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.