

GA-ASI DEMONSTRATES SHORT TAKEOFF/LANDING OF UAS ON UK CARRIER



[Release from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems](#)

Mojave Flights for the Royal Navy Highlight UAS' Ability to Operate From Warships

SAN DIEGO – 17 November 2023 – General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) conducted a first-of-its-kind demonstration of its short takeoff and landing (STOL) capability on the HMS Prince of Wales, a Royal Navy aircraft carrier, using the Mojave Unmanned Aircraft System. The demonstration took place on November 15, 2023, when the Prince of Wales was underway off the East Coast of the U.S., and the Mojave was controlled by an aircrew within a control station onboard the ship. The demonstration included takeoff, circuits, and approaches and ended with a landing back onto the carrier.

“We applaud the Royal Navy’s foresight in embracing this unprecedented capability for its carriers,” said GA-ASI CEO Linden Blue. “We knew our STOL capability would enable a UAS to safely take off and land on the Prince of Wales. Seeing our Mojave operate successfully in this environment opens myriad new ways our aircraft can be used to support multi-domain naval operations.”

Mojave is a short takeoff and landing UAS demonstrator originally developed to prove STOL operations at unprepared landing sites. While Mojave shares common systems and components with GA-ASI’s Gray Eagle model, a STOL wing set option is likewise being planned for the larger, more capable MQ-9B aircraft, which includes SkyGuardian®, SeaGuardian®, and the new Protector RG Mk 1 currently being delivered to the UK Royal Air Force. The MQ-9B version, called MQ-9B STOL, is being considered by the Royal Navy and other navies that operate aircraft from large flat-deck warships without catapults and arresting gear.

Royal Navy Director Develop, Rear Admiral James Parkin, whose team planned the trial, said: “The Mojave trial is a European first – the first time that a Remotely Piloted Air System of this size has operated to and from an aircraft carrier outside of the United States. The success of this trial heralds a new dawn in how we conduct maritime aviation and is another exciting step in the evolution of the Royal Navy’s Carrier Strike Group into a mixed crewed and uncrewed fighting force.”

Equipping UAS with STOL capability provides greater versatility and allows the aircraft to operate in areas previously deemed unsuitable for UAS operations, including landing onto and taking off from an aircraft carrier. MQ-9B STOL will be capable of carrying the same payloads and conducting the same missions as the SkyGuardian and SeaGuardian, including maritime surveillance, Anti-Submarine

Warfare (ASW), Airborne Early Warning (AEW), and surface strike.

History-Making Oceanographer and Ret. Navy Captain Dies at 92



[Release from the U.S. Navy](#)

16 November 2023

Retired U.S. Navy Capt. Don Walsh, best known for his daring dive to the deepest spot on Earth, nearly 36,000 feet below

the ocean's surface, has died at age 92.

Walsh was a co-pilot of the Trieste bathyscaphe, a deep submergence vehicle acquired by the Office of Naval Research (ONR) in 1958. Two years later, on January 23, 1960, Walsh and Swiss engineer Jacques Piccard, son of the inventor of the bathyscaphe, became the first humans to descend into the Challenger Deep, located in the Pacific Ocean's Mariana Trench.

"ONR sponsored the Trieste, but it was then-Lt. Don Walsh who made the very daring decision to make the first descent into the deepest spot of the earth's ocean. Walsh was a Navy officer, a submariner, an adventurer, and an oceanographer. To his family, we extend our deepest condolences and gratitude for allowing him to explore, and share his extraordinary experiences and knowledge with us," said Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Kurt Rothenhaus.

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experiences and knowledge with us,” said Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm. Kurt Rothenhaus.

Years later, Walsh described his dive with Piccard in a 2016 Future Force interview as “a pretty big deal” and a big relief to Adm. Arleigh Burke, who had greenlighted the expedition.

“Because he’d rolled the dice with us, just like ONR rolled the dice with us. He figured ...they could probably do it. And we did it. And so he was pretty happy about that,” said Walsh.

Walsh’s journey to the Challenger Deep is still believed to hold the record for deepest dive yet in a manned vehicle, and ushered in a “golden age” of manned underwater exploration in the 1960s and 70s. Walsh and Piccard, though, saw little when they hit the ocean floor. They only had 20 minutes to survey their surroundings, which had become a cloud of debris, before heading back to the surface.

Walsh was a submariner, explorer and oceanographer, who also taught at the University of Southern California. His love of the ocean and advocacy for its exploration continued well after his Navy retirement in 1975.

In 2010, the U.S. Navy presented its highest civilian recognition, the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award, to Walsh for his achievement and service in the years following his Navy career. He had served as a U.S. policy adviser on State Department and federal science boards, authored more than 200 published contributions to marine literature and presented more than 1,500 lectures in 50 countries.

US Navy Submarine Industrial Base Team Launches 2023-2024 Defense Trade Skill Pipeline Programs



[Release from Naval Sea Systems Command](#)

Nov. 17, 2023

By Team Submarines Public Affairs

WASHINGTON NAVY YARD – Over the last two months, the U.S. Navy’s Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) program team, in partnership with a critical network of Department of Defense suppliers, launched its 2023–2024 Talent Pipeline Program. In launching the next pipeline, a series of workforce trade skill events were held in key maritime centers of gravity including Philadelphia, PA, Hampton Roads, VA, Pittsburgh, PA, Boston, MA, and Long Island, NY. The Boston and Long Island pipeline projects are the newest additions to the Talent Pipeline Program as it enters its third year.

Pipeline program participants gathered at orientation events to hear from senior leaders about the Navy's generational journey to recapitalize its sea-based strategic deterrence, including the need to hire 100,000 new skilled trade workers into the submarine industrial base over the next 10 years. Attendees also heard testimony from SIB employers who have benefited from the talent pipeline program.

The program's goal is to enable employers in the SIB to hire and retain employees with critical trade skills by connecting with career and technical training providers and career-seeking students.

"We need you. We need all of you," said Ms. Stephanie Link, executive director, Program Executive Office for Attack Submarines, who spoke to pipeline participants at the inaugural Long Island orientation event about the critical mission of America's submarine force. "Without a trained and talented workforce who understands the mission and wants to participate, we're not going to meet demand. And I don't think that in this threat landscape we can risk that."

The 2023-2024 Talent Pipeline Projects build on the success of the 2022-2023 season where more than 700 new workforce members participated in [2022-2023 Talent Pipeline Project Signing Day](#) events earlier this summer. 'Signing Days' recognize trade skills students who have successfully completed training and are embarking on careers at small and medium-size defense industrial base suppliers that participated in the talent pipeline programs.

In Philadelphia, Team Submarine's Command Master Chief Jeff Hiscocks challenged suppliers to build the workforce needed to support the Navy's submarine construction cadence of one Columbia Class submarine and two Virginia Class submarines by FY 2026 as part of the SIB's demand signal.

"I thank you for your continued participation in the Talent

Pipeline Program,” said Hiscocks. “You can see some of the first year, second year teams who have been here since the beginning. The data doesn’t lie, you are seeing dramatic improvement in the retention of new hires.”

Individuals and suppliers located in, and around maritime centers of gravity are encouraged to attend and engage with talent pipeline program events to include launch/orientations, career fairs, welding competitions, signing days, and more.

For more information on the Navy’s Submarine Industrial Base Program’s Talent Pipeline Program visit:

[Talent Pipeline Program \(dibtalentpipeline.com\)](http://dibtalentpipeline.com)

**Celebrating 45 years of the
F/A-18 Strike Fighter**



[Release from Naval Air Systems Command](#)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md.—Born out of necessity and innovation, the U.S. Navy’s F/A-18 Hornet introduced a level of aircraft superiority that had not been seen before and set the standard for future development of next-gen fighters. Now, celebrating the 45th anniversary of its first flight Nov. 18, the original strike fighter aircraft is affectionately referred to as the “Legacy.”

Appropriately coined, the nickname encapsulates not only the cutting-edge capabilities of the aircraft at the time, but its place in history as the first in its class that would pave the way for future aircraft platforms.

Before the creation of the Legacy Hornet, the Navy’s fighter air wing consisted of multiple aircraft, each with a specific skill set and mission. The arrival of the F/A-18 Hornet ushered in a generation of carrier-capable, multirole fighter

aircraft that were all-weather and attack, designed for traditional strike applications and close air support without compromising fighter capabilities.

“It showed a great understanding of what a strike fighter mission requires,” said Cmdr. Tim Tuschinski, Integrated Product Team Lead for Radar/Fighter Electronic Warfare in the F/A-18 and EA-18G Program Office (PMA-265). “It allowed pilots to move quickly and efficiently between the air-to-air combat mission and the air-to-ground mission; it’s the flip of a switch.”

The Hornet cut its teeth during Operation Desert Storm, proving its lethality and versatility. Pilots could engage adversary fighters in the air and take out ground targets during the same mission. The aircraft’s survivability and easy repair only proved to further solidify its role as the preeminent aircraft in the carrier fighter air wing.

This aircraft was born at Naval Air Systems Command and developed to be a strike fighter.

“It’s fast! When you slick this thing up, it flies like a bat out of hell,” said Tuschinski. “It paved the way for the multimission platform aircraft that we see with the Super Hornet, the F-35 and the next generation fighters.”

Originally created by McDonnell Douglas and Northrop Grumman, the versatility of the aircraft came from its avionics, cockpit displays, excellent aerodynamics and its capability to carry a variety of weapons. It was built for pilot interface with a hands-on throttle and stick incorporation, as well as a digital cockpit.

“The most rewarding missions were the ones when we were able to locate and neutralize high value assets to keep our guys on the ground safe,” said Tuschinski, when reflecting on his time in the cockpit.

Today, the Legacy Hornet is no longer the preeminent strike fighter in the carrier air wing, that role has been passed along to its offspring, the Super Hornet. The Navy retired its last remaining legacy aircraft in the spring of 2023. However, the Hornet remains a workhorse for the U.S. Marine Corps and the militaries of several allied nations.

“We’re poised to continue sustaining this platform, keeping it lethal and survivable until its sundown,” said Tuschinski. “It’s going to continue its mission for the Marine Corps.”

Tuschinski flew the Legacy Hornet for 15 years and supported missions in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. His squadron provided close air support for troops under fire and completed pre-strike missions to set up ground troops for success. He now works in PMA-265, leading the team focused on radar and electronic weapons for the F/A-18 and the EA-18G.

This year not only marks the 45th anniversary of the Legacy Hornet’s first flight, but also the 50th anniversary of the establishment of PMA-265. For a half-century, the men and women of the program office have provided critical capabilities, cradle to grave, for the Hornet, Super Hornet and Growler.

“Our team continues to move fast and take risks to support, sustain, and advance the fleet,” said Capt. Michael Burks, PMA-265 Program Manager. “The technologies and capabilities that we develop are reliable, maintainable, and upgradable, allowing constant improvement, so that we can best support the Sailors and Marines in the fleet.”

The Hornet was just the beginning and set an expectation for fighter/attack aircraft that continues today. Over the past decade the U.S. Navy fully transitioned from use of the Hornet to the Super Hornet. This includes its use by the Blue Angels. The F/A-18 family of aircraft has surpassed 11 million flight hours. Through initiatives like Service Life Modification, the

Super Hornet will be the numerically predominant aircraft in the carrier fighter air wing into the mid-2030s and will provide significant combat capability for the air wing into the 2040s.

“It is a privilege to be at the helm of this esteemed, dedicated workforce,” said Burks. “PMA-265 continues to ensure responsiveness, innovation, expertise, professionalism and priority when addressing the needs of our warfighters and the challenges facing our international partners; that legacy continues.”

SECNAV Names Ship After World War II Hero, Medal of Honor Recipient Ernest E. Evans

Release from the Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs

15 November 2023

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Carlos Del Toro announced, today, that a DDG 51 Flight III Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer will be named after World War II hero Ernest E. Evans, the first Native American in the Navy to earn the Medal of Honor and one of only two World War II destroyer captains to attain it.

Secretary Del Toro made the announcement during Native American Heritage month. Additionally, Secretary Del Toro announced that the ship's sponsor will be U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, the first Native American to serve

as a cabinet secretary.

“Since our nation’s founding, Native Americans, such as Ernest Evans, have volunteered to serve in our armed services. From the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I and II, to Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, Native Americans have fought with honor and distinction to preserve our union and defend our ideals of freedom and democracy, even during periods where they were not recognized as citizens of our country,” said Secretary Del Toro.”

“Today, we honor Commander Ernest Evans for his courage and ultimate sacrifice,” said Secretary Deb Haaland. “While this nation has not always welcomed them, Native Americans have consistently and honorably served in disproportionately high rates across the Armed Forces to keep us safe at home and abroad. As we honor Commander Evans with this stunning vessel, we also honor the service of Indigenous servicemembers nationwide, past and present. Native American history is American history, and today’s designation ensures that our story continues to be told.”

Ernest Edwin Evans was born on Aug. 13, 1908, in Pawnee, Oklahoma. He graduated from Central High School in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy on May 29, 1926. After a years’ enlisted service, he was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy, entered as a midshipman, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in June 1931.

Evans spent his first decade of service in San Diego, Pensacola, and aboard seven ships. He was serving on his eighth in the East Indies when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, thrusting the U.S. into World War II.

In 1943, Cmdr. Evans assumed command of the USS Johnston, serving as its only commanding officer. During the commissioning ceremony, Cmdr. Evans reportedly told his crew

and the audience assembled, "This is going to be a fighting ship. I intend to go in harm's way, and anyone who doesn't want to go along had better get off right now."

Oct. 25, 1944, off the coast of the Philippines, Cmdr. Evans and the crew of the USS Johnston found themselves in harm's way during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. On that day, Cmdr. Evans and his fellow destroyer captains launched an offensive attack against overwhelming odds against a much larger Japanese naval force, with the USS Johnston in the lead. Not waiting for orders, Evans commanded the crew to begin a torpedo run, drawing fire away from the carriers, directly taking hits from three powerful 14-inch guns. Despite severe damage to his ship and his own wounds from Japanese fire, he repeatedly put the USS Johnston between the enemy and more vulnerable U.S. ships, saving the lives of thousands of his fellow Sailors.

Ultimately, the USS Johnston was lost during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, with Cmdr. Evans going down with his ship. For his leadership and selfless service in the face of a superior enemy force, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

"And I am honored to announce that, in recognition of his heroic actions, our Navy will once again welcome a USS Ernest E. Evans into our fleet once again, as his name will adorn our future Arleigh Burke Flight III class destroyer DDG-141," said Secretary Del Toro.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, Cmdr. Evans had the China Service Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp, and was entitled to the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with six engagement stars, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Philippine Defense and Liberation Ribbons with the one star.

A destroyer escort vessel, USS Evans (DE 1023), was named in honor of Cmdr. Evans. Mrs. Hugh Hendrickson of Tulsa,

Oklahoma, sister to Cmdr. Evans, sponsored the vessel at the launching at the Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging Company, Seattle, Washington, on Sept. 14, 1955.

USS Thomas Hudner Shoots Down Drone from Yemen



NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY SOUDA BAY, Greece (Oct. 2, 2023) The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) moors at the NATO Marathi Pier Complex as part of a scheduled visit to receive fuel and logistical support from Sailors and personnel assigned to Naval Support Activity (NSA) Souda Bay. NSA Souda Bay is an operational ashore installation which enables and supports U.S., Allied, Coalition, and Partner nation forces to preserve security and stability in the European, African, and Central Command areas of

responsibility. (U.S. Navy photo by Nicholas S. Tenorio)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – A U.S. Navy guided-missile destroyer (DDG) shot down a drone over the Red Sea, the Department of Defense said in a Nov. 15 release.

The release, relayed by Cmdr. Rick Chernitzer, force public affairs officer for U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, reads as follows:

“On November 15th and while transiting the international waters of the Red Sea, the crew of the USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) engaged a drone that originated from Yemen and was heading in the direction of the ship. The Hudner’s crew engaged and shot down the drone to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel. There were no U.S. casualties or any damage to the ship.”

The engagement is the second in the Red Sea is the second within the last month in which cruise missiles or drones have been shot down by U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class DDGs. On Oct. 19, the USS Carney (DDG 64) engaged and shot down four land-attack cruise missiles and approximately 15 drones launched by Houthi forces over the Red Sea in Yemen.

The Houthi missiles launched on Oct. 19 apparently were headed in the direction of Israel or the Carney. Israel has been engaged in combat with Hamas terrorists since Oct. 7. The Iran-backed Houthis have a history of using drones and missiles against Saudi petroleum infrastructure and U.S. Navy and other ships in the Arabian Sea.

BAE Systems to equip Royal Australian Navy's Hunter class frigates with Mk 45 naval gun



[Release from BAE Systems](#)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Nov. 15, 2023 – BAE Systems has received a contract to deliver multiple shipsets of the Mk 45 Medium Caliber Gun and automated Ammunition Handling System (AHS) for the Royal Australian Navy's new Hunter class frigates. The Mk 45 gun system will equip the Royal Australian Navy with a common, adaptable gun system that can easily integrate advanced munitions to provide the firepower required to meet the Hunter class deterrence mission.

“We are proud to partner with BAE Systems Maritime Australia to deliver the Mk 45 gun system and Ammunition Handling System

to the Royal Australian Navy,” said Brent Butcher, vice president and general manager of Weapon Systems at BAE Systems, Inc. “The highly reliable Mk 45 system maximizes the lethality of the Hunter class frigates, offers the capability to integrate advanced munitions, and supports additional future technology upgrades. With this system fielded on 11 fleets across the globe, it has proven it offers high-reliability.”

The Mk 45 gun system combines the 5-inch, 62-caliber Mk 45 Mod 4A naval gun with a fully automated AHS that continuously supplies the gun with ammunition, in high sea state conditions, without assistance from the crew. This automated gun system increases Sailor productivity, reduces risk to Sailor safety, and increases the operational capability of the Mk 45 at sea.

Work on the contract will begin in 2023 and finish in 2036. Engineering work will be completed in Minneapolis, Minnesota and production will occur in Louisville, Kentucky.

BAE Systems has delivered over 280 shipboard applications to the U.S. Navy and 11 fleets across the globe.

**Keel Authenticated for Future
Billy Frank Jr.**



Release from Naval Sea Systems Command

Nov. 14, 2023

By Team Ships Public Affairs

MOBILE, Ala. – The keel for the future USNS Billy Frank Jr. (T-ATS 11), the Navy's 6th Navajo-class platform, was laid Nov. 14 at Austal USA's shipyard in Mobile, Alabama.

A keel laying ceremony recognizes the start of a ship's construction through the union of a ship's modular components and the welding, or "authentication," of an honoree's initials into a ceremonial keel plate that becomes part of the ship. On hand to authenticate the keel was ship sponsor Pegan Frank, spouse to Nisqually Tribal Council Chairman William Frank III, son of the late Billy Frank Jr.

Billy Frank Jr. was a Nisqually tribal member and an iconic Native American environmental leader and treaty rights activist. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War, Frank chaired the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for over 30 years, receiving the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism and the Martin Luther King, Jr.

Distinguished Service Award. President Obama posthumously awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015.

“The future Billy Frank Jr.’s keel laying marks the beginning of the construction journey for this ship,” said John Lighthammer, program manager, Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office. “It is an honor to be joined by members of the Nisqually Tribe and we look forward to the partnership as we highlight their heritage.”

The Navajo class is a multi-mission, common hull platform that will deploy to support a range of missions such as towing, rescue, salvage, humanitarian assistance, oil spill response and wide-area search and surveillance. The vessels will replace the existing Powhatan-class T-ATF fleet ocean tugs and Safeguard-class T-ARS rescue and salvage ships in service with the U.S. Military Sealift Command.

Austal USA is also in production of future USNS Solomon Atkinson (T-ATS 12) with an additional three more T-ATS- ships under contract.

As one of the Defense Department’s largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships, and boats and craft.

**USS Stethem, Task Force 59
put more eyes in the sky,**

expanding maritime domain awareness



231109-N-CX511-6346 GULF OF OMAN (Nov. 9, 2023) A FlexRotor unmanned aerial vehicle hovers over the flight deck of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63) during UAV operations in the Gulf of Oman, Nov. 9. USS Stethem is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to help ensure maritime security and stability in the Middle East region. (U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Rory Cox)

[Release from U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs](#)

By U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs | November 14, 2023

MANAMA, Bahrain – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stethem (DDG 63) recently demonstrated expansive

maritime domain awareness, utilizing Flexrotor unmanned aerial vehicles during operations in the Gulf of Oman, Nov. 8-9.

The UAVs, part of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command's Task Force 59, put a highly capable intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capability in the hands of Sailors at sea. Flexrotor's high endurance and vertical takeoff-and-landing capabilities make them particularly well suited for the task of building an accurate maritime picture, said Capt. Colin Corridan, Task Force 59 commodore.

"Our warfighters require innovative methods for gaining a deeper understanding of the operating environment," Corridan said. "The ISR capabilities of these UAVs greatly expand our sight picture and help us better monitor what's happening in the region."

Flexrotor provides complete autonomous flight following takeoff, with a wide communication range and the ability for around-the-clock ISR coverage. It can be used day or night by U.S. and coalition partners for a wide range of intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance operations over land and sea.

Flexrotors played an integral part in recent operations where it integrated with 12 different unmanned platforms for "manned-unmanned teaming" operations, tracking Iranian Navy and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) ships and small boats over several days during routine patrols in and around the Strait of Hormuz.

The operations aboard Stethem built on the strength of that operation, Corridan noted.

"The Sailors aboard Stethem and from Task Force 59 are strengthening maritime security and stability through the use of Flexrotor, deterring malign activity by bad-faith actors,"

he said. “As these capabilities expand, we’re going to be able to gain more information more quickly to be able to make faster, smarter decisions.”

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet’s area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. This expanse, comprising 21 nations, includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb.

New Uncrewed Undersea Capabilities Strengthen AUKUS Partnership



Release from the U.S. Department of Defense

The UK, US and Australia have strengthened their maritime forces, introducing new uncrewed undersea vessels to extend the range and lethality of their warfare capabilities.

As part of the AUKUS partnership, the nations have taken part in a joint exercise off the east coast of Australia to test new equipment that will increase the protection of critical underwater infrastructure. During the exercise, Australia's new Undersea Support Vessel, Australian Defence Vessel (ADV) Guidance, hosted a range of undersea capabilities while they were tested at sea.

A recent addition to the Australian fleet, the ADV Guidance's primary role is to support undersea and surveillance systems trials and includes the ability to host a small team of sailors as well as on-board and off-board systems, with both crewed and uncrewed capability. Earlier this month, Lieutenant

General Rob Magowan, the UK's Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Military Capability, joined international representatives to witness the showcase of a range of advanced undersea capabilities deployed from ADV Guidance.

The UK's Offshore Patrol Vessel HMS Tamar, which is on a 5-year deployment to the Indo-Pacific, also played a key role in the exercise. HMS Tamar used a combination of divers and autonomous underwater vehicles to conduct mine countermeasure operations, and monitor critical infrastructure, including pipelines and communication cables.

Last week, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Key visited Australia to address the Australian Sea Power Conference, discussing the UK's commitment to the collective security of the region.

Key said:

"The recent AUKUS trials and exercise demonstrate the advances being made possible by our tri-lateral collaboration under the partnership. It is hugely exciting to see the strength of our three nations, coming together through the AUKUS partnership to successfully develop and demonstrate a range of underwater capabilities that are crucial to ensuring safety and security in the region and more broadly.

AUKUS is a landmark security and defence partnership between Australia, the UK, and the US to support a free and open Indo-Pacific by strengthening regional global security. This exercise is a significant step forward for delivery of the undersea warfare capabilities work stream under the second pillar of AUKUS.

AUKUS Pillar 2 seeks to strengthen trilateral capabilities in cutting-edge military technologies, increase interoperability, and drive knowledge-sharing and innovation. AUKUS partners are developing a suite of advanced capabilities including autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, and other key

technologies for the three AUKUS nations. Pillar 2 complements trilateral efforts under AUKUS Pillar 1 to deliver a conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability to Australia.”

Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO, Royal Australian Navy, said:

“Submarines are critical to the defence of Australia. Our submarines, and other military assets, will increasingly work with autonomous systems below and on the surface of the ocean to extend range and lethality.

AUKUS Pillar Two is about delivering advanced capabilities, including through technologies that extend reach and range.

As we have seen in the Ukraine conflict, scalable autonomous and semi-autonomous systems have the capacity to transform warfighting. The Defence Strategic Review (DSR) identified asymmetric capabilities like these as critical in the defence and protection of the nation.

These technologies originate from a range of industries, like the off-shore oil and gas and communications industries. They have been modified to carry a military payload to become force multipliers, working in concert with our ships, submarines and aircraft, and to serve as a key deterrent.

What we get by working with industry in this way is speed, what we get by doing it together under the AUKUS partnership is scale, where the sum of the whole is greater than its parts.”

Admiral Samuel Paparo, U.S. Navy, the Commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, said:

“These exercises accelerate our combined development of advanced military capabilities. In a dynamic strategic environment and the escalation of competitors’ coercive

activities, AUKUS is not just about the exchange of submarines and capabilities, it is an expansion of our continued trust in and commitment to our allies.

We are prioritizing capabilities that improve our warfighter's ability to see, understand, decide and act – then work together to bolster integrated deterrence.

Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are developing and fielding joint advanced military capabilities to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The strategic alignment of our national defense strategies anchored by shared values is driving unprecedented collaboration in advanced technologies.

Our trilateral exercises develop and deliver interoperable, threat-informed capabilities key to the warfighter, and contribute to sustained defense industrial-based collaboration. Meanwhile, the AUKUS partners are investing in trilateral projects that are enhancing our scientific and technological capacity to build enduring advantages for the future.”

Earlier this month, the Australian Deputy Prime Minister joined the UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps on a visit to Rolls Royce in Derby – the location where the nuclear reactors will be built for the SSN-AUKUS submarines under the AUKUS collaboration.