Integrated Battle Problem 23.1 Kicks Off

Release from Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs

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SAN DIEGO - U.S. Pacific Fleet began its second multi-domain unmanned capabilities exercise May 1.

The exercise features and develops unmanned capabilities “above the sea, on the sea and below the sea.”

Pacific Fleet’s Unmanned Systems Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP) 23.1 is a tactical warfighting rehearsal event conducted by U.S. 3rd Fleet to test and develop fleet-centric concepts and capabilities. This exercise will focus on proving the concept of unmanned systems employment to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific. Unmanned systems are vessels, aircraft,

or ground vehicles that can operate in risk-prone areas to reduce the potential for loss of human life. They can be operated remotely, semi- or fully-autonomously.

“We view unmanned systems as a force multiplier for traditional vessels, not a replacement,” said Capt. Dan Brown, Assistant Chief of Staff for Experimentation at 3rd Fleet. “We are optimizing the contribution of unmanned systems to overall naval strategy as an addition to the use of traditional vessels.”

Unmanned systems involved in this exercise contribute to a stronger naval force, further driving capabilities in the Indo-Pacific to contest adversaries.

UxS IBP 23.1 is focused on long-range fire above and below sea, surveillance and reconnaissance, command and control, and re-constituting intelligence. Some of the systems participating are the Sea Hunter and Seahawk medium displacement unmanned surface vessels, RQ-20 PUMA unmanned aircraft system, and MANTAS T-38 Devil Ray unmanned surface vehicle (USV).

This exercise allows PACFLT, working closely with the Type Commanders (Naval Surface Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Naval Air Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Naval Submarine Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet; Naval Special Warfare Command), to evaluate unmanned systems and highlight areas for improvement, providing that feedback to unmanned systems programs.

“Successfully integrating unmanned platforms provides our commanders with better options to fight and win in contested spaces,” said Brown.

Unmanned assets expand our intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance advantage, add depth to our missile magazines, and provide additional means to keep our distributed force provisioned. The capabilities of these integrated manned and unmanned systems enhance stability in the Indo-Pacific and contribute to regional maritime security, which is vital to the interests of the United States and its allies and partners.

Through analysis, simulation, prototyping, and demonstration, our Navy will systematically field and operate systems that possess the endurance and resilience to operate with infrequent human interaction. As a result of exercises like this, Sailors will have a high degree of confidence and skill operating alongside proven unmanned platforms at sea by the end of this decade.