

# Operational Commitments Delay VQ-1's Sundown Homecoming Ceremony



EAST CHINA SEA (Sept. 24, 2020) An EP-3E Airborne Reconnaissance Integrated Electronic System (ARIES) II, assigned to the "World Watchers" of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 1 (VQ-1), transits over the East China Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Andrew Langholf)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

Oct. 8, 2024

ARINGTON, Va. – A planned homecoming ceremony for two U.S. Navy EP-3E electronic reconnaissance aircraft and their crews today has been postponed because of the Navy's current operational commitments.

According to the Facebook account of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One (VQ-1), the ceremony was to welcome home the crews from the final operational deployments of VQ-1 and the EP-3E. The two crews were scheduled to return to the

squadron's home base of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington.

A Navy directive issued July 18, 2023, scheduled VQ-1's deactivation for March 31, 2025, but that the squadron was to cease operations by Sept. 30, 2024. Apparently, operational commitments initially delayed the cessation to Oct. 8, 2024, and now have required continued operations to an undetermined date. The operational commitments likely are related to the hostilities in the Middle East.

According to an Oct. 8 statement to Seapower from the Navy's maritime patrol reconnaissance program office, the last EP-3Es may not be retired until March 2025.

"Due to OPSEC [operations security] we cannot offer the number of aircraft, but there are sufficient aircraft to support the mission through the March 2025 date above," the statement said.

The EP-3Es that have been retired and those that will be retired in the future will be delivered to the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (309th AMARG) at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, for storage.

The Lockheed-built EP-3Es are being replaced by the Northrop Grumman MQ-4C Triton high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles. The Tritons have been operating from Guam and from NAS Sigonella, Sicily, and on Oct. 1, a third Triton site was established in the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of operations. The Navy directive also said that the foreign signals intelligence capability executed by EP-3Es would be assumed by a VUP [special projects patrol squadron].

In addition to the EP-3Es, the Navy operates a handful of P-3C, NP-3C, and NP-3D Orion aircraft flown by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 30 (VX-30) at NAS Point Mugu, California, and by Scientific Development Squadron One (VXS-1) at NAS Patuxent River, Maryland.

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# HII Launches Amphibious Transport Dock Harrisburg (LPD 30)



HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division successfully launched the first LPD Flight II, San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship Harrisburg (LPD 30) on Saturday, October 5, 2024. (HII)

From HII, Oct. 8, 2024

PASCAGOULA, Miss., Oct. 08, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII's (NYSE:HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division successfully launched on Saturday the first LPD Flight II, *San Antonio-class*

amphibious transport dock ship *Harrisburg* (LPD 30), marking one of the first major milestones in the ship's journey towards operational readiness.

The Ingalls team translated *Harrisburg* from land to the company's floating dry dock using translation railcars to support the ship's movement across the pier. While in the dry dock, the Ingalls team completed final prep work needed for launch.

"We view this launch as a significant step toward fielding capability to our U.S. Navy and Marine Corps partners, and a reminder of the importance of supporting national security," said Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson. "As shipbuilders, we are dedicated to this mission."

Photos accompanying this release are available at: <https://hii.com/newsroom/>

The launch of LPD 30 follows the recent announcement of the amphibious multi-ship procurement contract for the construction of three *San Antonio*-class (LPD 17) amphibious ships [LPD 33-35] and a contract modification for the next *America*-class (LHA 6) large-deck amphibious ship [LHA 10].

Ingalls currently has two Flight II LPDs under construction including *Harrisburg* (LPD 30) and *Pittsburgh* (LPD 31). Pre-construction activities are currently underway for the construction of *Philadelphia* (LPD 32), the 16th ship in the *San Antonio*-class.

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# USS Daniel Inouye Returns from Maiden Deployment



By MCSN Aaron Haro Gonzalez, Oct.4, 2024

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Daniel Inouye (DDG 118) returned to its homeport of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam after completing a historic maiden deployment, Oct. 4.

While in the U.S. 5th and 7th fleet areas of operation as part of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG), Daniel Inouye promoted regional stability and security, deterred aggression, and protected the free flow of commerce throughout its nine-month deployment.

“When you look at the history of Daniel Inouye, he had to fight to prove that he was an American through joining the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. On this deployment, we as the

Sailors of USS Daniel Inouye, carried his name into the Pacific and then into the 5th Fleet area of operation for the very first time, honoring his legacy,” said Cmdr. Kevin Dore, commanding officer of Daniel Inouye. “I’m extremely proud of the readiness and responsiveness our crew displayed throughout deployment. We were always ready to go, as evidenced by how quickly we manned our RHIB (rigid-hull inflatable boat) to come to the aid of two distressed Iranian mariners lost at sea.”

TRCSG rescued the two civilian Iranian mariners in international waters, Aug. 23, 2024. A RHIB from Daniel Inouye, along with a search and rescue helicopter from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 8, successfully recovered the mariners from the water and took them to the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) for medical care.

“Every single day this crew goes about their daily routines, treating every drill like it’s real life. Every time a real situation comes up, everyone is cool, calm and collected under pressure,” said Cmdr. Ryan Kelly, executive officer of Daniel Inouye. “That is ‘going for broke,’ when you give everything you have to everything you do in training. I’m honored to be part of a crew that gives their all every single day like the team on this ship.”

“Go For Broke” was the motto of the Army’s storied 442nd Regimental Combat Team and is now carried on by the crew of Daniel Inouye, featured prominently on the ship’s crest.

When not at sea, Daniel Inouye Sailors had the opportunity to enjoy foreign cultures during port visits to the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand.

“Being a plankowner, I’ve been here since commissioning. One thing that stands out about this ship and this crew is its resiliency,” said Command Master Chief Simeon Yeboah, Daniel

Inouye's senior enlisted leader. "I think the crew learns through history and what we teach about the man who represents this ship. I see Sailors who are proud of what they mean to the team and how they come together to make this ship work."

The ship is named after Honolulu native Daniel Inouye, a decorated World War II veteran who was elected as one of Hawaii's first representatives in the U.S. Congress. In 1962, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he served until his death in 2012, the second-longest serving senator in U.S. history. He served as President pro tempore of the Senate in his final years, which made him the highest-ranking Asian American politician in U.S history.

After graduating high school in 1942, Inouye, tried to enlist in the Army but Japanese-Americans were not allowed to join following the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1943 activated the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, made up exclusively of Japanese-American enlisted men but commanded almost entirely by Caucasian officers. In October 1944, Inouye received a battlefield commission to second lieutenant for his actions rescuing 211 U.S. Army Soldiers of the 1st Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment from German forces. During the battle, enemy fire hit Inouye in the chest, but a silver dollar in the chest pocket deflected the bullet, saving his life. In April 1945, Inouye lost his right arm in combat and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery. In the 1990s, Congress and the military reviewed the cases of WWII soldiers who may have been denied the nation's highest honor due to racism. In 2000, Inouye and 19 other Japanese-American veterans of the 442nd were awarded the Medal of Honor. In 2013, he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, becoming the first – and to date, only – senator to receive both the Medal of Freedom and Medal of Honor.

The TRCSG is commanded by Carrier Strike Group Nine (CSG 9) and composed of the flagship Theodore Roosevelt, Carrier Air

Wing (CVW) 11, Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Erie (CG 70) and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS John S. McCain (DDG 56), USS Halsey (DDG 97), Daniel Inouye, and USS Russell (DDG 59) of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 23.

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy's role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

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## **Ships Arrive for San Francisco Fleet Week 2024**



From Brian O'Rourke, 07 October 2024

SAN FRANCISCO – The America-class amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LHA 7); San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25) and the Unmanned Surface Vessel Ranger (OUSV 3) arrived in San Francisco in support of San Francisco Fleet Week 2024.

Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen from several ships, squadrons and military units will be in San Francisco for the annual San Francisco Fleet Week, Oct. 7-14.

Participating ships and units also include the Coast Guard Legend-class maritime security cutter USCG Bertholf (WMSL 750); the Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Regina (FFH 334); the unmanned surface vessel Ranger (OUSV 3); Naval Beach Group One; U.S. Marine Corps Task Force San Francisco (Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit 2; Combat Logistics Battalion 13; Combat Logistics Battalion 15; and Battalion Landing Team 1/5); the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels; the

Navy parachute team, the Leap Frogs; Navy Band Southwest; 1st Marine Division Band; 12th Marine Corps District, Recruiting Station San Francisco; Navy Talent Acquisition Group Golden Gate; Assault Craft Unit 1; Beachmaster Unit 1; Amphibious Construction Battalion 1; Amphibious Squadron 7; Combat Logistics Regiment 17; U.S. 3rd Fleet; Expeditionary Strike Group 3; and Navy Region Southwest.

Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard forces and assets also participate in a robust disaster response exercise, an annual event joint training event that adds a serious, practical objective to San Francisco Fleet Week. The exercise is designed to train military forces and local, county, state and federal government agencies to work together to respond to natural and man-made disasters, such as earthquakes, wildfires and industrial accidents.

Service members will have an opportunity to interact with the local community while participating in a number of community relations projects and entertainment events throughout the week.

Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force bands will perform a series of free neighborhood concerts throughout San Francisco. For a full list of concerts, visit the San Francisco Fleet Week website: Neighborhood Concert Series – San Francisco Fleet Week ([fleetweeksf.org](http://fleetweeksf.org))

San Francisco Fleet Week also offers the public an opportunity to take a tour of the ships and interact with service members as they showcase their ships', units', and services' capabilities. It also gives the public a chance to gain a better understanding of how the sea services support the national defense of the United States and protect freedom of the seas.

The schedule for ship tours is as follows and is subject to change:

Wednesday, October 9

Pier 27

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Thursday, October 10

Pier 27, Pier 35

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Friday, October 11

No tours, however, the ships can be seen in the San Francisco Fleet Week Parade of Ships 11am-12p.m. from along the San Francisco waterfront.

Saturday, October 12

Piers 27, 30/32, 35

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Pier 15/17

10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 13

Piers 27, 30/32, 35

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Pier 15/17

10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Monday, October 14

Pier 27, Pier 30/32

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

The public is encouraged to attend tours and interact with service members.

Prohibited items aboard include the following:

- Food or drinks, including ice chests and coolers
- Camera tripods
- Skateboards, bicycles, hover boards
- Gang-related clothing
- Unmanned aerial systems

- Weapons, including knives, firearms and club weapons
- Defensive chemicals or sprays, including mace and pepper spray
- Spray cans of any type, fireworks, flammable liquids or other explosives
- Illegal drugs and drugs considered illegal at the federal level, including marijuana, and/or drug-related paraphernalia
- Electronic cigarettes
- Large bags, including backpacks and large camera bags (small camera bags and small handbags may be permitted, but will be subject to search)
- Strollers
- Drinks, other than water, to facilitate security
- Smoking, dipping, or chewing gum while onboard USN Ships or within 100FT of watch-standers
- Pets are also prohibited, with the exception of service dogs for the disabled
- Open-toe shoes are not recommended. High heels are not permitted
- Ship tours may not be appropriate for those with disabilities and access and functional needs or certain medical conditions. There are steep ladders (stairways) to climb and uneven surfaces to traverse on board the ship. An alternative experience will be provided on the pier for those who wish to learn more about the ships in port.

You're also invited to visit Fleet Fest, a free family-friendly festival celebration at Pier 30/32, Saturday, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Military bands and local entertainers will perform throughout the weekend.

For more information, please visit the San Francisco Fleet Week web site at [www.fleetweeksf.org](http://www.fleetweeksf.org).

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# Beacon Technology Group and Akimbo Technologies Inc. Form Strategic Alliance to Strengthen Maritime Cybersecurity



Cyfax and DEFENSA Unite to Deliver Comprehensive Cyber Defense Across Global Marine Operations

MIAMI, Oct. 7, 2024 /PRNewswire-PRWeb/ – [Beacon Technology Group](#), a leader in cutting-edge cybersecurity for IT and industrial environments, today announced a strategic alliance with [Akimbo Technologies Inc.](#), a Canadian provider of military-grade OT cyber defense solutions. This partnership follows Beacon's recent launch of Cyfax at BlackHat USA, the perennial cyber show, where Cyfax was showcased as a groundbreaking external attack surface management (EASM)

platform. Cyfax combines deception technology with continuous hyper-automated penetration testing to provide immediate cyber posture insights, real-time alerts, and compliance reporting.

The maritime industry faces three key challenges: increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks, restricted access to cyber insurance due to poor risk management, and the tightening of global regulations from organizations like the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). The Beacon-Akimbo alliance addresses these challenges by merging advanced IT and OT security solutions to offer maritime operators comprehensive and proactive defense, both in port and at sea.

Cyfax's intelligence-driven capabilities—dark web surveillance and continuous penetration testing—complement Akimbo's DEFENSA system, which provides real-time threat detection and remediation for operational technology environments. Together, these solutions deliver the robust security posture necessary for maritime operators to meet evolving threats, and regulatory requirements, and maintain access to critical cyber insurance.

“The maritime industry, much like other critical sectors, is moving beyond traditional defensive postures. The time has come for a paradigm shift that embraces offensive strategies. This alliance provides that shift, delivering proactive, offense-driven solutions to a sector crucial to the global supply chain,” said Rob Vazquez, CEO of Beacon Technology Group.

“The partnership we are announcing today brings together two powerful cyber solutions, enabling the global commercial marine industry to protect itself from ever-evolving cyber threats. Building a defensive digital wall and hoping for the best is outdated. Today's maritime industry requires proactive solutions to combat sophisticated adversaries,” said Behrouz Poustchi, CEO of Akimbo Technologies.

As global regulations tighten and cyber insurance standards rise, the Beacon-Akimbo alliance ensures maritime operators are compliant and secure. With real-time monitoring and automated threat defense, these solutions meet the industry's regulatory and insurance demands.

For more information, visit <https://detect.solutions/> or <https://www.akimbotechologies.com/>.

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## HII Hosts Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Newport News Shipbuilding



From HII

NEWPORT NEWS, Va., Oct. 04, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) hosted Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff, at the company's Newport News Shipbuilding division Thursday.

"I firmly believe that honing our warfighting skills has primacy in all we do," Brown said. "It was great to see the hard work of the Navy's shipbuilding team alongside our defense industry partners ensuring we maintain our edge through the construction of the next *Ford*-class carrier and *Columbia*-class submarine. These efforts provide our military with unmatched capabilities, reinforcing our ability to operate effectively across any mission, in any domain, and in any region of the world."

While at NNS, Brown visited shipbuilders and sailors on *John F. Kennedy* (CVN 79), saw construction progress on *Virginia*- and *Columbia*- class submarine modules, and met with shipyard leadership. Adm. William Houston, director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, and Vice Adm. Jim Downey, commander, Naval Sea Systems Command, accompanied the chairman.

"Our shipbuilders' commitment to supporting the Department of Defense is unwavering, and we are grateful General Brown invested time to see that for himself," NNS President Jennifer Boykin said. "The nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines we build and maintain are vital to our national security, and we are proud to deliver these critical capabilities to those who defend our freedoms."

Photos accompanying this release are available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-hosts-chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-at-newport-news-shipbuilding/>.

NNS is the nation's sole designer, builder and refueler of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and one of only two shipyards capable of designing and building nuclear-powered submarines.

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# GE Vernova Secures Contract for U.S. Navy's Advanced Propulsion Load System Testing



CAMBRIDGE, Mass. October 3, 2024 – GE Vernova Inc. (NYSE: GEV) today announced that its Power Conversion business has secured a contract to develop and deliver a Propulsion Load System (PLS) for the U.S. Navy's land-based testing facilities to support a new generation of advanced naval surface vessels. These systems are planned to be used to rigorously test the performance and reliability of shipboard propulsion systems in a controlled, land-based environment before deployment at sea.

## **Contract Overview**

The scope of the contract, which was booked in the second quarter of 2024, includes the design, manufacturing, delivery, and installation of two independent PLS units at a U.S. Navy facility over a three-year period. The program and the facility, managed by the Naval Surface Warfare Center Philadelphia Division (NSWCPD), will serve as the primary site for testing and qualification of propulsion systems for a new generation of advanced naval vessels, such as the FFG-62 and DDG(X). By simulating real-world shipboard conditions, the PLS is designed to help reduce technical risks, streamline development timelines, and train future crews, providing a strategic advantage to the Navy.

The system is expected to incorporate a full suite of power conversion technologies, including propulsion load electric motors, E-houses, power electronic motor drives, switchboards, motor control centers, load banks, transformers, and related essential infrastructure.

“GE Vernova is proud to contribute to the U.S. Navy’s future naval capabilities by delivering innovative testing solutions that help lower the technology risk and prepare crews for the next generation of surface vessels,” said Ed Torres, Business Line Leader of GE Vernova’s Power Conversion Business. “This contract reflects our commitment to advancing naval technology through reliable, efficient propulsion load management systems.”

### **Technological Significance:**

The contract further solidifies GE Vernova’s leadership in providing more energy-efficient electric propulsion technologies for complex naval applications. With over 40 U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard vessel references, decades of experience with land-based test facilities, and successful integration of similar systems in programs such as the Columbia Class and Zumwalt Class, GE Vernova continues to demonstrate its expertise in this field.

## **Program Background**

The award comes from the US Navy's Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships under the program offices PMS 515 (frigates) and PMS 460 (DDG(X) program), with technical and programmatic ownership by the NSWC. The agreement, administered through the Maritime Sustainment Technology and Innovation Consortium (MSTIC) and managed by Advanced Technology International (ATI) is the largest agreement awarded to date on the MSTIC Other Transaction Authority (OTA).

This is GE Vernova Power Conversion's first Other Transaction Authority (OTA) award. OTAs provide the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and other government agencies with the flexibility needed to carry out innovation, prototype, research, and production programs by adapting and incorporating business practices that align with commercial industry standards. They promote flexible, faster, and more cost-effective product design and execution.

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# **US Navy Awards Bollinger Shipyards Contract to Build 7th Berthing Barge**

LOCKPORT, La., – (October 3, 2024) – Bollinger Shipyards (“Bollinger”) announced today that it has been awarded a contract to build the U.S. Navy's seventh Auxiliary Personnel Lighter–Small (APL 73) Class berthing and messing barge. The contract award is for a fixed-price option for the detail design and construction of the vessel.

“We're honored to be entrusted by the U.S. Navy to continue

building these critical vessels that improve the quality of life for our sailors,” said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. “We take great pride in every single vessel we build and deliver to the U.S. Navy. This contract reflects the relentless work ethic of our skilled workforce and their commitment to upholding the highest levels of quality and craftsmanship that our company was founded on and, 78-years later, remains dedicated to.”

Bollinger delivered APL 70 and 71—to the U.S. Navy in 2022 and 2023, respectively, and is currently building APL 72. APLs are used by the Navy to house crewmembers when ships are in port for availabilities and Inter-Deployment Training Cycles. Notably, Bollinger tailors the barge’s mobility requirement into the design, ensuring they can be towed to new bases or shipyards to support changing fleet requirements. Such mobility offers additional capabilities to serve humanitarian missions and other temporary assignments.

APLs are 269 feet long, 69 feet wide and have a draft of 7 feet. Each vessel is equipped with offices, classrooms, washrooms, laundry facilities, medical treatment areas, a barber shop and fitness center. With mess seating for 224 enlisted personnel and 28 officers, each meal is served via five 20-minute shifts to allow food service for 1,130 personnel (three meals per day). The vessels are fitted with mixed-gender berthing spaces for 74 officers and 537 enlisted personnel, for a total of 611 people.

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**SECNAV Del Toro Advances**

# Maritime Statecraft, Strengthens Maritime Dominance during Visit to Raytheon

From SECNAV Public Affairs, Oct.4, 2024

✘ TUSCON, AZ (October 4, 2024) – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro visited Raytheon Technologies (RTX) to receive updates and provide feedback on advanced naval capabilities and programs today. Discussions with Raytheon leadership addressed production timelines, industrial base health, and future technology development.

Secretary Del Toro met with Barbara Borgonovi, President of Naval Power at Raytheon, Gina Cunningham, Vice President for Naval Missile Systems, and Gerard Hueber, Vice President of Requirements and Capabilities.

During discussions, the Secretary emphasized the importance of continued investment in the defense industrial base to deliver cutting-edge solutions that strengthen maritime dominance amidst ongoing operations and in strategic competition. He pointed to proven success of U.S. Navy weapons systems aboard carrier strike groups and guided-missile destroyers to defeat Houthi and Iranian attacks in the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea. He also noted competitors were watching those engagements closely and taking note of the Navy's success.

“No one should doubt our Navy and Marine Corps team's ability to deploy and operate the world's most complex naval weapons systems in self-defense and in defense of our allies and partners,” said Del Toro. “That is exactly why we invest so much to develop our maritime threats, but also to deter our

strategic competitors from testing our resolve. That is also why this important visit is timely before our Navy demonstrates the ability to rearm at sea for the first time next week. “

The Secretary received updates on several critical programs including, the Standard Missile family, the AN/SPY-6 radar, the Tomahawk missile system and Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (cUAS) capabilities. The Secretary also received updates on accelerating SM-6 Block IA production, including investments to increase production capacity, secure more sources for critical components, and modernize manufacturing processes. Discussions also addressed the evolving threat of unmanned aircraft systems and the company’s ongoing efforts to develop and deploy effective countermeasures.

This visit reinforced the importance of a robust and resilient defense industrial base. The Secretary expressed confidence in Raytheon’s commitment to delivering innovative and reliable solutions that support the Department of the Navy’s mission.

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## **MQ-4C Triton Unmanned Navy Aircraft System Stands Up a Third Orbit**



The Navy's MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft system (UAS), operated by Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19, has established a third orbit in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations (AOR), Oct. 1.

[By Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group Public Affairs](#), Oct. 3, 2024

U.S. 5th Fleet Area of Operations – The Navy's MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft system (UAS), operated by [Unmanned Patrol Squadron \(VUP\) 19](#), has established a third orbit in the [U.S. 5th Fleet](#) area of operations (AOR), Oct. 1.

“Enabled by the Navy's Get Real, Get Better charge to think and act differently, and executed by the women and men of 'Big Red', the MQ-4C has achieved the unprecedented stand-up of three orbits, vastly increasing the maritime domain awareness for the Joint Force. Additionally, and through capitalizing on U.S. 10th Fleet's distributed networks, we are rapidly closing the sensor to shooter gap,” Capt. Ronald Rumfelt, commanding

officer VUP-19 said.

Triton first deployed to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam as an Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in August 2023 soon followed by a second detachment flying from [Naval Air Station \(NAS\) Sigonella, Italy](#) in April 2024. With the stand-up of a third orbit in U.S. Central Command, VUP-19, or “Big Red,” achieved the unprecedented milestone of remotely operating simultaneously in three AORs from its home base at [NAS Jacksonville](#), Florida.

More impressive is that the squadron, supported by [Persistent Maritime Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program Office \(PMA-262\)](#) at [Naval Air Station Patuxent River](#), achieved this milestone in just over one year from IOC.

The MQ-4C Triton provides a persistent maritime ISR capability using multiple sensors. Along with P-8A Poseidon manned aircraft and TacMobile ground support system, the MQ-4C Triton is integral to the Navy’s Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Force (MPRF) Family of Systems (FoS). The MQ-4C is the numerical replacement for the retiring EP-3 Aries II, Navy’s long standing manned signals intelligence platform.

The recently released [CNO Navigation Plan 2024](#), Navy’s strategic guidance from the [33rd Chief of Naval Operations](#), specifically calls out the operationalization of robotic and autonomous systems. CNO Adm. Lisa Franchetti’s Project 33 sets priorities for accelerated implementation and seeks to move proven autonomous systems into the hands of the warfighters. Embodying this warfighting approach, that is exactly what VUP-19 is doing.

Currently, Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group / Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group Pacific (CPRG/CPRG-PAC) provides oversight to more than 7,000 men and women on both coasts operating the U.S. Navy’s maritime patrol

aircraft.

The Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Force is administratively organized into two CONUS Patrol and Reconnaissance Wings at NAS Jacksonville, Florida and NAS Whidbey Island, Washington: including 14 Patrol and Reconnaissance squadrons, one Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS) and over 45 subordinate commands. The forward-deployed MPRF consists of three Patrol and Reconnaissance Wings in Manama, Bahrain ([CTF-57](#)); Sigonella, Sicily ([CTF-67](#)) and Atsugi, Japan ([CTF-72](#)). The MPRF is the Navy's premiere provider for airborne anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), and maritime intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations.