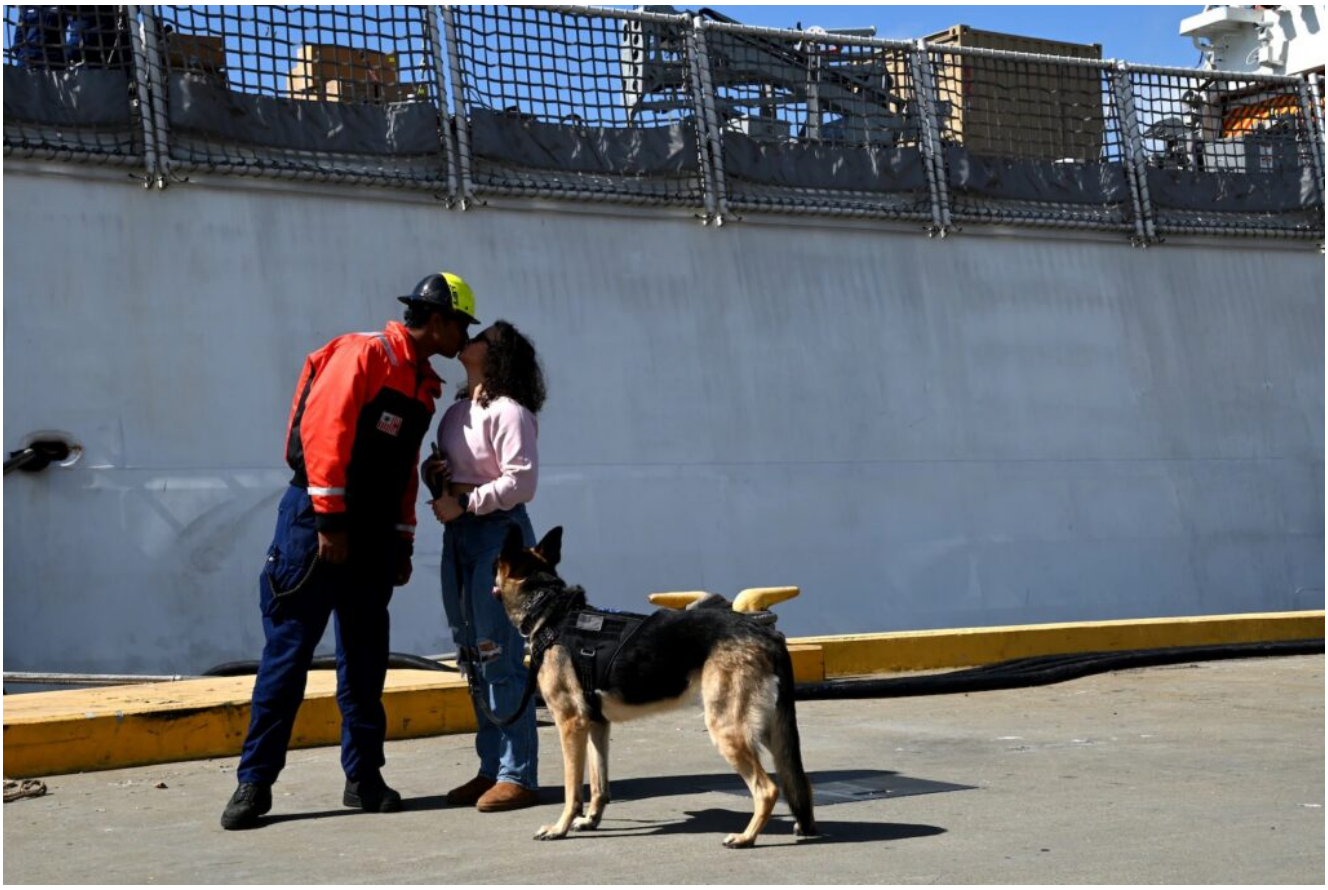
Coast Guard Cutter Waesche returns home following counternarcotics patrol; $166M in contraband seized



Release from Coast Guard Pacific Area

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Coast Guard Cutter Waesche returns home following counternarcotics patrol; $166M in contraband seized

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The Coast Guard Cutter Waesche (WMSL 751) and crew returned to their Alameda homeport, Friday, following a 90-day counternarcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

The 418-foot national security cutter and crew patrolled more

than 15,000 nautical miles conducting law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations in international waters off Central America and South America.

During nighttime patrol operations, Waesche personnel were notified by a Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) and aircrew of a suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel transiting international waters. Waesche's personnel launched the cutter's small boat crews and boarding teams, who interdicted the vessel after a multi-hour pursuit. The interdiction resulted in the seizure of approximately 400 pounds of cocaine and 5,000 pounds of marijuana.

Waesche later received a separate report from an MPA aircrew of another suspected narcotics-smuggling vessel transiting international waters. Waesche directed the launch of the deployed Jacksonville, Florida, based Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) aircrew and MH-65 Dolphin helicopter to interdict the vessel. The seizure resulted in an additional estimated 400 pounds of cocaine and 4,500 pounds of marijuana.

"Counternarcotics is one of the Coast Guard's most tactically demanding missions, requiring the integration of multiple Coast Guard units, federal agencies and partner nations," said Capt. Robert S. Mohr, Waesche's commanding officer. "The crew's tenacity throughout the patrol and focus seizing drugs from suspected smugglers in international waters off the coast of Central America is a testament to this crew's resiliency. They embody the best the Coast Guard has to offer with their determination and teamwork."

The Waesche deployed with the HITRON aircrew, the Coast Guard's Pacific Tactical Law Enforcement Team Detachment 108, and a civilian team responsible for operating the cutter's ScanEagle, an advanced unmanned aircraft system.

Additionally, the crew of the Waesche completed joint

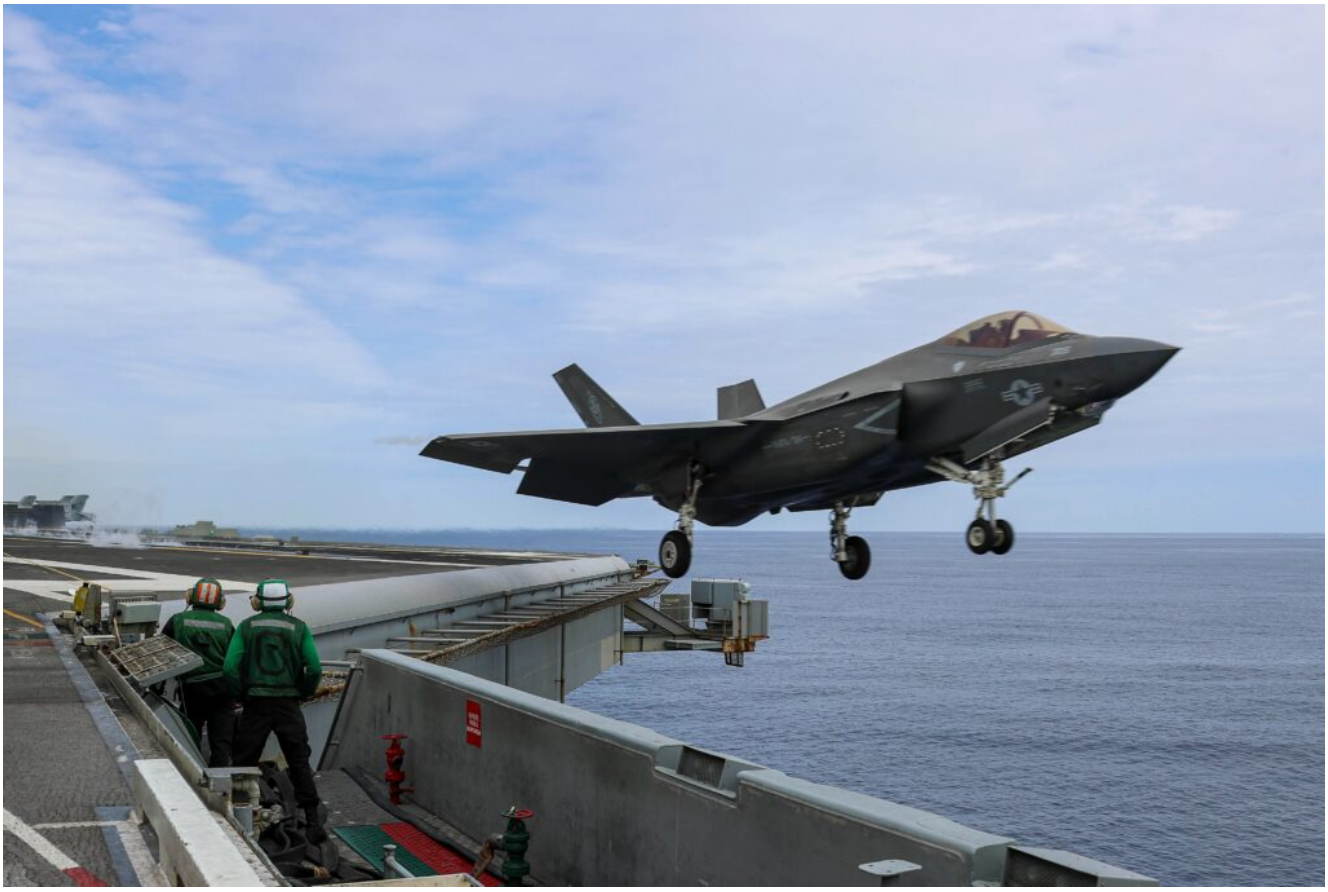
exercises with the Mexican Navy during the patrol. Waesche conducted formation operations with ARM Jalisco, a 280-foot Oaxaca-class offshore patrol vessel, executing maneuvers in close-quarters range to strengthen partner-nation relationships, interoperability, and operational proficiency between the sea services.

As part of the Coast Guard's living marine resources protection mission, Waesche's crew rescued an entangled sea turtle stuck in discarded fishing line. The crew cut the fishing line and released the turtle back to the ocean.

Waesche's crew offloaded approximately 6,325 pounds of cocaine and more than 13,220 pounds of marijuana worth a combined estimated wholesale total of more than $166 million in San Diego. In addition to Waesche's two interdictions, they offloaded contraband interdicted by the Coast Guard Cutter Steadfast's (WMEC 623) crew who were responsible for one interdiction, seizing approximately 3,300 pounds of cocaine and the Coast Guard Cutter Active's (WMEC 618) crew who were responsible for two interdictions seizing approximately 2,116 pounds of cocaine and 3,716 pounds of marijuana.

The Waesche is one of four Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda, California. National security cutters are capable of operating in the most demanding open ocean environments, including the hazardous fisheries of the North Pacific and the vast approaches of the Southern Pacific where a large amount of narcotics traffic occurs. With robust command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment, stern boat launch and aviation facilities, as well as long-endurance station keeping, the national security cutters are afloat operational-level headquarters for complex law enforcement and national security missions involving multiple Coast Guard and partner agency participation.

Marine Corps to Activate Second F-35C Squadron



Caption: PHILIPPINE SEA (April 19, 2022) An F-35C Lightning II, assigned to the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, launches from the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), April 19, 2022. VMFA-314 will be joined this month by VMFA-311, being re-activated to be the Marine Corps’ second F-35C squadron. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Javier Reyes)
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ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Marine Corps is scheduled to activate its second F-35C Lightning II strike fighter squadron at the end of the week, Headquarters Marine Corps announced in a media announcement.

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 311 (VMFA-311) will be re-activated from its former Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMA-311) identity in ceremonies on Friday, April 14, 2023, at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, California. The squadron will become the second operational Marine Corps squadron to operate the carrier-based F-35C version. VMFA-314, also based at Miramar, was the first, and has completed one deployment with the F-35C, on board USS Abraham Lincoln.

VMA-311 was an AV-8B Harrier II squadron that was deactivated in October 2020. It was based at MCAS Yuma, Arizona. It had operated the AV-8 since 1988.

VMA-311 was established on December 1, 1942, as Marine Fighter Squadron 311 (VMF-311) and deployed to the Pacific Theater in April 1943, equipped with F4U-1 Corsair fighters. The squadron eventually operated from Okinawa in March 1945 and conducted dive bombing and combat air patrol missions.

The squadron became the Marine Corps' first operational jet squadron in 1948, operating F9F Panther fighters, and during the Korean War flew the Corps' first jet combat mission. After the war, the squadron upgraded to the F9F-8 Cougar. The squadron was re-designated VMA-311 on June 1, 1957, and by 1958 was operating the A4D Skyhawk.

The squadron flew its A-4s in combat in the Vietnam War from April 1965 through January 1973.

After transition to the AV-8B, VMA-311 deployed to Saudi Arabia, and, in Operation Desert Storm, became the first squadron to fly the Harrier II in combat. In November 2001, the squadron also became the first Harrier squadron to fly in combat during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The squadron also flew combat missions in Iraq beginning in March 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Lt. Col. Michael P. Fisher will be the first commanding officer of VMFA-311.

Business, state consortium kicks off BAE Systems' $200 million ship repair facility upgrade in Jacksonville

Release from BAE Systems

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Upgraded facility will support the repair of Mayport-based Navy ships and commercial vessels that call upon the Port of Jacksonville starting in 2025

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – April 12, 2023 – BAE Systems officially began construction of a modern Pearlson Shiplift and land-level repair complex at the company's Jacksonville, Florida shipyard with a groundbreaking ceremony yesterday. The company

first revealed its plans to build the $200 million complex in December 2022.

“As the chair of Space Florida’s board of directors, I congratulate BAE Systems upon its groundbreaking ceremony,” said Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez. “This critical investment will facilitate improved capacity to service U.S military vessels and bring high wage jobs to Florida’s First Coast. I look forward to seeing the impact the Jacksonville Ship Repair expansion project will have on our maritime capabilities.”

Attending the groundbreaking ceremony were U.S. Representative Aaron Bean (R-Fla.), Pearlson’s President and Chief Operating Officer Kelly Pearlson Fraind, and BAE Systems Platforms & Services President Jeremy Tondreault.

“BAE Systems Ship Repair is an economic engine of Florida’s seacoast region, and since 1964, has brought great pride to our state by strengthening our role in national defense,” said Rep. Bean. “The modern ship lift and land level repair facility will improve production efficiency, overall reliability and expand ship capacity to counter China’s growing naval ambitions. In Congress, I will support Jacksonville’s maritime industrial base to solidify our legacy as the most formidable naval force in the world for future generations.”

The BAE Systems shipyard modernization project involves Pearlson Shiplift Corporation, Foth Engineering, and Kiewit Infrastructure South Co., in major construction roles. Foth along with Pearlson Shiplift are responsible for the overall facility design, construction management and engineering, and key equipment supply. Kiewit will serve as general contractor for the project. When complete in 2025, the new complex will expand the BAE Systems shipyard’s docking capacity by 300 percent. The construction and operation of the repair facility is expected to generate approximately 1,000 new jobs.

The complex will feature a new state-of-the-art shiplift system built by Pearlson Shiplift Corporation. The lift's 492-foot by 110-foot articulated platform can easily accommodate a Flight III U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer or a commercial vessel displacing about 25,000 tons.

"Pearlson's team worked with BAE Systems personnel on the ground in Jacksonville to deliver a comprehensive, detailed design that meets the shipyard's needs and delivers unparalleled capability," said Fraind. "The new Pearlson Shiplift System and land level facility for BAE Systems Jacksonville Ship Repair, when commissioned, will be the largest in both North and South America and the most modern shiplift facility in the world."

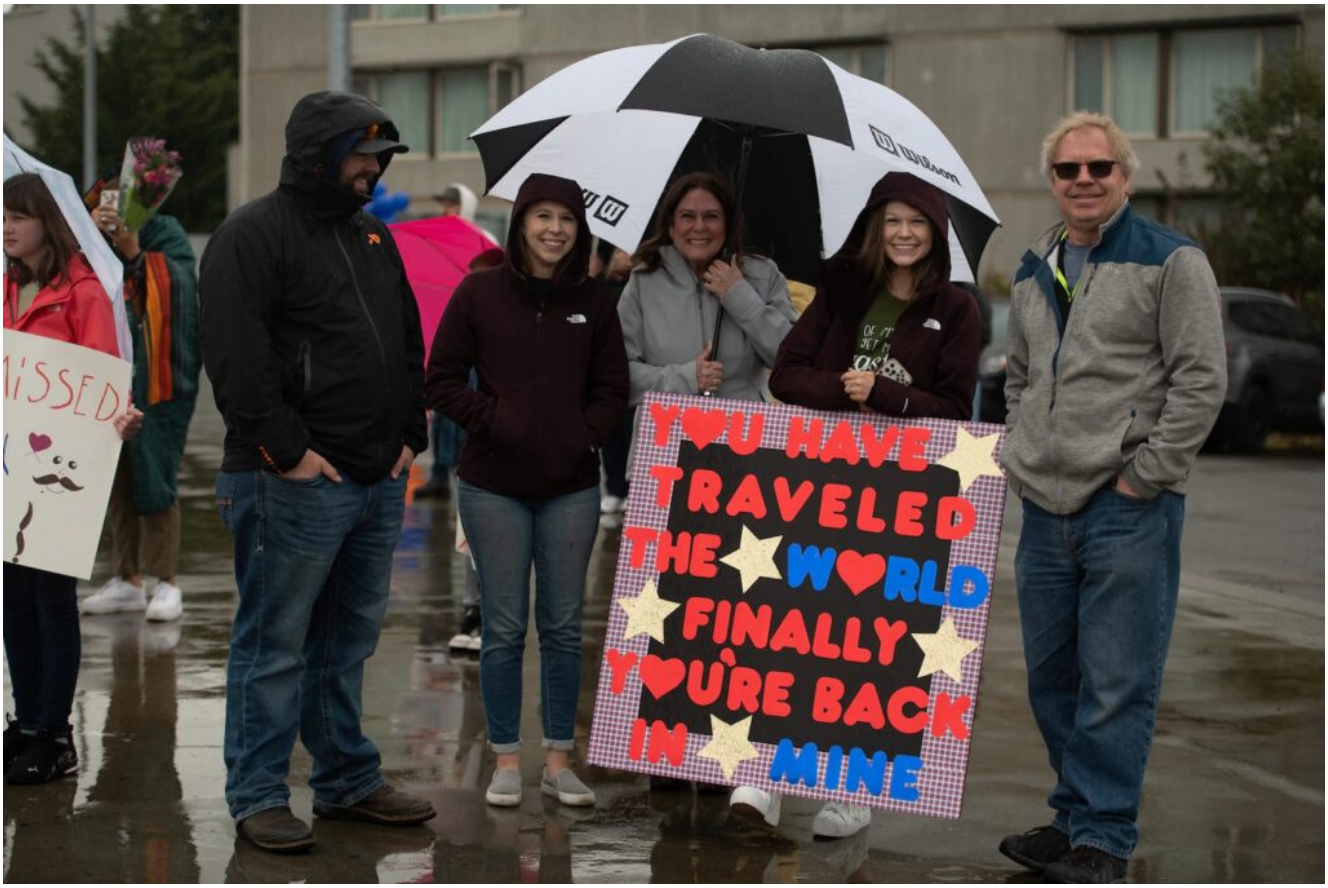
Once out of the water, dry-docked ships will be moved from the shiplift platform to one of several repair berths inside the shipyard by a series of self-propelled modular transporters and a Pearlson designed cradle system. The land-level repair area in the shipyard will provide electrical, sewage, and water services to docked ships, as well as storm water containment. These services will permit repair work to occur onboard several ships simultaneously without encumbering the shiplift platform or other work in the shipyard.

In addition to supporting the Navy's surface fleet at Naval Station Mayport, BAE Systems expects to expand its offerings within the commercial ship repair market. The port of Jacksonville is the 14th largest container port in the United States. Numerous workboats (e.g., tugs, barges, etc.) and commercial vessels operate in or pass through the port.

"The shiplift project is a significant investment by BAE Systems in the Jacksonville port, and we look forward to building this new complex to expand our shipyard's capacity to meet commercial and government ship repair needs," said Tondreault. "We also appreciate the support and contributions of the state and local leaders, and all of our partners, who

helped to make this a reality.”

Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star returns home by Easter after 144-day Operation Deep Freeze 2023 mission



Release from Coast Guard Pacific Area

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Editor’s Note: Click here to view the U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area Polar Operations imagery page

SEATTLE – The Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10) and crew returned to its homeport of Seattle, Saturday, following a 144-day deployment to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2023.

This deployment marks the Polar Star's 26th journey to Antarctica in support of Operation Deep Freeze, an annual joint military service mission to resupply the United States Antarctic stations, in support of the National Science Foundation (NSF) – the lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP). This year also marks the 63rd iteration of the annual operation.

The Polar Star crew departed Seattle bound for Antarctica on Nov. 14, 2022, traveling more than 25,000 miles through the North Pacific, South Pacific, Indian, Southern, and South Atlantic Oceans, including stops in four continents.

While en route to Antarctica, the Polar Star made two logistical stops in Australia in Chowder Bay, Sydney and Hobart. In Hobart, the cutter and crew hosted a reception on the cutter for guests from the Australian Antarctic Division, Australian Border Force, Tasmanian government representatives, and local industry partners.

After arriving in Antarctica, the cutter broke a 15.3-mile channel through fast ice and conducted over 1,600 hours of ice breaking operations to create a navigable route for cargo vessels to reach McMurdo Station. The Polar Star and crew executed more than 60 hours of ice escorts for cargo vessels through difficult pack ice conditions. The cutter departed the Antarctic region on March 2, after 67 days of operations in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2023.

On the return journey, the Polar Star crossed Drake Passage, rounded Cape Horn and transited the Strait of Magellan followed by stops in Punta Arenas and Valparaiso, Chile. The Polar Star's stop in Valparaiso consisted of a multi-day visit

where the crew conducted professional exchanges with Chilean Navy and First Naval Zone members, as well as students from the Chilean-U.S. Binational Center.

“The completion of this mission is a testament to our crew’s hard work, sacrifice and dedication,” said Capt. Keith Ropella, Polar Star’s commanding officer. “While this trip was incredibly rewarding and a once-in-a-lifetime experience, we are glad to be home and reunited with our friends and families again.”

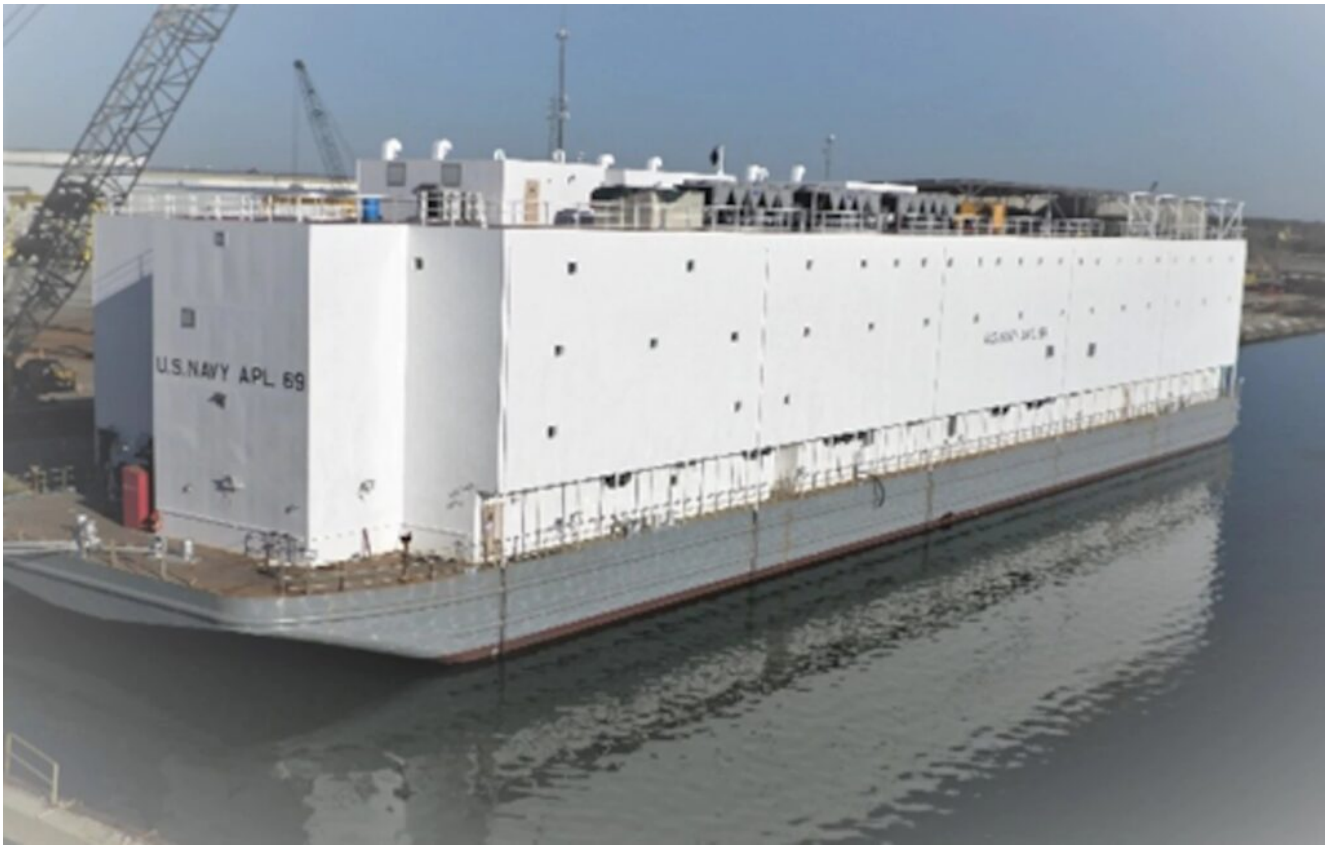
Operation Deep Freeze is the annual logistical support mission provided by the Department of Defense to the NSF managed by the USAP. This includes coordination of strategic intertheater airlift, tactical intertheater airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation support, search and rescue response, sealift, seaport access, bulk fuel supply, port cargo handling, and transportation requirements supporting the NSF. This is a unique mission demonstrating U.S. commitment to the Antarctic Treaty and to research programs conducted for the betterment of all humanity. The Polar Star and crew contribute to this yearly effort through icebreaking to clear the channel for supply vessels.

The Polar Star will proceed to Vallejo, California, in May for Phase III of its five-year Service Life Extension Project (SLEP). SLEP was awarded to Mare Island Dry Dock LLC to recapitalize targeted systems such as the propulsion, communication and machinery control systems and conduct major maintenance to extend the cutter’s service life by four years. By replacing obsolete, unsupportable or maintenance-intensive equipment, the Coast Guard will mitigate the risk of lost operational days due to unplanned maintenance or system failures. Each phase is coordinated so that operational commitments, such as Operation Deep Freeze missions in Antarctica will still be met.

The Polar Star is the United States’ only asset capable of

providing access to both Polar Regions. It is a 399-foot heavy polar icebreaker commissioned in 1976, weighing 13,500 tons and is 84-feet wide with a 34-foot draft. The six diesel and three gas turbine engines produce up to 75,000 horsepower.

US Navy awards BOLLINGER SHIPYARDS contract to build sixth berthing barge



Caption: Berthing Barge APL 69 was one of five APL 67-class barges built by VT Halter Marine, acquired last year by Bollinger Shipyards, which will build the sixth of the class. (U.S. Navy photo)

Release from Bollinger Shipyards

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LOCKPORT, La., – (April 11, 2023) – Bollinger Shipyards ("Bollinger") today announced that the U.S. Navy has awarded the Lockport-based shipbuilder the detailed design and construction contract for the sixth Auxiliary Personnel Lighter–Small (APL(S)) 67 Class berthing and messing barge. Construction will take place at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi and is anticipated to begin in the second quarter of 2023.

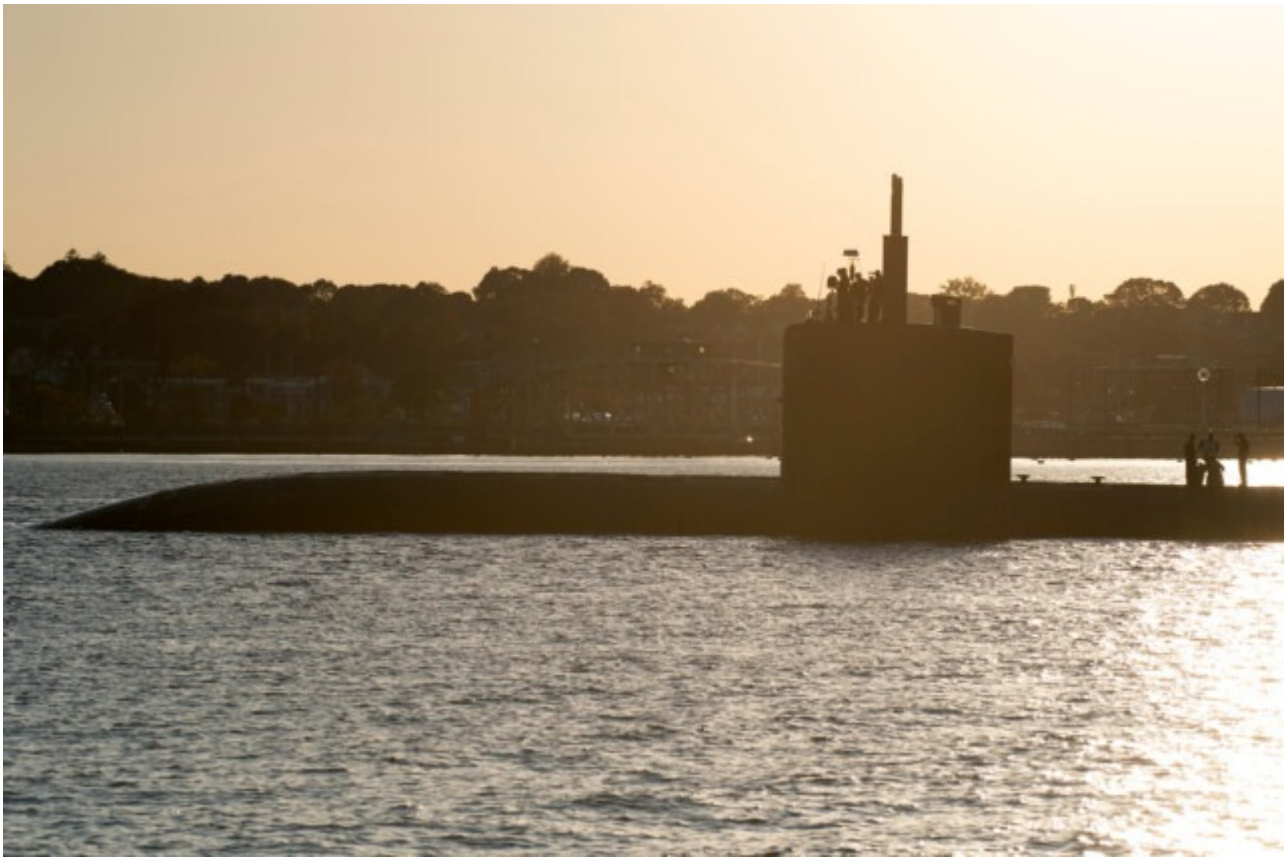
"We are honored to be entrusted by the U.S. Navy to build the sixth APL berthing barge," said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. "This contract is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team at Bollinger, and our commitment to delivering high-quality, reliable vessels that meet the Navy's rigorous standards. We look forward to continuing to grow our partnership with the Navy and delivering this critical asset to support our national defense."

The previous five APLs were built by VT Halter Marine, which Bollinger acquired in late 2022. Halter received the initial contract in 2018. APLs are used by the Navy to house crewmembers when ships are in port for availabilities and Inter-Deployment Training Cycles. The barges are mobile and can be towed to new bases or shipyards to support changing fleet requirements and also offer potential use for humanitarian missions and other temporary assignments.

APLs are 269 feet long, 69 feet wide and have a draft of 7 feet. Each vessel is equipped with offices, classrooms, washrooms, laundry facilities, medical treatment areas, a barber shop and fitness center. With mess seating for 224 enlisted personnel and 28 officers, each meal is served via

five 20-minute shifts to allow food service for 1,130 personnel (three meals per day). The vessels are fitted with mixed gender berthing spaces for 74 officers and 537 enlisted personnel, for a total of 611 people.

Rite-Solutions Receives Next-Generation Attack Submarine Navy Contract



Release from Rite-Solutions

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Middletown, RI (April 10, 2023) – Rite-Solutions has been awarded a new contract by the Naval Undersea Warfare Center

Division Newport (NUWCDIVNPT) with a potential value of $850,000 over the next two years.

The company will support the development, configuration, and delivery of a user-friendly interface software called the SSN(X) Sail Model Tool. The tool will enable sailors to evaluate current and future submarine sensors and antennas. The tool will allow proper assessment of the impacts of various submarine sail configurations with respect to overall submarine capability and vulnerability.

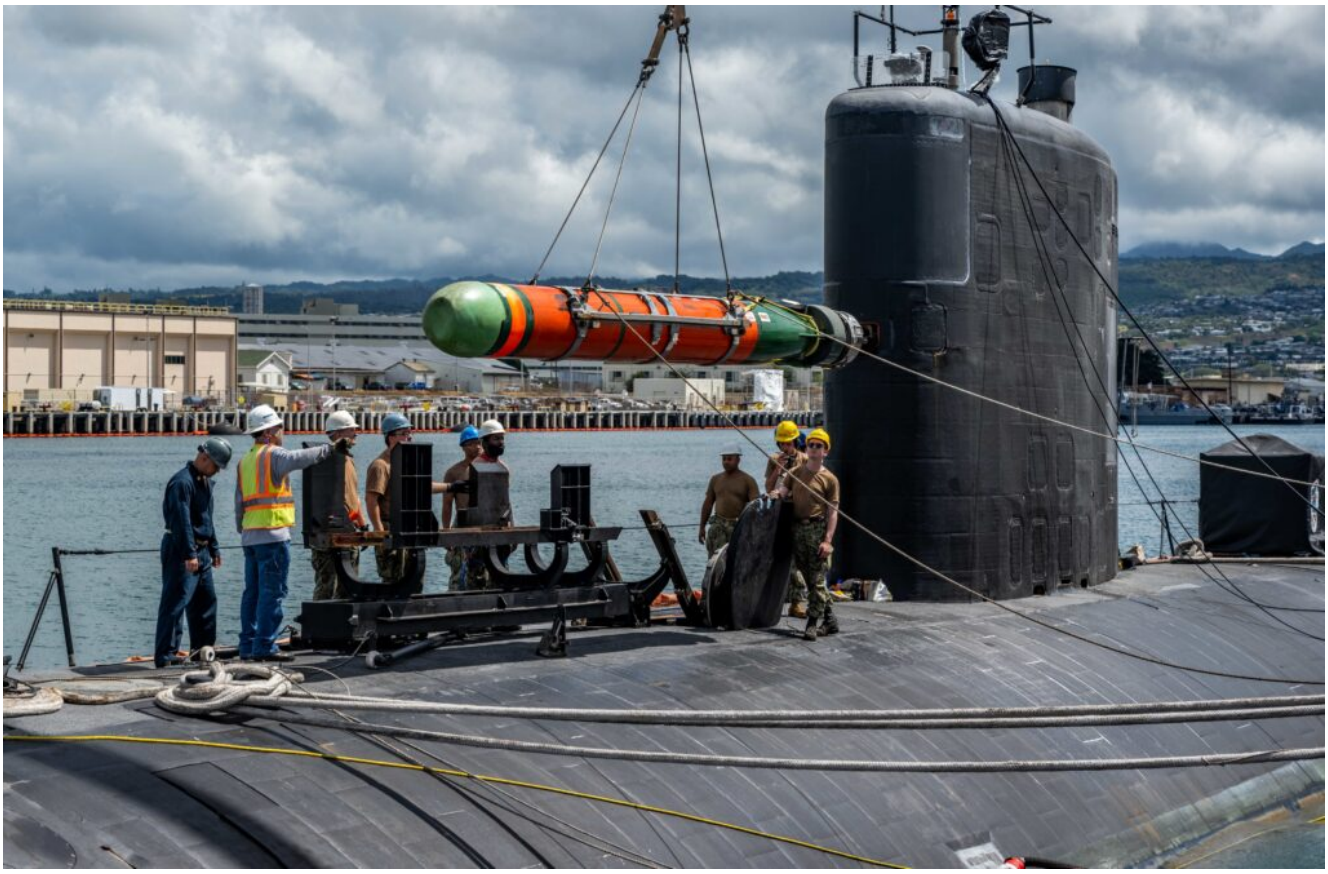
Laura Deady, Rite-Solutions Sr. Vice President says, “Rite-Solutions is grateful for the opportunity to support NUWC Code 34 in developing the SSN(X) Sail Model Tool. Rite’s greatest asset is the expertise of our workforce, which allows proficiency in our technical capabilities.”

The contract will be performed in Newport, RI and areas where the Navy has indicated a significant need.

“We are proud to be part of the next generation of attack submarines for the Navy,” adds Dennis McLaughlin, Rite-Solutions President, and CEO. “It’s an honor to be recognized as an innovative company and to be invited to work on cutting-edge technology that will help keep our Navy #1 in the world for decades to come.”

SAIC Awarded $102M Contract to Support U.S. Navy Torpedo

Production



JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM (June 2, 2021) Sailors assigned to the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Columbia (SSN 771) load a Mark 48 advanced capability torpedo for Exercise Agile Dagger 2021 (AD21). AD21 is a training exercise, with one-third of the Pacific Submarine Force getting underway, to assess warfighting readiness and build capacity for the joint force. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Michael B. Zingaro)
Release from SAIC

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Contract expands support of MK 48 production

Reston, Va., April 10, 2023 – Science Applications International Corp. (NYSE: SAIC) has been awarded a $102.5 million contract by the U.S. Navy to continue supporting the MK 48 Mod 7 Heavyweight Torpedo program. This is a firm-fixed-price and cost-plus-fixed fee modification to a previously awarded $1.1 billion torpedo production contract.

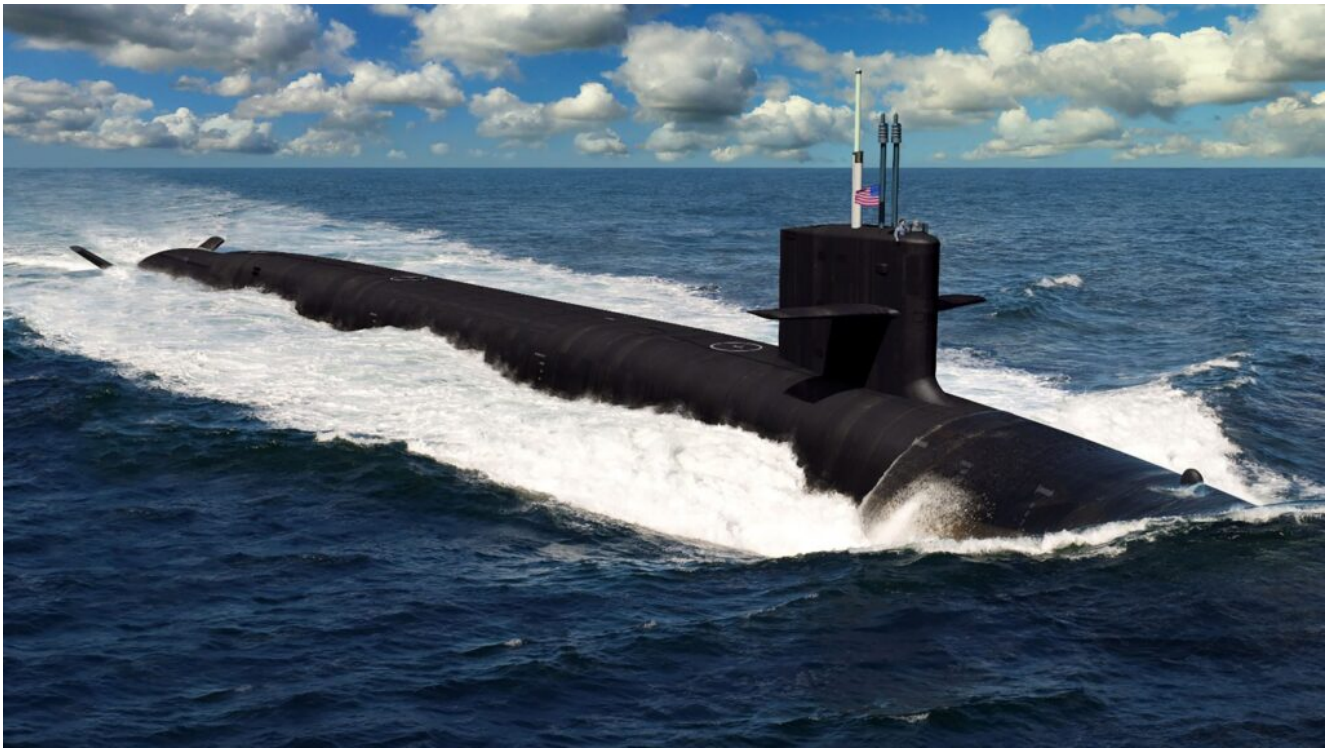
“SAIC has a long history of supporting the U.S. Navy, notably our work providing the dominant undersea weapons it requires,” said Bob Genter, president of Defense and Civilian Sector at SAIC. “We are honored by the Navy’s confidence in SAIC, and proud to expand our support of the MK 48 program.”

Under the new contract option, SAIC will produce, assemble, test and deliver the U.S. Navy’s MK 48 Mod 7 Torpedo Afterbody Tailcones (AB/TC) and MK29 Mod 0 Warshot Fuel Tanks to the U.S. Navy and foreign partners through implemented Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programs.

Currently, SAIC also provides all necessary facilities, resources and management to meet the contract’s integration, production, test and delivery requirements.

To learn more about SAIC’s work with the Department of Defense, visit www.saic.com/defense.

HII is Awarded Contract Modification for Columbia-Class Ballistic Missile Submarines



Release from HII

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NEWPORT NEWS, Va., April 11, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — HII (NYSE: HII) announced today that its Newport News Shipbuilding division has been awarded a $567.6 million subcontract modification from General Dynamics Electric Boat to provide long-lead-time material and advance construction activities for *Columbia*-class ballistic missile submarines.

HII is currently under contract for construction of submarine modules for Build I, the first two submarines in the class: *District of Columbia* (SSBN 826) and *Wisconsin* (SSBN 827). The advance procurement funds from this subcontract modification, awarded April 4, will allow NNS to purchase major components and commodity material and to begin advance construction on Build II, the next five submarines in the class.

“This contract modification underscores the critical manufacturing work our shipbuilders do for the U.S. Navy, as major contributors to the *Columbia*-class,” said Brandi Smith, NNS vice president for *Columbia*-class construction. “When delivered to the fleet, these submarines and their crews will

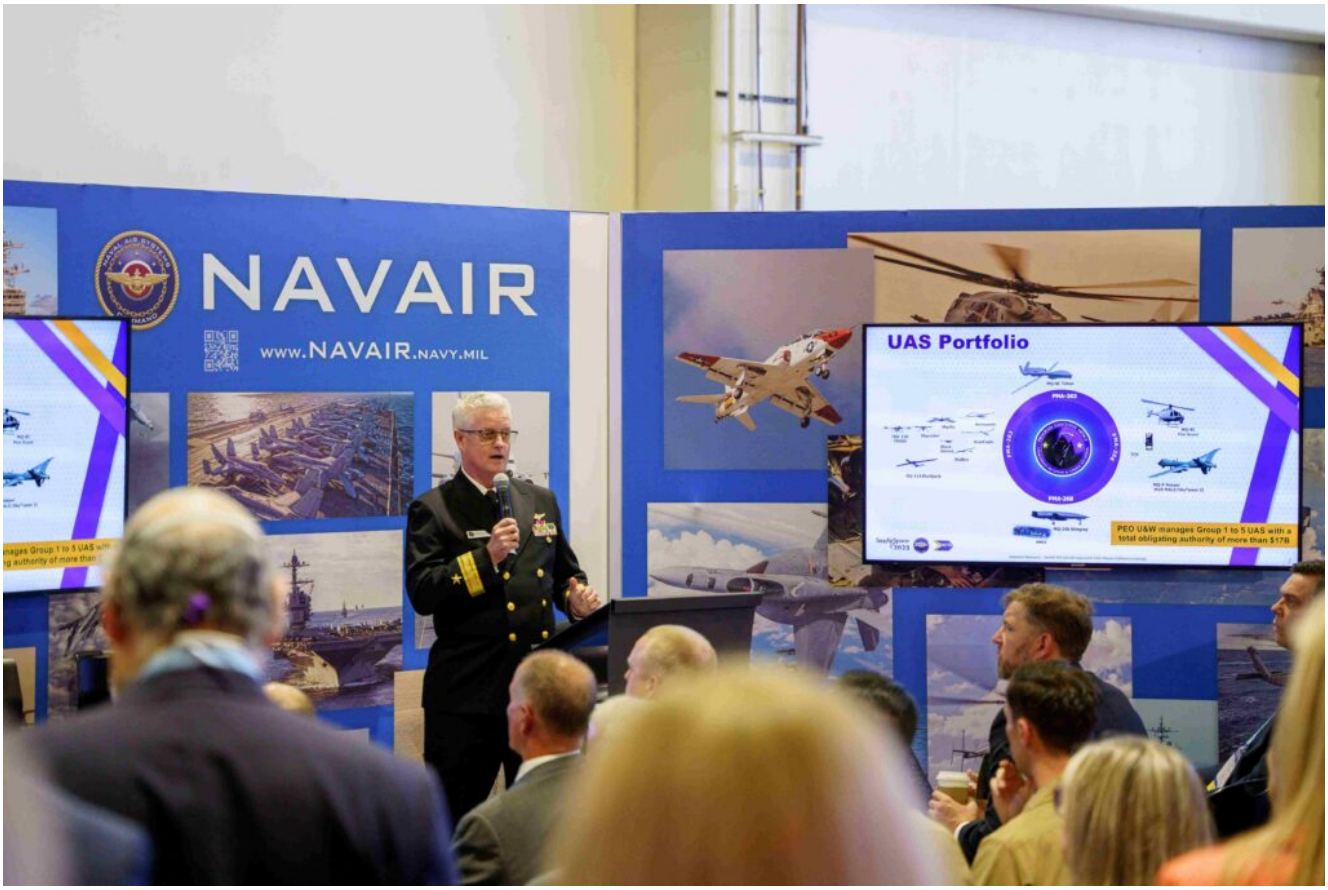
protect peace and freedom around the world, in service of the nation. Our shipbuilders understand the responsibility, commitment and discipline required of them each day, and take great pride in supporting this mission."

A photo accompanying this release is available at: https://hii.com/news/hii-contract-columbia-class-ballistic-missile-submarine-april-2023/.

The Navy has designated the *Columbia* class its top acquisition priority. Ultimately, the *Columbia* class will replace the fleet of *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines, and take over the role of the nation's sea-based strategic deterrent, providing the most survivable leg of the nation's strategic triad.

NNS is a major shipbuilding partner in the *Columbia*-class program, constructing and delivering six module sections per submarine under contract to General Dynamics Electric Boat.

NAVAIR Sees AI as Future of Air Wing



NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – In a well-attended presentation by Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) on April 3 at Sea-Air-Space 2023, RDML Stephen Tedford, program executive officer for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons (PEO (U&W)) explained the need for trust in autonomous systems while providing an overview of the Navy's unmanned aircraft, weapons, and target systems.

"If we have trust in autonomy, we can then make the move to truly artificial intelligence and in the future of the air wing," Tedford said.

He encouraged a real-world perspective when thinking about autonomous systems, remarking that, "I know many of you here that are in suits now are retired military. Many of you […] flew jets. At some point all of you were up and trying to find the tanker late at night, trying to get on the back side of the hose to get home. We learned that lesson over Afghanistan."

"How can you make in-flight refueling autonomous possible?"

Tedford queried. “What if a pilot just has to get close enough and then let the system take over for itself. And make it more reliable, make it consistent and make it easier,” he continued.

Open architecture may be the key.

“We always want open architecture systems,” Tedford said. “We need them for flexibility in our systems. Just like applications on your phone that you can add and get rid of. We need to be able to do that with our mission systems in the unmanned environment as well.”

Tedford also focused on the people behind the tech and stressed that autonomous systems and artificial intelligence don’t operate in a bubble. Fundamentally, an unmanned system is still a human system.

“We know that unmanned really isn’t actually unmanned,” said Tedford. “There’s a huge support staff that’s involved in getting an aircraft in the air and conducting the mission. What we’re talking about […] having direct connectivity between our unmanned platforms and a manned platforms where the unmanned becomes an extension of the manned mission.”

Combatting Climate Change

Captured by SD 1078 in the Atlantic Ocean during Hurricane Fiona, Sept. 22, 2022. (Video: NOAA and Saildrone)
Excerpted from the upcoming article in the May 2023 issue of Seapower Magazine

As climate change increasingly affects weather patterns over the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, tracking hurricanes and monitoring their intensity has become more critical than

ever.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that between 1980 and 2021, hurricanes caused 6,697 deaths and over $1.1 trillion in damages. Hurricanes' massive waves and roaring winds can also have catastrophic effects on ships at sea, making accurate forecasting a must for naval operations.

While new technology has steadily improved hurricane-tracking forecasts since the 1990s, predicting how rapidly a tropical storm or hurricane may intensify has been more problematic. To understand storm intensity, scientists measure heat and momentum, collecting data on the exchange of energy between the ocean and atmosphere. But in order to do this in the most accurate way, scientists need data from inside the storm itself.

That's where uncrewed systems come in. "With uncrewed systems, we can either do what we're already doing, but do it more productively and efficiently, or we can go get data we just couldn't get before," said NOAA Corps Captain William Mowitt, director of NOAA's Uncrewed Systems Operations Center.

You can read the full article about how the U.S. Navy, NOAA, and private partners are using uncrewed systems and new technologies to forecast hurricanes in the May issue of Seapower Magazine.

Vicky Uhland is a Colorado-based writer and editor who also covers the Navy League's annual Sea-Air-Space conference.