Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group F/A-18 Super Hornet Lost at Sea

From the Navy Office of Information, 28 April 2025

MANAMA, Bahrain – USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) lost an F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 136 and a tow tractor as the aircraft carrier operated in the Red Sea, April 28. All personnel are accounted for, with one Sailor

sustaining a minor injury.

The F/A-18E was actively under tow in the hangar bay when the move crew lost control of the aircraft. The aircraft and tow tractor were lost overboard.

Sailors towing the aircraft took immediate action to move clear of the aircraft before it fell overboard. An investigation is underway.

The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group and embarked air wing remain fully mission capable.

The strike group consists of flagship Harry S. Truman, the nine squadrons of Carrier Air Wing 1, three guided-missile destroyers of Destroyer Squadron 28, and the Ticonderoga-class cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64).

State Dept. Approves Possible Sale of Tomahawk Missiles to The Netherlands

PACIFIC OCEAN (Dec. 1, 2020) The guided-missile destroyer USS Chafee (DDG 90) launches a Block V Tomahawk, the weapon's newest variant, during a missile exercise. (U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Sean Ianno)
From the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, April 25, 2025

WASHINGTON – The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of the Netherlands of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles and related equipment for an estimated cost of $2.19 billion. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency delivered the required certification notifying Congress of this possible sale today.

The Government of the Netherlands has requested to buy up to 163 Tomahawk Block V All Up Rounds (AURs); 12Tomahawk Block IV AURs; up to 10 Tactical Tomahawk Weapons Control Systems (TTWCS); and up to two Tomahawk Block IV telemetry missiles, as well as other components, systems, training, spare parts and other support.

The proposed sale will improve the Netherland's capability to meet current and future threats by utilizing long-range,

conventional surface-to-surface missiles with significant standoff range that can neutralize growing threats. The Netherlands will have no difficulty absorbing these articles and services into its armed forces.

The principal contractor will be RTX Corporation, located in Tucson, Arizona.

Editor's note: The sale would make The Netherlands the fifth nation to deploy the Tomahawk, after the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan.

Continuing Promise 2025 Completes Planning USNS Comfort to Deploy to SOUTHCOM Region

From U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs, April 28, 2025

NORFOLK, Va. – Military and civilian planners from the United States and six partner nations met this week in Norfolk, Va., to make final plans for the upcoming Continuing Promise 2025 deployment.

U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) will deploy in support of Continuing Promise 2025, with the ship scheduled to conduct mission stops in Grenada, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. U.S. Navy Capt. Ryan Kendall, Deputy Commander, Destroyer Squadron 40 (COMDESRON 40) will serve as mission commander for Continuing Promise 2025.

Representatives from the six U.S. country teams joined other U.S. personnel at the conference, meticulously reviewing medical engagements, subject matter expert exchanges, and public engagements for each mission stop, which includes the participation of partner nation personnel and non-governmental organizations. Participants also heard from Capt. Bryan Carmichael, Continuing Promise 2022 Mission Commander, and Lt. Cmdr. Zachary Smith, Continuing Promise 2024 Mission Commander, who both shared their lessons learned and observations from their respective missions.

“Through detailed planning with our friends and partners, we have the blueprint for a successful Continuing Promise 2025 deployment,” said Capt. Kendall. “We look forward to bringing USNS Comfort to all six partner nations with the intent of strengthening maritime partnerships by helping people in need.”

Continuing Promise 2025 marks the 15th mission to the region since 2007 and the eighth time that USNS Comfort will visit the region in those 18 years. Continuing Promise 2025 will

foster goodwill, strengthen existing partnerships with partner nations, and encourage the establishment of new partnerships among countries, non-government organizations, and international organizations.

“The Continuing Promise 2025 Team has produced a strong plan for USNS Comfort Sailors and civilians to carry out,” said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet. “We are committed to supporting the success of this important mission.”

Since its inception in 2007, Continuing Promise has treated more than 605,000 patients and performed approximately 7,300 surgeries, leaving a lasting positive impact on people in need.

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

USCENTCOM Forces Continue to Target Houthi Terrorists

From U.S. Central Command, Apr. 27, 2025

TAMPA, Fla. – Since March 15, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces have conducted an intense and sustained campaign targeting the Houthi terrorist organization in Yemen to restore freedom of navigation and American deterrence. These operations have been executed using detailed and comprehensive intelligence ensuring lethal effects against the Houthis while minimizing risk to civilians.

- To preserve operational security, we have intentionally

limited disclosing details of our ongoing or future operations. We are very deliberate in our operational approach, but will not reveal specifics about what we've done or what we will do.

- We will continue to increase the pressure and further disintegrate Houthi capabilities as long as they continue to impede freedom of navigation.

- Since the start of Operation Rough Rider, USCENTCOM has struck over 800 targets. These strikes have killed hundreds of Houthi fighters and numerous Houthi leaders, including senior Houthi missile and UAV officials.

- The strikes have destroyed multiple command-and-control facilities, air defense systems, advanced weapons manufacturing facilities, and advanced weapons storage locations. These storage facilities housed advanced conventional weapons, including anti-ship ballistic and cruise missiles, unmanned aerial systems, and uncrewed surface vessels, which were employed in Houthi terrorist attacks on international shipping lanes.

- While the Houthis have continued to attack our vessels, our operations have degraded the pace and effectiveness of their attacks. Ballistic missile launches have dropped by 69%. Additionally, attacks from one way attack drones have decreased by 55%.

- U.S. strikes destroyed the ability of Ras Isa Port to accept fuel which will begin to impact Houthi ability to not only conduct operations, but also to generate millions of dollars in revenue for their terror

activities.

- The operation has been conducted by a robust assembly of forces to include two Carrier Strike Groups, the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group and the Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group. We are extremely proud of our well-trained and professional forces as they have effectively delivered precise and lethal strikes against Houthi military capabilities.

- Iran undoubtedly continues to provide support to the Houthis. The Houthis can only continue to attack our forces with the backing of the Iranian regime.

- We will continue to ratchet up the pressure until the objective is met, which remains the restoration of freedom of navigation and American deterrence in the region.

USNS Sojourner Truth Christened as MSC’s Newest Fleet Replenishment Oiler

From Sarah Cannon, April 28, 2025

SAN DIEGO – Military Sealift Command's (MSC) newest fleet replenishment oiler USNS Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210), was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, Calif., last night.

The event was attended by Dr. Brett A. Seidle, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy; Vice Adm. John F. G. Wade, commander, U.S. THIRD Fleet; Capt. Micah Murphy, commander, Military Sealift Command Pacific; executives and employees of NASSCO San Diego; and the decedents of Sojourner

Truth.

The ship honors Sojourner Truth, and escaped slave who became an American abolitionist and activist for African-American civil rights, women's rights, and alcohol temperance.

"We reserve the naming of our ships for special places, historic events and great people who represent the best among us, and who's distinguished contributions are worthy of our remembrances for generations to come," said Seidel. "In that vein, Sojourner Truth was a natural choice to be memorialized with a ship bearing her name."

The official christening moment happened when the ship's sponsor, Barbara Allen, the sixth-generation granddaughter of Sojourner Truth, broke a bottle of champagne over the ship's bow with the words, "For the United States of America, I christen you the USNS Sojourner Truth. May God bless this ship and all who sail on her." Following the christening moment, the ship blew her horns and slid down the rails, amid a fanfare of music from the Navy Band Southwest and a shower of red, white and blue streamers.

The 746-foot Truth is the sixth ship of the John Lewis fleet replenishment oiler class. Truth has the ability to carry 162,000 barrels of diesel ship fuel, aviation fuel and dry stores cargo. The John Lewis class is built with double hulls to protect against oil spills and strengthened cargo and ballast tanks and will be equipped with a basic self-defense capability. The Lewis-class of oilers will replace the current Kaiser Class fleet replenishment oilers as they age out of the MSC fleet.

"The greatness of this ship is only matched by the greatness of her crew who represent the thousands of Civil Service Mariners at sea today and the staff of Military Sealift Command who support them ashore, "said Murphy. "Our nation and

our Navy are fortunate to have these Americans who step forward through the maritime academies, the union halls, the maritime industry, and many other walks of life, from all corners of the nation to serve in the United States Merchant Marine. In peacetime or war, U.S. Merchant Mariners have answered the call to service every time. They demonstrate a deep and rich history of professionalism, seamanship, and bravery across the globe."

In addition to Truth, three more Lewis-class oilers are on order for the Navy. In July 2016, US Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus said that he would name the Lewis-class oilers after prominent civil rights activists and leaders including Harvey Milk, Lucy Stone, Thurgood Marshall, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Harriet Tubman.

"The Navy's ability to project power across the globe depends on sustained operations at sea and that simply wouldn't be possible without ships like USNS Sojourner Truth," said Murphy. "Without MSC's Combat Logistics Force, carrier strike groups and amphibious forces would be tethered to shore-based support, severely limiting their reach and operational tempo. In short, these ships enable U.S. naval forces to remain forward-deployed, flexible, and ready to respond anywhere in the world on short notice."

MSC directs and supports operations for approximately 140 civilian-crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy ships at sea, conduct specialized missions, preposition combat cargo at sea around the world, perform a variety of support services, and move military equipment and supplies to deployed U.S. forces. MSC exists to support the joint warfighter across the full spectrum of military operations, with a workforce that includes approximately 6,000 Civil Service Mariners and 1,100 contract mariners, supported by 1,500 shore staff and 1,400 active duty and reserve military personnel.

Coast Guard Offloads More than $214 million Worth of Illegal Cocaine in San Diego

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) crew members, Tactical Law Enforcement Team South, U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Los Angeles/Long Beach, Navy, Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron Jacksonville all stand at attention during an all hands event during a drug offload in San Diego April 24, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Austin Wiley)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, April 24, 2025

SAN DIEGO – The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) offloaded approximately 18,898 pounds of cocaine, with an estimated value of more than $214.3 million, on

Thursday in San Diego.

The offload is a result of six separate suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions or events off the coasts of Mexico and Central and South America by the Coast Guard Cutter Kimball and Coast Guard Cutter Forward during the months of February through April.

Multiple U.S. agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security, collaborate in the effort to combat transnational organized crime. The Coast Guard, Navy, Customs and Border Protection, FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, along with allied and international partner agencies, all play a role in counter-narcotic operations.

The fight against drug cartels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean requires unity of effort in all phases, from detection, monitoring and interdictions to criminal prosecutions by international partners and U.S. Attorneys' Offices in districts across the nation. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean is conducted under the authority of the Eleventh Coast Guard District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The interdictions, including the actual boardings, are led and conducted by members of the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard continues to increase operations to interdict, seize, and disrupt transshipment of cocaine and other bulk illicit drugs by sea. These drugs fuel and enable cartels and Transnational Criminal Organizations to produce and traffic illegal fentanyl threatening the U.S.

The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball is one of two legend-class national security cutters homeported in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The Coast Guard Cutter Kimball's crew can operate in the most demanding open ocean environments, and the vast approaches of the Southern Pacific, where significant narcotics trafficking

occurs.

US Navy to Christen Future USNS Sojourner Truth

From the Navy Offoce of Information, 25 April 2025

SAN DIEGO—The U.S Navy will christen the future USNS Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210) during a ceremony on April 26 at 8 p.m. (PDT) at General Dynamics NASSCO.

Dr. Brett Seidle, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy, will deliver the principal address followed by remarks from Vice Adm. John Wade, commander, U.S. Third Fleet; Capt. Micah Murphy, commander, Military Sealift Command (MSC), Pacific; and Dave Carver, president, General Dynamics NASSCO.

T-AO 210 is named in honor of Sojourner Truth, a nineteenth century civil rights activist from New York. In a time-honored Navy tradition, ship sponsor Barbara Allen, a sixth-generation descendant of the ship's namesake, will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

The christening of the future USNS Sojourner Truth symbolizes the Navy's 250-year commitment to innovation and maritime dominance. From seabed to space, the Navy delivers power for peace – always ready to fight and win. This milestone marks the Navy's enduring legacy and commitment to shaping the future of maritime power.

John Lewis-class fleet replenishment oilers (T-AOs) are operated by MSC and feature substantial volume for oil as well as significant dry cargo capacity. They also possess aviation

capability. T-AOs provide additional capacity to the Navy's Combat Logistics Force and are a cornerstone of the Navy's fuel delivery system. These ships are essential to sustaining contested logistics, enabling lethality even in sea-denied environments.

General Dynamics NASSCO is currently in production of three additional T-AOs, with two more under contract for future production. Additionally, a Block Buy contract was issued in September 2024 for the detail design and construction of T-AO 214-221.

Program Executive Office, Ships, one of the Department of Defense's largest acquisition organizations, is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, and auxiliary ships, including special mission ships, sealift ships and support ships.

DIU Is Vehicle for Boosting Navy Technology

A team of Department of Defense drone operators and experts test the technical capabilities of various uncrewed aerial systems during a Defense Innovation Unit led prize challenge to identify platforms, components, and capabilities for Blue UAS, which clears and validates flying platforms are safe to fly, cyber-secure, and meet DOD requirements, at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, on Nov. 2-6, 2024. *Photo credit: DIU | Devon Bistarkey*

As the U.S. Navy and Department of Defense race to develop more innovative offensive and defensive capabilities to deter China and other adversaries, most agree that greater engagement with the private technology sector is needed.

That’s in part the impetus behind the Replicator initiative, a DoD effort started in 2023 to speed adoption of commercial military and national security technology, particularly lower-cost uncrewed capabilities. This is also key to realizing the goals of the new 2024 Navigation Plan, released in September by Admiral Lisa M. Franchetti, then the 33rd chief of naval operations. The plan focuses on faster integration of robotics

and autonomous resources.

Enter the Defense Innovation Unit, a once “experimental” DoD office that in 10 years has become a central player in the Pentagon’s push to adopt and scale commercial technology for military applications.

Since its start in 2015, the office has pioneered deep relationships with Silicon Valley and the tech sector nationwide and a process for quickly prototyping military applications of commercial technologies. This has led to 450 prototype contracts and $68 billion in private investment, according to DIU’s fiscal 2023 annual report. These investments translated into 62 contracts for commercial solution transitions to the warfighter, the DIU report says.

Although DIU is a small office, with a fiscal 2024 budget of $983 million (compared to the nearly $875 billion in annual authorized defense spending), its influence is growing and getting attention. In 2023, the Pentagon elevated DIU in the organization chart to report directly to the office of the defense secretary. Now, DIU Director Douglas A. Beck serves on or provides leadership and staff support to various entities driving Pentagon innovation, including the Deputy’s Innovation Steering Group and Defense Innovation Working Group, both of which have oversight roles in implementing Replicator.

This puts “DIU at the forefront to deliver future capabilities at speed and scale,” Beck said in Feb. 15, 2024, testimony before the House Armed Services Committee.

DIU-Navy Collaboration

To learn more about how DIU works with the Navy to bring about innovation, Seapower spoke late last year with Alex Campbell, a highly decorated Navy captain who is director of the Maritime portfolio at DIU. Campbell, who has a master’s degree in business administration from Georgetown University, is a designated officer in explosive ordnance disposal, diving and

salvage, and surface warfare and a naval parachutist. He supported the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and others around the globe and, throughout his career, earned multiple service and campaign awards.

Campbell is also experienced in defense procurement. He ran the counter weapons of mass destruction portfolio for Special Operations Command and programs to build uncrewed, underwater systems and software. At DIU, Campbell connects Navy and combatant commanders with commercial firms to address complex military maritime needs.

The condensed and edited discussion follows.

How does DIU leverage relationships with the tech sector to develop solutions for the military?

DIU has this really unique, within the DoD, understanding of the commercial technology space. A really important part of DIU is our commercial operations team, and they essentially live, eat and breath where investment is happening in the commercial tech space and the defense tech space and also live, eat and breathe where these early and midstage startup companies are and [where] even more mature companies [are]. They have what I would call a real-time market survey, so that when we work through these problems of a service or combatant command, we're able to then pair them with certain parts of the commercial tech sector or the defense tech sector [to develop needed capabilities].

What's one example of a Navy-DIU partnership?

Project Overmatch is an important partner with DIU and has been for the last two or three years. And they have a remit to build basically a modernized tactical communications grid across ships and aircraft and in the joint world … to bring forth the best in [artificial intelligence] and autonomy capabilities for these tactical use cases, which makes them a great partner for DIU. [This is essentially to] do digital

transformation for ships, submarines and aircraft, [which is] really, really, really difficult.

Why is this transformation so challenging?

Because you have all of these weapons systems [on a destroyer] – whether it's radars or missile systems or torpedoes or electronic warfare systems – and they all generate just terabytes and terabytes of data in any given day. And there's a lot of room to improve essentially saving that data and finding a way to get that data into a cloud repository so that both government engineers and commercial companies can access that data so that they can build software capabilities that improve a warfighter's ability to do their job. You really can't create AI capability if you can't find a meaningful way to bring in all of the data that these Navy platforms generate on the day to day.

What is the fundamental importance of data in building naval autonomy, whether on a drone boat or on a destroyer?

If I have a drone boat and it's driving through the ocean and it encounters some big tanker on the ocean, it needs to be able to ingest data from a camera or from a radar system. It needs to know where that tanker is out in front of it, and it needs to know, "Hey, I have to turn left or I'm going to crash into the tanker."

It may sound like a very simple example, but you have to collect data over hundreds and hundreds of hours of running these drone boats out in the ocean in order to essentially have examples to train algorithms so that they know … whatever it is they need to do. This must all be in accordance with Coast Guard regulations for how a boat would behave if a human were driving it. And so, on the autonomous-system side, you have to collect all of that data to help inform how that drone boat will behave on the ocean. In that regard, data is fundamental.

And how is data functioning to render a destroyer more autonomous?

On a destroyer, you have these radar systems that do a whole range of things. But if you want to, for example, train a machine-learning capability to automatically sense specific targets, you need to collect a whole lot of data from those radar systems. And then you have to have a human being basically watch the playback from those radar systems and say, "OK, this particular signal in my radar data, that's a commercial airliner. This particular signal on my radar data is a seagull. This particular piece of data is a military aircraft."

And then you train an algorithm to automatically detect those things based on all the different data signatures …. and so, in that regard, data is just as fundamental to the drone boat as it is to the destroyer.

But humans still make the critical decision in the field?

You're not removing the human being from a lethal decision-making process; you're creating tools so that they can make better decisions faster.

What are the even steeper challenges in operationalizing autonomous capabilities for maritime military missions?

On the [more] difficult end of that spectrum [from navigation of a single drone boat], you have to figure out how to get hundreds or thousands of those craft to not only turn left, turn right, speed up and slow down – to avoid a tanker or an island or whatever – now you have to have all of those platforms doing it in concert with one another. And communicating in concert with one another, and creating effectively what I'll call a model of the world around them.

So, if I have hundreds of these platforms on the surface of the ocean, or in the air, or under the sea, I need all of

those platforms to understand where all of their partners are in the world. And then I need them to sense the world around them such that they can accomplish very specific missions. And that mission autonomy is very complex.

I think those are the areas we're looking to push into. That's sort of the next frontier of employing autonomous systems at scale. And that's something the commercial world hasn't even really figured out.

Then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen H. Hicks and staff members participate in interactive demonstrations during a DIU capabilities brief at the DIU, Mountain View, California, Dec. 12, 2023. *Photo credit: Department of Defense | U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alexander Kubitza*

How does DIU work with the Navy and the larger military community to address these complicated issues?

DIU spends time understanding a problem set from both the military's and the commercial technology sector's perspective. By understanding both sides of the coin, we are able to say, "OK, we've identified this problem, we've spent time with you

to understand the left and right limit of these problems." Regardless of where the problem starts from – whether it's a program office or from a fleet – we like to get that entire team of stakeholders together. Because what we've found is that if we don't do that, we can probably go run a really fun prototype, but the likelihood that that prototype is going to turn into a production contract and actually get fielded to a Sailor in a way that is integrated with other capabilities around it is very low.

How does the "commercial solutions opening" process work to develop those capabilities?

The central value proposition of DIU is this thing called a commercial solutions opening, which is a business and an acquisition process. We take a really thorough understanding of the problem, and we take a really thorough understanding of the tech and commercial space, and we forge that into a plan to go execute a project [in collaboration with government technology, warfighting and program management offices in the Navy or other services]. And in this commercial solutions opening, we put a solicitation or a request for proposal on our website. And then companies can bid on that proposal or bid on that request and provide a proposal for how they would go about solving for this problem.

How is DIU's process different from the traditional acquisition process?

In the traditional defense acquisition process, when you put a request for proposal or a solicitation out, it's usually this 10-, 20-, 30-page, very detailed document that really specifies solutions in many cases. When we put a solution or an RFP out it's usually one-and-a-half to three pages [that's] just a problem statement. It very rarely specifies a specific solution. And what we find is we really open the door to compelling solutions that you might not otherwise get when you specify a solution in your RFP.

And this process is faster. We do this pretty quickly. We post these solicitations for 10 days at a time, sometimes up to 15 days at a time, and then we move really quickly. Let's say we get 100 proposals, we move really quickly to … pick the best paper proposals, and then bring those teams in to do a live pitch and live Q and A, and sometimes we actually do live demonstrations depending on what the problem is and what the intended capability is.

How does the other transaction authority funding mechanism speed things up?

The other transaction authority is a contracting authority and nothing more. There's no financial authority tied to it. It is a mechanism to do contracting that is outside of the federal acquisition regulation, which is what most contracts in the DoD are done through.

But in the context of the Navy, almost every contracting shop in the Navy could choose to write and conduct more OTA-based contracts. So, it's not an authority issue, it's an adoption issue. We usually award one to five OTAs within 120 days of that solicitation going out. Which is three to five times faster than a traditional prototype contract … using the FAR as their guidebook and as their authority. And so that speed really makes a big difference in terms of getting companies to start solving warfighter problems faster and also keeping pace with technology … and then getting those prototypes out there as quickly as possible.

What happens in the prototype process?

Our protypes usually last 12 to 24 months. At the end of that 12- to 24-month period, we're going to try and field some viable product of that capability and ideally transition it to that traditional program office. [And Congress has in recent years given DoD more authority to quickly produce successful prototypes developed via competitively awarded OTAs.] So, I

can take a successful prototype capability awarded through a competitively sourced OTA, and I can use that to do a sole-source production award immediately thereafter.

Is DIU willing to work with the prime defense contractors (e.g., Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon)?

We're not anti-prime in any way, shape or form. But, at the same time, DIU exists with a specific remit to expand the industrial base for commercial dual-use tech companies, for new defense performers and for nontraditional defense performers. Part of the reason that DIU was stood up originally, around 10 years ago, was to essentially rebuild a bridge that had atrophied with commercial tech and Silicon Valley to create opportunities [and] to create space for that tech to be applied and leveraged by the DoD in ways that [weren't] happening.

Why wasn't that happening?

Part of the reason [is that a] 50-person startup can't afford to hire five people just to do military business development and to navigate the somewhat complex maze and pathway of a FAR-based contract. Or [know] how to leverage Congress to put an earmark in for the defense budget. All of these things that the defense primes have hundreds and hundreds of people doing every day.

DIU exists to really simplify the process so that a 50-person startup … can essentially provide the same
sort of proposal for any customer. OTA contracts are much simpler and much more like a commercial contract than what you're going to see through the FAR.

Do you expect the Navy to conduct more projects with DIU in the future?

We have been seeing an absolute increase in demand signal from the Navy, both for software and for hardware applications. So,

I feel like that’s a growth area. And I think the Navy is increasingly aware of DIU’s ability to move quickly and to bring in commercial companies and commercial performers that may not have otherwise bid in the traditional FAR-based contracting process on SAM.gov.

Erika Fitzpatrick is an award-winning writer living in Washington, D.C. With more than 20 years of experience in public policy journalism and communications, she specializes in covering issues affecting service members, veterans and military families. This story originally appeared in the April edition of Seapower *magazine.*

We Fight Tonight: Corps Capabilities for a Contested Indo-Pacific

Photo credit: U.S. Marine Corps

Since the 2018 National Defense Strategy reoriented the Joint Force toward great power competition, China – our primary pacing threat – has accelerated its military modernization and ramped up coercive behavior across every domain. Nowhere is this more evident than in the First Island Chain, where Beijing's revisionist ambitions collide head-on with our strategic interests. In this contested space, logistics is no longer a rear-area task – it's a frontline risk. If a capability can't be produced or pre-positioned inside the theater, there's a real chance it won't reach the warfighter at all.

The vast distance between the First Island Chain and the U.S. power base, combined with China's expanding anti-access/area denial arsenal, or A2/AD, has turned the supply chain from a guaranteed support function into the modern battlespace's Achilles' heel.

Mitigation of this new reality demands a shift in power projection, deliberate global pre-positioning to set the

theater and a sustainment strategy that keeps our platforms and support systems agile, resilient and ready for a fight over thousands of miles of unforgiving waters, from the U.S. homeland to dispersed Pacific archipelagos. A recent article in the Wall Street Journal outlined one plausible scenario, a strategic naval blockade of Taiwan, which makes the need for agile logistics and forward-positioned capabilities even more urgent.

When imagining the future fight, the battlespace transforms into a clash across a sprawling maritime theater with dispersed stand-in forces using interior lines and an intricate web of logistical support. The battlespace will be persistently monitored – defined by constant intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; autonomous systems; electronic warfare; degraded communications and navigation; and a menu of A2/AD capabilities that limit freedom of maneuver. These conditions fundamentally alter how Marines must think about and execute logistics.

Russia and Hamas targeted their enemies' homelands. China has also targeted the U.S. homeland, sending a signal that the United States and other vital points will not be off-limits from cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, strategic lines of communication, mobilization assets and weapon system vendors to disrupt forces and supply flows. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a recent Wall Street Journal report revealed that Chinese officials privately acknowledged their role in cyberattacks against U.S. infrastructure, admitting to years of intrusions into the computer networks of American ports, water utilities, airports and other critical targets.

In the vast expanse of the First Island Chain, Marines – along with the joint force and partner nation forces – operate today as dispersed, agile nodes, deliberately scattered to complicate enemy targeting and reduce signature detection.

Marine Corps Systems Command's Program Manager Combat Support

Systems is actively developing and fielding a suite of capabilities that redefine logistics support in a contested landscape. Guided by the modernizing principles behind the force restructuring plan Force Design, we're building integrated systems where every innovation meshes and enables the Marine Air-Ground Task Force commander to counter threats and disruptions in real time.

The First Island Chain forms the forward edge of U.S. power projection – placing the front line of great power competition just miles from China and thousands from the continental United States. *Image credit: Hudson Institute*

To understand the task at hand, picture a system where every logistics capability supports the kill web. Deployable Logistics IT is a powerful enabler, ensuring asset visibility of medical supplies both in the continental United States and with forward units. Condition-Based Maintenance Plus applies machine learning to enhance decision-making by alerting

commanders to maintenance issues and enabling timely resolution to prevent degradation in operational readiness. The Electronic Maintenance Support System equips Marines with diagnostic and networked tools to isolate and troubleshoot faults. Once a fault is diagnosed, Marine fabricators can use advanced manufacturing (3D printing) to produce replacement parts at the point of need in theater – mitigating potential disruptions to the supply web. Signature management capabilities cloak emissions of individual warfighters while the use of netting veils command and control nodes and larger equipment sets.

Meanwhile, an overhauled, more deployable medical support system extends care well beyond the traditional golden hour, ready to stabilize and treat casualties for longer durations, and provides surgical capability in smaller and more adaptive packages. Together, these interlocking capabilities transform potential disruptions into rapid recovery opportunities, sustaining warfighter survivability deep inside the weapons engagement zone and ensuring our forces remain agile and resilient – even when the logistics web itself is under stress.

The sections that follow highlight a few key elements of our integrated logistics capabilities that keep our dispersed Marines one step ahead in the contested Indo-Pacific battlespace.

Advanced Manufacturing

As aggression and the likelihood of kinetic operations increase, we can expect China to shape operations to affect stand-in forces, disrupt reinforcements deploying from the continental United States to the Pacific, and target the supply chain and commercial vendors once considered protected within the bastion of the homeland. With every link in the supply chain vulnerable, rapid field repairs are essential to sustain operations. The PM CSS is reimagining advanced

manufacturing to enable on-demand repairs and critical parts production directly in the field. This technology was tested in real-world scenarios: During Rim of the Pacific 2024, a combined team of Sailors and Marines used metal and polymer 3D printers to print critical components like reverse osmosis pump parts and lot-pressure air fittings aboard ship, keeping the amphibious transport dock USS Somerset (LPD 25) in the fight.

Today, our advanced manufacturing units are forging bonds with partner nation forces by fabricating parts to support Indo-Pacific Command hosts such as Australia, the Philippines, South Korea and Japan. By integrating advanced hybrid-metal and liquid metal jetting technologies into containerized, expeditionary fabrication units, Marines are reshaping the traditional supply chain model — one that often begins in or flows through CONUS and may prove untenable in the opening phases of conflict. This capability pushes manufacturing to the edge, enabling rapid, theater-level production and reducing reliance on vulnerable long-haul logistics.

Complementing this capability, the Digital Manufacturing Data Vault prototype serves as a secure repository to store, process and share technical data packages and digital drawings, ensuring that military and allied industrial partners can rapidly produce required components on demand. This comprehensive approach not only shortens supply chains but also helps keep forces mission-capable, even in the most austere and contested environments.

EOD and Combat Engineering

Explosive threats are one of many A2/AD tools China could throw at us to reduce freedom of maneuver. Explosive ordnance disposal and combat engineering capabilities are being overhauled to meet the demands of a high-threat A2/AD environment. The Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization capability is tailored for coastal environments and littoral

transition points, ensuring effective neutralization of explosive threats from very shallow water, from surf zones and on to the beach. For EOD, the LEON capability consists of five increments of equipment: remotely operated vehicle, personal dive equipment, uncrewed underwater vehicle, uncrewed surface vehicle and amphibious underwater ground vehicle.

The Stand-off Defeat of Explosive Hazards family of systems seeks to deploy advanced sensors and ground-penetrating radar for standoff detection via uncrewed air and ground vehicles, keeping Marines out of harm's way. The integrated sensors and auto-target recognition will identify threats and communicate across the tactical network. Together, these integrated solutions empower our EOD and combat engineer teams to swiftly and safely counter explosive threats, ensuring Marines remain protected and mission-capable in the most contested environments. The LEON and SDEH capabilities are a toolkit to increase mobility for commanders and ensure a path for maneuver into theater and intra-theater for forces and supplies.

Expeditionary medical capabilities like those shown in this field surgical suite enable damage control resuscitation and

surgery close to the point of injury, extending patient hold times to support the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations concept. *Photo credit: Program Manager Combat Support Systems*

Expeditionary Medical Systems

As kinetic threats escalate, expeditionary medical capabilities become essential to sustaining Marine forces. Credible medical care gives Marines confidence to go into harm's way. The Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations concept created a new paradigm in many log functions, and medical is at the front of the line for modernization. The "golden hour," a term coined during the Global War on Terror to describe the decisive period following an injury and casualty evacuation, is no longer the mantra. Now the focus is on sustaining 96-hour patient care hold times due to the distance between units and the overall contested environment. The PM CSS is facilitating that strategy shift by fielding modular, lightweight systems such as damage control resuscitation and damage control surgery. Distributed Marine units are equipped to deliver life-saving trauma interventions directly in austere environments where traditional evacuation routes and timelines could be unsupportable.

Complementing these innovations, advanced medical devices like the Expeditionary Portable Oxygen Generation System and Expeditionary Medical Refrigeration Unit ensure reliable access to medical-grade oxygen and blood products, even when power is reduced or unsupportable. Concurrently, a pilot modernization effort is underway within the 1st Marine Logistics Group Medical Logistics Company Warehouse. The goals are to provide a garrison and deployable capability with radio-frequency identification scanning, a dashboard for medical asset visibility and a decision support tool that can aid in deployment and ordering optimization – saving taxpayer dollars on wasted supplies and reducing labor requirements. These integrated solutions ensure Marines receive uninterrupted, advanced medical support, dramatically enhancing survivability and sustaining lethality deep within

contested zones.

Uniforms and Signature Management

Operating in the contested Indo-Pacific – especially within the First Island Chain – requires our Marines to obscure sophisticated enemy sensors across multiple spectrums. Our Ultra-Lightweight Camouflage Net System sets a new standard in electromagnetic battlefield concealment by reducing signature in the visual, infrared and radar bands. Designed for rapid deployment by a small team, ULCANS effectively masks vehicles, artillery and personnel, ensuring operational stealth in dynamic environments. Building on this breakthrough, next-generation clothing articles are in development that incorporate advanced technology to mitigate near- to long-wave infrared signature. These innovations and enhancements elevate traditional uniform products from an era of visual concealment using standard textile industry practices to advanced production capabilities that provide Marines with tools to enhance survivability and lethality on an increasingly multidomain transparent battlespace, ensuring tactical superiority.

Beyond these core innovations, the PM CSS is advancing a suite of complementary capabilities that enhance a resilient logistics web. Our power modernization initiatives reduce fuel demands and streamline mobile energy solutions. Meanwhile, digital tools like CBM+ and automated test systems ensure commanders maintain real-time situational awareness, enable diagnostics and rapid maintenance, and support circuit card repair in theater – keeping equipment in the First Island Chain and reducing wasteful efforts to return gear to higher echelons of maintenance in CONUS or to rely on today’s overstressed supply chain.

Uncrewed aircraft systems with computer vision for airfield recon, deployable ICD-705-compliant shelters, augmented-reality-aided navigation, bridging, polymer ammunition and

lighter, integrated personal protective equipment further ease logistical burdens and increase lethality. Together, these building blocks – designed to support the EABO concept – strengthen the distributed, logistics network needed for a future fight in the contested Indo-Pacific region.

While these capabilities do not regularly make headlines, they are the critical elements to enabling the EABO concept and strategy in general. Each innovation, whether in rapid field repairs, extended medical care or next-generation stealth textiles, forms an integral link in our resilient kill and logistics webs, ensuring dispersed Marines remain agile and ready for any threat or challenge.

Colonel Paul Gillikin, an infantry and special operations officer, is the program manager for Combat Support Systems at Marine Corps Systems Command in Quantico, Virginia.

USS Cape St. George Arrives in San Diego after Modernization

Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Cape St. George (CG 71) arrives at the mouth of San Diego Bay, April 22, 2025. Cape St. George, previously based at Everett, Wash., completed her homeport change to Naval Base San Diego. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Kelby Sanders)

From Lt. Grace Kording, April 24, 2025

SAN DIEGO – The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Cape St. George (CG 71) arrived Apr. 22 in its new homeport of Naval Base San Diego, California from Naval Base Everett, Washington, after conducting phased modernization at Vigor Shipyard in Seattle. This move was a permanent change of station for the crew and family members.

“I am so incredibly proud of this dedicated crew and for all of the hard work and sacrifice that brought Cape St. George back to life. Repairing and restoring systems after an extended modernization was a herculean effort, and this talented crew is the reason the ship was able to return to sea and reintegrate into our Navy’s fighting force,” said Capt. Jennifer Pontius, commanding officer of Cape St. George.

The cruiser began modifications in June 2021 and is scheduled to conclude in 2025. During this time, Cape St. George underwent extensive upgrades to its hull, mechanical systems, engineering, and combat systems in preparation for rejoining maritime operations.

“It’s been a long, rigorous journey bringing Cape St. George’s power plant back to life, but I am proud of the work we have done. I was filled with so many emotions when we got underway after spending numerous hours restoring the engine room equipment, but I understand this is only the beginning of our mission,” said Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) 2nd Class Annsia Stewart. “We are ready to make San Diego our home!”

The upgrades ensure Cape St. George remains one of the most technologically advanced and lethal ships in the U.S. Navy.

“I arrived at Cape St. George while it was dry-docked, and it has been an amazing experience seeing the reconstruction to get the ship fully operational. It is an incredible opportunity to set a foundation for future Sailors,” said Lt. j.g. William Neel, Strike Officer.

Cape St. George was commissioned June 12, 1993. The ship’s name commemorates the battle fought in the South Pacific off the island of New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago on Nov. 25, 1943. Modern U.S. Navy guided-missile cruisers are multi-mission Air Warfare, Undersea Warfare, Naval Surface Fire Support, and Surface Warfare (SUW) surface combatants capable of supporting carrier strike groups, amphibious forces, or independent missions. The mission of Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet is to man, train, and equip the Surface Force to provide fleet commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore.