# VMUT-2 begins assembly of the first 2nd MAW MQ-9A Reaper

U.S. Marines with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Training Squadron (VMUT) 2 conduct familiarization training with an MQ-9A Reaper unmanned aircraft at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina, April 11, 2024. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Orlanys Diaz Figueroa)

Story by 2nd Lt. John Graham, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

April 12, 2024

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. – Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Training Squadron (VMUT) 2, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), began the assembly of 2nd MAW's first MQ-9A Reaper, April 10, as part of the U.S. Marine Corps' continued transition from the legacy RQ-21A Blackjack in accordance with Force Design initiatives.

"The delivery and build of VMUT-2's first MQ-9A aircraft is

yet another successful milestone in the transition of VMUT-2 to become the MQ-9A Fleet Replacement Squadron, responsible for the world-class training of the Marine Corps' MQ-9A pilots and sensor operators," said Lt. Col. Michael Donlin, commanding officer of VMUT-2.

Many of the parts for the aircraft were delivered to VMUT-2, known as the "Night owls," aboard Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, North Carolina, from General Atomics in March, making 2nd MAW the third and final MAW to receive the aircraft. Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU) 1, 3rd MAW, procured the first MQ-9A Reaper for the Marine Corps in August 2021, and VMU-3, 1st MAW, was the first VMU to achieve initial operational capability with the MQ-9A platform in August 2023.

The MQ-9A Extended Range Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Unmanned Expeditionary (MUX) Medium-Altitude, High-Endurance (MALE) aircraft is a medium-altitude, long-endurance Block 5 remotely piloted aircraft, enabling future Marine Corps, naval, and joint force operating concepts by providing multisensor surveillance and reconnaissance; data gateway and relay capabilities through an aerial layer; and enabling or conducting the detection and engagement of targets during expeditionary, joint, and combined operations. The aircraft will provide intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting as well as performing additional missions such as: maritime domain awareness, airborne network extension, airborne early warning, and electronic support.

With a range of more than 1,600 miles and the ability to operate for more than 20 hours, the unmanned aircraft is designed to provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in support of 2nd MAW and wider Marine Expeditionary Force missions. This extended range is possible through the Marine Corps' addition of external fuel tanks to the aircraft that are capable of holding 1,300 pounds of fuel.

These capabilities will allow the MQ-9A Reaper to support future Marine Corps operating concepts, such as distributed maritime operations, littoral operations in a contested environment, and expeditionary advanced base operations as part of Force Design initiatives. The capabilities that the MQ-9A Reaper will provide represent an enhancement to 2nd MAW's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and data and communications network capabilities. The arrival and assembly of this aircraft represents a milestone in 2nd MAW unmanned aircraft systems' support for future operating concepts and represents an additional milestone in VMUT-2's continued transition from the RQ-21A Blackjack platform that served as 2nd MAW's primary unmanned aircraft system until July 2023.

"Our ability to rapidly and safely build these aircraft sets the stage for flight operations in the near future and is a testament to the hard work of the 'Night owl' maintenance department and the program office over the last ten months," said Donlin. "'Night owls' don't quit."

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# CORAS Rolls Out Early Release of Driver Trees Tool


April 17, 2024

Responding to U.S. Navy's Agenda for Performance-based Management, Decision-Making, and Readiness

MCLEAN, Va., April 17, 2024 (Newswire.com) – CORAS Federal, a FedRAMP High Software as a Service (SaaS) platform, announced an early release of a Driver Trees feature that adds to its suite of enterprise decision management tools. Driver Trees are a performance-based management process that identifies root causes and the most impactful way of pushing efficient progress and resolution, incorporating the U.S. Navy's (USN) Get Real Get Better and Performance to Plan (P2P).

CORAS Driver Trees are already at work within the USN supporting Program Managers in their "hunt for leverage", using metrics and cause-and-effect relationships to predict future performance and determine the highest-capacity drivers of those metrics. CORAS Driver Trees empower users to identify baseline conditions, align workflows to key performance indicators (KPIs), predict future outcomes, and promote clear ownership and accountability within teams.

"U.S. Navy departments already trust CORAS to deliver complete insights, informed decisions, proactive collaboration, and a single source of truth across complex multi-system secure

environments," said CORAS President and CTO Dan Naselius. "The CORAS Driver Trees tool is a direct result of listening to our U.S. Navy customers' needs and delivering them another weapon in our arsenal for DoD defense systems that articulates clear objectives, outcomes, drivers, and data-informed analyses. This tool will keep evolving as we continue to collaborate and refine CORAS Driver Trees' functionality through customer feedback."

USN Vice Admiral Morley recently presented a leadership masterclass on Program Management and Driver Trees with an agenda of understanding how to leverage tools like driver trees to align team accountability and deliver positive delta outcomes in USN acquisition environments. CORAS supports the warfighter by bringing disparate data sources together in secure, real-time environments for leadership to make fully informed decisions with live reporting, predictive AI/NLP, what-if scenarios, automations, and workflows.

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# VMM-268 Marines Prepare for Marine Rotational Force Darwin

Marine Corps Base Hawaii

April 16, 2024

A U.S. Marine with Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 268, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, guides an MV-22B Osprey in preparation for Marine Rotational Force Darwin (MRF-D) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, April 16, 2024. MRF-D is a deployment held in Australia that enhances capabilities and readiness of both the United States Marine Corps and the Australian Defense Force and continues to help strengthen the alliance between the two nations. VMM-268 will serve as the Aviation Combat Element for the upcoming iteration of MRF-D. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Tania Guerrero)

# April 16 Red Sea Update

U.S. Central Command

April 16, 2024

TAMPA, Fla.- Between 10:50 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. (Sanaa time) on April 16, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces successfully engaged two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in Iranian-backed Houthi terrorist-controlled areas in Yemen.

There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition, or commercial ships.

It was determined the UAVs presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels in the region. These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels.

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# Rite-Solutions Awarded Navy Task Order to Support Electronic Warfare and Support Trainers

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. – Rite-Solutions has been awarded a five-year, $10.7 million competitive Task Order from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC), Division Newport to provide hardware and software development services for Electronic Warfare (EW) and Electronic Support (ES) elements of the Submarine Multi-Mission Team Trainer (SMMTT).

The win – Rite-Solutions' third prime contract win in as many months – will enable the company to continue to support the Undersea Warfare Combat Systems Department, Product Development Division (Code 253) with critical analysis, designing, prototyping, programming, integrating, testing and evaluation, training and installation of EW and ES products.

Execution of this contract will fall under Rite-Solutions' Engineering Services Business Unit, led by Senior Vice President Laura Deady. "SMMTT is a critical tool in ensuring our sailors have the necessary skills in areas such as strike warfare; anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare; mine warfare; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; navigation; command, control, communications, computers and intelligence; and special warfare," said Deady. "Rite-Solutions brings the experience, capability, and high-caliber personnel necessary to ensure that our sailors are safe, trained, and prepared."

Rite-Solutions will support EW System environment simulations such as WLR-8 and BLQ-10, in addition to related Early Warning Receiver (EWR) subsystems. Additionally, Rite-Solutions will support the development of inorganic sensor data analysis, and emitter simulations of potential vessels or vehicles within a trainer gaming environment.

"Software development is a critical element to our company's core capabilities, and NUWC Newport is one of our most valued customers," said Joe Marino, Rite-Solutions' co-founder and CEO. "This contract win is a testament to our technical capabilities, our reputation in the industry, and our amazing team of engineers, scientists, and technical professionals who have an unwavering focus on our customers and their requirements."

# Indian Navy Carries Out First Drug Interdiction as CMF Member

By Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs | April 16, 2024

MANAMA, Bahrain – The Indian Navy Ship INS Talwar, operating in support of the Canadian-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, conducted its first interdiction of illicit narcotics as a member of Combined Maritime Forces, seizing 940 kg of drugs in the Arabian Sea, April 13.

Talwar, a Talwar-class frigate, seized 453 kg of methamphetamines, 416 kg of hash and 71 kg of heroin from a dhow as part of Focused Operation Crimson Barracuda.

The Indian Navy joined CMF last November.

“I commend the crew of INS Talwar for their efforts throughout this Focused Operation and their hard work has paid off with this seizure of 940 kg of drugs,” said Royal Canadian Navy Capt. Colin Matthews, Commander, Combined Task Force 150. “This seizure, the fourth of this Focused Operation, demonstrates the effectiveness and professionalism of CMF, and of the Indian Navy, in deterring and disrupting criminal and terrorist activities at sea.”

Crimson Barracuda, which concluded on April 15, focused on countering terrorist and criminal organizations’ use of the high seas to conduct smuggling operations in the Western Indian Ocean region.

CTF 150 is one of five task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the world’s largest international naval partnership. CTF 150’s mission is to deter and disrupt the ability of non-state actors to move weapons, drugs and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Combined Maritime Forces is a 42-nation naval partnership upholding the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world’s most important shipping lanes.

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# SECNAV Celebrates Keel Laying

# of the Future Frigate USS Constellation

The U.S. Navy symbolically laid the keel to its first Constellation-class guided-missile frigate, the future USS Constellation (FFG 62) during a keel laying ceremony at Fincantieri Marinette Marine, Marinette, Wisconsin, April 12. Distinguished guests (left to right) pictured: James Dillenburg, Ceremony Chaplain; Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations; Carlos Del Toro, secretary of the Navy; Jean Wagner, welder; Melissa Braithwaite, ship sponsor; Tony Evers, governor of Wisconsin; Mark Vandroff, CEO, Fincantieri Marinetti Marine; Marco Galbiati, CEO, Fincantieri Marine Group; Rear Admiral Kevin Smith, Program Executive Officer, Unmanned and Small Combatants.
SECNAV Public Affairs, 12 April 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro traveled to Marinette, Wisconsin, to celebrate the keel laying for the future USS Constellation (FFG 62), April 12.

The Constellation is the first ship of the Constellation-class frigates awarded to Fincantieri Marinette Marine in 2020.

“USS Constellation and the Constellation-class frigates are a critical next step in the modernization of our surface ship inventory, increasing the number of players on the field available globally for our fleet and combatant commanders,” said Secretary Del Toro.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti joined Secretary Del Toro during the historic occasion.

“This ship will be critical in putting more players on the field,” said Franchetti. “The Constellation-class frigate, named after the USS Constellation – the first of six frigates authorized by the Naval Act of 1794 and the first in-class

designed and built by American workers – will ensure the free flow of American commerce by sea."

The ship's sponsor is Melissa Braithwaite, the spouse of former Secretary of the Navy Kenneth Braithwaite, who named the ship in 2020.

"I am truly honored to be here as the USS Constellation sponsor. It is one of the greatest honors of my life," said Melissa Braithwaite. "Being a Navy wife and Ken's long service in the Navy, today, I had the honor of truly belonging to the Navy myself."

During his remarks, Del Toro thanked Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers for his leadership, pointing out that the state's shipbuilding industry was integral to the national maritime statecraft efforts to rebuild commercial and naval power.

"This yard is teeming with activity – Americans from all walks of life coming together to build warships in a demonstration of our industrial might, and showcasing the talents of the skilled workforce that our nation must expand during this critical period in our world's history, said Del Toro.

"After having helped support some of the efforts to update and expand Fincantieri's facilities to meet the needs of an effort of this size, it is great to be here now to celebrate these projects and see how this hard work is paying off," said Evers. "This contract to build these frigates is a great opportunity for Wisconsin to showcase our rich shipbuilding and maritime history and cement our role as leaders in this industry."

The Constellation-Class Guided-Missile Frigate (FFG 62) represents the Navy's next-generation small surface combatant. This ship class will be an agile, multi-mission warship capable of operations in both blue-water and littoral environments, providing increased combat-credible forward presence that provides a military advantage at sea.

Read Del Toro's full remarks here.

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# Canadian-Led CTF 150 Conducts Third Drug Interdiction in a Week

Service members from the Royal Navy's Duke-class Type 23 frigate HMS Lancaster (F229) search a suspected drug smugglers vessel during Focused Operation Crimson Barracuda in the Arabian Sea, April 11.
By Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs

MANAMA, Bahrain – The Royal Navy's HMS Lancaster (F229), operating in support of the Canadian-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, carried out its second successful drug seizure in

as many days, seizing 2,000 kg of hashish from a dhow in the Arabian Sea, April 11.

Lancaster, a Duke-class Type 23 frigate, seized the illicit drugs as part of Focused Operation Crimson Barracuda in an effort to counter illegal drug smuggling, who's profits often goes to funding terrorist activity. In the two days they have participated in Crimson Barracuda, the crew has interdicted a total of 3,300 kg of illicit narcotics.

On April 10, Lancaster seized 800 kg of hashish, 390 kg of methamphetamines and 110 kg of heroin from another dhow in the Arabian Sea.

"For the second day in a row, CTF 150 and the crew of HMS Lancaster prevented harmful and illicit drugs from reaching their final destination," said Royal Canadian Navy Capt. Colin Matthews, Commander, Combined Task Force 150. "Once again, we have prevented criminal and terrorist organizations from profiting off the sale of these drugs to fund their activities. I am incredibly proud of this team for all that they have accomplished in such a short window."

Crimson Barracuda counters terrorist and criminal organizations' use of the high seas to smuggle narcotics, weapons, and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman.

CTF 150 is one of five task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the world's largest international naval partnership. CTF 150's mission is to deter and disrupt the ability of non-state actors to move weapons, drugs and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Combined Maritime Forces is a 42-nation naval partnership upholding the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world's most important shipping

lanes.

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# Defense of Israel Activities Update

U.S. Central Command, April 14, 2024

SEAPOWER
The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

TAMPA, Fla. – On April 13 and the morning of April 14, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) forces, supported by U.S. European Command destroyers, successfully engaged and destroyed more than 80 one-way attack uncrewed aerial vehicles (OWA UAV) and at least six ballistic missiles intended to strike Israel from Iran and Yemen.

This includes a ballistic missile on its launcher vehicle and seven UAVs destroyed on the ground in Iranian-backed Houthi controlled areas of Yemen prior to their launch.

Iran’s continued unprecedented, malign, and reckless behavior endangers regional stability and the safety of U.S. and

coalition forces.

CENTCOM remains postured to support Israel’s defense against these dangerous actions by Iran. We will continue to work with all our regional partners to increase regional security.

**April 13 – 14 Red Sea Update**

April 15, 2024

TAMPA, Fla. – At approximately 7:00 p.m. (Sanaa time) April 13, Iranian-backed Houthi terrorists launched one anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) toward the Gulf of Aden from a Houthi controlled area in Yemen. There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition, or commercial ships.

Then between 4:00 a.m. and 9:15 p.m. (Sanaa time) April 14, CENTCOM forces successfully destroyed four uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen in self-defense.

It was determined the UAVs presented an imminent threat to U.S., coalition, and merchant vessels in the region.

These actions are taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure for U.S, coalition, and merchant vessels.

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# USS Roosevelt Departs for Sixth FNDF-E Patrol

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) in the Artic Circle. Roosevelt, forward-deployed to Rota, Spain, on its first patrol in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of regional allies and partners and U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa. *U.S. Navy*

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt departed Naval Station Rota, Spain to

begin its sixth Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) patrol, April 11.

The ship and her crew will begin this patrol by crossing the Strait of Gibraltar and operating in the Mediterranean Sea, in support of U.S. 6th Fleet tasking.

“Roosevelt’s crew is excited to get underway and get back to sea where we belong,” said Commander Jeffrey Chewning, Commanding Officer of Roosevelt. “We look forward to executing the mission we’ve been given over the next several months.”

Roosevelt completed its fifth FDNF-E patrol in November 2023. The fifth patrol took the ship and crew throughout the Mediterranean Sea and across the 6th Fleet area of operations. While in the Med, Roosevelt integrated with the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group, supporting security and stability in the region.

While on patrol in the Baltic in the summer of 2023, Roosevelt participated in NATO’s enhanced vigilance activity (eVA) Neptune Strike 23-2 and operated with NATO Allied Maritime Command’s Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG-1), demonstrating increased interoperability with NATO allies and partners.

Roosevelt was also the first American warship to conduct a Naval Surface Fire Support live fire exercise off the coast of Latvia.

Roosevelt is one of four U.S. Navy destroyers based in Rota, Spain, and assigned to Commander, Task Force 65 in support of NATO’s Integrated Air Missile Defense architecture. These FDNF-E ships have the flexibility to operate throughout the waters of Europe and Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Arctic Circle, demonstrating their mastery of the maritime domain.

For more than 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval

Forces Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with our Allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. 6th Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.