

SAIC to Build Propulsion for Navy Mk48 Torpedo From Scratch



Sailors and Military Sealift Command civilian mariners work last year to transfer torpedoes to the Los-Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Topeka (SSN 754). The Navy is resuming manufacture of Mk48 torpedoes after a two-decade break and industrial capacity must be rebuilt. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Alana M. Langdon
ARLINGTON,

Va. – With the U.S. Navy resuming manufacture of Mk48 torpedoes for its submarines after a two-decade hiatus, the engineering effort to restore the industrial capability to build the torpedo has required some resourcefulness on the part of defense contractors.

[SAIC won a competitive contract to build the torpedo's aft section](#), consisting of the propulsion section and the propeller, said Stephen Rigdon, SAIC vice president for programs in the Defense Systems Customer Group, speaking to *Seapower* on May 6 at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space exposition in National Harbor, Maryland.

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Stephen Rigdon of SAIC

The guidance-and-control section is being built by Lockheed Martin. Rigdon said the

warheads and fuel tanks in the middle section of the torpedo are on hand in the Navy's inventory.

"This is a build-from-scratch program," Rigdon said. "They haven't been built since the mid-90s. The biggest challenge we faced is reinvigorating the supply chain, finding suppliers that can provide the assemblies that go inside this torpedo."

He said there was no new technology in the propulsion sections, dating to the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Mk48 originally was built by Gould.

Our engineering and technical work ready the MK 48 Mod 7 for combat operations: <https://t.co/z1hcQH1eXo> #SAS2019 <pic.twitter.com/Ib45gl50bh>

– SAIC (@SAICinc) [April 29, 2019](#)

"We're building this from a government print," he said. "What we're finding out in some cases is that if you build it to the print it doesn't necessarily work perfectly. If you go back to the '90s, there was a guy that worked for the company that knew how to do that. That person is retired now. So, it's been an engineering challenge to figure those things out."

"The Navy has programs underway to look at improved engines and things like that," he said.

SAIC is under

contract to build 95 propulsion sections for the Mk48, with two more options on the contract.

“The Navy may buy up to 199 more,” Rigdon said.

SAIC is building the torpedo assemblies at its facility in Bedford, Indiana.