Attack Sub Chief Talks SSN(X), Maintenance Challenges

The Los Angeles-class submarine USS Cheyenne (SSN 773) passes through the newly procured entrance structure that closes in the Superflood Basin. *U.S. NAVY / Jim Cleveland*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The admiral in charge of the U.S. Navy's attack submarine program gave an update on the SSN(X) program while talking about the root causes of challenges the service faces from maintenance backlogs during an address at the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium in Arlington, Virginia, Nov. 2.

Rear Adm. Jonathan Rucker, program executive officer for

attack submarines (PEO SSN), said that the Navy was in the midst of looking at the trade space for SSN(X), which involves technology assessments and capability reviews leading up to an analysis of alternatives.

“This is really a team effort,” he said. “We’re working with the shipbuilders, we’re working across government, we’re working across industry to see what technologies are going to make the most sense.

“We want to learn from other platforms, so we put in the most capability we can but obviously we will not set [ourselves] up for capability that will not deliver,” he added.

He noted that the program has delivered 21 Virginia-class submarines to date with another 17 under contract or in construction, with two planned for delivery this year and two next year as well.

But the main struggle he highlighted had to do with the maintenance backlog the fleet faces, particularly when it comes to submarines. Of the 57 attack submarines in the fleet, 18 of them are unavailable because of maintenance.

“We should be down much lower,” Rucker said. “We should be at 10. … So we’re not where we need to be. That’s just a fact.”

He identified three main causes for this: planning, material and shipyard throughput.

With regard to planning, he noted that 30% of maintenance is unplanned, which is a major driver of maintenance time. The program’s goal is to reduce that figure to 10% by 2026, he said.

Rucker also said that about half of the material for maintenance isn’t ordered until the start of the submarine’s availability, leading to delays because there is often a long lead time associated with that material.

He vowed to take efforts to address all three areas in order to get the maintenance backlog under control.

Sub Admiral on China: 'We Will Not Yield Any Ground to Our Competitor'

Tugboats assist the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Key West (SSN 722) as it prepares to moor in Busan, South Korea, Oct. 31, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Adam Craft*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The commander of U.S. submarine forces in the Pacific Fleet struck a defiant tone in discussing the challenge posed by China at the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium in Arlington, Virginia, Nov. 2, vowing that

the United States would “not yield any ground to our competitor.”

Competition between the United States and China has increased in recent years due to U.S. naval drills in China’s backyard and U.S. involvement in Taiwan, and U.S. officials in recent years have taken an even sterner tone with how the growing naval power operates in the East and South China seas. Rear Admiral Jeffrey T. Jablon, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet submarine force, told symposium attendees that his “No. 1 focus” is the People’s Republic of China (PRC), despite Russia’s more acute and immediate activity in Ukraine, and he vowed that the United States would only increase its presence off the coast of China.

“The PRC’s rapid growth in military capability reinforces the critical importance of not only maintaining but … expanding our reach,” Jablon said. “We will maximize our strength in the undersea domain.”

He said that he would ensure the Pacific submarine fleet would be “ready at all times for full-spectrum cross-domain operations,” adding that his office had established a campaign plan for submarine forces that he described as “warfighting first, people always and safety is the bedrock of everything we do.”

The most important line of effort in that plan, he said, is modernizing the Navy’s fleet of ballistic missile submarines armed with nuclear weapons, pointing to efforts to maintain the Ohio-class SSBNs out until the 2040s while building the follow-on Columbia-class program.

Another line of effort is to “prepare for the fight in the ‘decade of maximum danger,'” Jablon said.

“That specifically refers to the PRC,” he said. “We’ve heard ‘we’re in an inflection point,’ ‘it’s a critical decade,’ ‘it’s a decisive decade.’ And it’s true. That’s my No. 1

concern. … China has built the largest Navy in the world, guaranteeing its numerical advantage in the South and East China seas.

“We will intensify our efforts to prepare our undersea force to deter and, if necessary, to beat the PLAN [People’s Liberation Army Navy],” he continued. “We will not yield any ground to our competitor.”

Navy’s FLEX Program at Forefront of Emerging Unmanned Technologies

An FVR-90 autonomous delivery drone from L3 Harris Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems prepares to land onto the flight deck

of the Spearhead-Class expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Burlington (T-EPF-10), amongst distinguished visitors from the Scientists-to-Sea program as part of the Navy's Fleet Experimentation Program (FLEX), in the Atlantic Ocean, Oct. 16, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Steven Khor*

ATLANTIC OCEAN — The Navy's Fleet Experimentation Program (FLEX), featuring unmanned aerial and surface vehicles, was held on the Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Burlington (T-EPF-10) in the waters around Key West, Fla. Oct. 16-21, 2022, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs said in a Nov. 3 release.

Organized by U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet, and the Office of Naval Research's (ONR) sponsored SCOUT initiative, the goal of FLEX was to test, evaluate and showcase the latest unmanned vehicles to strengthen and increase warfighter capabilities.

The purpose of this event is to bring new technology to address operational problems in the fleet," said Christopher Heagney, the Naval Air Fleet and Force advisor to U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet and ONR. "Manned systems have an operational penalty of having people. The operational commander is assuming a high risk when there is a person who can be captured or killed. By having an unmanned system we are able to eliminate that."

Heagney said Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) only has a limited number of assets to interdict illicit trafficking in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility. If those assets break, they lose valuable time going back to port, getting repair parts and returning. Unmanned platforms could present a solution by transporting those parts to where they need to be at sea.

ONR’s SCOUT initiative is an ongoing, multi-agency experimentation campaign for identifying alternative ways to bring unmanned technologies to solve warfighter problems, operationalize them and bring them to the Fleet. SCOUT is committed to getting nontraditional, commercial-off-the-shelf, government-developed and/or government-sponsored technologies to the fleet rapidly.

The Key West FLEX employed commercially developed unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and unmanned surface vehicles (USV) to carry out diverse tasks related to drug interdiction including tracking and identifying specific targets, logistics and re-supply and forward-deployed combat repair. The unmanned vehicles performed re-supply maneuvers in the ocean and at inland and coastal locations.

Industry leaders agree that the ultimate goal is to lessen the danger to warfighters through the use of unmanned systems and thus enhancing their capabilities. One day these technologies such as delivery of equipment and parts, fuel, provisions and medical supplies can be vital to mission safety and success of warfighters operating in austere conditions.

“FLEX is an important and productive partnership between 4th Fleet, Center for Naval Analysis and the Office of Naval Research as well as industry partners to implement solutions to pressing operational problems,” said Rear Adm. Doug Sasse, 4th Fleet’s reserve vice commander. “Efficient flow of logistics in a contested environment is going to be a key enabler to the Navy and Marine Corps operating concepts of distributed maritime operations (DMO) and expeditionary advance-based operations (EABO), and a lot of the technology that we have incorporated as part of FLEX will help DMO and EABO reach full potential.”

ONR SCOUT, Fourth Fleet and JIATF-South worked alongside other commands including the Naval Research Laboratory, Marine Corps

Warfighting Laboratory, Defense Innovation Unit and Naval Air Systems Command. ONR sponsored Scientists-to-Sea went underway with Burlington to see the technology firsthand.

“This year is quite exciting as we have been building on previous events to improve our capabilities at sea, leveraging unmanned assets in order to do what we want, and do it out at sea,” said Capt. Chip Wrye, the director of the Maritime Operations Center. “Specifically, this week we have been figuring out how to move packages between ships that are each individually moving, and do it in a way that the unmanned asset can find the receiving ship, and transfer its package to that ship without putting personnel in harm’s way.”

“FLEX and the ONR SCOUT collaboration event was a great opportunity to see the mission readiness of industrial capabilities to mitigate logistical support challenges to deep-sea operations, which drive Navy and Coast Guard ship day availability to JIATF-South,” said Jeffrey Havlicek, J7 director for Innovation and Technology, JIATF-South. “This event showcased a menu of options and generated comparative insights vital to our mission-area analysis of low-cost resupply at sea.”

The Key West FLEX event was the culmination of multiple scenario-based demonstrations of technology capabilities and characteristics held this year leading up to a large-scale main experimentation event in March 2023.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet supports U.S. Southern Command’s joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American region.

Vice Adm. Houston: Integration of Women in Submarine Fleet Key to Future Force

Master Chief Information Systems Technician Angela Koogler, the chief of the boat aboard the ballistic missile submarine

USS Louisiana (SSBN 743), poses for an environmental portrait at Naval Base Kitsap – Bangor, Wash, Aug. 29, 2022. Koogler is the Navy's first female chief of the boat. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brian G. Reynolds*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's submarine force has taken major strides at integrating women into the submarine fleet, which will be key to building the most "talented, capable force" possible, the commander of submarine forces told attendees of the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium here Nov. 1.

Vice Adm. William Houston highlighted recent advancements women have made in the submarine fleet, such as the first female "chief of the boat" on the ballistic-missile submarine USS Louisiana (SSBN 743).

"And female XOs [executive officers] and commanding officers are not restricted where they can go," Houston said. "We are working to integrate the submarine force faster."

Houston said that in many cases women are retained at a higher rate than male officers, and that opening the door to more women in the fleet would help the Navy attract the talent that it needs at a time when retention is a challenge throughout the service.

"We want the most talented, capable force and we need to remove any barriers to integration," he said. "It is absolutely critical that we do that."

Houston highlighted other personnel priorities for the fleet, including a growing emphasis on the "cyber workforce."

"We have now established a cyber watch pilot where we actually have personnel watching our cyber systems underway, and we're looking to roll that out to the entire fleet," he said. "We have integrated more than we have with the IW [irregular

warfare] community. … We have cryptological technicians leading some of our EW [electronic warfare] efforts on those ships.”

Houston said the Navy would need to be bold in leveraging expertise throughout the service.

“We are not afraid to integrate with non-submarine communities,” he said. “We have tremendous capabilities in the Navy that we are taking advantage of because we need to do that to prepare for combat.”

Admiral: Navy Planning to Extend Service Lives of 5 Ohio-Class Subs

The U.S. Navy Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Rhode Island (SSBN 740) arrived in Gibraltar for a scheduled port visit, Nov. 1, 2022. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy is planning to extend the service lives of up to five Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) to help cover a projected shortfall in the 2030s as aging subs retire faster than newly built Columbia-class submarines can replace them, a service official told attendees of the Naval Submarine League's annual symposium here on Nov. 1.

Rear Adm. Scott W. Pappano, strategic submarines program executive officer, said that the Navy will see its fleet of SSBNs dwindle from 14 today to 10 or 11 sometime in the 2030s. Because the Navy requirement is for 10 operational submarines at all times, that situation leaves the Navy with very little margin, he said.

As a result, the service is examining the possibilities of extending the service lives of some subs by about three years.

“Can we look at specific hulls individually and get additional life out of those hulls with some targeted maintenance? We are looking at that right now,” Pappano said. “We are planning right now … to do up to five hulls that we already targeted for a three-year life extension with about 18 months in the depot.”

Pappano added that the final number won’t necessarily be five. He believes they will need to do at least two or three, but the service will plan for up to five.

“It is not an all-or-nothing decision,” he said. “It’s an incremental decision. As the strategic landscape changes, as the role changes, as our construction performance changes, we can evaluate that going along.”

The first sub likely to undergo the process would be the USS Alaska (SSBN 732) in fiscal 2029, which means planning to execute the service life extension would begin in the 2025 to 2026 timeframe, Pappano said.

The Navy is in the midst of a high-stakes transition between the Ohio-class and Columbia-class SSBN programs. The Navy purchased the first Columbia-class boat in fiscal 2021, and will procure the second in 2024, with the remaining 10 at a rate of one per year between fiscal 2026 and 2035.

The Navy’s fiscal 2023 budget submission predicted that the first boat would be delivered in 2027 and the second in 2030. Under that schedule, the Navy’s SSBN force would drop from 14 boats in fiscal 2026 to 11 boats in 2030-2032, according to a Congressional Research Service report. The Navy argues that operating with 11 boats will be acceptable during that period

because all of the boats would be operational in those years, but it wouldn’t account for an unforeseen event that would force an SSBN out of service for a period of time.

Bell Delivers Marine Corps’ Final AH-1Z Helicopter


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A UH-1Y Venom lifts off from the deck of an amphibious assault ship as an AH-1Z Viper prepares to launch. *BELL*

AMARILLO, Texas – In a ceremony at the Amarillo Assembly Center, Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. company, celebrated the delivery of the 189th AH-1Z Viper to the U.S. Marine Corps, completing the Program of Record (POR) for the latest version of the storied H-1 platform. Bell completed the UH-1Y POR of 160 aircraft in 2018 bringing the combined Ah-1Z/UH-1Y POR to 349 aircraft.

"The first production lot of US Marine Corps H-1s was ordered in 1962, and they changed the way Marines fight today," said Mike Deslatte, Bell H-1 vice president and program director. "Completing the AH-1Z and UH-1Y deliveries to the US Marine Corps adds one more chapter to the legacy of the H-1 platform."

Bell has been producing H-1s for the U.S. military since 1959. Bell originally designed the H-1 for the U.S. Army with the iconic "Huey." In 1966 Bell created the AH-1 Cobra as the first dedicated gunship. In 1970, the Bell UH-1N brought twin engine capabilities to more than 28 countries, and in 1984 the AH-1W provided the U.S. Marine Corps increased attack helicopter capability.

The current generation AH-1Z Viper and UH-1Y Venom are the most agile, mobile and survivable combination of aircraft used by the Department of Defense. The 85% common platforms are the only two aircraft that share so much commonality, providing the Marines with logistical agility and reduced operating costs. The AH-1Z achieved initial operating capacity in February 2011 and the UH-1Y achieved initial operating capacity in August 2008. The first combined Viper/Venom deployment with a Marine Expeditionary Unit occurred in 2009.

"H-1s are key to the 2022 Marine Corps Aviation Plan," said Col. Vasillios Pappas, Light/Attack Helicopters program manager (PMA-276). "With the U.S. program of record now

complete, the Marines have the flexibility to manage and deploy the helicopters based on current and future mission requirements as established at the start of the program.”

The H-1 production line is still active in support of foreign military sales to approved U.S. allies. Bell continues to produce AH-1Z Vipers for the Kingdom of Bahrain and will manufacture eight UH-1Ys and four AH-1Zs for the Czech Republic in 2023.

Since the first delivery of the AH-1Zs and UH-1Ys to the U.S. Marines, the H-1 mixed fleet has accumulated more than 450,000 flight hours through a full spectrum of military operations. Bell will continue to support the U.S. H-1s with lethality, survivability and reliability upgrades through a long-term modernization plan that helps ensure the aircraft keep an overwhelming tactical advantage for generations.

Coast Guard Cutter Midgett Returns Home from Western Pacific Deployment

Petty Officer 1st Class Kyle Buell stands with his wife after U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) returned to homeport in Honolulu, Hawaii, Oct. 31, 2022. The crew was deployed for nearly three months in the Western Pacific theatre. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer Steve Strohmaier*

HONOLULU – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) and crew returned to its homeport, Monday, following an 83-day, 16,000 nautical-mile deployment to the Western Pacific, the Coast Guard Pacific Area said in a Nov. 1 release.

The Midgett and crew departed Honolulu in August to the Western Pacific to operate under the tactical control of U.S. Navy 7th Fleet to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

"The Coast Guard strives to be a trusted partner, and we play a vital role in ensuring safety, security and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific," said Vice Adm. Andrew J. Tiongson, commander Pacific Area. "As the region faces challenges like climate change and Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing, we will join with our Pacific partners to face these

common threats and challenges together."

Midgett's crew executed numerous cooperative engagements, professional exchanges and capacity building efforts with naval allies and partners, who included the Philippine Coast Guard, Singapore Maritime Security Response Flotilla, the Information Fusion Center, Police Coast Guard, Indian Coast Guard and Maldives National Defense Force.

"I am extremely proud of this crew and all they have accomplished over this deployment," said Capt. Willie Carmichael, commanding officer of Midgett. "They engaged in meaningful and collaborative engagements with our partners that increased our interoperability to address shared maritime threats and challenges. This Western Pacific deployment highlights the critical role the Coast Guard plays in strengthening maritime governance around the world and how much our partners value our presence. Midgett's ability and dedication to sail across two oceans and participate in purposeful engagements with our partners is a testament to the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The U.S. Coast Guard has a 150-year enduring role in the Indo-Pacific. The service's ongoing deployment of resources to the region directly supports U.S. foreign policy. As both a federal law enforcement agency and a branch of the armed forces, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to conduct security cooperation in support of combatant commanders on all seven continents. The service routinely provides forces in joint military operations worldwide, including the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft and deployable specialized forces.

Since 2019, Coast Guard Cutters Bertholf (WMSL 750), Stratton (WMSL 752), Waesche (WMSL 751) and Munro (WMSL 755) have deployed to the Western Pacific.

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.

Midgett is the second cutter named after the Midgett family, many of whom served in the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Life Saving Service and other predecessor life-saving services. Seven members of the Midgett family have been awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal, including John Allen Midgett Jr. and Rasmus Midgett.

National security cutters feature advanced command and control capabilities, aviation support facilities, stern cutter boat launch and increased endurance for long-range patrols to disrupt threats to national security further offshore.

Admiral: Guam Weather ‘Challenging’ for Navy’s Triton UAV Operations

A U.S. Navy MQ-4C Triton assigned to Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19 prepares to take off from the flightline at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Iwakuni, Japan, Oct. 5, 2022. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. David Getz*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The weather in Guam has proved to pose challenges to operations of the Navy's MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle, a Navy admiral said. He also praised the value of the Triton as a targeting platform.

In a situation report late last summer to the maritime patrol reconnaissance community, Rear Adm. Adam "Kujo" Kijek, commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group, said the "most impactful lesson" of the Early Operational Capability deployment of the Triton to Guam was one "delivered by mother nature."

Kijek said the "weather in Guam, and associated OP Areas [operations areas], can be very challenging for UAV operations. During 'monsoon' season, and with a stated goal of 16 missions per month, there were many days that Triton could

not get airborne or access required operating areas due to adverse weather. However, when weather permits Triton has proven its operational worth."

The admiral said that "to help combat these environmental anomalies, we executed a Seasonal Relocation Plan (SRP) to Misawa AB [Air Base] last summer, and Iwakuni [Marine Corps Air Station] this summer. Exercising these expeditionary muscles and harvesting lessons learned will pay huge dividends when Triton Multi-INT shows up in theater next year."

Kijek noted that "there is tremendous value in providing the persistent ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] that Triton brings by establishing pattern of life and building a real-time Common Operational Picture for Fleet and Combatant Commanders. However, from a tactical perspective, I have been most impressed when Triton works as a targeting platform in concert with other aircraft and surface units."

The admiral said he believed "the operational impact of Triton will grow exponentially" when the UAV's Multi-Intelligence Integrated Functional Capability-4 upgrade is deployed in 2023.

"The ability of Triton's SIGINT [signals intelligence] package to exploit the electromagnetic spectrum and the sheer volume of information harvested will present significant challenges to the Intel Community," he said. "Simply adding a SIGINT Coordinator (SC) to every Triton aircrew is not enough. We are working closely with the C10F [Commander, U.S. 10th Fleet and NAVIFOR [Navy Information Forces] to ensure that Triton is postured to take full advantage of Navy's Distributed SIGINT Operations architecture to realize its full potential. Achieving these linkages will be a primary focus during my tenure."

Major Pier Project Completed at Naval Base Kitsap Bangor

Mr. Peter Fleck, Submarine Development Group 5 facility operations manager, left, Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, Capt. Gary Montalvo, commodore, Submarine Development Group 5 and Capt. Kevin Pickard, chief of staff, Navy Region Northwest, cut a ribbon during a ceremony for a newly-completed service pier located on Naval Base Kitsap – Bangor, October 19, 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brian G. Reynolds*

NAVAL BASE KITSAP, Wash. – Submarine Development Squadron (DEVRON) 5 held a ribbon cutting ceremony, Oct. 19, 2022, on a newly-completed service pier extension located on Naval Base Kitsap Bangor, Washington, Lt. Cmdr Christopher F. Donnelly of

Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in a Nov. 1 release.

The ceremony marked the completion of a major infrastructure project, nicknamed the “Olympic pier” due to its proximity to the Olympic Mountain Range, which will support the arrival of fast attack submarines, including the planned change of homeport for USS Seawolf (SSN 21) and USS Connecticut (SSN 22) from Naval Station Bremerton to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

The ceremony, which was led by Capt. Gary Montalvo, commodore of DEVRON 5, hosted the event which featured Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, as the keynote speaker.

The service pier extension project was more than a decade in the making. Originally envisioned in 2008 and supported by Munsch, who was the DEVRON 5 commodore at the time and knew it was a project that was needed to service all classes of SSNs. Construction began in 2020.

“Your efforts, and that of many others over the years, to build this pier and ready it to sustain our most advanced submarines, represents the best of the many organizations working together, fighting any and all obstacles to build capability to enhance our undersea dominance,” said Montalvo.

The service pier extension includes state-of-the-art technologies for security and pier services for moored submarines. The shore power configuration incorporates the latest technology to provide multiple fully redundant power sources, ensuring continuous safe in-port operations and minimizing the affects due to normal wear and tear or natural disasters. The pier boasts a first-of-its-kind captured mooring system that compensates for tidal changes, which will ensure all classes of submarines remain securely moored without need to frequently adjust mooring lines.

A full environmental assessment of the project was performed during the design phase in order to minimize the environmental impacts to the Hood Canal and its local fish and wildlife. Environmental considerations include a newly-designed, all-electric crane which will provide service on the pier, and the deliberate positioning of backup diesel generators located upland, away from the water.

Upland support infrastructure for the service pier extension include a newly constructed parking lot to provide safe and convenient access for submarine crews and support personnel. The pier has maintenance support facilities dedicated to units moored at the service pier extension.

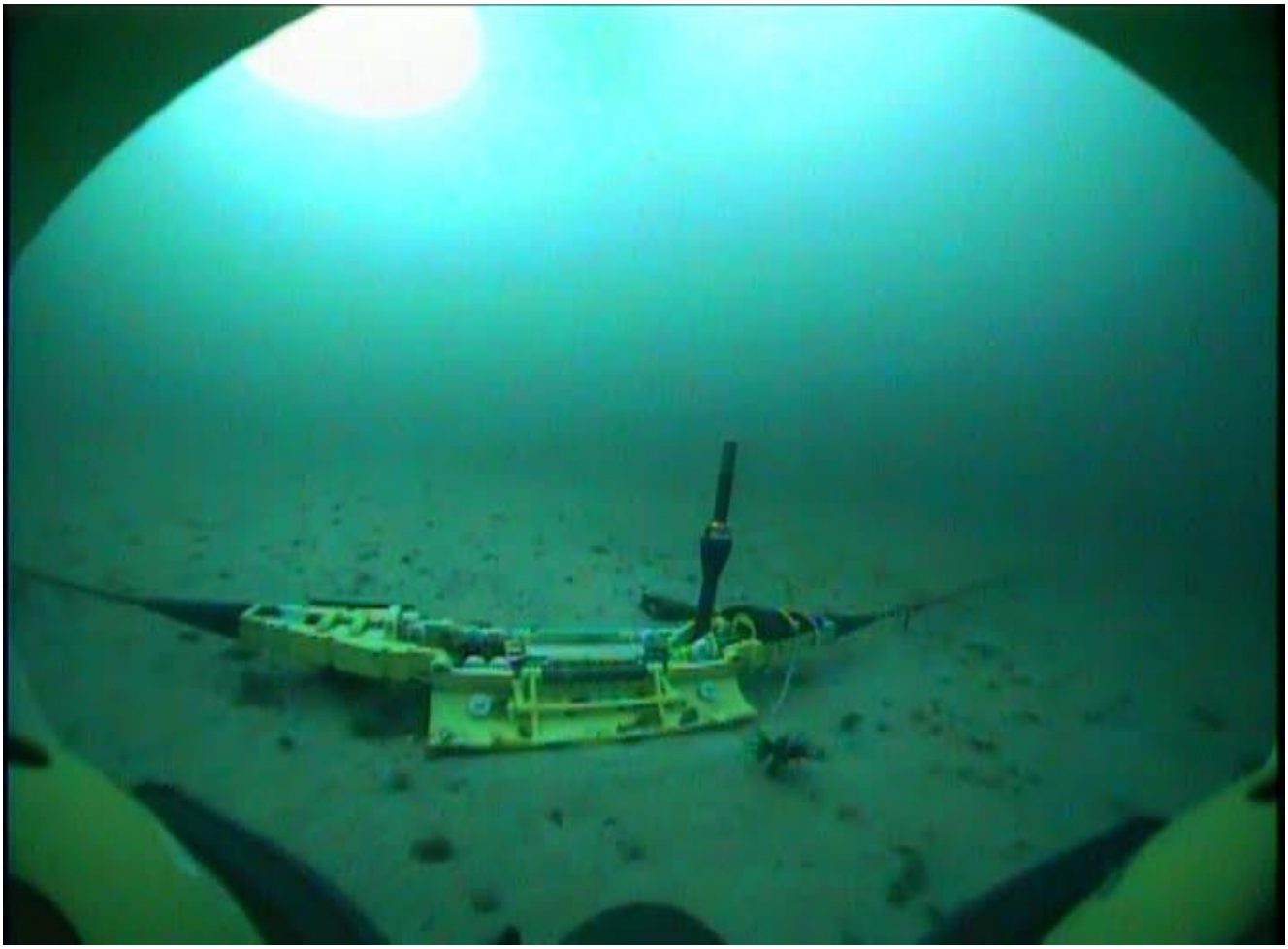
“The completion of Olympic Pier advances a visionary shore infrastructure plan designed to improve quality of work for our Sailors, increase operational availability of fast attack submarines in the Pacific Northwest, and advance the research, development, test and evaluation needed to deliver decisive warfighting advantage,” said Munsch. “Olympic Pier enables us to bring together intellectual and industrial partners with the Submarine Force’s most experienced operators of advanced undersea systems and, now, the right current and future submarines to test and field those decisive new capabilities.”

The service pier extension provides substantial immediate and long term benefits to the submarine force and the Navy. The planned change of homeport for Seawolf and Connecticut will improve the quality of service to the units while in port. Dedicated pier and maintenance facilities promote efficiency for maintenance.

Support, training and oversight provided by DEVRON 5, the Immediate Superior in Command, will be improved by the close physical proximity of the boats. Longer-term benefits include

the capability to maintain increased persistent presence of fast attack submarines in the northern Pacific region, and the continued development of future undersea warfare capabilities.

Navy Achieves Full Operational Capability on Critical Underwater Training Range



The Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office (PMA-205) recently achieved Full Operational Capability on their Undersea Warfare Training Ranges Increment I (USWTR INC

I) program. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office's (PMA-205) Ocean Systems Fixed Ranges team recently achieved full operational capability on the Undersea Warfare Training Ranges Increment I (USWTR INC I) program 13 months ahead of schedule, the Naval Air Systems Command said in a Nov. 1 release.

The Naval Aviation Training Systems and Ranges program office's (PMA-205) Ocean Systems Fixed Ranges team recently achieved full operational capability on the Undersea Warfare Training Ranges Increment I (USWTR INC I) program 13 months ahead of schedule. *U.S. NAVY*

The USWTR INC I training range supports fleet readiness through realistic training and the tactical development of submarine, surface ship, and aircraft undersea warfare capabilities.

"Since completing installation, the fleet has conducted four exercises on the Increment I range, to include critical anti-submarine warfare exercises, which shape future exercises and further advance the capabilities the Navy has to offer," said Brandi Payne-Tapponnier, the program's team lead. USWTR INC I allows for timely and accurate feedback of training performance to exercise participants and the ability to rapidly reconstruct the training event, enhancing the quality of complex training scenarios, she said.

The USWTR program consists of three increments. During USWTR INC I, the team managed the installation of the ocean sensor and shore electronics subsystems located off the coast of Florida. Under Increments II and III, the team is upgrading previously installed systems at the USWTR's other range locations in areas of the Pacific Ocean and international waters of the Caribbean Sea.

"These ranges are essential to our national security, and

provide critical support to the helicopter maritime strike, maritime patrol and reconnaissance, and Navy ship communities," said Capt. Kevin McGee, PMA-205 program manager. "They include a vast array of technology providing a realistic training environment that enables ships and aircraft to track targets for anti-submarine warfare training, which increases fleet capability and lethality."

The team acquired and installed an additional total of 500 nautical miles of instrumented undersea warfare training ranges in littoral waters in the Atlantic Ocean. Secondary missions of USWTR INC I include training in shallow water and conducting regional conflict operations training.