

RTX's Raytheon Completes Hydrodynamic Testing for the Barracuda Mine Neutralization System



Milestone moves program one step closer to operational testing

From RTX

PORTSMOUTH, R.I. (October 7, 2024) – Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, recently conducted a series of controlled environmental tests for the Barracuda Mine Neutralization System at the Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division.

Using a production representative test unit, Barracuda operated and collected data in environments of various sea states and water currents, demonstrating the ability to

hydrodynamically control itself in conditions simulating the ocean.

The test demonstrated the ability of the vehicle to detect, track and hold position on a target on its own. It was the first time Raytheon has executed this type of testing with the Barracuda mine neutralizer underwater vehicle and moves the program one step closer towards meeting operational requirements.

“This event marks a significant milestone in the advancement of underwater security and naval defense,” said Barbara Borgonovi, president of Naval Power at Raytheon. “Barracuda’s performance reaffirms its position as a game-changing solution for identifying and neutralizing naval mines, a critical challenge in modern naval operations.”

Barracuda is the U.S. Navy’s program of record for next-generation mine neutralization. It is a semi-autonomous system that uses sonar and camera systems to locate and neutralize undersea mine threats.

Raytheon was first awarded a contract for Barracuda in 2018. The program completed its critical design review in March 2023, and has now entered its qualification testing phase. In July 2023, Raytheon was awarded a contract to deliver engineering development model units to the U.S. Navy. The program will go into Low-Rate Initial Production in 2027.

Secretary of the Navy Del

Toro Champions Small Business Partnerships at San Francisco Fleet Week

From SECNAV Public Affairs, 10 October 2024

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – October 10, 2024 – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro addressed a gathering of small business leaders during San Francisco Fleet Week, emphasizing the vital role they play in supporting the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps today.

The event, titled “Breaking Barriers: A Department of the Navy & SBA Partnership for Small Business Success,” was held at the San Francisco SBA Business Office and brought together representatives from the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, regional APEX Accelerators, the National Defense Industrial Association, and other key stakeholders.

Secretary Del Toro highlighted the Department of the Navy’s commitment to small business partnerships, noting that contracts worth \$526 million have been awarded to small businesses located within 50 miles of San Francisco. He cited examples of successful collaborations, such as a \$2.89 million contract with Atomic, a Pleasanton-based small business, for the development of advanced tactical atomic clocks, and a \$451,000 contract with Arize AI, a Berkeley-based small business, for AI machine learning technology to enhance underwater threat detection.

“From my vantage point as Secretary of the Navy, a healthy, diverse industrial base made up of companies of all sizes—founded by American entrepreneurs from all walks of life—is absolutely crucial to the success of our Navy and our Marine Corps,” said Secretary Del Toro.

The Secretary underscored the importance of small businesses in providing critical capabilities and services to support Sailors, Marines, and civilians stationed around the globe. He emphasized the need for innovation and technological advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, cybersecurity, and unmanned systems to maintain the Navy's maritime dominance.

"We—along with our international partners and allies—are facing challenges across the globe," said the Secretary. "Addressing these threats requires a whole-of-nation commitment to ensuring we have a strong Navy and Marine Corps that can defend our interests on a global scale."

The Secretary's remarks were followed by a small business roundtable discussion, where he engaged with entrepreneurs and industry leaders to discuss opportunities for collaboration and address the unique needs of small businesses in the defense sector. He encouraged businesses to connect with the Department of the Navy's Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) for guidance and support in navigating the federal procurement process.

In the evening, Secretary Del Toro attended the "Honor Our Fallen" concert at the Herbst Theater in the San Francisco War Memorial Building. The concert, hosted by The Center for Humanitarian Assistance, featured a performance by the U.S. Marine Corps 1st Marine Division Band and honored the fallen service men and women of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. A private reception followed to thank attending Gold Star families.

About the U.S. Department of the Navy Office of Small Business Programs:

The U.S. Department of the Navy Office of Small Business Programs maximizes opportunities for small businesses in Navy contracts, ensuring they are integrated into the Navy's

acquisition process.

CH-53K Advanced Aviation Training Device Declared Ready for Training



The CH-53K Advanced Aviation Training Device is a new “first of its kind” trainer for both pilots and aircrew of the CH-53K. The mixed-reality static trainer recently completed a test readiness review and joint final testing and was declared ready for training. (U.S. Navy)

From NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, Oct. 10, 2024

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – A Test Readiness Review (TRR) and Joint Final Testing (JFT) were recently completed for the CH-53K Advanced Aviation Training Device (AATD) 1, resulting in the trainer being declared Ready for Training (RFT) on Aug. 16. The new mixed-reality static training device is the first of

its kind to support both pilot and aircrew training on the CH-53K King Stallion.

Veraxx Engineering Corporation developed the AATD prototype for the H-53 Heavy Lift Helicopter Program Office (PMA-261).

According to Maj. Daniel Meckley, H-53 Training Systems Integrated Product Team Lead, "The purpose of the device is to provide cockpit familiarization and crew resource management training to pilots and aircrew."

The AATD provides mixed reality goggles for pilots, which simulates the external environment while also allowing them to see their hands.

"With the AATD, the pilots don't need to use the goggles because there is a big screen TV in front of the device to conduct basic training," explained Meckley.

The crew chief also wears a set of goggles, but these are virtual reality instead of mixed reality.

"This means the crew chief cannot see his or her hands," said Meckley. "All they see is the simulated environment."

According to Meckley, even though the crew chief station is physically located behind the cockpit, the training can simulate being anywhere inside or outside the aircraft.

"This leads to enhanced communication and crew resource management during specific training areas like aircraft startup/shutdown, confined area landings, formation flights, etc.," he said.

PMA-261 manages the cradle-to-grave procurement, development, support, fielding and disposal of the entire family of H-53 heavy lift helicopters, including the CH-53K King Stallion, the CH-53E Super Stallion and the MH-53E Sea Dragon.

USS Annapolis Returns Home to Naval Base Guam Following Indo-Pacific Deployment



USS Annapolis (SSN 760) arrives at Naval Base Guam. (MC1 Justin Wolpert)

From Lt. James Caliva, Oct. 10, 2024

NAVAL BASE GUAM – The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Annapolis (SSN 760) returned to its homeport of Naval Base Guam after a successful three-month deployment in the Indo-Pacific region, Oct. 5, 2024.

“USS Annapolis exemplifies excellence and stands as the pinnacle of our submarine force, playing a vital role in ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific,” said Capt. Neil

Steinhagen, commander, Submarine Squadron 15. "Their unwavering commitment to advancing theater security and executing operational tasks has produced outstanding results. True to their motto, 'Born Free, Hope to Die Free,' the crew of Annapolis consistently meets every challenge head-on, showcasing unparalleled operational readiness and exceptional teamwork. Bravo Zulu, team—welcome home!"

Under the command of Capt. James Tuthill, Annapolis completed missions vital to national security, bolstering operational maritime capabilities in the Pacific. During their deployment, the submarine participated in key bilateral operations with the French Navy and welcomed Rear Adm. Chris Cavanaugh, commander, Submarine Group Seven, during a port visit to Yokosuka, Japan.

"My crew answered the call, exemplifying remarkable dedication to our mission across the Pacific," said Tuthill. "I couldn't be prouder of them, or the tenacity and professionalism they displayed every day at sea. Their resilience, determination, and refusal to quit when things got hard define my extraordinary team. It's a true honor to lead such an inspiring group. They rose to every occasion."

Commissioned on April 11, 1992, Annapolis is the fourth ship in the history of the U.S. Navy to be named for Annapolis, Maryland, home of the United States Naval Academy.

Assigned to Commander, Submarine Squadron 15 at Polaris Point, Naval Base Guam, Annapolis is one of four Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines forward-deployed in the Pacific. Renowned for their unmatched speed, endurance, stealth, and mobility, Los Angeles-class submarines form the backbone of the Navy's submarine force, ensuring readiness and agility in safeguarding maritime interests around the world.

USS Boxer, 15th MEU Arrive in Philippines to Deliver Emergency Relief Supplies



U.S. Marines assigned to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Philippine Marines assigned to 4th Marine Brigade load USAID supplies into an MV-22B Osprey during foreign disaster relief operations at the Laoag International Airport in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Philippines, Oct. 8, 2024. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Luis Agostini)

By Capt. Brian Tuthill, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit Public Affairs

Oct. 9, 2024

LUZON, PHILIPPINES – Amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD

4), and embarked elements of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), arrived in the Philippines Oct. 8 to support the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) efforts in foreign disaster response operations following Typhoon Krathon (locally known as Julian), which made landfall on the Province of Cagayan, Philippines, Sept. 30.

Their support is at the request of the Philippine government and directed by U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

"The primary focus of our mission is helping the people of the Philippines recover as quickly and safely as possible," said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Sean Dynan, commanding officer, 15th MEU. "Alongside the Armed Forces of the Philippines and USAID, our forces will help coordinate and transport relief supplies to those who were most affected in the Batanes Islands. Humanitarian assistance in an expeditionary environment is what we train to do, and it is one of the reasons we are forward deployed as an amphibious force."

The Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and 15th MEU (ARG-MEU) will send personnel and equipment from the ship to transport foreign disaster response (FDR) supplies to remote locations within the Philippines in collaboration with USAID.

"Our condolences go out to all those affected by this devastating typhoon," said U.S. Navy Capt. Tate Robinson, commodore, Amphibious Squadron (COMPHIBRON) 5. "The unique construct of the Navy and Marine Corps team in an ARG-MEU provides us the ability to respond to crises through rapid maneuverability and embarked assets, allowing us to be on station and ready to support however we are needed. I am proud of the way our amphibious force team has come together to work alongside our Philippine allies in a timely, efficient, and professional manner to provide aid and alleviate suffering for those affected by Typhoon Krathon."

The USAID supplies being delivered on the ground will include items such as tarps, shelter kits and food packets.

Boxer and 15th MEU will join personnel from I Marine Expeditionary Force's Marine Rotational Force – Southeast Asia, who are already located in the country, to help facilitate the efficient distribution of materials. Additionally, U.S. Marine Corps KC-130J Hercules aircraft from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, arrived in Manila from Okinawa, Japan, last week to support the ongoing relief efforts.

The ARG-MEU team is capable of conducting operations from combat missions to humanitarian aid and disaster relief. They exemplify these capabilities with air-borne and sea-based connectors to move people and supplies where and when needed. As such, prior to the deployment, Boxer and 15th MEU conducted training and certification for humanitarian assistance missions.

The U.S. military regularly trains with the Philippines on FDR operations. Recurring exercises, such as Balikatan and Kamandag, provide crisis response training that enhances operational readiness and develops joint interoperability during an actual disaster and the relief efforts that follow.

Boxer and embarked elements of the 15th MEU are conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Forging Industry Can Meet Defense Demand, Group Says



A Rock Island Arsenal-Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center artisan transfers a metal component during the forging process as part of a demonstration at the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command Casting & Forging Summit in 2022. The event gathered experts and officials across the government, military, industry and academia to discuss how to best modernize and sustain manufacturing operations critical to national security. *U.S. ARMY U.S. Army | Hayley Smith, Rock Island Arsenal-Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center*

The forging industry has a message for the Department of Defense and the country's defense contractors: it has tremendous capacity and is ready to work.

That message is being spread by a new education campaign from the Forging Industry Association. The group's CEO, Jim Warren, told reporters on Oct. 9 there is a perception within the DoD that the forging industry lacks capacity, but that's not the case.

"We have no problem with capacity on anything," he said. If there is a problem in the future, it will be with an expected surge in construction of commercial aircraft, but until then, "we can do it all," including making forged and cast components for ships and submarines.

The real issue, he said, is with an uncertain demand signal that makes it hard to predict when forged and cast products will be needed. The Forging Industry Association's message to the DoD and the prime contractors is, "can we please run more like a commercial industry?" Warren said.

The FIA is promoting a new survey from the auditing firm Wipfli, which concluded that 63% of forging companies do work within the defense industry and members, on average, are using 51% of their available capacity.

Companies that do primarily defense work have an even lower capacity use, at 41%. The FIA concluded these companies have ample capacity to do additional defense work if it was

available. The study also showed that 76% of forgers have invested in robotics, so they are working to boost their efficiency.

“Washington is making historic investments in our technological edge to compete in this new era of great power competition. But the North American forging industry is at risk of being neglected – by a combination of inattention from government authorities, a stubborn myth that it lacks sufficient capacity to meet demand, and trade policies that hobble us and aid our adversaries,” Warren said in a statement.

Helpful Steps

The FIA wants the government to take several steps, including streamlining the process for adding forging companies to approved vendor lists; adding more varied types of materials; extending contract periods to allow companies to make better use of their capacity; and make additional investments in new technology, infrastructure and workforce development programs.

The Defense Production Act Title III and the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment programs could help fund new technology to help improve the quality of hot forged parts, FIA said.

There are also trade issues. As is the case with other industries, the FIA says government-subsidized Chinese companies are unfairly competing in the market.

“What’s needed are higher tariffs on Chinese forgings – more than the current 25% tariffs currently in place – to help bring back some of that lost business,” Warren said in a statement. “More aggressive efforts are also called for to prevent China, India, and others from dumping into the market forgings such as gears and connecting rods that are far below fair market. That means considering outright bans on certain countries from importing forgings.”

MSCPAC Bids Farewell to USNS Pecos



From Sarah Cannon, Oct. 9, 2024

USNS Pecos (T-AO 197) will transit to the East Coast to be deactivated and removed from service.

SAN DIEGO – Military Sealift Command Pacific (MSCPAC) bids fair winds and following seas to the Military Sealift Command (MSC) fleet replenishment oiler USNS Pecos (T-AO 197) as it made its last departure from the San Diego Bay today. The ship will transit to the East Coast, where it will be deactivated

and removed from service.

Christened in 1989, Pecos served as part of the MSC fleet for 35 years. During its career, Pecos served in the Persian Gulf during both Operation Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2006 Pecos deployed with the MSC Hospital Ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) for five-months, delivering aid and humanitarian assistance to the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia, following the humanitarian assistance missions in the wake of the tsunami in Indonesia. Missions like this evolved into what is now known as the Pacific Partnership missions. These missions continue to provide medical and humanitarian assistance, while building international friendships throughout Southeast Asia.

In 2011, following the deadly earthquake and tsunami in Japan, Pecos rendezvoused with United States Seventh Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) near Kyushu, Japan as part of Operation Tomodachi. Blue Ridge transferred 96 pallets of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief material to Pecos for delivery to the Essex Amphibious Group and Carrier Strike Group 5. The pallets consisted of water containers and water purification tablets, first-aid products, tarpaulins, blankets, and other supplies. During her support effort to Operation Tomodachi, Pecos completed nine underway replenishments and delivered more than 2.3 million U.S. gallons of fuel to other supporting ships.

On November 28, 2018, the United States Navy sent Pecos and guided missile destroyer USS Stockdale (DDG 106) through the Taiwan Strait as a demonstration of the "U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Most recently, Pecos provided logistics support to the multinational maritime exercise, Rim of the Pacific 2024, delivering nearly 4 million gallons of diesel fuel and 2.2

million gallons of jet fuel through 36 underway replenishment events.

“This ship and its crew have answered all bells, time and time again. ” said Capt. Micah Murphy, commander, Military Sealift Command Pacific (MSCPAC). “The ship’s longstanding success, highlighted by this year’s RIMPAC, is really a testament to the professional mariners abilities, dedication to duty, and relentless pursuit of quality customer service to the fleet. It is fitting that one of the longest tenured Masters in MSC, Captain Keith Walzak, was at the helm during the last phase of this ship’s prolific career, capping off a storied career for them both. While it is sad to see a ship’s service end, it is special to be here to say fair winds and following seas to a ship as rich in MSC history as Pecos. Her spirit will live on in the new John Lewis class of oilers that her crew embarks and brings to life.”

Ahead of Pecos’ departure, Murphy and the MSCPAC team boarded the ship and took a moment to recognize members of the crew, for their outstanding support to the MSC mission, specifically to RIMPAC 2024, and to honor the retirement of Capt. Keith Walzak, Pecos’ civil service master, as he brings to end a 45-year career with MSC.

“I have served on a lot of ships during my career, but Pecos will be the one I really remember,” Walzak said as he addressed the crew. “I might remember this ship, because it is my last, and will be foremost on my mind, but I think I will also remember it, because of the hard work and dedication of all of you. We have a real team here, and that is why we were able to work through a lot of the challenges we’ve had, and to do the great work we’ve done this summer. I am proud of each and every one of you, and I am proud to have served with you.”

Walzak graduated from the United States Merchant Marine

Academy in 1980 and was recruited directly into MSC. Over the course of his career, Walzak served 40 ship assignments, 30 as ship's master. He is the Plank owner of USNS Butte (T-AE 27), USNS Mount Baker (T-AE 34), and USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE 14), the latter as the first master, something he considers a career highlight.

"Looking over my whole career, I would have to say that one of the most memorable moments would have to be in 2012, standing on the dais with my wife, as USNS Cesar Chavez, the last-AKE built, was being christened and launched into San Diego Bay, as the first Master on the last T-AKE," said Walzak.

On behalf of the Secretary of the Navy, Murphy presented Walzak with the Civilian Meritorious Civilian Service Award for his support to RIMPAC 2024.

"In 45 years of service I have gotten two certificates from the Secretary of the Navy," joked Walzak. "The first was my discharge from the Navy Ready Reserve, and this one, that I received today. I appreciate the recognition, and I'm proud to have had the opportunity to serve with MSC and to have had the long career that I've had. I've seen a lot, done a lot, and now I am ready to do whatever my wife wants me to do. She's spent 41 years waiting for this day. We will travel about, visit family, and get in some relaxation time."

Pecos is one of the 15 ships of the Henry J. Kaiser class fleet replenishment oilers which are operated by Military Sealift Command. As the class ages out of the MSC fleet, it is being replaced by the new John Lewis class which includes USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206) and USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), all currently operating under MSC.

Northrop Grumman Unveils the Next Generation of Bushmaster Chain Gun



Northrop Grumman's M230LF Dual Feed Bushmaster® Chain Gun® will offer two feed paths that can switch between air burst and high explosive, dual purpose ammunition rounds. (Photo Credit: Northrop Grumman)

For the first time operators can change between advanced ammunition rounds with the flip of a switch

PLYMOUTH, Minn. – Oct. 9, 2024 – Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC), a leading manufacturer of medium-caliber cannons, is introducing its next-generation M230 Link Fed (M230LF) Dual Feed Bushmaster® Chain Gun®, offering two ammunition feed paths for the first time. This new 30x113mm medium caliber chain gun is a proven variant of the M230LF chain gun to counter uncrewed aerial threats (C-UAS) and ground engagements.

- By offering a dual feed, the need for mixed ammunition belts in a single feed is eliminated.
- The ability to switch between two kinds of ammunition is now possible. A standard recommended ammunition load includes XM1211 proximity fuzed rounds for C-UAS and XM1198 high explosive, dual purpose rounds for anti-armor capability.
- The M230LF is currently at Technology Readiness Level 6. Meeting this threshold enables the capability to undergo live fire demonstrations that are currently scheduled for early 2025.

Expert:

Dave Fine, vice president, armament systems, Northrop Grumman: "The M230LF Dual Feed Bushmaster Chain Gun offers new flexibility by switching between ammunition paths using dual-feed technology. Using advanced technology combined with five decades of battle-proven experience, this next-generation cannon will empower operators to quickly respond to threats. This chain gun is the latest in our Bushmaster line to deliver reliable, multi-mission capabilities addressing the evolving threat environment."

About the M230LF Dual Feed Bushmaster:

As the first medium caliber chain gun in the world to offer a dual feed, the M230LF brings flexible lethality to the evolving battlespace. The cannon's system can instantly switch between ammunition paths, enabling operators to seamlessly address targets that require different 30x113mm ammunition types.

A dual feed system gives operators the option to change

between advanced ammunition rounds with the flip of a switch, delivering increased mission flexibility and lethality. The ability to select between two different rounds ensures targets are addressed with the best ammunition for the target type saving time, reducing logistical burdens and allowing for more engagements before needing to reload the system.

For operators already using the M230LF, the Bushmaster loads out at a similar weight to the single feed M230LF and features 60%-part commonality, leading to faster routine repairs and decreased down time for maintenance. Single feed M230LF cannons will continue to be produced for customers that prefer that option.

Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley Crew Returns From 75-day Arctic Ocean Patrol



From U.S. Coast Guard District 17 Public Affairs, Oct. 8, 2024

KODIAK, Alaska – The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley (WMEC 39) returned to their home port in Kodiak, Oct. 4, following a 75-day patrol in the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean.

The crew intercepted a Russian Federation naval vessel transiting the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, conducted domestic fisheries along the Aleutian Islands, and provided search and rescue coverage to the Bering Sea.

Their law enforcement team boarded 22 vessels, issued 27 safety and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration fishery violations, and terminated the voyage of two vessels for hazardous and unsafe conditions.

The Alex Haley crew also completed a successful gunnery exercise, as well as flight operations with MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crews from Air Station Kodiak.

Over the course of their patrol, the crew operated as far as

72 degrees north to the summer ice edge in the Arctic Ocean and 172 degrees east to Attu, the most westerly island of the Aleutian Islands chain, with visits to Adak and Nome.

The crew earned the Arctic Service Medal for providing 21 days of presence and search and rescue coverage above the Arctic Circle.

The Alex Haley, nicknamed “The Bulldog of the Bering,” is a 282-foot medium endurance cutter that performs search and rescue, fisheries law enforcement, and maritime security across Alaska. The cutter has been homeported in Kodiak since 1999 and was the recipient of the 2023 Captain Hopley Yeaton Cutter of the Year Award (Medium) and a 2024 International Maritime Organization Honour for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.

USS Comstock returns to San Diego after Indo-Pacific deployment



USS Comstock (LSD 45) returns to homeport at Naval Base San Diego. (MC1 Kelby Sanders)
Oct. 9, 2024

SAN DIEGO – The Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Comstock (LSD 45) returned to homeport in San Diego, following a nearly four-month deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, Oct. 8.

Along with its more than 400 Sailors, Comstock participated in multiple exercises and operations, displaying interoperability and the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

“The Sailors aboard Comstock performed their duty in an exemplary manner to support tasking in U.S. 7th Fleet,” said Cmdr. Byron Stocks, commanding officer of Comstock. “The mission execution afforded the opportunity to demonstrate joint force capability.”

With a focus on joint operations, Comstock and its embarked units supported the America Amphibious Ready Group and the

31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) during advanced integrated training and MEU certification. Comstock also successfully integrated with motorized weapons company of 31st MEU and Combat Logistics Battalion 31.

During the deployment, Comstock embarked two landing crafts utility from Naval Beach Group 7 to rehearse and demonstrate capability of the amphibious Navy's shore connectors.

Comstock also participated in Exercise Ssang Yong 24. During the decisive action phase of Ssang Yong, Republic of Korea and U.S. combined and joint forces conducted large-scale maneuvers from sea and air to showcase the overwhelming power of the alliance and its capability to carry out combined amphibious operations.

Since 2012, the ROK and U.S. Navy and Marine Corps have regularly conducted Ssang Yong to enhance defensive posture on the Korean Peninsula while improving naval and amphibious capabilities.

After Ssang Yong, Comstock transited home to San Diego following a nearly four-month deployment.

When not at sea, Comstock Sailors had the opportunity to enjoy foreign cultures during port visits to Guam, Japan, and Republic of Korea.

USS Comstock is homeported at Naval Base San Diego and assigned to Amphibious Squadron 1.