PCU John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) Completes Builder’s Sea Trials

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Program Executive Office Aircraft Carriers (PEO CVN) announced the successful completion of Builder’s Sea Trials (BST) for the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), at Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), a division of HII, in Newport News, Virginia, Feb. 4.
From Naval Sea Systems Command, Feb. 12, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Program Executive Office Aircraft Carriers (PEO CVN) announced the successful completion of Builder’s Sea Trials (BST) for the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79), at Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), a division of HII, in Newport News, Virginia, Feb. 4.

Completion of Builder’s Trials marks a significant shipbuilding milestone for the future John F. Kennedy, the second ship in the Gerald R. Ford-class of aircraft carriers designed to improve survivability, increase lethality, and drive down total ownership cost over their expected 50-year

lifespan.

“Seeing this Navy-industry team take CVN 79 to sea for the first time was nothing short of thrilling,” said Rear Adm. Casey Moton, Program Executive Officer for Aircraft Carriers (PEO CVN). “Thanks to the tireless efforts of thousands of proud American workers across the maritime industrial base, we are one step closer to delivering another Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier to the fleet.”

Throughout BST, Sailors from the Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) assigned to John F. Kennedy, shipbuilders from NNS, and personnel from the Navy’s Supervisor of Shipbuilding (SUPSHIP), Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), and PEO CVN worked side-by-side testing many of the ship’s key systems and technologies.

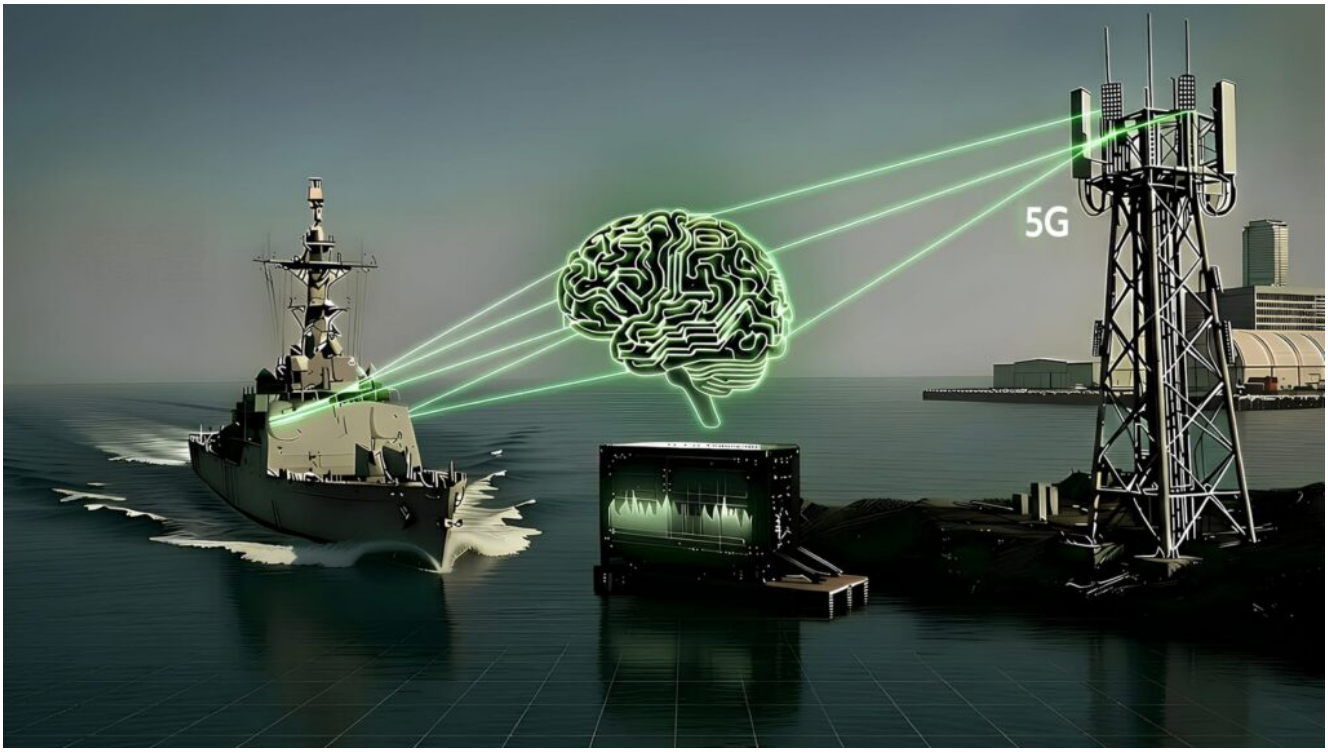
Prior to getting underway, John F. Kennedy conducted a five-day “Fast Cruise,” a multi-day pier side training evolution that brings the ship to life prior to getting underway during new construction or after an extended maintenance availability. This simulated underway period exercises the ship’s ability to operate at sea and affords the crew the opportunity to transition to an operational mindset before getting underway.

“There are millions of fingerprints contributing to this successful sea trial, both of the hard-working patriots who built this great ship and of the Sailors who are now bringing her to life,” said Capt. Doug Langenberg, commanding officer of PCU John F. Kennedy (CVN 79). “John F. Kennedy going to sea for the first time is truly momentous. This event is a result of years of hard work and an incredible shared effort between our shipbuilding partners and this crew who have worked side-by-side to get to this day. I’m proud of this crew and this opportunity to finally take this ship to sea where she belongs.”

With the conclusion of Builder's Trials, the team will resume completion work while also addressing any issues identified during trials. The next major milestone for the ship will be Acceptance Trials, the timeline for which is currently under review.

"We're making steady progress towards completion of the ship with all required capability," said Capt. Mark Johnson, Program Manager for Gerald R. Ford-class New Construction. "We continue to work closely with the shipbuilder to ensure that the nation's next aircraft carrier is delivered to the Navy on the fastest possible path to combat readiness."

RTX BBN Leads Secure 5G–Defense Radar Spectrum Demo



RTX BBN Technologies to develop smart spectrum manager for real-time defense radar and 5G coexistence

Team to build prototype that protects defense radars when the 3.1 to 3.45 GHz band is opened for commercial use

From RTX

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (Feb. 10, 2026) – RTX's (NYSE: RTX) BBN Technologies has been awarded a contract by the Department of War (DoW), in partnership with the National Spectrum Consortium, to support its Advanced Spectrum Coexistence Demonstration program. This initiative addresses concerns about maintaining the operational readiness of critical national security radars when they share the same radio frequencies with commercial 5G networks.

Current spectrum coexistence tools can take tens of minutes to detect interference, negotiate a new allocation, and reconfigure radios. This delay leaves both commercial 5G users and incumbent radars vulnerable to service loss or unsafe operations. In the program's first phase, the BBN-led team will create a basic "smart spectrum manager" that can detect when a radar is operating and predict whether a 5G signal might interfere and automatically shift 5G traffic to avoid

issues in seconds.

In the second phase, the project will evolve from a basic working model to a more advanced prototype equipped with cutting-edge tools to ensure radar and 5G networks can share the same frequencies reliably and seamlessly. These tools will transform the system into a smart, self-managing platform that follows preset rules to automatically optimize spectrum sharing. Once developed, this platform can be deployed on operational radars and 5G systems, allowing them to work safely, securely, and efficiently side by side, with little need for human involvement.

“Lives are put at risk when a radar misses a target, whether it’s a ship navigating waters or a rescue team tracking a storm,” said Chris Vander Valk, BBN principal investigator for the effort. “Our work ensures those radars stay reliable, even as 5G frequencies become increasingly congested, so public and private shared use of the spectrum is optimized for all users.”

The multi-team effort brings together the expertise needed for a comprehensive solution:

- Raytheon Advanced Technology will provide real radar signals and test equipment.
- Ericsson Federal Technologies Group will contribute 5G network expertise to ensure feasibility of transition.
- Signal Processing Technologies will share advanced interference cancellation, detection and localization techniques.

- Federated Wireless will bring dynamic spectrum management capabilities to optimize shared spectrum usage.

- Purdue University will deliver advanced signal processing and machine learning (ML) models for faster interference predictions.

- Novowi will offer ML-based techniques for real-time spectrum sensing, classification and localization, as well as security analysis.

BBN will integrate these components into a system for future government use and will incorporate a risk management function to balance potential impacts on incumbent and commercial operations.

The team hopes to achieve a 50% increase in usable commercial 5G capacity, a 20 dB drop in unwanted interference to radars, and a 1,000-fold improvement in 5G link quality when both systems operate side by side. To accelerate the transition, the team will also deliver a “sandbox” version of the spectrum access system that can run in the cloud or at the edge of the network, simplifying the move from testing to real-world deployment.

If successful, the system will turn a longstanding “either/or” dilemma—protect the radar or grow 5G—into a “both/and” solution, expanding the nation’s digital economy while preserving national security.

Work will be performed in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Marlborough, Massachusetts; Plano, Texas; Vienna, Virginia; Merrimack, New Hampshire; Arlington, Virginia; West Lafayette, Indiana; and Brookline, Massachusetts.

This effort was sponsored by the U.S. Government under Other Transaction number W15QKN-21-9-5599 between the National Spectrum Consortium (NSC) and the Government. The U.S. Government is authorized to reproduce and distribute reprints for Governmental purposes notwithstanding any copyright notation herein. The views and conclusions contained herein are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies or endorsements, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Government.

U.S. Coast Guard Completes the President's Contract Awards for 11 Arctic Security Cutters

Digital Render of Arctic Security Cutter
From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard announced today it has completed the award of contracts for 11 Arctic Security Cutters, fulfilling President Trump's directive to rapidly expand America's icebreaker fleet. The latest award is for construction of up to five Arctic Security Cutters, bringing the President's initial order to completion and marking a historic milestone in U.S. Arctic capability.

The contract awarded today builds on previous awards announced **Dec 29, 2025**, and delivers the 11 Arctic Security Cutters directed by the President. Together, these cutters will form the backbone of a revitalized U.S. icebreaker fleet, protecting U.S. sovereignty and dominance in the Arctic.

"America has been an Arctic nation for over 150 years, and we're finally acting like it under President Trump. Our adversaries continue to look to grow their presence in the Arctic, equipping the Coast Guard with Arctic Security Cutters will help reassert American maritime dominance there," said Secretary Kristi Noem. "Revitalizing the U.S. Coast Guard's icebreaking capabilities is crucial for our security and

prosperity, and today's announcement is an important step in that direction."

Davie Defense, Inc. will construct two Arctic Security Cutters at Helsinki Shipyard in Finland and three domestically. The Arctic Security Cutters will defend U.S. sovereignty, secure critical shipping lanes, protect energy and mineral resources, and counter foreign malign influence in the Arctic region. A robust icebreaker fleet will enable the Coast Guard to control, secure and defend U.S. Alaskan borders and Arctic maritime approaches, facilitate maritime commerce vital to economic prosperity and strategic mobility, and respond to crises and contingencies in the region.

"Awarding these contracts ensures the United States maintains its leadership as a maritime power in the Arctic," said Adm. Kevin E. Lunday, commandant of the Coast Guard. "Accelerating construction of these cutters will enable the Coast Guard to defend our northern border and approaches, while strengthening domestic shipbuilding and reinforcing the nation's industrial base."

Delivery of the first Arctic Security Cutter is expected in early 2028.

Acquisition of Arctic Security Cutters supports the Coast Guard's modernization under **Force Design 2028**, transforming the Service into a more agile, capable and responsive fighting force.

U.S. Marine Corps Selects GA-

ASI for MUX TACAIR Collaborative Combat Aircraft Program

GA-ASI's YFQ-42A Platform to Support Next-Generation Expeditionary Air Operations

From General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

SAN DIEGO – 10 February 2026 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) was competitively selected by the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) for evaluation in the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Uncrewed Expeditionary Tactical Aircraft (MUX TACAIR) Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) program. The agreement integrates GA-ASI's expertise in autonomy and uncrewed aircraft systems with a government-provided mission package, using the YFQ-42A platform as a surrogate to evaluate integration with crewed fighters.

The contract initiates integration of a Marine Corps mission kit into the YFQ-42A surrogate platform for assessment within the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF).

The USMC contract includes the rapid development of autonomy for the government-supplied mission kit – a cost-effective, sensor-rich, software-defined suite capable of delivering kinetic and non-kinetic effects – positioning the solution for use in expeditionary operations. This work will support evaluations of future MUX TACAIR capabilities.

“This selection builds upon the GA-ASI autonomous systems in use today and demonstrates our commitment to delivering next generation capabilities for critical USMC missions,” said Mike Atwood, Vice President of Advanced Programs for GA-ASI. “Our FQ-42, combined with our proven autonomy architecture and integration expertise, positions us to rapidly deliver an affordable CCA solution that enhances the Marine Air-Ground Task Force’s operational effectiveness in contested environments.”

GA-ASI was selected by the U.S. Air Force in April 2024 to build production-representative flight test articles for the CCA program. The YFQ-42A successfully conducted its maiden flight in August 2025, validating a “genus/species” concept for rapid, modular, and low-cost uncrewed fighter aircraft development. This approach enables a common core aircraft design that can be rapidly adapted for different mission sets and service requirements.

The YFQ-42A is a purpose-built CCA platform developed as part of GA-ASI’s ongoing investment in next-generation autonomous combat aircraft. The aircraft’s modular design enables rapid integration of mission systems. GA-ASI’s autonomy architecture, demonstrated through multiple live flight tests, provides the foundation for human-machine teaming in complex combat scenarios.

Navy Public Affairs Renames, Realigns to Deliver More Capable Forces

NORFOLK, Va. (Jan. 9, 2026) – Capt. Sarah T. Self-Kyler, commanding officer of Navy Public Affairs Command (NPAC), left, and Cmdr. Jason S. Fischer, commanding officer of Fleet Public Affairs Center (FLTPACEN) Norfolk, pose for a photo during an establishment ceremony at Naval Station Norfolk, Jan. 9, 2026. The establishment ceremony coincided with the inauguration of Navy Public Affairs Command, formerly Navy Public Affairs Support Element, and is part of a Navy-wide public affairs transformation designed to better align communication efforts with the fleet and to create a more agile and efficient communication force. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Troy Davis)

by Petty Officer 3rd Class John Farren

NORFOLK, Va. – Marking a significant reorganization of

expeditionary public affairs forces, the Navy redesignated Navy Public Affairs Support Element (NPASE) Headquarters as Navy Public Affairs Command (NPAC) and renamed all subordinate units Fleet Public Affairs Centers (FLTPACENs) Jan. 9.

The name changes signify a move from a “support element” to traditional Navy organizational naming nomenclature for units of such scale and mission.

The headquarters’ commanding officer, Capt. Sarah T. Self-Kyler, will continue to oversee the entire enterprise, now as Commander, Navy Public Affairs Command, an echelon II command under the Office of the Chief of Information.

The role of NPAC will remain the Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) to its seven subordinate FLTPACENs. In addition, NPAC will assume greater authorities to support CHINFO in community-wide policy and programs, including global force management, training programs, and review of equipment.

NPAC will become CHINFO’s go-to organization to monitor and assess all PA and VI resources, ensuring efficient alignment of personnel, training across multiple organizations, and deployable equipment to Fleet and Joint requirements.

“NPAC will strengthen our community’s ability to more efficiently organize, train, and deploy public affairs professionals across the world, ensuring our communication capabilities are aligned with the demands of modern naval operations,” Self-Kyler said.

NPAC’s subordinate commands, previously NPASE East, NPASE West, and NPASE Japan, have been redesignated as FLTPACEN Norfolk, FLTPACEN San Diego, and FLTPACEN Yokosuka. FLTPACEN Norfolk will continue to serve as ISIC to FLTPACEN Det Mayport and FLTPACEN Det Rota, while FLTPACEN San Diego will continue to serve as ISIC to FLTPACEN Det Pearl Harbor.

This organizational change establishes two new commanding

officer billets—one at FLTPACEN Norfolk and another at FLTPACEN San Diego.

“With 60-plus billeted personnel in Norfolk and San Diego, and dozens more in their subordinate detachments, it was clear that the command authorities should be maintained at the deckplate level where our leaders are overseeing daily readiness of our deployers and coordinating with CO counterparts at sea,” said Rear Adm. John A. Robinson, Navy Chief of Information. “For the first time, Navy public affairs now has three commanding officers wearing the gold trident-in-wreath pin. This pin may be small, but it is mighty.”

Cmdr. Jason Fischer became the first commanding officer of FLTPACEN, Norfolk during an assumption of command ceremony on Naval Station Norfolk, Jan. 9.

Addressing the Sailors and civilians of FLTPACEN Norfolk, Fischer stressed the value of the important work they do.

“You deploy forward, you advise commanders, you illuminate the truth in the fog of information warfare, and you help our Navy—and our nation—understand the meaning and impact of our service,” Fischer said. “Simply put, you ensure the American people see their Navy clearly.”

Cmdr. Jackie Pau became the first commanding officer of FLTPACEN San Diego during its establishment of command ceremony at the “world famous” I Bar onboard Naval Air Station North Island, Jan. 21.

“Fleet Public Affairs Center San Diego is made up of exceptional Sailors who understand the power of storytelling and the responsibility that comes with it, said Pau. “I’m proud to lead a team of warfighters entrusted with telling the Navy’s story with integrity and professionalism.”

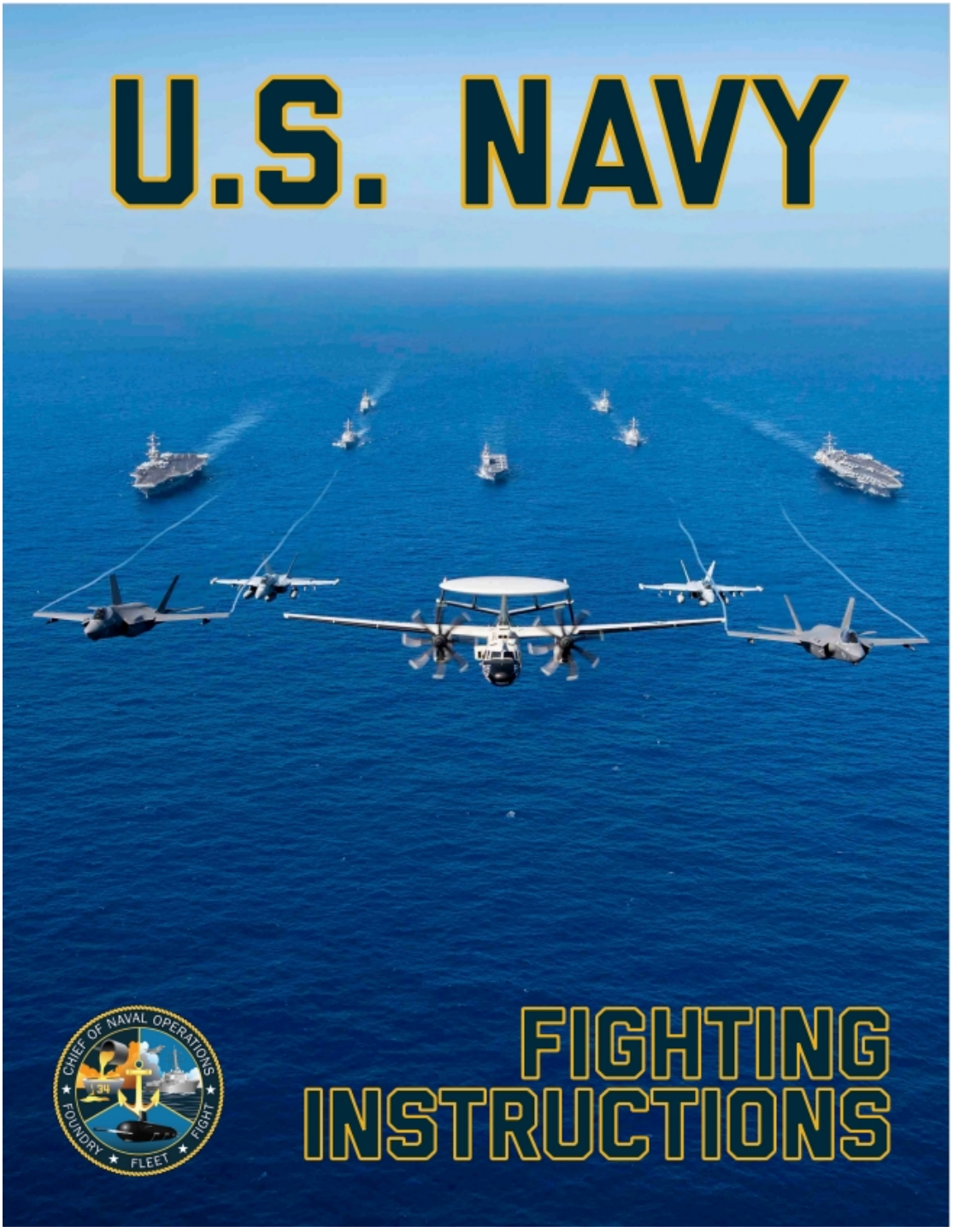
During his remarks over each ceremony, Robinson acknowledged the importance of developing strong leadership opportunities

within the Navy public affairs community, and emphasized the need for officers with vision, commitment, and a passion for excellence. “We are fortunate to have these highly accomplished leaders at the helm, guiding us into a new era of Navy Public Affairs.”

Cmdr. Rochelle Rieger has assumed duties as executive officer of NPAC.

NPAC’s renaming and the establishment of FLTPACENs Norfolk and San Diego represents the Navy’s commitment to streamlining communication efforts. By investing in its people and reordering its structure, the Navy is ensuring its public affairs community is a unified, “one team” force that is lethal and succinct.

Chief of Naval Operations Unveils ‘Fighting Instructions’ at U.S. Naval War College



From the Navy's Office of Information, Feb. 9 2026

The Navy's 34th Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Daryl Caudle, today released the United States Navy Fighting Instructions, a comprehensive framework to guide how the Navy organizes, trains, equips, and fights in an increasingly contested global security environment.

Caudle unveiled the document during remarks at the U.S. Naval War College, calling the institution the Navy's "home of

thought” and emphasizing the importance of introducing the guidance to future operational and strategic leaders. The Fighting Instructions introduce the Navy’s “Hedge Strategy” to build repeatable and tailorable processes that produce a Navy that is agile, lethal, and responsive to changes in the global security environment.

Caudle framed the document as the Navy’s answer to a defining challenge of the era: “How do we ensure we can fight and win across the spectrum of conflict, under conditions we cannot entirely predict, against adversaries who are increasingly capable, innovative, and aggressive – at near parity levels – simultaneously in key areas of vital national interest around the world?”

Adapting to a New Strategic Era

In his remarks, Caudle underscored that today’s Navy operates in an era of great power competition marked by rapid technological change, sophisticated adversaries, and mounting strain on the defense industrial base.

“We find ourselves operating in an era with other great powers, an era in which the speed of decision ruthlessly punishes delay,” he said. “The requirement for a strong, resilient, and globally present Navy has never been more important to our Nation’s defense.”

The Hedge Strategy balances high-end warfighting capability with scalable, cost-effective forces able to respond across a wide range of crises and conflicts. Central to this approach are Tailored Forces and Tailored Offsets – scalable, mission-focused combinations of platforms, systems, and capabilities designed to address high-consequence scenarios without constraining overall fleet design. Together, they expand combat mass, improve flexibility, and preserve the Navy’s ability to deliver decisive effects at acceptable levels of

risk.

“Our Navy’s approach to combat can no longer be based on capability overmatch and winning by mass dominance alone,” Caudle said. “The Nation needs a Navy that can hedge lethal effects aggressively, innovate continuously, fight distributivity, and command with clarity across a global network of battlespaces.”

Caudle also noted that the strategy complements national efforts to grow and modernize the Fleet, including the president’s Golden Fleet initiative, which underscores the importance of a larger, more capable Navy supported by a resilient maritime industrial base.

Sailors at the Center

Throughout the guidance, Caudle emphasized that Sailors remain the Navy’s decisive advantage.

“At the center of this vision will always be the United States Navy Sailor,” he said. “They are our most enduring strategic advantage, our primary weapon system, and the heartbeat of our world-class Navy.”

Quoting the late Adm. Hyman G. Rickover, the Father of the Nuclear Navy, Caudle closed by reinforcing the need for action over rhetoric.

“The great end of life is not knowledge, but action,” he said. “Through disciplined execution and a clear-eyed approach, we will defend our country, deter our adversaries, and preserve our place as the most formidable fighting force the world has ever known.”

The full text of the U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions can be downloaded at the following link:

https://www.navy.mil/Leadership/Chief-of-Naval-Operations/

Coast Guard, CBP, Homeland Security Task Force Partners Apprehend Stowaway Smuggler

From U.S. Coast Guard Southeast District, Feb. 9, 2026

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – Coast Guard Station San Juan and Sector San Juan Boarding Team members working with Homeland

Security Task Force – San Juan Region partner agencies apprehended a stowaway smuggler and seized 10 bales of cocaine in San Juan Harbor, Puerto Rico, Jan. 28, 2026.

The seized contraband weighed a combined total of 358kgs/789.25 pounds and is estimated to have a wholesale value of more than $5 million. The apprehended suspect faces federal prosecution on drug trafficking charges.

Sector San Juan Command Center watchstanders received a VHF Channel 16 marine radio communication from inbound Tug vessel Signet Thunder at approximately 5:48 a.m., Jan. 28, 2026, while the vessel was towing the barge San Juan-JaxBridge to the Old Army Terminal port facility in San Juan Harbor. The tug Signet Thunder reported that a crewmember from an assist tugboat had boarded the barge and sighted a stowaway onboard. The tugboat further relayed they would hold position and wait for assistance. Watchstanders directed Station San Juan to launch and alerted Customs and Border Protection's Caribbean Air and Marine Branch and Office of Field Operations, and Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine units which also responded.

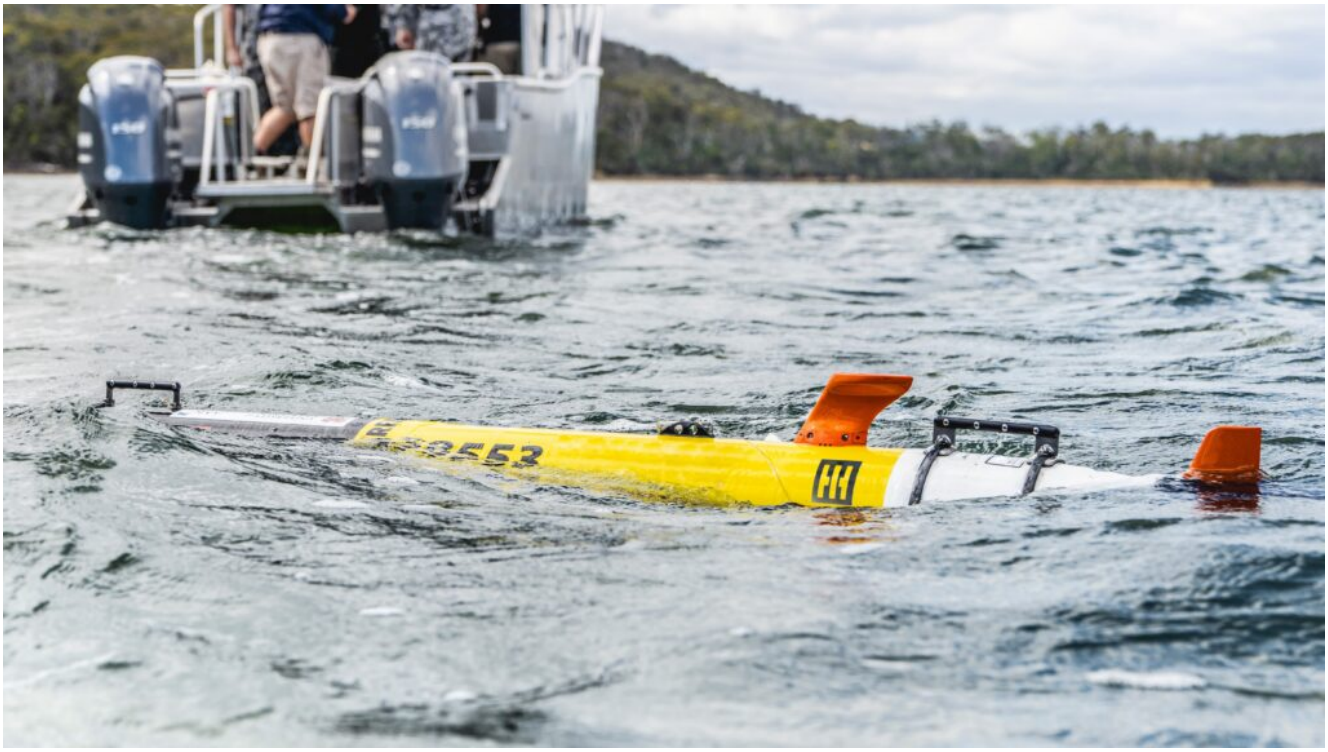
Watchstanders issued an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast to advise vessel traffic to be on the lookout for distress. Shortly thereafter, the Station San Juan boat crew sighted and recovered one person and 10 bales of suspected contraband from the water. Once pier side, Sector Boarding Team and Customs and Border Protection Office of Field Operations officers completed a boarding of the Signet Thunder and the barge and found no other stowaways or contraband onboard. The suspect and seized contraband were transferred to Homeland Security Task Force-San Juan law enforcement partners at Coast Guard Base San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"This case highlights a great response and interoperability between Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, and Puerto Rico Police responding units and the strong collaboration

within Homeland Security Task Force – San Juan partner agencies to secure the nation's Eastern Caribbean maritime borders from illicit drug trafficking," said Cmdr. Matthew Romano. Sector San Juan chief of response. "We commend the actions of the tugboat Signet Thunder which reflect positively on the maritime community and the important role they play in safeguarding our nation's navigable waterways. We are proud to stand the watch alongside our Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice and our local law enforcement partners as we continue to combat illicit trafficking throughout the waters of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands."

The Coast Guard is part of a whole-of-government approach to protect our maritime approaches in the Eastern Caribbean and secure our nation's borders by interdicting drug smuggling activities at sea and dismantling Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) and Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO), including narco-trafficking and human smuggling operations.

REMUS 100 Completes 935 Missions with Only Two Days of Downtime



From HII

NEWNHAM TAS, Australia, Feb. 10, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — The Australian Maritime College (AMC) and HII (NYSE: HII) today announced a major reliability milestone for AMC’s Legacy REMUS 100 autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV).

Over seven years, the AMC REMUS 100 completed 935 operational deployments with only two days of downtime caused by material issues. During this period the AUV supported the training of more than 400 Royal Australian Navy AUV operators.

Despite frequent use in challenging environments, the system maintained operational availability above 99.9%, which is a standout result for autonomous maritime technology.

This performance record reinforces the REMUS 100’s reputation as one of the most dependable autonomous underwater systems operating today. In 2026, HII REMUS will celebrate 25 years of reliable, innovative service to customers worldwide. To date, more than 750 REMUS AUVs have been delivered to customers in over 30 countries, with more than 90% still in active service.

The legacy REMUS 100 is a versatile, reliable, and easy-to-maintain system that played an important role in oceanographic research, environmental monitoring, and defence operations around the world.

Since the arrival of the REMUS100 at the AMC the vehicle has been maintained in-house by staff at the AMC's Autonomous Maritime Systems Laboratory in Northern Tasmania, with remote support provided directly from HII technical staff in the U.S.

"This reliability record is an outstanding testament to both the REMUS 100's robust engineering and technical expertise of the AMC team who maintain and operate the vehicle," said Chris White, AMCS manager of Defence & Autonomous Systems. "To sustain such high performance across hundreds of missions and diverse marine conditions is a reflection of both the system's design integrity and the autonomous system technical skills resident at the AMC."

"The REMUS 100's reliability has enabled the AMC to plan and execute complex missions with full confidence in the system. This level of dependability has a direct impact on mission success, data quality and training outcomes." said Duane Fotheringham, president of HII's Unmanned Systems. "Its performance record reinforces HII's commitment to delivering innovative, reliable, and upgradeable mission-ready autonomous underwater systems that set industry standards for performance and durability."

Lightfish Unmanned Vessel

First Joint Maritime Launch

By U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs, Feb. 10, 2026

VICTORIA, Seychelles – Commander Task Force (CTF) 66 launched a Lightfish Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) for the first time off a partner nation's vessel during Cutlass Express 2026 off the coast of the Indian Ocean, Feb. 9.

The launch was part of an unmanned systems training event with the Seychelles Navy, designed to test the Lightfish USV abilities in open ocean with limited connection.

"We are making history at Cutlass Express 2026 by demonstrating our enhanced warfighting skills through our robotic and unmanned capabilities alongside our maritime partners," said Lt. Bryna Loranger, CTF 66 Operations Officer. "6th Fleet is seeking new ways to build partner maritime domain awareness capabilities during this exercise by promoting interoperability. Through sharing and experimenting

with Seychelles Coast Guard assets and infrastructure, we are enhancing our expeditionary robotic autonomous systems capabilities in the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility."

CTF 66 is a fully uncrewed task force that uses advanced technologies, like artificial intelligence, to help U.S. 6th Fleet and its partners move faster to maintain a strong presence across Africa's maritime zones while detecting illegal activity.

CTF 66 is leading the U.S. Navy in innovating its approach to warfighting during an age where information systems, technology, and vulnerabilities in the global economy are being weaponized by adversaries operating in the grey-zone outside the domain of traditional warfare.

"Through exercises like Cutlass Express 2026, we are adapting alongside our partners by integrating unmanned tactics directly into operations," said Rear Adm. Kelly Ward, Commander, Task Force 66. "We are leaning into this domain hand-in-hand with our partners, translating innovation into warfighting readiness and enhancing maritime security to protect freedom of navigation."

Cutlass Express 2026 has 19 partners and allies working together through a series of shore-based training events. Cutlass Express provides all participating nations an opportunity to work side-by-side to synchronize and rehearse real-world scenarios that will include visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) and maritime interdiction training, counter-illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing procedures, and medical training.

Established in May 2024, CTF 66 is U.S. 6th Fleet's first all-domain task force designed to integrate Robotic and Autonomous Systems (RAS) with naval, joint and NATO partners in the European and African theaters of operations. Since its

establishment, the task force drives to innovate and develop unmanned technologies to enhance the way militaries integrate naval platforms across all domains, all enabled by this emerging technology.

CTF 66 currently maintains 22 USVs, however the task force is expecting to double its lethality as additional assets reach operational readiness in the near future. These USVs provide precise maritime domain awareness and serve as force multipliers. This enhanced technology forces adversaries to overextend their defenses and in positions to face complex strategic dilemmas.

Exercises like Cutlass Express 2026 allow CTF 66 to leverage strong collaboration with partners and allied nations to operate large numbers of unmanned systems at scale. These partnerships allow the task force to pre-position and deploy assets into host countries ahead of time using the ‘deploy to employ’ approach, while guaranteeing its immediate readiness in the area of operations.

CTF 66 and their USVs will continue to enhance deterrence, lethality and capabilities within the European and African theaters of operations.

For over 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa (NAVEUR/NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability. Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR/NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility.

U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Marine Corps Passes Fiscal 2025 Financial Audit

From Communication Directorate, Headquarters Marine Corps, Feb.9, 2026

HEADQUARTERS, MARINE CORPS – For the third year in a row, independent auditors verified that the Marine Corps' financial

records are materially accurate, complete, and compliant with federal regulations and issued an unmodified opinion for Fiscal Year 2025.

Three is a pattern of accountability. This repeat achievement reinforces the service's reputation for accountability, discipline, and leadership. The first and only service to achieve a clean, unmodified audit opinion, the Marine Corps continues to lead department-wide efforts toward effective financial management and delivering accountability to the American taxpayer.

The findings produced by the audit help the service to more efficiently and accurately plan, program, budget, and spend funds appropriated by Congress.

The Marine Corps' audit process enabled accurate global tracking and reporting of financial transactions, inventory of facilities, equipment and assets, and accounting for taxpayer dollars spent during the last fiscal year. The auditors also tested the Marines Corps' network, key business systems, and internal controls.

"Passing our third consecutive audit is a direct reflection of who we are as Marines," said Gen. Eric M. Smith, Commandant of the Marine Corps. "Discipline, accountability, and stewardship are not administrative tasks; they are part of our warfighting culture. When the American people entrust us with their tax dollars, we owe them careful judgment and integrity in how those dollars are spent. Receiving our third consecutive clean audit opinion affirms that Marines take that responsibility seriously at every level, in every unit. I am beyond proud of the work by our Marines, Sailors, and civilians that made this possible."

Since becoming the first service to pass an annual financial audit, the Marine Corps took additional steps to stabilize its new accounting system and procedures. Independent public

accountants contracted by the Department of War Inspector General audited all records. Financial management personnel also gained more hands-on experience, which set conditions for a smoother audit this year.

“With each additional audit year under our belts, we get smarter and adapt, finding new and better ways to get the job done,” said LtGen. James Adams III, Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources. “But to be clear, the hurdle we pass is no less significant. A financial statement audit is a year-round effort that tests every aspect of how we manage money for the Marine Corps. The sustained focus of our team on doing the job right over time is impressive.”

The auditor’s final report, enclosed in the Marine Corps’ Fiscal Year 2025 Agency Financial Report, highlights seven areas for the Marine Corps to improve upon, referred to as material weaknesses.

The Marine Corps will continue to eliminate these weaknesses through systems improvement and internal controls. While doing this, the Corps will still prioritize the accurate counting and management of its global assets, a challenging task given the vast scope of its operations. By repeating and refining this process, the Corps aims to develop a more fluid and efficient enterprise resource planning system, ultimately positioning itself for long-term mission success and accountability.

The Agency Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2025 is available at: https://www.pandr.marines.mil/