MQ-25 Team Completes First Lab Integration Event

An MQ-25 unmanned aircraft on the flight deck of USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) for the Unmanned Carrier Aviation Demonstration in December 2021. *BOEING*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy's Unmanned Carrier Aviation program office (PMA-268) conducted its first lab integration event June 28-30 at Patuxent River to demonstrate how the MQ-25's ground control station will command the unmanned aircraft in the carrier environment, Naval Air Systems Command said June 30.

The government team and its two prime industry partners led the effort at the program's System Test and Integration Lab, where Lockheed Martin's GCS controlled Boeing's hardware-in-the-loop air vehicle for the first time. The Hardware-in-the-loop uses aircraft hardware and software to provide a realistic surrogate for the air vehicle.

“This achievement is the result of weeks of preparation and dedication by highly skilled teams,” said T.J. Maday, MQ-25 labs and integration manager. “Bringing multiple systems together is never easy, but the joint government-industry team, coming together, understanding problems and finding solutions made this event successful. We learned how the system works as a whole and that early learning and discovery is key to keep the program moving forward.”

Maday said the team set a goal to send a basic command between the ground control station and the hardware-in-the-loop system. To meet that objective, Boeing and Lockheed Martin needed to deliver functional software for the government to exercise the GCS, the hardware system and the network components allowing connectivity between the systems.

“The team met the initial goal ahead of schedule and used the remaining time to exercise more functionality, like sending taxi commands,” Maday said. “They also simulated a lost link that verified the proper GCS display indicators, which is a critical function to ensure network connectivity between development environments.”

This fall the team plans to simulate a complete flight using the hardware-in-the-loop air vehicle and will also demonstrate switching connections “links” to the aircraft as well as adding other aircraft hardware and software into the mix.

“It’s great to see the combined team working side-by-side, learning and ultimately demonstrating success,” said Capt. Sam Messer, PMA-268 program manager. “This is how we get to IOC [initial operational capability] – we integrate, test, and learn early and at pace.”

The MD-5 GCS is part of the Unmanned Carrier Aviation Mission Control System, the system-of-systems required for MQ-25A command and control. UMCS also includes carrier and shore site infrastructure modifications, Navy produced ancillary

equipment, and integration with command, control, communications, computers and intelligence systems.

MQ-25 will be the world's first operational carrier-based unmanned aircraft to provide an aerial refueling capability to the fleet.

Coast Guard Awards Contract for Stage 2 of the Offshore Patrol Cutter Acquisition

An artist's rendering of the Offshore Patrol Cutter. *EASTERN SHIPBUILDING GROUP*

WASHINGTON – The Coast Guard awarded a fixed-price incentive contract to Austal USA of Mobile, Alabama, to produce up to 11 offshore patrol cutters, Coast Guard Headquarters said June 30.

The initial award is valued at $208.26 million and supports detail design and long lead-time material for the fifth OPC, with options for production of up to 11 OPCs in total. The contract has a potential value of up to $3.33 billion if all options are exercised.

In 2019, the Coast Guard revised the OPC acquisition strategy to mitigate emergent cost and schedule risk by establishing a new, full and open competition for OPCs five and through 15, designated as Stage 2 of the overall program. Informed by industry feedback, the Coast Guard released a request for proposals Jan. 29, 2021, for OPC Stage 2 detail design and production.

The Coast Guard's requirements for OPC Stage 2 detail design and production were developed to maintain commonality with earlier OPCs in critical areas such as the hull and propulsion systems, but provide flexibility to propose and implement new design elements that benefit lifecycle cost, production and operational efficiency and performance.

"The offshore patrol cutter is absolutely vital to Coast Guard mission excellence as we recapitalize our legacy medium endurance cutters, some of which are more than 50 years old," said Adm. Linda Fagan, commandant of the Coast Guard. "The OPCs are the ships our crews need to protect our national security, maritime safety and economic prosperity. I look forward to the new cutters joining our fleet."

The 25-ship OPC program of record complements the capabilities of the service's national security cutters, fast response cutters and polar security cutters as an essential element of the Department of Homeland Security's layered maritime security strategy. The OPC will meet the service's long-term need for cutters capable of deploying independently or as part of task groups and is essential to stopping smugglers at sea, interdicting undocumented non-citizens, rescuing mariners, enforcing fisheries laws, responding to disasters and

protecting ports.

Cutter Reliance Returns from a 71-Day Caribbean Sea Patrol

A response boat crew member steers toward the Coast Guard Cutter Reliance during a 52-day patrol in the Atlantic Ocean, Jan. 13, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD*

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The crew of USCGC Reliance (WMEC 615) returned to homeport in Pensacola June 30, after a 71-day Caribbean Sea patrol, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release.

The Reliance crew supported the U.S. Coast Guard 7th District

and Joint Interagency Task Force-South throughout their patrol, aiding in missions to interdict the flow of illegal drugs and prevent migrant trafficking throughout the maritime approaches to the United States and Caribbean partners.

Reliance interdicted multiple unseaworthy vessels trafficking migrants off the coast of Haiti, and ultimately provided safe and humanitarian care for 170 people.

Additionally, the cutter's crew worked with, and provided technical assistance to, the Haitian Coast Guard during their seizure of a suspected migrant vessel in the Canal de la Tortue.

Reliance's crew further assisted Haitian partners by towing a seized vessel safely to port after it experienced propulsion issues.

In a separate case, Reliance worked with international and domestic partners while attached to Joint Interagency Task Force-South to interdict a "go-fast" smuggling vessel that was transporting approximately 631 kilograms of suspected illicit drugs with an estimated street value of $26 million.

The 71-day patrol was also critical in the crew's efforts to conduct shipboard training, qualifications, and operational readiness.

Reliance is a 210-foot medium-endurance cutter homeported in Pensacola with a crew of 77. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations, migrant interdiction, enforcing federal fishery laws, and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Department of the Navy Hosts Climate Tabletop Exercise

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of the Navy hosted a first-of-its-kind Climate Tabletop Exercise at Marine Barracks Washington to examine the impacts that climate change has on mission, readiness and warfighting capacity, the service said in a release.

The DoN convened role players from the Department of Defense, federal agencies, Congress, think tanks, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to test how critical elements of the recently released DoN strategy Climate Action 2030 comes into practice.

“As the secretary of the Navy, the commandant of the Marine Corps and the chief of naval operations have said, we are looking at the impacts of climate change because it makes us better warfighters,” said Meredith Berger, assistant secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment. “The Navy and Marine Corps must address climate change in our readiness and operations in order to maintain every advantage to fight and win.”

Climate Action 2030 focuses the Department of the Navy on building a climate-ready force by building climate resilience and reducing the climate threat. These factors drove the design and execution of the scenario, which was created and facilitated by war game experts at the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab.

Set in October 2030, the scenario focused on a Navy Amphibious Ready Group and an embarked Marine Expeditionary Group preparing for an amphibious exercise with a partner nation in the Western Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. A typhoon impacts the exercise, and quickly creates cascading effects on

operations. The storm came on the heels of other destructive storms which made the land and local population less resilient and more susceptible to stronger damage from ensuing mudslides, electric grid, and other key infrastructure disruptions.

Facilitators briefed players, assigned duties and challenged them to work through some of the tough questions that the Navy and Marine Corps are facing every day. Players were broken into three interrelated groups: operational forces, installations and facilities, and higher headquarters. Each table featured a Navy flag officer and Marine Corps general officer as senior mentors.

Key takeaways from the exercise were the importance of incorporating climate predictions and considerations into planning and resourcing. The group talked about the importance of logistics, both as a warfighting enabler, resilience vulnerability, and an area where the department can make strides to become more energy efficient and therefore a more capable fighting force. Additionally, the group discussed identifying single points of failure which may be undermined climate impacts and the need for redundancy as well as efficiency. The importance of collaborative planning in order to develop resilient partnerships in the face of a dynamic and evolving climate environment were also discussed.

“In order to strengthen and maintain our maritime dominance, we need to strengthen and maintain our maritime partnerships,” Berger said. “Partnership is a key driver of success and diversity of perspective is the enabler. Today we had the chance to work with a variety of partners to gain their perspectives and share ours so that we can better tackle the climate crisis together.”

The DoN released the Climate Action 2030 strategy on May 24, building on a decades-long foundation of climate action and setting the department on a course to meet national and global

targets to reduce the threat of climate change. The department's Climate Action 2030 strategy document is available for download here.

Marine Corps Mourns the Passing of Medal of Honor Recipient Hershel 'Woody' Williams

Hershel "Woody" Williams salutes as he is introduced to the stage along with other members of a ship commissioning committee, March 7, 2020 in Norfolk, Virginia. Williams died on June 29. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Fernando Moreno*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Marine Corps mourns the passing of Hershel “Woody” Williams, the Corps said in a June 29 release.

Woody exemplified the warfighting spirit of all Marines – a combat-proven leader whose lifelong dedication to all service members and Gold Star families began with his heroic actions at the Battle of Iwo Jima. His legacy as a warrior and an advocate for veterans will live on among all Marines, and he will be deeply missed, the Corps said.

Marine Corps retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel Woodrow “Woody” Williams, the last living World War II Medal of Honor recipient, passed away early on June 29. Williams was surrounded by his family at the VA Medical Center in Huntington, West Virginia.

Born on Oct. 2, 1923, in Quiet Dell, West Virginia, Williams enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve May 26, 1943, and advanced to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 4 before his retirement in 1969 after 17 years of service. During WWII, Woody served in New Caledonia, Guadalcanal and Guam before landing in Iwo Jima where his actions earned him the Medal of Honor.

From Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger and Sgt. Maj. Troy E. Black:

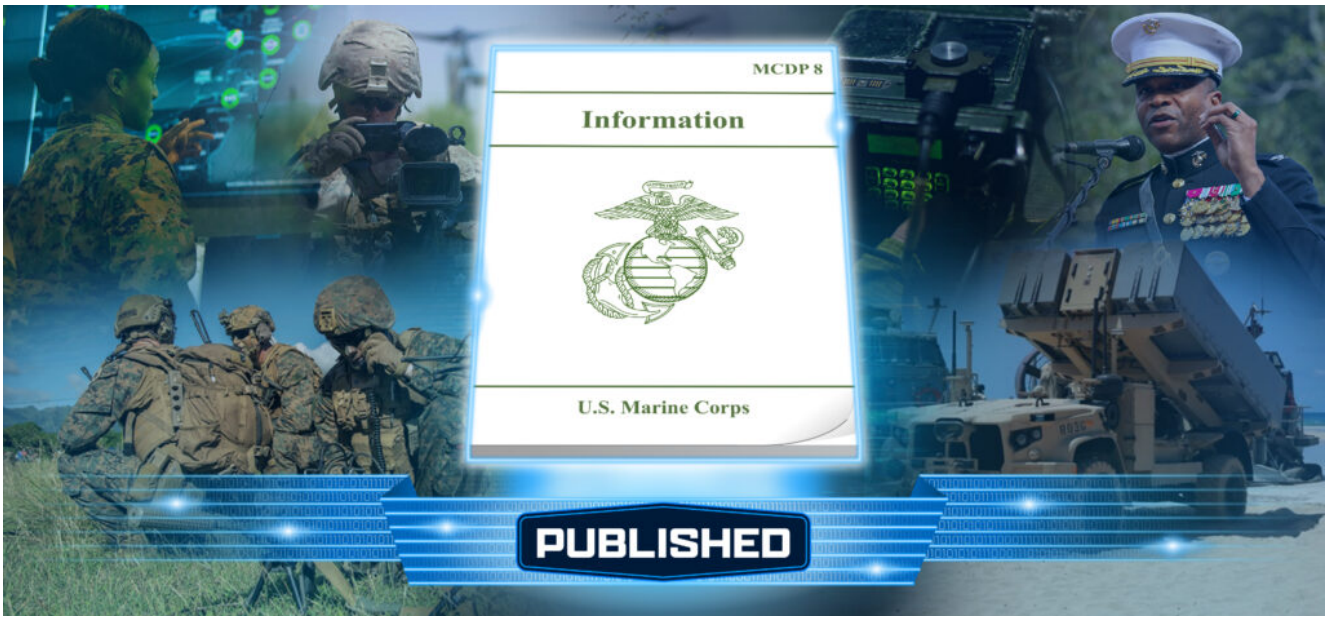
“On behalf of all Marines, Sgt. Maj. Black and I are heartbroken to learn of Woody’s passing. From his actions on Iwo Jima to his lifelong service to our Gold Star Families, Woody has left an indelible mark on the legacy of our Corps. As the last of America’s “greatest generation” to receive the Medal of Honor, we will forever carry with us the memory of his selfless dedication to those who made the ultimate sacrifice to our great nation. The Marine Corps is fortunate to have many heroes, but there is only one Woody Williams. Semper Fidelis, Marine.”

Williams is remembered through the naming of several locations

throughout his native West Virginia. Most recently, on March 7, 2020, the Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary mobile base USS Hershel Woody Williams (ESB 4) was commissioned in Norfolk, Virginia, commemorating Williams' legacy.

Williams' Medal of Honor citation can be found here: https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/Information-for-Units/Medal-of-Honor-Recipients-By-Unit/Cpl-Hershel-Woodrow-Williams/

Marine Corps Publishes Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 8 – Information



PENTAGON, Virginia – Gen. David Berger, 38th commandant of the Marine Corps, signed "Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 8, Information," publishing the Corps' newest doctrine, June 29, the Marine Corps said in a release.

The release of MCDP 8, Information marks the establishment of

the first capstone service doctrine to describe the purpose and mechanics of the Marine Corps' seventh warfighting function, information.

The Deputy Commandant for Information developed the publication in coordination with Doctrine Branch, Policy and Standards Division, Training and Education Command.

"Information is key to gaining advantage in all domains, whether during kinetic actions on the battlefield or during day-to-day operations in competition," Berger said. "It's especially critical when our Marines need to sense and make sense of the operating environment in support of the joint force or to exploit opportunities and take action against our adversaries."

The purpose of MCDP 8, Information is to introduce a conceptual framework for understanding and employing the information warfighting function in addition to providing Marines with increased flexibility in their operational approaches across all phases of the competition continuum, in all warfighting domains.

"MCDP 8, Information is written within context of Force Design 2030: threat-informed, concept-based and accountable to a campaign of learning," said Lt. Gen. Matthew Glavy, deputy commandant for information. "To maximize the information warfighting function we must make it a component of 21st century combined arms – such that we generate, preserve, deny and project information in full integration with fire and maneuver."

MCDP 8, Information is comprised of four chapters describing the nature of information, the theory of information, effective use of information and institutionalizing information.

"Any service, or service member, regardless of what their tactical implementation of information is, can apply the core

concepts outlined in MCDP 8, Information," said Eric Schaner, senior information strategy and policy analyst, Plans and Strategy, DC I. "Our intent is to increase overall understanding that information is a warfighting function that can be applied through combined arms and maneuver to support commander's objectives."

US Supplying Ukraine with 23 Metal Shark Military Vessels

A U.S. Navy 40 PB built by Louisiana's Metal Shark. Six of these new Navy craft will be sent to Ukraine as part of an assistance package. *METAL SHARK*

JEANERETTE, La. – To help Ukraine to better protect its coastline, waterways and ports, the United States is providing

the country with a range of defense articles, including 23 welded-aluminum military vessels built by Louisiana-based Metal Shark.

Last week the Defense Department announced that six of the U.S. Navy's new 40 PB maritime combat vessels would be sent to Ukraine as part of a $450 million security assistance package. Built by Metal Shark and delivered to the Navy in 2021 as part of a currently active defense contract for 50 vessels, these next-generation vessels feature six Mk16 weapons foundations plus a large forward foundation for stabilized, remote operated, optically guided Mk49/Mk50 weapons systems. Ballistic protection enables the 40 PB to sustain extended firefights, allowing crews to respond with overwhelming force while remaining secure and protected from hostile fire.

At Metal Shark's Franklin and Jeanerette, Louisiana, production facilities, production is well underway on 17 additional vessels for Ukraine, including 10 38-foot Defiant pilothouse patrol vessels, four 38-foot Defiant center console patrol vessels, and three 36-foot Fearless high-performance military interceptor vessels. Each of these vessels are proven military platforms optimized for the Ukraine mission.

The boats are being built and delivered as part of a long-range foreign policy strategy years in the making, but recent events in Ukraine have caused an acceleration of the timelines. As a result, vessels will begin shipping immediately.

"Metal Shark has been working closely with the U.S. Embassy in Kiev since 2019 to develop the strategy now being implemented to support Ukraine's maritime capabilities, so it is fulfilling to see that the vessels will arrive when they are most needed," said Henry Irizarry, Metal Shark's vice president of International Business Development. "Metal Shark provides next-generation, proven platforms to partner nations, but most importantly, we create long term partnerships with

end users to train boat crews and provide seamless technical support to assure 24/7 operational readiness.”

Metal Shark is a diversified shipbuilder specializing in the design and construction of welded aluminum and steel vessels from 16 feet to over 300 feet for defense, law enforcement, and commercial operators. Key customers include the United States Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force, Army, foreign militaries, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, passenger vessel operators, pilot associations, towboat operators and other clients worldwide.

CNO, Japanese Chief of Staff Meet to Discuss Maritime Security

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday meets with Chief of Staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Adm. Ryo Sakai during an office call at the Pentagon on June 28. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Chief Amanda Gray*

WASHINGTON – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday hosted the chief of staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Adm. Ryo Sakai, in Washington, D.C., for an office visit on June 28, the CNO's public affairs office said in a release.

The two leaders discussed maritime security and ongoing efforts to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"The alliance between Japan and the United States is the cornerstone of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific," said Gilday. "Our bond with Japan has never been stronger. We share a common vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and, together, we will work tirelessly to ensure and maintain security and stability in one of the world's most important regions. Adm. Sakai's visit provides a great opportunity to gain his first-hand strategic insights into regional security issues as well

as engage in productive discussions on how our navies can accelerate critical advances in interoperability."

"The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force will be celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, and our history has always been with the U.S. Navy, protecting peace and security in the Indo-Pacific Region," said Sakai. "The importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance is growing by the day, and today Adm. Gilday and I confirmed our strong bond and will to realize our common values of peace and stability in Indo-Pacific region."

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss how Japan and the U.S. can increase readiness, deter and counter malign gray-zone activities in the Indo-Pacific, and focus on interoperability and interchangeability between the two forces.

JMSDF and U.S. naval forces regularly operate together around the globe. This year the two navies participated in exercises such as Noble Fusion, Sea Dragon, Resilient Shield, and numerous other bilateral engagements.

This is the first opportunity for the two leaders to meet since Sakai became JMSDF's chief of staff in March 2022.

Navy Confirms Wreck Site off Philippines Coast that of USS Samuel B. Roberts

The U.S. Navy destroyer escort USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE-413) circa June 1944, while off Boston, Massachusetts. *NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND*

WASHINGTON – Seventy-eight years after its loss during World War II, the U.S. Navy confirmed on June 25 the location of USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE 413), the Naval History and Heritage Command said June 27.

As announced on Twitter June 24 by retired naval officer and underwater explorer Victor Vescovo, he and a team from the undersea technology company Caladan Oceanic located the destroyer escort ship more than four miles beneath the surface in the Philippine Sea.

Vescovo tweeted, “With sonar specialist Jeremie Morizet, I piloted the submersible Limiting Factor to the wreck of the Samuel B. Roberts [DE 413]. Resting at 6,895 meters, it is now the deepest shipwreck ever located and surveyed. It was indeed

the ‘destroyer escort that fought like a battleship.’”

USS Samuel B. Roberts was the first ship named for Coxswain Samuel Booker Roberts Jr., who was killed in the Battle of Guadalcanal. Commissioned April 28, 1944, the destroyer escort was lost that same year during the Battle off Samar when it, along with several other U.S. warships, engaged Japanese forces off the Philippine coast and selflessly put itself in harm’s way to protect U.S. invasion forces in Leyte Gulf.

“USS Samuel B. Roberts was lost in one of the most valiant actions in the history of the U.S. Navy,” said Naval History and Heritage Command Director Samuel Cox, a retired rear admiral. “The gallantry of her crew serves to inspire U.S. Navy personnel today, knowing they are entrusted with upholding the legacy and example of this ship and crew.”

Now that USS Samuel B. Roberts has been positively identified, the wreck site is considered a Department of the Navy sunken military craft protected from unauthorized disturbance by the Sunken Military Craft Act. Violations of the act can carry penalties of up to $100,000 a day, confiscation of the vessel used to disturb the sunken military craft and liability for damages caused. Permission to disturb U.S. Navy sunken military craft for archaeological, historical, or educational purposes is sought from the Naval History and Heritage Command. There are no plans to disturb USS Samuel B. Roberts.

“The site of the wreck marks the location of a hallowed war grave,” Cox added. “It serves to remind all Americans of the great cost born by previous generations for the freedom we should not take for granted today.”

More than 40 years after the ship’s historic actions in WWII, the story of DE 413 and its crew’s heroism inspired another generation of Sailors serving on a ship with the same name.

A bronze plaque commemorating the crew of DE 413 was aboard the Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigate USS

Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) when the ship struck an Iranian mine in the Persian Gulf April 14, 1988. The mine blew a 15-foot hole in the hull of the ship, breaking its keel. Because of the fast actions of the crew, after a five-hour effort to purge water and fight fires, the ship was saved. The captain of the vessel, Cmdr. Paul Rinn, noted that while running to their stations to save the ship, the FFG crew would touch the plaque for good luck to honor and recognize the bravery of the crew of DE 413.

The plaque is now in the collection at the National Museum of the U.S. Navy at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. It reads: “In Memory of Those Who Have Sailed Before Us/USS Samuel B. Roberts (DE-413)/LCDR R. W. Copeland, Commanding Officer.” The remainder of the plaque includes the names of the original crew of the USS Samuel B. Roberts.

U.S. 5th Fleet Gains First LCS, USS Sioux City, in Historic Deployment

Littoral combat ship USS Sioux City (LCS 11), arrives at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, June 25. *U.S. Army / Sgt. Terry Vongsouthi*

MANAMA, Bahrain – USS Sioux City (LCS 11) arrived at Bahrain for a scheduled port visit, June 25, marking the completion of a 10,000-mile journey while becoming the first littoral combat ship to operate in the Middle East, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs said June 25.

The ship and crew of 75 personnel departed Mayport, Florida, in April. While in the U.S. 5th Fleet region, Sioux City has provided maritime security presence enabling the free flow of commerce in key corridors of trade.

“We’re thrilled to have Sioux City’s crew here helping us understand how to integrate the LCS platform into our operations, and we’re exercising every one of the ship’s support capabilities,” said Capt. Robert Francis, commander of Task Force 55. Task Force 55 oversees U.S. surface forces operating in the Middle East.

After arriving in the Middle East in May, Sioux City operated in support of Combined Task Force (CTF) 153 and focused on maritime security and partner capacity building in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden. CTF 153 is one of four multinational task forces organized under Combined Maritime Forces, the largest international naval partnership with 34 nations. Led by the United States, Combined Maritime Forces is headquartered in Bahrain with U.S. 5th Fleet.

“I’m incredibly proud of our Sailors for executing every mission we’ve been tasked with,” said Cmdr. Scott Whitworth, commanding officer of USS Sioux City. “We are forging a new frontier for littoral combat ships.”

Sioux City is deployed with an MH-60 Seahawk helicopter from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 22.

The U.S. 5th Fleet region includes 21 countries, the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb and Suez Canal.