

- News
- City-by-City
- Virginia News
- North Carolina News
- Military
- Business
- Nation-World
- Money Watch
- Health
- Fitness
- Does It Work
- Technology
- Project Green
- Gas Prices
- Investigative
- Links in the News

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Navy tests cutting-edge technology

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Reported by: Mike Gooding

NORFOLK -- The Navy is studying cutting edge cyber technologies to better serve and defend its men and women at war.

Finding them is part of the mission of "Trident Warrior," an annual exercise sponsored by the U.S. Navy Second Fleet and directed by the Little Creek-based Naval Network Warfare Command.

The exercise is being managed from the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau, currently tied up at Naval Station Norfolk.

On Thursday, the Navy showed off an unmanned surface vessel that's equipped with some of the same technology as the Mars rover.



The USV, operating in the Elizabeth River about 1,000 yards off Nassau's stern, was sent to detect, track and intercept a target boat that was playing the role of a pirate dhow.

In real situations, it would be used for reconnaissance and force protection.

It is just one of dozens of at-sea technologies being tested during Trident Warrior.

Overseeing the exercise is Capt Carl Conti, II, Director of Innovation and Experimentation for Naval Network Warfare Command.

"We look at areas that need to have a focus on and we find the technologies to help us defend against a specific threat that might be out there, fill the gap that we have" he said.

Conti explained that, in the past, it has taken as long as six years from the moment a technology is discovered to having it operational. The Navy wants to find ways to compress that to 18 months.

"That's what we're trying to do here as well is find ways to upgrade, try to make things cheaper, try to do it faster, because buying things is not necessarily the best way to do things in the U.S. government," he said. "So, trying to find ways to make it faster, cheaper, save some lives, save some time. It's all good."

Personnel and assets from the U.S., Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are participating. France is taking part as an observer.

It runs from June 22 through July 2.

