

# **MIKEL Wins Multi-Million Dollar Contract to Support U.S. Navy**

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – MIKEL Inc., a defense company that has been developing and delivering innovative technologies to the U.S. Navy for more than 20 years, announced Sept. 1 that the Naval Sea Systems Command has awarded it a five-year, multi-million dollar contract to support the Undersea Warfare Combat Systems Department of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, Rhode Island.

This award extends a previous five-year contract, through which MIKEL continues to provide engineering and technical services for essential technologies on Navy submarines stationed around the world.

“MIKEL is proud to continue to provide technical support for critical systems that maintain and advance national security. Through this important partnership with defense leaders at NUWC, we can ensure that U.S. submarines and warfighters are on the cutting edge of technology and innovation,” said Kelly Mendell, president of MIKEL. “Once again, we’ve demonstrated that for the military leaders who make our country safer, MIKEL makes their work easier.”

The contract, which MIKEL won through a competitive bid process, supports the Global Command and Control System on vessels. MIKEL installs, tests, and ensures accuracy of software that integrates data from undersea, surface-level, and air sources, with available intelligence and environmental information. The system operates in near real-time, empowering fast action and decision making for all U.S. Navy submarines, surface ships, and land-based sites connected through NUWC in Newport.

In other words, the technology enables U.S. warfighters to maintain superiority.

“Our team brings highly-specialized technical expertise to this project, supporting the installation, integration, and deployment of critical systems on all U.S. Navy submarines,” said Kim Matthews, MIKEL’s director of Engineering Services. “We look forward to continuing to work with and deliver for our partners at NUWC. This award is a reflection of the quality work and state-of-the-art technologies our team consistently provides to the fleet.”

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## **Security, Industry Leaders Call Workforce Development an Urgent Defense Imperative**

NEWPORT, R.I. – As part of Defense Innovation Days, its signature national convening, SENEDIA (Southeast New England Defense Industrial Association) on Aug. 31 brought together White House, Department of Defense, Department of Labor and industry leaders for a compelling summit, “Building the Shipbuilding Workforce to Meet National Security and Supply Chain Priorities.”

Key takeaways from the summit included:

- The workforce is the top concern for government and industry leaders. There is a lot of great work going on, but it is not enough to meet the current and future workforce needs of the shipbuilding industry.
- The challenges of workforce shortages and eroded talent pipelines are too complex for any one entity to address

and solve alone. Effectively tackling these challenges requires new ways of thinking and new ways of partnering to develop regional training systems meeting critical defense needs. It is a strategic issue crossing state and industry lines.

- The shipbuilding industry needs to work together to make the case for manufacturing careers and reach underrepresented populations, including women, communities of color, refugees, and the previously incarcerated. Students need to be introduced to manufacturing careers earlier in their education.
- Partnerships need to address all the barriers to recruitment, hiring, and retention of workforce, including pay, benefits, and issues like housing and childcare.

With national projections of 2.1 million unfilled manufacturing jobs by 2030, summit speakers painted a picture of a workforce development strategy that starts in early childhood and continues through multiple pathways into the profession.

Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island), chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, welcomed the attendees. He highlighted that Rhode Island has a good story to tell about creating a model for workforce development that can strengthen our national security and workforce. The effort has created a sustainable workforce development pipeline to build submarines, and it is a program that can be replicated and shared with other sectors of the economy.

Deborah Rosenblum, assistant secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy, gave the keynote address for the summit. She highlighted that supply chain resilience and workforce development are national security imperatives. For more than 50 years, markets have prioritized supply chain efficiency over supply chain resilience. The need to invest in the resilience of the defense ecosystem has been made clear by

the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“The workforce challenge is beyond any one state, agency, or manufacturer to solve,” she said. “That is why DoD is making targeted investments in training through the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment National Imperative for Industrial Skills initiative and partnering with SENEDIA’s regional Next Gen Submarine Shipbuilding Supply Chain Partnership. The partnership has trained over 2,000 workers and focused attention to shipbuilding careers.”

Celeste Drake, White House National Economic Council deputy director for Labor Economy, expanded on the need for investment in the workforce. Manufacturing jobs are a pathway to the middle class. Over time, employer training eroded, and the public system has not kept up. Skills investment only works if they are the skills employers are looking for in their region. She also emphasized that resources and support for childcare and other caregiving responsibilities must be a part of the equation.

“We are behind other advanced economies right now, but we have a tremendous opportunity in front of us,” she said. “We are investing in the future of America.”

Manny Lamarre, senior advisor for the Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor, discussed the importance of equity, job quality, and partnerships. Companies can’t build the workforce of the future alone. The best way to scale workforce readiness is through partnerships that include industry, labor, and all levels of government (federal, state, local).

“To build a strong workforce, we need to create opportunities for young people to be exposed and introduced to the shipbuilding industry,” he said.

Adele Ratcliff, director of the DoD Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment Program, said the need for early career

exploration and skills building is more urgent than ever.

“Gaps in manufacturing workforce are undermining the entire sector. When the United States moved from quality manufacturing to cost manufacturing, companies took on a job shop mentality. The entire educational and recruitment pipeline from K-12 through community college eroded,” she said. “IBAS is investing in the skills imperative – piloting new programs, reducing the cycle time on training, and responding to new skills needs.”

Redefining career pathways in defense and helping more people see themselves reflected in those opportunities means new avenues for recruitment.

Navy Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, Navy Program Executive Officer for Strategic Submarines, said a strong and sustainable workforce is critical to the construction of Columbia-class and Virginia-class submarines – a top priority for the U.S. Navy. The current worker shortage needs to be closed faster, which will require thinking outside the box.

“We have to do things differently than we have done in the past,” he said. “The workforce is the rising tide that lifts all boats. That is the bottom line.”

Pappano went on to say that he and his team are expanding the view on ideal candidates for the defense industrial base jobs of tomorrow. At-risk youth and retraining for adult learners are some of the non-traditional sources that he hopes to expand, as well as refugees and those who come to America looking for a better life. For these individuals, defense employment could provide an expedited path to citizenship and a sense of patriotism and purpose, while the industry benefits from a new source of talent.

Rounding out the summit panel, Shawn Coyne, General Dynamics Electric Boat vice president for Human Resources, and Ray Steen, General Dynamics Bath Iron Works vice president for

Human Resources shared additional strategies for bolstering the ranks of the shipbuilding workforce and the broader defense workforce. Andrew Bond, General Dynamics Electric Boat vice president for Planning, was the moderator of the event.

Coyne announced that General Dynamics Electric Boat earlier this week increased their new minimum starting pay for unskilled workers to \$20 per hour. They have also significantly increased recruitment efforts, hosting or attending 350 recruitment events to date this year alone.

Particularly important, the speakers agreed, is increasing flexibility and benefits. Steen said a 9 to 5 job affords more options for childcare than the typical 7 a.m. start in military and defense environments. Changing shifts or creating flexibility, he said, can remove a major barrier for employment.

Consistently throughout the summit discussion, participants agreed that workforce development is a shared responsibility. Molly Magee, SENEDIA executive director, concluded that everyone at the summit has a clear call to action in their respective spheres of influence to break down the barriers to recruitment, hiring, and retention of the shipbuilding workforce.

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## **Australian Navy Submariners to Train on British Nuclear Submarines**



Australian submariners will train on the new U.K. submarine HMS Anson. *U.K. MINISTRY OF DEFENCE*

LONDON – Royal Australian Navy submariners will join United Kingdom crews to train on the newly commissioned Astute-class nuclear-powered attack submarine HMS Anson, the U.K. Ministry of Defence said Aug. 31.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Defence Secretary Ben Wallace hosted new Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles at Barrow to see the commissioning of the Anson.

The announcement came as Marles and Wallace emphasized the importance of the deep defense ties between the U.K. and Australia, following the development of the trilateral AUKUS partnership working with the United States, which was represented today by the U.S. Defense Attaché, Navy Capt. Leland.

Hosting Marles on his first official visit to the U.K. since the new Australian government came to power, the prime minister and ministers attended the commissioning of the fifth of seven new Astute-class Royal Navy submarines.

With naval capability at the center of the two powers' future defense relationship, the visit reinforced the priorities of the Integrated Review and significance of the AUKUS partnership, which links the U.K., the United States and Australia in promoting stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

The U.K. and U.S. already have welcomed Royal Australian Navy personnel on its specialized nuclear training courses, and

more will follow next year, before Australian submariners go to sea. The training and exchanges mark the beginning of a multigenerational naval partnership between the three AUKUS nations.

Marles, who is also minister for defense, visited Barrow, having also seen the Type 26 frigate shipbuilding facility in Govan, accompanied by the First Sea Lord, Adm. Sir Ben Key.

“Today is a significant milestone in the U.K. and Australia’s preparation to confront growing threats to the liberal democratic order, especially in the Indo Pacific,” said Wallace. “Not only have we progressed our defense planning but Minister Marles participated in the commissioning of our latest attack submarine, on which will Royal Australian Navy submariners will be embarked as we develop our shared capabilities in the years ahead.”

One of the most sophisticated underwater vessels ever built, HMS Anson represents £1.3 billion of U.K. investment. Capable of defending the U.K.’s interests at home and overseas, HMS Anson will be armed with up to 38 Spearfish Heavyweight Torpedoes and Block V Tomahawk land attack missiles, able to tackle targets at a range of up to 1,000 miles.

“HMS Anson is the cutting edge in submarine design and construction, ensuring operational advantage in the underwater battlespace, the last great stealth domain,” said Key. “Given the world we live in, there is no more important tool in the United Kingdom’s arsenal: silent, unseen, and a key instrument of our global, modern, ready Royal Navy.”

At 97 meters long, HMS Anson stands at around the length of two Olympic swimming pools, with 240 kilometers of cabling, enough to stretch from Barrow-In-Furness to its new home in Faslane, Scotland.

HMS Anson will remain in Barrow for the coming weeks while undergoing final checks and rigorous testing to the numerous

complex systems that make up a nuclear-powered submarine, before sailing to HM Naval Base Clyde in Faslane to prepare for sea trials.

HMS Anson will join four other Astute Class submarines in service with the Royal Navy – HMS Astute, HMS Ambush, HMS Artful and HMS Audacious.

Two further boats – Agamemnon and Agincourt – are in various stages of construction at BAE Systems' Barrow-In-Furness site as part of £11.2 billion overall investment in the whole Astute-class program.

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## **Coast Guard FRC Seizes Illegal Narcotics in Gulf of Oman**



Personnel from U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) interdict a fishing vessel smuggling illegal narcotics in the Gulf of Oman, Aug. 30. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

MANAMA, Bahrain – A U.S. Coast Guard fast response cutter interdicted a fishing vessel smuggling illegal drugs worth an estimated U.S. street value of \$20 million while patrolling the Gulf of Oman, Aug. 30, NAVCENT Public Affairs said Aug. 31.

USCGC Glen Harris (WPC 1144) seized 2,980 kilograms of hashish and 320 kilograms of amphetamine tablets during operations in support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150.

Led by the Royal Saudi Navy, CTF 150 is one of four task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the largest multinational naval partnership in the world. CTF 150 conducts maritime security operations in the Gulf of Oman and North Arabian Sea to help ensure the free flow of commerce.

Glen Harris previously interdicted another fishing vessel May

31 while patrolling the Gulf of Oman. The interdiction led to CTF 150 seizing \$11 million worth of heroin. This followed an earlier seizure of heroin, methamphetamine and amphetamine pills worth \$17 million in the same body of water, May 15.

“The results of Glen Harris’s success is a testament to the crew’s professionalism and determination,” said Lt. Cmdr. Reginald Reynolds, commanding officer of Glen Harris. “I’m proud of our team’s commitment to countering illicit activity on the high seas and promoting security and stability across the region.”

The fast response cutter arrived in the Middle East in January and operates from the U.S. Navy base in Bahrain where Combined Maritime Forces is headquartered with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet.

Combined Maritime Forces includes 34 member-nations that operate across the Middle East to promote rules-based international order at sea.

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## **USNS Trenton Completes Gulf of Guinea Deployment**



Military Sealift Command's expeditionary fast transport ship, USNS Trenton (EPF 5) gets underway from Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Dec. 20. *U.S. NAVY / Bill Mesta*  
MALAGA, Spain – The Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport USNS Trenton (T-EPF 5) arrived in Malaga, Spain, following a two-month deployment to the Gulf of Guinea, Aug. 28, 2022, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa Public Affairs said Aug. 30.

The deployment demonstrates the U.S. commitment to strengthening maritime security as well as peace and stability within the region. From July to August, Trenton conducted regional maritime presence operations and enriched valued relationships with African partners from Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Morocco and Sierra Leone.

“Our combined military and civilian crew executed their mission with professionalism and enthusiasm, which demonstrated the United States’ steadfast commitment to our partner nations,” said Cmdr. Tim Rustico, officer in charge of

Trenton.

Trenton's deployment also included tri-service maritime efforts within the U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF) area of operations. While deployed, Marines assigned to Task Force 61 Naval Amphibious Forces Europe-2d Marine Division (TF-61/2) embarked Trenton to provide in-port security assistance and to continue bolstering integrated maritime operations between the sea services.

"I'm incredibly proud of Trenton's professional execution during their deployment, where they worked with our partners, developed logistical nodes, and expanded maritime domain awareness in Western Africa," said Capt. Kenneth Pickard, commodore, Task Force 63. "Trenton's efforts laid the groundwork for continued presence and partnership in the Gulf of Guinea."

Over the last decade, the United States has steadily increased maritime security cooperation with partners on Africa's Atlantic coast to improve maritime domain awareness capability to protect their sovereign waters.

Earlier this month, NAVAF and the Royal Danish Navy jointly hosted the Maritime Operations Planning Workshop (MOPW) in Accra, Ghana for West African partners from 14 nations. MOPW allowed junior officers from African navies and coast guards to exchange operational planning experiences, develop templates for use during exercises, and plan real-world operations.

In July 2022, NAVAF participated in the Naval Infantry Leaders Symposium-Africa (NILS-A) in Dakar, Senegal with maritime partners and allies. NILS-A is a multinational, Africa-focused forum designed to bring together partner nations with Marine forces and naval infantry.

In March 2022, NAVAF hosted exercise Obangame Express, the largest multinational maritime exercise in Western Africa.

These types of exercises strengthen partnerships and allow countries to work more closely on shared transnational maritime challenges including collaborative efforts in support of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct and adherence to the rule of law.

In 2013, Gulf of Guinea coastal nations developed and signed the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, a key agreement to improve maritime interoperability. This powerful framework established objectives and improved inter-region coastal relationships and joint capabilities that have reduced illegal activities in the Gulf of Guinea.

The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety, and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa's prosperity and access to global markets.

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## **Coast Guard Enforces Safety Zone for Tow of Battleship USS Texas**



Pilot boat crews tow the battleship USS Texas down the Houston Ship Channel near Baytown, Texas, Aug. 31. The USS Texas is moving from the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site in La Porte, Texas, to a dry dock in Galveston where it will undergo extensive hull repairs. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 1st Class Corinne Zilnicki*

HOUSTON – The Coast Guard enforced a safety zone in the Houston Ship Channel and Galveston Ship Channel for the tow of the battleship USS Texas, Aug. 31, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release.

The Coast Guard captain of the port, in coordination with the Coast Guard's law enforcement partners, established a safety zone to ensure the safety of the public and security for all vessels in the channels.

Crews from Coast Guard Station Houston, Coast Guard Marine Safety & Security Team Houston, Coast Guard Station Galveston, Coast Guard Cutter Hawk, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Harris County Sheriff's Office and the Houston Police Department enforced the safety zone during the tow, which began at approximately 6 a.m. and concluded at 9 p.m.

Marine safety experts from Coast Guard Sector Houston-

Galveston and the Coast Guard's Salvage Engineering Response Team traveled aboard the battleship to ensure a safe, successful tow. Houston Pilots towed the battleship from the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site in La Porte, Texas, down the Houston Ship Channel, then transferred the tow to Galveston-Texas City Pilots, who transported the ship to Gulf Copper & Manufacturing Corporations' Galveston Shipyard in Galveston.

While in dry dock, the USS Texas will undergo \$35 million in hull repairs.

"Today's successful transit of the battleship Texas was a historic, monumental event only possible with planning and partnerships throughout the port community," said Capt. Jason Smith, captain of the port and commander of Sector Houston-Galveston. "Long before today's event, the Battleship Texas Foundation and Valkor worked closely with naval architects from Resolve Marine and the Coast Guard's Salvage Engineering Response Team to ensure a sound transit plan. Coast Guard crews partnered with local pilot associations and various other maritime law enforcement agencies to protect both the battleship and our waterways throughout the transit. As we say in the maritime community for a job well done, Bravo Zulu to all involved."

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**George H.W. Bush CSG Relieves  
Harry S. Truman CSG in U.S.  
6th Fleet**



The Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), bottom, operates with the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Aug. 27. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Samuel Wagner*

IONIAN SEA – The George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group (GHWBCSG) relieved the Harry S. Truman CSG (HSTCSG) in the Ionian Sea, Aug. 27, Carrier Strike Group 10 and CSG 8 Public Affairs said Aug. 31.

The relief marked the presence of two U.S. Navy aircraft carriers operating with one another in the Mediterranean, as well as GHWBCSG's official assumption of Commander, Task Force 60 responsibilities in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. HSTCSG's transit through the Strait of Gibraltar on Aug. 30 followed the dual carrier operations.

"We have the watch," said Rear Adm. Dennis Velez, commander, GHWBCSG, Carrier Strike Group 10. "The Truman and Bush Strike Groups represent a force that only a U.S. Navy carrier strike group can provide combatant commanders. The Truman Strike

Group executed the mission, reassured our partners and allies, and gave our diplomats opportunities to negotiate from a position of strength. They served our nation and the region well. We are proud of our teammates and wish them well on their return to friends and family.”

Velez and Rear Adm. Paul Spedero, Jr., commander, HSTCSG, CSG-8, met aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) to discuss regional maritime security, task force operations, and building relationships with NATO allies to strengthen deterrence and defense efforts.

“This has been a meaningful deployment for our strike group,” said Spedero. “We demonstrated our Navy’s resounding commitment to the NATO Alliance and to our partners in the region. Our Sailors set the stage for future operations and I look forward to seeing what the Bush’s strike group will accomplish during their deployment.”

The GHWBCSG will work alongside the joint force, partners and allies throughout the region while in the Naval Forces Europe, Naval Forces Africa, U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations.

While operating together the CSGs conducted a face-to-face turnover between commanders and transferred ammunition. Additionally, the strike group teams worked together to create a unique opportunity for family members embarked on either carrier to spend quality time with one another aboard George H.W. Bush.

The GHWBCSG is an integrated combat weapons system that delivers superior combat capability to deter, and if necessary, defeat America’s adversaries in support of national security. GHWBCSG’s major command elements are USS. George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), Carrier Air Wing 7, Destroyer Squadron 26, the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), and the Information Warfare Commander.

The ships of DESRON 26 within the GHWBCSG are USS Nitze (DDG

94), USS Truxtun (DDG 103), USS Farragut (DDG 99), and USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119).

The squadrons of CVW-7 embarked aboard George H.W. Bush are the "Jolly Rogers" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 103, the "Pukin Dogs" of VFA-143, the "Bluetails" of Carrier Airbone Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 121, the "Nightdippers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 5, the "Sidewinders" of VFA-86, the "Nighthawks" of VFA-136, the "Patriots" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 140, and the "Grandmasters" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 46.

Truman serves as the flagship of the HSTCSG and is commanded by Capt. Gavin Duff. Additional units include the nine squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 1, commanded by Capt. Patrick Hourigan, to include Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 11 "Red Rippers;" VFA-211 "Fighting Checkmates;" VFA-34 "Blue Blasters;" VFA-81 "Sunliners;" Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 137 "Rooks;" Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 126 "Seahawks;" Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 11 "Dragon Slayers;" Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 72 "Proud Warriors;" and a detachment from Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40 "Rawhides."

The staff and guided-missile destroyers of Destroyer Squadron 28 commanded by Capt. Blair Guy have included USS Cole (DDG 67) USS Bainbridge (DDG 96), USS Gravely (DDG 107), USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), and USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98). The strike group also consists of the Ticonderoga class guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto (CG 56), commanded by Capt. Christopher Marvin.

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# Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Arrives in the Western Pacific



U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Willie Carmichael, commanding officer of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757), salutes members of the Philippine Coast Guard after the cutter moored in Manila, Philippines, Aug. 30. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Chief Petty Officer Matt Masaschi*

MANILA, Philippines – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) arrived in Manila Aug. 30 for its first international port call during the crew's months-long Western Pacific deployment to the region, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said Aug. 31.

Midgett's crew will conduct professional exchanges and operate with the Philippine Coast Guard as part of an at-sea search-and-rescue exercise while in Manila, building upon the strong

partnership between the two nations.

Midgett is operating in support of United States Indo-Pacific Command, which oversees military operations in the region.

Operating under the tactical control of Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, the cutter's crew plans to engage in professional and subject matter expert exchanges with regional partners and allies and will patrol and operate as directed during their Western Pacific deployment.

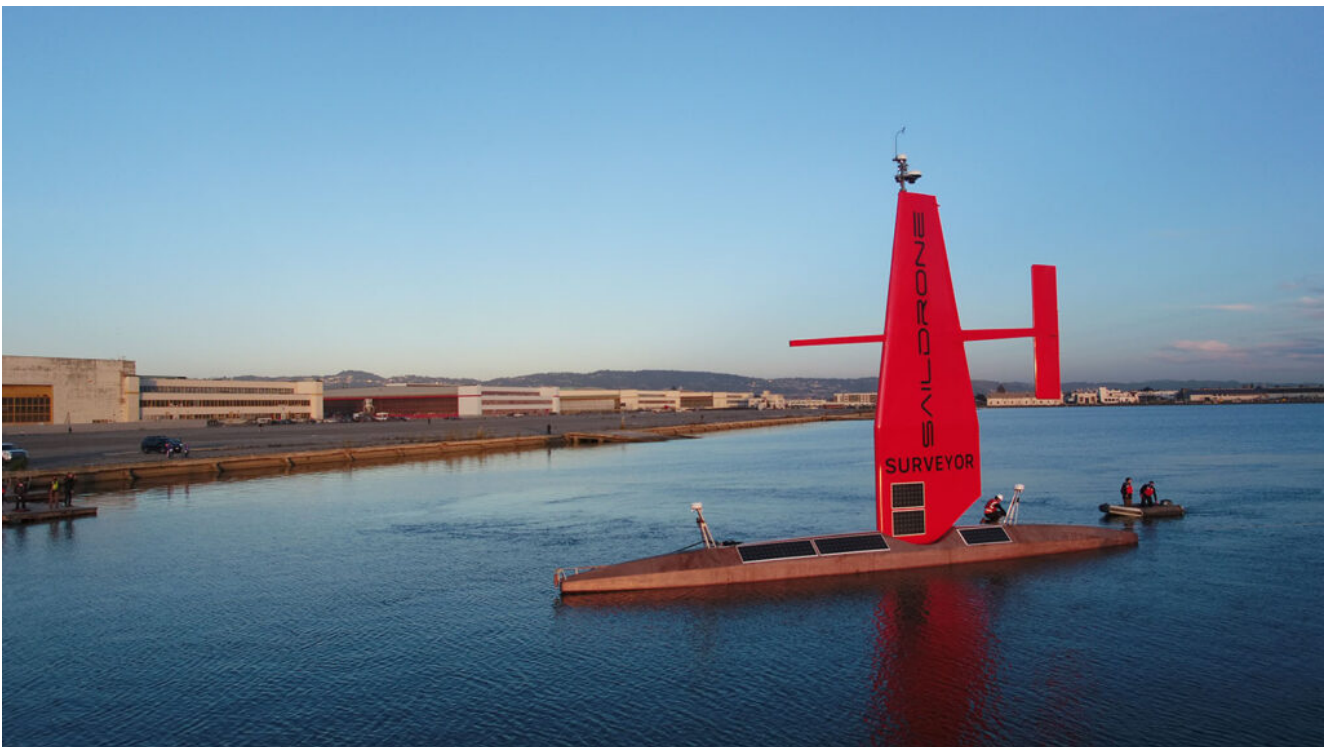
The Coast Guard provides expertise within the mission sets of search and rescue; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; maritime environmental response; maritime security; maritime domain awareness; aviation operations; interoperability; and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

"Engaging with our Philippine Coast Guard partners is truly an honor," said U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Willie Carmichael, commanding officer of the Midgett. "Together we will continue to build strong relationships and learn from each other. Our deep-rooted partnership will combine the best of both our Coast Guards and the planned search-and-rescue exercise and professional exchanges are a great opportunity for us keep the Indo-Pacific region open and free."

Commissioned in 2019, Midgett is one of two Coast Guard legend-class national security cutters homeported in Honolulu. National security cutters are 418 feet long, 54 feet wide and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, endurance of up to 90 days and can hold a crew of up to 170.

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# Austal USA and Saildrone Announce Strategic Partnership to Build USVs



A Saildrone Surveyor outside the company's headquarters in Alameda, California. *SAILDRONE*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA and Saildrone Inc. announced Aug. 30 a strategic partnership to build cutting-edge, autonomous uncrewed surface vehicles.

This new partnership combines Saildrone's uncrewed surface vehicle technology with Austal USA's advanced manufacturing capabilities. The partnership provides the U.S. Navy and other government customers a cutting-edge solution for maritime domain awareness, hydrographic survey, and other missions requiring persistent wide area coverage.

The partnership ensures that production of the Saildrone

Surveyor will accelerate to meet the rapidly growing demand for the ground-breaking technology. The Surveyor was developed and designed by Saildrone and will be manufactured exclusively by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama.

The Saildrone Surveyor, at 65 feet (20 meters) in length, is designed specifically for deep ocean mapping and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance applications, both above and below the surface. As with all Saildrone vehicles, the Surveyor is autonomous and uncrewed, offering extreme endurance, reliability and cost-effective operations. With its industry-leading expertise in aluminum shipbuilding, Austal USA is uniquely equipped to fabricate the Surveyor's aluminum hulls and ensure rapid delivery to the fleet.

"We are extremely pleased to enter into this agreement with Saildrone. It is a great fit as both of us are leaders in our respective markets and we both strive to provide leading edge solutions to the U.S. Navy," said Austal USA President Rusty Murdaugh. "With our lean manufacturing techniques and serial production capabilities, Austal USA will provide large scale fabrication of these vehicles and with our partner Saildrone rapidly get the capability to the Fleet."

Austal will begin manufacturing the first Saildrone Surveyor vehicles for the U.S. Navy in October 2022.

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**U.S. Navy Foils Iranian Attempt to Capture Unmanned**

# Vessel in Arabian Gulf



Screenshot of a video showing support ship Shahid Baziar, left, from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy unlawfully towing a Saildrone Explorer unmanned surface vessel in international waters of the Arabian Gulf, Aug. 30. *U.S. NAVY*

MANAMA, Bahrain – The U.S. Navy prevented a support ship from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) from capturing an unmanned surface vessel operated by the U.S. 5th Fleet in the Arabian Gulf, Aug. 29-30, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said in a release.

While transiting international waters around 11 p.m. (local time), Aug. 29, U.S. 5th Fleet observed IRGCN support ship Shahid Baziar towing a Saildrone Explorer unmanned surface vessel in an attempt to detain it. U.S. Navy patrol coastal ship USS Thunderbolt (PC 12) was operating nearby and immediately responded. U.S. 5th Fleet also launched an MH-60S Sea Hawk from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 26, based in

Bahrain.

The actions taken by U.S. naval forces in response resulted in the IRGCN vessel disconnecting the towing line to the USV and departing the area approximately four hours later. The U.S. Navy resumed operations without further incident.

“IRGCN’s actions were flagrant, unwarranted and inconsistent with the behavior of a professional maritime force,” said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. “U.S. naval forces remain vigilant and will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows while promoting rules-based international order throughout the region.”

The Saildrone Explorer USV the IRGCN attempted to confiscate is U.S. government property and equipped with sensors, radars and cameras for navigation and data collection. This technology is available commercially and does not store sensitive or classified information.

U.S. 5th Fleet operates a network of manned and unmanned systems in accordance with international law. The integration of unmanned systems and artificial intelligence into fleet operations enhances maritime vigilance for U.S. forces and international partners in waters across the Middle East.