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Mike Stevens
CEO

The Foundation of Maritime Power

BY MCPON (RET.) MIKE STEVENS, NAVY LEAGUE CEO

Logistics and infrastructure are not often the most visible elements of maritime power, but they are among the most decisive. They form the foundation that enables everything else, every deployment, every operation and every mission our sea services are called to execute.

For decades, the United States has relied on its ability to sustain forces across vast distances, often in complex and contested environments. That advantage has never been guaranteed. It is the result of deliberate investment, disciplined planning and the quiet, consistent work of those who build and maintain the systems that support the fight.

Today, that foundation is being tested in new ways. The demands of operating in a more contested and distributed maritime environment are placing increasing pressure on logistics networks. Supply lines that were once considered secure can no longer be assumed. The ability to move fuel, parts, munitions and personnel, reliably and at scale, is now a critical factor in deterrence and, if necessary, combat action.

At the same time, infrastructure at home must keep pace with the demands placed upon it. Shipyards, maintenance facilities and installations are not simply support functions; they are strategic assets. Their capacity, condition and resilience directly impact readiness. Equally important is the infrastructure that supports our people. Quality housing, modern facilities and reliable base services are essential to maintaining the strength and stability of the force.

What becomes clear is that logistics and infrastructure are inseparable from operational effectiveness. They are not enabling functions in the background; they are central to our ability to project power and sustain it over time. As the character of warfare continues to evolve, so too must our approach to sustaining the force, integrating new technologies, strengthening existing systems and ensuring resilience across the enterprise.

The Navy League remains committed to advocating for these priorities. Our members understand that readiness is built long before ships and submarines get underway or an aircraft takes flight. Through their support of the sea services and their families, they contribute directly to the strength of the foundation that underpins our maritime security. ■

Without Logistics and Infrastructure, the U.S. Isn't Combat Ready

BY BRETT DAVIS, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In his keynote speech at Sea-Air-Space 2026 (and you'll see more about that in this issue), Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Daryl Caudle issued a call for industry to build capabilities ready to go, with sustainability built in — "sustainment designed before steel is bent," as he said.

Logistics and infrastructure, the themes of this issue and key elements of sustainability, tend to get lost in the shuffle when discussing military operations. They aren't dramatic, they don't go boom, but without them the rest of the military doesn't work for long.

Contributor Dan Taylor points out the Navy ignored infrastructure issues for many years in favor of ships and weapon systems but now must improve the shore experience as it is "not ready for conflict today," as the commander of Navy Installations Command says in the story starting on page 13.

Contributor and Marine Corps Colonel Paul Gillikin highlights the challenges posed by the Indo-Pacific region, where "the challenge is projecting power and sustaining distributed forces among contested littorals over time." That story kicks off on page 30.

We also have stories about technology-first ways to improve logistics and operations, such as Senior Editor Richard R. Burgess' story on the U.S. Navy's new Combat Autonomous Maritime Platform, or CAMP, an underwater vessel that could carry a variety of payloads (page 25), and contributor George Galdorisi's look at the concept of resupplying Marines via uncrewed surface vessels (page 34).

We also have a look at a different type of logistics — maintaining the human soul. Writer Jim McClure gives us a glimpse into the world of Religious Program specialists, who support troops spiritually but may also be required to engage in combat. That begins on page 41.

All of that and more is in this issue, which also includes a quick look back at the Sea-Air-Space 2026 conference. Thank you for reading. ■

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NAVY LEAGUE of the UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENTS

ON THE COVER: A Navy pilot assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron 41 enters the cockpit of an F/A-18F Super Hornet on the flight deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, April 16, 2026. The aircraft carrier is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to support maritime security and stability in the Middle East. Photo credit: U.S. Navy.

Then-Secretary of the Navy John Phelan greets attendees at Sea-Air-Space the day before his ouster was announced. Photo credit: Laura Hatcher.

Firing Phelan Won't Immediately Fix Shipbuilding Woes

BY MATT REISENER

On April 22, President Trump made waves by authorizing the firing of Secretary of the Navy John Phelan and appointing Phelan's undersecretary Hung Cao as the acting head of the service.

The move reportedly caught Phelan off guard, prompting him to visit the White House to confirm whether Trump had indeed signed off on his termination. Many defense experts were similarly surprised Trump would initiate a leadership change amid the Navy's prominent involvement in America's campaigns against both Iran and narco-traffickers in the Western Hemisphere. While some analysts have questioned the wisdom of these operations, few have criticized the Navy's performance in these conflicts, which was highlighted by the March 4 sinking of the Iranian warship IRIS Dena, the first sinking of an enemy vessel by a Navy submarine since World War II.

However, Phelan's firing was less surprising to Washington insiders who had long heard rumbling of tension between Phelan and key officials within the Department of Defense, namely the Secretary and Undersecretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth and Steve Feinberg. Trump's comments on Phelan's firing hinted as these tensions, with the president remarking Phelan was "a hard charger, and he had some conflicts with some other people, mostly as to building and buying new ships."

Indeed, both the Pentagon and White House increasingly viewed Phelan as moving too slowly to implement President Trump's ambitious shipbuilding agenda and proposed reforms to jumpstart America's long-struggling shipbuilding industry, including those outlined in last April's executive order on Restoring America's Maritime Dominance and this February's Maritime Action Plan.

Owing to these concerns, Phelan was increasingly seeing his shipbuilding responsibilities scaled back, with the Office of Management and Budget assuming a larger role in managing shipbuilding and Feinberg taking over the management of submarine programs amid ongoing production delays. While other tensions with the Pentagon's leadership reportedly emerged surrounding Phelan's tendency to bypass Hegseth and bring ideas directly to Trump (including the idea for the proposed Trump-class battleship) and his reluctance to discipline Senator Mark Kelly for his participation in a video urging soldiers not to follow illegal orders, Phelan's slow progress toward revitalizing American shipbuilding appears to be the prime impetus for his dismissal.

President Trump's shipbuilding goals are certainly ambitious. Since returning to office, Trump has called for the creation of a "Golden Fleet" centered around 20-25 next-generation Trump-class battleships. The White House has requested more than $65 billion in shipbuilding funds for fiscal year 2027 (the largest shipbuilding request since 1962, adjusted for inflation), which includes funding for 34 vessels, such as six medium landing ships, one Columbia-class submarine, two Virginia-class submarines, and the first of the new FF(X) frigates, meant to replace the troubled Constellation-class design which was cancelled during Phelan's tenure. Given the scale of Trump's shipbuilding commitment and the fact that 82% of the warships being built in the U.S. are running behind schedule, the president's desire to see faster progress in this arena is understandable.

The Trump-class battleship may particularly prove to be an ongoing source of frustration for the White House.

Hurdles Remain

However, Phelan's successor will likely face many of the same shipbuilding challenges as his or her predecessor. America's shipbuilding woes go well beyond the leadership of one single secretary, reflecting decades of underinvestment in America's maritime industrial base. Since the 1950s, the number of U.S. shipyards able to build large seafaring vessels has declined by over 80%, owing to the decrease in government support for shipbuilding that occurred following the end of World War II and the Cold War.

Many American shipyards have outdated infrastructure and have underinvested in technology such as automation, digitization and artificial intelligence. America has fallen substantially behind many of its allies in integrating these technologies into its shipyards and shipbuilding processes, which, as highlighted in the Center for Maritime Strategy's recent report, "Pier Review: Leveraging the Allied Maritime Industrial Base for U.S. Shipbuilding," has caused America to fall further behind its foreign shipbuilding competitors. The shipbuilding industry also encounters frequent supply chain disruptions, with ship construction pausing due to delays in essential parts and materials caused by shipbuilders' overreliance on sole-source manufacturers. Finally, America lacks the labor force necessary to support large scale shipbuilding projects, with the industry beset by skilled labor shortages, high worker attrition rates and ongoing challenges associated with importing skilled laborers from overseas.

These problems contribute to the systemic delays facing American shipbuilding and regularly result in shipbuilding projects exceeding their original budgets by billions of dollars. A shipbuilding review

An artist's conception of the first Trump-class battleship. Photo credit: U.S. Navy.

conducted by Phelan's predecessor Carlos Del Toro revealed widespread delays in American shipbuilding projects, with some ships falling as many as 36 months behind schedule. Until these systemic issues are addressed, the White House may continue to encounter the same shipbuilding delays which precipitated Phelan's ousting.

Battleship Battles

The Trump-class battleship may particularly prove to be an ongoing source of frustration for the White House. Phelan was reportedly heavily involved in conceiving this idea, despite it going against the Navy's broader push for more smaller combatants and uncrewed vessels. While the White House is unlikely to abandon this project bearing the president's name, actually building this ship will prove as challenging to Phelan's successor as it did to the now-ousted secretary. The initial Trump-class ships will reportedly cost around $17 billion to build ($4 billion more than the USS Gerald Ford aircraft carrier), and the Washington Post reported in April the Navy has yet to determine what armaments the ship will carry and is considering several weapons which are themselves still in the development phase.

Trump wants construction on these ships to begin in 2028, likely understanding the only chance of his namesake ship's being completed is if construction is well underway by the time he leaves office, given the skepticism of this project among many Democratic and Republican national security experts. Yet given the scale of this project, the unfinished nature of the ship's design, and the systemic delays that frequently affect shipbuilding programs of this size, the first Trump-class vessel will likely be far from complete when the president's term ends, which could provoke further tensions between the White House and the Department of the Navy. Similarly, attempts to rush the production of this ship before its design is fully complete could result in late-stage design changes like those that eventually slowed the now-cancelled Constellation's production, or end up like the infamous USS Anderson, a World War II-era destroyer that was originally delivered dangerously overweight and top-heavy due to a rushed design and construction process.

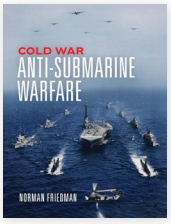
In firing Phelan, Trump has made it clear he views shipbuilding as a major defense priority, and that his future secretary of the Navy will be evaluated on their ability to make progress in this arena. Yet the White House must also recognize that American shipbuilding cannot be revitalized overnight and commit to long-term efforts to address the structural challenges facing the industry. If Trump judges his naval secretaries based on the progress they make on the Trump-class ships without first addressing the systemic problems facing American shipbuilding, he may find firing Phelan was insufficient to produce his desired results. ■

Matt Reisener is the Senior National Security Advisor for the Center for Maritime Strategy. He holds a Master of Arts in International Relations from the University of Chicago's Committee on International Relations, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Rhetoric & Political Communication from William Jewell College.

Cold War ASW, Chinese Maritime Threat, Vietnam POW, Guadalcanal, Nagato BB, Korea-Japan Naval Battles, USS Swordfish

BY RICHARD R. BURGESS, SENIOR EDITOR

COLD WAR ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE

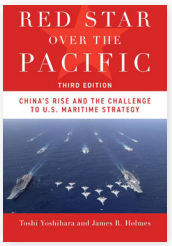


By Norman Friedman. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2025. 418 pages. $125.00

ISBN: 978-1-68247-857-8

Anti-submarine warfare excellence was demanded from U.S. and other NATO nations during the Cold War to challenge the enormous Soviet submarine fleet, especially its nuclear deterrent submarines. The technology and tactics that defeated the German U-boat threat in World War II had to be readjusted to counter nuclear-powered submarines. This massive book covers in detail, as far as classification could allow, the ships, aircraft, weapons, sensors, tactics and organization deployed to counter the Soviet fleet. The ASW expertise developed in the Cold War was perishable over time. This book by a recognized authority on submarines can be used to revitalize ASW thinking amid the rising threat from the submarine forces of China and Russia.

RED STAR OVER THE PACIFIC: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy (Third Edition)

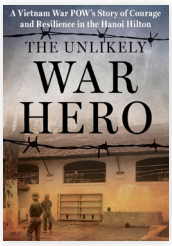


By Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2026. 420 pages. $39.95

ISBN: 978-1-68247-396-2

With worldwide commitments that strain resources, the United States still faces an expanding Chinese navy, merchant marine and overwhelming shipbuilding industry. The authors, in this third edition, earnestly strive to keep America's focus on and promote understanding the rise of Chinese maritime power as the prime threat to U.S. global supremacy. The authors ground their discussion on the theories of U.S. and Chinese strategists and how China translates them into concepts, technology and force structure, with new capabilities such as long-range anti-ship missiles that challenge the U.S. fleet and missiles that threaten U.S. bases in the Pacific and threaten Taiwan.

THE UNLIKELY WAR HERO: A Vietnam War POW's Story of Courage and Resilience in the Hanoi Hilton



By Marc Leepson. Essex, Connecticut: Stackpole Books, 2024. 229 pages. $32.95

ISBN: 978-0-81177292-1

While most U.S. POWs in North Vietnam were air crews, Doug Hegdahl was a seaman apprentice who had the misfortune of falling overboard from his cruiser in the Gulf of Tonkin and was picked up by the enemy and imprisoned with other POWs in the Hanoi Hilton. Feigning stupidity, he memorized the names of 254 fellow POWs and was ordered by his superiors to accept early release when offered in August 1969. He listed the names of POWs to U.S. officials, confirming the captivity of 63 men previously thought missing in action. He also confirmed torture by the enemy and provided details of imprisonment. The author does justice to telling the story of this amazing Sailor.

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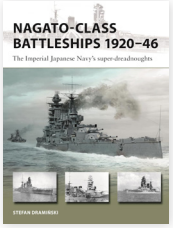
GUADALCANAL'S LONGEST FIGHT: The Pivotal Battles of the Matanikau Front

By David R. Holland. Philadelphia and Barnsley, U.K., 2025: Casemate Publishers, 2025. 241 pages. $34.95

ISBN: 978-1-63624-584-3

The Guadalcanal campaign in 1942-43 was the first island secured from the Japanese in World War II. The grueling five-month campaign often is considered as a whole, without studying of the individual battles fought to secure the island and its crucial airfield. This book details the seven major battles along the Matanikau River fought by Marine regiments and raiders and Army divisions. The book is enhanced by the author's use of Japanese sources to cover both sides well. The author, a former Marine infantryman, walked the battlefields on the island to give a fresh view to his narrative.

NAGATO-CLASS BATTLESHIPS 1920-46: The Imperial Japanese Navy's super-dreadnoughts

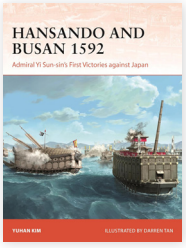


By Stefan Draminski. Oxford, United Kingdom: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2026. 48 pages. $20.00

ISBN: 978-1-4728-6957-9

The two Nagato-class battleships, Nagato and Mutsu, were the most powerful dreadnoughts of the Imperial Japanese Navy, eclipsed in that fleet only by the two super battleships of the Yamato class. The first to be armed with 16-inch guns and modernized in the 1930s, Nagato launched floatplanes to bomb Shanghai in 1937 during the Second Sino-Japanese War. In World War II, both ships participated in the Pearl Harbor Raid and the Battle of Midway. Mutsu was sunk in 1943 by a mysterious explosion. Nagato served in the battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf, firing its main battery in action only in the latter battle, and finishing out the war as a home-island anti-aircraft platform. Nagato was sunk in a nuclear test in 1946. This well-illustrated book contains exceptionally detailed operational histories of the ships.

HANSANDO AND BUSAN 1592

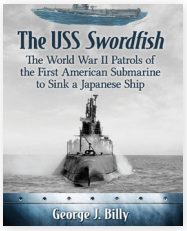


By Yuhan Kim. Oxford, United Kingdom: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2025. 96 pages. $25.00. ISBN: 978-1-4728-6886-2

Naval campaigns in the Western Pacific prior to the 19th century receive little attention from Western readers, so reading this book is a route to broadening one's understanding of naval history. The author covers the early naval battles of the Imjin War in 1592 between Korea and Japan. Korean Admiral Yi Sun-sin countered a Japanese invasion fleet led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, attacking Busan, after which the Korean and Japanese fleets fought at Hansando and Angolpo, after which stalemate resulted. This comprehensive, well-illustrated book covers the organization, ships, and technology of the belligerents.

THE USS SWORDFISH: The World War II Patrols of the First American Submarine to Sink a Japanese Ship

By George R. Billy. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2019. 222 pages. $35.00



ISBN: 978-1-4766-7774-3

This book is a history of the USS Swordfish (SS 193), a Sargo-class boat commissioned in 1939. Deployed to the Philippines in November 1941, Swordfish became the first U.S. submarine to sink a Japanese ship in World War II. The submarine conducted 13 war patrols, serving in turn under seven commanding officers. The 13th patrol would be its last, as it went missing during operations near Okinawa in January 1945. This extensively research book details each of the patrols of the Swordfish and the submarine's place in the overall strangulation of Japan. ■

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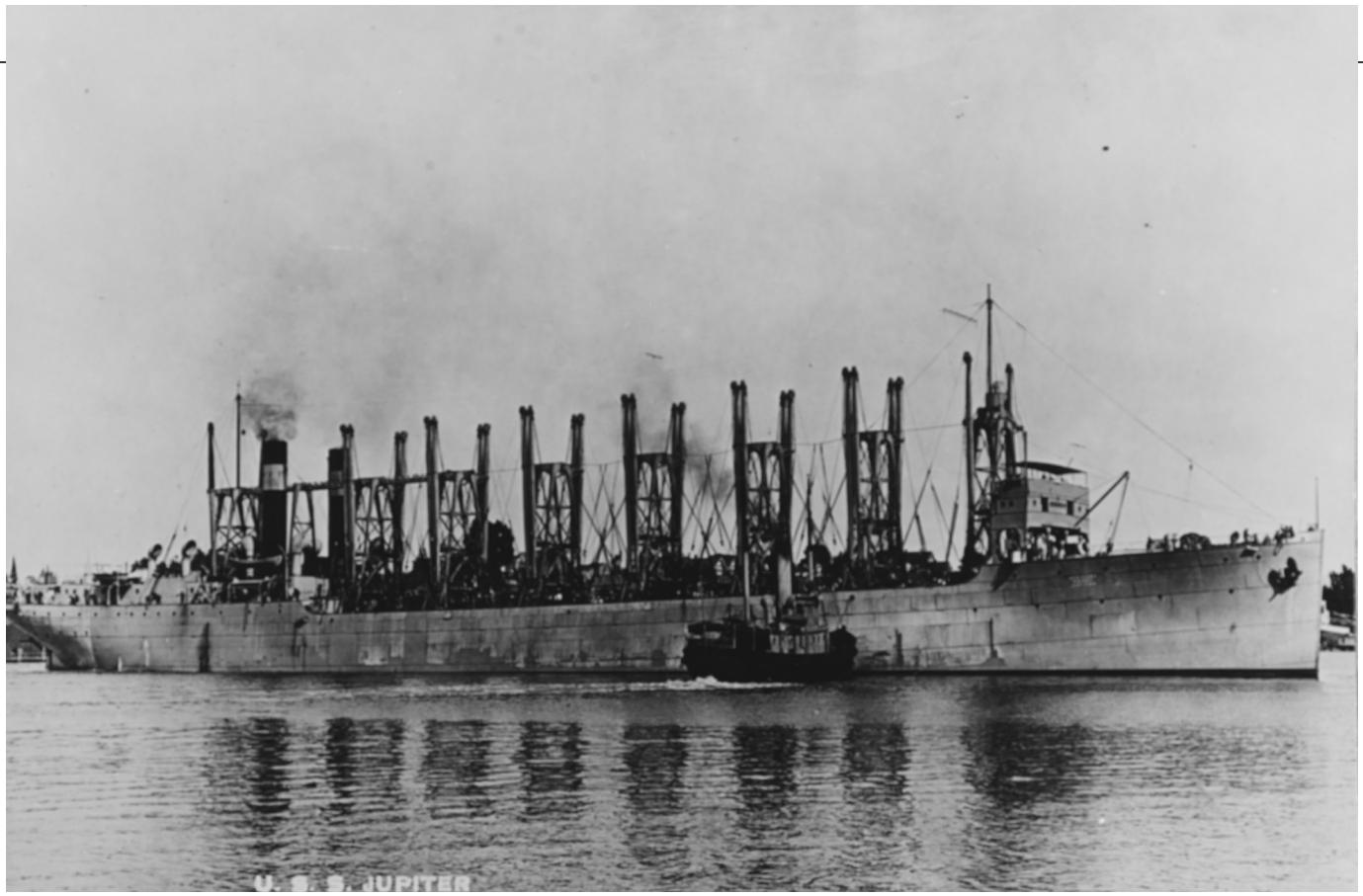


The USS Jupiter (Collier #3) off the coast of Mare Island Navy Yard, California, October 1913. Photo credit: U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command.

Transitional Era

Fleet Colliers Fueled the Coal-Fired Navy

BY DAVID F. WINKLER

On Dec. 16, 1907, the U.S. Navy dispatched 16 battleships from Hampton Roads, Virginia, on a round-the-world odyssey. The battleship flotilla would earn its place in history as the "Great White Fleet."

The sendoff had not been without concerns. If the Great White Fleet had an Achilles' heel, it was logistics. Keeping the fireboxes stoked required constant deliveries of coal. At the time only four of the 18 existing U.S. Navy colliers could support extended cruise operations. To supply the needed "black rock," the Navy chartered 38 colliers. Only eight of the colliers were U.S. flagged. Most of the remaining flew the red ensign of the British merchant fleet as many American shipping companies turned down the Navy's offer to transport coal at $9 per ton. Given those circumstances, Rear Adm. William S. Cowles argued, "Colliers are an absolutely necessary adjunct for an efficient fleet of naval vessels."

Congress had begun to address the problem back in April 1904 with the authorization of the first two fleet colliers. Named Vestal (later AC 1) and Prometheus (later AC 2), they were built in navy yards in Brooklyn, New York, and Mare Island, California. However, Vestal and Prometheus would have relatively short lives as colliers due to a design flaw that placed each ship's pilot house amidships, which made it difficult to operate coal rigs fore and aft. Converted to repair ships, both served the nation well during two world wars. At Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, Vestal, alongside Arizona, survived to get under way and support recovery operations.

As part of the congressional fiscal 1909 appropriation for the Navy passed on May 13, 1908, Congress authorized the Navy to construct two fleet colliers with cost not to exceed $1.8 million each, directing that one be built at a government yard on the West Coast, with the other to be bid on by private shipyards on the East Coast.

Few ships achieved as much historical notoriety as what would become Jupiter (Fleet Collier No. 3) and Cyclops (Fleet Collier No. 4). The Mare Island Navy Yard would build Jupiter. William Cramp & Sons Ship and Engine Building Company of Philadelphia stunned the Navy with an offer of $775,000 — less than half of what Congress had appropriated to build the ship. With the unspent appropriation, the Secretary of the Navy was authorized to acquire a third collier, the Neptune, to be built by the Maryland Steel Company facility at Sparrows Point near Baltimore.

The first of the three colliers completed, Cyclops, went down the building ways into the Delaware River on May 7, 1910. In November the Navy preliminarily accepted the ship and placed it in service at the Norfolk Navy Yard with the Naval Auxiliary Service. To put the project in perspective, Cyclops, at 525 feet in length, was over 72 feet longer than the U.S. Navy's battleship South Carolina launched in 1908.

The first of the three authorized, Jupiter would be last to be launched on Aug. 24, 1912. As with Cyclops and Neptune, Jupiter featured an elevated pilot house forward of its amidships cargo holds and coaling derricks. All three colliers featured two tall, side-by-side aft stacks.

With new classes of battleships under design, the Navy decided to select the three large fleet colliers being constructed to install three different propulsion systems for evaluation. The Cyclops received a three-cylinder, vertical, triple-expansion steam plant that was the standard for the era. The Neptune introduced a steam turbine plant, similar to that installed in Britain's revolutionary battleship HMS Dreadnought. The Jupiter would also receive a steam turbine; however, the difference in design was that the Neptune would operate using a series of mechanical reduction gears to transfer power from the steam turbine to the shaft, while the Jupiter's steam turbine would power electric motors that then drove the shafts. The Jupiter's system was known as the Melville-McAlpine Electric Drive. With Jupiter proving the viability of this unique propulsion plant, the Navy would have it installed in six battleships and the future carriers Lexington and Saratoga.

Colliers are an absolutely necessary adjunct for an efficient fleet of naval vessels.

- Rear Admiral William S. Cowles

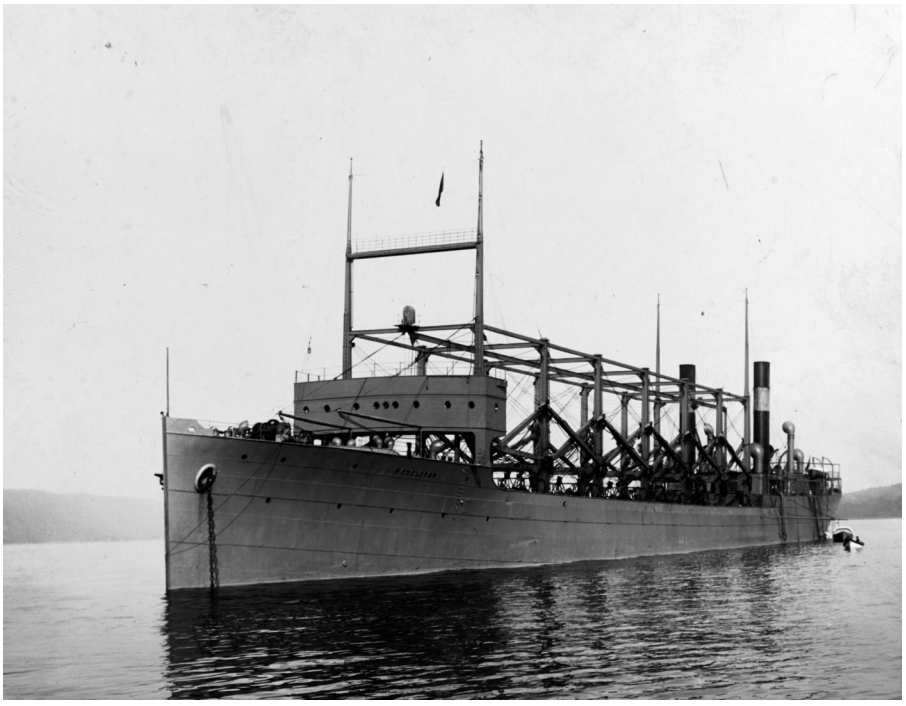
Unlike the Cyclops and Neptune, the Navy placed Jupiter in commission as a regular Navy ship with a uniformed Navy crew and not assigned to the Naval Auxiliary Service. The bluejackets assigned were selected from thousands of applicants from around the fleet. Driving the interest to become a plank-owner was the technology being introduced. Electricity would not only drive the ship but heat cooking ranges and operate potato peelers! Given the motive power, many began to dub the ship "the seagoing trolley car." The first commanding officer, Commander Joseph Mason Reeves, had been the officer-in-charge of the naval coaling station nearby at Tiburon, California.

The three colliers would support operations in 1914 against Mexico following the Vera Cruz incident. With war erupting in Europe, Jupiter became the first U.S. Navy ship to transit the newly opened Panama Canal from the Pacific to the Caribbean and provided coal to fleet units, most frequently at anchorages where the ship to be refueled tied up alongside as the collier's steel clam buckets reached down into her holds to grab the black rock and sling the fuel over to the deck of the receiving ship. Of note, the 1914 Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy stated:

Each year marks more distinctly the passing of coal, with its attendant discomfort and engineering and military inferiority as fuel for ships of war. Henceforth, all the fighting ships which are added to the fleet will use oil, and the transition from coal to oil will mark an era in our naval development almost comparable with the change from black powder to smokeless powder for our guns.

When the United States entered World War I, that prophecy bore

out. Following a hull cleaning at the New York Navy Yard, the collier took on pig iron for ballast and a cargo of grain destined to feed a future American Expeditionary Force and a contingent of the Navy's First Aeronautic Detachment — the first U.S. force to deploy to France.



USS Cyclops anchored in the Hudson River off New York City, Oct. 3, 1911. Photo credit: New York Navy Yard | Naval History and Heritage Command.

Underway on May 27, Jupiter met up with the awaiting destroyers Walke and Sterett. Both oil burners, the two warships did not have the fuel capacity to make the 3,600-mile voyage. The solution: Jupiter took Walke under tow for the first three days. Then Jupiter took Sterett under tow and, with a fuel hose extended back under the tow line, Jupiter proceeded to "oil" the trailing destroyer, pumping 6,000 gallons in an hour, which was the amount of time the Sterett needed to top off. During the refueling, Walke steamed around the two connected vessels to fend off any attackers. Walke again came under tow and took on petroleum as Sterett assumed guard duty. Three days later further north, the oiler Maumee would claim the accomplishment of the first wartime refueling at sea when she replenished six destroyers en route to Ireland. Though Jupiter beat her to the punch, Maumee's pioneering use of refueling alongside made that feat more notable. Meanwhile Jupiter would refuel Walke three more times and the Sterett twice on the way over.

Jupiter arrived off the French port of Verdon on June 5, having dodged two U-boat torpedoes in the Bay of Biscay. Neptune arrived at St. Nazaire three days later with the other half of the air detachment led by Lieutenant Commander Kenneth Whiting. With their missions accomplished, both colliers returned to the states to return to coal delivery duties. Then early in 1918, the Navy dispatched the Cyclops to Brazil to take on a cargo of manganese. On Feb. 15, 1918, the Cyclops departed Rio de Janeiro having loaded 10,500 tons of the stone. After a call to Barbados on March 4, it was never seen again.

Following World I during 1919, Jupiter spent much time steaming back and forth to Europe while Neptune operated on the West Coast. In the meantime, the colliers became a focal point at Navy General Board deliberations on the viability of an experimental aircraft carrier. Commander Whiting, impressed with Neptune, recommended that ship be converted. Navy constructor Commander Clayton M. Simmers demurred, arguing Jupiter, with its electric drive propulsion plant and two shafts, was the speedier of the two. The General Board concurred. Jupiter would be converted to become the Navy's first aircraft carrier. Proposals to also convert Neptune were considered. Instead, in 1922 — the year the renamed Langley was commissioned — Neptune was taken out of service and placed in upkeep at Philadelphia Navy Yard. It would be scrapped in 1939. Eventually converted into a large seaplane tender, Langley would be lost to Japanese air attack south of Java on Feb. 27, 1942. ■

Dr. Winkler is the Historian General of the Naval Order of the United States.

Shoring Up the Fleet

Navy Confronts Infrastructure Backlog

BY DAN TAYLOR

Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander of Navy Installations Command, recognizes a distinguished Sailor at the Naval Air Station Pensacola galley during a tour onboard NAS Pensacola, Fla., Apr. 4. Improving quality of life for our Sailors is a foundational element of enabling the warfighter and maintaining combat readiness. Photo credit: U.S. Navy | Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kyleigh Williams.

For most of the past two decades, the U.S. Navy made a deliberate choice: when budgets were tight, the fleet came first. Ships, aircraft and weapons systems absorbed the available resources, while ports, dry docks, barracks, hangars and support facilities took a back seat. The logic was defensible at the time, but today it leaves the Navy in a bind.

"The shore is not ready for conflict today," Vice Admiral Scott Gray, commander of Navy Installations Command (CNIC), wrote in the introduction to his command's 2024-2029 strategic guidance. "Many of our programs are resourced to a level that limits our warfighting and warfighters. Degradation of our infrastructure is accelerating at a time when a solid foundation is key to winning against global competitors."

Gray oversees about 70 Navy installations worldwide, and his assessment of their condition is pointed. He told Stars and Stripes during a visit to Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, in January the Navy's combat power and readiness originate ashore and inadequate facilities threaten the service's ability to compete with peer adversaries.

To deal with this problem, CNIC launched its "Revitalizing the Shore" initiative, a five-year strategic plan covering 2024 through 2029, to address what the command describes as resource gaps affecting installations globally. The plan is organized around four lines of effort: aligning the shore enterprise; delivering fleet-focused outcomes; improving quality of service; and bolstering the foundation. Each addresses a different dimension of the infrastructure problem.

A CNIC spokesperson told *Seapower* the initiative "focuses on cost-effective ways to meet warfighting needs and improve quality of service for Sailors and families."

The strategy document itself is more direct about the scale of the challenge. Base Operating Support funding, it notes, "has been essentially flat" and is projected to remain so across the upcoming Future Years Defense Program. Infrastructure degradation, the document warns, is "accelerating," not simply persisting.

One of the first moves has been structural. In 2023, the chief of naval operations designated CNIC as the Shore Type Commander, giving it authority to man, train, equip and maintain Navy shore installations, a significant consolidation of responsibilities

previously fragmented across multiple commands. The realignment is now being executed in phases.

In November 2025, CNIC completed the transfer of the Navy's bulk fuel operations — 56 Defense Fuel Support Points across nine regions — from Naval Supply Systems Command to installation commanding officers. The move was described as a direct response to lessons learned from the 2021 Red Hill bulk fuel storage facility water contamination incident in Hawaii, which exposed the risks of diffuse accountability over critical infrastructure.

On Feb. 22, 2026, the Navy took the next step, transferring command and control of installation maintenance and public works from Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) to CNIC, directly under installation commanding officers. Approximately 1,700 personnel in facilities management and environmental services now work directly for base commanders rather than NAVFAC.

"This realignment is about cutting through layers, bringing decision-making closer to the deckplate," Gray said in a Navy statement on the transfer.

The philosophy behind both moves is the same: consolidate accountability and eliminate bureaucratic distance between a problem and the person responsible for fixing it. "This move creates a single line of support for the warfighter," Gray said. "Whether it's a ship captain needing reliable shore power or a squadron leader with an urgent hangar repair, they now have one installation commander who is fully accountable for delivering that support."

Additionally, CNIC is championing alternative construction technologies, including modular and prefabricated structures, tension fabric buildings and industrialized construction methods that use standardized designs to achieve economies of scale. The CNIC spokesperson said after Super Typhoon Mawar severely damaged a hangar for Helicopter Squadron 25 in Guam, a prefabricated tension fabric hangar was deployed rapidly, allowing the squadron and its MH-60 Seahawk helicopters to remain fully mission-capable while permanent repairs were made.

Sustained Commitment

Sailor housing more broadly is a central thread of the initiative. Gray directed his region commanders in spring 2025 to personally inspect all unaccompanied housing facilities within their areas of responsibility, a signal the condition of barracks had become a command priority. Those inspections helped inform a significant infusion of funding: $375 million for barracks improvements. Of that, $75 million was directed to 95 smaller-scale projects across 50 installations, while the remaining $300 million was allocated to six major sustainment, restoration, and modernization projects addressing energy efficiency, HVAC, plumbing, electrical systems and bathrooms.

In the years ahead, the "Revitalizing the Shore" guidance points to several concrete lines of effort the Navy intends to pursue. For example, CNIC plans to complete the second phase of its public works transfer, bringing remaining NAVFAC functions fully under installation commanding officers. The command will also push forward on its Infrastructure Investment Plan across multiple Future Years Defense Programs — a multi-year recapitalization effort focused on the most mission-critical facilities, with particular emphasis on shipyard infrastructure.

Alternative construction methods, including modular and prefabricated designs, are expected to become standard rather than exceptional tools. On the quality-of-service side, the Navy plans to expand high-speed Wi-Fi access in unaccompanied housing, pilot new approaches to childcare capacity and standardize unaccompanied housing management systems.

Underlying all of it is the acknowledgment in the strategic guidance that the shore infrastructure deficit will not be resolved in a single budget cycle. Gray believes it will take a sustained, disciplined commitment to treating Navy installations as warfighting platforms that require the same consistent investment as the ships and aircraft they support. ■

Dan Taylor has covered the U.S. Navy and the Pentagon since 2007 for a wide range of publications, focusing particularly on Pentagon acquisition and the latest in defense technology. Currently, he is technology editor for Military Embedded Systems.

The Rickover Standard: Leadership Lessons for the Modern Navy

BY JOANN DIGENNARO

Admiral Hyman G. Rickover was one of the most demanding leaders in U.S. naval history, brilliant and unrelenting in his pursuit of excellence. During his six-decade career, he famously built the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Nautilus, and in doing so reshaped the standards for technical mastery and moral responsibility in military leadership.

Yet Rickover's greatest legacy isn't steel and circuitry. It's a model of leadership that still offers vital lessons for today's Navy — an age when ships, systems and strategy evolve faster than ever, but the human dimension of command remains integral to success.

Lesson One: Accountability Is Non-Negotiable

Rickover's management style began and ended with personal responsibility. He refused to accept "shared" accountability that diluted ownership. Officers who worked for him quickly learned responsibility could not be delegated away, only executed or neglected. That ethos underpinned the Nuclear Propulsion Program's unbroken reactor safety, a record unmatched in any high-risk engineering field.

Every captain and engineer under Rickover's command signed their name to the readiness of their ship or reactor — not as a formality, but as a moral commitment. If something went wrong, there would be no excuses, no shifting blame to a system or subordinate. In today's Navy, where operations depend on complex, networked systems, Rickover's lesson is more relevant than ever: accountability must remain with one person in charge.

Lesson Two: Details Matter; So Do Standards

Rickover's obsession with detail was legendary. He read every report and visited shipyards personally to inspect welds. He demanded contractors and officers understand every aspect of detail because small errors in nuclear engineering could have catastrophic consequences.

A 1955 portrait of Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. Photo credit: U.S. Navy | Naval History and Heritage Command.

He also knew "standards" meant more than compliance checklists. They represented culture. The military often prizes efficiency over excellence. However, Rickover insisted precision and pride were inseparable. "If you are going to do something, do it right the first time because you won't have time to do it over," he said.

For today's leaders who are managing the most advanced systems in the history of warfare, his high standard of disciplined excellence still applies. Technical progress will fail without leaders who care about details enough to abide by them daily.

Lesson Three: Educate the Whole Officer

Rickover's most unconventional belief was that technical brilliance alone made for poor leadership. He wanted officers who read history and could discuss the moral questions posed by Greek philosophers, not just those who could explain nuclear physics. To the "Father of the Nuclear Navy," a commander's intellect had to be rounded, capable of moral reasoning, not just mathematical precision.

Rickover was known to press candidates on literature, ethics and even their own personal failings. He wanted to see whether future officers could think independently, react under pressure and educate themselves continually.

Today's Navy faces similar demands. The challenges of information warfare and artificial intelligence require officers who understand not only systems, but people. They must navigate the ethical dimensions of command decisions in a world where data and missiles move faster than judgment.

Lesson Four: Bureaucracy Is a Battlefield; Learn to Fight on It

Many senior officers found H.G. Rickover obstinate and insubordinate, and some politicians found him abrasive. But his mastery of the bureaucracy ensured the Navy's nuclear propulsion program was sustained. He fought fiercely for the independence needed to maintain safety and quality, knowing one corner cut today could mean a disaster tomorrow.

Modern leaders, whether commanding Seabees or managing advanced systems programs, often face similar institutional friction: competing priorities, shifting resources, urgent timelines. Rickover did not equate bureaucratic compliance with leadership and he didn't care about ruffling feathers. Leadership frequently requires being unpopular and standing firm for principles when speed or convenience threaten safety, ethics or long-term effectiveness.

Lesson Five: Lead With Moral Courage

Above all, Rickover's leadership was rooted in moral conviction. He saw himself as a custodian of public trust by wielding nuclear power on behalf of the American people. That awareness infused every policy, procedure and personnel decision he made.

He often reminded officers that technology magnifies both competence and failure. The higher the capability, the greater the consequences of negligence. Modern naval leaders, commanding ships that can project power across multiple domains, face similar stakes. The challenge, as Rickover would say, is to build organizations capable of moral and operational excellence.

For the admiral, moral courage meant never tolerating mediocrity or permitting the fear of criticism to override one's duty. Those lessons are timeless.

Leadership in the Age of Complexity

The U.S. Navy in 2026 operates in an environment that Rickover could scarcely have imagined — one of unmanned systems, instantaneous communication and information operations across the spectrum of conflict. But the essence of his leadership philosophy remains remarkably current.

He recognized that while machines extend human reach, they also amplify human error. The solution, then and now, is not to rely on technology to save us from ourselves, but to cultivate leaders with the discipline, intellect and moral spine to use it wisely.

Rickover believed mastery of systems begins with mastery of self. His officers understood leadership is not about comfort but about stewardship — the disciplined commitment to safeguard what others depend on but may never fully understand.

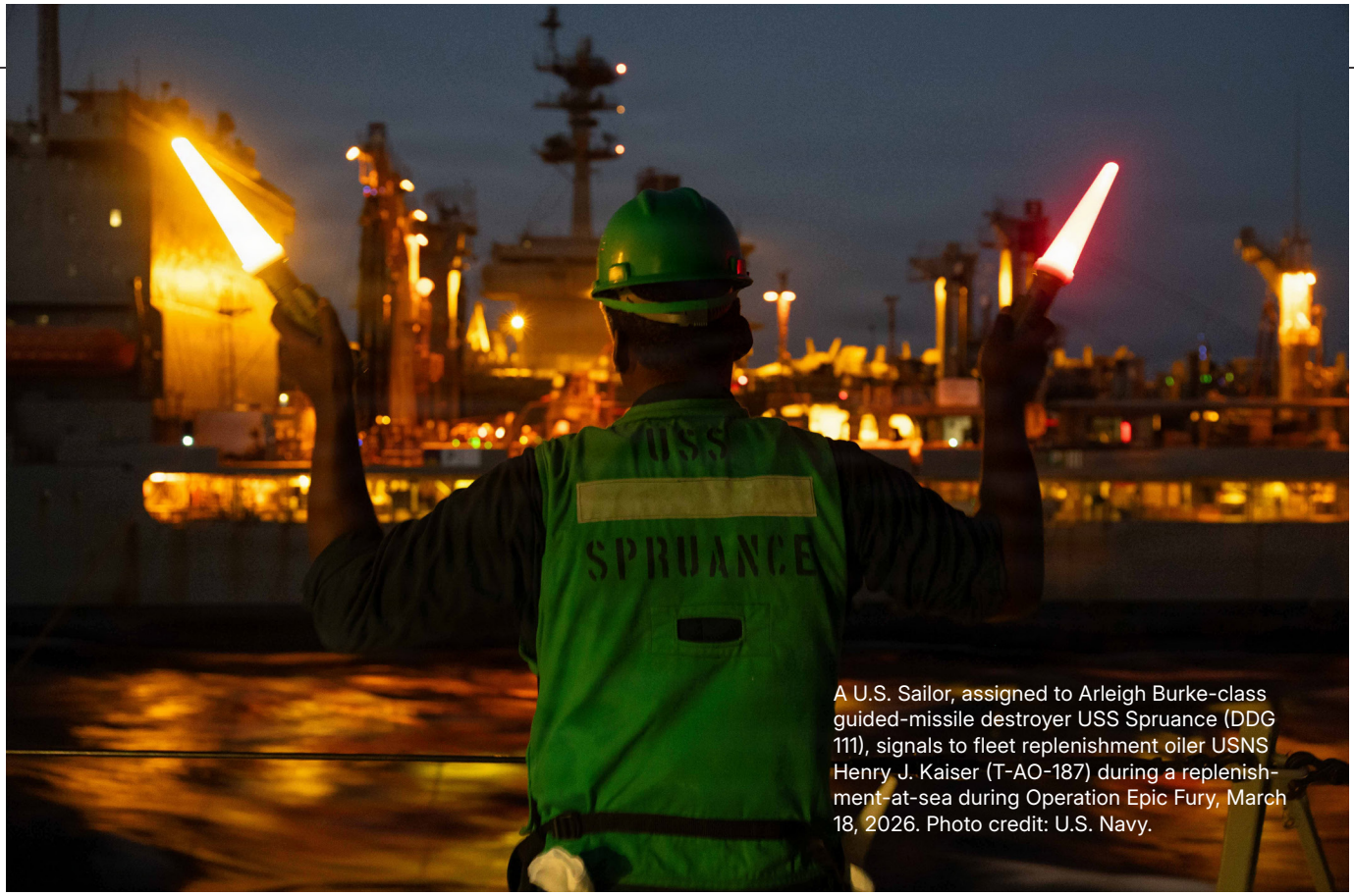
The Rickover Legacy

By the time he retired in 1982, Admiral Rickover had shaped not just a fleet of ships but a generation of leaders molded by his demanding expectations. The Navy's nuclear propulsion community still bears his imprint: a culture of accountability, excellence and ethical clarity.

Rickover's insistence on personal responsibility, intellectual rigor and moral courage holds lessons for today's naval leaders. These same principles guide the Center for Excellence in Education (CEE), which he and I began more than four decades ago.

Founded in 1983, CEE fosters excellence among global scientific leaders and provides cost-free science, technology, engineering and mathematics enrichment programs to students and teachers to promote U.S. innovation. CEE cultivates talented youth through high-level STEM mentorship and programming to keep the U.S. competitive. ■

Joann P. DiGennaro is co-founder and president of the Center for Excellence in Education. Her new biography of the admiral, "Rickover: Underway, My Way," publishes in May 2026 in conjunction with the America 250th birthday celebration.



A U.S. Sailor, assigned to Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Spruance (DDG 111), signals to fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO-187) during a replenishment-at-sea during Operation Epic Fury, March 18, 2026. Photo credit: U.S. Navy.

Chokepoint Logistics

Blockade of Iranian Ports Puts Navy Sustainment Network to the Test

BY DAN TAYLOR

For decades, the Strait of Hormuz has represented the single most consequential chokepoint in global maritime trade — a passage through which, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, roughly 20 million barrels per day of petroleum liquids flowed in 2024, representing approximately 20% of global consumption. When the Iran War began on Feb. 28, with joint U.S.-Israeli strikes that CENTCOM designated Operation Epic Fury, that chokepoint became a combat zone, and the U.S. Navy found itself managing one of the most complex logistics challenges it has faced in a generation.

Iran's response to the strikes was to mine the strait and choke off commercial traffic. The U.S. response, announced by CENTCOM on April 12 and implemented the following day, was a naval blockade of all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports. On April 14, CENTCOM commander Brad Cooper declared it fully in effect.

"A blockade of Iranian ports has been fully implemented as U.S. forces maintain maritime superiority in the Middle East," Cooper said. "U.S. forces have completely halted economic trade going in and out of Iran by sea." The operation involves more than 10,000 U.S. troops, over a dozen Navy ships, and fighter jets in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, according to U.S. military statements.

But executing that blockade — while simultaneously managing mine clearance, protecting commercial shipping and sustaining forward-deployed forces — has placed extraordinary demands on the Navy's logistics network in the region.

That network is built around U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet, headquartered at Naval Support Activity Bahrain. The operational logistics backbone is Military Sealift Command Central, whose commander is dual-hatted as Commander, Logistics Forces for NAVCENT, with Task Force 53 coordinating replenishment at sea and the movement of fuel, ordnance, cargo and personnel across the theater.

The at-sea sustainment of forward-deployed forces relies on two classes of MSC ships: fleet replenishment oilers, which deliver ship propulsion fuel and aviation fuel — Kaiser-class oilers carry about 180,000 barrels — and T-AKE dry cargo and ammunition ships, which deliver ammunition, food, and repair parts, with representative loads of 6,675 tons of dry cargo and 1,716 tons of refrigerated stores, according to Navy fact files. Together, they allow combatants to remain on station for extended periods without returning to port.

That capability has become critical because the shore node at Bahrain has not been immune to the conflict. Reporting following the Feb. 28 strikes indicated Iran damaged U.S. Navy facilities in the Bahrain area, triggering evacuation guidance for personnel and families. This illustrated a vulnerability logistics planners have long understood: fixed command and logistics nodes are targets, and when degraded, the cascading effects — displaced personnel, interrupted contracting, disrupted communications — become problems in their own right.

The Navy has been drawing on depth elsewhere in the network. NAVSUP Fleet Logistics Center Bahrain maintains contracting and logistics detachments in both Oman and the UAE, and U.S. access arrangements with Oman, including ports at Duqm and Salalah, provide staging options on the Gulf of Oman side of the strait, outside the minefield and the most constrained combat geography.

Strait Minefield

On April 11, CENTCOM announced U.S. forces had begun a mine-clearance mission in the strait, attributing the mines to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and stated a plan to establish and share a safe pathway with maritime industry. Mine countermeasure operations are slow and resource-intensive and keeping clearance elements and their escorts on station significantly increases UNREP demand. The mine threat also shapes where the Navy can operate: CENTCOM's blockade architecture has concentrated enforcement in the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea approaches rather than inside the more exposed and mined segments of the strait itself.

Michael O'Hanlon, director of research and senior fellow of the foreign policy program at the Brookings Institution, told *Seapower* the conditions for forcing the strait fully open to commercial traffic don't yet exist.

"If you put minesweepers in first, they're vulnerable to drones and missiles," he said. "And destroyers are at risk from mines. You'd have to do that in tandem."

He described what would have to change: sustained air campaigns degrading Iran's fast attack boat inventory, which is the primary means of deploying additional mines.

The Navy's logistics mission at Hormuz is also inseparable from the fate of commercial shipping. CENTCOM's blockade is scoped specifically to Iranian port traffic and explicitly does not impede freedom of navigation for vessels transiting to and from non-Iranian ports, but the practical reality for commercial shipping is more constrained than that legal distinction suggests. The Maritime Administration issued an advisory in March warning of Iranian missile, drone and uncrewed surface vessel threats and directing U.S.-flagged vessels to coordinate with NAVCENT's Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping office.

Looking ahead, if attacks on fixed bases continue, NAVCENT and MSC will likely continue shifting sustainment emphasis toward Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea nodes, with increased reliance on afloat prepositioning rather than fixed port infrastructure. Longer term, the crisis is sharpening the case for distributed logistics — more dispersed shore nodes, greater use of uncrewed maritime sensing through efforts like Task Force 59, and harder scrutiny of the overall capacity of the Combat Logistics Force.

For now, the blockade is in effect and mine clearance is underway. How long the Navy can sustain that posture — and at what cost to the platforms, personnel, and logistics infrastructure bearing the burden — remains the open question at the world's most consequential stretch of water. ■

Dan Taylor has covered the U.S. Navy and the Pentagon since 2007 for a wide range of publications, focusing particularly on Pentagon acquisition and the latest in defense technology. Currently, he is technology editor for Military Embedded Systems.

Sea-Air-Space Attendees Hear Calls for Steady Budgets, Faster Shipbuilding

BY BRETT DAVIS, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Attendees at Sea-Air-Space 2026 heard top speakers from the military, industry and government say the military needs steady funding, many more ships — including a new battleship class — and a new way of acquiring systems that emphasizes speed and quality.

It also marked the short tenure of former Navy Secretary John Phelan, who was reportedly forced out of the job the day after his keynote speech at Sea-Air-Space. In what turned out to be his farewell speech, Phelan argued for consistent defense funding rather than continuing resolutions that freeze spending at previous levels.

"Continuing resolutions impose constrained short-term funding conditions that force legacy program tradeoffs and impact our ability to innovate and therefore our readiness over time," Phelan said.

Phelan and a previous speaker, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Daryl Caudle, also touted the need for a new battleship as part of a "high-low" Navy mix, called the Golden Fleet, that would include battle force ships on the top and and numerous uncrewed ships on the bottom.

Caudle also unveiled the Fleet Introduction Operating System, or FIOS, which includes common interfaces, open architectures and other changes so, "if a capability shows up, it's ready to fight. Day one … bring me capabilities that work on arrival. Integrated. Scalable. Modular or containerized. Developed with modern training and implementation products with a sustain tail."

Russell Vought, director of the Office of Management and Budget, made it clear on the last day of the conference that the administration wants these systems and these ships on time and under budget, or the White House will shop around to nontraditional shipyards to get them.

"To be clear, we need more ships and we need them right now," Vought said. "We hope this year's budget on top of the 82 ships we already received in [fiscal] '26 in the One Big Beautiful Bill convey that sense of urgency on the part of President Trump and his administration. If we cannot get the ships we need from traditional sources at cost and on time, we will get them from other shipyards."

Some of those other ships are likely to be uncrewed, and one acronym was heard quite often at the conference: MUSV, for medium uncrewed surface vessel, a category the Navy plans to begin buying to bulk up

Above: Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Kevin Lunday gives an update on the service's plans.

Below: Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Daryl Caudle said the era of platform-centric acquisition is over. Photo credits: Laura Hatcher.

Clockwise from top left: Marine Corps Commandant General Eric Smith gives USMC highlights; Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought says the White House is serious about shipbuilding; an attendee tries out virtual reality goggles; former Navy League National President Alan Kaplan, center, receives the Distinguished Service Award from Navy League National President Larry Salter, left, and CEO Mike Stevens, right; and federal lawmakers discuss maritime issues. Photo credits: Laura Hatcher.

the fleet at a much reduced cost compared to aircraft carriers and battleships.

Many industry exhibitors displayed their MUSV wares, including several on the outside pier that offered rides on the choppy waters of the Potomac river.

Starting with STEM

As it has for the past several years, Sea-Air-Space opened with an event designed to attract students to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM. The annual STEM Expo exposed students to some of the scientific principles underlying the sea services while also serving up a little fun.

"Having these young folks here today to see how exciting all the different aspects are, from the shipbuilding to the missiles and aerospace industry, [and] medicines here, is just a real motivating opportunity for them to get them excited about all the things that we do in this industry, to get excited about school, and I know for certain we're going to have some of them that come in and benefit our nation and this industrial base in the future," said Buzz Donnelly, vice president of consumer affairs at HII, which sponsored the event. ■

Top left: Students at the STEM Expo take part in a Mad Science demonstration.

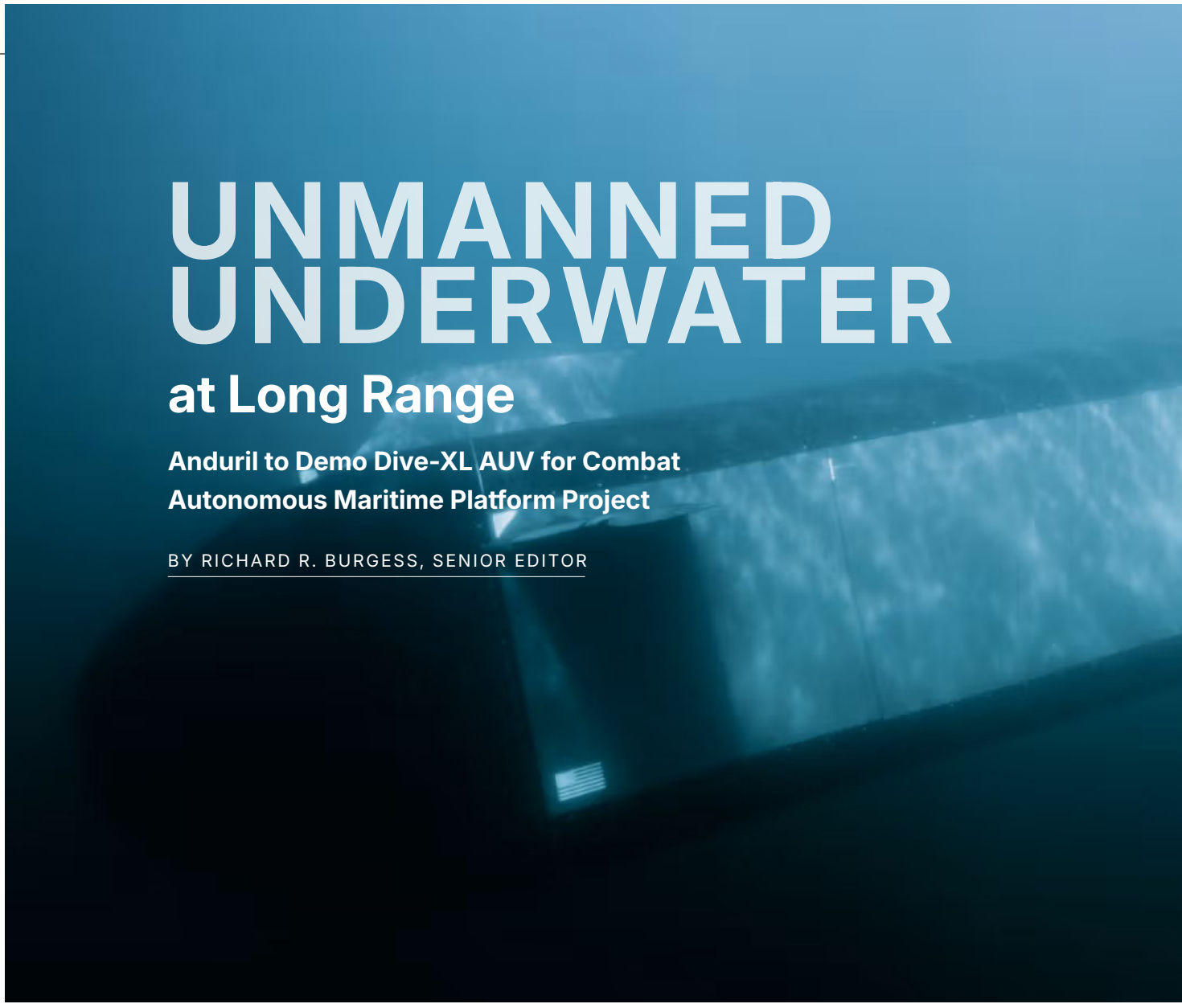
Bottom left: Teddy, one of the racing presidents of the Washington Nationals baseball team, visits Sea-Air-Space.

Bottom right: One of several uncrewed surface vehicles exhibited at the Gaylord Pier during the conference.

Photo credits: James Peterson.

Navy divers approach NASA's Artemis II module to recover the crew in San Diego after returning from a lunar mission, April 10, 2026. The USS John P. Murtha is underway in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of operations supporting the Artemis mission following its splashdown in the Pacific Ocean. Photo credit: U.S. Navy | Petty Officer 2nd Class David Rowe.


RESCUE



UNMANNED UNDERWATER

at Long Range

Anduril to Demo Dive-XL AUV for Combat Autonomous Maritime Platform Project

BY RICHARD R. BURGESS, SENIOR EDITOR

The Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) and the U.S. Navy selected Anduril in March 2026 to demonstrate its Dive-XL extra-large autonomous underwater vehicle (XL-AUV) to fill in a large gap in undersea capabilities for the Navy.

The DIU selected Anduril for the Combat Autonomous Maritime Platform (CAMP) Project, for which solicitation was made in April 2025 for "commercially available, demonstration-ready uncrewed systems that address these limitations, offering a scalable and cost-effective solution for long-range, high-capacity payload deployment," the solicitation announced.

"Current UUV capabilities present limitations in range and payload capacity, hindering the effective deployment of critical resources in certain operational scenarios," the DIU said in the solicitation.

Desired missions for the CAMP AUV include emplacement of various-sized payloads; bathymetric surveys; mapping; and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The AUV would be able to communicate across the air/water interface with acoustic and radio methods and be able to operate in a GPS-denied environment.

Characteristics desired by the DIU include capability of undersea transits greater that 1,000 nautical miles; operating at depths greater than 656 feet; carrying and deploying modular payloads five feet long and 19 inches in diameter and 21 feet long and 21

The Defense Innovation Unit selected the Dive-XL for the Combat Autonomous Maritime Platform project. Photo credit: Anduril.

inches in diameter. The vehicle should be capable of "autonomous operation including navigation, guidance and obstacle/collision avoidance (including during emergence and at surface), as well as remote operation … [and be] transportable, deployable and recoverable with commonly available commercial freight and transportation equipment, or demonstrate a development pathway to achieve this," the solicitation said.

"Anduril was selected via DIU'S competitive Commercial Solutions Opening after having completed the longest XL-AUV demonstration conducted to date, validating extended-range performance and system endurance in operationally relevant conditions," Anduril said in a release. "Anduril's autonomous undersea vehicles to-date have accumulated over 42,355 kilometers and 6,752 hours of mission time, proving the maturity, reliability, and long-duration capability required for distributed maritime operations."

Under the DIU/Navy contract award, Anduril will demonstrate a long-duration, operationally representative voyage of a Dive-XL AUV within four months of the contract award.

"For the U.S. Navy, CAMP is a significant step forward — enabling experimentation with XL-AUVs at meaningful scale and establishing a deliberate pathway toward wide-scale adoption and operational deployment," Anduril said.

"It's really focused on prototyping, experimentation and providing the opportunities for the U.S. Navy and for Sailors to be part of those demonstrations, such that they can then gain the confidence in the system with real hard, tangible data and evidence, and then DIU would then be able to partner with the Navy to then transition into Navy programs and operations," said Andrew Nuss, Anduril's lead for growth and strategy in Anduril's Maritime Division, in a roundtable for reporters.

The Dive XL is similar to the Ghost Shark XL-AUV Anduril developed for the Royal Australian Navy.

"That's why we have this belief that the underlying reliability of the system is kind of what we will see and what's been successful with Australia and our commercial customers in this space," said Shane Arnott, Anduril's senior vice president of its Maritime Division, during the roundtable for reporters. "What will be different is the missionization. So, we've already started doing U.S. payloads here in the United States using American steel, Americans with their hands-on keyboard writing software, etc. So, the architecture allows us to do that. [The AUV] is the truck, they're missionized for the U.S. Navy with whatever they want. That is actually part of the CAMP program. For obvious reasons, we can't talk about the specifics on the missionization, but it's both of those things together that will deliver a capability."

Nuss was not at liberty to discuss the contract value nor share many details of the demonstration other than "it will be a many-week-long voyage for the system

Anduril will demonstrate its Dive-XL extra-large autonomous underwater vehicle for the U.S. Navy. Photo credit: Anduril.

and really to demonstrate the autonomy of the system, the reliability of the system, the operations of the system, and do it in an operationally relevant way with Sailors side-by-side with the Anduril operators team.

"The long-range demo that we'll execute within the next couple months, that specific timing is not something that we can share right now but that will help validate the capability and demonstrate the capability to the U.S. Navy such that they can then make their programmatic decisions from there," he said. "There may be continued prototyping and missionization work that will continue as part of this program in partnership with DIU and the U.S. Navy."

Nuss also declined to disclose Anduril's partners in the CAMP project, but did say "very clearly that we are working very closely with the U.S. Navy to demonstrate the modular open systems architecture of the system and that may come with autonomy integration. It may come with unique payload integrations, payloads coming from the Navy or from other parties. That's all part of the architecture that we have developed around this capability is to be able to work either directly with Navy's or commercial partners or other industry partners that have unique payloads."

"Our architecture enables third party major payload sections, so big physical bits with elements that come out of it," Arnott said. "And there's software development, the payload development kit. So that's a fundamental part of our product architecture. How it's being utilized we can't share."

Undersea Challenges

Like many AUV types, the Dive-XL is electrically powered with batteries.

"We've then done some magic to make them survive subsea," Arnott said. "But what's interesting there is that we can start on mission and stay on mission at depth for our whole mission.

"One of the most dangerous things for submarines is coming up to the surface and then coming back down because there's nets, shipping containers, all sorts of things that you can run into that can impact your mission," he said. "Second to that is then also the ocean just wants to eat you. Anything that's inorganic in the ocean, the ocean tries to envelop it and a lot of those things that float in the ocean are close to the surface as well. So, if you can stay at depth below the twilight zone and even further, which is around a couple hundred meters and below, the survivability of the system is increased because the biofouling is decreased."

Arnott also addressed some of the challenges of operating AUVs.

"You don't have communication with these [AUV] systems," he said, noting in the air, surface and space domains, communications by radio — including via satellite — are usually reliable and constant. "As soon as you go below the waves, communication, you know, is orders of magnitude less useful. Acoustics are much worse than RF, etc., or satcom. So, your autonomy needs to be more resilient to work between [fewer] check-ins than you have in those other domains."

Arnott said navigation is the other major challenge.

"Knowing where you are is quite important," he said, noting the air, surface and space domains have access to GPS. "We don't have that. We've invested super heavily in that navigation and awareness piece. As a company, this is where we're very good: being able to understand where we are below the waves, and a bunch of this is proprietary technology but it's also having very strong awareness of everything around us from a safety standpoint. So that when we are surfacing, that we're doing it in a way that is safe, both to the vehicle but also to everyone around it as well.

"Then from a testing standpoint, just the resilience that the autonomy can go from a lot of systems that are out there for a couple of hours doing something fast and furious," he said. "How do we make sure our software is resilient enough that it can run for months at a time, still do its job, and deal with all those kind of issues? Each of those problems have been piece parts that we've been very deliberate in burning down."

Arnott said the CAMP project will advance the hedge force being advocated by the U.S. Navy's chief of naval operations.

"This particular asset is a very long range, very long endurance capability," he said. "Some of those missions are at range by themselves. Some of those missions are in collaboration with other systems including crewed systems or other unmanned systems or undersea communication systems, etc. It's a little bit different than some of the other forces that have the loyal wingman concept where it's always tethered to a crewed system of some variety. This has a much higher posture as it relates to a higher burden as it relates to autonomy, being able to work at very long ranges and to be able to work outside of communications. That is the challenge, if you will, for subsea where you don't have GPS all the time, you don't have RF communication or satcom all the time. So, both of those particular use cases have been what's been dictated and illustrated, if you will, by those hedge and hybrid strategies."

"We just believe that you look at the subsea domain, it's the last domain that's left open, if you will," Arnott said. "All the other domains are heavily contested or denied. And the subsea domain currently is patrolled and serviced by a very small number of exquisite capabilities in the Pacific and also the High North, which is the new fight that's starting around the Arctic. It's a water-based fight, so it's a no-brainer that robots are needed to supplement the crewed systems.

"Recently, we achieved what we call the Magellan milestone, which was having enough miles to go around the Earth for our AUVs," he said. "We're approaching around 7,000 hours at sea, and it's really about making sure that we're getting the readiness in our products and our capabilities that the Sailors can have confidence in using them. This CAMP program is an opportunity to do that, to trust these robots with very high-end warfighting missions."

Anduril now is building Ghost Shark and Dive-XLs at its Sydney, Australia, facilities and has built a facility in Quonset, Point, Rhode Island to annually deliver dozens of Dive-XLs and hundreds of the smaller Dive-LDs. ■

A Different World

Naval Integration and the Sustainment Fight

BY COLONEL PAUL GILLIKIN

U.S. Navy Landing Craft, Air Cushion 48 with Assault Craft Unit 5, disembarks Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) during ship-to-shore operations in the Pacific Ocean, Feb. 5, 2026. Photo credit: U.S. Marine Corps | Lance Cpl. Nicole Stuart.

The geopolitical order continues to shift. Since last year's Sea-Air-Space conference, the character of great power competition has evolved into a more volatile reality in which rivalry is increasingly giving way to conflict. That shift is now manifesting through flashpoints across multiple regions and domains, with the 2026 National Defense Strategy warning of an "increased risk of America itself being drawn into simultaneous major wars across theaters."

As competition intensifies across geographically dispersed theaters, maritime forces increasingly serve as the nation's first responders, positioned forward, persistently present and able to generate immediate effects in crisis. For the sea services, this environment has driven a visible reassertion of American naval power. Recent operations, including Operation Absolute Resolve in Venezuela and Operation Epic Fury in the Middle East, underscore the enduring relevance of maritime dominance in crisis response and deterrence.

Yet while these operations reaffirm the value of forward naval presence, they do not fully capture the demands of our nation's pacing threat. Fundamentally, the Indo-Pacific presents a different operational problem, where the challenge is projecting power and sustaining distributed forces among contested littorals over time.

This shift reinforces a broader reality: Maritime dominance alone is insufficient in contested littoral environments. Naval power is fully realized when the U.S. Navy partners with the expeditionary capabilities of the U.S. Marine Corps, enabling forces to seize, secure and operate from forward positions inside the threat envelope. This imperative is reflected in the Corps' modernization efforts, which emphasize a return to its historic role operating in the littorals and deeper integration with the Navy as a coequal partner in naval campaigning.

This operational imperative was institutionally reinforced across Marine Corps doctrine in in the Marine Corps' Vision and Strategy 2025, which defines the Corps as "increasingly reliant on naval deployment" and the Nation's expeditionary "force of choice" in an increasingly complex world.

Even as strategic discourse broadens to include both the homeland and our hemisphere, our nation's pacing threat remains in the vast, contested expanses of the Indo-Pacific. There, distance, denied access and persistent surveillance fundamentally complicate the projection, distribution and sustainment of combat power at scale. As forces distribute forward under concepts such as Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations and stand-in forces across the First Island Chain, contested access, degraded networks and the tyranny of distance converge to make sustainment the central operational problem.

Naval integration must therefore extend beyond force posture and into the sustainment of combat power inside the weapons engagement zone. Likely, supply lines are contested, command and control is degraded and resupply is neither assured nor timely.

To be clear, if a capability can't be produced or prepositioned inside the theater, there's a real chance it won't reach the warfighter at all.

The National Defense Strategy recognizes a contested threat environment and the tyranny of distance in the Indo-Pacific, both of which demand a fundamental reconceptualization of logistics as a source of credibility for stand-in forces. Sustainment can no longer function as a linear, rear-echelon system optimized for efficiency. Instead, it must operate as an integrated component of maneuver forces, designed for resilience, survivability and persistence under disruption. In this model, sustainment enables distributed forces to maintain tempo, absorb shock and regenerate combat power without reliance on assured resupply.

EABO is forcing the Navy and Marine Corps to reevaluate how we meet the evolving problem set through increased integration and institutional adaptation. Within this context, Marine Corps Systems Command's Program Manager for Combat Support Systems equips and sustains the Fleet Marine Force across engineering, maintenance, supply and medical functional areas, delivering capabilities that

enable forces to operate and endure in contested environments — no matter when the nation calls our forces to arms.

These capabilities align across three functional imperatives: sustaining materiel at the tactical edge, preserving freedom of action and maintaining force survivability under prolonged disruption.

A U.S. Navy Sailor and U.S. Marine install a 3D-printed stainless steel component aboard the USS Somerset (LPD 25), July 18, 2024, during Exercise Trident Warrior 24 and RIMPAC 2024. Photo credit: U.S. Marine Corps.

Advanced Manufacturing

As the risk of large-scale conflict increases, adversaries are expected to target not only forward forces but the logistics architecture that sustains them, including lines of communication, stateside commercial suppliers and supporting infrastructure. In such an environment, every segment of the supply chain becomes contested, elevating the importance of immediate, in-place repair and fabrication.

To address this challenge, expeditionary manufacturing capabilities are shifting production from centralized facilities to the tactical edge, effectively flattening the supply chain. Rather than relying solely on extended and vulnerable distribution networks, Marines can produce critical components on demand within the operational environment, filling gaps created by disruption, delay or denial.

This approach is already being operationalized. During RIMPAC 2024, Sailors and Marines employed metal and polymer additive manufacturing systems aboard USS Somerset (LPD 25) to fabricate essential components, continuing shipboard operations without returning to port. Building on this foundation, the Advanced Integrated Maintenance and Manufacturing System, or AIMMS, extends additive manufacturing into expeditionary environments with deployable metal printing capability, enabling forward forces to produce durable, mission-critical components at the point of need in support of distributed operations.

In the Indo-Pacific, where distance and contested access constrain traditional logistics, advanced manufacturing enables a more distributed and resilient support network. By combining forward-deployed fabrication with partner nation industrial capacity, this approach reduces dependence on continental supply chains while increasing responsiveness across the theater. Supporting this ecosystem, the Digital Manufacturing Data Vault enables secure distribution of validated technical data, allowing components to be produced across multiple locations and ensuring continuity under disruption.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Combat Engineering

Preserving freedom of action in contested environments requires the ability to detect, neutralize, and mitigate explosive threats that constrain maneuver and disrupt sustainment. To meet this challenge, Marine Corps explosive ordnance disposal and combat engineering capabilities are being modernized for operations within anti-access and area denial environments.

The Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization (LEON) capability enables forces to identify and neutralize explosive hazards from the surf zone to inland objectives. It integrates remotely operated systems, diver capabilities and uncrewed platforms to provide a layered approach to littoral threat mitigation.

Complementing this effort, the Stand-off Defeat of Explosive Hazards program employs advanced sensing technologies, including ground-penetrating radar and automated target recognition, delivered via uncrewed systems. These capabilities enable detection and classification of threats at distance, reducing risk to personnel while maintaining operational tempo.

Together, these systems provide commanders with scalable options to preserve mobility, ensuring that both combat and sustainment forces can continue to maneuver and operate within contested environments.

Expeditionary Medical Systems

Sustaining combat power in distributed operations requires rethinking how medical support is delivered. Evacuation timelines will extend. Communications will degrade. Air and naval transport will likely be degraded or delayed. Medical capability must therefore move forward and operate within the same contested spaces as maneuver forces, with systems that require less logistical support, including reduced weight, dependence on power, sterilized water, and fuel.

Under Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations, the traditional "golden hour" construct is no longer viable. The focus shifts to prolonged casualty care, with units expected to stabilize and sustain casualties for up to 96 hours in austere environments. Medical support becomes an integral component of force survivability and operational endurance.

To enable this model, modular, lightweight systems are being fielded for small, mobile teams operating inside the threat envelope. Capabilities such as Damage Control Resuscitation and Damage Control Surgery provide scalable component to Role 2 care closer to the point of injury, allowing limited personnel to deliver life-saving treatment even when evacuation is delayed or denied.

These capabilities are reinforced by expeditionary enablers that ensure access to critical resources under degraded conditions. Portable oxygen generation, lightweight surgical tool sterilizers and expeditionary refrigeration for blood products enhance operational flexibility. Marine Corps Systems Command is in the process of delivering freeze-dried plasma and platelets to forward deployed Marine units overseas.

Flexible CASEVAC platforms further increase resilience while minimizing logistical burden. Advances in medical logistics warehousing, including RFID-enabled tracking and decision-support tools, improve visibility, positioning and medical supply responsiveness across distributed formations.

Enabling a Resilient Logistics Network

Beyond individual capability areas, a broader ecosystem is reinforcing a distributed and resilient sustainment network. Power modernization initiatives reduce fuel demand and improve energy mobility, while digital maintenance tools enable real-time diagnostics and repair at the point of need.

Additional capabilities, including uncrewed systems, deployable Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities, augmented navigation tools and lightweight protective equipment further reduce logistical burden while enhancing operational effectiveness. Together, these systems form the connective tissue of a sustainment architecture, enabled by resilient industrial capacity and responsive vendor networks, designed to operate within contested, degraded and denied environments.

In the Indo-Pacific and beyond, the decisive factor will not be the ability to project force, but to sustain it under persistent attack and prevent early culmination before objectives can be reached. Forces that can repair, regenerate, and endure at the tactical edge will maintain tempo, preserve combat power and outlast their adversaries. Beyond individual capability areas, a broader web of systems is reinforcing a distributed and resilient sustainment network.

Together, these capabilities form a sustainment architecture built for distributed operations, where resilience and adaptation replace assumptions of access and efficiency. Enabled through integration with our Navy partners, this approach links sea-based maneuver with expeditionary sustainment, extending combat power across the littorals and into contested spaces. In the Indo-Pacific, the ability to generate and regenerate combat power at the tactical edge — under persistent attack and without assured resupply — will determine tempo and endurance. Through naval integration and adaptive sustainment, PM CSS ensures the Fleet Marine Force is equipped to fight (and win) tonight, no matter the clime or place. ■

Colonel Paul Gillikin, an Infantry and Special Operations Officer, is the Program Manager for Combat Support Systems at Marine Corps Systems Command in Quantico, Virginia.

A U.S. Navy Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft (GARC) maneuvers in the Atlantic Ocean during UNITAS 2025, the 66th iteration of the world's longest-running multinational maritime exercise. Photo credit: U.S. Navy photo.

USVs Can Help Expeditionary Strike Groups Prevail In Contested Logistics Environments

BY GEORGE GALDORISI

For more than eight decades U.S. Naval Expeditionary Strike Groups — comprised of Navy amphibious assault ships and a Marine Expeditionary Unit —have been America's forcible entry force. No other nation or navy has the capability or capacity to replicate the efforts of these two U.S. sea services.

When most people think of expeditionary and amphibious operations, they visualize the initial landing assault. It is understandable why this is so. Many have read about the United States island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific during World War II, or seen amphibious landings replicated in popular media such as films like "Saving Private Ryan."

However, the success or failure of any expeditionary and amphibious operation depends not only on a successful initial assault, but on the ability of the assaulting force to provide sustained logistics support for Marines who have seized a beachhead. If the Navy-Marine Corps team wants to be poised to successfully conduct these operations in the future, it will need to explore new tactics, techniques and procedures to provide logistics support in a contested environment as well as embrace new technologies that can deliver continuous logistics sustainment.

Perspective

It should come as no surprise that logistics has emerged as a crucial factor in the wars of the third decade of the 21st Century. The importance of this discipline goes back as far as recorded warfare. More than 2,300 years ago, Alexander the Great put it this

way: "My logisticians are a humorless lot … they know if my campaign fails, they are the first ones I will slay." In the maritime domain, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan said, "Logistics are as vital to military success as daily food is to daily work." During Operation Desert Storm, the 7th Corps Commander, U.S. Army Lieutenant General Fredrick Franks, noted, "Forget logistics, you lose."

The challenges of providing logistics support in a contested environment continue in this century. The grisly statistics of the number of soldiers killed or maimed while driving convoys of fuel or water trucks during the conflict in Iraq inspired the U.S. Army to invest heavily in developing autonomous ground vessels for use in future conflicts. More recently, Russia's invasion of Ukraine revealed the challenges of providing even the most basic logistics needs, with images of long lines of Russian military vessels stalled due to a lack of fuel during the initial weeks of the war still vivid.

Unlike armies that move supplies over land with an armada of trucks and other vessels, everything Marines need when they land on the beach must travel with them in a variety of amphibious assault vessels and landing craft, often in the face of well-entrenched enemy fire. But that is only half the story. Once the Marines — equipped with only what they can carry in their packs — are on the beach and in the fight, everything they need to keep fighting must be delivered to them from the amphibious assault ships standing offshore. This includes ammunition (and lots of it), food, water, fuel for vessels and everything else needed to move off the beachhead.

This challenge has also been recognized on the other side of the Atlantic. Two Royal United Services Institute research fellows suggested, "The prospect of assaulting a hostile shore today is more daunting than ever," and "the capacity of Marines to push inland must depend on the security of their logistical support." While the authors surfaced many valid concerns regarding the efficacy of conducting opposed amphibious assaults, their thesis was not that amphibious assault operations are dead, but that we must design platforms, systems, sensors and weapons that help ensure the assaulting forces can successfully conduct their challenging mission.

Leveraging New Technologies

The U.S. Marine Corps has focused its attention on the advantages of using unmanned surface vessels to close the "last tactical mile." Here's how one defense analyst put the challenge and the opportunity of using uncrewed surface vehicles, or, USVs, rather than manned craft to resupply Marines on the beach:

Amid the U.S. Navy's hyperactive interest in advancing unmanned maritime drones, the Marine Corps has been developing an autonomous navigation kit built specifically for closing the critical "last mile" where amphibious watercraft meet cluttered, rough beaches — areas especially vulnerable during combat.

Because of their long hiatus away from the U.S. Navy's amphibious assault ships, and recognizing the need to leverage new technologies, the Marine Corps has been especially proactive in organizing a large number of amphibious exercises, experiments and demonstrations to investigate emerging technologies (often commercial-off-the-shelf technologies, or COTS) to enable expeditionary strike formations to prevail in the face of a determined adversary possessing robust A2/AD capabilities.

These events have included the Advanced Naval Technology Exercise, the Valiant Shield series of exercises, Steel Knight, Bold Alligator, Sea Dragon and others, all designed to evaluate the ability of COTS unmanned surface vessels, and especially those that could be leveraged to perform the contested logistics function. In each of these exercises, the Marine Corps has invited industry to bring their newest technologies so that Sailors and Marines could evaluate them in the operational environment. COTS USVs were among the most welcome technologies as they had the potential to be used for the autonomous resupply mission.

The impetus for evaluating USVs for this resupply mission is clear. Using manned naval craft for this sustainment mission puts operators at unnecessary risk of enemy fire or from near-shore obstacles that were not cleared prior to the assault phase. Using scarce manned craft to perform this mission also takes them away from more necessary roles. That is why major Navy-Marine Corps amphibious exercises have focused on evaluating the ability of uncrewed surface

vessels to conduct this resupply mission.

One U.S. Navy-Marine Corps exercise, Joint Exercise Valiant Shield, focused specifically on the contested logistics function, something of critical importance to Marine Corps warfighters. Valiant Shield demonstrated the ability of commercial off-the-shelf technology — in this case, USVs — to perform one of the more important functions needed by expeditionary formations, that of logistics.

During Valiant Shield Marine Corps Forces, Pacific used USVs to resupply the landing force. The expeditionary force commander used a catamaran-style hull 12-foot Mantas USV to provide rapid ship-to-shore logistics resupply. While this small, autonomously operated USV carried only 120 pounds of cargo, the proof-of-concept worked and successfully demonstrated that USVs could safely and effectively resupply troops ashore.

Using USVs could be a gamechanger for expeditionary assault forces. Beyond taking operators out of harm's way, using USVs for this mission frees manned craft for other missions. Having a continuous, preprogrammed logistics resupply process to perform one of the "dull, dirty and dangerous" functions important in an amphibious assault, gives the commander one less thing to worry about in the chaotic environment of an amphibious operation.

While the proof-of-concept with a 12-foot Mantas USV worked, resupply in 120-pound increments is far less than is required to provide what is needed by troops on the beach. More is needed, and this requires larger USVs. For this reason, Maritime Tactical Systems, the maker of a family of USVs, was challenged by the Navy and Marine Corps to "scale-up" the 12-foot USV and develop a larger proof-of-concept unmanned surface vehicle for this mission. Larger unmanned surface vessels (a 38-foot catamaran USV) have been produced and used in Navy and Marine Corps exercises, experiments and demonstrations.

The basic specifications of the 38-foot T38 Devil Ray provide an indication of the ability of USVs to provide a steady, continuous stream of logistics support to Marines on the beach. The T38 catamaran USV travels at cruise speed of 25 knots with a burst speed of 80 knots and weighs 6,500 pounds. The T38 has the ability to carry a payload of 4,500 pounds.

Other systems featured in Navy and Marine Corps events include the Leidos-built Sea Hunter and Seahawk USVs, Blacksea Technologies' Global Reconnaissance Autonomous Craft (GARC) and Saronic's Corsair USV.

Impact on Expeditionary Logistics

Logistics resupply is one of the most important functions important in an expeditionary assault that can readily be offloaded to USVs and thus keep humans out of harm's way. But what would this look like, that is, what would a concept of operations entail to successfully perform this function?

An expeditionary formation typically stands no more than 15 to 25 nautical miles off the beach being assaulted. Using a notional stand-off distance of 20 nautical miles, an amphibious group equipped with four T38s traveling at their cruise speed of 25 knots could deliver 18,000 pounds of material from the expeditionary ships to the beach per hour, allowing the short time needed for loading and unloading the craft. Multiply that by 24 hours and you get a buildup of well over 400,000 pounds of vital material per day, enough to support a substantial force of troops ashore.

Over 2,500 years ago, Sun Tzu noted, "The line between disorder and order lies in logistics." If the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps expeditionary assault forces want to have the capability to move "beyond the beach" and travel inland in a contested logistics environment they would be well-served to embrace fast, agile unmanned surface vessels to provide that logistics support. The technology to do this exists today and can leveraged immediately. ■

Retired Navy Captain George Galdorisi is a career naval aviator and national security professional. During his 30-year career he had four tours in command and served as a carrier strike group chief of staff. He is the Emeritus Director of Strategic Assessments and Technical Futures at the Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific. He is the author of 17 books, including four consecutive New York Times bestsellers. His most recent novel, "Fire and Ice," is prescient as it foresaw Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A U.S. Marine controls height adjustments while loading an M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System during Operation Epic Fury, March 19, 2026. Recent high-tempo operations have exposed the critical importance of robust munition inventories and resilient supply chains. Photo credit: U.S. Marine Corps.

Moving at the Speed of War

Warfighting Acquisition in the Modern Era

BY JAMIE L. PFEIFFER

Modern naval excellence depends on adaptation and evolution. To keep up with rapid technological evolutions and increasingly contested maritime environments, our fighting forces must be more flexible than ever before. Providing supplies, equipment and armaments is more challenging than it's ever been. Traditional supply systems are breaking down under the demands of supporting today's forces.

To ensure our troops have the resources they need, when and where they need them, the U.S. naval services are transforming how they buy, build and deliver warfighting capability. In March 2026, the Department of the Navy announced it would reorganize its strategy around a new Portfolio Acquisition Executive (PAE) model.

This reorganization aims to better align procurement with operational urgency. Ideally, it will ensure the fleet has the warfighting resources it needs to deter threats and defeat adversaries in every corner of the globe. It will streamline governmental oversight of defense manufacturing, accelerate delivery of warfighting resources and strengthen the overall defense industrial base.

Implementing this new PAE model reflects the Navy's broader transformation toward efficiency and adaptability, positioning the naval services for sustained international competition and conflict.

In recent years, globalization and evolving technology have exposed the limitations of the Navy's traditional acquisition frameworks. The U.S. designed most of these legacy systems in the wake of World War II, as a culture of peacetime efficiency and deterrence replaced the need for wartime urgency.

Vice Admiral Seiko Okano, principal military deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, delivers remarks at the Washington Navy Yard auditorium during WTI Re-Blue. WTI Re-Blue is an annual U.S. Navy Warfare Tactics Instructor conference hosted by Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center that forges tactical mastery, drives doctrinal alignment and sharpens the surface force's warfighting edge. Photo credit: U.S. Navy | John Banfield.

As global tensions rise and operational demands increase, Navy leaders have sounded the alarm on fraying supply systems and inadequate warfighting resources. To protect our nation and maintain our role in the global power structure, the Navy is prioritizing Improving its procurement systems.

Vice Admiral Seiko Okano, principal military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, testified about the issue in March 2026 before the Senate Armed Services Committee. "Our Sailors and Marines operate in increasingly dangerous threat environments," Okano said. "The speed and scale of our industrial output are foundational to victory."

She noted that high operational tempos, especially those under U.S. Central Command, have exposed the critical importance of robust munition inventories and resilient supply chains. Demand for munitions has surged in recent years, reinforcing how important it is for our fighting forces to maintain an acquisition system that can deliver capability at scale and at speed.

"Our legacy acquisition system, designed for a peacetime environment, is simply too slow and risk-averse for this new era of competition," Okano testified. "That is why the Department has embarked on a fundamental transformation to establish the Warfighting Acquisition System on a permanent wartime footing."

What Is the PAE Model?

Many logistics systems across the Navy are decades old. They break frequently and require specialized maintenance. Different platforms and applications are siloed rather than coordinated, leading to duplication of effort, wasted time and increased risk of error. Delays and dead ends hamper procurement, repair and supply chain management, threatening the readiness and resilience of naval forces.

To transform these outdated systems into an effective, modern procurement model, the U.S. Navy has consolidated authority and accountability into unified portfolio leadership structures. Under this model, each PAE organization is headed by a senior acquisition official, who serves as a single accountable authority. This model will streamline decision-making, align authority with responsibility and reduce bureaucratic barriers that delay capability delivery.

The Navy has established five initial PAE organizations:

- PAE Industrial Operations
- PAE Marine Corps
- PAE Maritime
- PAE Strategic Systems Programs
- PAE Undersea

The PAE model allows the Navy to consolidate disparate, redundant and inefficient offices. In her testimony, Okano highlighted the broader vision behind the Navy's reorganization.

"This transformation empowers our leaders and holds them accountable for delivering decisive capabilities at the pace required to ensure we never fall behind," she told lawmakers.

The PAE model replaces fragmented oversight with "cradle-to-grave" portfolio management, including research, development, procurement, sustainment and industrial base considerations. By integrating these functions, the Navy can easily identify how each component functions in the bigger picture. It can make targeted changes to improve efficiency, enhance transparency and better align acquisition outcomes with the operational needs of fighting forces.

We cannot afford to be dependent on a handful of suppliers for the weapons we need to deter adversaries and, if necessary, win in combat.

– Vice Admiral Seiko Okano, principal military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition

Strengthening Defense Manufacturing

One notable feature of the PAE model is how much it emphasizes the importance of managing and revitalizing the defense industrial base. Although this area has become increasingly central to national security, it is currently undermanned and underfunded. The Department of Defense anticipates that thousands of additional skilled workers will be needed each year to keep up with increasing defense manufacturing demands.

"We must break up the status quo to inject real competition into the munitions industrial base," Okano said. "We cannot afford to be dependent on a handful of suppliers for the weapons we need to deter adversaries and, if necessary, win in combat."

According to Okano, the number of prime munitions contractors has declined from more than 50 to just five over the past three decades. This consolidation has constrained production, limited innovation, and increased costs — challenges the Navy now seeks to reverse.

The Navy has developed a two-pronged munitions strategy to meet the ever-increasing production demands: maximize current production while expanding competition and innovation.

Multi-year procurement contracts and long-term agreements will encourage industry and private equity partners to invest in building facilities and training skilled workers. These manufacturing efforts will help replenish critically low inventories, including Tomahawk cruise missiles, Standard Missile variants, and air-to-air weapons such as the AIM-120 AMRAAM active radar missile and the AIM-9X Sidewinder infrared-guided missile.

The department is also investing in critical supply chain nodes, such as solid rocket motors and energetics, to alleviate production bottlenecks. One example is a $2.7 billion Energetics Comprehensive Modernization Plan (ECMP) to revitalize the DoD's largest full-spectrum energetics facility at Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head.

Other key initiatives include synthesizing new molecular and chemical compounds for energy production and modernizing production capacity for Cartridge Actuated Devices and Propellant Actuated Devices (CAD/PAD) components.

In addition to supporting existing partners and production facilities, the Navy is actively exploring ways to foster new relationships with up-and-coming entrepreneurs. This initiative includes partnering with non-traditional and technology-focused firms to develop and deliver affordable, scalable solutions.

"New entrants bring a culture of agility and speed that is essential to outpacing our adversaries," Okano told lawmakers. "They provide a uniquely American advantage."

In furtherance of the DoD's emphasis on public-private cooperation, the Navy will collaborate with organizations such as the Defense Innovation Unit. DIU is tasked with accelerating the military's adoption

of commercially derived technology at speed and scale. Partnering with the Navy will create a dynamic ecosystem that complements traditional prime contractors and accelerates technological innovation.

Each PAE will include a dedicated Rapid Capability Cell linked to the Department of the Navy Rapid Capabilities Office (DON-RCO) to support urgent operational needs. The DON-RCO will consolidate innovation-focused initiatives, including NavalX and other incubator organizations, giving the RCCs direct access to R&D resources. The RCCs will collaborate directly with design, production, and manufacturing resources, cutting out layers of bureaucracy. Streamlining prototyping and fielding efforts could significantly decrease the time it takes to turn ideas into solutions.

The Navy's focus on a more integrated, streamlined approach to warfighting deliverables is a result of lessons learned in recent conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, where adaptability and innovation have proven decisive. A notable example is the seismic shift from traditional weaponry to attritable systems (unmanned military assets that are reusable but affordable enough to lose in high-risk combat). Despite having no conventional navy, Ukraine has used naval drones to effectively cripple dozens of Russian Black Sea Fleet vessels and break through blockades.

Ukraine's shift to drone-based operational systems reflects a change in the overall mechanics of modern warfare. Global military forces now use uncrewed and autonomous vehicles for reconnaissance, security, logistics and active combat operations underwater, on land and in the air. Increasingly, these digital assets incorporate artificial intelligence capabilities.

Uncrewed and autonomous systems are increasingly essential to military operations. They can enhance situational awareness, extend operational reach, and reduce the risk to personnel. The Navy's PAE plan dedicates significant resources to ensure the U.S. can keep up with this evolving technology and maintain its superiority in any environmental context.

The PAE for Robotic and Autonomous Systems will focus on accelerating the acquisition and deployment of uncrewed technologies across air, surface, subsurface and ground domains. The PAE structure allows the Navy to bypass the rigid, requirements-driven processes that hamstring progress and greenlight new technology faster.

Advanced digital technology will also help streamline every step of the PAE process. Each organization will use model-based systems engineering, data integration and advanced analytics to streamline decision-making and identify risks earlier in the development cycle. Open systems architecture will encourage rapid upgrades and promote competition among vendors.

Navy officials are confident these initiatives will eliminate redundant reviews, enhance collaboration, and accelerate execution — essentially cutting red tape to ensure warfighting acquisition keeps pace with the speed of war. At the same time, the Navy is pursuing reforms to the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution process, ensuring it will be able to fund these endeavors going forward.

Challenges and Oversight

Despite widespread support for the PAE restructuring, there will be challenges as the Navy transitions to the new model. The U.S. Navy is a vast enterprise, strongly rooted in its history and legacy. Changing course won't happen overnight. Aligning processes, redefining roles and ensuring consistent implementation will require sustained effort and close coordination with Congress and private industry partners.

The Navy must also maintain transparency and accountability if it wants to preserve congressional and voter confidence. Legislative authorities in the fiscal year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act and executive directives on acquisition modernization have provided the economic support to begin these reforms. However, future funding will be necessary.

The Navy hopes the PAE reorganization will create a resilient acquisition ecosystem capable of supporting high-end, sustained warfare. ■

Jamie L. Pfeiffer practiced in Illinois, Oregon and Washington states before retiring from active law practice. She is currently based in Chicago.

U.S. Navy Lt. Billy R. Wickham, left, a chaplain, California native with Headquarters and Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, and U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Nicholas D. Cluck, right, a religious program specialist with Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, execute a mass casualty response simulation. Photo credit: U.S. Marine Corps | Lance Cpl. Jozef P. Majewski.

A Presence at the Table

Navy RPs Fight Spiritual and Battlefield Enemies

BY JIM MCCLURE

"Get down! Get Down!" shouted a Marine 2nd Lieutenant as a platoon of 20 Marines attending a worship service on the outskirts of Baghdad on April 9, 2003, found themselves in an onslaught from an unknown direction, the sound of gunfire interrupting a sacred moment.

Then-Navy Chaplain Lieutenant Carey H. Cash, serving with the First Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment that had fought its way from Kuwait to the Iraqi capital, had almost completed his service of shared scripture and praise when the gunfire erupted.

"Just as I completed the concluding 'amen' of the final prayer and benediction, just as my lips were forming the last words, 'Go in peace,' the barrage began" recalled Cash, whose autobiography, "A Table in the Presence," tells the dramatic story of his combat experiences that spring.

Cash hit the deck under the front bumper of his humvee while the combat-experienced Marines instantly formed a circle and returned fire against seven members of Saddam Hussein's elite Republican Guards, who had disguised themselves as civilian citizens enjoying their first hours of freedom. As a noncombatant under the Geneva Convention, Cash was helpless as the close-quarters fire and deadly shrapnel whistled and crackled.

Every American rifle returned fire, but one worship service attendee made himself a standing target by leaping toward Cash. U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Redor Rufo, a Religious Program (RP) Specialist, was

about to do something every bit as much his duty as supporting the troops spiritually and assisting Chaplain Cash with setting up the service.

"Rufo was right behind me. With his trembling hand on my shoulder to keep me down, he immediately made ready his rifle and prepared to engage," Cash wrote. "A hail of bullets were raining down around us. Where was it coming from? We had no idea, but it was close, way too close."

Religious (and Combat) Support

The core mission of Religious Program Specialists is to facilitate the free exercise of religion and provide comprehensive religious support. They work closely with chaplains (commissioned officers) to ensure service members of all faith groups have their spiritual needs met, whether the Sailors and Marines are based on ship or shore or on domestic or expeditionary bases.

Religious Program Specialists undertake a variety of duties, which may include:

- Religious Program Management: Assisting in managing religious programs, chapel administration and event planning
- Volunteer Coordination: Recruiting, training and supervising volunteers who assist with chapel functions and religious activities
- Facility Support: Providing support for religious facilities and resources
- Crisis Intervention Support: Assisting with crisis intervention counseling
- Devotional Material Preparation: Preparing materials for religious services and events
- Advisement: Advising leaders on religious and moral issues.

They Navy describes the role of chaplain support as "acting as a resource for chaplains and providing armed protection in combat and operational environments, as RPs are combatants, unlike chaplains who are non-combatants." One of the most senior RPs, Senior Chief Petty Officer Angel P. Pacheco, works at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, with memories of sprawling in a foxhole with chaplains and Marines.

U.S. Marines and U.S. Navy Religious Program Specialist 2nd Class Anthony J. Ventura assigned to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit participate in an urban operations training exercise with the Female Engagement Team (FET) at Fort Pickett, Va., Feb. 21, 2016. Photo credit: U.S. Marine Corps | Lance Cpl. Koby I. Saunders.

From Altar Boy to Armed Angel

"The hardest thing I've had to do in combat was during my deployment with 5th Marines Regiment to Fallujah, Iraq in 2009. It was my first deployment with Marines, and I deployed with a Catholic priest. We were in a convoy of about seven vehicles with our commanding officer. We were often part of these convoys to visit Marines and conduct Mass for them," Pacheco said.

"While riding through a narrow street, our vehicle hit an IED [improvised explosive device]. I remember the loud bang, our vehicle rattling, and a cloud of sand would not let us see anything. I heard our staff sergeant yell, 'go, go, go,' and we drove as fast and safely as possible to a nearby forward operating base. I couldn't see my chaplain that was sitting next to me due to the cloud of sand, so I reached out to him and grabbed his shoulder. I, at the same time was only thinking, 'did I lose a limb? Did my Chaplain lose a limb?' Luckily, no one from that convoy was seriously injured."

Why would anyone choose such a career possibility? Pacheco feels it was meant to be.

"From the moment I was briefed about the rate in the recruiters' station I knew this was what I wanted to do. I originally wanted to come in as a corpsman because it was the only job I knew about that dealt with helping others, but once I found out about RP, my mind changed," he said.

U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Carey H. Cash, chaplain of the Marine Corps and deputy chief of Navy chaplains, gives a speech on spiritual fitness and mental well-being during Modern Day Marine 2025 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C., May 1, 2025. Photo credit: Navy Chaplain Corps | Javier Orona.

"I don't feel like a rescuer or like a Marine. I'm aware of what my role is as a Navy Religious Program Specialist," Pacheco said. "I enjoy being embedded in the Marine Corps culture, but I know that my responsibility is to manage the religious program with my chaplain and provide physical security in a combat environment."

The View From the Top

"Religious Program Specialists are essential because we enable the delivery of spiritual readiness across the force," said Master Chief RP Specialist Peter J. Butucel III. "We manage the Command Religious Program so chaplains can be on the deckplate providing direct spiritual care to Sailors, Marines, and their families.

"RPs and chaplains operate in every environment, from ships at sea, to the field with Marine infantry, to watch floors and cyber units, allowing us to be alongside our warriors wherever they are, providing religious services, facilitating pastoral care, and delivering faith-based character and values programs. Just as important, we build trusted relationships, so Sailors and Marines feel comfortable coming to us during difficult times," he said.

"At the end of the day, our role is about taking care of people, and when Sailors and Marines know someone genuinely cares about their well-being, it makes a real difference."

Who Survived the Baghdad Firefight?

The seven attacking Iraqis were killed in that April 2003 battle. All the Marines in the platoon attending services survived. Rufo is now enjoying his retirement from the Navy in 2017. And what of that young chaplain pinned down in Baghdad?

Now-Rear Admiral Carey H. Cash — incidentally, the great grandnephew of legendary singer Johnny Cash — assumed his duties as Chaplain of the Marine Corps in May, 2022. He also serves as deputy chief of chaplains of the Navy and deputy director of religious ministries.

"Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of my enemies," he quotes in his autobiography named after this passage. "King David believed it. A battalion of U.S. Marines experienced it. And its power is offered to all unto who in the midst of our trials, and when surrounded by enemies, can find that relentless courage, that reckless faith, that undying hope we need to look unto God — and believe." ■

Jim McClure served in the Marine Corps Reserve as a Marine Option NROTC Four Year Scholarship Midshipman at the University of Notre Dame.

VA Outpatient Center in California Renamed for Council Member

BY MIKE O'DOCHARTY

Former Navy Lieutenant Commander Louis "Lou" A. Conter (September 13, 1921 – April 1, 2024) was recognized for his contributions during a 28-year Navy career at the renaming ceremony of the Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic in Auburn, California, which now bears his name.

Lou, a member of the Placer County Council since 2002, resided in Grass Valley, California. He passed away in 2024 at the age of 102. The U.S. House of Representatives bill sponsor to rename the center, Rep. Kevin Kiley, underscored Lou's impact to his nation as "meaning far more than being a USS Arizona survivor and having his name on a building."

Above: The late Lou Conter reflects on his lost shipmates at the Pearl Harbor Arizona Memorial. Photo credit: Placer County Council.

Left: Lou Conter as a young quartermaster. Photo credit: Wikipedia.

Lou was a 21-year-old quartermaster on the quarterdeck near the stern of the USS Arizona during the Japanese surprise attack. He witnessed the bow rise 50 feet in the air when a bomb penetrated the forward magazine of the ship. In his 2021 autobiography, Lou wrote, "The USS Arizona was well organized and disciplined. We had been operating at sea for many months … she was a great ship on Dec. 7, 1941, she is a great ship today. A ship with a confident captain and crew will always remain a good ship. Our captain is still on board."

Lou was only one of 335 USS Arizona Sailors, from a crew of 1,512, and the only one of 35 quartermasters who survived the attack.

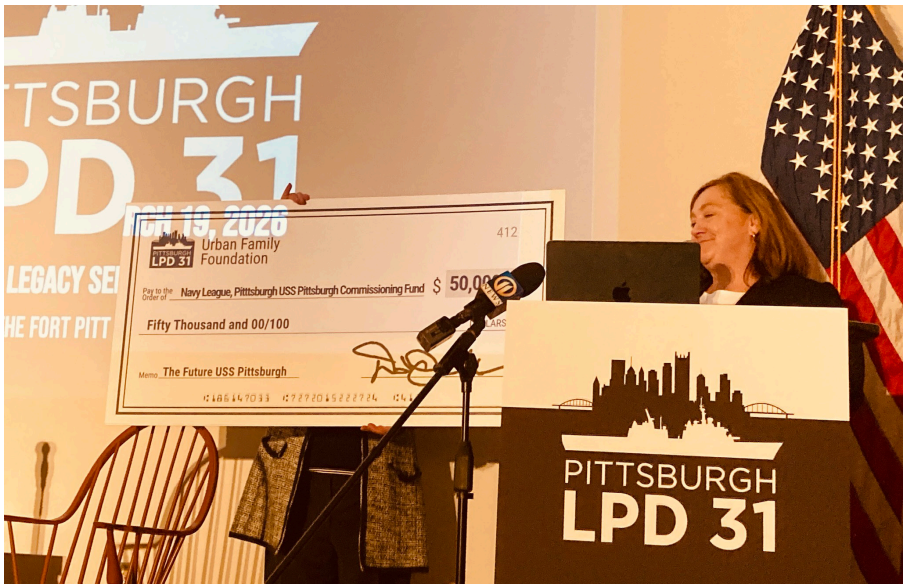
Lou eventually earned his Wings of Gold as an enlisted pilot, flying over 200-night search, strike and gunfire spotting missions around the Solomon Islands and New Guinea in the legendary PBY Catalinas with the Black Cats of VPB-11. Lou was shot down twice behind enemy lines during his tenure with VPB-11, once accidentally by an allied P-40 Warhawk and once by the Japanese. After the war, he transitioned to the A-1 Skyraider where he flew 29 combat missions over Korea from USS Bonhomme Richard.Lou's greatest contributions to his country and fellow aviators occurred after Korea when he was

assigned to establish the Navy's Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) school. His combat experiences during World War II, combined with his deep concern for the welfare of fellow service members, led to his pivotal role in developing the Navy SERE program.

Lou's extraordinary life story of personal survival and contributions to the survival of generations of Navy flight crews were published in 2021 in "The Lou Conter Story — From USS Arizona Survivor to Unsung American Hero." The book is available through Amazon.

In 2002, Lou started travelling with friends and family to Hawaii to attend Pearl Harbor survivor remembrances in what long-time friend Jack Kennedy described during the dedication ceremony as "the Conterage." Lou's son James Conter described his dad's attitude on the distinction of being a USS Arizona survivor. Lou would say, "We were the lucky ones, we came home, started families and lived our lives … the true heroes were the ones who didn't come home and gave the ultimate sacrifice." Lou retired from the Navy in 1967.

During the dedication ceremony, Navy retired Rear Admiral Bonnie Potter, the Placer County Council vice president, said Lou was a "mentor and a humble gentleman" who drove himself to our monthly Navy League meetings into his 100th year. ■



USS Pittsburgh (LPD 31) ship sponsor Nancy Dettmer presents a check to start the commissioning fund for the ship. Photo credit: Pittsburgh Council.

Pittsburgh Council Kicks Off USS Pittsburgh Legacy Series

As part of preparations for the new USS Pittsburgh (LPD 31) the Pittsburgh Council kicked off the "USS Pittsburgh Legacy Series" at the Fort Pitt Museum on March 19, 2026.

Retired Navy Captain Polly Bozdeck-Veater welcomed Navy Captain Matt Tardy, who oversees the construction of the next USS Pittsburgh; ship sponsor Nancy Dettmer; and Captain Jason Deichler, the last commanding officer of the submarine USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720) and a native of the city.

Tardy provided an update on the construction of the new USS Pittsburgh. Dettmer presented a check for $50,000 to start the Commissioning Fund, which will enable private citizens to contribute to the commissioning ceremonies for the ship and show the support of the city of Pittsburgh to the next warship to carry the city's name. Deichler engaged in a fireside chat with Bozdech-Veater to reminisce about interactions of the city of Pittsburgh, the Navy League, and the fast attack nuclear submarine USS Pittsburgh.

Retired Navy Captain Tom Clark opened the Legacy Series event with remarks on the customs and traditions of the U.S. Navy, and retired Navy captain Byron King provided a history of the interaction between the U.S. Navy and Pittsburgh, including the four warships that previously were named for the city. Pittsburgh is unique in having four — and now a fifth — Navy ships named after it.

Donations to the Commissioning Fund for the USS Pittsburgh can be made by contacting Bozdech-Veater at bozdechvpm@aol.com. Bozdech-Veater is the Chair of the USS Pittsburgh Commissioning Committee. ■

Camden-Kings Bay Holds Successful Fundraiser

The Camden-Kings Bay Council's largest general fund-raiser was held at the St. Marys Submarine Museum on Feb. 12, 2026. After the delicious Buffet-by-Brimley's, auctioneer extraordinaire Keith Post worked his magic with the 56 attendees. As usual, the event attracted both members and guests, all there for the fun and to take home a special dessert.

With the council's ever-increasing number of community affiliates recruited by Vicki Nicholson, Dave Reilly and Dan Udy (a community affiliate himself), it was good to see many of them joining in the fun.

Twenty-eight desserts were sold, many homemade, the rest from local bakeries and chefs. The total raised for the various projects of the council was $2,965, an all-time high.

Dividing the dollars by the number of desserts is an inaccurate picture of the prices. Through the cunning of the auctioneer, sometimes aided by a shill in the audience, there are always a few that sell for almost unbelievable prices. The high bid of the night was a carrot cake for $220.

Six of the desserts that were purchased were given to the Sailors from the USS Wyoming who volunteered to help with the logistics at the museum. ■

For many Sea Cadets, summer means advanced training. Photo credit: U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

Preparing to Answer: 'What Are You Doing This Summer?'

BY SEA CADETS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Across the nation, families are starting to ask, "What will we do this summer?" For Sea Cadets, the answer is simple. Advanced training.

Advanced training is more than just a seasonal activity to do over school breaks. For many, it is the highlight of the Sea Cadet experience, in which cadets move beyond monthly drills to real-world settings to test themselves physically, mentally, and as leaders.

For the youngest cadets, League Cadets in grades five through eight- the journey begins with Navy League Orientation (NLO). Although optional, Henry Horgan, the 2025 League Cadet of the Year, encourages all eligible League Cadets to attend NLO.

NLO "is truly a life-changing experience," Horgan said. "You will learn teamwork, leadership and discipline while working together to accomplish challenging tasks." Horgan, A League Cadet from Hawaii, said, "NLO prepares you for everything that comes next."

For cadets in grades nine and higher, their first training is the required Recruit Training, or RT. While the structure and pace are designed to be more challenging for these older cadets, it has a distinct purpose. Kall Meador, a cadet from Oklahoma, said, "The purpose is to build you up and guide you toward reaching your goals."

Meador, a homeschooler, has been in Sea Cadets since 2022. "What I learned about leadership and discipline has stayed with me as I've progressed through the program." Meador was recently announced as the 2025 Junior Sea Cadet of the Year.

Advanced training is one of the things that distinguishes Sea Cadets from other youth programs. After completing the initial NLO or RT training, cadets are eligible to attend trainings offered across the country during summer and winter breaks at facilities including military bases and university campuses.

While most advanced trainings

occur during the summer break,Sea Cadets is not a summer program. Cadets are committed year-round. To attend advanced training, cadets must be in good standing with their local units and regularly attend monthly drills.

Advanced trainings allow cadets to engage in hands-on experiences rarely accessible to teenagers. At-sea trainings allow cadets to live and work as part of a ship's crew, learning navigation, line handling, and shipboard operations. Aviation trainings introduce the fundamentals of flight and mission planning, while land-based trainings offer pathways into fields like cybersecurity, robotics, public safety, construction, and even advanced manufacturing.

Uniquely, this summer offers cadets a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in events celebrating America's 250th. Cadets may participate in parades and community events, and the most experienced cadets may also participate in Sail 250 by embarking Navy ships during one of the largest maritime celebrations in history.

For many cadets, summer training is the first step in career exploration. As cadets review advanced training options with their unit commanding officer and family, they are encouraged to consider opportunities that interest them, are new, or connect them to a career they want to explore. Advanced training is truly about building leaders of character and developing skills for life.

Cadet Chief Petty Officer Ryan Wilson of Illinois says, "I go to trainings to improve my leadership, and apply lessons learned within [Sea Cadets] to make mature decisions as a stronger person," said Cadet Chief Petty Officer Ryan Wilson of Illinois.

"Everything I learn at a training is useful in my everyday life as a student, athlete, and civilian."

Dedicated Volunteers

Of course, none of these opportunities would be possible without a dedicated corps of volunteers. Sea Cadet volunteers research, plan, and staff the majority of advanced trainings, sometimes working with community and industry partners and, more often, using their personal and professional expertise to help cadets test their interests in real-world environments. Since

Above: John Holt III, left, has volunteered with Sea Cadets since 2011. Below: Sea Cadets undergo raft training. Summer advanced training helps teach teamwork, discipline and leadership. Photo credit: U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

advanced trainings last between five and 14 days, many volunteers donate a sizable portion of their paid time off to the next generation of leaders through Sea Cadets.

John Holt III has volunteered with Sea Cadets since 2011 and staffed more than 15 trainings, making volunteering with Sea Cadets his way of life.

"I do this work because I know what's possible when young people are given structure, challenge, and someone who believes in them," Holt said. "Summer trainings are where confidence is built, leaders are forged, and futures begin to take shape."

With all the options available to youth and the immense dedication of adults in the program, for Sea Cadets and their volunteers, when August comes, it will be easy to answer the question, "So, what did you do this summer?" ■

To learn more about Sea Cadets or to volunteer, visit seacadets.org.

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■ We of the Navy League of the United States stand for a strong America — a nation morally, economically, and internally strong.

■ We believe that the security of our nation and of the people of the world demands a well-balanced, integrated, mobile American defense team, of which a strong Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine are indispensable parts.

■ We support all Armed Services to the end that each may make its appropriate contribution to the national security.

■ We know that in a free nation an informed public is indispensable to national security and, therefore, we will strive to keep the nation alert to dangers which threaten — both from without and within.

■ We favor appropriations for each of the Armed Services, adequate for national security, economically administered.

■ We oppose any usurpation of the Congress's constitutional authority over the Armed Services.

■ We urge that our country maintain world leadership in scientific research and development.

■ We support industrial preparedness, planning, production.

■ We support efforts of our government to achieve worldwide peace through international cooperation.

■ We advocate a foreign policy which will avoid wars — if possible; if not, win them!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

2026 May Top Recruiters

MEMBER	COUNCIL	MEMBER COUNT
Jane Ferreira	Honolulu	22
Roger Olsen	Tacoma	1
Bonnie Potter	Placer County	1

2026 February/March Top Recruiting Councils

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National Capital	59
Honolulu	51
Hampton Roads	41
Annapolis	23
Orange County	22

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