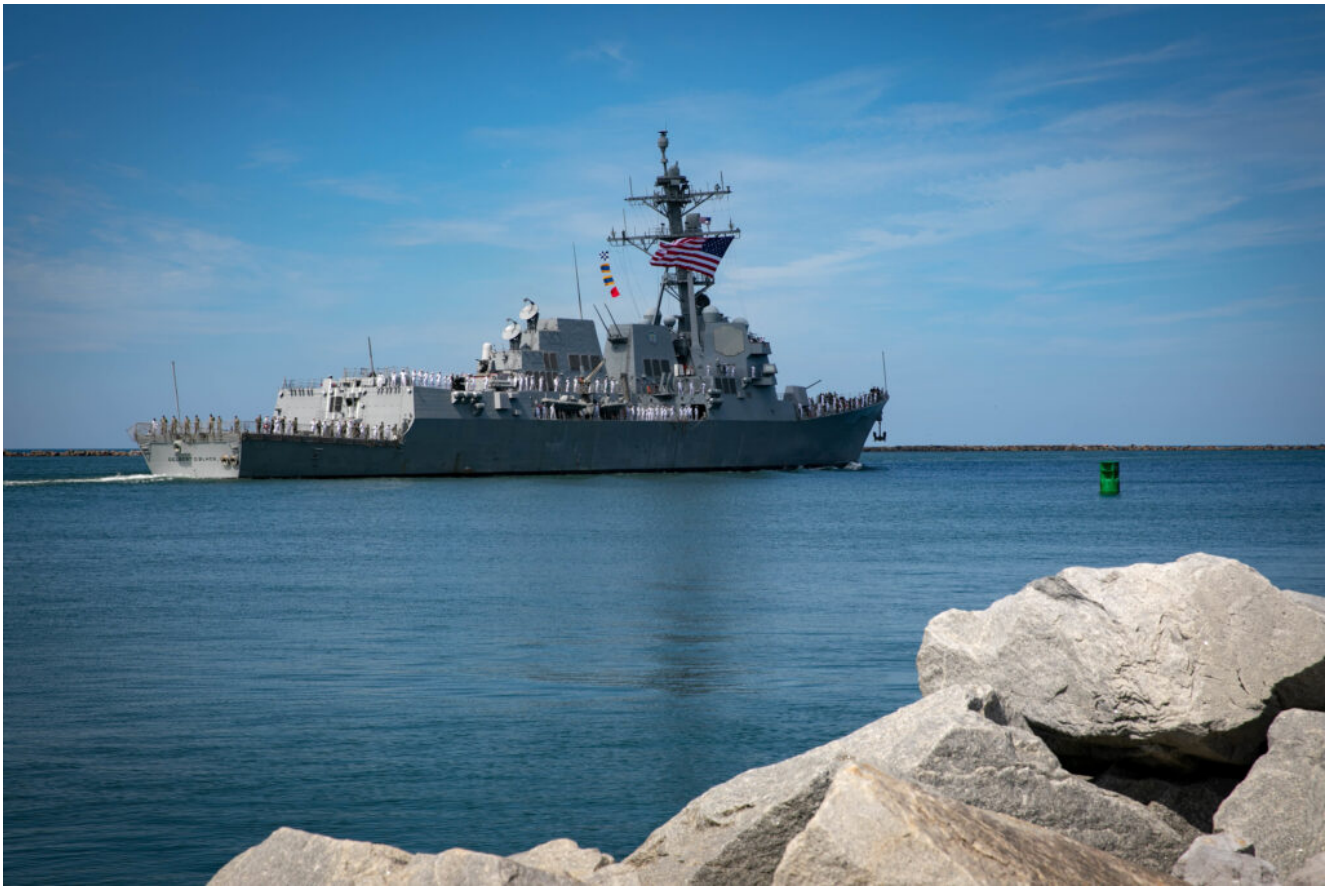
USS Delbert D. Black Under Way for First Deployment



The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) departs Naval Station Mayport for deployment, Aug 2. USS Delbert D. Black is homeported at Naval Station Mayport. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Juel Foster*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) departed Naval Station Mayport Aug. 2 on the ship's inaugural deployment, U.S. 2nd Fleet said Aug. 4.

The ship completed all training phases of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan with Destroyer Squadron 26 and Carrier Strike Group 10.

"Our ship and crew have trained for this moment for more than four years," said Cmdr. Mark Gallagher, commanding officer, Delbert D. Black. "We are prepared for any mission directed to

us. The crew and ship are the finest the Navy has to offer, and I am proud to sail with each one of these fine men and women."

Commissioned in September 2020, the ship's crew is comprised of more than 50 officers and nearly 300 enlisted Sailors.

Delbert D. Black is the 68th Arleigh Burke-Class guided-missile destroyer delivered to the Navy and the first to bear its name. The ship honors the first master chief petty officer of the Navy. Black is known for initiating the master chief program, ensuring enlisted leadership was represented Navy-wide.

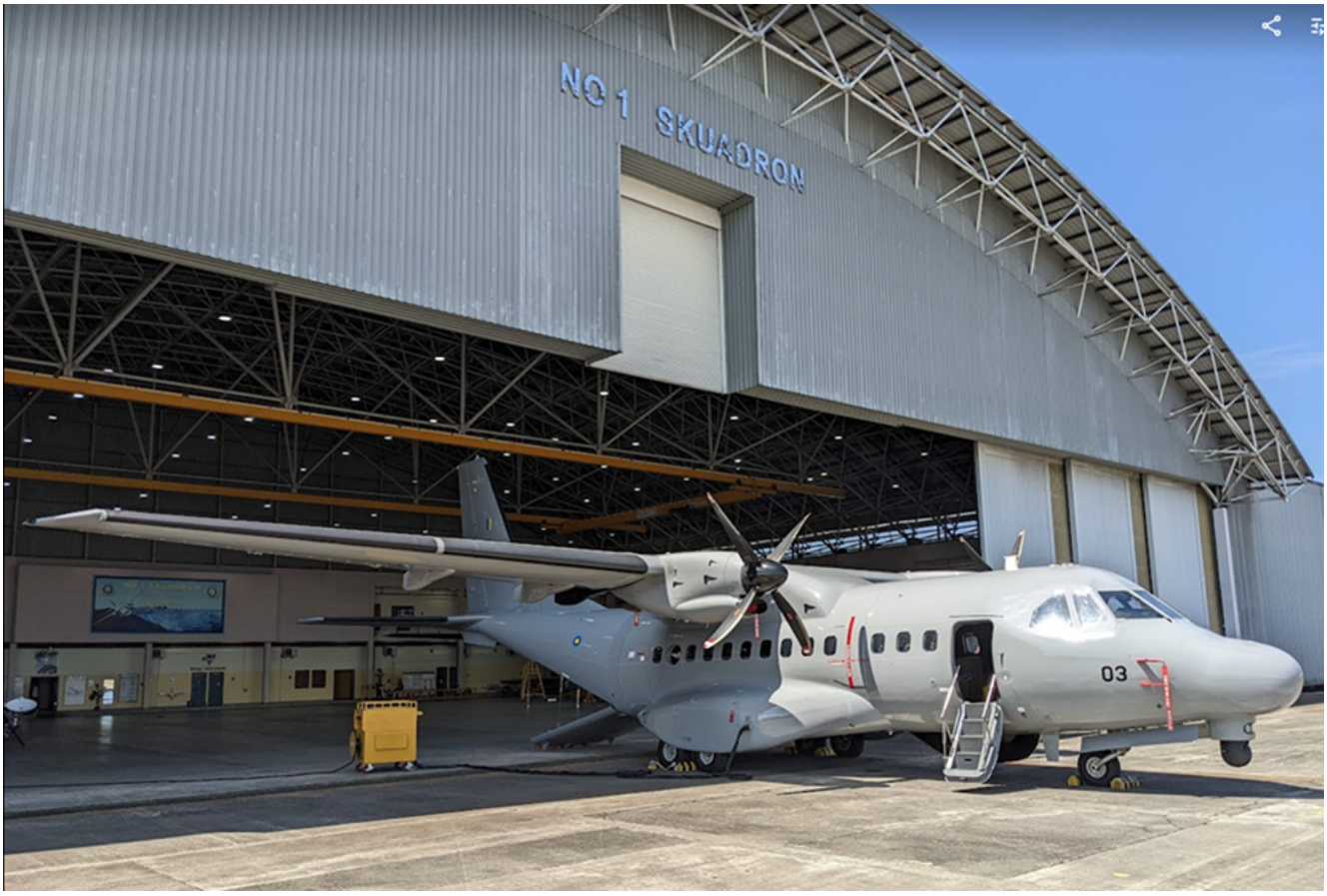
"It is an honor and a privilege to take this ship and crew on its maiden deployment," said Delbert D. Black Command Master Chief Christopher Bartley. "We are following in the footsteps of our trailblazing namesake, making Del and Ima Black proud."

Ima Black, Black's widow and a former Sailor, serves as the ship's sponsor. She served during World War II in the Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service).

A detachment from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 48 will remain embarked aboard Delbert D. Black.

Delbert D. Black provides the nation multiple warfighting capabilities as one of the Navy's newest destroyers that maintains maritime stability and security to ensure access, deter aggression, and defend U.S., allied and partner interests as part of the George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group.

U.S. Navy Delivers First Upgraded CN-235 Aircraft to RMAF



The U.S. Navy has delivered the first of three Royal Malaysian Air Force CN-235 military transport aircraft converted to a maritime patrol platform. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Navy has delivered the first of three Royal Malaysian Air Force CN-235 military transport aircraft converted to a maritime patrol platform, the Naval Air Systems Command said Aug. 3. This comes just three and a half years after the U.S. signed a letter of offer and acceptance to begin increasing the capability and interoperability of U.S. and Malaysian forces.

The effort was facilitated by the U.S. Navy's Building Partner Capacity program, aligned with the U.S. government's Maritime Security Initiative, which is intended to assist the Malaysian

government in increasing maritime security and maritime domain awareness within the Malaysian Exclusive Economic Zone.

The project to integrate an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance upgrade into the aircraft was undertaken by the Malaysian air force in cooperation with the Naval Air Systems Command's Security Cooperation Office and Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division's AIRWorks.

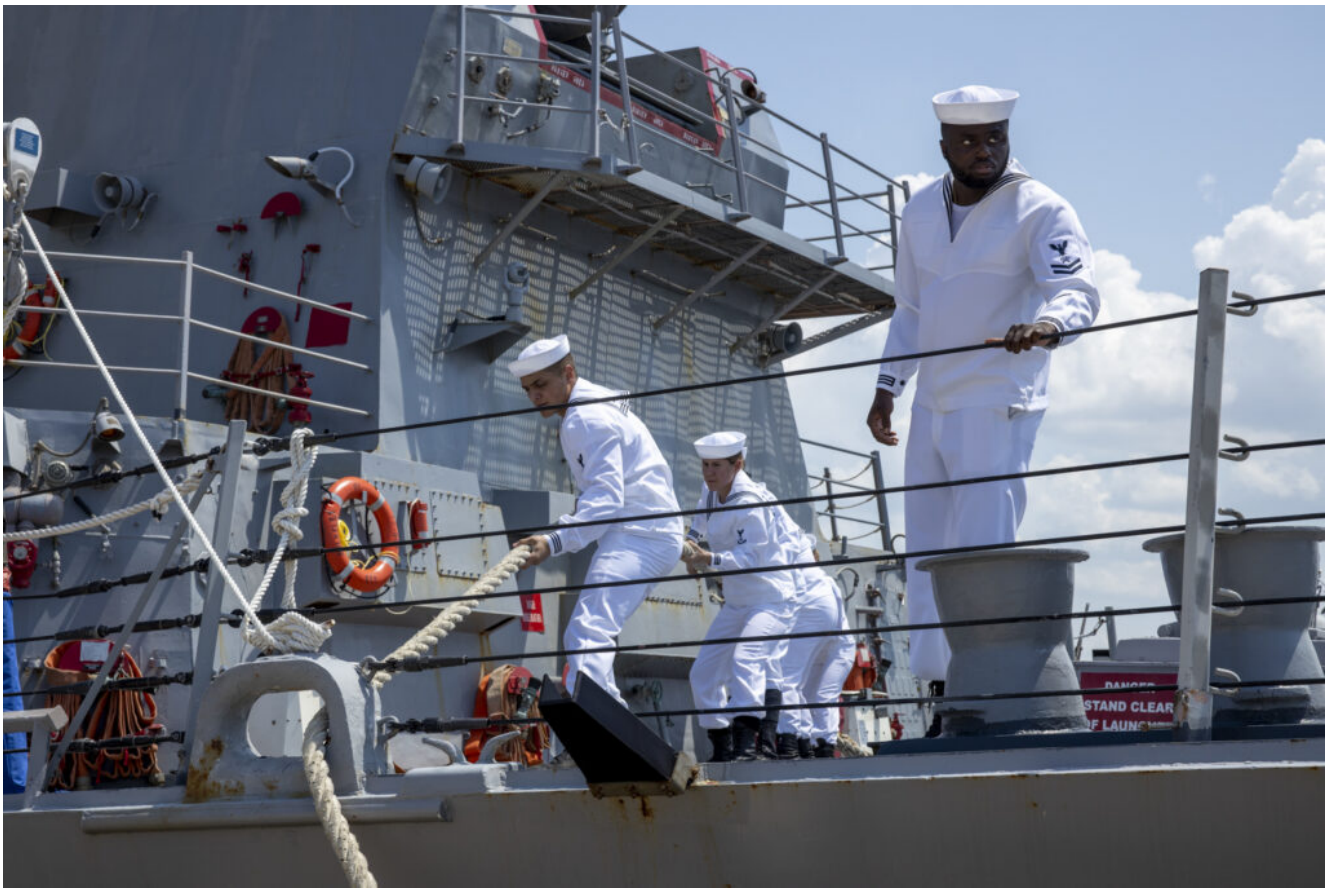
"Our collective international team has overcome tremendous challenges during the recent worldwide pandemic to deliver this capability. We are excited to deliver this first aircraft," said Gerald Swift, who leads AIRWorks, NAWCAD's office focused on rapidly and effectively delivering warfighter capability to meet immediate and emergent warfighter needs.

The upgrade includes a maritime surveillance mission suite, maritime surveillance radar, an electro-optical infrared turret, line-of-sight datalink and a roll-on/roll-off mission system operator station. Compatible mobile and fixed ground stations are also being delivered to increase the Malaysian air force's ISR capability.

The project's CN-235s were flown to Indonesia for completion and testing in Sept. 2020 amid COVID-19 restrictions and first flight took place in October 2021. Work on the two remaining CN-235 aircraft and multiple ground stations continues and is expected to be completed in 2022.

USS Bulkeley Departs Norfolk

for Homeport Shift to Rota



Sailors aboard the USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) cast off lines as they depart Naval Station Norfolk Aug. 4 for the ship's scheduled homeport shift to Rota, Spain, as part of the U.S. Navy's long-range plan to gradually rotate the Rota-based destroyers. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Theodore Green*

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK – The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) departed Naval Station Norfolk Aug. 4, commencing the ship's scheduled homeport shift to Rota, Spain, as part of the U.S. Navy's long-range plan to gradually rotate the Rota-based destroyers, U.S. Fleet Forces Command said Aug. 4.

Bulkeley will join destroyers USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117) and Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79 as Forward Deployed Naval Force-Europe (FDNF-E) assets stationed in Rota.

“The Bulkeley crew has been working extremely hard the past year to prepare to join our forward deployed forces in Rota and work with our partners and allies in the region,” said Capt. Mac Harkin, commanding officer, USS Bulkeley. “We are excited to join our sister ship and aviation units already at the tip of the spear, to assure our allies, respond to threats as required and ensure support to global operations.”

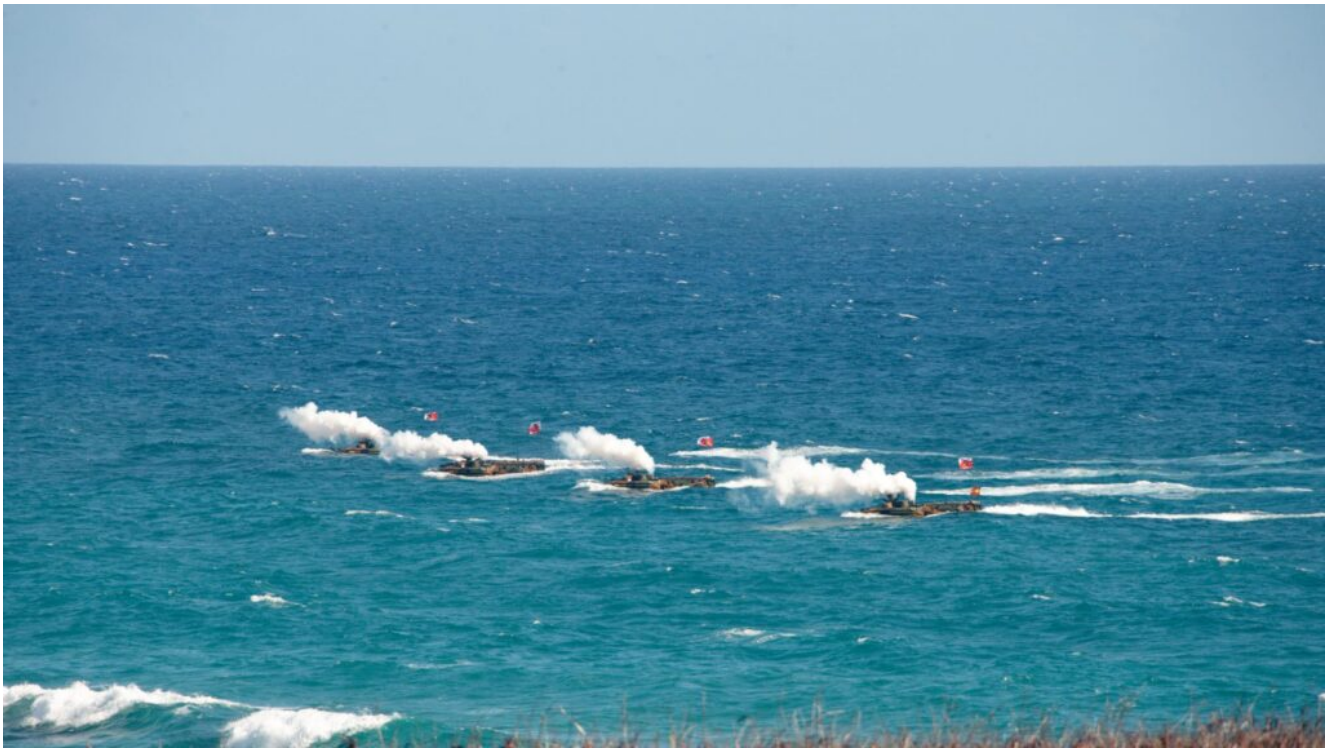
U.S. Navy ships assigned to FDNF-E demonstrate national resolve, strengthen alliances, dissuade potential adversaries and enhance the ability to respond quickly to contingencies. Rota offers a world-class port facility that provides an excellent location for multi-mission Aegis ships to support NATO and U.S. missions, exercises and engagements.

“Bulkeley is a highly capable, multi-warfare platform that is joining a substantial force of FDNF-E assets already in place,” said Harkin. “When combined with our partners and allies, we are collectively ready to perform a myriad of tasks, including NATO ballistic missile defense, the full spectrum of maritime security operations, bi-lateral and multi-lateral training exercises, and NATO operations and deployments.”

The rotation of the FDNF-E ships serves to keep these multi-mission capable ships forward deployed to better support maritime security operations in the region as well as Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) of U.S. and allied units and personnel.

With Bulkeley’s arrival, along with Paul Ignatius’ arrival earlier this year, USS Ross (DDG 71) and USS Porter (DDG 78) will shift homeports from Rota to Norfolk in the coming months, marking the final scheduled homeport shifts in the long-planned FDNF-E rotation.

Ready-to-Fight Force Conducts Amphibious Assault During RIMPAC 2022



Republic of Korea Marine Corps Amphibious Assault Vehicles cover and conceal during an amphibious raid for a multinational littoral operations exercise as part of Rim of the Pacific 2022, Aug. 1. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Sgt. Melanye Martinez*

MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII – With the theme of "Capable Adaptive Partners," the 2022 Rim of the Pacific exercise has featured a wide range of capabilities, projecting the inherent flexibility of maritime forces and helping to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific, culminating with an amphibious assault in Hawaii.

During the exercise, 26 nations, 38 surface ships, four submarines, nine national land forces, more than 30 unmanned

systems, approximately 170 aircraft and more than 25,000 personnel trained together while operating in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California, June 29 to Aug. 4.

Following weeks of workups, and then intensive training together when the exercise began, RIMPAC amphibious forces conducted a simulated assault on a beach and airfield at Marine Corps Base Hawaii at Kaneohe Bay on the island of Oahu in Hawaii.

RIMPAC has been led by the commander of U.S. 3rd Fleet, Vice Adm. Michael Boyle. Republic of Korea navy Rear Adm. Sangmin An served as the commander of Combined Task Force 176, RIMPAC's amphibious task force, aboard his flagship, amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2). His deputy was U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Michael Baze, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 3.

In the scenario, a fictional armed radical organization known as Draco has captured a beach and airfield and adjacent areas from a fictional friendly nation called Orion. The amphibious task force employed a multi-domain assault to capture it back.

By definition, an amphibious assault involves the establishment of a landing force on a hostile or potentially hostile shore. An amphibious force consists of an amphibious task force and a landing force. Both partner and partner nations and allies provide the forces that are organized equipped and trained for these specialty mission sets.

According to Col. Ricardo Miagany, assistant chief of staff for operations with Marine Forces Pacific, the ship-to-shore phase showcases multilateral interoperability approach.

"A flotilla of coalition naval vessels is supporting this amphibious assault. Each ship possesses unique capabilities that will be harnessed to dislodge the occupying forces," he said.

In addition to Essex, the assault force included the ROKN landing helicopter platform ROKS Marado (LPH-6112); the Royal Australian Navy landing helicopter dock HMAS Canberra (L02); and the Mexican navy landing ship tank ARM Usumacinta (A412), the ex-USS Frederick (LST-1184).

“Each ship possesses unique capabilities that will be harnessed to dislodge the occupying forces. Today’s training highlights some of the capabilities of the forces of the amphibious partners in the region as we operate together for a collection of naval platforms and functioning as one joint naval task force,” said Miagany.

USMC F/A-18 Hornets and AH-1Z and UH-1 aircraft provided fire support, and USMC CH-53E Super Stallions and MV-22 Ospreys delivered troops to the landing zone, USAF A-10 Thunderbolt IIs, a USAF MQ-9 Reaper and a USAF C-17 airlifter.

The ground assault included forces from Australia, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Chile, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Kingdom of Tonga and the U.S.

Miagany said the “ready-to-fight force embarked on amphibious assault vehicles, small boats and aircraft, and attacked from the sea to the shore in one of the most complex and difficult form of maneuver and amphibious operations.”

Force Modernization

“For years we have practiced amphibious operations together, and many of the participants in sporting experience have experience working with Marine Expeditionary Unites. These will remain key facets of our crisis response roles in support of our alliances and security partnerships in the years ahead,” Miagany said. “These challenges in the constant evolution of military technology are focusing the Marine Corps and many of our partners on force modernization efforts. Marine Corps investment and experimentation efforts will enhance our collective security and improve U.S. crisis

response capabilities."

Miagany said "the amphibious assault today demonstrates the flexibility and strength of integrated and interoperable amphibious forces, the synergy of network allies and partners, the enduring value of amphibious crisis response capabilities, and provides a glimpse of the U.S. Marine Corps' emerging core mission of providing stand-in forces which defend our allies and partners."

According to Miagany, amphibious assaults are one of the most complex of all military operations.

"Only a small collection of militaries around the world are capable of planning and executing them. This form of a maneuver warfare projects naval forces from ship to shore into contested spaces. Accomplishing this requires a tremendous amount of professionalism, partnership, compatible operating concepts and interoperable technology. When training and practicing these maneuvers throughout Hawaii in preparation for this mission, our nations are building relationships with each other and strengthening our interoperability. For years we have practiced amphibious operations together, and many of the participants this morning have experience working with Marine Expeditionary Units. These will remain key facets of our crisis response roles in support of our alliances and security partnerships in the years ahead."

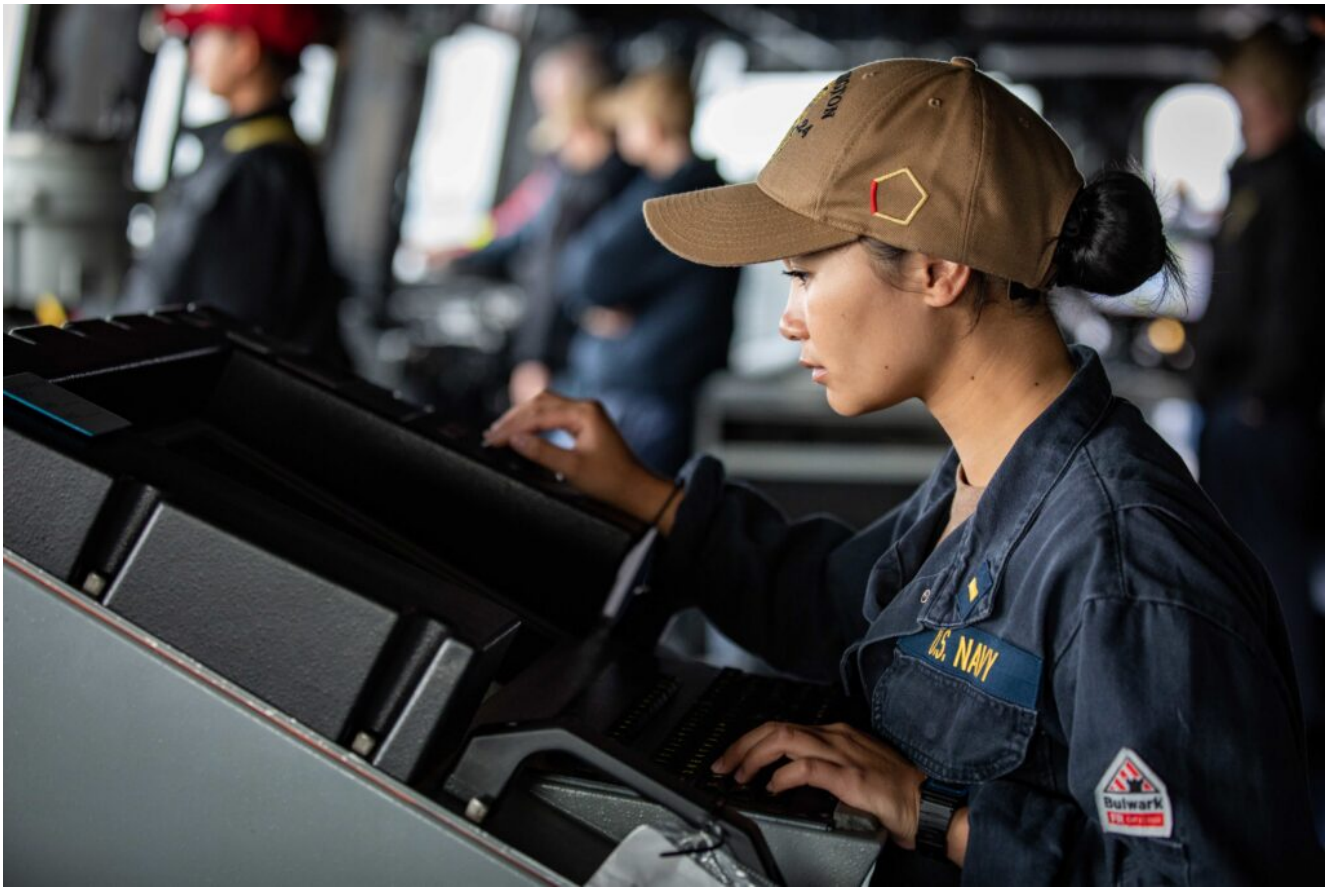
In addition to the operational demonstration, Marines from the 3d Littoral Combat Regiment displayed their tactical systems, including sensors such as the AN/TPS-80 Ground/Air Task Oriented Radar and weapons such as the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System.

At the conclusion of the demonstration, Lt. Gen. Steven R. Rudder, commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific and commanding general of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, congratulated the forces that had been training on the ground

for the past month and a half, and referred to the assault as the “RIMPAC graduation exercise.”

“The blue water ops that have been that have been transpiring has been shaping this environment so that we can conduct this amphibious assault today,” Rudder said. “It’s the first time we’ve done an amphibious assault with nine countries during the RIMPAC exercise. Although bilateral is such a key part of all of our nation’s military exercising in the Indo-Pacific, the biggest operations are by nature joint, and are by nature multilateral.”

Kearsarge ARG, 22nd MEU return to the Baltic Sea



U.S. Navy Ensign Glennalyn Ajero, assigned to the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24), stands watch in the pilot house as Arlington transits the Danish Straits to enter the Baltic Sea, Aug. 2. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Bellino*

BALTIC SEA – The Kearsarge Amphibious Ready Group, with embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, returned to the Baltic Sea, Aug. 2, to strengthen interoperability with key NATO allies and partners, the group's public affairs said Aug. 3.

Elements of the ARG-MEU include flagship Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge (LHD 3), San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24), and Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44), along with accompanying Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51).

While in the Baltic Sea, approximately 4,000 Sailors and Marines of the combined ARG-MEU team will train and operate alongside allied and partner nations to preserve maritime security and stability in the region. Operating alongside allies and partners in the Baltic Sea again demonstrates the U.S. commitment to the region and to improving capability and capacity across like-minded nations.

"Our experience in the Baltics earlier in the year was extremely positive and we're looking to build upon the relationships that we established as well as establish some new ones," said Col. Paul Merida, commanding officer of the 22nd MEU. "We are ready to train and operate alongside our allies and partners and, of course, we are always ready to respond to crisis if required."

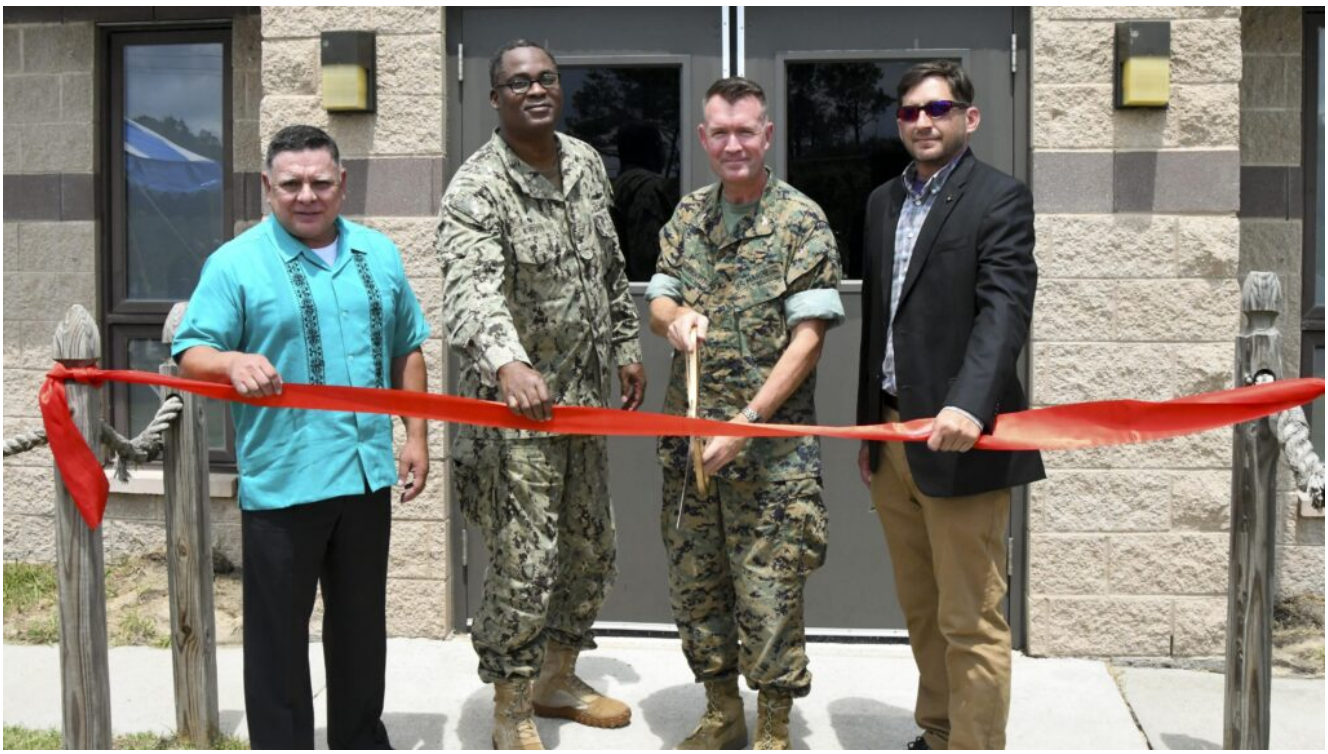
This marks a return to the Baltic Sea for elements of the ARG-MEU team, including Gunston Hall and Kearsarge, as both ships participated in the Estonian-led exercise Siil 22 in May and the annual joint, multinational exercise Baltic Operations (BALTOPS), the premier maritime-focused exercise in the Baltic

region, in June. Arlington will be operating in the Baltic for the first time, re-aggregated with the Kearsarge ARG-MEU team following operations in the Mediterranean Sea since April 2022.

Prior to returning to the Baltic Sea, the ships of the ARG concluded their mid-deployment voyage repair and maintenance periods in Brest, France; Rijeka, Croatia; and Copenhagen and Kalundborg, Denmark. Maintenance availability periods, termed MDVRs, allow U.S. Navy ships to accomplish necessary and preventative repairs to continue their missions in the region while simultaneously strengthening relationships with host nations.

“Following a successful mid-deployment voyage repair, the Kearsarge ARG and 22nd MEU remains committed to our allies and partners,” said Capt. Aaron Kelley, commander of the Kearsarge ARG and Amphibious Squadron 6. “As our ships frequently operate in the region, the ARG-MEU team remains ready and returns to strengthen relationships with new and familiar Baltic allies and partners while ensuring maritime security throughout the region.”

Navy Opens First Training Facility for Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems



Col. Victor Argobright, Navy and Marine Corps Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems (PMA-263) program manager, officially opens the Navy Training and Logistics Support Activity East July 27 at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Va. From right to left, he is joined by Frank Ball, director of operations, Air/Ground Systems Engineering Amentum; JEBLCFS Commanding Officer Capt. Michael Witherspoon, and Lee Hess Jr., Navy TALSA East project manager. *U.S. NAVY*

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy opened a new facility at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on July 27 that is dedicated to training Sailors who will operate the service's Family of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (FoSUAS), the Naval Air Systems Command said Aug. 2.

The facility, known as Training and Logistics Support Activity (TALSA) East, is the first dedicated Navy facility for unmanned aircraft operators to complete SUAS training.

Previously, Naval SUAS operators received training directly from the original equipment manufacturer, through contractor-lead training, or at one of the four Marine Corps TALSAs when seats were available.

"Navy UAS training takes a leap forward today with the opening

of this first-of-its-kind facility," said Marine Corps Col. Victor Argobright, PMA-263 program manager whose team will manage training at TALSA East. "Our FoSUAS team has been working diligently for nearly two years to provide high-quality training and certifications to our Navy personnel."

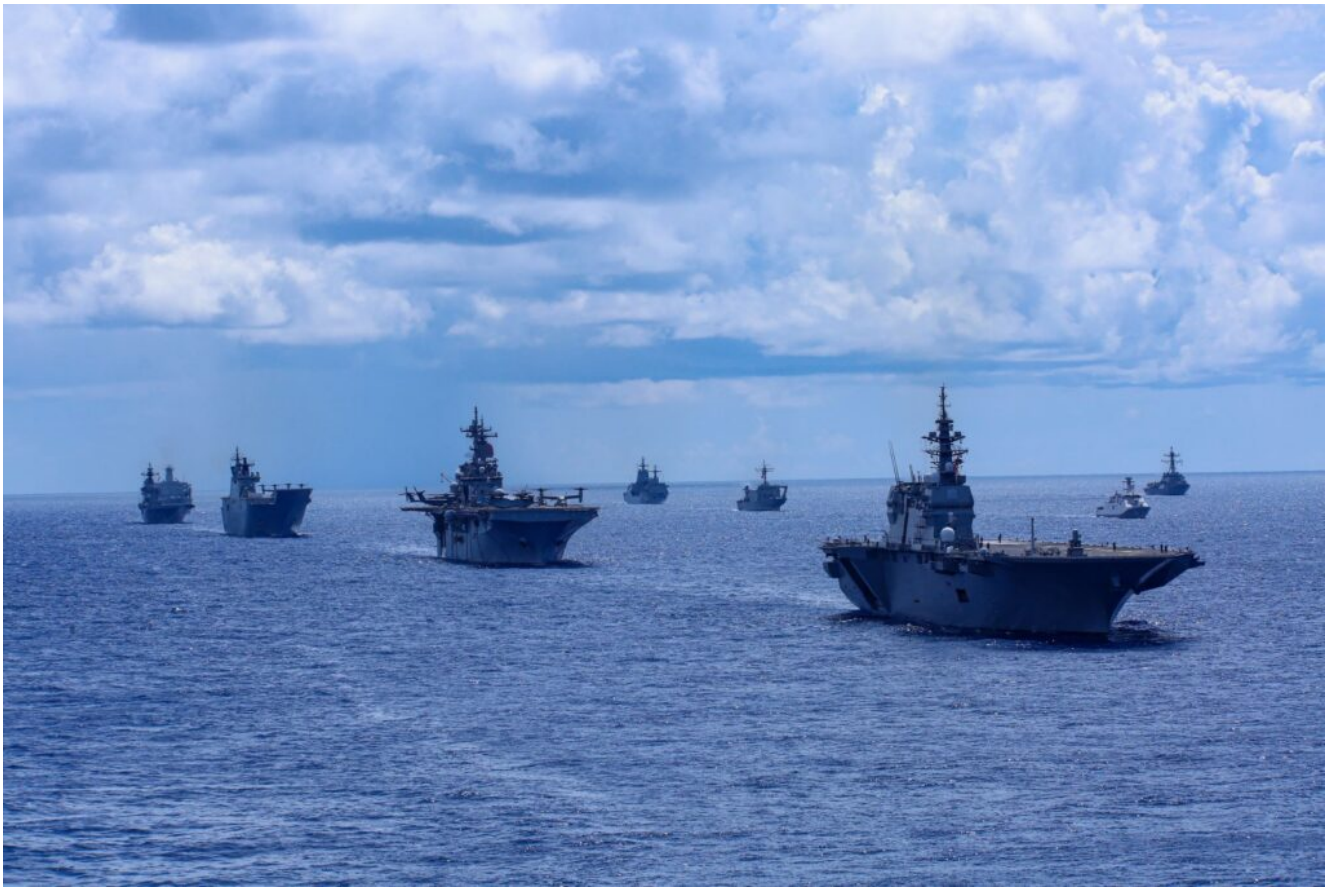
The TALSA is a central location for scheduling and formal entry-level SUAS courses that provide initial qualification training for systems currently in use by the operating forces. It also supports centralized storage of unit systems, supply, and maintenance services.

Scheduling at Navy TALSA East is flexible and tailored to student requirements. The first official course in the new facility will begin Aug. 8 for SkyRaider R80D.

"Being the first of its kind SUAS facility dedicated to training and logistics is a force multiplier for our Navy and Marine Corps," said Navy Capt. Michael Witherspoon, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story commanding officer. "This could not have been possible without the close coordination and collaboration of PMA-263, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story Public Works, the renovation team and the trainers here onboard the installation.

Navy TALSA East currently supports training for The Vertical Take-Off and Landing SkyRaider R80D, Skydio X2D and PD-100 Black Hornet 3. The Naval Expeditionary Combat Command will join the Naval Special Warfare community in fiscal year 2023 to also use the training and logistics support that the TALSA provides.

Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange Provides Exclamation Point to RIMPAC



Ships sail in formation during sail in formation during Rim of the Pacific 2022, July 28. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Ian Thomas*

HONOLULU – As this year's biennal, multinational Rim of the Pacific naval exercise is drawing to a close, naval experts will gather in Honolulu to conduct the 2022 Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange, or IMSE, essentially punctuating the end of RIMPAC with an exclamation point.

The conference is hosted by the Honolulu chapter of the Navy League and is being held at the Hawaii Convention Center Aug. 4-5.

According to retired Capt. Larry Osborn, a combination of three things makes IMSE unique – the location, the hybrid

format and the enduring theme of building partnerships while focusing each year on a pertinent issue. The focus area for IMSE 2022 is “information sharing.”

As for location, “Honolulu, located in the mid-Pacific, is the only place where a U.S. combatant command is co-located with all its components,” said Osborn.

Produced as a hybrid event, Osborn said, “IMSE reaches across the Indo-Pacific and around the world with a live webinar broadcast while the in-person participants and attendees gather in a non-threatening, non-government venue to network informally and strengthen relationships.”

IMSE has no official relationship with RIMPAC, but it’s not a coincidence that IMSE happens right after the exercise. The event will explore this “largest of all” multi-national exercise to learn how the maritime services from 26 nations share information and operate together effectively as a cohesive force.

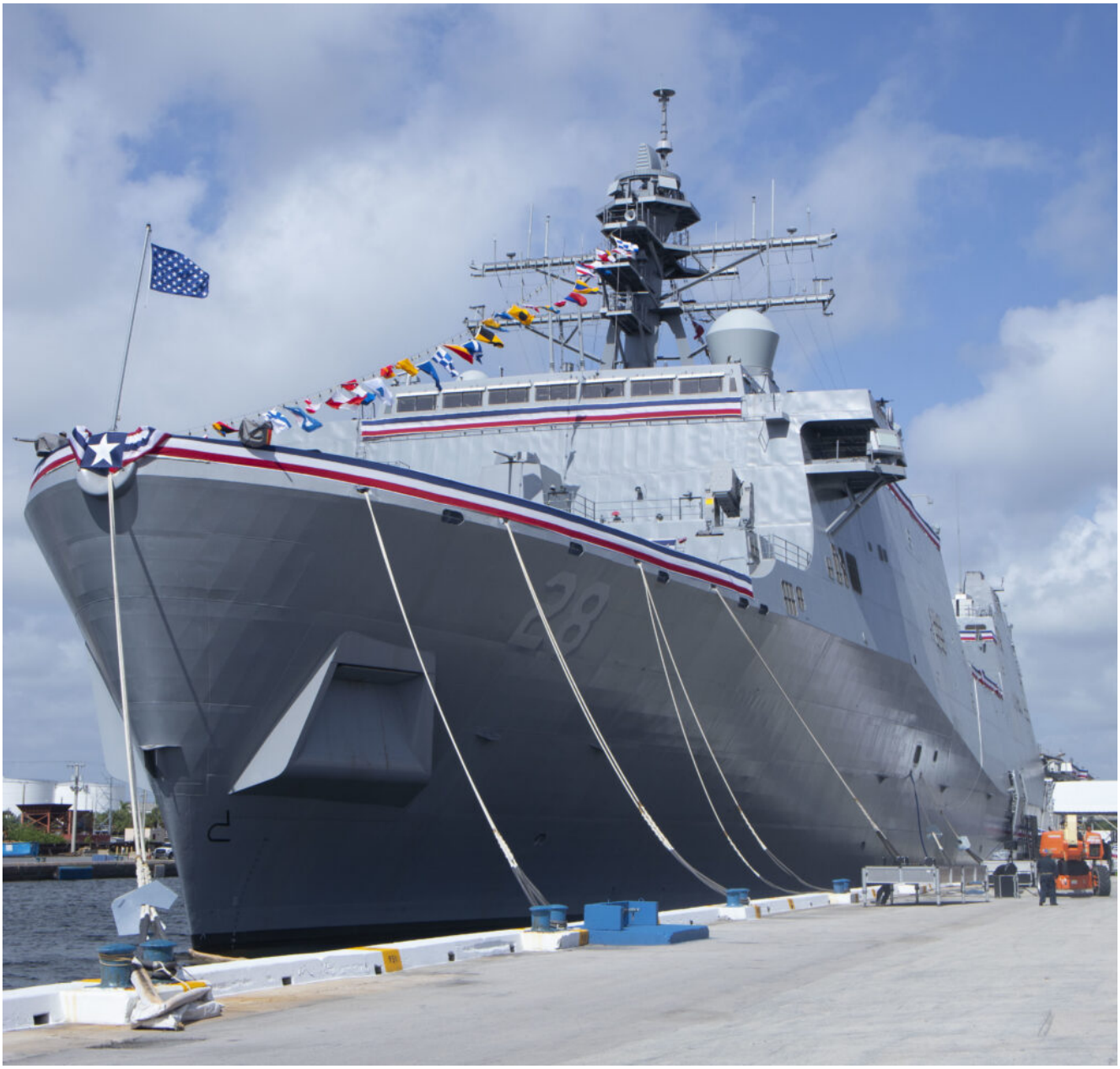
Since it’s a RIMPAC year, there will be representatives of a number of Indo-Pacific militaries already here. “We schedule IMSE to follow right after the RIMPAC closing to take advantage of the many foreign leaders present in Honolulu at that time,” Osborn said.

IMSE 2022 will feature a number of senior leaders from the region, to include remarks from the Australian and Korean heads of navy. Adm. Sam Paparo, U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, will open the conference with a luncheon keynote. Discussion

about the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue will include perspective from Indian, Japanese and U.S. senior leaders. Finally, a panel of ship commanding officers from the U.S., Malaysia, Australia, Korea, and the Philippines will share their RIMPAC experience.

Anyone can register at imsehawaii.org to attend IMSE 2022 virtually via a live webinar or in person. Registration will stay open until the conference opening. Navy League members attending in person receive a discount.

USS Fort Lauderdale Commissioned in Namesake City



The future USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28) currently moored in Port Everglades, in its namesake city Fort Lauderdale, Florida, getting ready for its commissioning ceremony. *U.S. NAVY / Sgt. Gavin Shelton, USMC*

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – The U.S. Navy commissioned its newest amphibious transport dock ship, USS Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), on July 30 in its namesake Florida city, Commander, Naval Surface Forces Public Affairs said July 30.

“To the Sailors and Marines who will serve aboard USS Fort Lauderdale, thank you and your families in advance for the service you will fulfill and sacrifices you may endure,” said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, who spoke at the event.

“The moment you bring this amphibious transport dock to life, you will strengthen the integrated deterrence capability of our entire joint force.”

Guest speakers for the event also included Kari Wilkinson, president of Ingalls Shipbuilding; Gen. Eric Smith, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps and Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantlis. The principal speaker was U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Florida).

“It is such an honor to be involved in the commissioning of the USS Ft. Lauderdale. It’s another chapter to the momentous history, friendship, and respect that the city has with the U.S. Navy,” Schultz said. “As chair of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, my support for our military is unwavering. I will always stand by our service members and veterans, and honor those who continue to serve.”

Ship sponsor Meredith A. Berger gave the first order to “man our ship and bring her to life.”

“The Navy names ships for people, places, and ideas that are special. The Navy certainly picked a special place when naming the USS Fort Lauderdale,” she said. “I am honored to be the sponsor for this incredible ship.”

Built by the Huntington Ingalls Industries in Pascagoula, Mississippi, Fort Lauderdale was launched March 28, 2020, and christened Aug. 21, 2021. The ship was delivered to U.S. Navy Nov. 30, 2021.

“Finally, if there is one thing that history has shown us from the days of antiquity it is that the stakes of the competition for control of the seas are high and for our part, USS Fort Lauderdale stands ready to deliver on any day, and at any time,” said Capt. James Quaresimo, the ship’s commanding

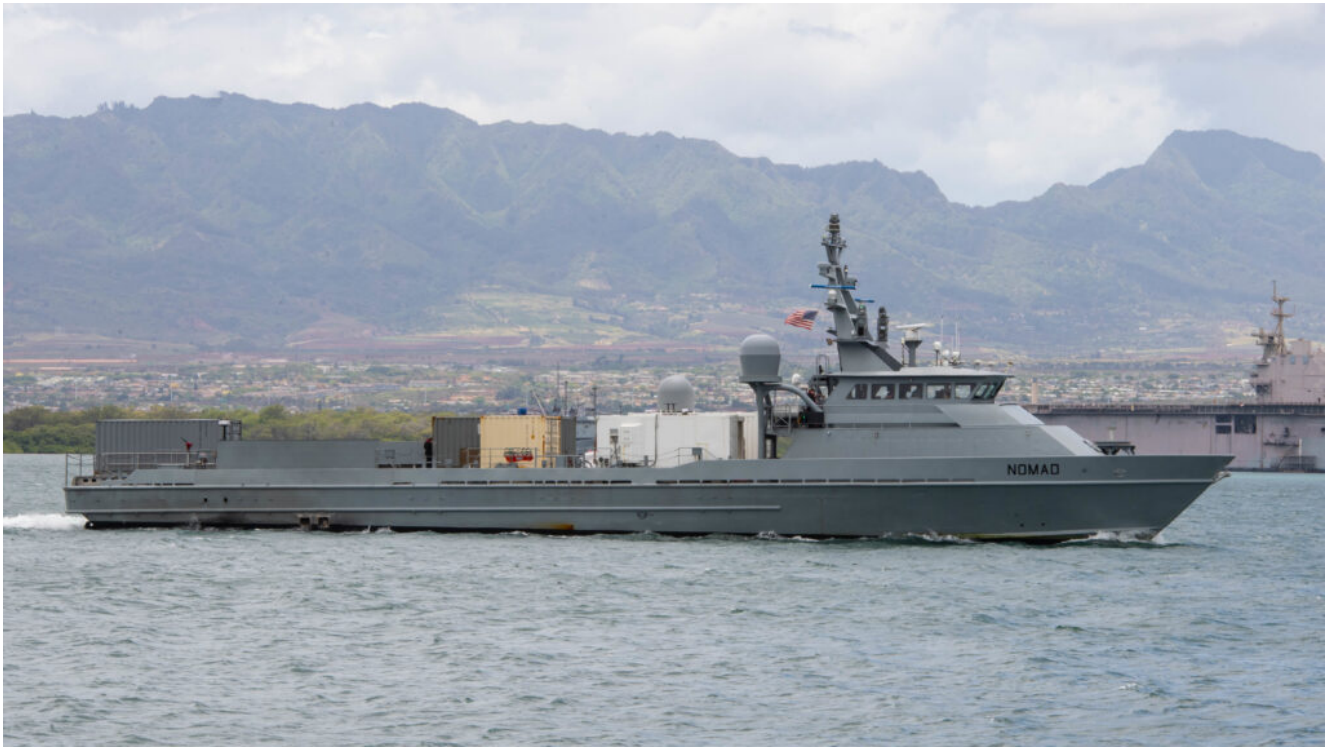
officer. “And those that may wish to challenge us – they should pause. For we are equipped with America’s unstoppable secret weapon that our enemies will never be able to duplicate and that is the fierce, dedicated and unstoppable, men and women of the United States Navy and Marine Corps.”

The ceremony marks the official transition of the USS Fort Lauderdale into the fleet and caps a weeklong series of events celebrating the ship and its namesake city.

Amphibious transport dock ships are warships that embark, transport and land elements of a landing force for a variety of expeditionary warfare missions.

USS Fort Lauderdale will be homeported at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

L3Harris, US Navy to Demo Maritime Autonomous Capabilities at RIMPAC



The large unmanned surface vessel Nomad arrives at Pearl Harbor to participate in Rim of the Pacific 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Demitrius J. Williams*

MELBOURNE, Fla. – L3Harris Technologies, in collaboration with the U.S. Navy, will demonstrate how unmanned surface vehicle technologies can provide critical support for traditional maritime forces during the Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2022, the company said Aug. 1.

RIMPAC is being held June 29 through Aug. 4 off the coast of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The Navy will operate its medium-displacement unmanned surface vehicle, Nomad, outfitted with numerous L3Harris autonomous technologies that enable it to perform strategic missions safely and accurately without the need for onboard support staff. The technology includes L3Harris control, electro-optical and communications systems.

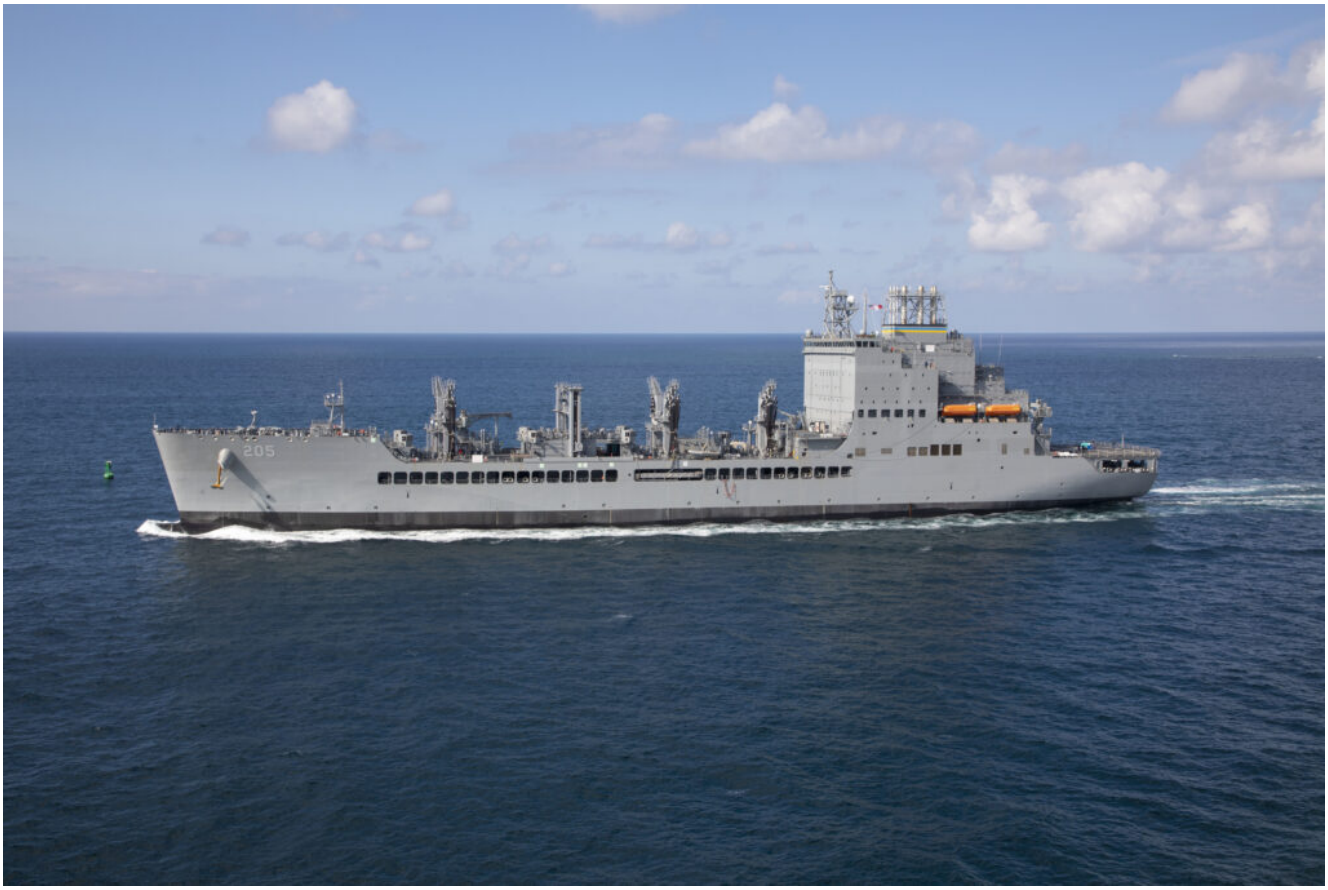
Nomad supports different maritime missions, including information, surveillance and reconnaissance, and maritime domain awareness missions It can operate in an autonomous mode, including maintaining vessel awareness and complying with international collision avoidance guidelines and can be

remotely piloted from an onshore or ship-based ground control station.

“RIMPAC provides a great opportunity to demonstrate how unmanned autonomous technology can support maritime forces,” said Rosemary Chapdelaine, president of Maritime at L3Harris. “Lessons learned from this exercise will enable us to continue developing and integrating autonomous capabilities in collaboration with the Naval Sea Systems Command, Unmanned Maritime Systems.”

Twenty-six nations, surface ships, submarines, national land forces, aircraft and nearly 25,000 personnel are expected to participate in this year’s RIMPAC.

Navy Accepts Delivery of Fleet Replenishment Oiler USNS John Lewis



The USNS John Lewis (T-AO 206), the lead ship of a new class of fleet replenishment oilers. *U.S. NAVY*

WASHINGTON – The Navy accepted delivery of the lead ship of its new class of fleet replenishment oilers, USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) on July 27, Team Ships Public Affairs said July 29.

T-AO 205's delivery follows the completion of acceptance trials with the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey to test the readiness and capability of the craft and to validate requirements.

"USNS John Lewis will provide much needed capability to the fleet as the primary fuel pipeline at sea," said John Lighthammer, program manager of the Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office. "This is the first of a 20-ship class providing the Sailors and merchant mariners another tool to support at-sea operations."

The new John Lewis-class T-AOs will be operated by Military Sealift Command to provide diesel fuel and lubricating oil,

and small quantities of fresh and frozen provisions, stores, and potable water to Navy ships at sea, and jet fuel for aircraft. The new T-AOs will add capacity to the Navy’s Combat Logistics Force and become the cornerstone of the fuel delivery system.