Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility Welcomes First Contingent of AUKUS Personnel

SEAPOWER
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Release from Naval Sea Systems Command

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16 August 2023

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (Aug. 15, 2023) – Personnel from participating nations reported to Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PHNSY&IMF) in support of the Australia, United Kingdom, and United States (AUKUS) security partnership's Pillar One initiative Aug. 14, 2023.

The Pillar One initiative is delivering a conventionally armed nuclear powered attack submarine (SSN) capability to Australia. The uniformed and civilian submarine maintenance subject matter experts from Australia, the United Kingdom, and

the United States comprise the Advance Verification Team (AVT) that, over the coming weeks, will work directly with shipyard personnel to gain a full understanding of the maintenance and industrial skills required to establish Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-W) in Australia as early as 2027.

At its height, SRF-W will host up to four Virginia class and one Royal Navy Astute class SSN. Initially, a combined Australian and U.S. team will execute maintenance on the U.S. flagged SSNs. Over time, as Australia grows its workforce and expertise, the U.S. will reduce its presence in Australia. The AVT is working to build a detailed understanding of the types of specialized skills and trades required to establish the SRF-W repair workforce.

AUKUS Pillar One has three distinct phases. Phase One involves establishing SRF-W through increased Virginia class visits to Australian designed to expand Australia's knowledge of SSNs and the development of an Intermediate Level Maintenance capability. Phase Two begins in the early 2030s, pending approval from the U.S. Congress, with the United States selling Australia between three and five Virginia class submarines. Phase Three sees the combination of United Kingdom submarine design and advanced United States technology in the delivery of SSN-AUKUS, the future attack submarine for both Australia and the United Kingdom. Australia plans to deliver the first sovereign-built SSN-AUKUS in the early 2040s.

"Each phase builds on the previous one and SRF-W is the foundation upon which the Australian maintenance, sustainment and new construction workforce is built," said Capt. Lincoln Reifsteck, the U.S. Navy's AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Program Manager, who emphasizes the importance of the AVT's role in the establishment of SRF-W .

"Australians are superior submariners," said Capt. Richard A. Jones, PHNSY & IMF's commanding officer. "They operate one of the best diesel-electric boat classes in the world in a highly

complex area of operations. That said, there is a big step between the Australian Collins Class SSK [diesel-electric attack submarine] and Virginia class SSN. We are honored to host the AVT over the next several weeks to share as much as we can, answer their questions, and set them on the right course to building out a holistic sustainment plan."

Once the AVT determines the skillsets and number of personnel required to execute intermediate-level maintenance, they will build an embedment plan to upskill and train Australian personnel within U.S. public naval shipyards.

"With an informed and specific plan, we will control costs by ensuring we send the right people, to the right places, to get the right training, at the right time to meet our requirements," said Rear Adm. Matthew Buckley, the Australian Submarine Agency's Head of Submarine Capability.

"Everything the AVT is doing works to grow Australia's organic capabilities needed to keep our spear point, our attack submarines, sharp," added Royal Australian Navy Capt. William McDougall, Director Submarine Rotational Force – West. "We are focused on ensuring the work taking place at [Australian base] HMAS Stirling fully supports SRF-West and we have been nothing but impressed by the dedication of our trilateral partners in setting us up for success."

The AVT will remain in Pearl Harbor for several weeks, return home, and then travel to the United Kingdom to tour British shipyards to refine its plans. "In the UK we have fewer SSNs than the US. We are going to show the AVT how we maintain and modernize a smaller number of submarines, while still operating at the highest possible standards. Given the projected size of the RAN SSN force, Australia will not require facilities akin to the United States Naval Shipyards, but instead infrastructure comparable to those present in the UK. This experience will be enormously beneficial for both the AVT and our personnel, as we look to strengthen our mutual

knowledge, and ongoing partnership," said Rear Adm. Chris Shepherd, the Royal Navy's Defence Nuclear Organisation AUKUS Director and Senior Responsible Owner for the Replacement Nuclear Submarine Programme.

The AUKUS partnership is a strategic endeavor that strengthens the three nations' national security and promotes peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia will acquire conventionally armed SSNs for the Royal Australian Navy under AUKUS Pillar One via the Optimal Pathway announced by leaders of the three partner nations on March 13, 2023. The AUKUS Integration and Acquisition (I&A) Program Office is responsible for executing the trilateral partnership to deliver conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered attack submarines to the Royal Australian Navy at the earliest possible date while setting the highest nuclear stewardship standards.

To read more about AUKUS click here.

VMGR-153 provides Transportation of JTF-50 Personnel and Equipment from Oahu to Maui

Release from [Marine Corps Base Hawaii]

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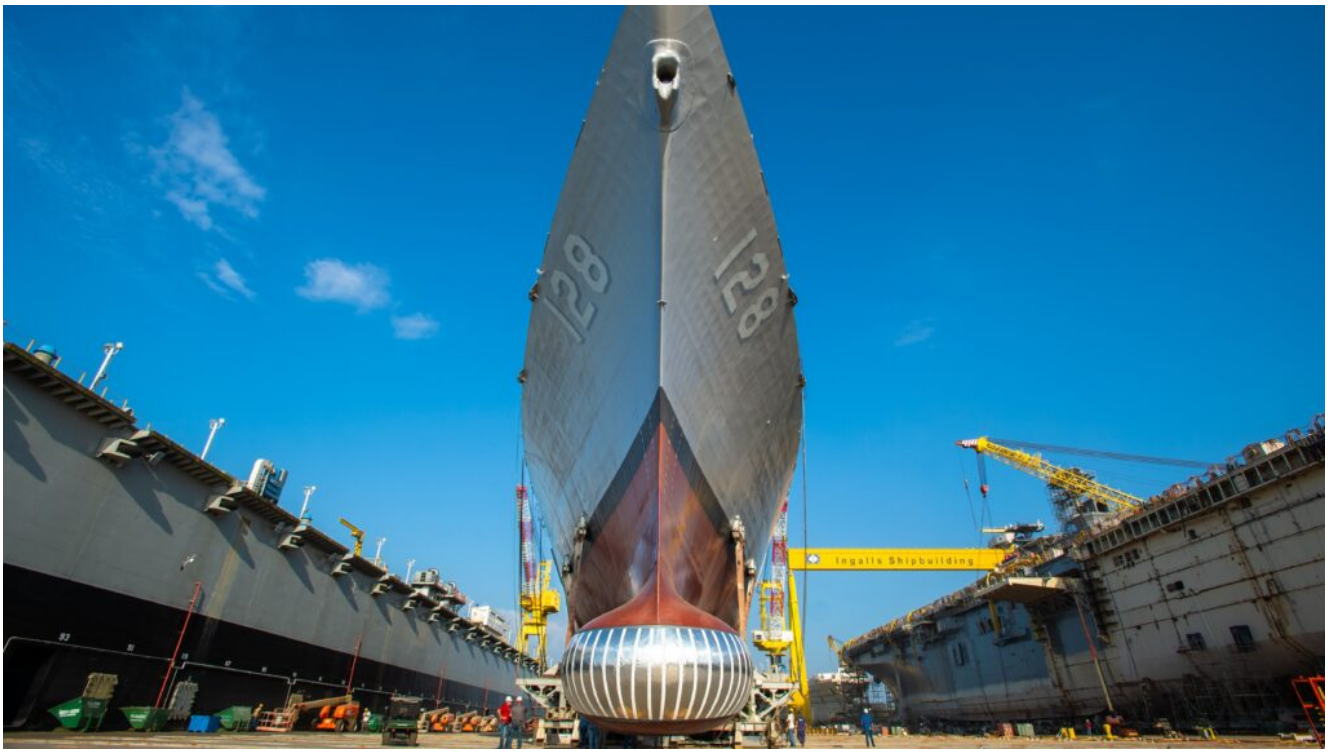
U.S. Marines with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 153 (VMGR-153) load cargo onto a KC-130J Hercules assigned to VMGR-153, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Air Wing, at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, August 14, 2023. At the request of U.S. Army Pacific, and in accordance with U.S. federal law, Hawaii based U.S. Marines with VMGR-153 provided transportation to Joint Task Force 50 personnel and equipment from Oahu to Maui. Joint Task Force 50 is the command and control element which will coordinate DoD response efforts upon request from appropriate government authorities. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Logan Beeney)

HII’s Ingalls Shipbuilding Launches Guided Missile Destroyer Ted Stevens (DDG 128)



Release from HII

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PASCAGOULA, Miss., Aug. 15, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII’s (NYSE: HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division announced the successful launch of the Navy’s third Flight III *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer *Ted Stevens (DDG 128).*

“The translation and launch are always important milestones for our shipbuilders and the life of a ship,” Ingalls Shipbuilding DDG Program Manager Ben Barnett said. “Our team has put in a tremendous amount of work leading up to the launch, and I am proud to see them bring DDG 128 one step closer to completion.”

Prior to launch, DDG 128 was translated from land to the dry dock using translation railcars to support the ship. Once in the dry dock, the ship is prepared to launch.

Ted Stevens is the 76th *Arleigh Burke*-class ship, and its name honors former U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, who served as a pilot in World War II and later as a U.S. senator representing Alaska. At the time he left office in 2009, he was the longest serving Republican U.S. senator in history.

Photos and a video accompanying the release are available at: https://hii.com/news/hii-ingalls-shipbuilding-launches-guided-missile-destroyer-ted-stevens-ddg-128/.

Ingalls has delivered 35 *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers to the U.S. Navy including the first Flight III, *Jack H. Lucas* (DDG 125), in June of this year. In addition, Ingalls Shipbuilding has four Flight IIIs currently under construction and was awarded an additional six destroyers earlier this month. *Ted Stevens* will be christened Saturday, Aug. 19, while *Jeremiah Denton* (DDG 129), *George M. Neal* (DDG 131) and *Sam Nunn* (DDG 133) are also under construction at Ingalls.

Flight III *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers built for the U.S. Navy incorporate a number of design modifications that collectively provide significantly enhanced capability. DDG 125 includes the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) and the Aegis Baseline 10 Combat System that is required to keep pace with the threats well into the 21st century. *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers are highly capable, multi-mission ships and can conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence and crisis management to sea control and power projection. Guided missile destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. surface fleet and are capable of fighting multiple air, surface and subsurface threats simultaneously.

Coast Guard shifts response focus to maritime environment after Maui Fires

Release from U.S. Coast Guard 14th District

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Aug. 14, 2023

HONOLULU – Coast Guard first responders are shifting the focus of response resources to minimizing maritime environmental impacts from the Maui fires while remaining ready to respond to any new reports of individuals in the water, Monday.

The Coast Guard has deployed pollution response teams and equipment to affected locations, to include a 100-foot boom placed at the mouth of the Lahaina Harbor, to contain potential hazardous contaminants and materials.

“While the Coast Guard is always postured for search and rescue operations, we are also focused on minimizing maritime environmental impacts as a result of the Maui fires,” said Cmdr. Kyra Dykeman, the deputy incident commander for the Coast Guard Maui fire response. “We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the community we serve.”

The Coast Guard has a safety zone established from Wahikuli Wayside Park to Launiupoko Beach Park, extending one nautical mile seaward from the shoreline.

The safety zone, enforced by the Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Honolulu, remains in effect as potential hazards in the waterway are still being evaluated. Safety zones are critical in protecting people, vessels, and the marine environment. In this response, the safety zone aids our partner agencies and first responders by allowing them to facilitate operational mandates and conduct thorough assessments without physical disruption by outside sources.

Coast Guard divers from Regional Dive Locker Pacific, in coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, are using Side-Scan Sonar and a Submersible Remote Operated Vehicle to map the Lahaina Channel and coastline off Lahaina in order to detect hazards that would make the channel unsafe for passage.

The Coast Guard National Strike Force (NSF) arrived on Maui Friday, to aid in the environmental response operation. The NSF provides highly trained, experienced personnel and specialized equipment to the Coast Guard and other federal agencies to facilitate responses to oil and hazardous

substance pollution incidents in order to protect public health and the environment.

For those mariners with questions regarding transit of the safety zone, owners of vessels impacted by the Lahaina fires, and reports of pollution in and around Lahaina Harbor, please call 808-723-0008. For all other questions or concerns please contact the Maui Emergency Operations Center at (808) 205-9328.

Africa Malaria Task Force focuses on new emerging threats from Africa's top killer

Release from U.S. Africa Command

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Aug. 15, 2023

By MAJ. JESSICA TAIT, U.S. Africa Command

ACCRA, Ghana – U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) Force Surgeon held an operational entomology event in support of the Africa Malaria Task Force (AMTF), July 17-21, in Accra, Ghana.

“This was a fantastic week spent among specialists in the fight against Malaria across all disciplines: physicians, researchers, medical technologists,” said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Carla Pappalardo, Nurse Corps. “They were able to spend ample time together sharing best practices and lessons learned over the years of study of this particular species, the Anopheles stephensi. Its emerging threat is not to be taken lightly, requiring an all hands effort and active involvement from our partner nations in activities such as this.”

Hosted by the Ghanaian Armed Forces (GAF), and co-hosted by NAVEUR-NAVAF and the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) Office of the Command Surgeon, the five-day event brought together more than 70 representatives from 15 African partner nations to include Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs), and the U.S. government.

“What was gained from this week’s event was not only collaboration, study, and networking, but a reminder that we are truly in this fight together,” stated Pappalardo. “We must continue to leverage each other’s expertise, knowledge and the science in order to stay lock-step in eradicating Malaria.”

The event included facilitated briefings, break-out sessions and field work, which focused on the emerging threat of the invasive malaria causing species, Anopheles stephensi, in Africa. Notable facilitators included members from GAF, the World Health Organization (WHO), Navy Entomology Center of Excellence, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Malaria prevention is one of AFRICOM’s top health priorities,” said Col. Tom Eccles, command surgeon, U.S. Africa Command. “As malaria parasites and their mosquito vectors develop new patterns of resistance, there’s a continual need for us to update our approach to malaria prevention. AMTF provides a unique forum for exchanging information with our African partners on tools and strategies for protecting our forces and improving population health.”

Since its inception in 2011, the task force has brought together scientists and policy makers with demonstrated interest in malaria programs to share resources, strategies and expertise that would ultimately act as a catalyst for change.

The African Malaria Task Force complements the U.S. President’s Malaria Initiative, focused on malaria prevention in Africa; and the African Partner Outbreak Response Alliance supports global health security objectives for the U.S. and partner nations.

AMTF was designed to strengthen and expand effective malaria programs by providing support for nations, military personnel, their families. NAVEUR-NAVAF and USAFRICOM will continue work with international partners to promote effective military-civilian, country specific and regional African partnerships in infectious disease outbreak detection, prevention and response programs.

Mercury Systems Names Bill Ballhaus as President and CEO

Release from Mercury Systems

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ANDOVER, Mass., Aug. 15, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — Mercury Systems, Inc. (the "Company" or "Mercury") (NASDAQ: MRCY, www.mrcy.com), a technology company that delivers processing power for the most demanding aerospace and defense missions, today announced that its Board of Directors has appointed Bill Ballhaus as President and Chief Executive Officer, effective immediately. Mr. Ballhaus had been serving as Mercury's interim President and Chief Executive Officer since June 24, 2023.

"Bill took on the role of Mercury's Interim President and CEO with a mandate from the Board to take immediate action to address the Company's operational and financial challenges and help drive enhanced shareholder value," said William K. O'Brien, Chairman of the Board. "During the past 45 days, under Bill's leadership, the management team has performed a deep dive of the Mercury business and charted a clear and compelling path forward. After conducting a review of potential candidates with the assistance of an executive search firm, and given Bill's previous successes in leading operational transformations and achieving strong results, the Board is confident that he has the right skills and experience to accelerate the execution of Mercury's strategic plan and solidify the Company's position in the rapidly modernizing aerospace and defense industry."

"I am honored and excited to take on the President and CEO

roles on a permanent basis," said Bill Ballhaus. "Working closely with our leadership team, we are moving aggressively to enhance execution to drive predictability of performance, rearchitect our organic growth engine, improve profitability, and drive greater cash generation. With a unique position at the intersection of tech and defense, and a core business that is well-positioned to benefit from industry tailwinds, we are confident we have the right team, strategy, and assets in place to capitalize on the opportunity in front of us."

As previously announced, Mr. Ballhaus will also assume the role of Chairman of the Board, effective immediately prior to the 2023 Annual Meeting of Shareholders. Barry R. Nearhos, who has served on the Board since 2018, has been appointed by the Board to serve as Lead Independent Director following the previously announced retirement of Mr. O'Brien immediately prior to the Annual Meeting.

About Bill Ballhaus

Mr. Ballhaus has significant experience in the aerospace, defense and technology industries, including multiple CEO roles. He previously served as Chairman and CEO of Blackboard, Inc., a leading EdTech company, from 2016 until its merger with Anthology in 2021. Prior to that, he served as CEO and President of SRA International, Inc., a provider of information technology services, from 2011 until the creation of CSRA Inc. from SRA and CSC's U.S. public sector business. Before that, he served as CEO and President of government contractor DynCorp International from 2008 to 2010. Mr. Ballhaus has also held senior leadership positions at BAE Systems, Boeing and Hughes, where he led global government and commercial technology businesses particularly focused on software and IT.

Mr. Ballhaus holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Davis and Master's and Doctorate degrees in Aeronautics and Astronautics

from Stanford University. He also earned a Master's degree in Business Administration from the Anderson Graduate School of Management at UCLA.

Franchetti Takes the Helm After Gilday's Relinquishment of Office

Release from Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

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From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – Adm. Mike Gilday relinquished the office of the Chief of Naval Operations after successfully concluding his

four-year tenure as the Navy's top military leader in a ceremony at the United States Naval Academy, Aug. 14.

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti, who has been nominated by President Biden to be the next CNO, will perform the duties of the CNO until someone is formally appointed to that role in accordance with law.

Gilday became the 32nd CNO in August 2019. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CNO acts as an advisor to the President of the United States, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Under direction of the Secretary of the Navy, the CNO is responsible for the command, utilization of resources, and operating efficiency of naval forces and shore activities.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin spoke at the ceremony highlighting the importance of the Navy, and the increasingly critical role the service plays in strategic competition.

"To tackle the national security challenges of the 21st century, we need our Navy more than ever," said Austin. "We rely on our Navy to project American power, to protect American interests; we rely on our Navy to bolster our unmatched network of allies and partners, from the South China Sea to the Caribbean; and we rely on our Navy to deter conflict and keep the peace."

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro acted as the presiding officer and keynote speaker of the ceremony. Similar to Austin, Del Toro emphasized Gilday's "transformational leadership" and prioritization of readiness during an era of strategic competition.

"Admiral Gilday boldly charged forward, leading and inspiring Sailors at every level, from the tactical, to the operational, to the strategic… he's also championed our strategic relationships with allies and partners," said Del Toro. "He served as our 32nd Chief of Naval Operations during a pivotal

– and perhaps sometimes even a bit chaotic – time for our fleet, for our Nation, and for our friends around the world – many of whom are represented here today."

For his part, Gilday reflected on the adaptation and change the Navy has undergone in adjusting to a new and challenging security environment, while also calling for the Department to "act with urgency and purpose" in order to maintain maritime superiority. He expressed confidence and optimism in the Navy's direction, while praising Sailors and families around the Fleet for their resilience and service.

"We have the best Navy in the world," said Gilday. "Every day, our people are standing the watch, operating globally and at the tip of the spear, strengthening our alliances and partnerships."

As he departed, he left the Fleet with a message of service, to be leaders and serve with a purpose.

"Embody humility; selflessness; complete transparency; acknowledge the value of every Sailor and civilian; and always do the right thing, especially when it is difficult," said Gilday. "Have total ownership of your job and duty… because when you are called upon to sail into harm's way, your mission is to fight and win for our nation."

Gilday described Adm. Franchetti as exceptionally well-qualified to perform the duties of CNO during this uncertain and unprecedented leadership transition.

"I am proud that she will be my CNO," said Gilday. "She is a Fleet Sailor, an operator, a warfighter. She has already made the Navy better as our Vice Chief of Naval Operations, the Navy is in good hands with her at the helm."

During the ceremony, Franchetti and Del Toro both thanked Gilday, his wife Linda Gilday, as well as their entire family for their service and leadership throughout the years.

“Admiral Gilday and his wife Linda have dedicated so much of themselves and their time over the past four years focusing on quality of life and quality of service issues to ensure our Sailors and their families have the resources they need to be resilient during their time in service to our Navy and our nation,” said Del Toro. “I especially want to highlight Linda’s significant accomplishments in supporting our Navy families and spouses. You have been a shining example for our service members and families of a remarkable professional and an extraordinary public servant; we express our deepest gratitude to you for your devotion to our Navy family.”

VCNO also stressed the importance of a seamless transition with Gilday’s departure.

“As we look to the horizon and prepare for the challenges that lie ahead, I will act with a sense of urgency to ensure our Sailors have everything they need to maintain our warfighting edge,” said Franchetti.

She added, “For the past 247 years, the U.S. Navy has stood the watch. We, along with the Marine Corps are America’s Away Team, around the world and around the clock. As we look to the future, our mission continues, undisrupted and unabated. We fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows so that others can too.”

In the absence of a confirmed 33rd Chief of Naval Operations, and in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 8035, Franchetti assumes the responsibilities of the CNO as the current Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

Adm. Franchetti was nominated by President Biden to be the 33rd Chief of Naval Operations this past July. If confirmed, she would be the first woman service chief and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Mahoney Nominated for Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps

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ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced Aug. 14 that the president has nominated Marine Corps Lieutenant General Christopher J. Mahoney for appointment to the grade of general, with assignment as assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. Mahoney is currently serving as deputy commandant for Programs and Resources, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

Lieutenant General Mahoney is a native of South Weymouth,

Massachusetts, and graduated from Holy Cross in June 1987. He completed The Basic School (TBS) and the Infantry Officer's Course (IOC), at Quantico, Virginia, graduating in March 1988.

After flight training in Florida and Texas and his qualification as an A-6E Intruder pilot, Mahoney deployed to the Indo-Pacific with VMA (AW)-224, The Bengals. He completed transition training to the F/A-18 at El Toro and made multiple deployments with VMFA (AW)-224 and VMFA-122 to the Indo-Pacific, Italy, and Iraq flying out of MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina, and MCAS Miramar, California. Additionally, Mahoney served a tour as an instructor at the Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron-1 (MAWTS-1) at MCAS Yuma, Arizona.

He has commanded twice at the squadron level as well as at the Group Level. He has served on Joint duty with the Joint IED Defeat Organization at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, as the chief of staff and has served on the Headquarters Marine Corps Staff as the executive assistant to the Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources.

His General Officer duties to date include a posting as the deputy commander of Marine Forces Pacific, the director of Strategy and Plans at Headquarters Marine Corps, deputy commander, United States Forces, Japan, and as the commanding general, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

Mahoney is currently serving as deputy commandant for Programs and Resources, Headquarters Marine Corps.

Mahoney is a graduate of the Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course (WTI), the Marine Division Tactics Course (MDTC), and the Naval Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN). He is a qualified forward air controller and parachutist. He attended the Australian Command and Staff College and the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base. He holds Masters Degrees from the University of Canberra in Australia and the Air University

with the highest academic distinction. General Mahoney has over 5000 hours of flight time, in the A-6, F-5, F/A-18, and the F-35.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Remarks at the Chief of Naval Operations Relinquishment of Office Ceremony

Release from the U.S. Department of Defense

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Good morning, everyone. It’s great to be here with all of you this morning.

I see a number of former chiefs in the audience this morning. And welcome to you all. Good to see you.

Thanks to Secretary Del Toro. Carlos, we appreciate everything that you do for our Sailors and our Marines.

Let me also welcome our outstanding Deputy Secretary, Kath Hicks. Kath, it’s an honor to serve alongside you. We’re absolutely lucky to have you.

I want to thank the many distinguished guests and senior military leaders who are here today, including General Milley. General, thank you for your tremendous leadership of the Joint Chiefs.

I’m also delighted that we’re joined by a great Navy leader who’s been a friend and mentor to me and to so many people here, Admiral Mike Mullen. Sir, it’s an honor to have you.

And let me say a special welcome to Admiral Mike Gilday’s family—including his mother, Mrs. Frances Gilday. And we’re joined by two of Mike’s siblings, Mark and Mary Joy. And I know that his other siblings, Dave and Brian, are also cheering him on.

It is an absolute honor to be here today in Memorial Hall. The Navy will always steer by the “immortal valor” of the Naval Academy graduates who lost their lives in defense of America.

We’re gathered in this sacred space for a simple reason: and that reason is to pay tribute to the finest Navy that the world has ever seen. And we should remember that, right now, thousands of Sailors stand the watch on ships and stations around the world. And that’s a testament to the Navy’s patriotism and professionalism.

And it’s a testament to your leadership as well. So Admiral Gilday, congratulations on your tremendous tenure as the 32nd Chief of Naval Operations. And I’m glad to be here with so many outstanding Sailors today as we celebrate your service and all that the Navy has achieved under your leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen, to tackle the national-security challenges of the 21st century, we need our Navy more than ever. It is especially vital in today’s world. And as Mike Gilday likes to say, the global economy floats on seawater.

So we rely on our Navy to secure the world’s sea lanes for the free flow of ships, commerce, and ideas.

We rely on our Navy to sail, fly, and operate wherever international law allows.

We rely on our Navy to project American power and to protect

American interests.

We rely on our Navy to bolster our unmatched network of allies and partners, from the South China Sea to the Caribbean.

And we rely on our Navy to deter conflict and to keep the peace.

Now, some of our competitors have a very different vision. They want to upend the rules-based international order that was built at such a high cost after World War II. That includes new challenges in the maritime domain.

But we are determined to defend the freedom of the skies, the seas, and space. And we are determined to keep the world of the 21st century open, stable, and peaceful.

And that's exactly what Admiral Gilday has been focused on for the past four years as our CNO.

First and foremost, he's been relentless about readiness. The Navy has been using data-driven reforms to improve maintenance. And today, our Navy, our shipyards, and our industrial base have sped up the pace of repairs. We've also invested in our supply chains so that when our ships, subs, and aircraft need maintenance, their new parts are more reliable and get to the fleet even faster.

And under Admiral Gilday's leadership, the Navy has also made great strides to modernize our fleet, to strengthen its capabilities, and to project American power on a global scale.

Last October, the Navy deployed its new, first-in-class aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford. She's the largest warship in the world. The most technologically advanced. And the most powerful.

In the recent Exercise Neptune Strike, the Ford steamed through the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, sailing together

with our NATO allies and other partners to reinforce our common deterrence.

And Navy airwings have deployed with the F-35C—which is a multi-role stealth fighter that is tailor-made for carrier-based operations.

Now that's the type of progress and drive that will keep our Navy on the cutting edge.

And Admiral Gilday has also deepened the Navy's integration with the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard. He and his team developed the first tri-service maritime strategy since 2015. And that strategy will shape the maritime balance of power for years and years to come.

And he has dramatically improved our interoperability with our allies and partners.

To take just one example: our Navy has a key role in our historic AUKUS partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom. AUKUS is helping our three great democracies work even more closely together to keep the Indo-Pacific free, and open, and secure.

Last month, the first Australian officers graduated from the Navy's nuclear-power school. And just days ago, a Virginia-class submarine visited Australia as a part of the AUKUS partnership. And these crucial port visits help pave the way for our Australian counterparts to operate their own sovereign, nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines.

Now, it's a huge task to forge a Navy that will meet today's security requirements. But for our Sailors, it's all in a day's work. And it's all in a life's calling.

Every day, the men and women of the United States Navy defend our democracy.

You do it with courage, skill, and honor. And you're not just

advancing American seapower around the planet. You're also advancing America's commitment to an open world of rules and rights.

For the past four years, Admiral Gilday has guided all those advances with vigor, and expertise, and foresight.

Now, Mike was adamant that he did not want today's ceremony to be about him. But Mike, you don't always get to choose. And so I'd be remiss if I didn't say a couple of things about your distinguished career.

Now, his career started right here at the Naval Academy. And by the way, I'm impressed that I was in the building for at least 30 minutes, and nobody said, "Beat Army" to me when I walked in.

You're thinking it though, Admiral.

Mike's classmates knew that he would always put in the work, whether he was studying for an exam or playing ultimate Frisbee.

And that commitment to excellence defined Mike's 38 years in uniform.

He took on some of the most challenging jobs out there. Service aboard five warships, two of which he commanded, the destroyers Higgins and Benfold. Commander of a Destroyer Squadron and Carrier Strike Group Eight. Commander of U.S. Fleet Cyber Command. Director of operations on the Joint Staff. And even carrying the so-called "nuclear football" on Air Force One.

Now, the Admiral has always understood that the most precious asset in the Navy's arsenal is our people, including our military families. And Mike's own family has supported him every step of his journey.

His wife, Linda Gilday, has had a distinguished career as an

engineer and a program manager. And she has brought her own expertise to the Navy as well, including working to improve infrastructure at the Navy's public shipyards.

Linda also helped launch the "Women in the Navy" initiative to honor the inspiring women who have strengthened this service throughout its history. And Linda has been a staunch advocate for military spouses and military families, from working for accessible, high-quality child care to helping families transition from duty station to duty station.

So Linda, on behalf of everyone, thank you for everything that you've done in support of Mike and in support of our United States Navy.

Now, Linda and Mike are deeply proud of their two sons. Michael is a senior at Auburn University. You can say "War Eagle" if you like. Brian is an ensign in the Navy, now serving as an explosive ordnance disposal officer. And that makes Brian third-generation Navy.

So this is an exemplary military family.

Mike, you are a sailor's sailor, through and through. And I'm reminded of something that you said here in May on Commissioning Day. You said that you've always found that "Sailors just want to be led well and treated with respect."

And that's been your hallmark, Mike, from Ensign to Admiral. You've always led superbly, and you've always treated everyone with the respect that they deserve.

Bravo Zulu, Sailor.

We wish you fair winds and following seas.

And I am extremely proud to call you my shipmate.

Let's give Mike and the entire Gilday family a round of applause.

Now, this is indeed a proud day—but I want to take a moment to mark a painful milestone.

As you know, more than 300 nominations for our outstanding general and flag officers are now being held up in the United States Senate. That includes our top uniformed leaders—and our next Chief of Naval Operations.

Because of this blanket hold, starting today, for the first time in the history of the Department of Defense, three of our military services are operating without Senate-confirmed leaders.

This is unprecedented. It is unnecessary. And it is unsafe.

This sweeping hold is undermining America's military readiness. It's hindering our ability to retain our very best officers. And it's upending the lives of far too many American military families.

Our troops deserve better. Our military families deserve better. Our allies and partners deserve better. And our national security deserves better.

So let me say again that smooth and swift transitions of confirmed leadership are central to the defense of the United States and to the full strength of the most lethal fighting force in history.

And it is time for the Senate to confirm all of our superbly qualified military nominees—including the 33rd Chief of Naval Operations.

Ladies and gentlemen, all around the planet, U.S. Navy ships help to build a world that is more free, more just, and more secure.

Our Sailors never waver. And they never give up the ship. And their idealism reflects our country's highest values of democracy and freedom.

Our Sailors are the reason why the United States has the finest Navy in human history.

And thanks to you, the sight of an American flag fluttering in a sea breeze from a gray Navy hull renews the faith of free people in a more hopeful world.

So thank you to all of the men and women of the United States Navy.

May God bless you.

And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Thank you very much.

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy, scientists deploy ice stations

Release from U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area

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Editor's Note: Click here for more U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy imagery

BEAUFORT SEA – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) crew and embarked researchers ventured onto a floe of multi-year ice for the first of three multi-instrument ice stations in the Arctic Ocean Basin late July and early August.

As the Healy carefully approached and maintained position alongside an ice floe above 77 degrees north, the crew and a team of scientists, working in cooperation with the Office of Naval Research, (ONR) offloaded a diverse collection of equipment on to the floe carefully selected for its size and composition of multi-year ice.

The objectives included the installation of two major instruments: the Waves, Weather, Ice Mass, Balance, and Ocean (WIMBO) device, a massive weather buoy destined to remain at sea; and a Dynamic Ocean Topography device, collecting sea surface data. Science instruments like the WIMBO are

individual components of a greater project, the Arctic Mobile Observing System (AMOS), a network of robotic oceanographic instruments making years-long autonomous observations of ocean and sea ice physics.

The science party, headed by Dr. Craig Lee of the University of Washington's Applied Physics Laboratory is comprised of the foremost leaders in the field of oceanographic science.

"The ONR AMOS program focuses on developing technologies for making continuous, long-term scientific observations of the Arctic marine environment," said Lee. "The partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard and science is critical to these endeavors, as are the unique capabilities of Healy and the skill of its crew."

Healy is the Coast Guard's only icebreaker specifically designed for Arctic research, as well as the nation's sole surface presence routinely operating in the Arctic Ocean. The platform is ideal for projects like AMOS; providing access to the most remote reaches of the Arctic Ocean; areas barricaded by pack ice and insurmountable by most research vessels.

Its normal operations revolve around over-the-side science instrument deployments and Conductivity, Temperature, and Depth casts; both of which have been the focus during its month-long trip with ONR.

Healy proved capable of further support to the science party, precisely locating and keeping station along an ice floe, preserving its structural integrity for on-ice activity. The ability to delicately maneuver the 16,000 ton (displacement) ship while coordinating on-ice activities speaks to the crew's familiarity with the region. The unity of effort between the Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy, and the National Ice Center representatives that guided them there; further solidifies Healy as a permanent and experienced steward of the Arctic Ocean.

Healy is 1-month into a 5-month deployment in support of science missions across the Arctic region. Following the work in support of the Office of Naval Research, Healy embarks a team of international scientists to recover and redeploy oceanographic instruments as part of the Nansen and Amundsen Basin Observational System (NABOS). The NABOS instruments have collected Arctic data for more than 20 years, contributing to an international body of knowledge through the U.S. National Science Foundation’s Arctic Observing Network.

Commissioned in 1999, the Healy is one of two active polar icebreakers and is the largest and most technologically advanced icebreaker in the Coast Guard. The crew compliment of 84 supports the primary mission of scientific support.