

# Unified Response: An Inside Look at 300 Coast Guardsmen responding to Potomac Plane Crash



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Lance Ide, left, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Corbin Singleton, boatswain's mates at Station St. Inigoes, respond to the aircraft collision on the Potomac River, Washington, Jan. 30, 2025. The Coast Guard responded to the incident with local, city, state and federal partners. *Photo credit: U.S. Coast Guard | Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Bokum*

WASHINGTON – On the evening of January 29, while most of the city slept, hundreds of Coast Guardsmen from across the East Coast deployed to the Potomac River, ready to face the unimaginable.

Crew members launched from Coast Guard Station Washington and

arrived at the freezing river as a commercial jet and Army helicopter lay shattered.

For those directing first responders from the command center at Sector Maryland – National Capital Region, managing the unimaginable is a part of the job.

“Having also responded to the Key Bridge collapse last year, this aircraft collision was another heartbreaking reminder of how quickly tragedy can unfold,” said Sector Maryland – National Capital Region command center chief Lieutenant Stasia Ellis. “Our thoughts still go out to the families who lost loved ones. Coast Guard first responders demonstrated exceptional courage and dedication, working tirelessly alongside our partners to bring answers and closure to those affected.”

By 5 a.m., Station Philadelphia was traveling over 100 miles to Washington in support of the mission.

At dawn, response boat crews from Stations Curtis Bay, Annapolis, Oxford, Crisfield and Coast Guard Cutter Sailfish were on scene.

In a unified effort, 278 Coast Guard service members and Auxiliarists from 33 units across the East Coast responded to the incident with an urgent mission – search, recover, and bring closure to a nation reeling from disaster.

Within hours after the incident, Sector Maryland – National Capital Region and subordinate commands stood up an Incident Management Team at Station Washington to coordinate the mission and streamline real-time communications.

“We came from over 70 miles away that morning before sunrise, not really sure what to expect on-scene,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Corbin Singleton, a machinery technician with Station St. Inigoes. “Whether it was search and rescue or enforcing the safety zone, we were determined to help and

support the mission however we could.”

As Singleton and his crew supported the mission from the water, Captain Patrick Burkett, commander, Sector Maryland – National Capital Region, welcomed the acting commandant, Admiral Kevin E. Lunday, and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, to meet with first responders at Station Washington.

Shortly after 10 a.m., Lunday and Noem were underway visiting the wreckage site on a Station Washington small boat.

“There were a lot of moving parts that morning as traumatic as it was, but I am so incredibly proud of our team’s efforts throughout this response,” said Burkett. “From the moment the accident took place, we’ve been here to support the American public.”

The Coast Guard rapidly integrated into the incident unified command to support local, city, state, and federal partners.

Beyond search and rescue, the Coast Guard’s objectives included ensuring the safety of the public and first responders on the water, aiding in victim recovery efforts, assisting salvage operations, and supporting the National Transportation Safety Board’s incident investigation.

“We put all available resources to bear on this response,” said Burkett. “We had many Coast Guard small boat stations and cutters arrive at the scene that morning and days after. We called in additional crews to help from Sector Delaware Bay to make sure we kept a 24/7 presence on the waterway and support by any means we could.”

A week after the accident, a total of 11 small boat stations and five cutters were deployed, including support from two Coast Guard sectors, Coast Guard headquarters, and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

“We worked together as a unified command,” said Burkett. “Everybody has their responsibilities from our responding units to the agencies in the unified command. We worked as a team to ensure we got the mission accomplished. This is what we do. This is what we train to do. That’s why we train with our partner agencies here in the greater Washington area to prepare for these types of tragedies.”

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## **LRASM Performs Flight Test in F-35 Integration Test Series**



From Lockheed Martin

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md., March 4, 2025 – Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] and the F-35 Pax River Integrated

Test Force (ITF) completed an initial flight test integrating the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) weapon system onto the F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter jet. This most recent test follows a flight test with LRASM on F-35C in [September 2024](#).

As part of the F-35's Block 4 upgrade, AGM-158 strike systems (Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile and LRASM) are being integrated for external carriage on the F-35, adding more multi-role mission capabilities to the quarterback of the fighting force. The flight marks the beginning of the F-35B AGM-158 strike systems flight sciences test program, a critical step toward bringing this advanced technology to America's warfighter.

"Integration of the AGM-158 strike systems family delivers increased reach and lethality against heavily protected, strategic targets." said Jon Hill, vice president and general manager, Air Dominance and Strike Weapons at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control.

"The integration of these systems further demonstrates how we continue to add the most advanced capabilities to the F-35 to ensure it will remain a dominant force, owning the skies for decades to come," said Chauncey McIntosh, vice president and general manager of the F-35 program at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics.

With more than 20 years of experience providing highly survivable and accurate cruise missiles, Lockheed Martin is combining F-35 air dominance with the unique capabilities of the JASSM and LRASM weapon systems to enhance combat readiness. More than 1,100 F-35s are currently operational around the globe, and the fleet has surpassed 983,400+ flight hours.

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# President Says Military Recruiting Up, So Too Will Be American Shipbuilding, 'Golden Dome'

March 5, 2025 | By C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

During his first address to a joint session of Congress, March 4, 2025, President Donald J. Trump said that the changes he's made since his inauguration in January have enhanced recruiting within the U.S. military in ways that haven't been seen in years.

On his first day in office, the president signed an executive order ending diversity, equity and inclusion programs across the federal government. Less than a week later, newly sworn-in Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth drafted a message to the force that mirrored the president's words, saying he would rebuild the U.S. military with a focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards and readiness.

"Our service members won't be activists and ideologues," Trump said. "They will be fighters and warriors. They will fight for our country."

The president said the result of his executive order has filtered down into the armed forces, putting a new focus on merit and spurring renewed interest in serving.

"I am pleased to report that in January, the U.S. Army had its single best recruiting month in 15 years and that all armed services are having among the best recruiting results ever in

the history of our services,” Trump said. “What a tremendous turnaround. It’s really a beautiful thing to see people love our country again ... they love our country, and they love being in our military again.”

The president also said the United States will pursue a “Golden Dome,” similar to Israel’s own “Iron Dome” defense system, which is designed to protect against inbound missile attacks.

“My focus is on building the most powerful military of the future,” Trump said. “As a first step, I’m asking Congress to fund a state-of-the-art, ‘Golden Dome’ missile defense shield to protect our homeland – all made in the USA.”

The president said that President Ronald Reagan had wanted to build a similar system during his term, but the technology wasn’t available at the time to bring that project to fruition. But now, he said, that technology exists.

“Israel has it, other places have it, and the United States should have it, too,” he said. “This is a very dangerous world. We should have it. We want to be protected. And we’re going to protect our citizens like never before.”

Trump also promised an expansion of American shipbuilding in order to support both the U.S. military and the commercial sector. American shipbuilding is at a low point today, but the president promised new efforts to increase America’s shipbuilding efforts.

“We are also going to resurrect the American shipbuilding industry, including commercial shipbuilding and military shipbuilding,” Trump said. “I am announcing tonight that we will create a new Office of Shipbuilding in the White House and offer special tax incentives to bring this industry home to America, where it belongs.”

The president said the U.S. once had a great domestic

shipbuilding industry, which has largely died down now. That will change, he promised.

“We used to make so many ships. We don’t make them anymore, very much,” he said. “But we’re going to make them very fast, very soon.”

The president also said he planned to take action to expand domestic production of rare earth elements, which are critical to U.S. defense.

“Later this week, I will also take historic action to dramatically expand production of critical minerals and rare earths here in the USA,” he said.

Rare earth permanent magnets, for instance, are not only essential components in a range of defense capabilities, including the F-35 Lightning II aircraft, Virginia and Columbia class submarines and unmanned aerial vehicles, but are also a critical part of commercial applications in the United States. They are also used to generate electricity for electronic systems in aircraft and focus microwave energy in radar systems.

Finally, Trump said that the mastermind behind the terrorist attack at Abbey Gate during the August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan has been captured. Some 13 American service members were killed during that attack.

“I am pleased to announce that we have just apprehended the top terrorist responsible for that atrocity, and he is right now on his way here to face the swift sword of American justice,” Trump said.

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# Navy Undersea Warfare Units Start Exercise Black Widow 2025



JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM (March 3, 2025) – The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Montana (SSN 794) gets underway from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in preparation for exercise Black Widow 2025, March 3, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Scott Barnes)

From Cmdr. Rick Moore, March 5, 2025

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – U.S. Navy submarines, ships and aircraft commenced exercise Black Widow 2025 in the Hawaii Operating Area, March 4, 2025. Black Widow is the premier tactical development exercise for U.S. Navy undersea warfare (USW) forces, integrating submarines, surface ships, and aircraft into a team tasked to track and engage a simulated adversary submarine in a realistic and challenging

training environment.

In addition to providing live training to USW operators, exercise Black Widow incorporates real-world lessons learned into the tactical development and training of units operating under a theater undersea warfare (TUSW) construct. During Black Widow 2025, Commander, Task Force (CTF) 34 will serve as the TUSW commander, responsible for exercising command and control over exercise units and validating new tactics, techniques and procedures introduced by the Undersea Warfighting Development Center.

“The Black Widow exercise series is our annual pinnacle event to deliver high-end integrated theater undersea warfare tactical development and combat readiness. It’s incredibly valuable to work across domains to deliver cutting edge capabilities that make us more capable and more lethal,” said Rear Adm. Rick Seif, commander of the Pacific Submarine Force and CTF 34. “Conducting Black Widow in the Indo-Pacific allows our forces to train like we fight and ensure we are postured to deter, and if necessary defeat, any potential adversary.”

Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 23 will embark aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) as the scene of action commander for the exercise. In this role, DESRON 23 will coordinate the localized multi-domain search and tracking of a submarine during scenarios that will grow increasingly more complex over the course of the exercise.

“Undersea warfare is a team sport, and we want our surface and aviation teammates to be ready to seamlessly operate shoulder-to-shoulder with our undersea force when called upon,” said Capt. Ryan Leary, commodore, DESRON 23. “Participation in Black Widow 2025 reinforces the proficiency of our operators through realistic exercises with live submarines, best posturing our force to deter aggression throughout the Indo-

Pacific.”

Other units participating in this year’s exercise are the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112), the Virginia-class fast-attack submarines USS Mississippi (SSN 782) and USS Montana (SSN 794), P-8A Poseidon aircraft from Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, and an MH-60R Sea Hawk from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 37, embarked aboard Michael Murphy.

Black Widow and other USW exercises and operations emphasize the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region and the submarine force’s critical role in enabling all-domain access for the joint force. USW is a team effort that requires frequent realistic training among air, surface and undersea forces to maintain a high level of readiness and interoperability.

Exercise Black Widow 2023 took place in the Hawaii Operating Area. The exercise allows Navy units to continue to develop warfighting skills while working through the unique environmental challenges resident within the Indo-Pacific region. Previous iterations of this exercise have taken place in the Atlantic Ocean.

The Pacific Submarine Force provides strategic deterrence, anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface warfare; precision land strike; intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and early warning; and special warfare capabilities around the globe.

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## **USCGC Vigorous Returns After**

# Alien Interdiction Operations, Maritime Border Security Patrol



Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous' crew transfers aliens to the Margaret Norvell in the Florida Straits, Feb. 19, 2025. The aliens were transferred to The Bahamas following an illegal maritime venture interdiction off Key Biscayne, Florida. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Chief Petty Officer Ryan Youngblood)  
From U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, March 5, 2025

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Vigorous (WMEC 627) returned to their homeport in Portsmouth, Wednesday, following a 46-day maritime border security patrol in the Florida Straits.

Vigorous deployed in support of Homeland Security Task Force – Southeast and Operation Vigilant Sentry while underway in the Seventh Coast Guard District's area of responsibility, where

crew members conducted alien interdiction and border security operations. The crew worked alongside other Coast Guard units and partner agencies such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection – Air and Marine Operations and Homeland Security Investigations.

Throughout the patrol, Vigorous' crew interdicted, processed and repatriated more than 67 aliens attempting to enter the United States illegally, and transferred six suspected smugglers ashore to HSI custody to support further investigation for potential federal prosecution.

While at sea, the cutter participated in five interdictions of vessels attempting to smuggle aliens into the U.S. illegally. The aliens interdicted were from multiple countries including Honduras, Bangladesh, Haiti, and China.

“The integrity of our maritime borders is vital to national security, and I am proud of our crew's hard work and determination throughout this deployment,” said Cmdr. Todd Batten, commanding officer of Vigorous. “Together with our partner agencies, including CBP AMO, HSI, and Florida state and local law enforcement, we were able to effectively enforce United States customs and immigration laws against illegal entry.”

Vigorous, along with other Coast Guard assets and additional HSTF-SE partners, maintained a continual presence with air, land and sea assets in the Florida Straits in support of OVS. HSTF-SE combines a multi-layered approach to maritime border security, which is designed to protect the safety of life at sea while preventing illegal entry into the U.S. and its territories.

Vigorous is a 210-foot, Reliance-class medium-endurance cutter. The cutter's primary missions are counter-drug operations, alien interdiction, enforcement of federal fishery laws and search and rescue in support of U.S. Coast Guard



operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

For information on how to join the U.S. Coast Guard, visit [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go CoastGuard.com) to learn about active duty, reserve, officer, and enlisted opportunities. Information on how to apply to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy can be found [here](#).

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# U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Visits Australia, Furthers Collaboration and Maritime Security



Coast Guard Capt. Matthew Rooney, the commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) and Royal Australian Navy Capt. Rebecca Levitt, the commanding officer of His Majesty's Australian Ship Kuttabul, exchange patches during a media engagement in Sydney, Feb. 25, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jennifer Nilson)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, March 4, 2025

SYDNEY – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) recently completed a port call in Sydney, Feb. 25, 2025, conducting several engagements with Australian partners that strengthened ties and furthered collaborative maritime security throughout Oceania. Reflecting the spirit of the Pacific Quadrilateral Defense Coordinating Group, the U.S. Coast Guard continues its vital collaboration with Australian law enforcement to identify maritime vulnerabilities and cooperate on solutions that reduce risks to safety, health, and security throughout the region.

While in Sydney, Midgett hosted a law enforcement partnership event with Australian and United States stakeholders. Participants, including U.S. Consul General in Sydney Christine Elder, U.S. Coast Guard Attaché Capt. Amanda Ramassini, representatives from U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Secret Service, and Australian law enforcement and maritime security partners, joined the crew for breakfast and roundtable discussions in the wardroom, followed by a tour of the cutter. Law enforcement partners received a briefing on Midgett's capabilities and its current mission in the Pacific. Highlighting the close bond between the two nations and their agencies, Midgett's Lt. Jake Behne recently deployed to the Torres Strait as an observer with the Australian Border Force (ABF) Fast Response Boat unit, and now an ABF Officer in Charge is set to sail aboard Midgett as an observer.

Separately, Sydney media outlets were invited aboard with the assistance of U.S. Consulate Sydney; the subsequent reporting

on partnerships reached more than a million Australians.

Beyond official engagements, the crew of Midgett embraced the opportunity to experience Australian culture and history during a visit to the Australian National Maritime Museum.

“This visit to Sydney was more than just a port call; it was a chance to reinforce the vital link between the U.S. Coast Guard and our Australian counterparts,” said Capt. Matthew Rooney, Midgett’s commanding officer. “The support we received from HMAS Kuttabul was first rate and the warm welcome from our Royal Australian Navy shipmates made our time here truly memorable.”

The United States’ alliance with Australia remains a cornerstone of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The U.S. Coast Guard looks forward to continuing partnerships with Australia’s maritime and border forces to ensure a connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient Pacific.

Midgett, commissioned in 2019 and homeported in Honolulu, is the eighth Legend-class national security cutter. These 418-foot vessels are equipped with advanced technology, making them ideally suited to support a wide range of missions, including maritime security, law enforcement, and search and rescue operations.

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## **Navy Delivers New Crash and Salvage Cranes, Strengthening**



# Fleet Readiness



A new Crash and Salvage Crane (CSC) is delivered Feb. 27 to Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) in Pensacola, Fla. (U.S. Navy photo)

From Naval Air Systems Command, March 3, 2025

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy’s Common Aviation Support Equipment program office (PMA-260) successfully delivered the first of 27 replacement Crash and Salvage Cranes (CSC) to Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) in Pensacola, Florida.

PMA-260 coordinated the development, acquisition and fielding with support from Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) Lakehurst, Fleet Readiness Center Aviation Support Equipment (FRC ASE), NAVAIR Technical Data & Engineering Services Command (NATEC) and Allied Systems Company.

“The delivery of the new CSCs to the fleet enhances readiness and ensures safety of our sailors deployed on aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships around the world,” said Capt. Matthew Wilcox, PMA-260 program manager.



# Supporting Region

# Indo-Pacific



*Continuing to provide Combat Training Center (CTC) market expansion, Tactical Engagement Simulation Systems (TESS), instrumentation and exercise control software solutions*

From Cubic

SAN DIEGO, March 3, 2025 (Newsire.com) – [Cubic](#) announces FMS award to deliver its Live Training Systems (LTS) product lines

to support Force-on-Force (FoF) and Force-on-Target (FOT) training programs in the Indo-Pacific region. The advanced training solutions enable the region's partners to conduct realistic, interoperable and effective training exercises, providing operational readiness, designed to perform seamlessly with U.S. Partner and Allied Forces.

"Cubic's LTS product lines are deployed at multiple locations through the Indo-Pacific region, our customers are increasingly conducting multinational exercises and training to support regional security initiatives." said Russell Marsh, President of Cubic Defense. "Our focus is on innovation to address evolving threats and the future needs of the operational commanders who need to make critical and timely decisions, anywhere, anytime."

The program award will provide the host country Cubic's LTS-Soldier and LTS-Vehicle systems, the combined systems support multi-code laser standards, supporting interoperability with multiple live training systems. The program includes Cubic's CATS Metrix Exercise Control (EXCON) software and its LTS-Instrumentation systems, supporting the country's ability to conduct instrumented After Action Reviews (AARs). The program also includes associated support equipment and New Equipment Training (NET). The combination of Soldier, vehicle, exercise command and instrumentation systems allow Indo-Pacific allies to run a combat training center without external augmentation or assistance.

Cubic's LTS-Soldier and LTS-Vehicle Systems are based on the U.S. Army's I-MILES Individual Weapon System – 2 (IWS-2) and I-MILES Tactical Vehicle System (TVS) Programs of Record (PORs). Cubic's LTS-Instrumentation Systems are based on the U.S. Army's Army Mobile Instrumentation Training System (AMITS) POR. Cubic's CATS Metrix EXCON software is deployed at over 30 locations worldwide supporting FoF, FoT, and constructive training missions.



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# HII Installs First Additively Manufactured Valve Manifold Assembly on Aircraft Carrier



From HII

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., March 04, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) announced today that shipbuilders at its Newport News Shipbuilding division have successfully installed the first valve manifold assembly created by additive manufacturing technology on a new construction aircraft carrier.

NNS continues to integrate additive manufacturing, also known as 3D printing, into the shipbuilding process. The use of certified 3D-printed parts has the potential to accelerate construction and delivery of vessels to the U.S. Navy by

cutting lead times and improving manufacturing quality for critical components.

The valve manifold assembly, a specialized assembly that allows distribution of a single source of fluid to multiple points on the ship, is installed in a pump room on *Gerald R. Ford*-class aircraft carrier *Enterprise* (CVN 80). The assembly, which is approximately 5 feet long and 1,000 pounds, reflects the shipyard's pursuit of all opportunities to support construction using additive manufacturing. NNS collaborated with DM3D Technology to manufacture the manifold body.

With the completion of this evolution on *Enterprise* (CVN 80), similar manifolds planned for *Doris Miller* (CVN 81) will employ additive manufacturing rather than traditional casting methods, reducing schedule risk and improving efficiency.

Photos accompanying this release are available at: <http://hii.com/news/hii-installs-first-additively-manufactured-valve-manifold-assembly-on-aircraft-carrier-at-newport-news-shipbuilding/>.

“What started as a proof of concept quickly turned into a tangible result that is making a meaningful difference to improve efficiencies in shipbuilding,” said Dave Bolcar, NNS vice president of engineering and design. “The benefits of this innovation will extend well beyond *Enterprise* (CVN 80), as we incorporate our expertise in additive manufacturing into the fundamentals of shipbuilding.”

This latest advancement in the development and deployment of additive manufacturing builds on NNS' prior certification and approval as a supplier for additive manufacturing components on Naval Sea Systems (NAVSEA) platforms. To date, the shipyard has created more than 55 additively manufactured parts installed on both new construction vessels and those currently in the fleet, with plans to install more than 200 additional parts this year.

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# Wittman, Ryan Relaunch House Defense Modernization Caucus



From the office of Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Virginia

WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA-01) and Congressman Pat Ryan (D-NY-18) relaunched the House Defense Modernization Caucus (HDMC) for the 119th Congress to continue their efforts to advance the national security ecosystem through the integration and adoption of emergent technologies. The relaunch was unveiled at the “Defense Modernization Outlook for the 119th Congress: Priorities and Pathways” event on Capitol Hill, featuring expert discussions with leaders from government, private capital, and the defense industry.

Originally [founded by Wittman and Ryan](#), the bipartisan caucus serves as a driving force behind key policy and funding initiatives aimed at modernizing the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and strengthening national security.

“As warfare continues to evolve with emerging technologies, our national security agencies must prioritize agile and responsive modernization efforts. Ensuring this progress requires dedicated focus and support,” said Congressman Wittman. “As the founding co-chair of the bipartisan Defense Modernization Caucus, it’s been a pleasure to watch our caucus grow, and I’m eager to collaborate with colleagues on both sides of the aisle during the 119th Congress to drive innovation and strengthen America’s security through cutting-edge advancements.”

“There’s no more time for screwing around. We need to deliver and scale capabilities at the speed of combat, not the speed of Congress,” said Congressman Ryan. “The incredible growth of the HDMC in just the past few months shows the bipartisan appetite for action. Now we need to push – hard. And probably piss some people off along the way. Get on board with a software-centric Pentagon, PPBE reform, and increased partnerships with VC and the private sector, or get out of the way.”

“The Silicon Valley Defense Group applauds Representatives Wittman and Ryan and the critically important work of the House Defense Modernization Caucus,” said Jacqueline Tame, executive director, Silicon Valley Defense Group. “These long-needed efforts to catalyze systemic modernization via digital transformation, comprehensive and lasting acquisition reform, and forging pathways towards emerging technology readiness, require strong, unwavering, bipartisan leadership. We are proud to support your vision and agenda for the 119th Congress.”

During the HDMC relaunch event, Tame moderated a panel



discussion featuring Wittman and Ryan, exploring key initiatives such as streamlining the DoD's Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process, accelerating defense acquisitions, and leveraging venture and private capital to drive innovation.

A follow-up expert panel examined the Pentagon's efforts to enhance collaboration with private-sector tech firms, scale emerging technology adoption, implement AI at scale, and address ethics and security concerns in AI integration. Panelists included:

- Colin Carroll, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of Defense
  
- Liz McNally, Deputy Director, Defense Innovation Unit
  
- Dan Tadross, Head of Federal, Scale AI
  
- Michael Brown, General Partner, Battery Ventures

In December, Wittman and Ryan announced several key wins they [secured](#) in the *Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act* to bolster the defense innovation ecosystem. Wittman and Ryan led efforts to streamline and accelerate the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)'s Authority to Operate (ATO) process, expand rapid hire authority for DoD innovation engines, and increase access to classified space for startup and scaleup companies.