Press Release

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Navy Laser Destroys Unmanned Aerial Vehicle in a Maritime Environment

WASHINGTON — Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), with support from Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Dahlgren, for the second time successfully tracked, engaged, and destroyed a threat representative Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) while in flight, May 24, at San Nicholas Island, Calif.

This marks the first Detect-Thru-Engage laser shoot-down of a threat representative target in an over-the-water, combat representative scenario.

A total of two UAV targets were engaged and destroyed in a maritime environment during the testing, the second series of successes for the U.S. Navy's Laser Weapon System (LaWS) Program. Members of NAVSEA's Directed Energy and Electric Weapon Systems (DE&EWS) Program Office (PMS 405), Program Executive Office for Integrated Warfare Systems (PEO IWS), Raytheon Missile Systems, and NSWC Dahlgren fired a laser through a beam director on a KINETO Tracking Mount, controlled by a MK 15 Close In Weapon System (CIWS). This brings to a total of seven UAVs destroyed by the Surface Navy's first tactical development for fielding a Directed Energy weapon system.

"The success of this effort validates the military utility of DE&EWS in a maritime environment. Further development and integration of increasingly more powerful lasers into Surface Navy LaWS will increase both the engagement range and target sets that can be successfully engaged and destroyed," said Program Manager Capt. David Kiel.

NAVSEA's DE&EWS Program Office is responsible for managing the research, development, integration, and acquisition initiation of DE&EWS for the Navy's surface forces. PEO IWS 3BC is the Program Office responsible for all aspects of the CIWS Program with Raytheon serving as the Navy's prime contractor for CIWS. NSWC Dahlgren, as the LaWS Technical Direction Agent (TDA), focuses on the technology development and test and evaluation for directed energy.

DE&EWS is transitioning technology from the laboratory to prototype system development/test for operational development and use. One of the multiple 'game changing' technologies under development includes laser weapons that provide for speed-of-light engagements at tactically significant ranges with cost savings realized by minimizing the use of defensive missiles and projectiles.

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