U.S. Coast Guard’s Newest Polar Icebreaker Returns to Seattle Following 36-Day Deployment

USCGC Storis (WAGB 21) sits hove to in the ice while conducting ice liberty for the crew in the Bering Sea, April 17, 2026. The patrol focused on advancing operational readiness, strengthening interoperability with other military assets, and testing new concepts to support prolonged operations in one of the world’s most demanding and austere maritime environments. (U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo.)

From U.S. Coast Guard Northwest District, May 15, 2026

SEATTLE – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard’s newest polar icebreaker, the USCGC Storis (WAGB 21), returned to their

temporary Seattle home port Monday after a 36-day deployment to the Bering Sea.

The patrol focused on advancing operational readiness, strengthening interoperability with other military assets and testing new concepts to support prolonged operations in one of the world's most demanding and austere maritime environments.

Amid increased global focus on the Arctic, Storis' deployment demonstrates the enhanced capability and commitment to securing maritime borders and protecting U.S. sovereignty and natural resources to safeguard national interests.

Acquired and **commissioned in 2025**, Storis is the first polar icebreaker commissioned by the Coast Guard in more than two decades. A primary mission for the cutter and its crew during this deployment was conducting an ice assessment to establish baseline performance in a range of Arctic conditions. The crew evaluated the cutter's full icebreaking capabilities, with data gathered serving as a benchmark to inform future operations for U.S. and allied vessels navigating high-latitude environments.

The ice assessment and operational exercises are integral to the crew's preparation for their scheduled summer deployment.

"Operating the Storis in the extreme conditions of an Arctic winter is a clear statement of our nation's resolve," said Capt. Corey Kerns, commanding officer of Storis. "Storis represents a critical bridge to our future icebreaker fleet. This mission is about preparation, rigorous training and asserting the continued importance of the Arctic to our nation."

To demonstrate U.S. operational capability in the high latitudes, Storis conducted a joint passing exercise with the Legend-class national security cutter USCGC Waesche (WMSL 751). The exercise took place in challenging winter conditions less than a mile from the ice edge, with visibility limited

to 150 yards.

Storis and Waesche also executed a proof-of-concept fueling evolution in Dutch Harbor, Alaska. This logistical demonstration expanded Storis' operational flexibility for future deployments. By establishing cutter-to-cutter refueling capability, Storis can extend an asset's time on station, maximizing operational reach while reducing the need for long transits back to port for logistics.

The crew conducted advanced ice rescue training during the deployment, practicing complex life-saving maneuvers in unforgiving Arctic conditions to prepare for high-risk search and rescue missions in ice-covered waters. This hands-on training ensures the Coast Guard can effectively respond to emergencies and protect mariners operating in harsh environments.

To ensure maximum readiness in a rapidly evolving geostrategic environment, the crew also conducted a gunnery exercise. Operating in the Arctic presents unique defense challenges, and the live-fire exercise provided essential hands-on training for the ship's weapons teams. By honing marksmanship and weapons system proficiency, the crew reinforced the Coast Guard's role as an armed service capable of defending national security interests and responding to emerging maritime threats.

Storis is a 360-foot medium icebreaker with a displacement of nearly 15,000 tons. Powered by four diesel engines generating 22,500 horsepower, the cutter can navigate through three feet of ice at five knots, adding crucial capability to the Coast Guard's Arctic operations.

Storis joins the cutters Healy (WAGB 20) and Polar Star (WAGB 10), augmenting the Coast Guard's presence in the high latitudes and underscoring the United States' commitment to Arctic security and stewardship. Storis is a multi-mission

capable asset equipped to support logistics, search and rescue, ship escort, environmental protection, and enforcement of laws and treaties in the region.

Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma Busts Cocaine ‘Triple Threat’

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma crew members conduct interdiction operations in the Gulf of America, May 8, 2026. Tahoma’s crew, alongside a deployed Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron aircrew, stopped three suspected smuggling vessels carrying narcotics during a maritime patrol approximately 90 miles off Cartagena, Colombia. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Southeast District, May 14, 2026

MIAMI – Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma's crew simultaneously interdicted three suspected smuggling vessels carrying approximately 6,085 pounds of cocaine worth nearly $45.8 million, May 8, approximately 90 miles off Cartagena, Colombia. This seizure represents 2.3 million potentially lethal doses of cocaine that will not reach American streets.

Tahoma's crew launched their two small boats and their deployed Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron aircrew stopping all three vessels.

One vessel was non-compliant and required aerial use of force tactics, including precision sniper fire directed at the engines, to compel the vessel to stop resulting in the suspected smugglers on the vessel jumping overboard. The aircrew released multiple personal flotation devices, and the people were rescued with no reported injuries. The other two vessels stopped when directed by Coast Guard crews.

"Interdicting three vessels simultaneously is a testament to the unwavering professionalism, precision, and dedication of our crews," said Cmdr. Nolan Cuevas, Tahoma's commanding officer. "This interdiction prevented a significant number of illegal narcotics from reaching America's shores, and their teamwork underscores the Coast Guard's mission to protect our nation and saving lives."

Tahoma's crew will offload approximately 8,185 pounds of narcotics, worth nearly $61.6 million Thursday at Port Everglades.

"Executing such a complex mission demands the highest proficiency from our crew," Cuevas said. "Our success required the integration of thoughtful training, carefully planned logistics, and joint coordination. We are very proud of our efforts to prevent illicit networks from threatening our security."

The following assets and crews were involved in the interdiction operations:

- Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma
- Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron
- **Joint Interagency Task Force South**
- **Coast Guard Southeast District watchstanders**

Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma's offload continues record-setting Coast Guard operations to interdict, seize, and disrupt transshipment of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs by sea. This includes the Coast Guard's seizure of over 511,000 pounds of cocaine in 2025 – over three times the Service's annual average – as well as accelerated counter-narcotics operations in the Eastern Pacific through Operation Pacific Viper. The Coast Guard's persistent operations and rapid response have denied criminal organizations billions in illicit revenue and prevented the flow of dangerous drugs into American communities.

Eighty percent of interdictions of U.S.-bound drugs occur at sea. This underscores the importance of maritime interdiction in combatting the flow of illegal narcotics and protecting American communities from this deadly threat. Detecting and interdicting illicit drug traffickers on the high seas involves significant interagency and international coordination. Joint Interagency Task Force South, in Key West, conducts the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Once an interdiction becomes imminent, the law enforcement phase of the operation begins, and control of the operation shifts to the U.S. Coast Guard

for the interdiction and apprehension phases. Interdictions in the Caribbean Sea are performed by members of the U.S. Coast Guard under the authority and control of the Coast Guard Southeast District, headquartered in Miami.

Coast Guard Cutter Tahoma is a 270-foot medium endurance cutter homeported in Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island under U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command.

U.S., Cameroon Boost Maritime Security with Unmanned Systems During Obangame Express

Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Crafts (GARC) deploy in formation with the Brazilian Amazonas-class offshore patrol vessel Araguari (P122) during a live robotic and autonomous systems (RAS) demonstration with Commander, Task Force (CTF) 66 during Exercise Obangame Express 2026 in Douala, Cameroon, April 25, 2026. (U.S. Navy)
From U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs, May14, 2026

U.S. Sixth Fleet successfully integrated advanced unmanned surface vessels (USVs) during Exercise Obangame Express 2026 in Douala, Came

As part of the exercise, Commander Task Force 66 (CTF 66) conducted USV training initiatives in the port of Douala, integrating Lightfish and Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft (GARC) platforms to demonstrate expeditionary unmanned systems operations.

During the training, shoreside operators employed Lightfish systems to enhance maritime domain awareness, enabling the detection and identification of simulated malign actors and threat vessels. Once identified, high-speed GARC assets were deployed to respond and conduct intercept operations, showcasing a layered and responsive unmanned capability.

The ability to deploy a diverse package of USVs allows for the detection, identification, and interception of maritime threats with minimal infrastructure. This capability significantly increases operational reach and enhances security in contested or remote regions.

Integrating deployable USVs into the fleet provides a rapid-response capability previously unavailable to surface forces. These systems allow the U.S. to project power into contested waters within hours, bypassing the lengthy transit times required for traditional vessels stationed in Europe.

“On short notice, USV packages can be employed with a small

operational footprint to protect ports, escort high-value assets and deter threats to critical maritime infrastructure, offering a flexible and scalable solution to emerging security challenges throughout the world," said Rear Adm. Kelly Ward, commander of U.S. Sixth Fleet's Task Force 66. "Obangame Express provided an invaluable opportunity to exercise this capability while training alongside our Cameroonian partners."

This capability is not limited to West Africa. The Navy's expeditionary unmanned systems model enables rapid global deployment, providing near-immediate maritime security and warfighting support to allies and partners worldwide.

Obangame Express is one of three regional maritime "Express" series exercises led by U.S. Sixth Fleet as part of a comprehensive strategy to provide collaborative opportunities to African forces and international partners to address maritime security concerns.

Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allies, international partners, and other U.S. government departments and agencies to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Carrier Air Wing 8 Returns from Historic 11-Month

Deployment

Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213, the “Blacklions,” returned to Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, May 11, 2026, following a historic eleven-month deployment to U.S. 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th Fleets as part of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group assigned to Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8. CVW-8 logged more than 5,500 flight hours in support of Operation Epic Fury alone, and more than 11,800 launches throughout the 11-month deployment. (U.S. Navy photo by Zachary wickline)
From Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic, May13, 2026

Aircraft of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group’s Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8 returned to their home naval air stations May 11, following an historic and successful 11-month deployment to the U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command and U.S. Southern Command areas of operations.

Before returning after 322 days, breaking the post-Vietnam War record for days deployed, CVW-8 conducted more than 11,500 aircraft events launched from the Electromagnetic

Aircraft Launching System (EMALS) and recovered with Advanced Arresting Gear aboard the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78).

"The officers and Sailors of Carrier Air Wing 8 have served their nation with distinction," said Rear Adm. Rich Brophy, commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic. "Throughout their record-breaking deployment, these aviators successfully conducted worldwide operations, embodying the highest ideals of resilience, courage, and selfless service to the nation."

The Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group deployed as an integrated naval force in support of economic prosperity, national security, and national defense. The force conducted combat operations in support of Operation Southern Spear and Operation Absolute Resolve from the Caribbean Sea in U.S. Southern Command, and Operation Epic Fury from the Mediterranean Sea in U.S. European Command and the Red Sea in U.S. Central Command.

"The men and women of Carrier Air Wing 8 performed admirably and projected power on a global scale," said Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command. "From major combat operations to exercising alongside our allies and partners in multiple regions, Carrier Air Wing 8 demonstrated to the world that they have the technical expertise, work ethic, and grit to accomplish the mission anywhere it is needed. I couldn't be more proud of the team."

The Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group operated with 20 ally and partner nations throughout deployment, conducting interoperability exercises to increase combined air power projection with Norway, United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Italy, France, and Tunisia. The flagship conducted port visits in France, Norway, Spain, Croatia, Greece, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

CVW-8 includes Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 31, VFA-37,

VFA-87, all flying the F/A-18E Super Hornet aircraft and based out of Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, Virginia; VFA-213 that flies the F/A-18F Super Hornet aircraft based out of NAS Oceana, Virginia; Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 142 that flies the E/A-18G Growler aircraft based out of NAS Whidbey Island, Washington; Airborne Command & Control Squadron (VAW) 124 that flies the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye aircraft based out of Naval Station (NS) Norfolk, Virginia; Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40 that flies the C-2A Greyhound aircraft based out of NS Norfolk, Virginia; Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 70 that flies the MH-60R Seahawk helicopter based out of NAS Jacksonville, Florida; and Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9 that flies the MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter based out of NS Norfolk, Virginia.

Gerald R. Ford, a first-in-class aircraft carrier and deployed flagship of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12, incorporates modern technology, innovative shipbuilding designs, and best practices from legacy aircraft carriers to increase the U.S. Navy’s capacity to underpin American security and economic prosperity, deter adversaries, and project power on a global scale through sustained operations at sea.

HII Hosts Rep. Adam Smith at Newport News Shipbuilding

From HII

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., May 12, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) hosted Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, at its Newport News Shipbuilding division Monday to meet with shipyard leadership and tour the company's facilities.

"We're grateful for the time Rep. Smith invested with us to see our commitment to the mission and being held accountable for supporting it," NNS President Kari Wilkinson said. "We understand the urgent need for submarines and aircraft carriers and are steadfast in our commitment to the nation."

During Monday's tour, Smith saw construction progress on *Columbia*- and *Virginia*-class submarines, as well as on *Gerald R. Ford*-class aircraft carriers. He also witnessed how NNS is innovating with advanced technology solutions to increase efficiencies across the shipyard.

“Revitalizing our defense industrial base – particularly in the area of shipbuilding – remains a top priority with strong bipartisan support in the committee,” Smith said. “Addressing capacity issues and workforce shortages amid the ongoing pacing challenge from China and threats from Russia, Iran, North Korea, and other global extremists is more important than ever. After seeing the work being done by the people at Newport News Shipbuilding, I’m confident that we can meet these threats and challenges as long as we remain committed to providing support for and oversight of the stable, long-term funding needed to invest in infrastructure and personnel. That is how we can achieve greater innovation with the kind of advanced technology needed to build a stronger national defense.”

With a workforce of more than 26,000 shipbuilders, NNS is the largest industrial employer in Virginia.

Thomas Releases Command Vision at U.S. Fleet Forces Command Commander’s Conference

By U.S. Fleet Forces Command Public Affairs, May 13, 2026

SUFFOLK, Va. – U.S. Fleet Forces Command concluded its annual Commander's Conference May 7, bringing together senior military leaders to ensure the delivery of the world's most ready, capable, and adaptive force—one fully integrated across all domains and prepared to deter, fight, and win in a dynamic battlespace.

Hosted by Adm. Karl Thomas, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, the two-day event centered on the theme "Bridging the Foundry to the Fight." The discussions focused on

strengthening our capabilities by restoring readiness and building a powerful Fleet from a resilient industrial base to maintain a decisive global warfighting advantage. During the event Thomas released his vision for the command, addressing how the Fleet should generate global warfighting advantages to drive his vision into execution and lethal performance:

To deliver the world's most ready, capable, and adaptive force that is integrated across domains, driven by innovation, and prepared to deter, fight, and win in a dynamic battlespace.

"Our charge is to ensure the Navy remains the world's most ready Fleet," said Thomas. "That means transforming our processes into a world-class foundry where data-centric decision-making and innovation accelerate our ability to deliver combat-ready Sailors and ships to the point of need."

Throughout the conference, Thomas emphasized high-end warfighting through the "Foundry and Fleet" lens. This approach ensures that every aspect of force generation—from maintenance and modernization to advanced training—aligns to the demands of a contested environment. His vision is meant to achieve four Overarching Objectives:

- Forging the Total Sailor: A better-supported Sailor is a more lethal Sailor. Investing in our Sailors as warfighters, maintainers, individuals, and providers for their families; commending their willingness to sacrifice in the defense of our nation.
- Rehearsing the Fleet: Recognizing that platforms and supporting systems are becoming more complex, we must provide the doctrine, training, and protection, and rehearsal necessary across domains to ensure a ready Fleet capable of responding when our Nation demands.
- Optimizing Force Generation Readiness: Our Fleet must stand ready. We must maximize the number of trained,

rehearsed, and certified personnel, platforms, and payloads when our Nation calls.

- Preparing for a Global Fight: Our goal is to deter by being better prepared and by presenting unsolvable dilemmas to our adversaries. Should deterrence fail, we will be ready to fight a high-end war and provide a range of military capabilities from restrained show of force, to surgical strikes, to sourcing overwhelming firepower.

Additionally, Thomas outlines that this will all be built upon three underlying principles:

- High-End Warfighting: utilizing and embracing technologies to best see and sense the battlespace, confuse the adversary's understanding, quickly promulgate orders to forces, aggregate firepower across domains at critical points, then maneuver in time and space to resupply and reattack, all while actively preventing the adversary from attempting the same.
- The Bedrock of Sailors and Families: Our advantage comes from the men and women we recruit, train, and retain. We must understand and support their needs and provide the tools, support, and time to ensure they are prepared to do our Nation's bidding.
- Data-Centric Decision Making: The speed and scale of warfare is expanding and accelerating. This transformation requires more informed and quicker thinking leveraging authoritative data sources compiled to enhance evaluation, assessment, and speed of decision.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Daryl Caudle addressed conference attendees and reinforced U.S. Fleet Forces Command's role as both a force provider and as a critical driver in ensuring that today's force is ready to fight and decisively win.

“U.S. Fleet Forces Command is not just a force provider; it is the engine of our naval power,” said Caudle. “In today’s security environment, U.S. Fleet Forces Command sits at the center of how we generate combat power, allocate it across global demands, and manage risk to ensure our force remains the bedrock of national security.”

A parallel spouse program focused on the bedrock of the force: Sailors and their families. Spouses from across the Fleet engaged with leadership on quality-of-life initiatives, cyber awareness, and the resources essential to maintaining family readiness during increased operational tempos.

The conference reinforced the imperative to adapt how the Navy mans, trains, equips, and sustains the force to ensure it remains adaptive and capable of prevailing in any conflict.

“This period for the Navy is unique at multiple levels,” said Thomas. “It is a unique time filled with opportunity to impact the Fleet for decades to come. Our senior leadership has provided clear, aligned guidance and this vision provides the guidance with which U.S. Fleet Forces Command will lead the way at seizing this opportunity.”

U.S. Fleet Forces Command trains, certifies, and provides combat-ready naval forces to combatant commanders worldwide to conduct prompt, sustained operations at sea in support of national security objectives.

Leidos to Accelerate Hypersonic Weapons Production for U.S. Army, Navy

RESTON, Va. (May 12, 2026) – Leidos (NYSE: LDOS) has been awarded a $2.7 billion U.S. Army contract to advance hypersonic weapons from prototyping to production. This contract unifies the Thermal Protection Shield (TPS) and Common Hypersonic Glide Body (CHGB) programs, with the goal of

streamlining development and accelerating delivery of this critical capability in alignment with Army acquisition reform initiatives.

By integrating these programs, Leidos will work to help the warfighter achieve greater efficiency, reduce production timelines and support a reliable supply of components to meet operational demands. Leidos brings proven expertise in guidance systems, sensor technologies, and precision munitions integration to this effort, helping to advance the nation’s hypersonic capabilities and strengthen its integrated air and missile defense.

“This contract is a major step forward in delivering hypersonic capabilities to the warfighter at speed,” said Leidos Defense President Cindy Gruensfelder. “Our team is committed to supporting the Army and Navy in producing this critical operational capability.”

The combined contract is intended to transition the programs into a production-ready phase to support the Department of War’s initiatives. Leidos has been the prime contractor on the TPS program since 2021 and CHGB program since 2019.

This contract aligns with Leidos’ NorthStar 2030 strategy, emphasizing commitment to innovation and technological leadership in defense and national security. By focusing on advanced hypersonic and precision strike technologies, Leidos is not only working to meet current defense needs but also positioning the company for future military capabilities, a key pillar of its long-term corporate vision.

SRF-JRMC Continues to Deliver Warships to Fleet On Time

From U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility Japan RMC, May 13, 2026

YOKOSUKA, Japan – U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) completed a key maintenance period for the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114), returning the ship to the fleet on time April 6.

The successful Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) maintenance availability reinforces SRF-JRMC's critical role in generating combat-ready ships to support U.S. 7th Fleet operations.

This year, SRF-JRMC has delivered all seven of its completed ships to the fleet on time or ahead of schedule. From January through April, SRF-JRMC returned two mine countermeasures

ships, three destroyers, and an amphibious transport dock to the U.S. 7th Fleet.

The timely and successful work by the U.S. Navy’s primary ship repair team in Japan underscores its commitment to ensuring U.S. 7th Fleet remains a lethal, mission-ready force in the Indo-Pacific.

Diligently preserving, maintaining, and employing combat ready ships in the Indo-Pacific is a core focus of U.S. Pacific Fleet, reflecting teamwork among Sailors and civilian maintenance personnel. The CNO availabilities brought together the ship’s crew, SRF-JRMC’s Japanese master labor contractors, local Japanese contractors and U.S.-based companies.

“Our success this year is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of the ships’ crews, the ship superintendents and their teams, and the entire SRF-JRMC organization,” said Capt. Wendel Penetrante, SRF-JRMC commanding officer. “Managing availabilities, with the recent increase in operational tempo, demonstrates their exceptional capability. We continue to meet the spirit of the command’s motto, ‘Nan Demo Dekimasu!’”, which means ‘we can do anything!’ in Japanese.”

The U.S. Navy maximizes its ability to maintain a reliable presence in the region by conducting complex repairs at forward locations. This demonstrates a long-term commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

For over 75 years, SRF-JRMC has been the linchpin of U.S. naval operations in the Indo-Pacific region by providing intermediate and depot-level repair for the ships of U.S. 7th Fleet.

GA-ASI and USAF Demonstrate APKWS on MQ-9A Reaper

Flight Test of Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System Using MQ-9A

From General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

SAN DIEGO – 11 May 2026 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI), in collaboration with the U.S. Air Force (USAF), has conducted flight tests of an Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) using a USAF MQ-9A Reaper® Remotely Piloted Aircraft. MQ-9A is produced by GA-ASI.

The testing took place recently at the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR).

The demonstration featured multiple types and variations of shot profiles, including aerial targets. All shots were executed flawlessly by the MQ-9A crews using laser-guided rockets and a specialized launcher.

This effort supported real-time technological adaptation requirements, moving rapidly from planning to integration and flight test. It also brought together multiple Department of War stakeholders and their industry partners.

“We recognize the value that a system like APKWS brings to the MQ-9 aircraft as a tool to counter one-way attack drones,” said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. “APKWS can increase the number of weapons the MQ-9A is able to carry, as well being able to carry new lower cost weapons. More than anything, this integration effort underscores how government and industry can collaborate to rapidly test and make new capabilities available to warfighters.”

Navy Advances Acquisition Reform Strategy: Appoints Three New Portfolio Acquisition Executives

From the Department of the Navy Office of Information, May 11, 2026

WASHINGTON – The Department of the Navy today announced the establishment of three additional Portfolio Acquisition Executive (PAE) organizations: PAE Aviation, PAE Mission Systems and PAE Munitions. With these directives, the Navy continues foundational acquisition reforms focused on accelerating delivery of capability to the fleet.

“The needs of the warfighter demand that our acquisition system move faster in order to outpace the threat,” said Jason

Potter, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition (ASN RDA). “The establishment of these PAEs today will accelerate acquisition efforts in three key portfolios.”

The Department of the Navy has designated three senior acquisition leaders as the interim PAEs:

- PAE Aviation: Vice Adm. John Dougherty
- PAE Mission Systems: Mr. Jim Day
- PAE Munitions: Mr. Paul Mann

“We are empowering these officials to move out and deliver for the fleet,” Potter said. “With these authorities, we are removing barriers that slowed down capability delivery. We are also doing away with fragmented accountability. Each PAE is accountable for mission outcomes across their entire portfolio.”

The PAE represents a significant evolution of the previous Program Executive Officer (PEO) construct, with PAEs possessing broader scope and authority. PAEs are responsible for an entire portfolio of like programs and will have direct authority not only for program offices, but also over associated technical, contracting and sustainment functions. Approximately 70 percent of these functions and associated personnel will move from systems commands (SYSCOMs) into the PAEs.

“This is not just a name change, but a critical step toward streamlining and simplifying the Navy’s acquisition process,” said Adm. Jim Kilby, Vice Chief of Naval Operations. “The three new PAEs are designed to align authority and accountability, reduce process overhead, equip program

managers to execute more effectively, and deliver operational capability to the Navy and Marine Corps with speed and scale."

"We are fully committed to getting Marines what they need with the speed and flexibility demanded by the modern security environment," said Gen. Bradford J. Gering, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. "We have empowered our PAEs with broad authorities and cradle-to-grave oversight of portfolios. This combination will eliminate obstacles and accelerate the delivery of capabilities to our Marines at the speed of relevance."

The establishment of PAE Aviation, PAE Mission Systems and PAE Munitions brings the total of Department of the Navy PAEs to nine, joining PAEs for Robotic and Autonomous Systems, Maritime, Industrial Operations, Marine Corps, Strategic Systems Programs, and Undersea.