# U.S. Submarine Tender to Support AUKUS Pillar 1 Milestone




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HMAS STIRLING, Australia - The U.S. Navy submarine tender USS Emory S. Land (AS 39) pulled into HMAS Stirling, Aug. 16, marking the seventh port visit in Australia since the ship left its homeport of Guam, May 17.

The mixed crew of U.S. Navy and Royal Australian Navy personnel will take part in a Submarine Tendered Maintenance Period (STMP) over the next several weeks as Australian technicians perform maintenance on a U.S Navy nuclear-powered fast-attack submarine (SSN) scheduled to arrive for a port visit.

The STMP marks a significant step toward Australia becoming sovereign-ready to operate, maintain, and support a fleet of conventionally armed SSNs, which is a central requirement in executing Pillar 1 of the AUKUS security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

“Our knowledge exchange with the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Fleet Support Unit (FSU) since January has been exceptionally productive,” said Capt. Brent Spillner, commanding officer of the Emory S. Land. “Within weeks they were working shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. technicians on real submarine repairs, and for the last six weeks we’ve had a team of U.S. Sailors embedded in the FSU West workshops at HMAS Stirling. We’re learning as much from them as they are from us, and we have Australian sailors and officers in the key management positions for the STMP.”

More than 30 Australian sailors will execute the majority of planned maintenance work under the supervision of U.S. personnel, which will include the replacement of a mast in the submarine’s sail and a key hydraulic valve, along with the simulated removal of a large pump weighing more than 3,500 pounds from within the boat.

“Both of our navies are benefiting tremendously from the interoperability we’ve been developing during this deployment, and are now better able to support each other’s fleets around the world. This STMP marks the first time that Australian workers will perform maintenance on an American SSN in Australian waters, but it’s really just the next step in a long partnership,” said Spillner. “This is an important milestone and learning opportunity as we work together to establish Submarine Rotational Force – West, where both U.S. and UK submarines will regularly transit through HMAS Stirling, with maintenance and logistics assisted by Australian personnel, as they develop their own Intermediate-Level Maintenance capability for the eventual Australian

SSNs.”

The deployment has been an opportunity for sailors from the three navies to work together.

“The opportunity to have RAN sailors from FSU integrated with my repair department has been phenomenal,” said Cmdr. Derek Fletcher, repair officer aboard Emory S. Land. “The ability to work side-by-side in Guam on U.S. SSNs and then continue that side-by-side work on RAN vessels and even a Royal Navy vessel while in Australia has truly demonstrated our interoperability. It’s been incredible to see our Sailors working together to provide repair services to vessels from all three AUKUS partners.”

Since the start of the Emory S. Land’s deployment, 176 U.S. Sailors have participated in 18 community relations events, investing 731 hours into the communities of Darwin, Cairns, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. While in port at HMAS Stirling, U.S. Sailors are planning an additional eight to 10 community relations events throughout the region, as well as having the ability to tour Western Australia.

“This deployment is like none other I have ever experienced and will not easily be forgotten,” said Lt. Cmdr. Mark Miller, Emory S. Land’s chaplain. “The warmth and hospitality which the U.S. Sailors have received is truly heartfelt. We are grateful for the strong bond of our two nations and we look forward to our stop in Western Australia.”

Emory S. Land is on deployment supporting the U.S. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy’s largest forward deployed numbered fleet, operating with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Emory S. Land provides expeditionary intermediate-level maintenance, services, and logistics support to deployed submarines.

Guam is home to the U.S. Navy’s only submarine tenders, Emory S. Land and USS Frank Cable (AS 40), as well as Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines. The submarine tenders provide maintenance, hotel services and logistical support to submarines and surface ships in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operation. The submarines and tenders are maintained as part of the U.S. Navy’s forward-deployed submarine force and are capable of meeting global operational requirements.

For more information about Emory S. Land, visit us at http://www.csp.navy.mil/emorysland/ or like us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/EmorySLand, or on Twitter @EmorySLand.

For more news from USS Emory S. Land (AS 39), visit http://www.navy.mil/local/as39/.