U.S. Navy breaks ground on new Regional Training Center (RTC) at IALR Campus

The new center will accommodate full-scale growth of the defense manufacturing training program, providing a pipeline of 800-1,000 skilled workers per year for high-demand jobs.

DANVILLE, Va. (October 11, 2023) – The United States Navy broke ground on a new regional training center for the Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM) program in Danville today. The new 100,000-square-foot training facility, located on the campus of the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR), will allow more students to enroll in accelerated four-month training programs to help them reskill or upskill for high-paying jobs. Estimated to open by 2025, the Regional Training Center expects to graduate 800-1,000 students per year to fill critical vacancies across the defense industrial base.

The groundbreaking ceremony was held during the annual ATDM & U.S. Navy Additive Manufacturing Center of Excellence (AM CoE) Summit, which gathered the Navy, Office of the Secretary of Defense, state and local officials, and industry partners to increase awareness of these important initiatives and promote participation and contributions by industry and other stakeholders. This year, ATDM instructors and students were joined by Secretary of the U.S. Navy Carlos Del Toro and Rear Admiral Scott W. Pappano to celebrate the success of the past year and discuss goals going forward.

“The incredible progress made over the past year here in Danville, both in building the next generation of submarine builders at ATDM and in advancing the manufacturing technology we need to succeed at AM CoE, proved that we are on the right

path," said Rear Adm. Pappano, program executive officer, Strategic Submarines, U.S. Navy. "This past year established the foundation for the critical leaps forward we need in the coming years to scale both programs to ensure we have the skilled workforce with the technology and capabilities needed to build the Navy's next generation of submarines."

"The groundbreaking of the Regional Training Center is a key milestone in scaling ATDM by providing a dedicated training facility with the infrastructure and equipment necessary to reach our full capacity of training potential," said Dr. Debra Holley, director of the ATDM program.

Darrell Daltan, chair of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors, remarked that the construction of the Regional Training Center is a "win for our local economy, as it will bring up to 1,000 students a year to Danville and Pittsylvania County, and all of whom will live, work, and play here. By building its training facility in Danville, the Navy has provided a capital investment that further shows the growing prominence of this region in manufacturing and related industry sectors."

"We are especially fortunate that the Navy has recognized the forethought of our local leaders who have worked over the years to create educational programs that emphasize the type of knowledge and skills needed for this program," Dalton continued.

In partnership with the Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment Program Office (IBAS) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Navy's Program Executive Office (PEO) Strategic Submarines, ATDM trains workers in critical manufacturing skills to establish a steady and sustainable flow of workers into the SIB/DIB to fill critical skills gaps and labor shortages. The AM CoE directly supports the growth of our nation's industrial base by using additive manufacturing for the production of submarine components to

bolster naval shipbuilding and repair supply chains.

America’s defense industrial base (DIB) is still greatly in need of workers who can build and repair naval ships. The lack of workforce and manufacturing shortfalls in this area impact the material readiness of the current naval fleet; major maintenance and overhaul availability; and new construction. The construction of the “1 COLUMBIA + 2 VIRGINIA” naval ships beginning in FY26 will further stress the Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) and increase the need for qualified talent in the workforce. The AM CoE, which formally opened at last year’s summit, directly supports growth of our nation’s industrial base by scaling and maturing additive manufacturing technologies in the SIB. The technologies enable innovative production of submarine components to bolster naval shipbuilding and repair supply chains. As a result, the AM CoE will increase overall manufacturing capacity and close the supply-demand gap in critical marketspaces like castings, forgings, fittings, and fasteners.

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) has also been selected by the U.S. Navy Program Executive Office, Strategic Submarines (PEO SSBN) as the designated memorial location for the Ex-USS Buffalo (SSN 715) sail and the Ex-USS Providence (SSN 719) rudder to preserve and commemorate the history of these submarines and honor the service of their crews. This memorial demonstrates the strong partnership between the Navy and Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing (ATDM).

“Today marks a new chapter in the exciting growth of the ATDM program and further exemplifies the educational, workforce, and technological innovation that is taking place in Virginia. The investments made here are vital to the economic progress of the entire commonwealth,” said Telly Tucker, president of the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, which leads the multi-year ATDM pilot project. IALR’s Center for Manufacturing Advancement is also home to the Navy’s AM CoE.

“The ATDM program marks a bold step forward,” said Danville City Councilman Lee Vogler. “This initiative stands at the forefront of addressing the challenges facing our defense industrial base and, by extension, our nation’s security.”

The sail was part of the Ex-USS Buffalo (SSN 715), a decommissioned United States Navy LOS ANGELES Class nuclear-powered attack submarine. USS Buffalo (SSN 715) was commissioned in November 1983, and decommissioned in January 2019. During that time, she saw most of her service in the Pacific area of operation.

The rudder hails from Ex-USS Providence (SSN 719), also a decommissioned United States Navy LOS ANGELES Class nuclear-powered attack submarine. Ex-USS Providence (SSN 719) was commissioned in July 1985. In August 2021, USS Providence was transferred from Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn., to Kitsap Naval Base in Bremerton, Wash., for decommissioning after 37 years of service.

To learn more about the new regional training center, or ATDM program classes and cohorts, please visit www.atdm.org.