purpose, and that was to attack NATO resupply routes from North America to Europe. Russian leaders like fleet commander Admiral Sergei Gorshkov proclaimed the Soviet navy would confront Western navies on the high seas. The large German submarine fleets of World Wars I and II were designed to break Allied supply routes across the Atlantic. Why else would the Soviets build such a force? Intelligence gathered from wiretaps on Soviet undersea communications cables in fact revealed the Soviet navy's main purpose for its submarines was defense of its ballistic missile submarine force and the protection of the Soviet Union from nuclear attack by Western naval forces. Soviet doctrine said the war would be over before the West could even consider reinforcing NATO by sea.

Getting all of these aspects of wargaming as accurate as possible from the start is essential to setting the stage for game results that can be used by commanders to evaluate plans and the systems to execute them in both peace and war. Wargaming is pursued with victory as the goal, but if it is not sourced with accurate information, it can be a futile exercise.