

Japan, Philippines, and United States Conduct Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity



The U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 85), the Philippine Navy Jose Rizal-class guided-missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal (FF 150), and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Mogami-class frigate JS Noshiro (FFM 3) conduct a multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone, March 28, 2025.

By U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Public Affairs, March 28, 2025

SOUTH CHINA SEA – The Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force and the United States Navy, demonstrating a collective commitment to strengthen regional and international cooperation in support of a free and open

Indo-Pacific, conducted a multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone, March 28, 2025.

This iteration builds upon previous MCAs and our continuing operations together, which strengthens the interoperability of our defense/armed forces doctrines, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

MCAs are conducted in a manner that is consistent with international law and with due regard to the safety and navigational rights and freedoms of all nations. Participating units included the U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 85) and a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, the Philippine Navy Jose Rizal-class guided-missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal (FF 150) and King Air C-90 aircraft, and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Mogami-class frigate JS NOSHIRO (FFM 3).

The U.S., along with our allies and partners, upholds the right to freedom of navigation and overflight and other internationally lawful uses of the sea related to those freedoms.

U.S. Trains First Australian Radiological Control Technicians to Support AUKUS Submarine Force



In a milestone for the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) enhanced trilateral security partnership, four Australian civilian maintenance technicians, pictured with Norfolk Naval Shipyard commander Capt. James Mosman, graduated from the U.S. Navy's Radiological Controls Technician Qualifying School (RCTQS) at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard March 26, 2025.

By Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility, and AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Public Affairs, March 27, 2025

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – In a milestone for the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) enhanced trilateral security partnership, four Australian civilian maintenance technicians from the Australian government's submarine company, ASC, graduated from the U.S. Navy's Radiological Controls Technician Qualifying School (RCTQS) at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard March 26, 2025. The group's successful completion of this specialized training marks a key step in supporting Australia's acquisition of sovereign conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS Pillar I Optimal

Pathway.

The RCTQS provides the specialized training required to uphold the U.S. Navy's nuclear and radiological safety standards and ensure compliance with U.S. regulatory requirements. The rigorous six-month program provides detailed theoretical and practical-skills training with participants demonstrating their knowledge and abilities through comprehensive assessments and examinations. Upon qualification, these technicians are responsible for ensuring adherence to U.S. radiological controls requirements and standards during the operation and maintenance of naval nuclear propulsion plants at nuclear shipyards and maintenance activities. Since its inception, RCTQS has been instrumental in developing personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect Sailors, workers, the public and the environment.

"This is an intense, demanding school that teaches complex theory and application of radiological controls," said RCTQS instructor Donald Sweeney. "The Australian students were well prepared, focused, and committed from day one. They continue to exceed expectations at every step and are well positioned to perform their roles on conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines in their home country. I look forward to hearing about their future success."

The ASC technicians started their training in the fall of 2024 after spending three months training at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PHNSY & IMF) in Hawaii. Over the next three years, approximately ten ASC technicians will enter the RCTQS program.

"Having the Australian maintenance personnel training and working side-by-side with our American trainees builds Australia's technical expertise and readiness to keep the U.S. submarines assigned to Submarine Rotational Force – West ready to operate," said Meganne Atkins, acting director of the AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Office.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) Commander Capt. James "Jip" Mosman emphasized the benefits of the collaboration: "Incorporating the Australian technicians into our training facility has been a great opportunity to build a positive and productive partnership. The intensive training they received lays the groundwork for them to effectively lead and execute radiological operations."

Participating in the training has been an invaluable experience for the Australian cohort.

"The skills and knowledge we have gained as well as the professional relationships we have forged are essential for us to safely and securely steward Australia's conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines," said ASC trainee Steve*. "We are more confident than ever in our ability to meet Australia's regulation requirements and to uphold the responsibility imposed upon us in our duties to maintain the integrity and viability of the program."

More than 130 Australian civilian submarine maintainers are currently training at PHNSY & IMF to maintain nuclear-powered fast-attack submarines. "As the lead maintenance activity for Submarine Rotational Force – West, we are charged with ensuring the Australian personnel are ready to conduct maintenance on U.S. submarines," said Capt. Ryan McCrillis, PHNSY & IMF's commander. "Being able to send RCTQS trainees to Norfolk, Virginia, where the Navy has established this centralized high-quality training facility, ensures that when our submarines start rotating to Western Australia, the right people with the right training are ready to keep them fit to fight."

The AUKUS trilateral security partnership strengthens the participating nations' lethality and warfighting capabilities, enhances readiness by adding capacity and resilience to the submarine industrial base and is essential to securing a free and open Indo-Pacific region through operating more

interoperable high-end allied warships to deter aggression.

The AUKUS I&A Program Office is the U.S. Navy office responsible for executing the trilateral partnership to assist Australia in acquiring conventionally armed, nuclear-powered attack submarines at the earliest possible date while setting the highest nuclear stewardship standards and continuing to maintain the highest nonproliferation standard.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard, one of the nation's four public shipyards, focuses on generating fleet readiness and putting more combat-ready platforms at sea. As part of a broader effort to standardize radiological training across the service, the U.S. Navy established the RCTQS at the shipyard in 1996. Developed with input from multiple naval shipyards, the program has continuously evolved to incorporate the latest safety protocols and technological advancements. To date, RCTQS has trained nearly 7,000 radiological control technicians, playing a vital role in supporting the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility is a field activity of Naval Sea Systems Command and a one-stop regional maintenance center for the U.S. Navy's surface ships and submarines. It is the largest industrial employer in the state of Hawaii, with a combined civilian and military workforce of approximately 6,400. It is the most comprehensive fleet repair and maintenance facility between the U.S. West Coast and the Far East, strategically located in the heart of the Pacific, being about a week's steaming time closer to potential regional contingencies in the Indo-Pacific.

*Per ASC protocols, employee last names are not publicly released

US Navy to Christen Future USNS Billy Frank Jr.



From the U.S. Navy Office of Information, March 27, 2025

MOBILE, Ala.—The U.S. Navy will christen the future USNS Billy Frank Jr. (T-ATS 11) during a ceremony on Saturday, March 29, at 10:00 a.m. CDT at Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama.

The Honorable William Frank III, former chairman of the Nisqually Tribe and son of the ship's namesake will deliver the principal address followed by remarks from Dr. Brett Seidle, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition; Rear Adm. Thomas Anderson, program executive officer, Program Executive Office, Ships; Rear Adm. Mark Haigis, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command; and Michelle Kruger, president of Austal USA.

In a time-honored Navy tradition, Ship Sponsor Peggen Frank will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow. Frank is the executive director of Salmon Defense and daughter-in-law of the ship's namesake.

The ship is named in honor of Korean War veteran and Nisqually tribal member Billy Frank Jr., who received an Albert Schweitzer Prize for humanitarianism; a Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award; and, posthumously, a Presidential Medal of Freedom for his over 30-years of service to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

The Navajo-class ship 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. Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems.

Navy Seeks Ways to Streamline Shipbuilding



March 25, 2025 | By David Vergun, DoD News

The United States projects its presence around the globe through its warships, impacting geopolitical decisions daily while maintaining the American way of life, said Brett A. Seidle, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

Seidle testified today before the Senate Armed Services Committee's subcommittee on seapower regarding the state of conventional surface shipbuilding.

"We have fielded the finest Navy ever assembled in the history

of the world, and I believe that is still true," he said.

The backbone of a strong Navy is its shipbuilding enterprise, Seidle added. Those who build ships are passionate about what they do and their role in supporting national security.

He said there's a need to reinvigorate the nation's industrial might, particularly in shipbuilding. Various challenges hinder more ships from being delivered on time and budget. Costs are rising faster than inflation, and schedules on multiple programs are delayed one to three years.

"We need increased modernization, infrastructure investment, better workforce hiring and retention, and improved supply chain performance," Seidle noted, adding that the assistance of Congress and the Navy's industrial partners will be key to solving these challenges.

Navy Vice Adm. James P. Downey, commander of Naval Sea Systems Command, also testified.

Downey said Navsea is committed to appropriately evaluating cost, schedule and technical requirements to deliver the right capabilities to the warfighters.

He said the command continually reviews its shipbuilding military specifications and is committed to collaborating with industry to simplify and streamline wherever possible. Also, the command is transitioning design plans into digitized formats, thereby reducing the burden on shipbuilders.

Downey said Navsea continues to face mounting challenges, from shifting demographics and workforce shortages to supply chain disruptions that collectively continue to pressurize shipbuilding contracts.

"We need strategic solutions to improve waterfront productivity, and we are evaluating contracting approaches and incentives while also centralizing that data to better access

what levers are needed to improve shipbuilding performance,” the vice admiral said.

Currently, the Navy has 92 ships under contract, with 56 vessels actively in construction. In addition to these prime shipbuilding contracts, Navsea has several shipyards that outsource work. Downey said the process results in a more distributed shipbuilding model with somewhat more complex oversight required.

He said Navsea is committed to helping industry create productive and safe workspaces on the waterfront to attract and retain the skilled workforce needed to build the Navy the nation needs.

“When you visit the shipyards and speak to the workers, whether it’s welders, machinists, front office staff or engineers, you understand what it means to them to build a great ship from the keel up, to start with nothing, and then to deliver a fully capable warship – that’s the product of teamwork in its purest form of execution,” he said.

DON Authorizes Attendance at Sea-Air-Space 2025 for Military, Civilian Personnel



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – Travel for the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Symposium has been authorized for all Department of Navy military speakers, moderators, and panelists, and attendance at the event has been approved for all National Capital Region (local) Navy federal civilian employees and uniformed military personnel.

A memo released by acting Under Secretary of the Navy Terrence Emmert, dated 20 March 2025, says, “I approve the Department of the Navy’s attendance at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Symposium, 6-9 April 2025, at National Harbor, Maryland.”

Sea-Air-Space, the nation’s largest maritime national security symposium, is critical, as it “provides a platform for the professional development of Department of the Navy personnel on the latest developments in naval warfare, as well as an opportunity for Navy engagement with representatives from a broad cross-section of government, industry, academia, and the

international community.” (GENADMIN released 24 MARCH 2025).

The Navy League of the United States, the host for Sea-Air-Space, is offering federal active-duty and civilian employees admission and transportation to the event, as well as one complimentary meal event. The Navy League also offers them discounted parking and meals for purchase at a discounted rate. Local bus services to and from the Gaylord National Harbor is also available for all federal civilian employees and uniformed military. Please see website, www.seaairspace.org for further details. Attendees not opting for these services are responsible for their own commuting costs to the event.

Newly confirmed 79th Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John C. Phelan, will address Sea-Air-Space attendees on his priorities for the Department, including ways to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding, strengthen warfighting culture, and recruit America’s best and brightest. Top speakers also include acting Commandant of the United States Coast Guard Admiral Kevin Lunday, Acting Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jim Kilby, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Eric Smith.

To register for Sea-Air-Space, click [here](#).

Saildrone Deploys New Technology to Operate in GPS- denied Environments



A Saildrone Voyager USV equipped with hardware and software to operate in a GPS-denied environment at sea during IMX 2025. US Navy Photo by Chief Petty Officer Arif Patani.

The Saildrone Voyager platform has been equipped with new hardware and software algorithms, making it capable of operating in areas of GPS jamming and spoofing.

From Saildrone, March 25, 2025

AQABA, Jordan – Saildrone, the world leader in maritime autonomy, has successfully demonstrated operations in the Middle East with new hardware and software capabilities that allow saildrones to operate in a GPS-denied environment.

The US Navy established Task Force 59 in 2021 as part of the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) and US Fifth Fleet to advance the operational employment of unmanned systems and artificial intelligence in fleet operations. Due to recent regional events, GPS jamming and spoofing have hindered unmanned operating systems in the area.

Following intensive development and testing by Saildrone engineers to create a resilient positioning system, Saildrone now has the ability to autonomously operate in GPS-denied or

spoofed maritime environments. Saildrone's innovative solution leverages multiple forms of localization, ensuring seamless operation without relying exclusively on satellite systems, and allowing operations to continue in contested environments. This was notably demonstrated during IMX 2025, where Saildrone was the only unmanned platform able to navigate and provide persistent surveillance in a denied environment.

"Satellite positioning and connectivity can no longer be relied upon in potential future conflicts," said Richard Jenkins, Founder and CEO at Saildrone. "It is essential that our unmanned systems can continue to operate in denied environments, and Saildrone once again leads the way with demonstrated resilience in real operational missions with US Navy."

Saildrone USVs are actively conducting wide-area surveillance in the CENTCOM AOR, enhancing maritime domain awareness and supporting US Navy operations. US forces have been engaged in the region supporting Operation Prosperity Guardian since December 2023, safeguarding commercial shipping and countering regional threats.

Saildrone is now in its fourth year of operations with the US Navy, with USVs on the water in the Middle East, Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific Oceans.

**SECDEF Hegseth Tours General
Atomics Manufacturing**

Facility



Pictured L to R: Senator Roger Wicker (R-Miss), Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, GA-EMS Vice President of Manufacturing Pete Rinaldi, GA-EMS President Scott Forney
Visit Emphasizes Directive to Expand Domestic Defense Industrial Base

From General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems

SAN DIEGO – 24 Mar 2025 – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) hosted U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth at its Manufacturing Center of Excellence in Tupelo, MS at the invitation of U.S. Senator Roger Wicker (R-Miss), the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The visit punctuates Secretary Hegseth's commitment to re-invigorate and expand the nation's defense industrial base to rapidly deploy weapons technologies to support an expanding range of national security initiatives.

During his visit, Secretary Hegseth was briefed on GA-EMS' manufacturing capabilities and expansive portfolio, with a focus on the company's weapons systems including hypersonics, missiles and space-based tracking payloads; all of which

facilitate a comprehensive, layered defense shield for early detection and rapid response in support of Golden Dome for America.

“It was great to host Secretary Hegseth in Mississippi as we engaged with some of our state’s best-in-class defense capabilities, including at General Atomics,” Chairman Wicker said. “The General Atomics facility in Tupelo has a nationally competitive workforce that conducts cutting-edge work in advanced military technologies. As Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I will always showcase Mississippi’s leading contributions for the warfighter and work to expand our state’s growing role in the defense industrial base.”

With over 750,000 square feet of manufacturing facilities located in Tupelo, Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS noted during the tour that the company’s commitment to and investment in research and development, its highly trained workforce, and its production capacity directly aligns with the Secretary of Defense’s stated goal of advancing “made in the U.S.” manufacturing capability to ensure the delivery of highly-capable, cost-effective weapons, specifically missile defense and hypersonics, to support the warfighter and advance America’s national interests. GA-EMS also has manufacturing facilities in Iuka, MS with strategic access to the Tennessee – Tombigbee Waterway and Gulf of America to facilitate the expansion of shipyard capacity to meet shipbuilding demand.

General Atomics was honored to host the Secretary of Defense and remains a committed partner to helping the Department of Defense deliver the most transformational and effective weapons to the warfighter at scale to support U.S. military operations.

Nimitz Carrier Strike Group Departs Bremerton for Regularly Scheduled Indo- Pacific Deployment



Sailors man the rails on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) in the Puget Sound after getting underway for a regularly scheduled Indo-Pacific deployment, March 21, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Japeth Carter)

From Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs, March 24, 2025

The Nimitz Carrier Strike Group (NIMCSG) departed Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton, Washington, for a regularly scheduled deployment to the Western Pacific, March 21. For five decades, the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group has upheld the U.S. Navy's commitment to a forward presence while ensuring maritime security, deterring aggression, and protecting the American way of life. Nimitz, in its 50th year of service, continues

and celebrates its legacy of strengthening alliances and partnerships, demonstrating the power of teamwork and cooperation in maintaining peace and security.

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The strike group's deployment will focus on protecting security, freedom, and prosperity for the United States, our allies and partners, and demonstrating the U.S. Navy's unwavering commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

NIMCSG consists of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17, and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 9.

The embarked air wing consists of nine squadrons flying F/A-18C/E/F Super Hornets, EA-18G Growler, E-2D Hawkeyes, C-2A Greyhounds, and MH-60R/S Sea Hawks; Squadrons are the "Fighting Redcocks" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 22, "Mighty Shrikes" of VFA-94, "Kestrels" of VFA-137, "Blue Diamonds" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 146, "Cougars" of VAQ-139, "Indians" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 6, "Bluetails" of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 121, "BattleCats" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 73, and the "Rawhides" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40.

DESRON 9 consists of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), USS Gridley (DDG 101),

USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108) and USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123).

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic and relevant training to ensure the readiness necessary to execute the U.S. Navy's timeless role across the full spectrum of military operations. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance a shared vision of a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific in which all nations are secure in their sovereignty and free from coercion.

USS Spruance Deploys to U.S. Northern Command Area of Responsibility



From U.S. Northern Command Public Affairs, March 22, 2025

PETERSON SPACE FORCE BASE, Colo. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Spruance (DDG 111) departed Naval Base San Diego to support U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) southern border operations in the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility, March 22.

In support of U.S. Northern Command’s mission to restore territorial integrity at the U.S. southern border, Spruance reinforces the nation’s commitment to border security by enhancing maritime efforts and supporting interagency collaboration. The ship’s operations highlight the Department of Defense and Navy’s dedication to national security priorities, contributing to a coordinated and robust response to combating maritime related terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration.

“USS Spruance’s deployment as part of U.S. Northern Command’s southern border mission brings additional capability and

expands the geography of unique military capabilities working with the Department of Homeland Security,” said Gen. Gregory Guillot, Commander, U.S. Northern Command. “With Spruance off the West Coast and USS Gravelly in the Gulf of America, our maritime presence contributes to the all-domain, coordinated DOD response to the Presidential Executive Order and demonstrates our resolve to achieve operational control of the border.”

Spruance will be accompanied by an embedded U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET). Founded in 1982, Coast Guard LEDETs carry out a variety of maritime interdiction missions, including counter-piracy, military combat operations, alien migration interdiction, military force protection, counter terrorism, homeland security, and humanitarian response.

On Dec. 19, 2024, Spruance returned to Naval Base San Diego following a five-month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operation as part of the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group (ABECSG).

The strike group was ordered to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility to bolster U.S. military force posture in the Middle East, deter regional escalation, degrade Houthi capabilities, defend U.S. forces, and sailed alongside allies and partners to promote security, stability and prosperity. Assigned destroyers of the ABECSG, to include Spruance, were essential to providing a layer of defense to U.S. forces and ensuring the safe passage of commercial vessels and partner nations transiting in international waterways like the Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden.

Spruance brings maritime capabilities to USNORTHCOM AOR in response to Presidential executive orders and a national emergency declaration and clarification of the military’s role in protecting the territorial integrity of the United States.

USNORTHCOM was named the DoD's operational lead for the employment of U.S. military forces to carry out President Trump's southern border Executive Orders. The combatant command continues to fill critical capabilities gaps in support of DHS and CBP.

Thales Delivers the World's 1st Autonomous Mine Hunting System to the Royal Navy



From Thales, March 14, 2025

- Thales has reached a historic milestone by delivering the first end-to-end autonomous maritime mine hunting system to the Royal Navy. This achievement comes under the aegis of the Joint Armament Cooperation Organization (OCCAr) and within the framework of the Franco-British MMCM (Maritime Mine Counter Measures) project.
- This cutting-edge system places the UK and France at the forefront of naval innovation. Utilising cyber-secured autonomous drones equipped with Artificial Intelligence (AI), Thales is revolutionising mine countermeasures operations with unprecedented precision and safety.
- Thales relies on 200 skilled jobs, thereby contributing to the dynamism of the British defence industry.

Marking a technological breakthrough in the conduct of mine countermeasure missions, this system drastically reduces the exposure risk for personnel on board ships while contributing to the safety of maritime routes, the backbone of the global economy.

The Royal Navy will receive its first four systems over the course of the year. Each system includes several integrated pieces of equipment and subsystems, enabling the accomplishment of highly complex missions: an Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV), an advanced towed sonar (TSAM) with a cutting-edge multivision sonar (SAMDIS), a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), and a lightweight operations centre (e-POC), all supported by a secure command and control system.

Thanks to its expertise in sensors, data analysis, and machine learning, Thales has developed a sonar analysis application, Mi-Map, which processes sonar data up to four times faster, allowing even more precise detection and classification of sea

floor mines.

Deployed and operated from a mother ship and coastal bases, the platforms can handle vast volumes of data, enabling operators to expedite the process of identifying and neutralising mines. This innovative system aligns with the British government's ambitious policy to position the UK as a global leader in autonomous maritime technologies.

Minister for Defence Procurement and Industry, Rt Hon Maria Eagle MP, said: "This delivery marks a significant milestone in our mine-hunting capabilities and the autonomous technology will keep Britain and our Royal Navy sailors safer by identifying & removing them from mines. It has also supported hundreds of skilled jobs across UK industry – a clear demonstration that defence is an engine for economic growth."

Rebecca Smith, Member of Parliament for South West Devon, attended the ceremony at the Thales Maritime Autonomy Centre in Plymouth, officially marking the delivery of this cutting-edge technology capable of detecting and neutralising the growing threat of naval mines.

"I welcome today's announcement by Thales regarding the delivery to the Royal Navy of the world's first end-to-end autonomous mine hunting system. I am pleased to see that a city with such a prestigious naval history as Plymouth now finds itself at the heart of a future rich in innovations for the Royal Navy. I hope we continue to see new activities develop, resulting in new local jobs in high-tech maritime areas. In the current climate, it is important to ensure strong military and industrial cooperation across Europe, and I am proud to see Plymouth playing a key role in effectively supporting the relationship between the UK and France", declared Rebecca Smith, MP South West Devon

Phil Siveter, CEO of Thales in the UK, stated, "We are extremely proud to deliver the world's first end-to-end

autonomous mine hunting system to the Royal Navy. With the introduction of AI and advanced sensor technology, this innovation marks a new era in naval defence and underlines our unwavering commitment to providing cutting-edge solutions that enhance the capabilities of our armed forces. The Royal Navy will now have a powerful tool to protect its national interests and maintain safety at sea.”

A historic partner of the Royal Navy for over a century, Thales has long contributed to the advanced technologies that equip its sonar and mine hunting systems. The Franco-British MMCM program highlights Thales’s determination to provide world-class capabilities in these areas. Significant investments made by the UK have maintained over 200 skilled jobs, particularly at Thales sites in Somerset and Plymouth, strengthening the entire ecosystem of suppliers and partners.