Navy Concludes Helicopter Aviator Training in TH-57 SeaRanger

PENSACOLA, Fla. (Feb. 23, 2017) Two U.S. Navy TH-57C Sea Ranger helicopters conduct a formation training flight over Pensacola Beach, Fla. (U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Antonio More)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – The. U.S. Navy has retired the Bell TH-57 Sea Ranger helicopter from training naval aviators after 57 years of training Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and foreign naval aviators to fly helicopters.

The last Sea Ranger in Training Air Wing Five, TH-57C Bureau Number 162668, side number E-106, based at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whiting Field, Florida, made its last flight on Sept. 19, 2025, and was delivered to the National Naval Aviation

Museum at NAS Pensacola, Florida. The helicopter was presented that day to museum director Sterling Gillum by the pilot, Commander James Gelsinon.

Another of the wing's TH-57Cs was delivered to the USS Lexington Museum in Corpus Christi, Texas.

The TH-57 in its three versions – A, B, and C – provided flight training over the years to student rotary wing aviators by Training Air Wing Five's Helicopter Training Squadrons HT-8, HT-18, and HT-28. The Navy procured a total of 40 TH-57As, 51 TH-57Bs, and 89 TH-57Cs.

The TH-57 is not quite gone, however, being used at NAS Patuxent River, Maryland, by an air test and evaluation squadron, HX-21.

"HX-21 still flies TH-57 for readiness flights, not testing," said Connie Briggs, a spokeswoman for the Naval Air Systems Command. "Right now, there are no immediate plans to retire the aircraft."

The TH-57 has been succeeded by the TH-73A Thrasher for training naval helicopter pilots at Whiting Field. The Thrasher is built by AgustaWestland Philadelphia, a Leonardo company.

MIB, Electric Boat, Lincoln Electric Advance Additive Manufacturing for Submarine

Building

From Lincoln Electric

WASHINGTON & CLEVELAND, Sept. 30, 2025 – The U.S. Navy's Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program, General Dynamics Electric Boat, and Lincoln Electric today announced an investment to accelerate the integration of additive manufacturing (AM), also known as 3D printing, into the construction of nuclear-powered submarines.

America must deliver one Columbia-class ballistic missile

submarine and two Virginia-class attack submarines each year by 2028, while sustaining the current fleet. Meeting this demand requires innovative methods to increase throughput, reduce bottlenecks, and strengthen supply chains. Additive manufacturing provides critical solutions to these challenges.

Matt Sermon, executive director of the Maritime Industrial Base Program, noted, “The MIB Program is charged with strengthening and expanding the shipbuilding and repair capacity our nation needs for deterrence and warfighting. By investing in additive manufacturing at scale, we are helping ensure our industrial base has the tools, technologies, and resilience required to meet the Navy’s mission.”

Through MIB Program funding, General Dynamics Electric Boat will source critical components from Lincoln Electric’s new large-scale metal additive manufacturing capability, anchored by four state-of-the-art SculptPrint™ machines. This represents Lincoln Electric’s largest government-funded AM capital investment to date, located at its advanced Additive Solutions facility in Cleveland.

“Material availability continues to drive construction delays across the submarine enterprise,” said Ken Jeanos, vice president of supply chain, materials and logistics for General Dynamics Electric Boat. “3D-printed parts have the potential to accelerate construction and delivery of submarines to the U.S. Navy by cutting lead times for critical components.”

“This Maritime Industrial Base investment is a pivotal step to further unlock AM capabilities, enabling the defense industry to address complex supply chain challenges with innovative, efficient solutions,” added Jeanos. “This partnership expands the use of AM and other innovative technologies that Electric Boat’s engineering and procurement teams have been working on for several years.”

Steven B. Hedlund, chairman and CEO of Lincoln Electric, underscored the partnership's impact: "This investment strengthens our partnership with Electric Boat and solidifies Lincoln Electric's commitment to delivering transformative solutions for the defense industrial base."

RTX's Raytheon Delivers 500th ESSM Block 2 to U.S. Navy

From RTX, Oct. 1, 2025

Missile provides reliable ship self-defense against air and sea-surface threats

TUCSON, Ariz., Oct. 1, 2025 /PRNewswire/ – Raytheon, an RTX (NYSE: RTX) business, has delivered its 500th ESSM Block 2 missile to the U.S. Navy. The company is investing in infrastructure and material to continue deliveries, with plans

to nearly double production rates by June 2026.

ESSM Block 2 is an advanced surface-to-air missile that has proven effective against a variety of air and sea-surface threats. It features an upgraded guidance system with a dual-mode active and semi-active radar seeker, increased maneuverability, and improved performance over its Block 1 predecessor.

“ESSM plays a crucial role in helping to ensure both ship self-defense and local area defense for U.S. and allied navies around the globe,” said Barbara Borgonovi, president of Naval Power at Raytheon. “The continued delivery of this capability is a testament to the strong partnerships and shared commitment among our team, our customers, and our allied nations to equip our servicemen and women with the best defense solutions.”

ESSM is managed by the NATO SEASPARROW Consortium composed of 12
nations: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Türkiye, and the United States. The consortium is NATO’s largest and most successful cooperative weapons project and represents over 50 years of international military-industrial cooperation.

USS Benfold Departs U.S. 7th Fleet after 10 years of Forward-Deployed Service

YOKOSUKA, Japan (Sept. 29, 2025) – Sailors assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65) man the rails as the ship departs Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 29, following 10 consecutive years of forward-deployed service in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. Benfold is forward deployed and assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's Largest DESRON and U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force. (U.S. Navy Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Taylor DiMartino)

By Lt. Victor Murkowski, Destroyer Squadron 15 Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65) departed Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, Sept. 29, following 10 years of forward-deployed service to U.S. 7th Fleet.

Benfold's decade of service was recognized by senior leadership at a farewell ceremony with Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. "Benfold successfully stood the watch in the Western Pacific for 10 years," said Capt. Dave Huljack, commodore, DESRON 15. "This ship leaves with an amazing legacy

as a workhorse for the fleet and a stalwart friend to our allies and partners. Over the last decade, Benfold and her crew have executed our nation's tasking with strength and excellence. We will miss Benfold's grit and determination but look forward to her crew's continued success in DESRON 31."

Benfold is scheduled to relocate to Everett, Washington, to support U.S. 3rd Fleet operations. Benfold will also shift from DESRON 15 to the "Ke Koa O Ke Kai" (The Warriors of the Sea) of DESRON 31 after its transit across the international date line.

Benfold arrived in Yokosuka and joined Forward-Deployed Naval Forces – Japan (FDNF-J) in October 2015. During the ship's decade-long tenure, it participated in numerous multilateral maritime exercises, such as: Malabar, Maritime Counter Special Operations Forces Exercise, Pacific Griffin, Valiant Shield, Keen Sword, Annual Exercise, and Resolute Dragon, working alongside allies and partners to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"Through tenacity and teamwork, Benfold's decade assigned to the Western Pacific has allowed our crew to build on the ship's great accomplishments," said Cmdr. Rich Mayer, commanding officer of Benfold. "Benfold is leaving the 7th Fleet family on a high note. Our families will miss Japan, and we will miss sailing alongside one of our nation's strongest allies."

Throughout the tenure, Benfold maintained uncompromised combat readiness, conducting numerous patrols and demonstrating U.S. commitment to the region.

While assigned to FDNF-J, Benfold earned three Battle Efficiency "Battle E" Awards, the Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Fund Award, the Arleigh Burke Fleet Trophy, the CNO Afloat Safety Award, multiple Retention Excellence Awards, and 10

consecutive Fleet Health Promotion and Wellness, or Green “H,” awards. While assigned to DESRON 15, Benfold sailed more than 4 million miles across the Indo-Pacific.

“Operating alongside partners and allies in 7th Fleet has been a highlight for Benfold crewmembers over the past decade,” said Mayer. “Our Sailors have made lasting memories, and Benfold’s successes are a testament to the U.S. Navy’s long-term commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

U.S. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

General Dynamics Electric Boat Awarded $642M for Virginia-Class Submarine Work

Release From General Dynamics Electric Boat

GROTON, Conn. (September 26, 2025) – General Dynamics Electric Boat, a business unit of General Dynamics (NYSE: GD), announced today it has been awarded a $642 million contract modification to a previously awarded contract supporting submarine production. This modification is for a cost-plus-fixed-fee modification to a previously awarded contract (N00024-20-C-2120) for Lead Yard Support and Development Studies and Design efforts related to Virginia-class submarines, as detailed in the U.S. Department of War contract award.

“This contract modification supports our efforts to deliver the submarines our Navy needs as quickly as possible,” said Mark Rayha, president of General Dynamics Electric Boat. “This funding allows us to continue our design and development efforts in order to sustain and extend our nation’s operational overmatch against any potential adversaries. With the support of the administration, the Navy and Congress, we are prepared to deliver the advantage to protect our sailors, our families and our freedom.”

CTF-66 Showcases RAS Capabilities With Partners in Unmanned Systems Demonstration

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Cameron C. Edy

TROIA, Portugal – Commander, Task Force (CTF) 66 conducted a live robotic and autonomous systems (RAS) demonstration with Allies and partners during the experimentation exercise Robotic Experimentation and Prototyping with Maritime Unmanned Systems (REPMUS) / Dynamic Messenger 2025, in Troia, Portugal, Sept. 25, 2025.

Nations that participated in the live RAS demonstration include Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and United States.

“We continue to advance our robotic and autonomous systems through ongoing testing and combined training with partners and their unmanned systems,” said Adm. Stuart B. Munsch, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa (NAVEUR/NAVAF). “We deeply appreciate our Ally, Portugal, for their leadership in maritime experimentation and unmanned systems. Our collective capability is only getting stronger.”

Taking place near the Portuguese Navy’s Operational Experimentation Centre (CEOM), the live RAS demonstration deployed two groups of unmanned surface vessels (USVs) simulating a swarming attack, with CTF-66 deploying three Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Crafts (GARC) in response to

disrupt the attacking USVs and protect critical infrastructure from harm.

This routine demonstration tests and validates U.S. and partner robotic and autonomous systems' ability to protect critical infrastructure, and enhances interoperability within the NATO's allied and partner nations in employing unmanned systems to execute national tasking.

"CTF-66 is focused on adaptation, which enables a warfighting edge and warfighting advantage," said Rear Adm. Michael S. Mattis, commander, CTF-66. "Sharpening that warfighting edge is pushing the capabilities and limits of our RAS with Allies and partners, and that's exactly what we're doing during REPMUS/Dynamic Messenger 2025."

REPMUS 2025 is a Portuguese-led experimentation exercise that focuses on maritime unmanned systems experimentation, capability development and interoperability, highlighting NATO's ability to trial and integrate uncrewed systems into the operational environment.

REPMUS 2025 is combined with exercise Dynamic Messenger (DYMS), an operational experimentation exercise led by NATO's Allied Maritime Command to promote adaptation of capabilities, support agile modernization of Allied Maritime forces, and gain operational advantage across the Alliance.

REPMUS / Dynamic Messenger 2025 integrates unmanned systems into NATO's standing Naval Forces, resulting in both national maritime capability development and an exponential growth in RAS capability across the Alliance. The exercise also supports NATO's broader Digital Transformation goals by improving information sharing, data management, and the integration of advanced technologies into command structures.

Established in 2024 to deploy and employ RAS with Navy, joint, and NATO partners, CTF-66 utilizes RAS in conjunction with conventional manned platforms and spaced-based capabilities to

expand Maritime Domain Awareness, develop defense measures against adversarial use of RAS, innovate asymmetric fighting, and in the future, deliver lethal effects, if necessary.

Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa, and freedom of navigation in and around the Mediterranean.

For over 80 years, NAVEUR/NAVAF has forged strategic relationships with 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 and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility.

U.S. Navy to Christen Future USS Louis H. Wilson Jr.

From the U.S. Department of War, Sept. 26, 2025

The U.S. Navy will christen the future USS Louis H. Wilson Jr. (DDG 126), during a ceremony at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works (BIW) on Saturday, September 27, at 10:30 a.m. (EST).

The principal address will be delivered by Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Eric Smith; Additional speakers include Governor of Maine, Janet Mills; U.S. Senator of Maine Angus King; Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition, Jason Potter; Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration of Capabilities and

Resources, Vice Adm. Brad Skillman; Medal of Honor Recipient, Col. Harvey C. Barnum, Jr.; and President of General Dynamics Bath Iron Works, Chuck Krugh.

In a time-honored tradition, ship sponsors Janet Wilson Taylor, daughter of the namesake and Susan J. Rabern, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Financial Management and Comptroller, will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

The ship is named after Gen. Louis Hugh Wilson Jr., a World War II and Vietnam War veteran who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism during the Battle of Guam. Following his service in Vietnam, he served as the 26th Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1975 to 1979.

The christening of DDG 126 symbolizes the Navy's 250-year commitment to innovation and maritime dominance. From seabed to space, the Navy delivers power for peace – always ready to fight and win. This milestone marks the Navy's enduring legacy and commitment to shaping the future of maritime power.

Arleigh Burke-class Flight III destroyers feature the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar and incorporate upgrades to the electrical power and cooling capacity plus additional associated changes to provide enhanced warfighting capability to the fleet. Future destroyers Harvey C. Barnum Jr. (DDG 124), Patrick Gallagher (DDG 127), William Charette (DDG 130), Quentin Walsh (DDG 132), John E. Kilmer (DDG 134), Richard G. Lugar (DDG 136), and J. William Middendorf (DDG 138) are also in production at BIW.

HII Successfully Completes Builder's Sea Trials for Destroyer Ted Stevens

From HII

PASCAGOULA, Miss., (Sept. 27, 2025) – HII's (NYSE: HII) Ingalls Shipbuilding division successfully completed builder's sea trials for guided missile destroyer Ted Stevens (DDG 128), marking a major milestone in the construction of the second Flight III destroyer built at Ingalls. The trials were conducted over several days in the Gulf of America, and tested the ship's engineering, navigation, and combat systems to ensure readiness for the future acceptance trials and eventual delivery to the U.S. Navy.

"The Ingalls and Navy team worked diligently to get DDG 128 ready for sea, and I want to recognize the team's determination in reaching this major milestone," Ingalls Shipbuilding DDG Program Manager Ben Barnett said. "Their efforts reflect the urgency we all share in delivering these

ships with the highest quality and technological advancements needed to support the U.S. Navy fleet and to protect our national security."

During builder's trials, the Ingalls test and trials team completed a full range of hull, mechanical and electrical tests, as well as Flight III AN/SPY-6 (V)1 radar array testing. These tests are designed to validate critical system performance and ensure the ship meets or exceeds Navy requirements.

Flight III Arleigh Burke-class destroyers represent the next generation of surface combatants for the U.S. Navy and incorporate a number of design modifications that collectively provide significantly enhanced capability. Upgrades include the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) and the Aegis Baseline 10 Combat System required to keep pace with the threats well into the 21st century.

Ingalls has delivered 35 Arleigh Burke-class destroyers to the U.S. Navy including the first Flight III, USS Jack H. Lucas (DDG 125), in June of 2023 and currently has five Flight IIIs under construction including Ted Stevens (DDG 128), Jeremiah Denton (DDG 129), George M. Neal (DDG 131), Sam Nunn (DDG 133) and Thad Cochran (DDG 135).

Earlier this month, HII announced that the company would be partnering with several shipyards and fabricators in multiple states to grow its throughput and meet the requirements of increased demand for ships by the U.S. Navy. This effort included Ingalls Shipbuilding selecting outfitted structural units for Arleigh Burke-class destroyers to be constructed, inspected and accepted at partner locations and later delivered to Ingalls for final integration.

As the largest manufacturing employer in Mississippi, Ingalls Shipbuilding has designed, built and maintained amphibious ships, destroyers for the U.S. Navy for over 86 years.

U.S. Navy Decommissions Avenger-class Mine Countermeasures Ships in Bahrain

MANAMA, Bahrain (Sept. 3, 2025) U.S. Sailors man the rails of the Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Dextrous (MCM 13) during a decommissioning ceremony for the ship in Manama, Bahrain. The recently decommissioned Avenger-class mine countermeasures ships USS Sentry (MCM 3), USS Dextrous (MCM 13) and USS Gladiator (MCM 11), and their crews, were recognized during the final decommissioning ceremony for USS Devastator (MCM 6) on board Naval Support Activity Bahrain, following nearly 40 years of active service. (Official U.S. Navy photo)

From Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs, Sept. 25, 2025

After nearly 40 years of active service, three recently decommissioned U.S. Navy Avenger-class mine countermeasures ships and their crews were recognized in conjunction with a final decommissioning ceremony for USS Devastator (MCM 6) on board Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bahrain, Sept. 25.

“As you carry the plank you own of Douglas fir away with you today, remember that with it you carry the legacy of the thousands of Sailors who come before you,” said Lt. Cmdr. Alex Turner, commanding officer, USS Devastator. “Today, Devastators’ watch has ended; her service is complete, but her legacy will endure… and in every Iron Man who is honored to call this wooden ship home, there are truly no greater heroes.”

U.S. Navy Vice Adm. George Wikoff, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) and U.S. 5th Fleet (C5F) presided over the final decommissioning ceremony that recognized the proud history of not only Devastator, but also USS Sentry (MCM 3), USS Dextrous (MCM 13) and USS Gladiator (MCM 11).

“For more than three decades, USS Devastator, USS Dextrous, USS Gladiator and USS Sentry have been critical to maritime missions around the globe – defending the freedom of navigation, promoting stability and deterring and defeating efforts by adversaries to harm the innocent,” said Wikoff. “To all, past and present, who have served on [these ships], thank you for standing the watch, being true trailblazers in the fleet and maintaining a constant presence in our area of operations… what a proud legacy you leave in your wake.”

Avenger-class ships were designed as mine sweepers/hunter-killers capable of finding, classifying and destroying moored and bottom mines. The ships used sonar and video systems,

cable cutters and a mine detonating device that could be released and detonated by remote control. They were also capable of conventional sweeping measures. The ships were a fiberglass-sheathed, wooden hull construction.

U.S. 5th Fleet's Task Force 55/Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 50, responsible for surface forces across the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, including patrol craft, independently deploying ships and now, littoral combat ships, is charged with the mine countermeasures mission.

Four littoral combat ships (LCS) are slated to deploy to Bahrain to replace the decommissioned MCM ships that have operated forward in 5th Fleet area of operations for decades.

USS Canberra (LCS 30) was the first Independence-variant LCS to deploy with the mine countermeasures mission package to the region and arrived at NSA Bahrain, May 22. Canberra has an integrated suite of unmanned maritime systems and sensors, and is designed to locate, identify and destroy mines while increasing the ship's standoff distance from a threat.

NAVCENT/C5F is the maritime component commander of U.S. Central Command, whose area of responsibility encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman and parts of the Indian Ocean. This expanse, comprised of 21 countries, includes three critical chokepoints at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait at the southern tip of Yemen.

US, French In-Flight

Refueling Extends Advanced Hawkeye's Reach

This summer, the French Navy and Air Force conducted qualitative aerial refueling testing with French Rafale, MRTT and A400M tankers as a part of a collaborative effort between the E-2/C-2 Airborne Command & Control Systems Program Office (PMA-231) and France's Direction Générale de l'Armement.
From Naval Air Systems Command, Sept. 25, 2025

NAS PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The E-2D Advanced Hawkeye (AHE) achieved a breakthrough in global airpower this summer, successfully refueling mid-air from three French-made tankers – a historic first that dramatically extends the Advanced Hawkeye's reach and for seamless joint operations while providing unprecedented airborne surveillance capabilities.

The French Navy and Air Force conducted qualitative aerial refueling testing with French Rafale, MRTT and A400M tankers as a part of a collaborative effort between the E-2/C-2 Airborne Command & Control Systems Program Office (PMA-231) and France's procurement agency, known as Direction Générale

de l’Armement (DGA).

DGA and the French Navy will continue additional aerial refueling testing and pilot training in France as they replace their E-2Cs beginning in 2028. France became the second international customer of the E-2D AHE in December 2020, procuring three French variant E-2D aircraft from the U.S. Navy.

The E-2D AHE represents a two-generation leap in technology compared to its predecessor, the E-2C Hawkeye. The aircraft features a state-of-the-art radar and upgraded aircraft systems that improve supportability and increase readiness. The centerpiece of the E-2D AHE is the APY-9 radar system, designed specifically to provide enhanced surveillance detection and tracking capability against advanced threat aircraft and cruise missile systems in the overland, littoral and open ocean environments.

With the addition of aerial refueling capabilities, the E-2D remains the most advanced command and control platform in the world. Aerial refueling increases the range and endurance of the platform, and enhances its ability to provide continuous, long-range surveillance and battlefield management.