

U.S. Pacific Fleet to Conduct Unmanned Fleet Battle Problem in 2021 to 'Drive Lethality'



Sailors assigned to Coastal Riverine Squadron 3 and the expeditionary mine countermeasure company of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 5 retrieve a MK 18 Mod 2 unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) during a transit through the Northern Mariana Islands. The Navy is planning a Fleet Battle Problem that will include unmanned systems. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cole C. Pielop

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's U.S. Pacific Fleet is planning a Fleet Battle Problem next year that will feature unmanned systems in air, surface, and undersea domains, a Navy admiral announced, noting that "an unmanned Fleet Battle Problem is a pretty new concept."

"We're going to issue a PlanOrd [Planning Order] next week that we're going to order an unmanned fleet battle problem," said Rear Adm. Robert Gaucher, director, Maritime Headquarters, U.S. Pacific Fleet, speaking Sept. 8 at the Defense, Protection, Security virtual conference sponsored by the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International.

Gaucher explained that Fleet Battle Problems are run "to get after one of these key operational problems. We're going to do two for early 2021 to be able to run a Fleet Battle Problem centered on unmanned. It will be on the sea, above the sea and under the sea ... as we get to demonstrating how we can align to the [Indo-Pacific Command] directives to use experimentation to drive lethality."

The admiral said "we haven't worked out all the details. I know there will be a command-and-control aspect to it as we build and figure out what the best command-and-control is,

working with [Chief of Naval Research Rear Adm.] Lorin Selby and seeing what his options are for some of the payloads and sensors that we can bring in, as well as demonstrating some autonomy in an actual fleet problem, run by either the shore and, at points, ships at sea as we try to press the advantage against our adversaries.”