

LRASM Performs Flight Test in F-35 Integration Test Series



From Lockheed Martin

NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, Md., March 4, 2025 – Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] and the F-35 Pax River Integrated Test Force (ITF) completed an initial flight test integrating the Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) weapon system onto the F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter jet. This most recent test follows a flight test with LRASM on F-35C in [September 2024](#).

As part of the F-35's Block 4 upgrade, AGM-158 strike systems (Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile and LRASM) are being integrated for external carriage on the F-35, adding more multi-role mission capabilities to the quarterback of the fighting force. The flight marks the beginning of the F-35B AGM-158 strike systems flight sciences test program, a

critical step toward bringing this advanced technology to America's warfighter.

"Integration of the AGM-158 strike systems family delivers increased reach and lethality against heavily protected, strategic targets." said Jon Hill, vice president and general manager, Air Dominance and Strike Weapons at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control.

"The integration of these systems further demonstrates how we continue to add the most advanced capabilities to the F-35 to ensure it will remain a dominant force, owning the skies for decades to come," said Chauncey McIntosh, vice president and general manager of the F-35 program at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics.

With more than 20 years of experience providing highly survivable and accurate cruise missiles, Lockheed Martin is combining F-35 air dominance with the unique capabilities of the JASSM and LRASM weapon systems to enhance combat readiness. More than 1,100 F-35s are currently operational around the globe, and the fleet has surpassed 983,400+ flight hours.

President Says Military Recruiting Up, So Too Will Be American Shipbuilding, 'Golden Dome'

March 5, 2025 | By C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

During his first address to a joint session of Congress, March 4, 2025, President Donald J. Trump said that the changes he's made since his inauguration in January have enhanced recruiting within the U.S. military in ways that haven't been seen in years.

On his first day in office, the president signed an executive order ending diversity, equity and inclusion programs across the federal government. Less than a week later, newly sworn-in Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth drafted a message to the force that mirrored the president's words, saying he would rebuild the U.S. military with a focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards and readiness.

"Our service members won't be activists and ideologues," Trump said. "They will be fighters and warriors. They will fight for our country."

The president said the result of his executive order has filtered down into the armed forces, putting a new focus on merit and spurring renewed interest in serving.

"I am pleased to report that in January, the U.S. Army had its single best recruiting month in 15 years and that all armed services are having among the best recruiting results ever in the history of our services," Trump said. "What a tremendous turnaround. It's really a beautiful thing to see people love our country again ... they love our country, and they love being in our military again."

The president also said the United States will pursue a "Golden Dome," similar to Israel's own "Iron Dome" defense system, which is designed to protect against inbound missile attacks.

"My focus is on building the most powerful military of the future," Trump said. "As a first step, I'm asking Congress to fund a state-of-the-art, 'Golden Dome' missile defense shield to protect our homeland – all made in the USA."

The president said that President Ronald Reagan had wanted to build a similar system during his term, but the technology wasn't available at the time to bring that project to fruition. But now, he said, that technology exists.

"Israel has it, other places have it, and the United States should have it, too," he said. "This is a very dangerous world. We should have it. We want to be protected. And we're going to protect our citizens like never before."

Trump also promised an expansion of American shipbuilding in order to support both the U.S. military and the commercial sector. American shipbuilding is at a low point today, but the president promised new efforts to increase America's shipbuilding efforts.

"We are also going to resurrect the American shipbuilding industry, including commercial shipbuilding and military shipbuilding," Trump said. "I am announcing tonight that we will create a new Office of Shipbuilding in the White House and offer special tax incentives to bring this industry home to America, where it belongs."

The president said the U.S. once had a great domestic shipbuilding industry, which has largely died down now. That will change, he promised.

"We used to make so many ships. We don't make them anymore, very much," he said. "But we're going to make them very fast, very soon."

The president also said he planned to take action to expand domestic production of rare earth elements, which are critical to U.S. defense.

"Later this week, I will also take historic action to dramatically expand production of critical minerals and rare earths here in the USA," he said.

Rare earth permanent magnets, for instance, are not only essential components in a range of defense capabilities, including the F-35 Lightning II aircraft, Virginia and Columbia class submarines and unmanned aerial vehicles, but are also a critical part of commercial applications in the United States. They are also used to generate electricity for electronic systems in aircraft and focus microwave energy in radar systems.

Finally, Trump said that the mastermind behind the terrorist attack at Abbey Gate during the August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan has been captured. Some 13 American service members were killed during that attack.

“I am pleased to announce that we have just apprehended the top terrorist responsible for that atrocity, and he is right now on his way here to face the swift sword of American justice,” Trump said.

Navy Undersea Warfare Units Start Exercise Black Widow 2025



JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM (March 3, 2025) – The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Montana (SSN 794) gets underway from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in preparation for exercise Black Widow 2025, March 3, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Scott Barnes)

From Cmdr. Rick Moore, March 5, 2025

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – U.S. Navy submarines, ships and aircraft commenced exercise Black Widow 2025 in the Hawaii Operating Area, March 4, 2025. Black Widow is the premier tactical development exercise for U.S. Navy undersea warfare (USW) forces, integrating submarines, surface ships, and aircraft into a team tasked to track and engage a simulated adversary submarine in a realistic and challenging training environment.

In addition to providing live training to USW operators, exercise Black Widow incorporates real-world lessons learned into the tactical development and training of units operating under a theater undersea warfare (TUSW) construct. During Black Widow 2025, Commander, Task Force (CTF) 34 will serve as

the TUSW commander, responsible for exercising command and control over exercise units and validating new tactics, techniques and procedures introduced by the Undersea Warfighting Development Center.

“The Black Widow exercise series is our annual pinnacle event to deliver high-end integrated theater undersea warfare tactical development and combat readiness. It’s incredibly valuable to work across domains to deliver cutting edge capabilities that make us more capable and more lethal,” said Rear Adm. Rick Seif, commander of the Pacific Submarine Force and CTF 34. “Conducting Black Widow in the Indo-Pacific allows our forces to train like we fight and ensure we are postured to deter, and if necessary defeat, any potential adversary.”

Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 23 will embark aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) as the scene of action commander for the exercise. In this role, DESRON 23 will coordinate the localized multi-domain search and tracking of a submarine during scenarios that will grow increasingly more complex over the course of the exercise.

“Undersea warfare is a team sport, and we want our surface and aviation teammates to be ready to seamlessly operate shoulder-to-shoulder with our undersea force when called upon,” said Capt. Ryan Leary, commodore, DESRON 23. “Participation in Black Widow 2025 reinforces the proficiency of our operators through realistic exercises with live submarines, best posturing our force to deter aggression throughout the Indo-Pacific.”

Other units participating in this year’s exercise are the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112), the Virginia-class fast-attack submarines USS Mississippi (SSN 782) and USS Montana (SSN 794), P-8A Poseidon aircraft from Patrol Squadron (VP) 4, and an MH-60R Sea Hawk from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 37,

embarked aboard Michael Murphy.

Black Widow and other USW exercises and operations emphasize the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region and the submarine force's critical role in enabling all-domain access for the joint force. USW is a team effort that requires frequent realistic training among air, surface and undersea forces to maintain a high level of readiness and interoperability.

Exercise Black Widow 2023 took place in the Hawaii Operating Area. The exercise allows Navy units to continue to develop warfighting skills while working through the unique environmental challenges resident within the Indo-Pacific region. Previous iterations of this exercise have taken place in the Atlantic Ocean.

The Pacific Submarine Force provides strategic deterrence, anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface warfare; precision land strike; intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and early warning; and special warfare capabilities around the globe.

Navy Delivers New Crash and Salvage Cranes, Strengthening Fleet Readiness



A new Crash and Salvage Crane (CSC) is delivered Feb. 27 to Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) in Pensacola, Fla. (U.S. Navy photo)

From Naval Air Systems Command, March 3, 2025

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy’s Common Aviation Support Equipment program office (PMA-260) successfully delivered the first of 27 replacement Crash and Salvage Cranes (CSC) to Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) in Pensacola, Florida.

PMA-260 coordinated the development, acquisition and fielding with support from Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD) Lakehurst, Fleet Readiness Center Aviation Support Equipment (FRC ASE), NAVAIR Technical Data & Engineering Services Command (NATEC) and Allied Systems Company.

“The delivery of the new CSCs to the fleet enhances readiness and ensures safety of our sailors deployed on aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships around the world,” said Capt. Matthew Wilcox, PMA-260 program manager.

CSCs are used for lifting and moving disabled aircraft on aircraft carriers and landing helicopter dock ship flight

decks. Flight operations are not allowed without these critical pieces of equipment.

The new CSCs, designed by industry partner Allied Systems Company, replaces the legacy carrier and amphibious assault crash cranes. The legacy CSCs, designed decades ago, exceeded their anticipated life expectancy and became increasingly difficult to maintain due to obsolescence issues. The new variants correct those deficiencies and are much easier to maintain.

The CSC has two variants – the carrier CSC (CCSC) and the amphibious CSC (ACSC). The CCSC has a heavier counterweight than the ACSC, and the lighter ACSC has outriggers within the width of the crane that increase its stability. The similar designs, along with the new diesel hydraulic system and user friendly human interface machine.

PMA-260 is responsible for the procurement, development and fielding of Common Ground Support equipment and Automatic Test Equipment. Additionally, this command serves as the lead manager of the Aircraft Maintenance and Material Readiness List (AMMRL), Metrology and Calibration (METCAL) and Mobile Facilities programs in support of the Naval Aviation Enterprise.

Chief of Naval Air Training Announces Covered Aircraft Refueling Sites



T-45 Goshawk assigned to Training Wing ONE refuels in the covered hot pit at NAS Meridian. [\(Photo By Petty Officer 2nd Class Molly Crawford \)](#)

From Chief of Naval Air Training, Feb. 28, 2025

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – The Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA) is excited to announce the official completion of the first aircraft protective enclosures (APEs) over refueling sites known as ‘hot pits’ at two training wings in the Naval Air Training Command (NATRACOM).

The first installations of APEs over hot pits took place at Training Wing ONE (TW-1) at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian and Training Wing TWO (TW-2) at NAS Kingsville. TW-2 held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, February 28 to highlight the advances.

A hot pit refueling is when an aircraft is refueled immediately after landing, while the aircraft keeps one engine

running. This form of refueling reduces response time and keeps aircraft mission ready. This technology enhances the operational efficiency and safety of our fleet while providing a modernized infrastructure for training operations.

“We are absolutely thrilled to bring these new capabilities to these wings and to the rest of the Naval Air Training Command,” said Rear Admiral Brophy, Chief of Naval Air Training. “APEs over refueling pits are a game-changer in the way we conduct operations. Temperatures in the summer for unprotected aircraft can become excessive and the APEs will enhance overall safety while we train the future of naval aviation.”

The new aircraft protection enclosures over the refueling pits ensure the longevity and safety of military aircraft and its aviators by offering protection from environmental elements during critical training phases.

These advancements are a clear demonstration of CNATRA’s continued commitment to excellence in aviation training, readiness and safety. The improvements will directly benefit the fleet’s performance and prepare the next generation of naval aviators for success. With the successful completion of the project at two training wings, the project continues with the intent to cover all hot pits at every training wing under CNATRA.

The mission of Naval Air Training Command is to train, mentor, and deliver the highest quality Naval Aviators that win in competition, crisis, and conflict. Headquartered on board NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, CNATRA leads the NATRACOM composed of five training air wings located on Naval Air Stations in Florida, Mississippi and Texas. The wings are home to

Undersea Warriors: NATO Demos Collaboration During Exercise Dynamic Manta 25

By Allied Maritime Command, March 3, 2025

CATANIA, Italy – Six Allied submarines are planning to taking part in NATO's most advanced submarine warfare exercise off the coast of Italy between 28 February and 14 March 25. Exercise Dynamic Manta 25 brings surface ships, submarines, aircraft and thousands of personnel together in the Mediterranean Sea, where they will train, demonstrate and refine Allied capabilities in this particularly demanding type of warfare.

Dynamic Manta builds on the success of previous iterations, incorporating new tactics, technologies and operational insights, ensuring NATO's forces remain at the forefront of undersea warfare. The exercise prepares NATO submarine crews to respond and adapt to any type of threat below the surface.

Hosted by Italy, the exercise was planned by NATO Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM) based in Northwood, UK. Commander Submarines NATO, US Navy Rear Admiral Bret Grabbe, said this is the largest and most complex submarine exercise to take place in the Mediterranean Sea.

“Exercises like Dynamic Manta help NATO maintain the edge when it comes to anti-submarine warfare,” he said. “By practising coordinated operations against both conventional and advanced undersea threats, NATO continues to demonstrate its commitment to safeguarding the strategic waterways that connect member states.”

For only the third time since the exercise began in 2013, submarine assets will also work with Allied maritime Special Operations Forces (SOF), consolidating interoperability with this critical asset. The capability of Allied SOF teams to cooperate with Allied submarines from different nations represents a force multiplier for NATO. For this iteration of the exercise, a Greek SOF team will make a landing from an Italian submarine to conduct its mission.

The aim of Dynamic Manta is to provide all participants with complex and challenging warfare training to enhance interoperability and proficiency in anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare skills. Each participating unit will have the opportunity to conduct a variety of submarine warfare operations. The submarines will take turns hunting and being hunted, closely coordinating their efforts with the air and surface participants.

The exercise plan to involve units, sailors and airmen from nine NATO nations.

The submarines belong to the navies of France, Greece, Italy, Türkiye and the United States, with NATO Submarine Command (COMSUBNATO) exercising operational control on several, as required by the exercise scenario.

Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) from Canada, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States are also planning to take part, alongside Maritime Patrol Helicopters (MPH) from France, Italy and the US, supported by surface ships from Greece, Italy, Spain, Türkiye and the US.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) is taking part, commanded by Turkish Navy Rear Admiral H. Ilker Avcı.

As the host nation, Italy is providing support in Catania and Augusta Harbors, the naval helicopter base in Catania, Naval Air Station Sigonella, as well as support from Augusta Naval Base.

Representing Italy during the exercise as the host nation guest is Rear Adm. Alberto Tarabotto, Commanding Officer, 4th Naval Division.

There are two sister ASW training events as part of NATO's continuous submarine warfare training and cooperation. Exercise Dynamic Mongoose which takes place in the cold waters of the North Atlantic, and Playbook Merlin which takes place in the shallow waters of the Baltic Sea.

Dynamic Manta is one of nearly a dozen MARCOM-led maritime exercises held each year in addition to numerous national exercises, which increase readiness in defense of the Alliance.

NSW Conducts Training with Lithuanian and German special operations forces



From Lt.j.g Martin Carey, Feb. 28, 2025

Strengthening NATO alliances, U.S. East Coast-based Naval Special Warfare Operators (SEALs) and U.S. Special Warfare Combat Crewmen (SWCC) recently conducted a two-week training exercise with Lithuanian and German Special Operations Forces.

The exercise, which took place in the Baltic region, aimed to increase warfighting readiness and allied lethality through a series of challenging maritime operations, small boat tactics, and low-light weapons live-fire drills. The training event was designed to foster greater cooperation and interoperability between the participating nations, maintaining a strategic advantage in the region.

“Exercises like this are crucial to ensuring we can operate seamlessly together to fight and win wars,” said CAPT V. Scott King, Commodore of Naval Special Warfare Group TWO. “By training alongside our Lithuanian and German counterparts,

we're not only enhancing our own warfighting readiness but also strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation that underpin our alliance."

Allied training exercises like this are vital to bolstering the collective defense capabilities of NATO nations and builds a stronger, more lethal alliance to address threats in the area.

Throughout the exercise, the units focused on developing and enhancing their skills in maritime special operations, as well as advanced marksmanship and close quarters combat techniques. The special operations forces refined their ability to launch, operate and recover small raiding crafts from the well decks of the Combatant Craft Medium, one of Naval Special Warfare's most versatile boats. The event culminated with a full-mission profile, bringing together all aspects of the training into a real-world scenario that showcased the special operations forces' readiness in the maritime domain.

"The training we conducted was both realistic and challenging," said the senior Naval Special Warfare Operator on site. "We were able to learn from each other and share best practices. This type of cooperation is essential to achieving shared goals and maintaining elite levels of lethality."

Naval Special Warfare Group TWO produces, supports, and deploys the world's premier maritime special operations forces to conduct full-spectrum operations and integrated deterrence in support of U.S. national objectives. For more information, visit <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/>

Phelan to Focus on Navy Recruiting, Shipbuilding



Sen. Roger Wicker, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, met with Secretary of the Navy nominee John Phelan in January. *Photo credit: Sen. Wicker's office.*

WASHINGTON – Businessman John Phelan, nominated by President Trump to be secretary of the Navy, appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Feb. 27 and said he wants to focus on Navy recruitment and training, get shipbuilding back on track and set up an “accountable warfighting culture” is approved.

Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi), chairman of the committee, said Phelan had a “distinguished career in the private sector” although he has no Navy experience, and said “his background showcases his ability to manage complex business deals to drive efficiency and to deliver results. Our Navy will need someone with all three of those skills and more to get our Navy back on the right track.”

“I understand why some question why a businessman who did not wear the uniform should lead the Navy,” Phelan said, pledging to “step outside the status quo and take decisive action with a results-oriented approach.”

Wicker's first question to Phelan was what he would do to

improve Navy recruiting. The service met its goals last year, he said, but “only by lowering standards. Last year, nearly 20% of Navy recruits were considered category IV – they tested below the 30th percentile on the military aptitude test.”

Phelan said some recruiting numbers have gone up, “which is a reflection of the president’s victory and return to the warfighting ethos,” and said he would take advantage of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Navy to highlight the benefits of life in the service.

He also said the Navy should “do better from a digital perspective outreach” to young people, and take a page from the Marine Corps, which has worked with the same advertising company for three decades to build its brand.

Wicker said if Congress “threw a zillion dollars at the Navy” it still couldn’t build enough ships because the industrial base doesn’t have enough workers.

Phelan said he would visit the shipyards and spread best practices, including borrowing some from international shipyards, and also “telegraph demand” for shipbuilding to incentivize the private sector to invest in shipbuilding.

Echoing Wicker’s comment that some shipyard salaries are so low a welder could get the same salary working at a convenience store, Phelan said, “you can’t have those kinds of wage differentials for those kinds of jobs.”

Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) asked about Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth’s recent announcement that the Pentagon should be ready to cut 8% from the defense budget in each of the next five years in addition to laying off thousands of defense workers. Reed said such “disruptions” could jeopardize any gains the shipbuilders might make in recruiting workers.

Phelan said he is “not privy” to the details of the cuts, but

“I do think the shipbuilding force is critical. If confirmed, will set with the secretary of defense and president and very quickly talk about that.”

Later, he said he understood the potential cuts to be “a planning tool – where would we cut if we need to cut?” that would move resources from nonlethal to more lethal activities.

“Do I view the construction of submarines and ships as lethal? The answer is yes, because we need to have these ships and we need to get them out there quickly,” he said.

Austal USA Hosts Acting Secretary of the Navy



Dr. Brett Seidle – VIP Tour

From Austal USA

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA welcomed the Honorable Dr. Brett Seidle, acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research Development and Acquisition (ASN RDA) at the company's Mobile, Ala. shipyard yesterday. Dr. Seidle, joined by Rear Admiral Tom Anderson, Program Executive Officer Ships, toured the shipyard's facility and discussed the company's growing diversity of design and shipbuilding contracts with members of Austal USA's senior leadership team. During his tour, Dr. Seidle witnessed Austal USA's talented workforce in action.

This was Dr. Seidle's first visit to Austal USA, providing him a firsthand look at the company's state-of-the-art ship manufacturing facility, including separate steel and aluminum assembly lines. During the tour, Dr. Seidle saw ten vessels under construction as well as aircraft elevators for U.S. Navy Ford-class aircraft carriers (CVN 80 and 81). At Austal USA's vessel completion yard, Dr. Seidle saw the future USS Pierre (LCS 38), the final ship of the class, scheduled for delivery in May.

"We were honored to exhibit our talented workforce and modern facilities to Dr. Seidle and Admiral Anderson," stated Austal USA President Michelle Kruger. "We're proud of our success and diverse portfolio of work, and we look forward to continuing to be a key component of the Nation's shipbuilding industrial base."

Austal USA, celebrating 25 years in Mobile, has delivered 32 ships to the Navy since 2009 and is constructing ships from six different programs. The company also has modules in production for both the Virginia and Columbia-class submarine programs. In addition to Austal USA's nearly one million square feet of existing enclosed manufacturing space, a new final assembly building to manufacture Navy and Coast Guard surface ships, and a dedicated submarine module production facility are both under construction. When complete they will

add over 600,000 square feet of indoor production area supporting 2,000 new jobs to the workforce.

U.S. Navy awards GE Aerospace Performance Based Logistics Contract for Avionics

From GE Aerospace, Feb. 24, 2025

CINCINNATI – February 24, 2025 – GE Aerospace has been awarded a contract to provide performance-based logistics (PBL) avionics support for the F/A-18, AV-8B and AH1-Z aircraft globally.

“Supporting the safety and operations of our armed forces is one of the most important things we do,” commented Matt Burns, general manager of Avionics Systems for GE Aerospace. “This five-year contract builds on a series of previous PBL contracts with our team supporting 30 years of 99% availability for the U.S. Navy.”

Under the contract, GE Aerospace will support stores management systems used in mission critical operations for the U.S. Navy fleets of F/A-18, AV-8B and AH1-Z aircraft globally. In addition to the supply, warehousing, and logistics management of the spares, GE Aerospace provides depot level repair of aircraft units and subassemblies and fleet support at major naval bases providing training and technical support.

GE Aerospace’s stores management systems provide scalable architectures with redundant centralized or distributed stores

management while maintaining standard stores station interfaces and safety critical release control. Providing the tactical and operational ability to further protect troops while accomplishing their missions, GE Aerospace has delivered more than 5000 stores management systems to numerous fourth and fifth generation fixed-wing and rotary-wing military aircraft operators worldwide.