Navy’s MQ-4C Triton Maritime UAV Picks up the Tempo

Northrop Grumman’s Brad Champion briefs reporters in front of B21, the latest MQ-4C Triton the company delivered to the U.S. Navy. *Photo credit: Brett Davis*

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Maryland – The MQ-4C Triton maritime uncrewed aircraft, built for the Navy by Northrop Grumman, has been picking up its operational tempo in recent months, even as international customers consider adding the high-flying drones to their fleets.

The U.S. Navy has ordered 24 of the high-altitude, long-endurance aircraft and Northrop Grumman recently delivered the 20th of the batch, tail No. B-21. That vehicle was in a hangar at Naval Air Station Patuxent River on June 13, when the company invited reporters to see it and get an update on the aircraft program.

Australia, a partner on the program, has ordered four and has received three of them so far.

Captain Josh Guerre, program manager for the Persistent Maritime Unmanned Aircraft Systems Office, said the Triton system has been racking up milestones since August of 2023 when its capability stood up in 7th fleet and it achieved initial operating capability. Since then, the Triton was stood up in 6th Fleet in April 2024 and 5th Fleet in October 2024, which Guerre called a "stair-step" progress.

"For us, getting to IOC was like the start of the base climb to Mount Everest, because then we had to stand up capability in two other theaters and then maintain that pace of operation in all three of those theaters in continuity," Guerre said. "The good news is, we've done that."

Over the last six months, "we've been able to execute 45 flights per month across all three operational orbits, 15 per orbit for six straight months," Guerre said. The aircraft are operated remotely by crews in Jacksonville, Florida, well beyond the line of sight.

Triton is, as Guerre said, "a truck" that carries GEOINT (geographic intelligence) and SIGINT (signals intelligence) payloads, which the program is continually refining to meet the needs of combatant commanders.

Brad Champion, Northrop Grumman's MQ-4C enterprise director, said although the Triton is a variant of the Global Hawk airframe, it's very different and its sensor packages are hardened to meet the rigors of maritime environments and to transit through icy weather.

It is, he said, "the most advanced UAV that has ever been deployed by the U.S. Navy."

An MQ-4C Triton peeks out of a hangar at Naval Air Station Patuxent River. *Photo credit: Brett Davis*

As the company nears the end of the current U.S. Navy buy, other countries are considering adding Triton to their fleets, including Norway, which is expected to down-select between the Triton and a competitor platform later this year.

NATO, which is already flying the Global Hawk as part of its Alliance Ground Surveillance program, wants to beef up its program as well with a maritime variant.

The Triton is expected to interface closely with the Navy's Boeing-built P-8 Poseidon crewed aircraft, as together they help pick up the workload of the aging P-3 Orion maritime surveillance aircraft.

The multi-intelligence version of the Triton "was selected as one of a family of systems to replace the EP-3," Champion said. "The EP-3 has sunset and Triton is picking up a portion of that mission from a SIGINT perspective."

Any country that flies P-8s should consider the Triton, Champion said, as they operate in a similar fashion and can share similar information. And, because the Triton can pick up the SIGINT portion of the work and leave the P-8s to conduct anti-submarine warfare, “we actually preserve the life of your P-8.”

First Increment 3 Block 2 modifications complete for P-8A Poseidon aircraft

P-8A takes off with Increment 3 Block 2 in June 2025.
From Naval Air Systems Command, June 13, 2025

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — Increment 3 Block 2 modifications are

complete for the first P-8A Poseidon aircraft. The modifications outfit the P-8A with the full anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities outlined in the P-8A program's evolutionary acquisition strategy. The modifications began at Boeing's Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul hangar at Cecil Airport in Jacksonville, Florida in March 2024.

"In today's ever changing global environment, it is important to pace the threat in terms of lethality and survivability. The Increment 3 Block 2 modifications to the P-8A Poseidon will ensure they remain the most sophisticated and capable maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft in the world," said Capt. Erik Thomas, Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft Program Office (PMA-290) program manager.

The P-8A is the Department of Defense's only long-range full-spectrum ASW, cue-to-kill platform, with substantial armed ASuW and networked ISR capabilities. Increment 3 Block 2 provides a significant upgrade to the P-8A airframe and avionics systems, and includes new airframe racks, radome, antennas, sensors, and wiring. The modification incorporates a new combat systems suite with improved computer processing, higher security architecture, a wide band satellite communication system, an ASW signals intelligence capability, a track management system, and additional communications and acoustics systems to enhance search, detection and targeting capabilities.

In response to evolving threats around the world, future P-8A modifications will be made via a sequence of rapid capability insertion efforts that build upon this new Increment 3 Block 2 baseline.

PMA-290 manages the acquisition, development, support and delivery of the U.S. Navy's maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft.

GDIT Awarded Mission-Enhancing Enterprise Contract to Support Special Operations Forces

Company will leverage AI, cloud and cyber capabilities to

enhance operational effectiveness

From GDIT, June 13, 2025

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT), a business unit of General Dynamics, announced today that it was awarded a foundational Information Technology Enterprise contract to support components of the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM). The $396 million contract, awarded in April, has a one-year base period and four option years.

SOCOM components require modernized IT networks to enable Special Operations Forces (SOF) to rapidly transfer, communicate and share operational and intelligence information, especially in contested and remote environments where speed and agility are crucial. Under this contract, GDIT will provide a full gamut of enterprise IT services that are well-integrated, flexible and adaptable to support SOF's dynamic and complex missions around the world. The company will leverage its AI capabilities to enhance operational effectiveness and improve decision making, migrate SOF to a multi-cloud environment, and implement advanced zero trust solutions to bolster cybersecurity.

"Modern warfare is constantly evolving and enhancing SOF's digital capabilities is critical to mission success," said Brian Sheridan, GDIT's senior vice president for Defense. "We look forward to delivering a cutting-edge IT network that ensures our elite military units are connected to the intelligence they need to stay ahead in every mission."

The contract builds on GDIT's history of delivering mission-critical IT capabilities for combatant commands. Last year, the company won a technical and mission services contract to support SOCOM and its partners. GDIT also provides digital modernization services for the U.S. Central Command and cyber services for the U.S. Southern Command.

GA-ASI Adds SAAB Airborne Early warning Capability to MQ-9B

New Capability Will Transform Airborne Early Warning Access and Affordability for MQ-9B Customers

From GA-ASI, June 15, 2025

SAN DIEGO – 15 June 2025 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) is partnering with Saab to develop Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) capability for its line of MQ-9B Remotely Piloted Aircraft, which includes the SkyGuardian and SeaGuardian models, the United Kingdom's Protector, and the new MQ-9B STOL (Short Takeoff and Landing) model currently in development. GA-ASI plans to fly AEW on MQ-9B in 2026.

"High and low-tech air threats both pose major challenges to

global air forces," said GA-ASI President David R. Alexander. "We're developing an affordable AEW solution in cooperation with Saab, the leading provider of AEW&C systems, that will transform our customers' operations against both sophisticated cruise missiles and simple but dangerous drone swarms. We're also making AEW capability possible in areas it doesn't exist today, such as from some navy warships at sea."

GA-ASI will pair Saab's AEW sensors with the world's longest-range, highest-endurance unmanned aircraft system (UAS), the MQ-9B. At sea or over land, the AEW mission package on MQ-9B will put air dominance within reach at a lower cost than legacy platforms.

The MQ-9B AEW solution will offer critical aloft sensing to defend against tactical air, guided missiles, drones, and other threats at a fraction of the cost of manned platforms. Operational availability for medium-altitude long-endurance UAS is the highest of any military aircraft, and as an unmanned platform, its aircrew are not put into harm's way. AEW for MQ-9B will augment existing AEW fleets by extending their effective ranges. It also gives air forces that need AEW, but lack legacy platforms, a powerful and affordable means to counter threats.

GA-ASI and Saab's AEW offering will span a wide range of applications, including early detection and warning; long-range detection and tracking; simultaneous target tracking and flexible combat system integration, all over line-of-sight and SATCOM connectivity.

MQ-9B is the world's most advanced medium-altitude, long-endurance UAS. GA-ASI has MQ-9B orders from the United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada, Poland, Japan, Taiwan, India, and the U.S. Air Force in support of the Special Operations Command. MQ-9B has also supported various U.S. Navy exercises, including Northern Edge, Integrated Battle Problem, RIMPAC, and Group Sail.

USS Cole Assists Royal Canadian Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Transfer Intercepted Contraband

Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG-67) moors off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina, April 15, 2025, during Exercise Southern Lightning. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Farnsworth) [Stock Photo]

13 June 2025

From U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command Public Affairs

CARIBBEAN SEA – The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67), supporting maritime southern border operations, conducted a hold-and-transfer of 245 kilograms of contraband recovered by the Royal Canadian Navy Harry DeWolf-class offshore patrol vessel HMCS William Hall (AOPV 433) in the Caribbean Sea June 9. The Reliance-class U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Cutter Vigorous (WMEC 627) accepted the contraband from the Cole's embarked USCG Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) June 11 during a rendezvous at sea in the Caribbean.

The Cole, with the embarked LEDET, provides a combination of U.S. Navy endurance, range, and capability with USCG law enforcement authorities, increasing protection to the U.S. southern border's maritime approach.

The contraband's transit was detected by Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South, which collaborates with partner nations and leverages all-domain capabilities to detect and monitor illicit drug trafficking in the region.

The contraband and surrounding circumstances are considered under investigation and are subject to review and disposition through the U.S. Department of Justice.

The U.S. Coast Guard LEDET has unique legal authority to conduct U.S. law enforcement operations in support of border security missions under U.S. Northern Command. Utilizing the Coast Guard's jurisdiction, the Cole will employ LEDET personnel to perform vessel boardings, searches, and seizures in U.S. and international waters, targeting drug trafficking, illegal immigration, and transnational crime with a nexus to the U.S. southern border. With LEDET's tactical expertise guiding interdiction efforts, the Cole will harness its advanced surveillance systems and mobility to locate and intercept suspect vessels, effectively extending Coast Guard authority through naval power to enhance maritime security

operations. This collaboration ensures a robust, legally empowered response to maritime threats, strengthening U.S. border protection efforts.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet serves as a trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South American maritime forces and promotes unity, security, and stability in the region.

For more USNAVSOUTH/4th Fleet news and photos, visit facebook.com/NAVSOUS4THFLT, https://www.fourthfleet.navy.mil/, X – @ NAVSOUS4THFLT, and https://www.linkedin.com/company/u-s-naval-forces-southern-command-u-s-4th-fleet

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SECDEF Announces Flag and General Officer Nominations

From the Department of Defense, June 13, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps Col. Christopher G. Tolar for appointment to the grade of major general, with assignment as staff judge advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Tolar is currently serving as command judge advocate, U.S. Africa Command, Stuttgart, Germany.

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) Kristin Acquavella for appointment to the grade of rear admiral. Acquavella most recently served as commander, Naval Supply Systems Command Weapons Systems Support, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) David M. Buzzetti for appointment to the grade of rear admiral. Buzzetti is currently serving as deputy joint staff surgeon/director, Reserve Medical Readiness Operations and Affairs, Joint Staff, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) Matthew Case for appointment to the grade of rear admiral. Case is currently serving as deputy to the Assistant Director Health Care, Defense Health Agency/chief, Medical Service Corps, Falls Church, Virginia.

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) David J. Faehnle for appointment to the grade of rear admiral. Faehnle is currently serving as commandant, Naval District Washington, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) Joaquin J. Martinez de Pinillos for appointment to the grade of rear admiral. Martinez de Pinillos is currently serving as reserve director, Maritime Operations, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) Donald M. Plummer for appointment to the grade of rear admiral. Plummer is currently serving as reserve vice director, Joint Force Development, Joint Staff (J-7), Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

Navy Rear Adm. (lower half) Christopher D. Stone for appointment to the grade of rear admiral. Stone is currently serving as director, Strategy, Policy, Programs, and Logistics, J-5/4, U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

Navy Capt. Frank J. Brajevic for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Brajevic is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Medical Forces Pacific Navy Reserve, San Diego, California.

Navy Capt. Sharif H. Calfee for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Calfee most recently served as senior military advisor to the Secretary of the Navy, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

Navy Capt. Christopher A. Carter for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Carter is currently serving as commander, Navy Reserve Naval Special Warfare Task Force Eighteen, San Diego, California.

Navy Capt. Kevin M. Corcoran has for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Corcoran is currently serving as deputy commander, Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Navy Capt. Matthew A. Hawkins for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Hawkins is currently serving as chief of staff, Navy Reserve U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Africa, Naples, Italy.

Navy Capt. Jonathan J. Jettparmer for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Jettparmer is currently serving as director, Navy Reserve Program Office, Naval Sea Systems Command, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

Navy Capt. Suzanne J.M. Krauss for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Krauss is currently serving as commanding officer, Navy Reserve Commander Sixth Fleet Headquarters, Naples, Italy.

Navy Capt. Anthony L. Lacourse for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Lacourse is currently serving as force surgeon, Navy Reserve U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

Navy Capt. Kristin L. McCarthy for appointment to the grade of

rear admiral (lower half). McCarthy is currently serving as director, Legal Services, Navy Reserve Office of the Judge Advocate General Headquarters, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

Navy Capt. Lester Ortiz for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Ortiz is currently serving as commodore, Navy Reserve Seventh Naval Construction Regiment, Gulfport, Mississippi.

Navy Capt. Quinton S. Packard for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Packard is currently serving as a military fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

Navy Capt. Rigel D. Pirrone for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Pirrone is currently serving as commanding officer, Navy Reserve N5/N7, U.S. Naval Forces Europe/Africa, Naples, Italy.

Navy Capt. Kimberly M. Sandberg for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Sandberg is currently serving as chief of staff, Navy Reserve Naval Medical Forces Support Command, Houston, Texas.

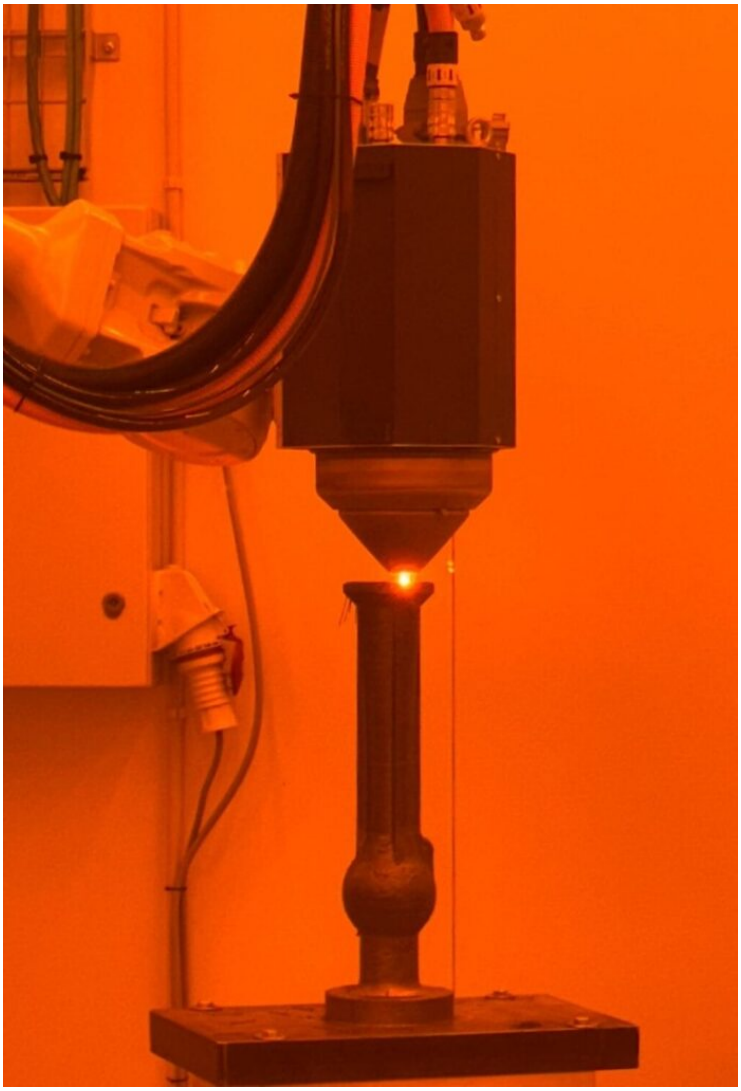
Navy Capt. Michael J. Thornton for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Thornton is currently serving as force surgeon, Navy Reserve Naval Forces Korea, Busan, Korea.

Navy Capt. Jonathan R. Townsend for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Townsend is currently serving as commanding officer, Naval Support Activity South Potomac, Washington, D.C.

Navy Capt. Kelly C. Ward for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Ward is currently serving as Reserve chief staff officer to commander, Navy Expeditionary Combat

Command, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Low-Risk AM Process Improving Readiness Generation



NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – An additive manufacturing machine prints an eductor, or jet pump, using stainless steel wire for the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51). Forward Deployed Regional Maintenance Center (FDRMC) Detachment Rota, in partnership with the Spanish Armada's intermediate-level maintenance command and their embedded additive manufacturing (AM) contractor, manufactured

parts for Arleigh Burke, generating timely readiness for the ship ahead of its planned patrol throughout U.S. Sixth Fleet.

By Naval Sea Systems Command Office of Corporate Communications

June 12, 2025

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – Forward Deployed Regional Maintenance Center (FDRMC) Detachment Rota, in partnership with the Spanish Armada's intermediate-level maintenance command and their embedded additive manufacturing (AM) contractor, manufactured parts for the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) in early June. This innovative solution generated timely readiness for the ship ahead of its planned patrol throughout U.S. Sixth Fleet.

Expediting the process, the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) engineering directorate empowered waterfront chief engineers to approve AM parts and components that carry little to no risk to the safety and operation of the ship. The NAVSEA guidance eliminated administrative barriers, effectively streamlining the process to support real-time needs during maintenance. This component is the 37th additively manufactured component installed in the Fleet since the process was adopted in 2023.

"We have empowered and equipped our waterfront and forward-deployed engineers and maintainers that directly support our warfighters," said Rear Adm. Pete Small, NAVSEA chief engineer. "This project executed with our Spanish allies further proves the significant readiness AM generates for our ships, restoring a critical system while meeting the compressed timeline for the ship's forward-deployed patrol."

The FDRMC team utilized the low-risk AM approval process to manufacture and install two new eductors, or jet pumps, into

the vacuum collection holding and transfer (VCHT) system during a maintenance period. The eductors had leaks that had been temporarily patched and needed full replacement prior to the next patrol to restore system readiness and safeguard against future system failure while deployed. New eductors, typically made of cast-bronze, require almost a year to receive and install, exceeding the maintenance timeline ahead of the ship's upcoming patrol.

The FDRMC team partnered with a local AM contractor to manufacture the two replacement eductors with available corrosion-resistant stainless-steel wire. The first-time process took approximately two months to plan, scan, print, machine, weld and install aboard Arleigh Burke, shortening the timeline by more than 80% and meeting the ship's operational schedule. Once the project was approved, the manufacturing only required seven days of work to complete the eductors ahead of install.

"FDRMC is the front-line readiness generator for our forward deployed naval forces in Fifth and Sixth Fleets," said Capt. Mollie Bily, FDRMC commanding officer. "Our Rota AM team attacks each maintenance window looking for a way to use advanced AM to expedite parts and solutions for our homeported and deployed ships that must be ready for Fleet tasking at a moment's notice."

FDRMC provides emergent, intermediate and depot-level maintenance and modernization for Forward Deployed Naval Forces in U.S. 5th and 6th Fleets through fleet technical assistance, voyage repair, contract management oversight, assessments, and diving and salvage. FDRMC is the only forward-deployed RMC supporting two numbered fleets, serving three combatant commanders, and conducting work on three continents.

NAVSEA designs, builds, and maintains ships, submarines, and integrated warfighting systems for the US. Navy ensuring the

warfighter is capable of projecting presence in peace, power in war, and assured maritime access.

For more on NAVSEA, visit: https://www.navsea.navy.mil/

Modern Trenches, Modern Threats: Combat Engineering in the Drone Age

U.S. Navy Sailors assigned to Naval Construction Battalion 14 and Marines assigned to 8th Engineering Support Battalion conduct trench reinforcement training to increase combat engineering capabilities during exercise Baltic Operations 2025 (BALTOPS 25), June 6, 2025, in Skrunda, Latvia.

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Justin Stumberg, June

13, 2025

SKRUNDA, Latvia – In the wooded fields of western Latvia, lines of freshly turned earth snake across the terrain—dug not by history, but by engineers preparing for the future fight. A century after trench warfare defined conflict in Europe, the tactic is making a modern return, this time shaped by airborne threats that are autonomous, persistent, and digital.

As part of exercise Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) 2025, U.S. Navy Seabees, U.S. Marines from 8th Engineer Support Battalion (ESB), and Latvian Army engineers are constructing a fortified trench network designed for survivability in a drone-contested battlespace. The project serves both as a realistic rehearsal and a proof of concept for how modern combat engineers support maneuverability, concealment, and endurance in multi-domain operations.

“We are creating positions designed for modern combat environments,” said Lt. j.g. Wiatt Lewis, officer in charge of Naval Construction Battalion (NCB) 14. “These field fortifications are built to reduce detection, limit exposure to unmanned systems, and enhance force protection across the battlespace.”

Lewis emphasized that as the operational environment evolves, so must the approach to allied engineering and maneuver.

“Every trench, every covered position demonstrates a shared commitment to mobility, concealment, and resilience,” said Lewis.

A Classic Concept Meets a Modern Fight

Though trench warfare may evoke images of muddy stalemates and early 20th-century weaponry, recent conflicts have proven that the tactic is far from obsolete. The ongoing war in Ukraine has demonstrated how entrenched positions, overhead cover, and field fortifications can provide critical protection against

modern threats including drones and precision fires. What was once viewed as a relic of past wars has reemerged as a vital component of survivability in high-intensity, large-scale ground combat.

Today’s engineers are applying that hard-earned relevance to modern doctrine. Using precision equipment, updated tactics, and threat-informed design, U.S. Navy Seabees, Marine Corps combat engineers, and allied forces are modernizing trenches for use in multi-domain environments.

Seabees provide the horizontal construction expertise—operating bulldozers, graders, and compactors to carve structured fighting positions into dense Baltic soil.

Meanwhile, Marines from 8th ESB bring combat engineering insight, ensuring the trench layout supports tactical movement, defensibility, and low visibility against drone reconnaissance and attack.

“We have trained for this kind of work in the United States, but doing it here alongside the Seabees and our Latvian partners adds a different level of complexity,” explained SSgt. Austin Leigh, combat engineer and platoon sergeant with 8th ESB. “We are always thinking about our visibility from above, the effects of thermal detection, and how to keep the position secure from multiple angles.”

Partnered, Resourceful, Ready

One of the most distinctive aspects of this multinational effort is the Latvian Army’s use of a field-deployable sawmill, providing raw timber milled on site. The lumber is then used to reinforce trench walls, build overhead cover and concealment, and create tactical infrastructure, eliminating the need for long-lead construction materials that are not always readily available.

“Having a sawmill out here and cutting our own lumber changes

the game," said Chief Construction Mechanic William Fox, NCB 14 senior enlisted leader. "We are not waiting on flatbeds or shipping containers. We're using what is already around us to get the job done.

Fox explained that producing timber on site has helped his team stay on schedule and adapt in real time.

"Every board we cut with our own hands is one less we have to wait for," he said. "It keeps the crew moving, keeps the project rolling, and honestly, it just feels good to build something right here with what we have."

This effort also highlights the value of integrated training in a joint and allied environment. Seabees, Marines, and Latvian engineers have worked shoulder to shoulder, blending skills, sharing tools, and building trust through every shovel of earth and cut of timber.

"This has been some of the most valuable training I have had in my 12 years in the Navy," said Builder 1st Class Nathan Burke, project supervisor with NCB 14. "It has been a true privilege to work alongside both ESB Marines and the Latvian forces. I only hope we will be able to expand upon what we have started here."

Burke noted that the project not only benefited the mission—it also sharpened the warfighting instincts of the next generation.

"This trench project has provided a tremendous opportunity for our junior Bees and Marines to encounter and overcome some unique challenges," he said. "It is these types of problem-solving skills that will be crucial when we are operating in a true wartime scenario."

He added that the work accomplished in Skrunda is only the beginning of what is possible when allied engineers train together with a shared purpose.

“I am humbled by and incredibly proud of what our [team] has accomplished here these past weeks,” said Burke. “I feel as though we have just scraped the crust on what we could do here to develop and sharpen our skills, should we find ourselves fighting alongside our partners in the region.”

Preparing for the Next Fight

As training wraps in Skrunda, the trenches carved into the Latvian soil remain behind, standing as evidence of what can be accomplished when engineers from different nations work side by side. Built with shovels, saws, and shared experience, the project adds lasting value to the local training area and the forces who may use it in the future.

BALTOPS 2025 serves as a proving ground for ships, aircraft, and the people who build, dig, and design the infrastructure that supports them. In an era shaped by technology and unpredictability, the most effective tools are often the ones forged by hand, in the field, together.

For imagery, video, and updates, visit https://www.c6f.navy.mil. Media inquiries should be directed to U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa Public Affairs at: cne_cna_c6fpao@us.navy.mil

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Pacific Partnership 2025 Commences Mission Stop in Suva, Fiji

SUVA, Fiji (June 9, 2025) Engineering Aide 2nd Class Jordanne Jones, left, and Construction Electrician 2nd Class Connor Croissant, both assigned to Amphibious Construction Battalion 1, conduct construction repairs at Waiqanake School during Pacific Partnership 2025 in Suva, Fiji, June 9, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Moises Sandoval/Released)
11 June 2025

From Petty Officer 2nd Class Moises Sandoval, Logistics Group Western Pacific

SUVA, Fiji – Pacific Partnership has returned to Fiji to conduct the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster response preparedness mission in the Indo-Pacific region, June 8, 2025. Pacific Partnership fosters collaboration to enhance natural disaster response preparedness and builds lasting relationships between Fiji, the United States, and participating nations. Engagements for this year’s iteration will occur in the cities of Suva and Nadi.

At Fiji’s invitation, Pacific Partnership’s mission is to collaborate in several humanitarian and civic readiness workshops in areas such as engineering, natural disaster response, public health, and Fijian community outreach projects. This year’s mission, featuring about 58 personnel, is primarily a collective effort between Fiji, New Zealand and the United States.

“I am honored to oversee this year’s return of Pacific Partnership to the nation of Fiji,” said U.S. Navy Capt. Mark B. Stefanik, mission commander. “The continued opportunity to build upon our enduring relationship with the Fijian community further emphasizes a shared support of a free and resilient Indo-Pacific.”

While in Fiji, the Pacific Partnership 2025 team will focus on subject-matter exchanges and community education in permaculture, spearhead emergency preparedness and disaster response training, and conduct the foundational construction of a local schoolhouse. Additionally, the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band, accompanied by members of the Scots Guard, Royal Australian and Royal Canadian navies, will perform during a variety of community outreach engagements.

“We really appreciate Fiji welcoming us for Pacific Partnership 2025,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Gibson, Officer in Charge for the Fiji mission. “It’s awesome to be working alongside our Fijian counterparts, building a stronger, healthier, and more resilient Indo-Pacific together.”

Now in its 21st iteration, the Pacific Partnership series is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster management preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. Pacific Partnership works collaboratively with

host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase security and stability in the region, and foster new and enduring friendships in the Indo-Pacific.

America ARG and 31st MEU Marines Conduct Integrated Operations in Solomon Sea

From Lt. Carolina Fernandez, USS America, June 10, 2025

SOLOMON SEA – Elements of the America Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and the embarked 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) are conducting integrated operations in the Solomon Sea, June 9.

The amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), the amphibious transport dock ship USS San Diego (LPD 22), the amphibious transport dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47), and their Marine Corps 31st MEU embarked elements are the only forward-deployed ARG-MEU, and serve as the ready crisis-response force in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

“Operations at sea with our U.S. Marine Corps partners demonstrates the incredible capability of the America Amphibious Ready Group and strengthens Navy and Marine Corps integration at sea,” said Capt. Patrick German, commodore, Amphibious Squadron 11. “While underway, we look forward to advancing our capabilities through multi-domain operations.”

Deploying from USS America is a detachment of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 242 consisting of F-35B Lighting II aircraft operating from USS America, which provide commanders more stealth and flexibility than any other aircraft.

“The forward positioning of this much combat power shows how much skin in the game we have and illustrates our capability and resolve – which is the core of deterrence,” said Col. Chris P. Niedziocha, commanding officer, 31st MEU.

Comprised of more than 5,000 Marines and Sailors, the America ARG is an integral part of forward-deployed U.S. naval power in 7th Fleet. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Follow USS America (https://www.facebook.com/USSAmerica/) and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (https://www.facebook.com/31stMEU) on Facebook for regular updates throughout the patrol. For media inquiries, contact PAO@lha6.navy.mil.