Navy’s New Mobile Ship Target Arrives in Port Hueneme



The Navy’s Mobile Ship Target MST 2301, known as MST-2, arrives at Port Hueneme to begin outfitting and preparation for future weapons testing operations. The remotely operated vessel is designed to provide a realistic, reusable surface target for live-fire and sensor testing. (Courtesy photo)
From Naval Air warfare Center Weapons Division, Jan. 14, 2026

PORT HUENEME, Calif. — The Navy’s newest test ship, the Mobile Ship Target, arrived in Port Hueneme Jan. 14, where Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division teams will prepare it for operations supporting advanced weapons testing.

Gunderson Marine built and launched the 260-foot Mobile Ship Target, known as MST-2 and designated MST 2301, in Portland, Oregon, in July 2025 for builder’s sea trials before delivering it to the Navy.

At Port Hueneme, NAWCWD teams will outfit MST 2301 for operational use. To enable remote operation, the Threat Target

Systems Department’s seaborne engineering team will install a government-developed remote-control system. This capability will allow the vessel to operate safely during live-fire events.

“Once complete, the MST will give us a safe, repeatable way to run some of the toughest weapons tests the fleet depends on,” said Kevin Gross, director, Threat Target Systems Department.

Unlike smaller or single-use targets, MST-2 was designed for long-term use. Missions will include sensor and tracking evaluations as well as live-fire events with weapons launched from ships or aircraft. Its size, speed and reconfigurable design make it a flexible platform for testing future naval capabilities.

MST-2 will replace the Advanced Target Launch System, also known as MST-1 (MST 9301), which is being removed from government ownership after decades of supporting fleet and maritime testing operations.

“This is about giving Sailors and Marines confidence,” said Rear Adm. Keith Hash, commander, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division. “When they go into harm’s way, they need to trust their systems completely. The MST lets us prove that trust under the most realistic conditions possible.”

NAWCWD expects MST 2301 to complete outfitting and begin supporting weapons testing in early 2026.