Indian Navy Carries Out First Drug Interdiction as CMF Member

By Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs | April 16, 2024

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

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

The Indian Navy joined CMF last November.

“I commend the crew of INS Talwar for their efforts throughout

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

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

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

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

SECNAV Celebrates Keel Laying of the Future Frigate USS Constellation

The U.S. Navy symbolically laid the keel to its first

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Read Del Toro’s full remarks here.

USS Roosevelt Departs for Sixth FNDF-E Patrol

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) in the Artic Circle. Roosevelt, forward-deployed to

Rota, Spain, on its first patrol in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of regional allies and partners and U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa. *U.S. Navy*
NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt departed Naval Station Rota, Spain to begin its sixth Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) patrol, April 11.

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

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

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

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

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

Roosevelt is one of four U.S. Navy destroyers based in Rota, Spain, and assigned to Commander, Task Force 65 in support of NATO’s Integrated Air Missile Defense architecture. These FDNF-E ships have the flexibility to operate throughout the

waters of Europe and Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Arctic Circle, demonstrating their mastery of the maritime domain.

For more than 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) has forged strategic relationships with our Allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

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

HII Delivers Amphibious Transport Dock Richard M. McCool Jr. to U.S. Navy

HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division delivered amphibious transport dock Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29) to the U.S. Navy on April 11. Pictured from left to right are SUPSHIP Gulf Coast's LPD Program Manager Representative Cmdr. James R. Wilkins IV, Ingalls Shipbuilding's LPD Program Manager Davianne Stokes, and Prospective Commanding Officer for Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29) Capt. Jeffrey D. Baker. *HII*

PASCAGOULA, Mississippi – HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division announced the delivery of amphibious transport dock Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29) to the U.S. Navy.

Richard M. McCool Jr. is the 13th San Antonio-class ship delivered by Ingalls and is the final Flight I transition ship before Ingalls moves into production of the LPD Flight II line.

"The LPD 29 delivery demonstrates how our shipbuilders are enabling our combined Navy and Marine Corps team," said Kari Wilkinson, president of Ingalls Shipbuilding. "It is the most recent example of what U.S. industry and government partnerships can accomplish by putting another player on the field. We will now bring the full weight of this collaborative team to bear on steady-state Flight II execution going forward."

Ingalls has two Flight II LPDs under construction including Harrisburg (LPD 30) and Pittsburgh (LPD 31). In March 2023, Ingalls was awarded a modification to the contract for the procurement of the detail design and construction of Philadelphia (LPD 32), the 16th ship in the San Antonio class and the third LPD Flight II.

The San Antonio class is foundational to the U.S. Marine Corp's Force Design construct and can support a variety of crisis response, special operations and expeditionary warfare missions. LPDs can operate independently or as part of amphibious readiness groups, expeditionary strike groups, or joint task forces. These capabilities allow the U.S. Navy to protect America's security abroad and promote regional stability and preserve future peace.

Navy Strives to Realize its Vision for Greater Use of Unmanned Systems

A full-size prototype of Manta Ray, a new class of uncrewed underwater vehicle, is assembled in Northrop Grumman's Annapolis facility. *Northrop Grumman*

Unmanned systems are increasingly part of maritime defense, but integrating remote air, surface and undersea capabilities into fields of operation requires new thinking and a whole lot of trust, military leaders and experts said at Sea-Air-Space 2024.

"In force fleet, we really try to move from experiments to operationalizing," said Rear Admiral James Aiken, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and commander, U.S. 4th Fleet. "And then we also want to go from the tactical – from those simple functions that we talk about – to the operational."

Aiken spoke at a panel of senior and retired military leaders from the Navy, Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard and private industry.

Moderating the panel was Bryan Clark, senior fellow and

director at the Hudson Institute, a naval operations expert and co-author of the study, “Unalone and Unafraid: A Plan for Integrating Uncrewed and Other Emerging Technologies into US Military Forces.”

Clark and co-author Dan Patt argued in the paper the Navy could use “AI-enabled uncrewed vehicles” to gain and sustain operational advantage against a great-power rival like China. “The ability of uncrewed systems to provide resilience and adaptability depends on scale,” Clark and Patt wrote in the paper, published last year.

The Navy described its vision for integrating unmanned aerial systems, ships and undersea vehicles into the fleet and fleet marine force in the “Advantage at Sea” strategy and the follow-on “Unmanned Campaign Framework,” released in 2001. But, as a 2022 U.S. Naval Institute article argued, Congress is unlikely to fund these vehicles unless the Navy develops a more complete conception of their use across conflicts.

That work is ongoing, panel speakers indicated.

Rear Admiral Kevin Smith, Program Executive Officer of Unmanned and Small Combatants with Naval Sea Systems Command, said his office is supporting Navy efforts by designing, developing, building and modernizing unmanned systems. These include unmanned maritime systems and mine and expeditionary warfare systems. Areas of study and experimentation focus on mechanical and electrical systems, autonomy, interoperability and more.

“Obviously a lot of data is being gathered,” Smith said, which can be used to improve the systems and define their requirements for acquisition. And this applies to large unmanned system as well as medium and small systems.

“Taking the Sailor out of harm’s way isn’t very important — it’s paramount,” Smith said.

Aiken said getting these tools more quickly into a battlefield environment requires less testing and more operations. He said this has involved “putting unmanned vessels into the hands of operators” and “testing our assumptions” on how the Navy deploys, positions and otherwise uses them.

Aiken said the goal is to combine manned and unmanned systems, and to stack unmanned systems, “which I call the Reese’s effect, where we’re putting peanut butter and chocolate together,” he said. He cited the use of unmanned surface vessels with communications balloons as part of a mesh network.

Retired Rear Admiral John Tammen, deputy of the Undersea Enterprise Campaign for the Northrop Grumman Mission Systems Sector, said he sees three broad areas of opportunities to further the Navy’s efforts in this area:

• First, there are more players on the field from private industry. Tammen said a brief walk through the Sea-Air-Space exhibit hall showed the array of firms either operating their own vehicle or supporting their components. “That was very exciting to see and I think we need to support that,” he said.

• Two, the evolution of using unmanned systems in capacities beyond surveillance to man-unmanned operations. “The example I like to use is the P-8 tied to the Triton,” he said. “Being able to get something that’s greater than the sum of the parts – one plus one equals three.”

• Three, the increasing ability to get significant payload far forward, from undersea, Tammen said, as has been demonstrated in the DARPA-Northrop Grumman Manta Ray UUV program and others.

In fact, unmanned systems that are contractor-owned and operated appeal to the U.S. Coast Guard, which has a smaller budget and less acquisition, said Thom Remmers, Systems Strategic Team Lead and Naval Engineer and Acquisition Program

Manager.

Aiken said at the end of the day, a lot of success involves building service members' trust in unmanned systems – not for use in a lab but in the real world.

HASC Members Prepare to Dive into Navy Budget

Members of the House Armed Services Committee seem prepared to overturn some Navy decisions as outlined in the fiscal 2025 budget request, including retiring some ships early and funding only one Virginia-class submarine.

"What has happened is, as the top line is increased, the game has become, 'we'll add a bunch of the stuff that we know Congress won't add, and we'll take out stuff that we know Congress is going to put back in.' And that will be a net gain. That game has to stop," said Rep. Wittman (R-Virginia),

chair of the House Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces.

As for the Virginia-class sub, Wittman said the Navy position that the program is behind anyway and the shipbuilders can't keep up doesn't make sense.

"It really is about demand signal and, and you can't have it both ways. You can't say, well, the reason we are reducing the submarine request is because we don't think the industrial base can do it. That's wrong," he said. "The industrial base can do it if you send them the demand signal. We're at about 1.6, I think, submarines today annually, we need to be at 2.3. The way we get there is to send the proper demand signal."

Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Connecticut), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, said a defense industry report issued in December highlighted the need for procurement stability.

"Procurement stability was the watchword throughout that report," he said. "And, we're sacrificing that. I mean, literally, within weeks" of the report.

Naval aviation is also an issue, as the Navy has an air attack shortfall, noted moderator Bryan Clark, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

"There are some, thanks to Congress, some Super Hornets being procured in this year's appropriations," he said. "But there doesn't seem to be a clear path ahead for the carrier air wing."

This drew an animated response from Wittman, who said there doesn't seem to be a sense of urgency about the situation.

"The challenge now is to make sure we get enough F-35s in production to be able to sustain these carrier wings," and to make sure there's not a "valley" as the Super Hornets retire,

“where now all of a sudden you have aircraft carriers sitting at the dock because there’s no aircraft on board. That means we have to get those lines to intersect. That’s more of a challenge than what a lot of folks think because the tactical air component of that is about maintaining production.”

The aircraft also need technical refresh three, an upgraded software capability that contractor Lockheed Martin warned will be delayed.

“I mean, there needs to be an all hands on deck mentality to go, no, that’s not acceptable. We need these aircraft and now we’re going to have hundreds of aircraft sitting on the tarmac waiting to get a software upgrade, right?”

Wittman continued, “F-35 is it, right? That’s all we have, right? Let’s get our fanny in gear and get this thing going and get it on the decks of the aircraft carriers, get it in the hands of our pilots in the Air Force. Get our fanny in gear. I mean, this is it. I hate to get fired up about it, but I’m fired up about it because this is the future of tactile air for this nation. Get our fanny in gear,” he said, slapping the arms of his chair for emphasis.

Workforce Woes

The panel, which included Reps. Donald Norcross (D-New Jersey), Jen Kiggans (R-Virginia) and Ronny Jackson (R-Texas), also discussed the workforce issues plaguing the defense industry.

Kiggans, a former Navy helicopter pilot, said she sat on a HASC task force looking at recruitment and retention and what rose to the top were several issues: Compensation, housing and child care.

“That 5.2% pay raise that we just gave our servicemen and women in the appropriations bills that were passed a couple weeks ago, that’s a good starting place, but there’s still

more work to do," Kiggans said.

As for housing, she said college dorms are better than the places junior enlisted Sailors and Marines are asked to live. "We have to do better for our junior Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen and Marines to be able to expect them to want to do the job that we ask," she said.

On the pay issue, Wittman said, "this 5.2% increase this year was great, but remember, the lower you are on the salary scale, the percentage is not as quite as much in your paycheck. Take for example, if you come into our services, if you are a private in the Army, the Marine Corps, third-class Seamen, third-class Airman, your starting salary is $23,000 a year. That's 11 dollars and 50 cents an hour asking you to do the most dangerous work of the nation, putting your life on the line. And guess what? You go to Chick-fil-A and serve chicken sandwiches and make more money in a much, much less challenging or dangerous environment. We have got to fix the junior enlisted salary differential."

Government, Industry Must Meet in 'Common Place of Excellence,' Del Toro Says

Industry and government alike must modernize their processes and up their game to overcome shipbuilding challenges, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro said April 9 at the lunch session at Sea-Air-Space, including by working with shipbuilding partners overseas.

Del Toro began the speech with a bit of levity, bringing the U.S. Marine Corps mascot Chesty the bulldog onto the stage, before describing the challenges that face the nation, from Houthi rebel attacks in the Red Sea to the state of the nation's shipbuilding facilities and workforce.

"You have to understand, we, the nation, abandoned the shipbuilding industry and making the necessary investments in around the early 1980s," Del Toro said. "Because we thought that somehow the private sector would just take care of itself. And some ways it did. China moved in with cheap labor and labor practices that weren't fair. In fact, the United States is considering suing China for some of those unfair practices."

Incentives weren't made, and after the Cold War the nation lost many of it shipbuilders, he said, adding, "thank God" the

nation still has the shipbuilders it does.

“But the fact is, we need more capacity if we want to a grow a Navy fleet. Let me be clear, we need a bigger Navy fleet to meet the challenges of the future. We need to have the industry to be able to grow that capacity. So, this is a whole of government discussion that we’ve initiated in the Navy across the government and there’s a lot of interest that’s growing in many different places throughout government. And I think that you’ll see this actually continue,” he said.

Del Toro cited a recent visit to South Korea, where he saw what could be the future.

“Right now, we build the most capable warships in the world in shipyards that are sometimes decades behind the global technological standard. This is an inefficient approach requiring far too much time and taxpayer dollars. And it’s certainly an approach that is only inadequate to pace our 21st century competitors,” he said.

Japan and Korea, he noted, build high-quality ships “for a fraction of the cost that we do. When my team and I went to South Korea, we were floored at the level of digitization and real-time monitoring of shipbuilding progress with readily available information down to the individual pieces of stock materials. Their top executives can tell us to the day when ships would actually be delivered,” he said.

“It’s an ethos of commitment to constant improvement that is the foundation of their reputation, consistently delivering on time and on budget, even during COVID. The daunting challenges that we face are also an opportunity, a great opportunity to partner with a greater number of shipbuilders here in the U.S. and with our closest allies abroad. We have an opportunity to attract the most advanced shipbuilders in the world to work with our first-rate ship builders of the world … and invest in commercial shipyards here at home,” Del Toro said. “This will

allow us to modernize and expand our shipbuilding industrial capacity, creating good paying new-collar American jobs that come with a healthier and more competitive shipbuilding workforce."

Previous decades of investment are what have enabled the Navy to fight off the Houthi rebels as effectively as it has, Del Toro said.

"Ladies and gentlemen, sometimes I think the American people think that this is somehow commonplace to do this, as our CNO said the other day. There is absolutely nothing commonplace about this. Our United States Navy has been attacked. We have conducted strikes like we haven't seen in many ways since World War II."

He said investments in training have led to the successful engagements, along with the investments in the Aegis Combat System and the SPY-1 radar

"Those investments are the reason why our Sailors and Marines have been able to combat thethis with proficiency that they have demonstrated to win the fight of the future," he said.

The services must make similar investments today in robotics and other technologies. Del Toro noted the service has newly introduced the robotics warfare specialist rating. The RW "will be the subject matter expert for computer vision, mission, autonomy, navigation, autonomy, data systems, artificial intelligence and machine learning," he said, calling it a "significant milestone in our journey towards achieving a truly hybrid fleet."

And, he said again, the nation needs to investment in shipbuilding.

"The findings of the 45-day comprehensive shipbuilding review have underscored too many of our industrial partners are behind schedule and over budget on our highest priority

programs. Let’s be clear, I want American industry to thrive, as a business owner for almost two decades. I understand your perspective. I’m pushing our shipbuilding industry to invest in itself to get better, be technological leaders and to once again deliver platforms on time and on budget. We must deliver for the American people because it’s our line of work. We don’t get to make excuses,” he said.

“Of course, there’s work for us to do on our end and the government as well. I’m determined to address the longstanding challenges in our procurement processes that cause industry heartburn as they tried to do business with us. And there are many that we have to work through. I expect our leaders in the government to foster culture of excellence and accountability across our own acquisition workforce.

“The point is this,” Del Toro said. “Just as our country needs you and industry to be at the top of your game, I’m determined to ensure that we and the Department of the Navy are also on the top of our game. We must meet industry in a common place of excellence.”

AUKUS Program Marks ‘Greatest Industrial Undertaking’ for Australia

Then-CNO Admiral Mike Gilday, Royal Navy First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff Adm. Sir Ben Key, and Chief of the Royal Australian Navy Vice Adm. Mark Hammond, tour the Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Missouri following the AUKUS bilateral announcement in San Diego, Calif, March 13, 2023. CREDIT: U.S. Navy | Commander Courtney Hillson

The AUKUS program, the multination effort to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines, will kick-start that country's ability to build nuclear subs, an Australian minister said in a panel discussion at Sea-Air-Space on April 8.

Pat Conroy, Australia's minister for defense industry and minister for international development and the Pacific, said the effort will be a challenge but it was a logical choice to select a partnership of Australian Submarine Corp. and BAE Systems to build the subs, as ASC built Australia's diesel-electric submarines and BAE builds the United Kingdom's Astute and Dreadnought-class submarines.

"For them to form a joint venture for us was the right model,"

Conroy said. He said it will be a “step up” for them to move to nuclear standards, but they’ve had a long partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat in the United States.

“Electric Boat was instrument in fixing some of the challenges that we encountered earlier in the Collins class,” Conroy said. “So, we’re confident we’ll put the ecosystem in and we’re investing around $30 billion Australia to increase our industrial place uplift that will really underpin what is the greatest industrial undertaking our country’s ever attempted.”

Moderator Megan Eckstein of Defense News noted the United States and United Kingdom are talking about building up the nuclear industrial base, but for Australia, “you’re starting from scratch.”

Conroy replied, “it’s an incredible effort, and lots of progress has been made from legislative rules to establishing a nuclear regulatory authority to starting to train our workers, our industry in the nuclear mindset. It has been a challenge, but also a great opportunity to include Australian companies from the ground floor.”

Australia is mounting a full national mobilization, he said, including funding 4,000 additional permanent university places in STEM subjects to grow the workforce.

“We think we need 20,000 workers. We’ve got Royal Australian Navy sailors working on U.S. submarine tenders in Guam right now, and a hundred ASC employees will be working for harbor sustainment next year,” he said.

“So, we’re starting that training pipeline. That $30 billion dollars will be a massive investment. And while it’s a challenge, there’s also opportunities,” he said.

“I’ve had the privilege of going through Barrow-in-Furness in the U.K. [home of BAE Systems Submarines] and the Groton,

Connecticut yard here [home of Electric Boat] and they've got tremendous expertise built up over a century. But they've also got the challenges of that, of being built around towns like in Barrow-in-Furness. You've got terrace houses next to assembly halls because the town and a shipyard being built up together. Having a brownfield site where we can build with the best equipment, with lots of open space, will really allow us to maximize efficiencies and learnings from our oldest partners."

Ursa Major Signs Contract with US Navy for Next Gen Solid Rocket Motors for Standard Missile

PHILIPPINE SEA (April 5, 2024) The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins (DDG 76) launches a Standard Missile (SM) 2 from a forward launcher while operating in the Philippine Sea, April 5, 2024. (USN photo by MC1 Hannah Fry)

DENVER, April 8, 2024 – Ursa Major, America's leading privately funded company focused solely on propulsion, announced a contract today with the Naval Energetics Systems and Technologies (NEST) Program to develop and hot fire test a prototype solid rocket motor (SRM) for the U.S. Navy's Standard Missile (SM) program. Under this contract, Ursa Major will develop a new design and apply the company's revolutionary manufacturing process to the Navy's workhorse Mk 104 dual-thrust rocket motor in coordination with the Navy's Program Executive Office Integrated Warfare Systems 3.0, Naval Air Warfare Center – Weapons Division at China Lake, and the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Indian Head.

The Mk 104 SRM powers the Navy's SM arsenal, including the SM-2, used for surface-to-air defense; the SM-3, used for ballistic missile defense; and the SM-6, an anti-air, land, and sea missile. In 2022, the Missile Defense Agency stated

that the SM-6 is the only missile capable of intercepting maneuverable hypersonic missiles. While the Mk 104 is a high-performance motor, legacy models are challenging to manufacture. Using the company's cutting-edge Lynx production process for SRMs, Ursa Major will leverage additive manufacturing to design a high-performing motor built for manufacturability and reliability.

"We are proud of the Navy's support and recognition of Ursa Major as a trusted partner to develop the next generation of Mk 104 solid rocket motors," said Ursa Major founder and CEO Joe Laurienti. "Our new approach to manufacturing SRMs allows Ursa Major to quickly develop high-performing motors at scale, driving volume and cost efficiencies to address this critical national need."

"PEO IWS is excited to work with Ursa Major on this effort to bolster a critical component of the Nation's industrial base," said Captain Thomas Seigenthaler, the director of PEO IWS 3.0. "The production of solid rocket motors is a top priority, and we are impressed with Ursa Major's innovative approach to address manufacturing challenges."

Lynx, Ursa Major's innovative new approach to designing and manufacturing SRMs, was introduced in November 2023. The manufacturing process uses additive manufacturing and a product-agnostic tooling system to rapidly produce scalable SRM systems without expensive or time-consuming re-tooling or re-training. Learn more here.

USS Antietam Shifts Homeport

to Hawaii

By Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs, April 8, 2024

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii –

The Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Antietam (CG 54) arrived to its new homeport of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, April 5, as part of a planned rotation of forces in the Pacific.

Antietam is now assigned to Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific and U.S. 3rd Fleet.

Antietam departed Yokosuka, Japan, Jan. 26 to transit to Hawaii and assist in enforcing international fisheries law during their Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) mission. OMSI is a Secretary of Defense program leveraging Department of Defense assets transiting the region to increase the Coast Guard's maritime domain awareness, ultimately

supporting its maritime law enforcement operations in Oceania.

“I’m proud of the Antietam crew for their execution of the Oceanic Maritime Security Initiative during our homeport shift from Yokosuka, Japan to Hawaii,” said Capt. Victor Garza, commanding officer of Antietam. “I thank the families for the support they give their Sailors. It is their strength that enables us to go to sea.”

During Antietam’s transit to Hawaii, the ship made port calls in major naval ports including Suva, Fiji and Apra Harbor, Guam.

Aloha to Antietam and welcome to Hawaii!

The mission of Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific is to manage the overall warfighting capability of the Surface Combatant Force homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii; to coordinate through the Fleet Response Plan cycle the manning, operations, combat systems, engineering, maintenance, training, logistics, administration, and support of assigned units to achieve the highest levels of combat readiness.

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute our 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 our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.