

Australia Announces Procurement of Fourth MQ-4C Triton UAV

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va.—The Australian Defence Force (ADF) will procure a fourth MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), the Australian government announced in a Sept. 19 release.

The Triton's builder, Northrop Grumman Corporation, is scheduled to deliver Australia's first Triton and its ground and support systems in 2024. The UAVs will be operated from RAAF Tindal, in the Northern Territories by 9 Squadron, which will be headquartered RAAF Edinburgh, South Australia.

"Defence Industry Minister Patna Conroy said the purchase of the additional Triton will enhance operations from Australia's northern bases, a priority under the Defence Strategic Review," the release said.

Northrop Grumman continues production of the latest configuration of the Triton, the multi-intelligence Integrated Functional Configuration 4 (IFC-4) for the U.S. Navy. Earlier this month, the U.S. Navy declared Initial Operational Capability for the Triton, which has been deployed to Guam to establish its first orbit. The Triton deployed to Guam in 2020 for Early Operational Capability. The Navy's program of record for the Triton calls for 27 aircraft, including the development aircraft.

Australia also plans to upgrade its fleet of 14 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft between 2026 and 2030 with "enhancements to anti-submarine warfare, maritime strike and intelligence collection capabilities," the release said.

USS Canberra Commissioning Touched Hearts

USS CANBERRA LCS 30
Keel Laid 10 March 2020
Christened 5 June 2021
Commissioned 22 July 2023
Sydney, Australia



Honorary Plank Owner
Ron Spence









The rare commissioning abroad brought people together from across the globe.

It's always a special occasion when a new ship is commissioned and brought to life with crew, family, and friends, but the [recent commissioning of the USS Canberra](#) (LCS 30) was particularly meaningful. [Seapower](#) recently got the scuttlebutt from Ron Spence, Commissioning Committee Gift Coordinator and learned a little more about how this particular commissioning was celebrated.

While nearly every commissioning involves recognition of those [designated as plank owners](#), the individuals honored with that title for the *Canberra* received something extra special. "The plank owners' plaques were made by a gentleman names Joseph Nolin, a native citizen from Australia who now lives in Portland, Oregon," said Spence. "His company, Lumberjack Wood Products, custom made these plaques from authentic Australian

Beech wood that Mr. Nolin brought from Australia.”

Spence said, “I felt having them made from Australian wood, by a native from Australia in the shape of the continent of Australia was very special and a great way to honor the commissioning.”

“I have seen many plank owners’ plaques, but nothing as unique as this one,” he said.

The Commissioning Committee also hosted a watch party in San Diego, attended by friends, families, and supporters of the of the new LCS, including many members of the [United States Navy League](#), which has a long history of supporting and ship commissionings. “It was a wonderful experience,” said Spence, “especially when we heard family members say, ‘there is my daddy on TV.’”

“All of the events and gifts were put together by the women and men of the Commissioning Committee,” said Spence. Many of the members responsible had never met in person, “but they came together from across the globe to help make this a most memorable event,” he said.

“Something such as this had never been done before, but it was done, and done right,” Spence said.

USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) Decommissions

[Release from Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two](#)

11 September 2023

NAVAL STATION MAYPORT (Sept. 8, 2023) – Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) was decommissioned in Mayport, Fla., September 8.

As an operational unit, Milwaukee and its crew played an important role in the defense of our nation and maritime freedom. Milwaukee and its Sailors were key to determine the operational success and deployment capabilities of today's LCS platform.

During the ceremony guest speaker, Vice Adm. Dirk Debbink (USN, Ret), former chairman of Milwaukee's commissioning committee wished the crew of Milwaukee fair winds and following seas as they bid farewell to their ship.

"We are all very proud of the way this ship served our Navy and our nation since that cold day in November 2015." said Vice Adm. Dirk Debbink (USN, Ret), former chairman of Milwaukee's commissioning committee. "She was the first true serial production ship of the Freedom Class, having incorporated literally hundreds of changes, lessons learned from Freedom and Fort Worth."

Milwaukee and its Sailors contributed a tremendous amount of work and time to ensure success of the LCS program during the ship's time in naval service. Milwaukee completed two successful deployments in April 2022 and June 2023. The ship deployed to U.S. Fourth Fleet and integrated with the embarked US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET), other US warships, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and SOUTHCOM/JIATF-S. During their second deployment, Milwaukee and her embarked LEDETs, seized an estimated \$30 million in suspected cocaine and three detainees during interdictions as sea, preventing 954kgs of cocaine from entering the United States. She also transported

six detainees and case packages on behalf of USCGC BEAR in support of the counter-narcotic/interdiction mission. While deployed, Milwaukee provided maritime security presence enabling the free flow of commerce in key corridors of trade.

“Throughout the life of the ship, the Sailors that sailed Milwaukee led the way in training and operations that led to fleet improvements and culminated with operational success that supported national security objectives and demonstrated U.S. commitment to our allies.” said Cmdr. Jason Knox, Milwaukee’s commanding officer. “Not only can her Sailors be proud of their distinctive accomplishments, but the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin can be proud of their ship, too.”

Milwaukee was designed by Lockheed Martin and constructed by Marinette Marine Corporation (Fincantieri) Marinette, Wisconsin, Milwaukee was commissioned November 21, 2015, in Lake Michigan at Milwaukee’s Veteran’s Park. Mrs. Sylvia Panetta, wife of former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, served as the ship’s sponsor.

USS Milwaukee (LCS 5) is the fifth United States Navy Warship named after the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The ship represents the proud people of the Milwaukee community. Upon decommissioning, Milwaukee’s Sailors will receive follow-on orders to new assignments.

LCS are fast, agile, mission-focused platforms designed to operate in near-shore environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats. LCS are versatile and are capable to support a broad spectrum of fleet missions and operate alongside regional navies and coast guards while supporting forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence missions around the globe.

For more news from Commander, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron Two, visit <https://www.surflant.usff.navy.mil/lcsron2/> or

follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/comlcsron2/>

A Day to Remember

This is the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, and on the world.

Once again, it is a day to reflect and remember. In fact, we who experienced the events of that day in any way must remember and share, lest we not forget. If you don't know about what happened that day, then you must become educated, and made aware of the events of that day in New York, Washington and Somerset County, Pennsylvania. It was an attack driven by hate, and an attack on all of us.

There is a saying that you die three times: when you take your last breath; when they cover your grave after your funeral; and when your name is uttered for the last time.

This is what I remember, and what I choose to reflect upon every year on this day. You will indulge me, I hope, because it is necessary for me to share this with others and share it every year on this day for as long as I can do so. It is the least I can do for a shipmate.

So, join me in saying his name: Michael Noeth.

*** Linseed oil:

Some things have an evocative smell.

When I was in command of the Naval Media Center in Washington, D.C., the executive officer of a ship based at Pearl Harbor – USS *Russell* (DDG 59) – called my staff at *All Hands* magazine in our Publishing Department. The XO had a Sailor aboard the

ship who wanted to be a draftsman.

The “undesigned seamen” or SNs on a ship usually work in the deck force, chipping paint and handling lines. As they see what professional opportunities are available on board their ship, they can “strike” for a rating, like Radioman or Quartermaster. A “Striker Board” will convene and review the needs of the ship, and the desires of the individual. If the Sailor is squared away, has done a good job with the deck force and the ship needs a Quartermaster (QM), for example, he or she can strike for that rating, and becomes a QMSN.

Seaman Michael Noeth wanted to be a Draftsman. The DM rating was one of the smallest ratings in the Navy. There were very few of them compared to Gunner’s Mates or Machinist’s Mates, and certainly none aboard a surface combatant. In fact, today the rating has been disestablished and the functions combined into the Mass Communications Specialist (MC) rating.

In this case, the executive officer wanted to do something good for his Sailor. And this was extraordinary, because USS *Russell* was about to depart on deployment. In spite of the fact that the ship was about to be on cruise for six months, the XO called us and asked if his Sailor could come and work with us to learn the DM rating so he would be prepared to take the DM test for Third Class Petty Officer. If he passed, he could become a DM3. If not, he could return to the ship and eventually strike for another rating. For our part of the deal, we had to cover his travel expenses. We said yes.

There are never enough Sailors in the Deck Force, especially on deployment, but the XO wanted to help a Sailor. So, SN Michael Noeth came to work for us in the Publishing Department at the Naval Media Center in Washington, D.C.

He was placed under the expert tutelage of our Draftsman First Class (DM1) Rhea Mackenzie. Seaman Noeth quickly made himself at home in a back corner of the *All Hands* magazine production

spaces. And it was here he set up his easels, canvasses and paints. When I would come by – which was often, because I was always wandering around Building 168 to see all of the interesting stories and projects our people were working on – I could smell the linseed oil he used for his brushes long before I reached his work area. He would have various canvasses and illustrations in various stages of completion posted around his desk, as well as examples of artwork he admired or wanted to emulate.

As one of the 450 men and women of the Naval Media Center, he learned his trade from an experienced draftsman, created artistic content for *All Hands* magazine, and became a well-liked and contributing member of the command. At our Halloween party, he came in second place in our costume contest. He was a dead ringer “Alex” from *Clockwork Orange*, and was topped only by an even more convincing Cruella Deville from *101 Dalmatians*.

Whenever I got near his work area, I would be greeted by the smell of his linseed oil, and I knew I would be in for some kind of surprise. Seaman Noeth painted the cover for several issues of *All Hands* magazine (such as the one with a cut-out porthole that opened to an ocean panorama). To see him tackle these assignments was a joy, probably because he was enjoying his work, and appreciative of the opportunity. On my visits, I would see the many versions and sketches he was working on, and I could see it all come together with the finished product.

He took the advancement exam and passed it. As his six-month temporary assignment came to an end, his command allowed him to transfer to my command on a permanent basis as they did not have any billets for a draftsman, and we did. Soon, he moved on to other Navy assignments as a Draftsman, all because his ship wanted to give him a chance to realize his dream, and my command wanted to help him get there. We felt good about helping him attain his goal. But most of all, because he was

a Sailor who deserved it.

He did, indeed, become a talented Navy illustrator and draftsman. He served aboard amphibious assault ship USS *Wasp* (LHD 1), and was later assigned to the Navy Command Center where he skillfully created briefings and presentations for Navy leadership. He was doing just that on September 11, 2001, when terrorists forced an airliner to crash into that building.

We must not forget. So, I choose to remember a bright, ambitious, creative young striker today, and whenever I smell linseed oil.

We will continue to speak his name.

-30-

Please also see:

<https://allhands.navy.mil/Stories/Display-Story/Article/1839561/we-will-never-forget/>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/specials/attacked/victims/v_358.html

<https://pentagonmemorial.org/explore/biographies/dm2-michael-noeth-usn>



Marine Corps Looking at Stealthy Autonomous Vessels for Logistics



ARLINGTON, Va.—The U.S. Marine Corps is exploring a concept to enhance its ability to supply its forces inside a contested environment: low-profile vessels used by drug-running cartels.

The Corps, however, is looking at autonomous low-profile vessels (LPVs), said Lieutenant General Karsten Heckl, deputy commandant for Combat Development and Integration, speaking

Sept. 6 at the Defense News Conference in Arlington, who advocated the use of autonomous unmanned systems wherever possible.

Drug runners have built and used manned LPVs frequently over the last two decades to carry loads of illegal drugs from Latin America to the United States. The LPVs, called semisubmersibles, are fabricated in secret locations and, with a small crew, carry their payload along the transit lanes, trying to avoid visual and radar detection with their very low profiles.

“We just copy the drug lords down south running drugs,” Heckl said. “They are hard to find, so now we figure, hey, it works, right?”

The Marine Corps has recently focused on logistics in a contested environment as part of its Force Design 2030 to address the challenge of supplying its forces inside the enemy’s weapons engagement zone – inside the first island chain off China, for example.

Heckl addressed the concept pairing it with uncrewed autonomy, noting the lower cost of unmanned systems without having to accommodate humans and the supplies and safety systems needed to sustain them.

The required scale of autonomous LPVs is so far undetermined, but Heckl pointed to the success of an unmanned expeditionary fast ship (T-EPF) in autonomous operations. Austal built the Military Sealift Command’s 13th T-EPF, USNS Apalachicola – a fast catamaran logistics ship—with autonomous control systems to demonstrate the potential of autonomous operations of a ship of its size.

“T-EPF 13 went out and did 1,500 nautical miles completely autonomously,” Heckl said. “They had human beings on board as back-ups, but what an amazing capability, a ship that can go 45 knots in Sea State 3 that can operate autonomously.”

Autonomous—from a logistics perspective—absolutely.

“I want autonomous everything, if we can get there,” he said.

Marine Aviator Killed in F./A-18D Hornet Crash



EL CENTRO, Calif. (Sept. 28, 2020) Marines with Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 224 (VMFA 224), Marine Aircraft Group 31, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, prepare F/A-18s for flight operations aboard Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. on Sept. 28, 2020. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Nicholas Buss)

ARLINGTON, Va. — A Marine Corps aviator was killed in the

crash of his F/A-18D Hornet strike fighter on Aug. 24.

The two-seat Hornet, with only the pilot on board, crashed near Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, at 11:54 PST, according to a release from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. The name of the pilot will not be released until the next of kin has been notified. The mishap is under investigation.

The aircraft was assigned to Marine All-Weather Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA (AW)) 224, based at MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina. The squadron is one of only two VMFA(AW) squadrons remaining in the Marine Corps, the other being VMFA(AW)-533. The Marine Corps is in transition from the F/A-18 Hornet to the F-35B/C Lightning II strike fighter.

Fleet Forces Commander Caudle: Navy Is Flexing Proficiency in Operational Level of War



ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy’s ability to plan and execute war at the operational level in a joint environment is one factor being tested in an upcoming large-scale exercise, with fleet commander staffs and their fleets set to be stressed in various scenarios. The Navy is leveraging the operational planning expertise of the Marine Corps officers integrated in its staffs.

Admiral Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, speaking July 24 to reporters during a briefing on the upcoming Large-Scale Exercise 2023, was asked by Seapower to address the Navy’s proficiency in the operational level of war, the lack of which was years ago a noted weakness.

“Our ships are fantastically engineered and built, they’ve got all the kit,” Caudle said. “We embark on those, lean forward, and can sustain in operations ... so the ability for the Navy to think about how we actually plan and utilize those forces was somewhat dampened maybe by the fact that our ability to

conduct warfare with those ships was so good. So, we found ourselves in a place where we needed to improve our ability to plan.

“We are – in a very prescribed and repeated manner – sending more of our Navy leaders to planning school,” the admiral said. “We’re building naval planners. We’re getting them in position of fleet command staffs, combatant command staffs, to actually exercise that level of Navy planning required to conduct this global warfare more effectively.

“We integrate with the Marine Corps who are excellent at this, and we bring our Marine partners into our planning cells,” he said. “Our future planning cells at all of our MOCs [Maritime Operations Centers] is part of that. Our future operations – where talk about that three-to-six-month time frame – where Marine Corps officers really bring a lot of knowledge and capability to Navy staffs. We’re completely integrated there. Our targeting cells are completely integrated. The things that the Marines have a lot of expertise in this that the Navy is still learning how to do at that level. It’s been a great success story.”

Over the last two decades the Navy has established Maritime Operations Centers to support fleet staffs and other commanders in planning and executing operations.

Caudle described the MOCs as “really a maritime operational concept ... that informs the commander’s decision cycle. When you hear the word ‘MOC,’ what should really come to your mind is a battle rhythm. We can scale that level of battle rhythm to the conflict that it needs to scale to. So, we’re going to test the different echelons of scale during Large-Scale Exercise 23 to enable a global battle rhythm between three fleet commanders, exercising that decision cycle... So, that’s part of this as well, testing out how that operational concept works.”

Large-Scale Exercise 2023, scheduled for Aug. 9 through Aug. 18, is a global exercise that will involve 22 time zones, six combatant commanders, seven fleets, nine MOCs, six carrier strike groups (four virtually in Live Virtual Constructive (LVC)), three amphibious ready groups (two in LVC), 25 ships and submarines (plus another 50+ LVC), and 25,000 Sailors and Marines.

**FUTURE USS CANBERRA (LCS 30)
RECEIVES NATIONAL, GRASS-
ROOTS SUPPORT FROM
COMMISSIONING COMMITTEE**



230419-N-NT811-1004 SAN DIEGO (April 19, 2023) The Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Canberra (LCS 30) departs San Diego Harbor for a routine underway off the California Coast. Littoral Combat Ships are fast, optimally manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats. LCS integrates with joint, combined, manned and unmanned teams to support forward presence, maritime security, sea control and deterrence missions around the globe. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Mark D. Faram)

SYDNEY – The Navy’s Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship, the future USS Canberra (LCS 30), will be commissioned, July 22 at the Royal Australian Naval Base Garden Island, in Sydney Harbor – a rare commissioning abroad for the U.S. Navy. Behind the scenes, an all-civilian committee of Navy League members have worked for months to support the ship and its crew ahead of this historic event that both celebrates and exemplifies the strong relationship between the two nations. “We have begun another important in the relationship between these two

great nations. The new USS Canberra (LCS 30) demonstrates the strong alliance between the United States and Australia,” said Ward Cook, Commissioning Committee Chairman in Kansas City.

Quoting Alfred Thayer Mahan who said, “navies are instruments of international relations,” Commissioning Committee member Patricia Du Mont in Fort Lauderdale, Florida underscored the importance of the relationship, stating, “As the first U.S. Navy international ship commissioning, the commissioning of USS Canberra (LCS 30) in Sydney, Australia, exemplifies people-to-people diplomacy.”

The [Navy League of the United States](#), a nonprofit organization headquartered in Arlington, Virginia whose mission is to advocate, educate, and support the sea services, is routinely involved in the commissioning process of U.S. Navy ships. President and CEO of the Hampton Roads, Virginia Navy League Council, Maryellen Baldwin explained that her council has commissioned 28 ships to date and stated, “Navy League-provided ship enhancements add character and context to a warship, which exerts its presence through port visits and other peacetime pursuits [while also] improving quality of life for those aboard.”

The USS Canberra Commissioning Committee, made up of eleven individuals from across the United States, have extensive experience bringing new ships to life. With more than 50 combined ship commissioning between them, these individuals came together 20 weeks ago to support the crew and families of the future USS Canberra (LCS 30).

When the Navy receives delivery of a ship from the contractor, the ship is only given the bare essentials to conduct business at sea. The civilian Commissioning Committee raises funds to support the crew’s additional needs while on board the ship. There are important morale items that need to be purchased for the crew to use during their down time on board, such as media like books and TVs, and gym equipment This critical support

for the ship and her crew are an important part of any ship commissioning effort, but this unique international commissioning this some both challenges and great opportunities.

“Working with on the commissioning of the USS Canberra has been the most challenging yet rewarding experience. Dealing with the women and men from around the globe to not only make all the events leading up to the commissioning happen, but being able to support the crew and their families in many ways will always make this a memorable experience for me,” said Commissioning Committee member Ronald Spence in the Rocky Mountain region, who has worked on multiple commissioning committees.

It will be up to the ship’s crew, its sponsor, the commissioning committee, and the City of Canberra to strengthen the relationship between the ship and its namesake for the life of the ship. The ship’s sponsor is Australian Senator, the Honourable Marise Payne, the former Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The commissioning ceremony will be highlighted by a time-honored Navy tradition when Ms. Payne will give the first order to “man our ship and bring her to life!”

Built by [Austal USA](#), LCS 30 will be the twenty sixth littoral combat ship to enter the fleet and the fifteenth of the Independence variant. Former Austal employee and Commissioning Committee member Jenny Beam Klein of Mobile, Alabama said, “it was an honor to witness the construction of future USS Canberra (LCS 30) for the past five years here in Mobile, Alabama.” She discussed the importance of the relationship with Austal, stating, “It has been a privilege to be part of the LCS 30 Commissioning Committee under the leadership of Mr. Ward Cook and Mr. Ernie Conner and we are thrilled to watch her join the U.S. Navy fleet this weekend on the other side of the world. This ship and ceremony are creating stronger ties between our Gulf Coast shipbuilding community, the Navy and

Australia. Congratulations to the Officers and the Crew!"

Austal is also hosting watch party for the event at their facility in San Diego to, "keep the families involved," said Commissioning Committee member CW04 David Miller, USN (Ret.) of Kansas City, Missouri. "What an honor to be part of this challenging, but highly rewarding event, planning and conducting the commissioning of a ship in Sydney," he said.

This will be the first US Navy ship in an allied port, and the second US Navy Combat ship named after Australian's capitol city. Independence-variant LCS pride themselves on being fast, optimally manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats. LCS integrates with joint, combined, manned and unmanned teams to support forward-presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence missions around the globe.

USS CANBERRA (LCS 30) will be homeported in San Diego, California. The ceremony will be live streamed at: <http://www.dvidshub.net/webcast/32033>. The link will become active approximately five minutes prior to the event (Friday, July 21st 8:55 p.m. EST). Please contact Editor-in-Chief of [Seapower](#) magazine, Ann Tropea with questions: atropea@navyleague.org

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Navy Retires Its Last Special

Operations Squadron

Helicopter



SAN DIEGO, California (June 30, 2023) MH-60S Seahawks assigned to the “Firehawks” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 85 fly near San Diego during the squadron’s final flight prior to its deactivation ceremony. Navy Reserve squadron HSC-85 is the Navy’s last helicopter squadron dedicated to Naval Special Warfare (NSW) and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ryan LeCompte)

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy’s only helicopter squadron dedicated to support of special operations forces has made its final flight.

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 85 (HSC-85), a reserve squadron based at Naval Air Station North Island, California, made its final flight on June 30, 2023, prior to its deactivation

ceremony, according to a release from Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve.

HSC-85 was equipped with MH-60S Seahawk helicopters to support “Naval Special Warfare forces and other special operations forces training and readiness,” according to the Department of the Navy’s 2023 budget highlights book. The Navy proposed retirement of the squadron with the service’s 2023 budget request. The Navy estimates the program savings would amount to \$312.5 million over the Future Years Defense Plan.

HSC-85 originally was established as Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 85 (HS-85) in 1970 at NAS Alameda, California, and equipped with the SH-3A Sea King helicopter, later upgrading to the SH-3D and SH-3H versions. The squadron moved to NAS North Island in 1993 and in October 1994 was redesignated Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 85 (HC-85), shifting to the roles of search and rescue, logistics and range support.

The squadron was redesignated HSC-85 in February 2006 and equipped with MH-60S helicopters. In 2011, special operations support became its primary role, and it was equipped with an older version of the Seahawk, the HH-60H. The Navy planned in 2016 to deactivate HSC-85 and its East Coast counterpart, HSC-84, but HSC-85 survived. The squadron in 2018 upgraded to the Block III version of the MH-60S.

Navy’s I-Boss Aeschbach: Fleet Sees Greater Need for

Information Warriors



ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy’s operational climate is generating a growing need for the Navy Information Forces, challenging the capacity of the forces to meet that need.

The Navy’s information warfare forces include personnel specializing in intelligence, electronic warfare, cyber warfare, oceanography, nuclear command and control, and information warfare.

Vice Admiral Kelly Aeschbach, commander Naval Information Forces—known informally as the “I-Boss” – speaking July 18 with retired Rear Admiral Frank Thorp IV in the U.S. Naval Memorial’s SITREP series, said the Navy’s intelligence and cryptologic specialists were not as busy in the maritime environment during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as they

have now become with the great power competition with China and Russia.

“We were really not challenged in the maritime, and our global competitive environment has changed substantially, and we are now facing a near-peer competition – in some areas, we are being outpaced by our competitors – that I think demands now that you need information warriors to deliver our capability full-time,” Aeschbach said.

The admiral cited the Navy’s submarine force as an example where what is now information warfare was a collateral duty for a submarine officer, but now, with the increased demands of high-end warfare, the capabilities of information warfare specialists are needed to handle the flood of information and allow the other personnel to concentrate on the areas in which they excel.

“We’re a better team for it, if we’re there bringing the detailed information warfare capability,” she said.

With the increasing demands on information warfare forces, the Navy is challenged to prevent burn-out of the force, which—unlike ship or aircraft crews—does not have a routine sustainment cycle.

“We are operating all the time, and so one of the challenges we have as a type commander is: how do you do the care and feeding and re-generation of a force that is always in demand,” Aeschbach said. “So that has challenged us in terms of how we maintain an appropriate operational tempo for our personnel, effectively train them, and afford them enough time to re-charge and be most effective and most ready for the missions for the missions they’re supporting.”

Aeschbach is working to develop and use live virtual constructive technology to provide realistic training for information warfare forces, which, because of the nature of their capabilities, are more difficult to exercise

realistically in a peacetime environment.