Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange Provides Exclamation Point to RIMPAC

Ships sail in formation during sail in formation during Rim of the Pacific 2022, July 28. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ian Thomas*

HONOLULU – As this year's biennal, multinational Rim of the Pacific naval exercise is drawing to a close, naval experts will gather in Honolulu to conduct the 2022 Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange, or IMSE, essentially punctuating the end of RIMPAC with an exclamation point.

The conference is hosted by the Honolulu chapter of the Navy League and is being held at the Hawaii Convention Center Aug. 4-5.

According to retired Capt. Larry Osborn, a combination of three things makes IMSE unique – the location, the hybrid

format and the enduring theme of building partnerships while focusing each year on a pertinent issue. The focus area for IMSE 2022 is “information sharing.”

As for location, “Honolulu, located in the mid-Pacific, is the only place where a U.S. combatant command is co-located with all its components,” said Osborn.

Produced as a hybrid event, Osborn said, “IMSE reaches across the Indo-Pacific and around the world with a live webinar broadcast while the in-person participants and attendees gather in a non-threatening, non-government venue to network informally and strengthen relationships.”

IMSE has no official relationship with RIMPAC, but it’s not a coincidence that IMSE happens right after the exercise. The event will explore this “largest of all” multi-national exercise to learn how the maritime services from 26 nations share information and operate together effectively as a cohesive force.

Since it’s a RIMPAC year, there will be representatives of a number of Indo-Pacific militaries already here. “We schedule IMSE to follow right after the RIMPAC closing to take advantage of the many foreign leaders present in Honolulu at that time,” Osborn said.

IMSE 2022 will feature a number of senior leaders from the region, to include remarks from the Australian and Korean heads of navy. Adm. Sam Paparo, U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, will open the conference with a luncheon keynote. Discussion

about the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue will include perspective from Indian, Japanese and U.S. senior leaders. Finally, a panel of ship commanding officers from the U.S., Malaysia, Australia, Korea, and the Philippines will share their RIMPAC experience.

Anyone can register at imsehawaii.org to attend IMSE 2022 virtually via a live webinar or in person. Registration will stay open until the conference opening. Navy League members attending in person receive a discount.

Langley Confirmed to Head Africa Command as Four-Star General

Lt. Gen. Michael Langley. *U.S. MARINE CORPS*

WASHINGTON – Lt. Gen. Michael Langley has been confirmed by the U.S. Senate to be the first African-American four-star general in the U.S. Marine Corps, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced Aug. 1.

Langley was nominated to the be commander of U.S. Africa Command in Stuttgart, Germany, on June 9. He will be promoted to general at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, Aug. 6, the Marine Corps announced Aug. 2. Langley is currently serving as commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command; commanding general, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic; and commander, Marine Corps Forces North, Norfolk, Virginia.

“He’s been a Marine for more than 35 years. He’s led an impressive career. And he’s now the first Black four-star general in the history of the Marines,” Schumer posted on Twitter.

“It is a great honor to be the president’s nominee to lead U.S. Africom,” Langley said at his July 21 nomination hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. “I am grateful for the trust and confidence extended by him, the secretary of defense, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and the commandant of the Marine Corps.”

A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, Langley graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington and commissioned in 1985. He commanded at every level from platoon to regiment, including Battery K, 5th Battalion, 11th Marines in support of Operation Wildfire in the Western United States; battalion and regimental commands in 12th Marines forward deployed in Okinawa, Japan; and both the 201st Regional Corps Advisory Command-Central and Regional Support Command – Southwest in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

As a general officer, his command assignments include deputy commanding general, II Marine Expeditionary Force and commanding general, 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade; commander, Marine Forces Europe and Africa; and deputy commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic and deputy commander, Marine Forces Command and Marine Forces Northern Command.

Langley holds multiple advanced degrees including Masters in National Security Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

USS Fort Lauderdale Commissioned in Namesake City

The future USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) currently moored in Port Everglades, in its namesake city Fort Lauderdale, Florida, getting ready for its commissioning ceremony. *U.S. NAVY / Sgt. Gavin Shelton, USMC*

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – The U.S. Navy commissioned its newest amphibious transport dock ship, USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), on July 30 in its namesake Florida city, Commander, Naval Surface Forces Public Affairs said July 30.

“To the Sailors and Marines who will serve aboard USS Fort Lauderdale, thank you and your families in advance for the service you will fulfill and sacrifices you may endure,” said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, who spoke at the event. “The moment you bring this amphibious transport dock to life, you will strengthen the integrated deterrence capability of our entire joint force.”

Guest speakers for the event also included Kari Wilkinson, president of Ingalls Shipbuilding; Gen. Eric Smith, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps and Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantlis. The principal speaker was U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Florida).

“It is such an honor to be involved in the commissioning of the USS Ft. Lauderdale. It’s another chapter to the momentous history, friendship, and respect that the city has with the U.S. Navy,” Schultz said. “As chair of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, my support for our military is unwavering. I will always stand by our service members and veterans, and honor those who continue to serve.”

Ship sponsor Meredith A. Berger gave the first order to “man our ship and bring her to life.”

“The Navy names ships for people, places, and ideas that are special. The Navy certainly picked a special place when naming the USS Fort Lauderdale,” she said. “I am honored to be the sponsor for this incredible ship.”

Built by the Huntington Ingalls Industries in Pascagoula, Mississippi, Fort Lauderdale was launched March 28, 2020, and christened Aug. 21, 2021. The ship was delivered to U.S. Navy Nov. 30, 2021.

“Finally, if there is one thing that history has shown us from

the days of antiquity it is that the stakes of the competition for control of the seas are high and for our part, USS Fort Lauderdale stands ready to deliver on any day, and at any time," said Capt. James Quaresimo, the ship's commanding officer. "And those that may wish to challenge us – they should pause. For we are equipped with America's unstoppable secret weapon that our enemies will never be able to duplicate and that is the fierce, dedicated and unstoppable, men and women of the United States Navy and Marine Corps."

The ceremony marks the official transition of the USS Fort Lauderdale into the fleet and caps a weeklong series of events celebrating the ship and its namesake city.

Amphibious transport dock ships are warships that embark, transport and land elements of a landing force for a variety of expeditionary warfare missions.

USS Fort Lauderdale will be homeported at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

L3Harris, US Navy to Demo Maritime Autonomous Capabilities at RIMPAC

The large unmanned surface vessel Nomad arrives at Pearl Harbor to participate in Rim of the Pacific 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Demitrius J. Williams*

MELBOURNE, Fla. – L3Harris Technologies, in collaboration with the U.S. Navy, will demonstrate how unmanned surface vehicle technologies can provide critical support for traditional maritime forces during the Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2022, the company said Aug. 1.

RIMPAC is being held June 29 through Aug. 4 off the coast of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The Navy will operate its medium-displacement unmanned surface vehicle, Nomad, outfitted with numerous L3Harris autonomous technologies that enable it to perform strategic missions safely and accurately without the need for onboard support staff. The technology includes L3Harris control, electro-optical and communications systems.

Nomad supports different maritime missions, including information, surveillance and reconnaissance, and maritime domain awareness missions It can operate in an autonomous mode, including maintaining vessel awareness and complying with international collision avoidance guidelines and can be

remotely piloted from an onshore or ship-based ground control station.

“RIMPAC provides a great opportunity to demonstrate how unmanned autonomous technology can support maritime forces,” said Rosemary Chapdelaine, president of Maritime at L3Harris. “Lessons learned from this exercise will enable us to continue developing and integrating autonomous capabilities in collaboration with the Naval Sea Systems Command, Unmanned Maritime Systems.”

Twenty-six nations, surface ships, submarines, national land forces, aircraft and nearly 25,000 personnel are expected to participate in this year’s RIMPAC.

Royal Navy’s New Ship Will be an Autonomy and Lethality Accelerator

The U.K. Royal Navy’s experimental vessel XV Patrick Blackett. *U.K. ROYAL NAVY*

PORTSMOUTH, UK — The Royal Navy welcomed the experimental vessel XV Patrick Blackett (X01) on July 29 in a ceremony at Portsmouth, United Kingdom.

The Royal Navy refers to the new ship, which has the hull number X01, as an “autonomy and lethality accelerator” and a “maritime sandbox,” dedicated to exploring and demonstrating new, innovative technology at sea.

The ship, designed as an offshore support vessel, was acquired from the Dutch shipbuilder Damen and optimized for Royal Navy use. Its inherent modularity allows various systems and capabilities to be installed in the Royal Navy’s PODS (Persistently Operationally Deployed Systems), or secured on deck, and plugged in to the ship’s network to be evaluated.

The 135-foot ship will have a top speed of about 20 knots and have a crew of five. It is not expected to be operated autonomously without a crew.

The ship’s namesake, physicist Patrick Blackett, served in the Royal Navy in WW I and later made groundbreaking contributions during WW II in the field of operational research. He won a Nobel Prize for his work in 1948.

The vessel will be operated as part of the Royal Navy’s “NavyX” organization, which, according to its website, “rapidly develops, tests and trials cutting-edge equipment, with the aim of getting new technology off the drawing board and into the hands of our people on operations at a pace. Operating across all maritime environments – over water, on water, underwater and the littoral. By empowering a team with diverse experience, NavyX will exponentially accelerate our speed of learning and our capacity to procure and integrate these best-in-class technologies.”

Navy Conducts Unmanned Logistics Prototype Trials Aboard T-EPF Apalachicola

WASHINGTON – The future expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Apalachicola (EPF 13) is performing a series of planned test events assessing autonomous capabilities integrated into the shipboard configuration, demonstrating that a large ship can become a self-driving platform, Team Ships Public Affairs said July 29.

Known as Unmanned Logistics Prototype trials, each test event increases the perception capabilities and complexity of behaviors demonstrated by the autonomous systems. Test evolutions to date include point-to-point autonomous

navigation, vessel handling and transfer of vessel control between manned to unmanned modes.

“The autonomous capabilities being demonstrated by this prototype system represent a major technological advancement for the EPF platform, the Navy at large and our industry partners. EPF 13 will be the first fully operational U.S. naval ship to possess autonomous capability including the ability to operate autonomously in a commercial vessel traffic lane,” said Tim Roberts, Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. “This testing is a game changer and highlights that there is potential to expand unmanned concepts into existing fleet assets.”

Collaboration for the test events include team members from PEO Ships, PEO Unmanned and Small Combatants, Naval Systems Engineering and Logistics Directorate – Surface Ship Design and System Engineering, Supervisor of Shipbuilding – Gulf Coast, Naval Surface Warfare Center support from Carderock, Combatant Craft Division, Dahlgren and Philadelphia and the Navy’s shipbuilding and industry partners, Austal USA, L3Harris and General Dynamics.

Future test events will add levels of difficulty and include night navigation, and differing weather and sea states. These trials will set crucial groundwork for autonomous vessel operations, to include vessel encounter and avoidance maneuvering and compliance with International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

EPFs are shallow draft, commercial-based, catamaran designed for rapid, intra-theater transport of personnel and equipment. The EPF’s high speed, shallow draft, and ability to load/unload in austere ports enables maneuver force agility in achieving positional advantage over intermediate distances without reliance on shore-based infrastructure.

EPF 13 is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy later this year.

Navy Accepts Delivery of Fleet Replenishment Oiler USNS John Lewis

The USNS John Lewis (T-AO 206), the lead ship of a new class of fleet replenishment oilers. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – The Navy accepted delivery of the lead ship of its new class of fleet replenishment oilers, USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) on July 27, Team Ships Public Affairs said July 29.

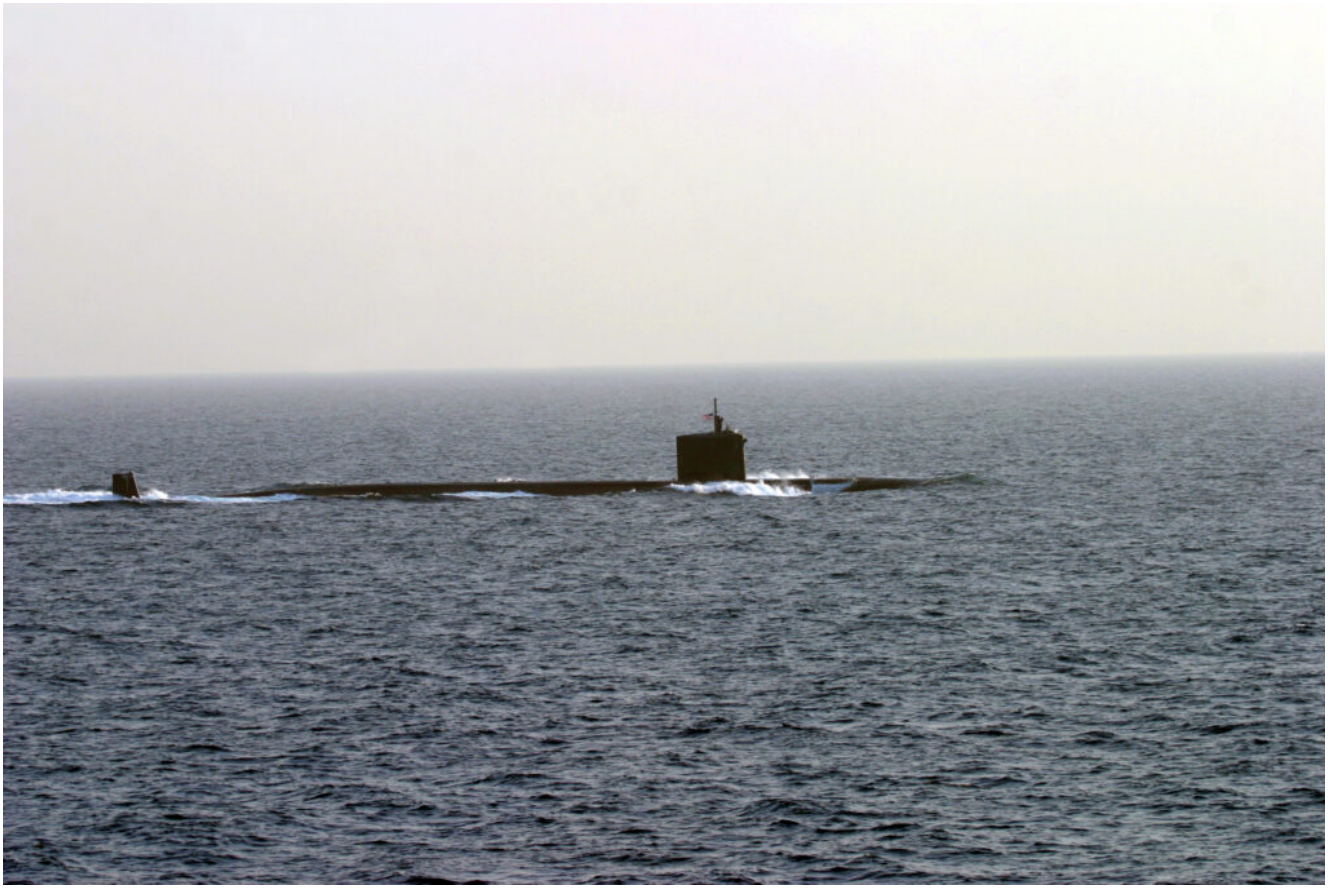
T-AO 205's delivery follows the completion of acceptance

trials with the Navy’s Board of Inspection and Survey to test the readiness and capability of the craft and to validate requirements.

“USNS John Lewis will provide much needed capability to the fleet as the primary fuel pipeline at sea,” said John Lighthammer, program manager of the Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office. “This is the first of a 20-ship class providing the Sailors and merchant mariners another tool to support at-sea operations.”

The new John Lewis-class T-AOs will be operated by Military Sealift Command to provide diesel fuel and lubricating oil, and small quantities of fresh and frozen provisions, stores, and potable water to Navy ships at sea, and jet fuel for aircraft. The new T-AOs will add capacity to the Navy’s Combat Logistics Force and become the cornerstone of the fuel delivery system.

General Dynamics Electric Boat Awarded $698M Contract Mod to Overhaul USS Hartford



The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Hartford, shown underway in the Persian Gulf in 2009. *U.S. NAVY*

GROTON, Conn. – General Dynamics Electric Boat announced June 29 it was awarded a modification of the previously awarded U.S. Navy contract for the repair, maintenance and modernization of the submarine USS Hartford (SSN 768).

The contract modification has a value of $697.9 million. Work will be performed at the company's shipyard in Groton, Connecticut, and is expected to be completed in October 2026.

USS Hartford is a Los Angeles-class submarine built by General Dynamics Electric Boat and commissioned in 1994.

"This engineered overhaul of the USS Hartford will enhance its warfighting capability and extend the ship's service life, returning a valuable asset to the U.S. Navy submarine fleet," said Kevin Graney, president of General Dynamics Electric Boat.

Navy to Commission Amphibious Transport Dock Ship Fort Lauderdale

The Navy’s newest amphibious transport dock ship, USS Fort Lauderdale, transports the Navy’s newest connectors to their new homeport. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy will commission its newest amphibious transport dock, the future USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), during a 10 a.m. EDT ceremony Saturday, July 30, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the Defense Department said July 29.

The future USS Fort Lauderdale is the first naval ship to honor the city of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

“Tomorrow we commission the future USS Fort Lauderdale, bringing a powerful war ship with a dedicated and determined crew to life,” said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. “This ship will play an integral part in strengthening America’s partnerships and protecting our country’s security abroad.”

The future USS Fort Lauderdale is the 12th San Antonio-class ship, designed to support embarking, transporting, and bringing elements of 650 Marines ashore by landing craft or air-cushion vehicles. A flight deck hangar further enhances the ship’s capabilities, which can support the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft.

The ceremony will be live streamed at: USS Fort Lauderdale Commissioning. The link becomes active approximately 10 minutes prior to the event (9:50 a.m. EDT).

Initial Operating Capability Declared for Unmanned Influence Sweep System

The Minecountermeasure Unmanned Surface Vehicle is recovered onboard USS Manchester (LCS 14) during Unmanned Influence Sweep System initial operational test and evaluation June 2021. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Program Executive Office, Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) announced July 28 the Unmanned Influence Sweep System, a critical component of the Navy's suite of mine countermeasure technologies, has achieved initial operating capability, or IOC.

The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations declared UISS IOC on July 22. The program completed formal testing and delivered a system with logistics and training material with appropriately trained Fleet personnel to execute minesweeping as part of the Mine Countermeasures Mission Package.

"UISS's declaration of IOC is a monumental achievement for the Navy's Mine Countermeasures Mission Package," said Capt. Godfrey "Gus" Weekes, LCS Mission Modules (PMS 420) Program

Manager. PMS 420 is the office that oversees the Unmanned Influence Sweep System within PEO USC.

Capable of being operated from littoral combat ships, shore, or vessels of opportunity, the Unmanned Influence Sweep System provides acoustic and magnetic minesweeping coupled with the semi-autonomous, diesel-powered, aluminum-hulled Mine Countermeasures Unmanned Surface Vehicle. The MCM USV is an integral part of the mine countermeasures mission package and serves as the tow platform for both minesweeping and mine hunting missions.

Notably, this is also the first IOC of an unmanned surface platform by the U.S. Navy, marking an important milestone in the evolution toward a hybrid fleet of manned and unmanned systems.

“Over the years, the program has worked tirelessly to mature and field the UISS system that will keep the Navy’s most valuable asset, our sailors, safer by keeping them out of the minefield. With this declaration, the program is inching closer toward system-wide IOC for the MCM MP,” Weekes said.