Navy Establishes Unmanned Surface Vessel Division One



The medium-displacement unmanned surface vessel Sea Hunter sits pierside at Naval Base San Diego, during the Unmanned Surface Vessel Division One Establishment ceremony. USDIV One will focus on unmanned surface vessel experimentation and fleet advocacy for the surface force. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin C. Leitner SAN DIEGO – Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet

established Unmanned Surface Vessel Division (USVDIV) One during a ceremony, May 13, which also included a change of command ceremony for Surface Development Squadron One, said Ens. Ronan Williams of the Force's public affairs office in a May 13 release.

During the combined ceremony, Cmdr. Jeremiah Daley assumed command of the newly established USVDIV One.

"To meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must continue to innovate the surface force," said Daley. "USVDIV One will accelerate the delivery of credible and reliable unmanned systems in conjunction with increasingly capable manned platforms into the fleet."

USVDIV One will oversee medium and large unmanned surface vessels including the Sea Hunter and its sister vessel, the Sea Hawk. The division will focus on unmanned surface vessel experimentation and fleet advocacy for the surface force. The division will be a cornerstone in building the foundational knowledge required for Sailors to operate and maintain the USV fleet and spearhead the development of the processes required for USV operations and sustainment.

Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, presided over the ceremony.

"USVDIV One will be a catalyst for innovation as we employ unmanned surface capabilities in the Pacific Fleet," said Kitchener. "The implementation of unmanned systems will increase decision speed and lethality to enhance our warfighting advantage."

Capt. Shea Thompson relieved Capt. Jeffrey Heames as commodore of SURFDEVRON One.

"It's been an honor and privilege to lead a team of surface warriors who are shaping the future of our force," said Heames. "I know Capt. Thompson shares this enthusiasm and drive to innovate and transform the surface force into a formidable 21st century fighting organization."

Heames was SURFDEVRON One's second commodore. Previously, he commanded USS Preble (DDG 88) and served as the Commodore for Destroyer Squadron 23.

SURFDEVRON One is responsible for the maintenance, training, and manning oversight for medium and large USVs and the Zumwalt-class guided-missile destroyers, including the future USS Lyndon B. Johnson (DDG 1002).

USS Hershel 'Woody' Williams Blue MILCREW Begins Deployment



The Expeditionary Sea Base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) departs Civitavecchia, Italy, to begin a deployment May 14, 2022. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Fred Gray

CIVITAVECCHIA, Italy - The Blue military crew of the USS

Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) and the ship's Military Sealift Command Civilian Mariners departed Civitavecchia, Italy, to begin a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations, May 14, 2022, said Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Fred Gray IV of the U.S. 6th Fleet in a May 16 release.

The Blue Crew took over for the Gold Crew while in Civitavecchia May 9. This crew swap follows Gold Crew's fivemonth deployment, which included participation in exercise Obangame Express and security operation patrols with African partners along the west coast of Africa.

"We are rested and ready to get back on the open seas to execute our mission requirements," said Capt. Chad W. Graham, commanding officer of Hershel "Woody" Williams Blue MILCREW. "The Hershel 'Woody' Williams is a unique platform that enables us to integrate and operate with internal and international partners improving interoperability, maritime domain awareness and building upon our existing relationships."

During the deployment, the ship and crew will complete a mobility air qualification. They will also participate in a variety of exercises and operations with partner nations.

USS Hershel "Woody" Williams is the first warship permanently assigned to the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility. The U.S. shares a common interest with African partner nations in ensuring security, safety and freedom of navigation on the waters surrounding the continent, because these waters are critical for Africa's prosperity and access to global markets.

The ESB ship class is a highly flexible platform that operates across a broad range of military operations. Acting as a mobile sea base, they are part of the critical access infrastructure that supports the deployment of forces and supplies to support missions assigned.

USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. Commissioned in Charleston



USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. is named after the first black U.S. Marine Corps aviator and the first black Marine to become a three-star general. U.S. NAVY

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Navy commissioned its newest Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121), May 14 in Charleston, South Carolina, said a Navy spokesperson in a May 14 release.

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro attended the ceremony. He began by thanking the Petersen family for their lifetime of service to the nation. "All of us join you in honoring Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen Jr."

Del Toro also recognized the plankowners bringing the ship to

life. "As Secretary of the Navy I contribute all that I can to make sure that you and your families are equipped for the many challenges that lie ahead. That starts with making sure that you have the very best ship that our nation has to offer."

The principal speaker was Carlos Campbell, naval aviator and former assistant secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, who served alongside Petersen and relayed stories exemplifying the general's strength and dedication. Recalling Petersen's ethic, Campbell said, "He received a frag wound, he was treated in the field, and returned to combat."

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday also attended the ceremony. "It's fitting that a name synonymous with service and sacrifice be emblazoned on the steel of this American warship," said Gilday. "Sailors aboard this mighty warship will deploy wherever, whenever needed, with General Petersen's fighting spirit and tenacity, for generations to come."

Gen. David Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps, also attended the ceremony. "General Petersen was a man of many firsts," said Berger. "There's a saying that ships take on the characteristics of their namesakes, and if that's true, then God help any adversary to ever confronts the Frank E. Petersen Jr."

Gayle Petersen, Lt. Gen. Petersen's daughter, expressed thanks on behalf of her family and made a special recognition. "We would not be having this ceremony today if not for a gentleman named Robert Adams. When my dad was shot down in Vietnam he was rescued by Robert Adams." Gayle continued, "I would like to thank all who had a hand in building this ship, from stem to stern."

Guest speakers for the event included Rep. Nancy Mace, R-South Carolina; John Tecklenberg, mayor of Charleston, South Carolina; and George Nungesser, vice president of Program Management, Ingalls Shipbuilding.

The ship's sponsors are D'Arcy Ann Neller, wife of former commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Robert Neller, and the late Dr. Alicia J. Petersen, Lt. Gen. Petersen's wife at the time of his passing in 2015. Dr. Petersen passed away in September 2021. Both sponsors participated in the keel laying, mast stepping and christening ceremonies.

D'Arcy Ann Neller thanked the families. "Our service members can't do what they do without you and your love and support. To the officers and crew: A ship without a crew is like a body without blood. You will all make this ship come alive."

During the ceremony, USS Frank E. Petersen's commanding officer Cmdr. Daniel Hancock reported the ship ready. Assisted by Lt. Gen. Petersen's daughters, Gayle Petersen, Dana Petersen Moore, Lindsay Pulliam and Monique Petersen, Neller gave the traditional order to "Man our ship and bring her to life!"

Lt. Gen. Petersen continues a family legacy of service begun by his great grandfather. Private Archibald (Archie) Charles McKinney enlisted in 1863 and served in the Massachussetts 55th Regiment, Company E during the Civil War. McKinney's trip home included traveling aboard a steamship, disembarking at the Port of Charleston.

The future USS Frank E. Petersen, Jr. honors Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen, Jr. Petersen was the first black U.S. Marine Corps aviator and the first black Marine to become a three-star general. Petersen served two combat tours, Korea in 1953 and Vietnam in 1968. He flew more than 350 combat missions and had more than 4,000 hours in various fighter and attack aircraft. Petersen passed away in Aug. 2015 at the age of 83.

Retiring in 1988 after 38 years of service, Petersen's awards

included the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with Combat "V," Distinguished Flying Cross; Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V;" and the Air Force Commendation Medal.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet. These highly capable, multi-mission ships conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence to national security providing a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air, surface and subsurface.

Pappano: Studying 'Shortish' Life Extension of Ohio SSBNs as Risk Mitigator



The Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Wyoming (SSBN 742), supported by USNS Black Powder (T-AGSE 1), prepares to execute an exchange of command and crews at sea. This regularly scheduled exchange of command at sea demonstrates the continuity and operational flexibility of our sea-based nuclear deterrent operations and our ready, reliable ballistic-submarine force. The efficiency of exchanges of crews at sea allows Sailors to reunite with their families and provides a ready, resilient submarine force. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Aaron Xavier Saldana ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy admiral in charge of procuring and sustaining the Navy's ballistic-missile submarines (SSBNs) said the Navy is studying possible short service-life extensions of some Ohio-class SSBNs and even the Ohio-class guided-missile submarines.

The Ohio-class SSBNs are scheduled to be replaced by the Columbia-class SSBNs now under construction. The first Columbia SSBN is scheduled to be on patrol in fiscal 2031 in order to maintain the undersea leg of the nation's nuclear deterrent force. The margin available in the schedule for the

Columbia program is tight.

"Because it is the prudent thing to do, we are evaluating potential – not class extensions – but individual hull extensions for up to five of our Ohio-class SSBNs," said Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, the program executive officer for strategic submarines, speaking May 12 in a webinar of the Advanced Nuclear Weapons Alliance Deterrence Center.

The Ohio-class SSBNs were built for 30-year service lives, which were lengthened to 42 years through an extension program.

"It's very hard to get past 42 years," Pappano said. "We're going to at least evaluate that in the background. The first time we'd actually have to start thinking about doing that – to actually do one – would be in the FY29 time frame. So, we're doing the evaluations right now on what it would take to do a 'shortish' repair availability to extend those ships for a couple of years as a risk mitigator, if need be. My goal is to not have to do that, but we want to understand the opportunities and risks associated with that short extension of the Ohio if we need to go do that, depending on what the world situation looks like at the end of the '20s and into the '30s."

The admiral said the Ohio class has been upgraded with a modernized Strategic Weapon System and COTS [commercial-off-the-shelf] systems and sensors.

"That class is doing very, very well," he said.

Pappano also said that "as part of that we'll also evaluate the SSGNs [Ohio-class guided-missile submarines] right now. That's a bit more of a challenge because those ships are operated vigorously than the SSBNs are in the current roles they have right now, but we will continue to look forward to doing that. "Eventually, the Virginia-class [SSN] VPM [Virginia Payload Module] capability will supplant much of that [SSGN] missile inventory," he said. "Until that comes online, we want to make sure we have the missile shooter capability in the SSGNs for as long as we can, but it's going to be a delicate balancing act of maintaining the current SSBN fleet versus extending the SSGN fleet. One of the things we're looking at right now as we go forward is to make sure we provide as much capability to the warfighters as we can at the right amount of risk."

Navy to Commission Guided-Missile Destroyer Frank E. Petersen Jr.



Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) navigates in the Gulf of Mexico during bravo trials. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES* ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will commission the future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121), the newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, during a 10:00 a.m. EDT ceremony on Saturday, May 14, in Charleston, South Carolina, the Defense Department said in a release.

The future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. is the first ship to honor Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen, Jr., the first Black Marine Corps aviator and the first Black Marine Corps officer promoted to brigadier general. When Petersen retired in 1988 after 38 years of service, he was, by date of designation, the senior-ranking aviator in the Department of the Navy.

The principal speaker is The Honorable Carlos Campbell, Naval aviator and former Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. Additional speakers include The Honorable Nancy Mace, U.S Rep. from South Carolina's 1st District; The Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy; Gen. David Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Adm. Michael Gilday, Chief of Naval Operations; The Honorable John Tecklenberg, Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina; Mr. George Nungesser, Vice President of Program Management, Ingalls Shipbuilding; and Ms. Gayle Petersen, daughter of the ship's namesake.

The ship's sponsors are Mrs. D'Arcy Ann Neller, wife of former Commandant of the Marine Corps, retired Gen. Robert "Bob" Neller, and the late Dr. Alicia J. Petersen, Lt. Gen. Petersen's wife at the time of his passing in 2015. Dr. Petersen passed away in September 2021. Both sponsors participated in the keel laying, mast stepping, and christening ceremonies. Mrs. Neller will give the order to "man our ship and bring her to life."

"This ship honors the life and legacy of Lt. Gen. Frank E.

Petersen, Jr., a pioneer not just for Marine Corps aviation but for our entire naval force," said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. "I have no doubt the crew will be a cornerstone of the Surface Force carrying his legacy forward and strengthening the bond between our Navy and Marine Corps team."

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet providing protection to America around the globe. These highly capable, multi-mission ships conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence to national security, providing a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air, surface and subsurface domains. These elements of seapower enable the Navy to defend American prosperity and prevent future conflict abroad.

The nearly 9,500-ton USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. is 509.5 feet in length, has a waterline beam of 59 feet, and a navigational draft of 31 feet. Four gas turbine engines will power the ship to speeds in excess of 30 knots. USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. will homeport at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The ceremony will be live streamed at: <u>USS Frank E. Petersen</u>, <u>Jr. Commissioning</u>. The link becomes active approximately ten minutes prior to the event (9:50 a.m. EST).

Additional information on a history of the ship and its namesake can be found at: <u>https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-galler</u> <u>y/infographics/heritage/history-of-u-s-marine-corps-</u> <u>pioneer-frank-e-petersen.html</u>

SECDEF Announces Flag and General Officer Nominations

ARLINGTON, Va. – Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced on May 11 that the president has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Brian W. Cavanaugh for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general, with assignment as commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command; commanding general, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic; and commander, Marine Corps Forces North, Norfolk, Virginia. Cavanaugh is currently serving as commanding general, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Okinawa, Japan.

Navy Rear Adm. Michael E. Boyle for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, and assignment as commander, Third Fleet, San Diego, California. Boyle is currently serving as director, Maritime Operations, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Navy Rear Adm. Frank M. Bradley for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, and assignment as commander, Joint Special Operations Command; and commander, Joint Special Operations Command Forward, U.S. Special Operations Command, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. Bradley is currently serving as commander, Special Operations Command Central, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

Navy Rear Adm. Richard A. Correll for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, and assignment deputy commander, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska. Correll is currently serving as director, Strategic Integration, N2/N6T, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C.

Navy Capt. Aaron C. Rugh for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half), and assignment as chief prosecutor for military commissions. Rugh is currently serving as division director, Criminal Law Division, Office of the Navy Judge Advocate General, Washington, D.C.

Ingalls Shipbuilding: Ready to Take on More Navy Shipbuilding



USS Fort Lauderdale was translated via Ingalls' rail car system to the floating dry dock prior to launch. The dock was moved away from the pier and then flooded to float the ship. With the assistance of tugs, USS Fort Lauderdale came of the dock on March 29. HII / Lance Davis ARLINGTON, Va. – Ingalls Shipbuilding, HII's builder of surface warships, has the industrial facilities and workforce

to add to the capacity of its portfolio, a senior Ingalls

official said.

"We have the ability to take on more work that we do today," said George Nungesser, vice president for program management at Ingalls, speaking May 11 to reporters at the Modern-Day Marine Expo in Washington.

Ingalls' 11,500 workers are building Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers, Legend-class national security cutters, America-class amphibious assault ships (LHAs), and Flight I/II San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ships (LPDs). They also are activating the combat system of the third Zumwalt-class guided-missile destroyer.

Nungesser said that Ingalls has three LPDs under construction. LPD 28, the future USS Fort Lauderdale, will sail away from the shipyard for commissioning in July. Nungesser said this LPD represented the best cost and schedule performance to date in the LPD 17 program.

LPD 29, the future USS Richard M. McCool Jr., was launched in January and is 75% complete. Nungesser said it would be delivered to the Navy by the end of 2023.

LPD 29 and LPD 30 are transition ships to the Flight II version of the class.

LPD 30, the future USS Harrisburg, is 25% complete.

Fabrication of LPD 31, the future USS Pittsburgh, is scheduled to begin in September.

LPD 32 has been requested by the Navy in the 2023 budget. However, the budget plan would truncate the LPD 17 program with LPD 32 being the last to be procured. The Marine Corps has listed advance procurement funding of an additional ship, LPD 33, in its Unfunded Priorities List for 2023.

Nungesser said the Navy did a good job with the technology transition to the Flight II ships, including accommodation of the SPY-6(V)2 active electronically scanned array radar and the CH-53K helicopter.

Ingalls completed the post-shakedown availability of the America-class LHA USS Tripoli (LHA 7), work which including modifying the ship to operate F-35B Lightning II strike fighters.

LHA 8, the future USS Bougainville, is 50% complete.

LHA 9 was authorized and funded in fiscal 2021.

Nungesser said that Ingalls has a solid backlog of work in the short term and is working to modernize its facilities and is working closely with its vendors to sustain the industrial base. Ingalls is in discussion with its vendors to get price quotes for LPD 32.

He said that it would be ideal for the workforce to have the LPD production centered on building one every two years and LHA production every four years.

Ingalls wants to be the builder of the future Light Amphibious Warship, Steve Sloan, Ingalls' LPD program manager, also speaking in the roundtable.

Raytheon Flies APG-79(V)4 GaN-AESA Radar in Marine Corps F/A-18



F/A-18C Hornets attached to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115 fly in formation during a Bab Al Mandeb transit, Feb. 3, 2022. U.S. NAVY

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — Raytheon Intelligence & Space's (RI&S's) pre-production APG-79(V)4 radar system was successfully flown on a U.S. Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornet earlier this year, at Naval Air Weapons Station in China Lake, California. This is the radar system's first flight on the aircraft since RI&S delivered the prototype radar in 2021.

The APG-79(V)4 is an APG-79 radar derivative that employs the first airborne GaN-AESA fire-control radar to help pilots detect and track enemy aircraft from greater distances with greater accuracy and meets the power and cooling requirements of legacy aircraft.

"Following successful ground testing and the delivery of the prototype radar, this flight test was critical to observe performance in the air," said Thomas Shaurette, vice president of F/A-18 & Global Strike Radars for RI&S. "It allowed our partners to see the V4 radar's enhanced detection and tracking

abilities in real-time."

The U.S. Marine Corps pilot demonstrated the radar's seamless integration with the legacy Hornet avionics. The APG-79(V)4 radar is common in parts and technology with the legacy AN/APG-79 radar used in the U.S. Navy's F/A-18 Super Hornet, thus optimizing cost and sustainment. Flight tests will continue to support weapons system integration on the fleet.

The Naval Air Systems Command recently awarded additional contract modifications to equip the Hornet fleet with more radars in 2021, and the total production value for domestic and foreign military sales customers is over \$300 million.

CNO: Keep R&D Alive for Nuclear Sea-Launched Cruise Missile



A Tomahawk cruise missile is removed from Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Asheville at Polaris Point, Guam. An SLCM-N would occupy the place in naval armament formerly occupied by the now retired nuclear-armed version of the Tomahawk. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Victoria Kinney

WASHINGTON – The Navy's top officer did not request any funds for procurement of the Sea-Launched Cruise Missile – Nuclear (SLCM-N) in the 2023 budget proposal but would like to fund a small amount of research and development to keep the industrial base in place should the missile be funded in the future.

Testifying May 11 before the House Armed Services Committee, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday said that "having served on a nuclear-capable surface ship in the late 1980s, that mission does not come without a cost. There is a significant amount of attention that has to be paid to any platform that carries that type of weapon in terms of training, in terms of sustainability, in terms of reliability, in terms of the force's readiness to be able to use them and be able to conduct that mission. I'm not convinced yet that we need to make a \$31 billion investment in that particular system to close that particular gap.

"It makes sense to me that we keep a small amount of money against R&D to keep that "warm,' if you will, within the industrial base, while we get a better understanding of the world we live in with two nuclear-capable peer competitors," Gilday said. "At the same time, the fact that we're about to put hypersonics into play this year with the Army, in 2025 with the Navy, that's also a deterrent we should factor in the conversation in terms of the investments that we're going to make, in my opinion."

Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Colorado, addressed the CNO and reminded the officials present that this year the HASC had heard testimony from Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Adm. Christopher Grady, U.S. Strategic Command Commander Adm. Charles Richard and U.S. European Command Commander Gen. Todd Wolters that "their best military advice was to continue with the SLCM-N program.

"Do you believe that we should continue the program or at least the research so that we don't lose that capability in the workforce and in our labs that's actually proceeding apace right now and, then, from that, make informed decisions about whether or not we want to invest a significant amount of money in that capability understanding what both of those nuclearpowered peers bring to the table?" he said.

Lamborn said that opponents of SLCM-N say the Navy did not have the bandwidth to handle a nuclear cruise missile aboard ships, but he pointed out that the Navy deployed a nucleararmed version of the Tomahawk cruise missile on ships and submarines during and after the Cold War. He asked the CNO if "given the mission of certifying and carrying a SLCM-N, are you confident that the Navy would be up to the task, given that assignent?"

Gilday affirmed that "given the assignment, we would, sir," while again noting the cost. "I think it deserves some study in terms on how we're going to balance that, given other things that we're doing."

Lamborn told Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, who also testified at the hearing, that Del Toro's predecessor, "promised certain documents and emails related to the thenrumored cancellation of the SLCM-N program. Last year's NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] fenced a large amount of money until these documents and the analysis of alternatives for SLCM-N were provided to Congress. We have yet to receive any of this information.

"Despite the proposal in the Nuclear Posture Review to cancel SLCM-N and its being zeroed out of this year's proposed budget request, when can we expect the Navy to comply with our directives and produce these documents?" Lamborn asked.

Del Toro responded that he "was not aware that those documents had not been provided to the Congress, however I will promise you that I will go back and ensure that we do provide necessary required documents that you have requested."

CNO, Italian Defense Chief of Staff Meet, Discuss Maritime

Strategy and Partnership



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday, left, is shown hosting then-Chief of the Italian Navy Adm. Giuseppe Cavo Dragone at the Pentagon in this February 2020 picture. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Raymond D. Diaz III

WASHINGTON — U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday met with the Italian Chief of Defense Staff Adm. Giuseppe Cavo Dragone at the Pentagon May 10, the CNO's Public Affairs Office said in a release.

Gilday and Cavo Dragone discussed the long-lasting and vital maritime partnership between Italy and the United States, as well as the importance of global security.

"The very nature of our operating environment requires common values and a collective alliance," said Gilday. "You have been a strong partner and gracious host to U.S. naval forces and our joint efforts in Europe. Working together is critical to regional security and stability." "We are ready to make further commitments in all domains, in what we consider an important portion of allied areas of responsibility, namely the wider Mediterranean region," said Cavo Dragone.

Gilday and Cavo Dragone also spoke about strategic competition, China and Russia.

They both affirmed the close relationship of the U.S. and Italian navies and expressed appreciation for their partnership as NATO allies and as friends.

The U.S. and the Italian navy regularly operate together around the globe. In addition to conducting real-world tricarrier operations, earlier this year the two navies also participated in exercises and activities such as Neptune Strike 2022, Obangame Express, and assorted bilateral drills. These exercises highlight NATO's ability to integrate high-end maritime warfare capabilities to support the defense of the alliance.

Italy hosts American Sailors at Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples, Naval Air Station Sigonella and NSA Naples Detachment Gaeta.

Gilday previously met with Cavo Dragone in February 2020 and October 2021, when he served as the chief of the Italian navy.