SECDEF Orders Closure of Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in Hawaii

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro receives a brief on well operation and recovery initiatives from Capt. Burt Hornyak, commanding officer, Fleet Logistics Center Pearl Harbor during a tour of the Red Hill Well in Aiea, Hawaii, in February. Secretary Del Toro was in Hawaii to meet with families and see the progress that has been made in restoring and protecting the island's safe drinking water. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chelsea D. Meiller*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin III made the following statement March 7 announcing the decision to close a Navy petroleum storage facility near Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which recently leaked and affected the Navy's drinking water system for the area:

"After close consultation with senior civilian and military

leaders, I have decided to defuel and permanently close the Red Hill bulk fuel storage facility in Hawaii.

“This is a multi-step process. Throughout the process, we will work closely with the Hawaii Department of Health and with the Environmental Protection Agency to safely defuel the Red Hill facility. No later than May 31, the Secretary of the Navy and Director of the Defense Logistics Agency will provide an action plan for safe and expeditious defueling of the facility, with a completion date target of 12 months. Then, as soon as we have made corrective actions to ensure that defueling will be safe, we will begin defueling. Then we will move to permanently close the Red Hill facility, including conducting any and all necessary environmental remediation around the facility.

“This is the right thing to do.

“Centrally located bulk fuel storage of this magnitude likely made sense in 1943, when Red Hill was built. And Red Hill has served our armed forces well for many decades. But it makes a lot less sense now. The distributed and dynamic nature of our force posture in the Indo-Pacific, the sophisticated threats we face, and the technology available to us demand an equally advanced and resilient fueling capability. To a large degree, we already avail ourselves of dispersed fueling at sea and ashore, permanent and rotational. We will now expand and accelerate that strategic distribution.

“Moreover, when we use land for military purposes, at home or abroad, we commit to being good stewards of that resource. Closing Red Hill meets that commitment.

“We will continue our work with the Hawaii Department of Health, national and local elected officials, and other community leaders, to clean up the water at the Red Hill well. And we will develop an environmental mitigation plan to address any future contamination concerns. When we begin to

consider land-use options for the property after the fueling facility is closed, we will stay in lockstep with communities in Hawaii. Nothing will be decided without careful and thorough consultation with our partners.

“The same goes for our workforce and their families. Your health has been impacted, your lives and livelihoods have been disrupted, and in many cases, your very homes have been rendered unavailable to you. We owe you the very best health care we can provide, answers to your many questions, and clean, safe drinking water. Quite frankly, we owe you a return to normal. And you have my commitment to that end.”

Throughout this process, and moving forward, we have remained grateful for the partnership and guidance of our federal, congressional, state, and community stakeholders. These consultations, which will continue, have both informed and strengthened our planning, and we are deeply appreciative of this support.

I set about achieving three priorities when I took this office: defend the nation, take care of our people, and succeed through teamwork. I believe my decision to shut down the Red Hill bulk fuel storage facility aligns with all three of these priorities.

Navy launches Ice Exercise 2022 in the Arctic Ocean

Virginia-class attack submarine USS Illinois (SSN 786) surfaces in the Beaufort Sea, kicking off Ice Exercise (ICEX) 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mike Demello*

U.S. NAVY ICE CAMP QUEENFISH – Commander, Submarine Forces officially kicked off Ice Exercise 2022 in the Arctic Ocean on Friday, March 4, after the building of Ice Camp Queenfish and arrival of two U.S. Navy fast attack submarines, Submarine Force Atlantic Public Affairs said March 6.

ICEX 2022 is a three-week exercise designed to research, test and evaluate operational capabilities in the Arctic region.

“The Arctic region can be unforgiving and challenging like no other place on Earth,” said Rear Adm. Richard Seif, commander of the Navy’s Undersea Warfighting Development Center in Groton, Connecticut, and the ranking officer of ICEX 2022. “It’s also changing and becoming more active with maritime activity. ICEX 2022 provides the Navy an opportunity to increase capability and readiness in this unique environment,

and to continue establishing best practices we can share with partners and allies who share the U.S.’s goal of a free and peaceful Arctic.”

The Arctic is experiencing a trend of diminishing sea ice extent and thickness creating the likelihood of increased maritime activity in the region, including trans-oceanic shipping and resource extraction.

The Navy’s Arctic Submarine Laboratory, based in San Diego, serves as the lead organization for coordinating, planning and executing the exercise involving representatives from four nations and more than 200 participants over the five weeks of operations.

In addition to the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel who are participating in the exercise, personnel from the Royal Canadian Air Force, Royal Canadian Navy and United Kingdom Royal Navy are participating.

U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Dave Swensen is leading a team of six from the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Center to assist in ICEX 2022.

“Any opportunities we can get to provide our personnel access to experience in extreme cold conditions will be force multipliers to our institution and ultimately to the Marine Corps,” said Swensen, who added that five of the center’s personnel taking part in ICEX are instructors at the Bridgeport, California, cold weather center for excellence. “We will come back among the most cold weather-experienced personnel at the base.”

A temporary ice camp is being established on a sheet of ice in the Arctic Ocean, known as an ice floe, to support testing submarine systems and other arctic research initiatives.

The camp, named Ice Camp Queenfish, will serve as a temporary command center for conducting operations and research in the

Arctic region. The camp consists of shelters, a command center, and infrastructure to safely house and support more than 60 personnel at any one time.

“At Ice Camp Queenfish, our teams can test equipment in a very harsh and demanding environment,” said Howard Reese, director of the Arctic Submarine Laboratory. “It’s important that all the technology we’re testing can perform in all of the oceans of the world, including the Arctic. Here, we can learn what works well in the Arctic and what doesn’t work as well, and we can make changes and improvements.”

The camp gets its namesake from USS Queenfish (SSN 651), the first Sturgeon-class submarine to operate under ice and the fourth submarine to reach the North Pole when it surfaced there on Aug. 6, 1970.

Submarines have conducted under-ice operations in the Arctic regions in support of inter-fleet transit, training, cooperative allied engagements and operations for more than 60 years. USS Nautilus (SSN 571) made the first transit in 1958. USS Skate (SSN 578) was the first U.S. submarine to surface through arctic ice at the North Pole in March, 1959.

Since those events, the U.S. Submarine Force has completed 97 Ice Exercises – ICEX 2022 is the 98th – the last being conducted in 2020.

Essex ARG, 11th MEU Return from Indo-Pac Deployment

Amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) arrives pierside at Naval Base San Diego. Essex, a part of the Essex Amphibious Ready Group, returned to Naval Base San Diego, March 4, after a deployment to U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th in support of regional stability and a free and open Info-Pacific. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Melvin Fatimehin*

SAN DIEGO – The Essex Amphibious Ready Group returned to port at Naval Base San Diego March 4, concluding a seven-month deployment to U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation, U.S. 3rd Fleet said in a release.

Essex ARG is comprised of the multi-purpose amphibious assault carrier USS Essex (LHD 2), amphibious transport dock USS Portland (LPD 27), and dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) led by Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 1.

Marines with the 11th MEU, embarked aboard the ships of the ready group, arrived off the coast of Southern California March 2 to disembark to Camp Pendleton, California, with a small contingent of MEU personnel remaining aboard the ships for the pierside arrival.

“It is a great honor to welcome the Essex ARG and the 11th MEU back to San Diego,” said Rear Adm. Wayne Baze, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 3. “I’m excited to have them home after a successful deployment. Their integrated operations while at sea are a testament to the Navy-Marine Corps team’s ability to face any challenge to accomplish the mission. I could not be more proud of the Sailors and Marines and am incredibly thankful for the families and friends they rejoin today who supported them.”

The Essex ARG and 11th MEU provided numbered fleet and combatant commanders with a responsive, flexible and forward-deployed asset capable of maritime power projection, contingency operations, and crisis response. Their capabilities enabled shaping of the operational environment to protect the United States and allied interests in any threat environment.

“Throughout the ARG-MEU’s 212-day deployment, I have been most humbled to have served alongside a highly skilled team of Sailors and Marines,” said Capt. Karrey Sanders, commander, PHIBRON 1. “Our integration as a combined blue-green team was nothing short of exceptional, and I am thankful to have not only showcased our amphibious capabilities throughout three Navy fleets together but to have created and shared countless memories that will last a lifetime.”

During deployment, Sailors and Marines supported Operation Freedom Sentinel and Operation Inherent Resolve. The ARG-MEU team also supported Large Scale Exercise 21, Exercise Indigo Defender 21, Red Sea Maritime Security Operations, Marine Exercise Philippines 22, and Noble Fusion 22.

In U.S. 5th Fleet, from September 2021 to January 2022, the ARG-MEU team operated in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, and Indian Ocean. The team conducted theater amphibious combat rehearsals in Kuwait, sustaining their readiness and proficiency in multiple full

mission profiles. During Exercise Indigo Defender, the Marines and Sailors spent two weeks with Saudi Naval Forces Western Fleet conducting bilateral training in amphibious operations, a mass casualty drill and integrated fires training to enhance proficiency and readiness while maintaining a tiered crisis response posture in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

While operating in U.S. 7th Fleet supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command from January to February 2022, the ARG conducted expeditionary strike force operations with the Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group in the South China Sea. ESF operations demonstrate U.S. capability to quickly aggregate an integrated naval force to operate all-domain warfare anywhere international law allows.

SCO Transfers Overlord Unmanned Surface Vessels to U.S. Navy

Vice Adm. Stephen Koehler, Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, gives remarks during the Ghost Fleet Overlord Transition Ceremony on Naval Base San Diego. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin C. Leitner*

SAN DIEGO – The Defense Department's Strategic Capabilities Office officially transitioned the Ghost Fleet Overlord Program to the Navy Program Executive Office, Unmanned and Small Combatants during a ceremony at Naval Base San Diego on March 3, 2022, the PEO's public affairs office said in a release.

Navy Vice Adm. Stephen T. Koehler, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, was the keynote speaker.

"The future of our fleet is a formidable manned and unmanned team," said Koehler. "Where unmanned systems work in concert with, and enable enhanced capability of manned platforms; driving to an even more distributed and more lethal force."

SCO initiated the Ghost Fleet Overlord Program in 2018 to

accelerate the Navy's adoption of unmanned and autonomous systems.

In partnership with the Navy, the objective of SCO's Overlord Program was to convert large, commercially available vessels to autonomous operation. Designers installed perception and autonomy systems, automated and improved ship system reliability for extended missions and developed the command control and communications architecture.

"The Strategic Capabilities Office partnered with the Navy, Unmanned Maritime Systems [PMS 406] specifically, from the beginning of the Ghost Fleet Overlord Program," said Jay Dryer, director, Strategic Capabilities Office. "At transition, this enables PMS 406 and the larger team of operators, warfare centers and industry to not miss a beat, continue advancing this technology, and provide a real capability sooner. This is what SCO does best: Integrate mature technologies to accelerate service priorities and create new capabilities for the warfighter."

The program's objective was achieved through long endurance transits and participation in fleet exercises. The fleet exercises demonstrated the feasibility of unmanned surface vessels. Specifically, the ability to host and employ modular payloads through a realistic set of concepts of operations.

SCO was well positioned to mature unmanned systems using Other Transaction Authority agreements with industry-led development teams given the increasing commercial use of autonomous technology.

SCO developed two prototype surface vessels to serve as test beds for the Navy's Medium and Large Unmanned Surface Vessel programs of record.

During the program, Overlord USV Prototypes 1 (Nomad) and 2 (Ranger) took part in multiple fleet level exercises and

demonstrations, traveled 28,982 nautical miles in autonomous mode and tested numerous payloads.

The advances achieved in autonomy, communications and payload integration by Nomad and Ranger are a catalyst for developing the Navy’s future USV programs of record, and in the acquisition of two additional Overlord USV prototypes for continued Navy experimentation and development.

The SCO-led phase of this development culminates with the transfer of Nomad and Ranger to the Navy for follow-on development and fleet experimentation. The next phase will inform the Navy’s unmanned concept development and directly support the Department’s autonomy modernization priorities and Unmanned Campaign Framework.

Navy Selects Northrop Grumman to Sustain and Modernize E-6B Mercury Aircraft

Northrop Grumman has been selected by U.S. Navy for sustainment and modernization of E-6B Mercury aircraft. *U.S. AIR FORCE / Staff Sgt. Jacob Skovo*

LAKE CHARLES, La. – Northrop Grumman Corp. was recently awarded the Integrated Modification and Maintenance Contract for the U.S. Navy's E-6B Mercury aircraft, the company said March 3. The work will be performed at Northrop Grumman's Aircraft Maintenance and Fabrication Center in Lake Charles.

"We are laser focused on providing the most relevant capabilities while improving mission readiness," said Mary Petryszyn, corporate vice president and president of Defense Systems at Northrop Grumman. "As leaders in aircraft sustainment and modernization, the U.S. Navy's E-6B Mercury fleet is another example of our strong partnership with the Navy in achieving those goals."

Over the next five years, Northrop Grumman will perform modifications to the Navy's E-6B aircraft improving command, control and communications functions that connect the national command authority with the United States' Nuclear Triad. The company will establish a consolidated production line for core

modifications required under the $111 million contract. Northrop Grumman may also take on additional, smaller modifications and select depot maintenance tasks as required.

As part of the critical Take Charge and Move Out strategic communications mission, the E-6B operates across a wide frequency spectrum to transmit and receive secure and non-secure voice and data information. The aircraft provides survivable, endurable, reliable airborne command, control, and communications in support of the president, secretary of defense, and United States Strategic Command.

CNO Gilday Honors Former CNO Adm. Thomas Hayward

Former chief of naval operations, Adm. Thomas B. Hayward. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Former chief of naval operations Adm. Thomas B. Hayward died March 3.

CNO Adm. Mike Gilday issued the following statement on Hayward, the 21st CNO:

"Today, the Navy grieves alongside the family and friends of Adm. Thomas B. Hayward as we celebrate his legacy and service to our nation. He was a Sailor, a warfighter, a man of honor and integrity, who served as the chief of naval operations from 1978 to 1982. As CNO, he expertly led the Navy during challenging times after the end of the Vietnam War and the transition to an all-volunteer force. Facing both the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis and renewed Soviet competition in the midst of the Cold War, he rebuilt the combat readiness of the Navy through significant personnel and material investments

and restored ‘Pride in the Navy.’ Focused on operational superiority, he prioritized building sophisticated capabilities to support a global, offensive-minded maritime strategy. He enlisted in the Navy during World War II and as a naval aviator flew combat missions in Korea and Vietnam. We truly lost a great leader and shipmate. We are grateful for your leadership, mentorship and commitment to our Navy and nation. Fair winds and following seas, Sir.”

Below is the biography of Hayward:

Hayward was born in Glendale, California, on May 3, 1924, the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Payson Hayward. A native Californian, Admiral Hayward attended Glendale Junior College and Occidental College at Los Angeles, and in 1943 was appointed a Naval Aviation Cadet in the V-5 Program of the U. S. Naval Reserve. He entered the U.S. Naval Academy in 1944 on appointment from the State of California and upon graduation was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy on June 6, 1947.

Following graduation from the U. S. Naval Academy, he served in the aircraft carrier USS Antietam until detached in September 1948 for flight training at Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Designated a Naval Aviator on July 26, 1950, he was assigned to Fighter Squadron 51. While with that squadron, he participated in combat operations in Korea, embarked in the carrier USS Essex (CV 9), and later in USS Valley Forge (CVA 45).

In January 1954, he reported for test pilot training at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland, and upon completion of training remained there as a test pilot and project coordinator. He next attended the Aviation Safety Officers School at tile University o£ Southern California at Los Angeles, after which he served with All-Weather Fighter Squadron Three. In August 1958 he reported for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and in December 1959, joined Fighter Squadron 211 as executive officer. In

July 1961, he became administrative aide to the secretary of the Navy. He was next attached to Fighter Squadron 103 in December 1963, serving as executive officer and later as commanding officer. In July 1965, he assumed command of Attack Carrier Air Wing 10 which was deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the carrier USS Shangri-La (CVA 38), and later to Southeast Asia in the Vietnam conflict aboard the carrier USS Intrepid. (CVS 11).

From August 1966 to August 1967, he was a student at the National War College in Washington, D.C., and in 1967 he received a Master of Science degree in international affairs from George Washington University. He was next commanding officer of the USS Graffias (AF 29) operating off the coast of Vietnam. In August 1968, he reported as executive assistant and aide to the under secretary of the Navy.

In December 1969, he assumed command of the attack carrier USS America (CVA 66), deploying to the 7th Fleet as the flagship of commander Task Force 77. Promoted to rear admiral in November 1970, he reported to Hawaii as commander, Sea Frontier and commandant of the 14th Naval District. He was assigned additional duty as commander Fleet Air, Hawaii, and commander Manned Spacecraft Recovery Forces, Pacific. He became director of the Office of Program Appraisal, Navy Department in December 1971, and on April 26, 1973, was promoted to vice admiral and reported as director, Navy Program Planning in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. On June 14, 1975, he assumed command of the U.S. 7th Fleet in the Western Pacific and was embarked in the guided-missile cruiser USS Oklahoma City. Promoted to the rank of admiral, he assumed duties as commander in chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet on August 12, 1976.

Hayward became the 21st chief of naval operations on July 1, 1978 and continued in this assignment until 30 June 1982. He retired from active duty on 1 July 1982.

VCNO: Retention Strong; Recruiting Difficult; Surface Fleet Manning Improving

Adm. William Lescher, vice chief of naval operations, speaks to Naval Aviators at the 2021 Naval Helicopter Association Symposium. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chelsea D. Meiller*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Retention of Sailors in the fleet is going well but the demographics trend for recruiting is getting tougher, said the vice chief of naval operations, who also explained the efforts to reduce the shortage of Sailors on the Navy's surface ships.

“We’re very focused on retention, and it’s strong right now,” said VCNO, Adm. William K. Lescher, testifying March 3 before a joint hearing of the Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee and Readiness subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. “It’s at a very strong level.

“Part of the reason we’re focusing on it is because recruiting is becoming increasingly difficult for all the services and even more broadly,” Lescher said. “The last data I [saw] showed that that portion of the U.S. population that’s eligible to serve, their propensity to serve from 2018 was 13% and to 2021 is now 10%. All of the service recruiters are seeing symptoms of the ‘great resignation’ and/or a labor market that is so tough that at our new-construction shipyards, our repair shipyards, our aviation depots, all are struggling to bring in – we’re all competing for – the same talented group. So, we’re laser-focused on that.”

During the hearing, Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-California) cited a Government Accountability Office report that found the surface fleet is 15% undermanned compared with required levels, since under-manning was part of the reason for the 2017 collisions involving the destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS John McCain.

In response, Lescher pointed out the Navy has increased its end-strength by 23,000 personnel since those incidents and is “getting very much after it [the under-manning]. Part of the reason that it remains under-manned is because we have been adding billets as well. … As we add billets to address the overwork issue and make sure the crew is sized for everything that is expected of it, we’re then chasing that with our accessions. So, we’re closing the gaps across the Navy.”

The VCNO said “the other element is strong certification and focus on the manning that we deploy our ships with. The remaining work we have to get after with a strong sense of urgency is across the full OFRP [Optimized Fleet Readiness Plan] cycle as well.”

Also testifying was Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, commander, Naval Surface Forces, who spoke on the use of data for the last year in a program involving tracking expertise and proficiency in six shipboard rates, or Sailor job specialties, in engineering and combat systems.

“We track each individual and what their proficiency and experience are, and then we are able to put them where we think we need them,” Kitchener said. “For example, if a ship is down in a number of years of experience in an engineering work center or an Aegis fire control system, we can actually make sure we send the right person there that increases the proficiency. It’s a much better measure of fit. … Right now, it’s part of the manning process. We’re using it extensively to fill those gaps at sea … making sure that we have the right people to go there.”

Kitchener said the results to date are “very encouraging” and “it’s a metric that we’re going to continue to go after to allow us to make sure we have that manning right on the ship.”

U.S. Navy Recovers F-35C from South China Sea

An F-35C Lightning II that crashed in the South China Sea earlier this year has been recovered. *U.S. NAVY*

YOKOSUKA, Japan – U.S. 7th Fleet's Task Force 75 and Naval Sea Systems Command on March 2 successfully retrieved the F-35C Lightning II aircraft which crashed earlier this year in the South China Sea, 7th Fleet Public Affairs said March 3.

The F-35C Lightning II, assigned to Carrier Air Wing 2, crashed while USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) was conducting routine flight operations in the South China Sea on Jan. 24.

The wreckage was recovered from a depth of approximately 12,400 feet by a team from CTF 75 and the NAVSEA's Supervisor of Salvage and Diving embarked on the diving support construction vessel Picasso.

"The task force's expertise in rapid, scalable command, control, and communications, agile logistics, organic security, and explosive ordnance disposal was the most flexible choice for the fleet commander to respond in a timely manner," said CTF 75 Commodore Capt. Gareth Healy.

“Ultimately, this deliberate approach resulted in the correct capabilities conducting recovery operations within 37 days of the incident. Given the unique challenges of this problem and the unique technical capabilities that NAVSEA delivered, this was an aggressive and achievable timeline.”

The aircraft was recovered using a CURV-21 remotely operated vehicle, which attached specialized rigging and lift lines to the aircraft. The ship’s crane lifting hook was then lowered to the seafloor and connected to the rigging, and then lifted the aircraft to the surface and hoisted it onboard Picasso.

The aircraft will be delivered to a nearby military installation to aid in the ongoing investigation and evaluated for potential transport to the United States.

Navy Patrol Ship USS Typhoon Decommissioned

Sailors disembark patrol coastal ship USS Typhoon (PC 5) during the ship's decommissioning ceremony at Naval Support Activity Bahrain. Typhoon commissioned in 1994 and began conducting routine coastal patrol operations under U.S. 5th Fleet in 2004. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Dawson Roth*

ARLINGTON, Va. — A second Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship has been retired from the fleet in the Persian Gulf. USS Typhoon (PC 5) was decommissioned in Manama, Bahrain, on Feb. 28 after 28 years of service, a few days after its sister ship, USS Firebolt (PC 10), was decommissioned on Feb. 23.

The event drops to eight the number of Cyclone-class PCs forward deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet. Three PCs based in the United States were decommissioned last year, leaving the rest of the class in the Persian Gulf.

The 174-foot-long, 375-ton Typhoon was built by Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana, and commissioned in Tampa, Florida, Feb. 12, 1994.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Typhoon deployed to

the Mediterranean and Baltic seas. It was forward to the 5th Fleet in 2004. In the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea, the Typhoon conducted maritime security patrols, including anti-piracy and anti-smuggling operations, security patrols for offshore oil rigs and terminals, and shipping escort.

The Typhoon and its sister ships will be replaced in the Persian Gulf by forward-deployed littoral combat ships beginning in 2022.

Future Attack Submarine USS Oregon Delivered to U.S. Navy

The Virginia-class submarine USS Indiana (SSN 789), a sister

ship to the future USS Oregon, departs Submarine Base New London in Connecticut on Jan. 7. The future USS Oregon was delivered to the Navy on Feb. 26. *U.S. NAVY / John Narewski*
GROTON, Conn. – The submarine force's newest attack submarine, the future USS Oregon (SSN 793), was delivered to the U.S. Navy on Feb. 26, Team Ships Public Affairs said Feb. 28.

PCU Oregon is the 20th Virginia-class submarine that are co-produced at General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries – Newport News Shipbuilding through a long-standing teaming agreement. Oregon is the 11th Virginia Class delivered by GDEB and the second Block IV configured submarine.

"Oregon is in excellent condition and the captain and crew have expertly taken the ship through her paces," said Capt. Todd Weeks, the Virginia-class program manager who rode the boat during its sea trials. Delivery of a Virginia-class submarine is the culmination of almost 10 million work hours by the shipbuilders under the exacting standards imposed by Naval Sea Systems Command and Naval Reactors under the direct oversight of the Supervisors of Shipbuilding at both company locations. "Each organization works tirelessly with the others focused on getting ships to sea as the first step in ultimately arriving at its squadron and homeport where it becomes a vital asset to the Nation."

Virginia-class submarines are built to operate in the world's littoral and deep waters while conducting antisubmarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations forces support, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare missions. Their inherent stealth, endurance, mobility and firepower directly enable them to support five of the six maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security and deterrence.

The submarine’s sponsor is Dana Richardson, wife of former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson.

Oregon is the third U.S. Navy ship to honor the state. The first USS Oregon was a brigantine ship purchased in 1841 and used for exploration until 1845. The second Oregon (BB 3) was commissioned on July 15, 1896. While decommissioned in 1906, she was later recommissioned in 1911 and remained in the reserve until stricken from the Navy list in 1942.