

SMWDC Hosts Directed Energy Working Group at Naval Base San Diego



SAN DIEGO – Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC) hosts a directed energy working group Oct. 19, bringing together stakeholders to advance the integration of directed energy capabilities into surface force operations. The working group focused on the Surface Navy’s evolving directed energy tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), doctrine and capability development priorities. SMWDC enhances the surface force’s lethality and readiness. Photo credit: U.S. Navy

The Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC) hosted a directed energy working group Oct. 19, bringing together stakeholders to advance the integration of directed energy capabilities into surface force operations.

The working group focused on the Surface Navy's evolving directed energy tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), doctrine and capability development priorities. "Directed energy gives our warfighters another means to fight, defend and sustain combat power in a contested environment," said Cmdr. Rob Toohig, SMWDC experimentation lead. "Our focus is ensuring Sailors have the tactics, training and technical understanding needed to employ these capabilities effectively."

The event concluded with a capability gap discussion in which SMWDC Warfare Tactics Instructors examined concepts for employing directed energy systems across the surface fleet. Warfare Tactics Instructors from the Integrated Air and Missile Defense warfare area and the Directed Energy Community of Focus discussed current capabilities and limitations and identified potential paths forward.

Participants from the Surface Requirements Group (SURFRG) also provided insight on surface force tactical gaps and how today's working group could help address those gaps through technology. SMWDC's SURFRG executes a process to provide the single voice for Commander, Naval Surface Forces, to cover the surface fleet's most pressing tactical gaps and identify prioritized solutions to close them rapidly. SURFRG, as the type commander's executive agent to the Department of the Navy Rapid Capabilities Office (DONRCO) and lead for the DONRCO Surface Adoption Team, aims to increase surface force lethality at the speed of relevance. Directed energy is an increasingly important element of naval warfare, providing the fleet additional means to defend itself, preserve combat power and sustain operations during prolonged conflict.

"Warfighting advantage comes from putting capability in the hands of Sailors, learning through operational employment and rapidly applying those lessons across the fleet," said Col. Joseph Rosal, director of directed energy for the Office of the Secretary of War for Research and Engineering. "This

effort helps ensure directed energy is developed and integrated to meet the demands of future maritime combat.”

Fleet Sailors will play a central role in advancing these capabilities. Operational employment, at-sea experimentation and fleet feedback will help inform future TTPs, training, doctrine and capability development. SMWDC’s efforts are intended to place emerging capabilities in the hands of Sailors early, learn through operations and rapidly incorporate lessons into the surface force.

About the Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center: SMWDC is the Navy’s warfighting development center for surface warfare and mine warfare. Its mission is to increase the lethality and tactical proficiency of the surface fleet across all domains by providing tactical expertise and solutions through the development and assessment of warfighting doctrine, concepts, tactics, techniques and procedures.

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