

Ohio-Class Submarines Work with USAF and USMC During VERTREP



An MH-60R Seahawk helicopter, assigned to the “Wildcats” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23, delivers supplies to the ballistic missile submarine USS Nevada (SSBN 733) during a vertical replenishment at sea. U.S. NAVY

NAVAL BASE KITSAP, BANGOR, Wash. – Two Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines demonstrated their ability to replenish while operating at sea during a series of vertical replenishment exercises off the coast of California July through August 2022, said Submarine Group 9 public affairs.

During the exercise, the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines USS Nevada (SSBN 733) and USS Henry M. Jackson (SSBN 730) operated jointly with U.S. Navy MH-60R Seahawk helicopters, U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Ospreys, and U.S. Air

Force C-17 Globemaster IIIs.

“Recently the Pacific SSBN submarine force exercised a vertical replenishment capability for at-sea SSBNs to prove our resiliency for worldwide operations and to replenish our ships with materials, food and operational gear,” said Capt. Kelly L. Laing, director of maritime operations for Commander, Task Group 114.3. “This allows us to maintain an unpredictable forward presence and continued demonstration of the unmatched strength of our strategic forces.”

The event showcased the submarines’ ability to remain on mission and at sea while performing essential replenishment operations.

“Our fundamental mission is to deter a strategic attack, which is an existential threat to the United States and our allies.” said Rear Adm. Mark Behning, commander of both Submarine Group 9 and Task Group 114.3. “Testing our readiness ensures we maintain a safe, secure and reliable strategic deterrent force.”

The event was part of a U.S. Strategic Command exercise which highlights the interoperability of multiple U.S. military platforms in order to implement the strategic deterrence mission.

“Exercising these VERTREPs was a joint operation involving Marine and Air Force assets,” Laing said. “This shows our commitment to joint operations worldwide and between combatant commanders. This is important so that we don’t stovepipe ourselves under one community or brand. We are committed to operating together as a global force.”

This event is the latest in a series of efforts by the United States submarine force to look at alternative operations that previously required a submarine to be pierside to accomplish.

For example, in May, the Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Alabama (SSBN 731) conducted an at-sea crew exchange, swapping out the blue and gold crews. This demonstrated the submarine's ability to continuously operate and stay on mission for longer periods of time while sustaining quality of life for the crews and their families.

"What this shows to our allies and adversaries is that we have the ability to keep our boats at sea," Laing said. "This shows them that we are ready."