

Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force 154 Marks Productive First Year



MANAMA, Bahrain (May 21, 2024) Royal Jordanian Naval Force Capt. Ayman Salem Alnaimat, commander of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154, bottom right, and service members from CTF 154 pose for a photo outside of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command headquarters in Manama, Bahrain, May 21. CTF 154 conducts multinational maritime training at locations across the Middle East, enabling more CMF partner-nations to participate in training opportunities without ships or aircraft, particularly during courses that are facilitated ashore. **(Photo by Courtesy Photo)**

By Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs | May 22, 2024

MANAMA, BAHRAIN – Combined Maritime Forces' Combined Task Force (CTF) 154 marked one year as the partnership's

multinational maritime training task force, May 22.

CTF 154 provides multinational maritime training across the Middle East, centered on five core areas: maritime awareness, law of the sea, maritime interdiction, maritime rescue and assistance, and leadership development. CTF 154 customizes training to meet partner needs, enabling more nations to participate in training evolutions, even without ships or aircraft.

Since standing up last year, CTF 154 has completed nearly 30 training exercises across five operations: Compass Rose I and II in Bahrain; Southern Readiness in the Seychelles, and Northern Readiness I and II in Jordan. These events connected more than 135 subject matter experts with over 400 participants from 23 countries.

“Working and training collectively allows us to operate more effectively,” said Vice Adm. George Wikoff, CMF commander. “With CTF 154 we’re boosting regional maritime security by providing the ‘go-to’ training that partners and members need to keep the advantage in a dynamic environment.”

The task force conducted their inaugural event, Compass Rose, in Bahrain May 22-25, 2023. The training included more than 50 participants from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and United States and focused on first aid and vessel boarding procedures. The second Compass Rose exercise also occurred in Bahrain that December, with training on visit, board, search and seizure procedures, vessel security, and watch officer fundamentals.

In July, CTF 154 traveled to the Seychelles for Exercise Southern Readiness. The exercise involved vessel boarding, search-and-rescue operation techniques, maritime law and navigation. This was undertaken by field experts from Canada, Australia, France, United Kingdom, India, Italy and the United States of America, including experts from Seychelles Coast

Guard and the locally based office of the United Nations on Drugs and Crimes.

CTF 154 conducted operation Northern Readiness at the Royal Jordanian Naval Base in Aqaba, Jordan, in October. More than 30 CMF facilitators from eight nations led training courses on maritime awareness, law of the sea, VBSS, search and rescue, medical evacuations, seamanship development, public affairs, and leadership development.

In February, the Task Force held its largest scale event to date, Operation Northern Readiness II. Approximately 150 participants, facilitators, and observers took part, including representatives from CMF, European Union Naval Force Operation, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

“Being the commander of Combined Task Force 154 is an honor for the Royal Jordanian Navy and for myself,” said Capt. Ayman Salem Alnaimat, who became CTF 154’s second commander in November. “As we celebrate a year of impressive accomplishments, I believe the task force has more to achieve. All CMF members and our regional maritime partners support our efforts, which promote interoperability, capacity, capability and cooperation.”

CMF is the largest multinational naval partnership in the world, with 43 nations committed to upholding the international rules-based order at sea, which promotes security, stability, and prosperity across approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters, encompassing some of the world’s most important shipping lanes.

CMF’s other task forces include CTF 150 that focuses on maritime security in the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean; CTF 151, which leads regional counter-piracy efforts; CTF 152, dedicated to maritime security in the Arabian Gulf; and CTF 153 in the Red Sea.

USS Greenville Arrives at New Homeport of Naval Base Point Loma



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (May 20, 2024) The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Greenville (SSN 772) arrives at its new homeport at Naval Base Point Loma, Calif., May 20, 2024, following a 30-month engineered overhaul at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1Tiarra N. Brown)

20 May 2024

From MC1 Tiarra Brown, Commander, Submarine Squadron 11 Public Affairs

The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Greenville (SSN 772) and its crew of approximately 155 Sailors arrived at its new homeport of Naval Base Point Loma, San Diego, May 20, 2024.

Greenville is conducting a homeport shift to San Diego following the completion of a 30 month Engineered Overhaul (EOH) at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. Prior to beginning its EOH, Greenville was homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Submarine EOHs are comprehensive maintenance periods, ranging from 24 to 36 months in duration, and are normally conducted near the mid-point of a submarine's service life. The EOH period encompasses necessary repairs, maintenance, equipment modernization and upgrades, and system alterations. The production work accomplished during the EOH will ensure the submarine operates at full technical capacity and mission capability, and remains certified for unrestricted operations over the long term.

"It is a wonderful feeling to be here in San Diego," said Cmdr. Chad Tella, Greenville's commanding officer. "This crew has worked incredibly hard over the course of the last 30 months while Greenville was in the shipyard. Over the past month of operations, the crew has demonstrated their professionalism and resilience in safely bringing Greenville to our new home. I could not be more proud of each and every crewmember, and I am happy to join the warfighters of Submarine Squadron 11."

Greenville will be joining the four Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines already assigned to Submarine Squadron 11. More than half of the U.S. Navy's submarine force is based in the Indo-Pacific region due to the area's strategic importance.

“We are excited to welcome Greeneville to the Submarine Squadron 11 family,” said Capt. Kenneth Douglas, Commander, Submarine Squadron 11. “They bring increased experience and capability under the water to our already impressive arsenal and we are looking forward to seeing what they will do.”

Changing homeports can be challenging for crews, as it requires a lot of communication and coordination between multiple organizations.

“We are extremely proud of our Sailors and their families who have worked tirelessly to return our ship back to the fleet,” said Greeneville’s Chief of the Boat, Senior Chief Logistics Specialist (Submarine) Dan Dumitrache. “They have persevered through months of shift work, several arduous crew certification events, countless numbers of complex ship system testing, household goods shipments, and geographic separation from their loved ones. Their hard work and preparation has ensured that Greeneville will continue to be an undersea warfighting asset for years to come. We are excited to show our operational commanders what we are capable of. Our Sailors and their families exemplify the ship’s motto, ‘Second to None.’”

Greeneville was built by Virginia-based Newport News Shipbuilding and DryDock Company beginning in 1990 and was commissioned in February 1996 at Naval Station Norfolk. It is the only vessel in United States Naval history named after Greeneville, Tennessee.

Greeneville is now assigned to U.S. 3rd Fleet. 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 execute the 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 allies and partners to advance freedom of

navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security in the Indo-Pacific.

SECNAV Del Toro Discusses Building Comprehensive U.S. and Allied Maritime Power at National Maritime Day Ceremony



SECNAV Public Affairs, May 22, 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro today reiterated his commitment to restoring the Nation's vital strategic shipping

and shipbuilding industry.

Secretary Del Toro made the remarks at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration (MARAD) National Maritime Day ceremony, May 22, in Washington, D.C.

“History reveals that no nation has endured as a great naval power without also being a commercial maritime power, both in shipbuilding and shipping,” said Secretary Del Toro. “And for the first time in 125 years, we have a full-spectrum, global maritime competitor. That is why, as Secretary of the Navy, I have advocated so forcefully to revive commercial shipbuilding and the U.S. Merchant Marine.”

To achieve this goal, Secretary Del Toro has engaged across the Cabinet to advance a whole-of-government effort to rebuild the Nation’s comprehensive maritime power.

For example, last May, Secretary Del Toro met with Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and Administrator for the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD) retired Rear Adm. Ann C. Phillips to begin laying key groundwork for interagency collaboration that is at the center of our new national Maritime Statecraft.

“Our collective efforts have catapulted the importance of restoring America’s comprehensive maritime power to the top of the national agenda. We are now participating in multiple White House-led interagency processes on naval and commercial shipbuilding,” said Secretary Del Toro.

In addition, last year, Secretary Del Toro brought together the Maritime Administration, the U.S. Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Army to form a Government Shipbuilder’s Council to tackle common challenges.

“We are also working closely at the state level, including with the Governors of Wisconsin and Michigan, on improving

shipyard communities and mobilizing the 'North Coast's' world-class industrial workforce," said Secretary Del Toro.

Other efforts include:

Engaging with organized labor. Last month, Senior Advisor Steve Brock was present at the signing ceremony of an innovative union contract between Bartlett Maritime and the President of the Boilermakers Union. This new program will train union welders in the construction trades in shipbuilding work and deploy them as a rotational force to shipyards around the country.

Working to restore competition in the U.S. shipbuilding marketplace. Earlier this year, Secretary Del Toro traveled to Asia to meet with the top executives of the world's most advanced and productive commercial shipbuilders. He brought to the table a simple, yet profound opportunity: "Invest in America"—modernize and invigorate the U.S. shipbuilding ecosystem with your cutting-edge technology and processes.

Expanding opportunities. Recently, the Department of Energy (DOE) expanded eligibility for its significant infrastructure and IRA loan program to include new and modernized commercial shipyards, as well as, construction of commercial ships at scale. These incentives should open a path for U.S. built ships to once again be part of our commercial sealift programs.

"On this National Maritime Day, I want mariners and those who love and support them to know a renaissance in American maritime power has begun, and we, in the Department of the Navy, are with you," said Secretary Del Toro.

Congress established National Maritime Day in 1933 to honor the maritime industry's significant contributions to the United States. Congress established National Maritime Day to honor the American steamship Savannah's historic voyage from the United States to England, marking the first successful

transatlantic crossing using steam propulsion, 91 years ago.

Read Secretary Del Toro's full [remarks online](#).

Netherlands, U.S. naval forces conduct South China Sea operations



USS Mobile and HNLMS Tromp conduct a Replenishment At Sea with USNS Wally Schirra. (U.S. Navy photo)

By Lt. j. g. Rebecca Moore, May 22, 2024

SOUTH CHINA SEA – The Netherlands and United States' navies conducted bilateral operations in the South China Sea, May 22.

Participants included U.S. Navy Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Mobile (LCS 26), Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS Wally Schirra (T-AKE 8) and Royal Netherlands Navy De Zeven Provinciën-class frigate HNLMS Tromp (F803).

“The Netherlands is one of our oldest, continuous bilateral relationships, stemming from the 18th century. I look forward to any opportunity to work together with partners and allies, especially at sea,” said Capt. Sean Lewis, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 7. “We share a deep commitment to maintaining stability and free use of vital sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific.”

The bilateral operation provided a valuable opportunity to improve allied interoperability and conduct complex scenarios to improve combined readiness.

“We’re fortunate to work together with allies and to have them provide replenishment to us. Operating together fortifies our existing relationship with our partners from the U.S.,” said Cmdr. Yvonne van Beusekom, Commanding Officer HNLMS Tromp. “We look to continue coordination between our nations to promote regional peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.”

The U.S. Navy regularly participates with allies and partners in high-end maritime exercises and operations, which have continued to grow in scale, scope and complexity, to create combined operations that enhance interoperability, boost deterrence and demonstrate shared resolve.

“We are fortunate to work with friends at sea in the region. Consistent collaboration makes us better as a crew and more capable as a joint force,” said Cmdr. David Gardner, commanding officer for Mobile. “Bilateral operations like these strengthen bonds with our Royal Netherlands Navy partners and deepen our understanding of how to operate

together.”

During the operation, Commander, Destroyer Squadron 15 acted as a facilitator between DESRON 7 and the Netherlands. Multilateral operations improve interoperability between allied navies and support a free and open Indo-Pacific. These evolutions demonstrate the strength of regional partnerships, interchangeability and cooperation.

As the U.S. Navy’s forward-deployed DESRON in Southeast Asia, DESRON 7 serves as the primary tactical and operational commander of littoral combat ships rotationally deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility, functions as Expeditionary Strike Group 7’s Sea Combat Commander and builds partnerships through training and exercises and military-to-military engagements.

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.

U.S. Pacific Fleet Announces 29th RIMPAC Exercise



From Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO – Approximately 29 nations, 40 surface ships, 3 submarines, 14 national land forces, over 150 aircraft and more than 25,000 personnel will participate in the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise scheduled June 26 to Aug. 2, in and around the Hawaiian Islands.

RIMPAC 2024 is the 29th exercise in the series that began in 1971. As the world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC combines force capabilities in a dynamic maritime environment to demonstrate enduring interoperability across the full spectrum of military operations.

The theme of RIMPAC 2024 is "Partners: Integrated and Prepared." To promote a free and open Indo-Pacific, Exercise RIMPAC is the premier joint and combined maritime exercise, utilizing and preserving a world class maritime training environment. With inclusivity at its core, RIMPAC fosters multi-national cooperation and trust, leverages interoperability, and achieves respective national objectives to strengthen integrated, prepared, coalition partners.

This year's exercise includes forces from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, the Republic

of Korea, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Hosted by Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, RIMPAC 2024 will be led by Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, who will serve as the Combined Task Force (CTF) commander. For the first time in RIMPAC history, a member of the Chilean Navy, Commodore Alberto Guerrero, will serve as deputy commander of the CTF. Rear Adm. Kazushi Yokota of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force will serve as vice commander. Other key leaders of the multinational force will include Commodore Kristjan Monaghan of Canada, who will command the maritime component, and Air Commodore Louise Desjardins of Australia, who will command the air component.

During RIMPAC, integrated and prepared partners train and operate together in order to strengthen our collective forces and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. RIMPAC 2024 contributes to the increased interoperability, resiliency and agility needed by the Joint and Combined Force to deter and defeat aggression by major powers across all domains and levels of conflict.

U.S. Coast Guard Visit to Republic of Palau Strengthens Maritime Navigation and Cooperation



U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam personnel and Marine Transportation leadership observe the installation of fixed ATON from the government of Japan being installed in Palau on May 14, 2024. The team completed a vital weeklong mission in the Republic of Palau, setting the stage for future collaboration and bolstering safe maritime navigation and security. This visit, in response to a request from Palau Marine Transportation, focused on an Aids to Navigation (ATON) Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE). (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

From U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam, May 20, 2024

KOROR, Republic of Palau – On May 14, 2024, the U.S. Coast Guard completed a vital weeklong mission in the Republic of Palau, setting the stage for future collaboration and

bolstering safe maritime navigation and security.

This visit, in response to a request from Palau Marine Transportation, focused on an Aids to Navigation (ATON) Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE). The exchange laid the foundation for a future SMEE planned for later in the year, including personnel from the 225-foot sea-going buoy tender, USCGC Hickory (WLB 212).

Palau, a nation consisting of approximately 340 islands and renowned for its maritime heritage and strategic location in the Pacific, plays a crucial role in regional maritime safety, security, and environmental stewardship. With its vibrant tourism industry and commitment to marine conservation, Palau's efforts are vital for the economic and ecological health of the region.

Lt. Anna Maria Vaccaro and Lt. Jay DeInnocentiis led the U.S. Coast Guard SMEE team. They met with Palau Marine Transportation leadership and ATON technicians to discuss the fixed and floating ATON constellation in Palau. The team also reviewed the equipment storage and set-up for fixed and floating aids. They went to sea with the marine transportation team to inspect the aids on the reef and observed the establishment of a fixed aid.

Palau requested U.S. Coast Guard assistance with establishing four additional fixed aids in locations challenged by the rapid depth changes and strong currents. A microbeacon barge, a type of barge equipped with microbeacon technology which often is used for shallow water ATON positioning and coastal navigation, is the most suitable asset for this task due to the channel's bathymetry. The barge is provided by the U.S. Coast Guard and will be delivered by USCGC Hickory upon the buoy tender's arrival back to the Western Pacific. The Palauan team plans to use the microbeacon barge for servicing coastal aids to navigation in shallow waters.

In addition to the SMEE, Capt. Nicholas Simmons, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam commander, and Capt. Robert Kistner, the incoming commander, traveled to Palau for brief yet impactful introductions and to express gratitude for the support received during Capt. Simmons' tenure as commander.

Strategic Importance of ATON

The strategic relationship between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Republic of Palau is vital for ensuring maritime safety, security, and prosperity in the Pacific region. The ATON system is crucial for safe navigation, preventing maritime accidents, and ensuring the smooth flow of marine transportation. This system supports economic activities, fisheries, and the overall security of maritime routes, which are essential for Palau and its partners.

"The economic and environmental value of ATON in maintaining a safe and efficient maritime transportation system cannot be overstated," said Capt. Simmons. "Our collaboration with Palau Marine Transportation demonstrates our commitment to enhancing maritime safety and supporting our partners in the Pacific. It has been a privilege to be in Palau, and I am profoundly grateful for the exceptional relationship and hospitality extended to us."

Trip Highlights

- **Leadership Engagement:** Lt. Vaccaro and Lt. DeInnocentiis met with senior leaders at Palau Marine Transportation to discuss the ATON constellation. They observed the implementation of fixed aids provided by the government of Japan and witnessed the installation of a fixed aid on the reef.
- **Promotion Ceremony:** They observed the promotion ceremony of a U.S. Naval colleague Cmdr. Brendan Kruse, COFA Security

Cooperation Officer, further supporting Department of Defense relationships in the region.

- Community Participation: Lt. Vaccaro participated in Palau National Police Week's 5K Walkathon and candlelight vigil.
- Key Introductions: Capt. Kistner met with critical partners in Palau, including National Security Coordinator Ms. Jen Anson, U.S. Embassy Palau Charge d'Affaires Mr. Andrew McLean, and U.S. Maritime Advisor to Marine Law Ms. Jennifer Ketchum (USCG Ret.). The team toured the Port of Malakal, the Joint Operations Center, and visited the PSS Remeliik II, a Guardian-class patrol boat in the service of Palau's Division of Maritime Law Enforcement, built and provided by Australia.

Future Support

The Service tentatively plans an ATON SMEE accompanied by the Hickory and crew for late 2024 to further engage with Palauan partners and establish a realistic timeline for servicing aids in Palau. This continued partnership underscores the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment to supporting maritime navigation and security in the region, reinforcing the positive impacts and legacy of reliability.

"Our continued collaboration with the Republic of Palau is a testament to the strong strategic partnership we share," said Capt. Kistner. "By working together, we can enhance Palau's maritime transportation system and build local capacity, ensuring the safety and security of its waters and contributing to the stability of the broader Pacific region. We are deeply grateful for Palau's cooperation and support in this mission."

The U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam team focuses on maritime safety, security, and stewardship in Oceania. With a primary presence in Guam and Saipan and over 300 members across Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the team maintains a strong U.S. presence in

the Micronesia sub-region and adjacent areas, closely tied to local communities.

HII Launches “Build It” Campaign to Highlight Shipbuilder Support for U.S. Navy



NEWPORT NEWS, Va., May 21, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – As New York City hosts the annual Fleet Week in celebration of the nation’s sea services, HII (NYSE: HII) – the nation’s largest military shipbuilder and a sponsor of the Intrepid Museum’s commemoration of the event – is launching a hiring campaign to spotlight the contributions and rewards of building ships for the U.S. Navy.

The HII “Build It” campaign is dedicated to the men and women who partner with the U.S. Navy to build ships critical to the national defense. Shipbuilders value the mission and pride in ship construction, steady advancement and job security, and comprehensive benefits such as health coverage and professional development opportunities.

“The breadth of our workforce at HII is astonishing,” said Xavier Beale, vice president of human resources at HII’s Newport News Shipbuilding. “From the craftsmen and women in our shipyards who build the most powerful ships in the world with their own hands, to the nuclear engineers who enable safe nuclear power and propulsion, all the way to the cyber and data scientists who build the tools that deliver decision advantage: It’s a workforce for our 21st century national defense.”

In addition to Newport News Shipbuilding, which is the nation’s only builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and one of two builders of nuclear-powered submarines, HII’s divisions include Pascagoula, Mississippi-based Ingalls Shipbuilding that delivers amphibious ships, destroyers and cutters, and McLean, Virginia-based Mission Technologies, which builds technologies and solutions that connect and strengthen an all-domain force.

Imagery accompanying this release is available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-launches-build-it-campaign-to-highlight-shipbuilder-support-for-u-s-navy/>.

HII’s Build It campaign targets workers of all ages and skill levels, and highlights paid training and development at its shipyards for those who require it.

Russell Dawson, 36, was accepted into the century-old Newport News Shipbuilding Apprentice School right out of high school. Since graduating in 2010, Dawson has supported aircraft carrier and submarine programs at the shipyard, moved up the

ranks and is currently working on the *Columbia*-class program, the Navy's top acquisition priority. "I've always wanted to serve my country," Dawson said. "I see my work as a shipbuilder doing just that. It's an honor to help build the greatest ships for our Navy."

From an apprentice to a master shipbuilder who has worked over 40 years at the company, HII shipbuilders contribute daily to national security. Stan Brazell, manager of quality receipt and inspection at Ingalls Shipbuilding, began his career in 1991 as an outside machinist apprentice and over the course of his career has worked on almost every ship program at Ingalls, including the construction of USS *Bataan* (LHD 5). "I view this job as my way of serving our country," Brazell said. "While I may not be wearing combat boots, I do wear work boots, and those boots have allowed me to contribute to building freedom."

The Build It campaign will appear on social media, digital and display advertising, and local television. HII expects it will complement a current national advertising campaign launched by the U.S. Navy, which is aimed at energizing a movement to attract workers in support of shipbuilding and the national defense. Examples of videos in support of HII's campaign are:

[Build It: Preshus](#)

[Build It: Kevin](#)

[Build It: Grant](#)

[Build It: Quadale](#)

Engaging Future Shipbuilders

Throughout the year HII is proud to play a role in fostering a culture of innovation, growth and community engagement by investing in initiatives that support and inspire the leaders of tomorrow. For example, HII recently partnered with the Tall Ship Providence Foundation in Alexandria, Virginia, on an upcoming educational video series for fourth graders about the

history of shipbuilding. The series emphasizes the importance of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and the ongoing significance of shipbuilding to the nation. HII believes that the video series and the foundation's continued educational efforts will inspire young talent to explore career opportunities in shipbuilding. Watch a preview of the video titled "How to Build a Ship: Who Builds Ships" [here](#).

For information about employment opportunities and careers at HII, including shipbuilding, visit [HII.com/careers](https://www.hii.com/careers).

SECNAV Del Toro Awards Navy Unit Commendation to USS Carney



From SECNAV Public Affairs, May 19, 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro awarded a Navy Unit Commendation (NUC) to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Carney (DDG 64) for “outstanding performance against terrorist forces during their nearly eight-month deployment.”

Secretary Del Toro presented the NUC to Carney’s crew when they [returned to Naval Station Mayport, Fla., May 19, after being deployed for more than seven months](#) to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe – Africa and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command areas of operation.

“Carney was deployed forward, deterring our adversaries, protecting our national interests, defending the rules-based international order, and promoting peace,” said Secretary Del Toro. “I, and all Americans, am immensely proud of these

Carney Sailors. They represent the best of the Department of the Navy and indeed our Nation.”

The NUC is awarded to any ship, aircraft, or other unit of the Navy or Marine Corps that has distinguished itself by outstanding heroism in action against enemy forces and is the second highest unit award in the Department of the Navy, behind the Presidential Unit Citation.

Following the Oct. 7, 2023, terrorist attacks in Israel, USS Carney operated alongside the Gerald R. Ford and Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Groups in the Red Sea, defending commercial shipping lanes, innocent merchant mariners, and American, allied, and partner vessels against drone and missile attacks launched by the Iranian-aligned Houthis in Yemen.

In all, USS Carney conducted 51 engagements against Houthi weapons, including land attack cruise missiles, anti-ship ballistic missiles, and unmanned systems, and two defensive strikes that destroyed 20 targets.

Additionally, USS Carney, alongside USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), successfully engaged Iranian ballistic missiles fired at Israel on April 13 in a retaliatory strike.

While in Mayport, Secretary Del Toro also addressed families on the pier, thanking them for their support throughout USS Carney’s deployment.

“I recognize that their service is only possible through the support provided by the military families – the foundation of our Armed Forces,” said Secretary Del Toro. “Thank you, to all of you, for your unwavering support, love, and encouragement for your Carney Sailor and the Navy.”

During their deployment, USS Carney operated in the U.S. Fifth and Sixth Fleet Areas of Operations, and participated in military operations Spartan Shield, Cobalt Shield, Inherent

Resolve, Poseidon Archer, and Pandora Throttle. As outlined in the NUC, Carney “protected vital global commerce through two strategic maritime chokepoints, defended key allies and partners, deterred aggression, and forged partnerships founded on trust and unity of effort against violations of international law. In self-defense, they destroyed many unmanned aerial vehicles, anti-ship ballistic and cruise missiles, land attack cruise missiles, and small boats, and they provided crucial naval presence in the region at a pivotal moment in history.”

Read Secretary Del Toro’s [full remarks online](#).

AUSTAL USA Christens 19th LCS – FUTURE USS PIERRE



From Austal USA, May 18, 2024

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA celebrated the christening of the company’s 19th Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship (LCS)

today – the future USS Pierre (LCS 38). Ship sponsor Larissa Thune Hargens executed the ceremonial bottle break over the bow of Pierre witnessed by an audience of over four hundred excited guests.

Hargens, a native of South Dakota, graduated from Bethel University, in Saint Paul, Minn., with a bachelor's degree in political science and history. Since graduating, Hargens has held several positions with the University of Sioux Falls in South Dakota and currently owns her own LLC, Red Writer, where she does freelance marketing and social media.

The call to serve runs deep in Hargens' family. Her grandfather was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight in Fighting Squadron 18 (VF-18) on the USS Intrepid (CV-11) during World War II and her father is U.S. Senator John Thune. Hargens has continued that tradition by serving with a non-profit incentive program that helps limited-income pregnant women.

Key speakers at the ceremony included Vice Admiral Morley, USN, Commander Naval Sea Systems Command; Rear Admiral Anderson, USN, Program Executive Office Ships; U.S. Senator John Thune representing South Dakota; and Austal USA President Michelle Kruger.

“One of my proudest moments since joining Austal USA, was looking out into the audience today and seeing the many talented Austal USA employees and other Navy and industry guests who are responsible for the success of the LCS program,” stated Austal USA President Michelle Kruger. “Austal USA has grown from a small commercial shipyard to a large, advanced defense ship manufacturer primarily thanks to the Indy-variant LCS program. Christening this ship, the last Austal USA-built LCS, makes me a bit nostalgic but I know, for this company and the great team we've assembled, the future is bright and limitless.”

LCS 38 is the second ship named in honor of the capital city of South Dakota, a region with a rich American culture that includes a great history of service to the Navy and Marine Corps. The first USS Pierre, a World War II PC class submarine chaser, was commissioned in 1943 and decommissioned in 1958. Pierre (LCS 38) is the last Independence-variant LCS to be christened. Following delivery, she will join her sister ships homeported in San Diego and deploying to the INDO-PACOM region.

“It is truly an honor for PEO USC to have led the construction of this remarkable class of ships,” said Rear Adm. Kevin Smith, Program Executive Officer, Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC). “Built by an industry team lead by Austal USA, the Littoral Combat Ship stands as a testament to our unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence in naval shipbuilding. As we christen the USS Pierre, we also celebrate the extraordinary crews that will sail this ship, employing the capabilities and versatility of the Littoral Combat Ship class, which will continue to play a pivotal role in safeguarding our nation’s interests now and for years to come.”

The LCS is a fast, agile, mission-focused platform designed to operate in near-shore environments, winning against 21st-century coastal threats. In November 2023 the Navy reported it had six Independence-variant LCS deployed in the Pacific throughout 2023, including the record-breaking 26-month overseas deployment of USS Charleston (LCS 18). The Austal USA-built LCS variant is also providing support to the Navy’s unmanned programs with USS Oakland (LCS 24) operating as a mothership for the Unmanned Surface Division 1 vessels Ranger, Mariner, Seahawk and Sea Hunter; the large flight decks support unmanned drones, like the MQ-8C Fire Scout. Integration of the mine countermeasures (MCM) mission package placed aboard USS Canberra (LCS 30) signifies additional capabilities planned for Independence-class ships.

Navy Announces Commissioning Date for the Future USS Richard M. McCool Jr



[By Karli Yeager](#), Naval Surface Forces Public Affairs, 20 May 2024

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – The U.S. Navy has approved the commissioning date for the future USS Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29).

The Navy will commission Richard M. McCool Jr., an amphibious transport dock, September 7, 2024 at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Pensacola, Florida.

The naming of LPD 29 honors U.S. Navy Capt. Richard M. McCool Jr., who was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1945 for the

heroism he displayed after his ship was attacked by kamikaze aircraft in the Battle of Okinawa. Despite suffering from shrapnel wounds and painful burns, he led efforts to battle a blazing fire on his ship and rescue injured sailors. LPD 29 will be the first of its name.

Richard M. McCool Jr. is co-sponsored by Shauna McCool and Kate Oja, granddaughters of the ship's namesake. As the co-sponsors, McCool and Oja lead the time-honored Navy tradition of giving the order during the ceremony to "man our ship and bring her to life!" At the moment, the commissioning pennant is hoisted and Richard M. McCool Jr. becomes a proud ship of the fleet.

Richard M. McCool Jr. will be the Navy's 13th San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship.

Amphibious transport docks are used to transport and land Marines, their equipment, and supplies by embarked Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) or conventional landing craft and amphibious assault vehicles (AAV) augmented by helicopters or vertical take-off and landing aircraft (MV-22). These ships support amphibious assault, special operations, or expeditionary warfare missions and serve as secondary aviation platforms for amphibious operations.