

Element U.S. Space & Defense Unveils New \$3M Naval Shock-Testing Barge to Enhance U.S. Navy Readiness



From Element U.S. Space & Defense, Sept. 26, 2024

State-of-the-Art Platform Bolsters National Defense by Ensuring Critical Naval Equipment Withstands the Harshest Conditions

BELCAMP, Md. – [Element U.S. Space & Defense](#), a trusted government partner with over six decades of expertise in space and defense testing, celebrated the launch of its state-of-the-art Extended Floating Shock Platform (EFSP) barge on Wednesday, September 18 at its Rustburg, VA facility. This \$3 million investment advances Element’s ability to conduct high-impact shock testing to confirm the durability and reliability of essential equipment used by the U.S. Navy—ultimately protecting sailors at sea.

The new barge simulates real-world naval conditions, subjecting vital shipboard systems to extreme shocks from explosions and rough waters. These tests verify that equipment meets the Navy's stringent shock-resistance standards, enhancing the operational readiness of ships and the safety of personnel. Manufacturers can now validate their products in an authentic maritime environment to guarantee peak performance under the most demanding conditions. Equipment that successfully passes Element U.S. Space & Defense's EFSP barge testing earns Navy certification for meeting the highest standards for mission-critical use.

"We're taking crucial steps to safeguard our sailors by ensuring that shipboard systems perform reliably under the harshest conditions," said Jeffrey Simmons, General Manager of Element U.S. Space & Defense's Rustburg facility, during the launch event. "This investment significantly boosts our ability to validate and protect the equipment that the Navy depends on."

The celebration—which featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by an exclusive tour showcasing the barge's advanced capabilities—also included remarks from Calvin Milam, Element U.S. Space & Defense's Engineering Manager, who highlighted the importance of innovation in military readiness. Matt Cline, a member of the Campbell County Board of Supervisors, also attended the event, recognizing the company's valuable contributions to national defense and the local economy.

Britton Kreitz, Senior Vice President of Operations at Element U.S. Space & Defense, highlighted the strategic significance of the new barge for both the U.S. Navy and the company's mission. "This investment is about more than expanding our capabilities—it's about directly addressing the evolving needs of the Navy and the Department of Defense. By pushing the limits of shock testing, we can confirm that the equipment our sailors rely on is ready for anything. This barge solidifies our role as a key partner in safeguarding national security."

With the introduction of this cutting-edge platform, the Rustburg facility now sets the industry standard for heavyweight shock testing, confirming that the Navy's vital parts and systems remain battle-ready. For more information about Element U.S. Space & Defense and its advanced testing capabilities, please visit www.elementdefense.com.

Marine Corps Successfully Demonstrates Link-16 in Third XQ-58A Valkyrie Test Flight



From Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – The Marine Corps' XQ-58A Valkyrie successfully completed its third test flight on Sept. 20,

2024, at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. This flight was conducted in partnership with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, and industry partners.

The test demonstrated newly added Link-16 capabilities for the uncrewed collaborative combat aircraft prototype, marking the first time the Department of Defense controlled an air vehicle using offboard expeditionary methods. Initial results indicate that the prototype met threshold requirements for autonomously exchanging relevant tactical information. These Link-16 capabilities significantly enhance the Marine Air-Ground Task Force's ability to conduct integrated and joint operations, contributing to the Marine Corps' mission to deter conflict and, when necessary, defeat enemies in complex and evolving scenarios.

This successful test was conducted in preparation for Emerald Flag 2024, a multiservice and multi-domain training exercise scheduled for October. The exercise will incorporate technology and focus on the efficiency of joint warfare. The XQ-58A has proven itself ready for this capstone event, allowing the Marine Corps to demonstrate cooperative kill chain closure between manned and unmanned strike platforms for the first time in a large-force exercise.

**BAE Systems Awarded
Modernization Contract for
USS Halsey**



GULF OF ADEN (July 12, 2021) The guided-missile destroyer USS Halsey (DDG 97) operates in formation with aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) during a fueling-at-sea in the Gulf of Aden. (U.S. Navy photo by Machinist's Mate Fireman Brandon Perera)

SAN DIEGO – Sept. 26, 2024 – BAE Systems has received a \$177.8 million contract from the U.S. Navy for the maintenance and modernization of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Halsey (DDG 97). The total value of the previously awarded undefinitized contract award could reach \$225.5 million if all options are exercised.

Under the Depot Maintenance Period (DMP) contract, BAE Systems' San Diego shipyard will dry-dock the 509.5-foot-long ship, perform underwater hull preservation work, enhance the ship's Aegis combat system with the Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program (Block 3), upgrade the command-and-control systems, and refurbish the living spaces for the ship's 260 crewmembers. The work is expected to begin later this month and will continue into 2026.

“This type of deep-level sustainment work is necessary and critical to maintain the combat effectiveness of the USS Halsey,” said Eric Icke, vice president and general manager of BAE Systems San Diego Ship Repair. “Our San Diego team is ready to conduct the assigned DMP work that will enable the Halsey to move into its next phase of fleet readiness.”

The San Diego shipyard recently completed similar work aboard the USS Mustin (DDG 89). The Halsey will be the shipyard’s fifth DMP project.

USS Halsey is the 47th ship in the Arleigh Burke class of guided missile destroyers and was commissioned in July 2005. It is the second Navy ship named in honor of Fleet Admiral William F. “Bull” Halsey, who gained fame in the Pacific theatre during World War II.

**Northrop Grumman Awarded
JCREW/DRAKE Full Rate
Production Follow-on Contract**



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Everest Austerman operates a Drone Restricted Access Using Known Electromagnetic Warfare (DRAKE) anti-drone system during a simulated straits transit aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78). (Photo Credit: U.S. Navy)

Intelligent electronic countermeasure systems designed to increase protection from ship-to-shore

SAN DIEGO – Sept. 26, 2024 – Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC) was awarded a follow-on production contract as part of a larger contract, which is now valued at over \$161 million, by the U.S. Navy for the next generation JCREW/DRAKE 2.0 systems.

- The award includes production and delivery of the JCREW/DRAKE 2.0 dismantled and mounted systems.
- As the recommended counter-improvised explosive device

(IED) and counter-unmanned aircraft system (UAS) solution, JCREW/DRAKE 2.0 will feature increased signal processing and frequency range, instantaneous bandwidth and a more capable user interface.

Expert:

Gordie Russell, vice president, communications solutions, Northrop Grumman: "JCREW/DRAKE continues to prove itself as a critical component in protecting our warfighters while maintaining the strategic advantage needed to succeed across the modern battlefield. These systems are designed with an open and integrated architecture to support rapid upgrades and mission agility from ship-to-shore – capabilities that are critical for quick decision making."

Additional Details:

JCREW/DRAKE 2.0 provides 360 degrees of protection to the warfighter afloat, ashore and on-the-move by using intelligent jamming to selectively defeat threats without interruption to friendly communications.

The system can operate independently or can integrate with other Command and Control (C2) systems such as Northrop Grumman's FAAD C2 system, delivering a layered defense and technological advantage for the warfighter.

JCREW, the system's counter-IED capability, is a TRL 9 system with Full Rate Production and is a Program of Record with Naval Sea Systems Command. It achieved Full Operational Capability ahead of schedule in July 2023 and is currently employed by the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, Australia and New Zealand.

DRAKE, the system's counter-UAS capability, was added to the Army's Joint Counter-small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-sUAS) Office list of recommended C-sUAS Detection and Defeat Systems

in May 2023 and recently became its own Navy Program of Record under Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants, Expeditionary Missions Program Office in April 2024.

USS Preble Departs San Diego for Japan



USS Preble (DDG 88) departs San Diego Harbor as part of a homeport change in the Pacific, (MCC Mark D. Faram)

USS Preble Departs San Diego for Japan

26 September 2024

From Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

SAN DIEGO – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer

USS Preble (DDG 88) departed San Diego Sept. 22, 2024, shifting its homeport to Yokosuka, Japan. The move is part of a scheduled rotation of forward-deployed naval forces in the Pacific a permanent change of station move for for the crew and family members.

USS Preble (DDG 88) departs San Diego Harbor as part of a homeport change in the Pacific, (MCC Mark D. Faram)

Preble replaces USS Benfold (DDG 65), which will depart Yokosuka and shift its homeport to Everett, Washington.

The forward presence of Preble directly supports the United States' commitment to the defense of Japan, enhancing the national security of the United States while improving its ability to protect strategic interests. Preble will directly support the Defense Strategic Guidance to posture the most capable units forward in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The United States values Japan's contributions to the peace, security and stability of the Indo-Pacific and its long-term commitment and hospitality in hosting U.S. forces forward deployed there. These forces, along with their counterparts in the Japan Self-Defense Forces, make up the core capabilities the alliance needs to meet our common strategic objectives.

"It has been more than four years since Preble last operated in 7th Fleet," said Cmdr. Paul Archer, Preble's commanding officer. "But Preble today is markedly different than the ship that last left 7th Fleet. Armed with the U.S. Navy's most capable combat system suite, this crew is well-trained and hungry to take our cutting-edge warship west to support national strategic objectives. The Western Pacific is gaining a true asset—unparalleled technical capabilities and more than 300 Sailors excited for this new opportunity."

Preble is the sixth ship to be named in honor of Commodore

Edward Preble, an early 19th century U.S. Navy hero who served in the Revolutionary War and launched the attack on Tripoli in 1803.

The ship was commissioned Nov. 9, 2002, in Boston and has been homeported at Naval Base San Diego for nearly 22 years.

One of Preble's most notable operations was its 2004 surge deployment in support of the global war on terrorism. It was one of several U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and coalition ships responsible for patrolling and safeguarding the waters near the Khawr AL Amaya and Al Basrah oil terminals in the Persian Gulf.

The security environment in the Indo-Pacific requires that the U.S. Navy positions the most capable ships forward. This posture allows the most rapid response times for maritime and joint forces and brings our most capable ships with the greatest amount of striking power and operational capability to bear in the timeliest manner.

The mission of Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific is to man, train, and equip the Surface Force to provide fleet commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore.

Navy Awards Amphibious Multi-Ship Procurement Contracts



The U.S. Navy awarded contracts totaling \$9,472,132,620 for procurement of one America-class amphibious assault ship (LHA) and three San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock (LPD) ships, Sept. 24. The award, executed across two separate contracts to Huntington Ingalls Industries, Ingalls Shipbuilding Division, utilized a multi-ship

From Team Ships Public Affairs, 24 September 2024

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy awarded contracts totaling \$9,472,132,620 for procurement of one America-class amphibious assault ship (LHA) and three San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock (LPD) ships, Sept. 24. The award, executed across two separate contracts to Huntington Ingalls Industries, Ingalls Shipbuilding Division, utilized a multi-ship procurement approach. By using this strategy, as authorized by Congress, the Navy is projected to achieve more than \$901 million in cost avoidance as compared to the use of annual contracts.

The long-term contract agreements align with Secretary of the Navy Del Toro's maritime statecraft initiatives to make naval

shipbuilding more cost effective while promoting shipyard stability and investment. The agreements provide stable shipyard workload well into the early 2030s, providing a consistent demand signal to vendors.

“The importance of this multiple amphibious ship purchase cannot be overstated with respect to our whole-of-government effort to restore the maritime capabilities of the United States,” said Del Toro. “This purchase sends a steady demand signal to our shipbuilding industrial base that our Navy is actively investing in our shipbuilding infrastructure.”

The awards are consistent with the Commandant of the Marine Corps’ projected force structure requirements and demonstrates the Navy’s commitment to maintaining 31 amphibious ships.

“The Amphibious Ready Group / Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) is the premier force offering of our Corps,” said Lt. Gen. Eric Austin, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration. “This multi-ship procurement contract ensures the Marine Corps upholds the obligation to meet combatant commander requirements for continuous MEU presence. ARG/MEUs provide our national leadership with combat credible forces that are persistently forward, assure allies and partners, and contribute to deterrence, campaigning, crisis response, and combat operations.”

The America-class of amphibious assault ships operate as the centerpiece of ARG/MEU operations and Marine Expeditionary Brigade with accommodations for ship’s company, troops, vehicles, and equipment. The San Antonio-class of amphibious transport dock ships are designed to embark, transport, and deploy ground troops and equipment.

“This multi-ship procurement provides the long-term stability our shipbuilders and vendors require, enabling them to deliver product effectively, help support and retain a talented and critical workforce, and invest in the infrastructure required

to sustain and grow our shipbuilding capability and capacity,” said Assistant Secretary of the Navy Acquisition, Research and Development, Nickolas Guertin.

“This multi-ship procurement will deliver critical amphibious warfare capability to support the Navy and Marine Corps mission,” said Capt. Matthew Tardy, program manager, Amphibious Warfare Program, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. “The partnership between the Navy and Ingalls Shipbuilding is important. We are proud to be working with their talented workforce to build and deliver highly capable ships and provide needed stability for the shipbuilding industrial base.”

Program Executive Office Ships (PEO Ships), one of the Defense Department’s largest acquisition organizations, manages the design and construction of destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships, as well as a wide range of boats and craft for U.S. agencies and foreign military sales. These platforms enable our nation and its allies to project presence in peace, power in wartime, and assured access at all times.

The Navy provide the following opening statements in a press roundtable announcing the contract on Sept. 25:

Tom Rivers, Executive Director, Amphibious Auxiliary and Sealift for Program Executive Office Ships

“I want to thank everybody for joining us today for this media roundtable. Earlier this evening, using the authorities provided within the National Defense Authorizations Acts for fiscal years, 2023, and 2024, Huntington Ingalls Incorporated, better known as Ingalls shipbuilding division of Pascagoula, Mississippi, was awarded a combined \$9.47 billion fixed price incentive fee agreement to procure three San Antonio class amphibious transport docks, LPDs, 33, 34 and 35 and one America class amphibious assault ship, LHA 10. The agreement

involves two separately numbered contracts that will be awarded simultaneously. You probably saw the announcement come out at five o'clock the first ship, LPD 33 is scheduled to deliver in 2031 the LHA and LPD platforms perform a variety of expeditionary warfare missions and are designed to operate independently or as a part of an amphibious Task Force or an amphibious ready group or an expeditionary strike group or Joint Task Force. This amphibious ship, multi ship multi ship procurement demonstrates the Navy's commitment to maintaining 31 amphibious warships and the prudent use of taxpayer funds. The use of this multi ship procurement will result in significant savings to the American taxpayer compared to the total anticipated cost of carrying out the program through annual contracts. The estimated program savings is \$901 million across fiscal years, 2024 through fiscal year, 2029 by using this approach, in keeping with the Secretary of Navy's maritime statecraft initiative, this multi billion dollar contract award reflects the innovation to build and sustain our maritime dominance and allows for critical investment and sustainment of our shipbuilding industrial base, helping to ensure stability and jobs for the next decade. Lastly, the use of this multi ship Procurement Agreement for four ships is consistent with the Commandant of the Marine Corps' projected force structure requirements for amphibious ships."

Lt. Gen. Eric Austin, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration

"Thanks, Mr. Rivers, and thanks to all the folks that are able to dial in for this conversation this evening. And I also, just as a Marine and the requirements officer for the Marine Corps and the combat developer, I just want to thank PEO ships, OPNAV, industry partners and our Congress for getting this over the finish line in terms of the contract award, this is a big deal for our Navy and Marine Corps, our naval expeditionary force. This multi ship procurement award is really fantastic news. The amphibious ready group, Marine

Expeditionary we call it the ARG MEU, is the premier force offering for our corps and for our naval expeditionary force, three San Antonio class, LPDs and the America class LHA will provide sea bases for embark forces to provide the nation with the most modern and lethal amphibious warfare capability in history, the multi ship procurement contract enables the Marine Corps obligation to meet the combatant Commander requirements for continuous MEU presence. Our ARG MEUs provide our national leadership with combat credible forces that are persistently forward, that assure allies and partners, contribute to deterrence that campaign and respond to crisis and support combat operations when required, simply put expeditionary Marine Forces embarked on amphibious warfare ships, facilitate forward presence, make our naval forces stronger, our joint forces more capable and our allies more confident.”

Below is a statement from Paul Roden, chairman of the Amphibious Warfare Industrial Base Coalition, on occasion of the contract award:

“Today marks a historic moment for the 650 suppliers across 39 states that comprise the amphibious warship industrial base, as the Navy officially announced the award of a block buy for one LHA and three LPD amphibious warships. This four-ship bundle provides the stability and predictability that our suppliers need to invest in their facilities and, importantly, in their workforce. Even more, the block buy is projected to save U.S. taxpayers nearly \$1 billion. We’ve long advocated for this type of needed investment in our amphibious fleet, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to making it a reality. From our supporters in Congress, to leaders in the Navy and Marine Corps, and suppliers nationwide that helped emphasize the value of this investment – Thank You.”

Northrop Grumman to Produce First Hypersonic Glide Phase Interceptor



Northrop Grumman will produce the Glide Phase Interceptor (GPI) program, the first-of-its-kind defensive countermeasure against hypersonic missile threats. (Northrop Grumman)
Program is first-of-its-kind countermeasure against hypersonic threats

From Northrop Grumman, Sept. 25, 2024

CHANDLER, Ariz. – Sept. 25, 2024 – The U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) will proceed with Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC) for the Glide Phase Interceptor (GPI) program, the first-of-its-kind defensive countermeasure against hypersonic missile threats. Working in close partnership with MDA, the three-year developmental effort produced a purpose-built, innovative design capable of defeating existing and emerging hypersonic threats.

During this next phase of development, Northrop Grumman will:

- Continue to refine the preliminary design of the GPI, which will fire from the U.S. Navy's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense destroyers and Aegis Ashore using the standard Vertical Launch System
- Demonstrate system performance in hypersonic environments prior to conducting its Preliminary Design Review
- Complete flight experiments ahead of schedule leveraging the company's own flight-proven systems
- Use digital engineering practices to connect the entire GPI program to accelerate design processes and develop interceptor capabilities faster and more efficiently

Expert:

Wendy Williams, vice president and general manager, launch and missile defense systems, Northrop Grumman: "GPI adds mission critical standoff to warfighters in scenarios where distance creates an advantage. Tailorable to a multitude of mission requirements, Northrop Grumman's revolutionary solution is designed to perform in the evolving threat landscape."

Details:

Northrop Grumman's design includes advanced technologies, such as a seeker for threat tracking and hit-to-kill accuracy, a re-ignitable upper stage engine used for threat containment and a dual engagement mode to engage threats across a wide range of altitudes.

Northrop Grumman [will work closely](#) with the United States in support of its role under the GPI Cooperative Development program with the Japan Ministry of Defense to deliver interceptors to the MDA.

Sept 24 U.S. Central Command Update



From U.S. Central Command, Sep. 24, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – In the past 24 hours, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully destroyed one Iranian-backed Houthi uncrewed aerial vehicle over the Red Sea.

It was determined this system presented an imminent threat to U.S. and coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region. This action was taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S.,

coalition, and merchant vessels.

U.S. Navy selects BAE Systems to provide advanced digital interrogator target data processor solution



Identification Friend or Foe tech refresh design implements new capabilities into one system

From BAE Systems

GREENLAWN, N.Y. – September 24, 2024 – BAE Systems has received a \$19 million contract from the U.S. Navy to design and implement UPX-24 target data processor capabilities into a single digital interrogator Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) solution. The upgraded IFF digital interrogator (DI) will

optimize data collection and processing to provide time-critical insights and enhance decision making for the maritime fleet.

“This is a collaborative effort with our customer to bring the Navy’s UPX-24 target data processor functions into our digital interrogator systems,” said Donna Linke-Klein, director of Tactical Systems at BAE Systems. “Going from two separate hardware sets on a shipboard platform to a single consolidated solution allows for reduced obsolescence and the ability to rapidly integrate new technology. The latest design will optimize performance while providing the situational awareness our warfighters need in a variety of threat environments.”

BAE Systems’ digital interrogator systems enable operators to identify friendly forces and make informed decisions that reduce friendly fire incidents and support mission success. The DI collects the data by emitting an “interrogating” radio signal at one frequency, prompting an IFF transponder to emit a reply signal at a different frequency, indicating that an approaching platform is “friendly.” The U.S. Navy’s UPX-24 system provides target data to the ship’s command, control, communications, computer and intelligence system, and processes all the inputs to decide how to respond.

By combining these capabilities into one multifunction solution, this advanced DI will support size, weight, power, and cost objectives and accommodate future upgrades.

With more than 80 years of [IFF experience](#), BAE Systems has delivered over 16,000 transponders, 1,500 interrogators, and 6,000 combined interrogator transponder systems for use on new and existing platforms, including unmanned aerial vehicles, ships, and rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft.

Work on the advanced IFF digital interrogator target data processor solution will be performed at BAE Systems’ state-of-the-art facility in Greenlawn, New York.

USS Leyte Gulf Decommissioned



From USS Leyte Gulf Public Affairs, Sept. 24, 2024

NORFOLK, Va. – The crew of the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55) held a decommissioning ceremony onboard Naval Station Norfolk on September 20th.

Over 500 attendees including plankowners and former crew members joined together to celebrate the ship's distinguished 37 years of naval service. Vice Adm. Eugene Black III, Leyte Gulf's 14th commanding officer, served as the ceremony's keynote speaker, wishing the current crew fair winds and following seas as they bade their ship farewell.

“What a great opportunity to celebrate the Sailors who brought

this ship to life, kept her operating at the highest level and ready for a fight throughout her long and illustrious career of service to our nation," he said.

Cmdr. Brian M. Harrington, who served as the 23rd and final commanding officer of Leyte Gulf, led the ship's final crew through the decommissioning process, assuming command following Leyte Gulf's deployment to the Caribbean Sea and South Atlantic earlier this year.

"It's been an honor to lead America's Battle Cruiser and her crew through the final chapter in her storied career. This crew accomplished the final mission with professionalism and dedication that honors all Leyte Gulf Sailors past and present."

The ceremony atmosphere was one of fond but somber remembrance as Black and Harrington shared a few memories created over Leyte Gulf's 37 years of service, inviting shared laughter from crewmembers past and present.

Leyte Gulf was built at Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and commissioned in Port Everglades, Florida, on September 26, 1987. Leyte Gulf's namesake commemorates the largest naval battle in history, fought from October 23-26, 1944 during World War II.

Since her maiden deployment in 1988, the warship has been vital to America's national defense strategy, leading the way in air defense throughout 17 deployments around the world. After decommissioning, the ship will be towed on October 16th to the Navy's Inactive Ship's facility in Philadelphia, Pa., where it will be in a Logistical Support Asset status.