

# Navy League Fly In Focuses Federal Attention on Sea Services



Navy League National President Christopher Townsend, right, speaks with Rep. Rob Wittman of Virginia during the Fly In. *Photo credit: James Peterson*

Members of the Navy League of the United States fanned out across congressional buildings on May 7 as part of the second consecutive “Anchors Aweigh Fly In” to help educate lawmakers and their staff about the needs of the men and women of the sea services.

Luke Lorenz, the senior director of legislative affairs at the Navy League, said nearly 60 members from around the country participated in the Fly In, a significant step up from the 40 who took part last year, when the annual effort was restarted in the wake of COVID.

They came from all over the country, as far away as California, representing the Navy League's different regions, he said.

The Navy Leaguers briefed lawmakers and their staff on a variety of issues, including the importance of passing regular appropriations bills instead of relying on continuing resolutions that freeze federal spending at last year's levels. For many agencies, including the Department of Defense, that amounts to a cut as it doesn't account for inflation.

Bolstered by a new report from the Congressional Budget Office, the Navy Leaguers advocated for at least a \$40 billion annual Navy shipbuilding and conversion budget to get to a 355-ship manned fleet, as well as \$10 billion annually to build an uncrewed fleet.

They also advocated for a \$20 billion Coast Guard budget (up from less than \$13.5 billion in fiscal 2024) and touted workforce development pipeline programs such as the Sea Cadets and Young Marines.

Last but not least, the group sought co-sponsors for the SHIPS for America Act, which would revitalize the U.S. shipbuilding and commercial maritime industries. Creating such an act was a chief goal of the Fly In last year; now that it has been introduced, the Navy Leaguers called for support and passage.



Nearly 60 Navy League members took part in the 2025 Fly In.  
*Photo credit: James Peterson*

“Today was a great day. It’s always a privilege to spend time with my fellow Navy Leaguers who fly down here on their own dime, taking time off from work and their busy lives, to advocate for our sea services, the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S.-flag Merchant Marine,” said board member Sara Fuentes.

“It’s really inspiring to see how they’re able to move the ball forward in terms of our sea service priorities. Last year we were here asking Congress to consider a SHIPS for America Act and today we are here asking for that SHIPS for America Act to have cosponsors. So, it’s amazing to see the progress we’ve already been able to make within one year thanks to the passion, dedication and service of Navy League members.”

After the busy day, members reported to National President Chris “Towny” Townsend they heard support for the SHIPS Act and the sea services during their meetings, and members were pleased the message was non-partisan.

Townsend said the event was “bittersweet” for him, as the Fly In is his last as national president, but said, “As always, it’s great to see our members engage, to execute on of our most important mission pillars, which is to advocate on behalf of our sea services, our sea service members and their families. And I saw that in full display today.”

## **Resonating Messages**

Hampton Dowling, of the Mid-Atlantic Council in Northern Virginia, said although he is a life member, the Fly In was his first event with the Navy League – and it won’t be the last.

He said the staffers he spoke with felt the SHIPS for America Act was something that needs to happen and were impressed that the Navy League is one of the driving forces behind it.

“To have such a definitive statement by staffers on a rather uncommon subject matter – and the bill is about as complex as an octopus – I was really impressed. I was very optimistic,” he said.

Retired Navy Commander Jim Semerad met with a variety of lawmakers and staffers, from Republican Rep. Pete Sessions of Texas to Michigan Democrat Rashida Tlaib, and said the message resonated well on both sides of the aisle.

Semerad said Sessions even “commandeered” him to address Sessions’ staff and educate them about the Navy League and its issues, and Tlaib was “very excited that I showed up” and came out of her office to speak with him.

“People wanted to do the right thing when it comes to the Navy’s and the sea services’ budget,” he said, including for keeping commercial shipping lanes open.

“This was a very positive experience,” Semerad said. “I would encourage everybody from the Navy League: Put on your

comfortable shoes, wear tennis shoes if necessary, and come to Washington, D.C. and have the experience of passing on the Navy's message. You'll feel good about it and the legislators feel good about it, too."

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## **USS Forrest Sherman Departs Norfolk for Routine Deployment**



From U.S. 2nd Fleet, May 7, 2025

NORFOLK, Va. – Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98) departed Naval Station Norfolk for a scheduled deployment on May 6, 2025.

USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98) departed Norfolk as part of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (CSG-12) for a scheduled

deployment to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. The deployment will underscore the U.S. Navy's commitment to maritime security and stability in the region.

"Our crew has relentlessly prepared for this deployment and are ready for any challenge we may face; I could not be more proud to lead these Sailors on deployment," said Cmdr. Andrew Darjany, commanding officer of Forrest Sherman. "Thank you to our families and the Norfolk community for your support as we head out to sea."

Forrest Sherman's last deployment was in 2022, when they served as the flagship for Standing NATO Maritime Group Two and operated in the European theater. As the flagship, Forrest Sherman led a multinational maritime group in operations throughout the Mediterranean Sea, ensuring security and stability in the region while supporting deterrence and defense of NATO territory. The ship conducted five multinational exercises with NATO Allies and partners, strengthening relationships with these critical allies and partners and reinforcing the U.S. commitment to the NATO Alliance and to the region.

"The Sailors of USS Forrest Sherman are headed to do our nation's work at sea," said Rear Adm. Paul Lanzilotta, commander of CSG-12. "The combat capabilities that this ship brings to a fight will be ready whenever tasked to deter, and if necessary, defeat, aggression in defense of America's interests around the world."

"Relentless Fighting Spirit," Forrest Sherman's motto, highlights the crew's commitment to their mission and to the U.S. Navy and our Allies and partners. Commissioned on January 28, 2006, USS Forrest Sherman is named in honor of Adm. Forrest Sherman, the 12th Chief of Naval Operations.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs

maritime ready forces to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

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## **Bollinger Shipyards and Edison Chouest Offshore Launch United Shipbuilding Alliance (USA)**

*USA has capacity to utilize any of its 19 strategically located shipyards and 14 fabrication facilities across Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida to optimize labor resources and accelerate project timelines*

*USA responds to Arctic Security Cutter RFI with a 33-month contract award-to-delivery timeline utilizing a commercial vessel construction for national security purpose model*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – [May 6, 2025] – Bollinger Shipyards, the largest privately-owned and operated shipbuilder and vessel repair company in the United States, and Edison Chouest Offshore (ECO), a global leader in advanced commercial vessel construction and operation, today announced the formation of a strategic partnership called United Shipbuilding Alliance (USA).

This partnership is designed to offer a fully integrated solution to expedited design, construction, and delivery of next-generation icebreakers to directly meet the urgent Arctic operational needs. USA recently responded to the U.S. Coast Guard's April 11<sup>th</sup> Request for Information titled, "Arctic

Security Cutter (ASC): Icebreaking Capable Vessels or Vessel Designs that are Ready for Construction,” outlining the utilization of a commercial vessel for national security purposes acquisition process that spans 33 months from contract award to delivery.

The viability and effectiveness of commercial vessel construction for national security purposes have been firmly demonstrated through the recent acquisition of the USCGC STORIS (WAGB-21) [ex – M/V AIVIQ]. The STORIS is an American-built icebreaker designed for Arctic conditions and delivered in under three years.

The proposed commercial acquisition method will save U.S. taxpayers more than 40% by reducing and eliminating excess program bloat, government vendor source selection mandates, and redundant bureaucratic reporting mandates. The streamlined approach enables agile execution, smart vendor selection, and the flexibility to shift work across multiple facilities, ensuring projects stay on schedule, minimize disruption, and remain on budget. Programs benefit from stable, contract-driven workforces and flexible timelines, with the ability to shift work across multiple facilities to stay on schedule and control costs. In contrast, government acquisition often suffers from regulatory delays, rigid change management, and increased costs.

“If the mission demands speed, efficiency, and innovation, the answer is clear, let American industry lead,” said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. “The formation of the United Shipbuilding Alliance comes at a pivotal moment and answers President Trump’s call to action in making American Shipbuilding Great Again. I am excited by President Trump’s efforts to reinvigorate America’s shipyards. Through his leadership, he has reignited demand, sparked competition, and challenged American industry to rise to the occasion with urgency and creativity.”

“The creation of the United Shipbuilding Alliance represents a significant evolution in America’s capacity to rapidly address urgent Arctic operational requirements,” said Gary Chouest, President and CEO of Edison Chouest Offshore. “Our collaboration underscores a dedicated commitment to ensuring America retains a decisive edge in maritime capabilities and enhancing national security within the increasingly strategic Arctic region.”

USA will leverage the combined 144 years of expertise and capacity of Bollinger and ECO’s 6,000-plus skilled American workers across their 33 operational shipyards and fabrication facilities across the Gulf of America to rapidly design, build, and deliver icebreakers for commercial and government customers. Between the two American companies, they have built and delivered four icebreakers in the last three decades, and Bollinger is currently constructing the Polar Security Cutter (PSC) program for the U.S. Coast Guard.

Bollinger took over the struggling PSC program in late 2022 when it acquired Singapore-owned VT Halter, which had amassed more than a quarter billion dollars in losses over the first three years of the program. Last week, Bollinger announced it has received approval from the U.S. Coast Guard to begin full production activities on the PSC program, underscoring the confidence the U.S. Government places in Bollinger to deliver the nation’s first heavy polar icebreaker in nearly fifty years. Bollinger has delivered over 180 vessels for the U.S. Coast Guard in its more than 40 years of building for the U.S. government.

Bordelon continued, “It is critically important that any vessel transporting U.S. servicemembers and projecting American power abroad be built here in the United States. The United Shipbuilding Alliance is proof that American industry can and will deliver faster, better, and more cost-effectively, by aligning commercial innovation with national security priorities. Together with our partners at Edison

Chouest Offshore, we're leveraging our combined experience, infrastructure, and skilled American workforce to give the United States the tools it needs to lead in the Arctic."

The U.S. government has demonstrated a clear need for growing, strengthening and accelerating America's Arctic operational capabilities. Emphasizing innovation, fiscal responsibility, and efficiency, USA will leverage the speed and advanced maritime engineering, naval architects, and designer techniques of commercial construction to streamline the procurement of each vessel, significantly expediting production schedules, and achieving substantial cost efficiencies, benefiting both government needs and taxpayers.

#### About United Shipbuilding Alliance

United Shipbuilding Alliance (USA) is a teaming agreement between Bollinger Shipyards and Edison Chouest Offshore, combining over 140 years of government and commercial maritime construction experience, during which they have constructed and delivered over 4,000 vessels. The alliance is specifically organized to rapidly design, build and deliver advanced, mission-critical icebreaking vessels, directly addressing operational needs and enhancing strategic national capabilities of the United States in Arctic waters. Together, Bollinger and ECO have 33 operational shipyard and fabrication facilities.

#### About Bollinger Shipyards

With an 80-year legacy of excellence, Bollinger Shipyards is a leading designer and builder of high-performance military patrol boats, salvage vessels, research vessels, and a wide array of specialized maritime assets. With 13 strategically located shipyards and 22 dry-docks across Louisiana and Mississippi, Bollinger is the largest privately-owned shipbuilder in the Gulf of America region, dedicated to innovation and the highest standards of quality in

shipbuilding.

## About Edison Chouest Offshore

Founded in 1960, Edison Chouest Offshore (ECO) is recognized as one of the most diverse and dynamic marine transportation solution providers and commercial shipbuilders in the world. ECO operates a global fleet of nearly 300 vessels, including some of the most technically advanced ships serving the offshore, research, and national security sectors. With capabilities spanning vessel design, new construction, port operations, and subsea services, ECO maintains shipyards, fabrication facilities, and port terminals throughout the Americas. ECO continues to be an innovative leader in new technologies, integrated bridge systems, and global vessel monitoring technologies.

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## **EOS Awarded Laser Powder Bed Fusion Training Contract by U.S. Navy**



*The U.S. Navy's Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program, in partnership with BlueForge Alliance, has funded the EOS Additive Minds Academy to train the MIB suppliers in laser powder bed fusion (LPBF) process chain to strengthen the industrial 3D printing workforce*

*MIB suppliers will participate in hands-on and online Additive Minds Academy courses, designed to equip users with critical skills in additive manufacturing*

*From EOS*

NOVI, Michigan, May 7, 2025 – EOS, a leading supplier of additive manufacturing (AM) solutions for industrial 3D printing, today announced a contract to support the U.S. Navy's Maritime Industrial Base initiative to provide end-to-end LPBF process training for MIB suppliers. The initiative aims to strengthen AM efficiency and bridge the maritime AM education and workforce gap.

Beginning in May 2025, [the training program will take place at the Additive Minds Academy Center in Novi, Michigan, and](#)

combines online coursework with hands-on experience to equip MIB suppliers with critical skills in AM software, LPBF system operation, and ASTM machine certifications free of charge.

“This program helps the U.S. Navy offer suppliers skilled personnel trained in new technologies like laser powder bed fusion, which will enable us to quickly fill critical component gaps that our traditional manufacturing base can’t provide in a timely fashion,” according to Dr. Justin Rettaliata, MIB Program Additive Manufacturing Lead. “Through initiatives like this, the MIB Program is advancing more agile and responsive manufacturing technologies in the U.S. Navy’s supply chain to quickly produce parts.”

The initiative aims to strengthen AM efficiency and bridge the maritime AM education and workforce development gap. All courses will be led by EOS and ASTM certified Additive Minds Academy trainers, and upon completion, participants will earn industry-recognized certifications for metal AM data preparation and metal machine operation, certified by ASTM.

The EOS Additive Minds Academy training courses include:

- Data Preparation Metal Certification
  
- Metal LPBF System Operator Training
  
- ASTM Machine Operator Certification

“In recent years, the imperative for faster, more adaptable manufacturing processes to meet the U.S. Navy’s production objectives has become increasingly evident,” said Fabian Alefeld, Director of Business Development and Additive Minds Academy at EOS. “Bridging this manufacturing gap demands innovative thinking, advanced technologies, and – most critically, a skilled workforce equipped to leverage these new

tools effectively. We are honored to provide the training and education essential for the MIB and the U.S. Navy to successfully integrate additive manufacturing into their broader operational framework.”

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# **Rite-Solutions Awarded \$234M SBIR Phase III Contract for Combat Systems of the Future**

From Rite Solutions

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. (May 6, 2025)—On May 1st, the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) awarded a 5-year, SBIR Phase III contract to Rite-Solutions. This \$243M contract – the largest in the history of the company – will enable Rite-Solutions to provide innovative solutions in systems and software engineering that are geared towards maximizing the effectiveness and suitability of future combat system while reducing risk and total cost.

“This contract award is one of the most significant achievements in the history of our company,” said CEO and Co-Founder Joe Marino. “We are extremely excited to be able to bring our innovation and energy to the next evolution of combat systems.” Co-Founders and Board members Jim and Linda Lavoie agree, stating that “this contract, resulting from the hard work and excellent support of our workforce, solidifies our place as a significant contributor to the advancement of our Undersea Warfare capabilities.”

The goals of the CSoF initiative include (1) improving mission effectiveness while achieving optimal manning levels and reducing total life-cycle costs; (2) inserting new functionality and capability for current and future ship platform and combat systems improvements in both organic and off-hull systems; and (3) leveraging systems engineering to develop cost-effective improvements in the lab environment for modeling, simulation, test and integration. Efforts will be focused on new submarine platforms, including but not limited to the Next-Generation Attack Submarine (SSN(X)), to support technology innovations and improvements, acquisition, research and development, design, specification development, and test and evaluation.

“This is a big win for Rite-Solutions and our many talented industry partners,” said Laurie Carter, Executive Vice President for Business Development and CSoF Capture Manager. “We are eager to get started – bringing our innovative mindset to the goal of building a more efficient, flexible and adaptable combat system.”

Execution of tasking under the CSoF contract will be managed by Mike Miller, CSoF Director and Program Manager, who will be responsible for coordinating the efforts of Rite-Solutions and nearly 20 industry partners.

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## **SECDEF Directs Flag and General Billet Reductions**

From the Department of Defense, May 5, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – The following memorandum was issued by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth:

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP SUBJECT:

General/Flag Officer Reductions

The Department of Defense is committed to ensuring the lethality of U.S. Military Forces to deter threats and, when necessary, achieve decisive victory. To accomplish this mission, we must cultivate exceptional senior leaders who drive innovation and operational excellence, unencumbered by unnecessary bureaucratic layers that hinder their growth and effectiveness.

A critical step in this process is removing redundant force structure to optimize and streamline leadership by reducing excess general and flag officer positions.

Therefore, I direct the following actions:

- A minimum 20% reduction of 4-star positions across the Active Component;
- A minimum 20% reduction of general officers in the National Guard; and
- An additional minimum 10% reduction in general and flag officers with the realignment of the Unified Command Plan.

Through these measures, we will uphold our position as the most lethal fighting force in the world, achieving peace through strength and ensuring greater efficiency, innovation, and preparedness for any challenge that lies ahead.

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# Interdisciplinary Engineering Major Now Offered at CGA



U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) cadets observe Boston Dynamic's robot, Spot, controlled by a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Lincoln Laboratory researcher (left) at USCGA, New London, Connecticut, Nov. 27, 2023. (Photo by U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Third Class Matthew Thieme.)

From the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, May 5, 2025

NEW LONDON, Conn. – The [U.S. Coast Guard Academy](#) has launched a new academic major. [Interdisciplinary Engineering](#) (IDE) prepares future officers for careers across a wide spectrum of Coast Guard missions. IDE is open to cadets beginning with the Class of 2028.

The new academic major advances an interdisciplinary approach to prepare cadets to serve in a wide variety of Coast Guard careers. Interdisciplinary Engineering students will be able to customize their plan of study to suit their interests and

be well prepared to pursue a Professional Engineer license and graduate school in engineering or other disciplines.

In addition to the core curriculum for all cadets, IDE students will complete required engineering, math, and science courses to meet accreditation criteria in ABET's Engineering Accreditation Commission. The IDE curriculum also leaves room for a series of engineering and free electives, making it much more flexible compared with CGA's other engineering programs. This flexibility allows students to take courses in areas of interest related to [Coast Guard missions](#) and sub-disciplines.

Potential areas of focus include (but are not limited to): Aviation/Aerospace Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Marine Safety Engineering, Cybersecurity, Engineering Management, Industrial Engineering, Ocean Engineering, Power Systems & Control Engineering, and Systems Engineering.

"The Interdisciplinary Engineering major equips cadets with the ability to tackle complex, real-world challenges that don't fit neatly into a single discipline. By blending foundational engineering principles with systems thinking and innovation, our graduates will be uniquely prepared to support the Coast Guard's evolving missions and lead in dynamic, mission-critical environments."

Housed in the School of Engineering and Cyber Systems, the IDE program will give cadets a hands-on educational experience. IDE students will have access to the Academy's power lab, circulating water channel, wind tunnel, towing tank, 3-D printers, and other engineering lab facilities.

The announcement of the new major comes after recent recognition from the Carnegie Foundation on the [Academy's second Carnegie Classification](#) for continued leadership in providing high-impact, STEM-focused academic programs to prepare cadets for future service.

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# USS Miguel Keith Completes Overhaul at MHI

From U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility Japan RMC (SRF-JRMC), May 2, 2025

YOKOHAMA, KANAGAWA, Japan – The U.S. Navy's Lewis B. Puller-class expeditionary mobile base USS Miguel Keith (ESB-5) completed a five-month Regular Overhaul (ROH) availability at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), Yokohama, Japan, April 15, 2025.

The ROH marks the first time a Japanese shipyard has bid on and won an ROH contract of this scale for a U.S. Navy Vessel. The ROH is much larger work vice voyage repairs (VRs), which have been conducted at the shipyard previously. 10 U.S.C. § 863 prohibits overhauling, repairing, or maintaining U.S. naval vessels in foreign-owned and operated shipyards outside the United States, except for VRs. Still, since the USS Miguel Keith's availability was under 6 months and the ship was not due to return to the U.S. within 15 months, this statute did not apply.

U.S. Ship Repair Facility and Regional Maintenance Center's (SRF-JRMC) Singapore Detachment, which usually supports the ship's maintenance availabilities, planned the \$12 million project executed by MHI. During the availability, 56,000 square feet of nonskid decking was replaced on the flight deck and mission deck. In twenty-nine spaces, including the galley, scullery, laundry, and berthing areas, deck replacement and preservation were accomplished. Over 10,000 square feet of the forward deckhouse superstructure and MOGAS deck and associated equipment were also preserved. MHI also fabricated, welded,

and replaced over 300 feet of flight deck catwalk safety handrails. Additionally, four galley ovens were replaced, and the entire exterior of the ship was painted bow to stern.

This was the first ROH for the Singapore Detachment, according to Douglas Cabacungan, the Project Manager. "Usually, we provide shorter emergent and continuous maintenance repairs outside of Japan," said Cabacungan. "So, we were able to expand our skill set, work outside of our comfort zone, and work with a contractor we normally do not work with which will pay dividends when we need to start operating in places we aren't currently."

"The ability to use Mitsubishi Heavy Industry's shipyard to conduct this level of maintenance availability has allowed SRF-JRMC's organic workforce in Yokosuka to focus their efforts on the three other warship maintenance availabilities being conducted simultaneously," said Capt. Wendel Penetrante, Commander of SRF-JRMC. "We were even able to complete one of those availabilities 3 days early and respond to two unplanned voyage repairs."

The USS Miguel Keith is a 240-meter-long vessel designed to be a customizable floating command base that can launch helicopters and small boats, provide living quarters for troops, and command-and-control facilities. Her large open decks can accommodate a variety of other capabilities, including berthing for special operations troops, laundry facilities, or cold storage. The ship has been operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations since September 2020 with a mixed crew of Sailors and civilian mariners from Military Sealift Command (MSC).

For over 75-years, U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) has been the linchpin of U.S. naval operations in the Indo-Pacific region, providing intermediate-level and depot-level repair for the ships of the

U.S. Navy and the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

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# Department of Defense Demonstrates Reusability of Hypersonic Test Vehicle

From the U.S. Department of Defense, May 5, 2025

The U.S. Department of Defense Test Resource Management Center (TRMC), in partnership with Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane Division (NSWC Crane), conducted a second successful flight of a fully recoverable uncrewed hypersonic test vehicle in March 2025, within three months of the first test in December 2024. This test campaign marks the Nation's first return to reusable hypersonic flight testing since the manned X-15 program ended in 1968.

In both tests, the Stratolaunch Talon-A hypersonic vehicle launched from the Roc carrier aircraft, flew over the Pacific Ocean and achieved speeds greater than Mach 5 before landing at Vandenberg Space Force Base. The landmark tests supported the ongoing TRMC Multi-Service Advanced Capability Hypersonics Test Bed (MACH-TB) project.

George Rumford, Director of the TRMC, stated, "Demonstrating the reuse of fully recoverable hypersonic test vehicles is an important milestone for MACH-TB. Lessons learned from this test campaign will help us reduce vehicle turnaround time from months down to weeks."

MACH-TB accelerates delivery of advanced hypersonic capabilities to the warfighter by providing DoD, other Federal

agencies, industry, and academia the capability to affordably and rapidly conduct hypersonic experiments and test hypersonic system components.

NSWC Crane awarded the MACH-TB contract to Leidos through the Strategic and Spectrum Missions Advanced Resilient Trusted Systems (S2MARTS) Other Transaction Authority (OTA) vehicle on behalf of the TRMC. As the prime contractor for MACH-TB, Leidos awarded Stratolaunch, LLC a competitive contract to provide flight test services for the program.

### **About TRMC**

The U.S. Department of Defense Test Resource Management Center (TRMC) is a DoD Field Activity that reports directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The mission of the TRMC is to ensure the readiness of DoD to experiment and test.

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**Maritime Program Previews  
Talent Pipeline Program,  
Future of Maritime Careers**



Matt Sermon, Direct Reporting Program Manager, Maritime Industrial Base Program, participates in the 2024 Philadelphia Signing Day event in June 2024.

By Maritime Industrial Base Program, May 6, 2025

WASHINGTON – Across shipyards and classrooms, welding booths and engineering labs, a new wave of talent prepares to step into critical roles shaping America’s defense future.

In May and June, the U.S. Navy’s Talent Pipeline Program (TPP) will recognize the individuals, employers, and training partners driving this workforce initiative, kicking off the third year of a program now aligned under the Navy’s expanded Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program.

The 2025 TPP Signing Day season begins this month with a series of regional celebrations hosted across seven pipelines serving key maritime hubs and national employers. These events will honor thousands of new hires entering the Defense Industrial Base and highlight the growing collaboration among local industry, academia, and Navy leadership. The season will

culminate with a national Signing Day event in late June that will bring all regions together for a shared celebration of purpose and progress.

The newest program, known as the Enterprise Plus pipeline, applies the same proven approach to companies that have a national presence and multiple facilities, which are suppliers located outside of one of the six regional pipelines. This addition ensures that TPP remains accessible to employers and workers across the country, regardless of geography.

“This isn’t just a hiring effort,” said Matt Sermon, Direct Reporting Program Manager of the MIB Program. “The young men and women preparing to join this workforce are answering a national call. Each of them plays a role in securing the American way of life.”

The TPP provides the training and tools needed to create and sustain a talent pipeline that empowers employers to recruit, hire, train and retain a skilled workforce.

### **A Strategic Evolution: TPP Now part of the MIB Program**

The MIB Program leads the Navy’s effort to revitalize America’s shipbuilding and repair capabilities. Established in September 2024, it strengthens and expands the industrial base that builds and maintains surface ships, aircraft carriers, and submarines vital to national defense.

Originally part of the Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) Program, TPP is now a cornerstone of the MIB Program’s workforce strategy. This realignment allows the program to expand beyond submarines to include careers tied to the full range of naval shipbuilding—opening new pathways for skilled tradespeople across the country.

### **Six Regions, One Mission**

The 2025 regional Signing Day events will take place across

six strategic locations: Virginia, two locations in Pennsylvania, Southern California, New York, and Massachusetts. Each site represents a unique collaboration among regional employers, workforce boards, academic institutions, and Navy partners, all focused on cultivating talent pipelines tailored to local industry needs.

From first-time participants to returning employers, the momentum is strong. New training partners, expanded industry participation, and rising student interest point to a banner year for TPP.

“The US Navy Talent Pipeline Program trains, coaches, encourages, and recognizes Small/Medium sized Defense Industrial Base Employers for improving the performance of their Talent Acquisition and Retention systems, running a better business and providing more industrial base capacity to support the Navy demand,” said Joe Barto, Talent Pipeline Program Manager. “The 2025 Signing Days across all the Regional Flags and culminating with the National Signing Days are all about recognizing the 452 Employer Partners for their work in recruiting, hiring, onboarding and retaining new teammates.”

### **A Growing Legacy of Opportunity**

Now entering its third year, TPP has helped facilitate hiring more than 9550 individuals since its launch. In 2025 alone, over 4,200 new hires are expected to be recognized through the Signing Day events.

The program’s network has expanded to include more than 450 employers this year.

“To those embarking on a career in national security, what you do is vital to defending the American way of life,” Sermon said. “The only way America will keep pace with the industrial might of our competitors is with American workers, American innovation, and technical excellence.”

## **Looking Ahead: A National Celebration of Service and Skill**

This year's regional events will build toward a culminating national Signing Day in late June, where leaders from across the Navy, industry, and education will gather to celebrate this new generation of maritime professionals.

"These events aren't about the numbers—they're about the people," Sermon added. "These men and women are the foundation of our national defense. With every submarine and surface ship we build, their impact is clear."

With more than 250,000 skilled workers needed over the next decade to meet the Navy's construction and maintenance goals, the stakes are high—but so is the energy behind this mission.

The TPP's upcoming Signing Day events are more than ceremonies. They're a signal to the nation that the workforce behind the fleet is strong, growing, and ready.