

Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS)



In December 2024, the Navy and Army completed the first end-to-end flight test of the prototype Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS) All-Up-Round (AUR) launched from an Army battery. In April 2025, the Navy conducted a flight test of the prototype CPS AUR launched from an operationally relevant Navy launcher. This flight test serves as the operational demonstration (Ops Demo) required to close out the Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) rapid prototyping phase of the overall CPS acquisition strategy. In August 2025, the Navy conducted a warhead arena test; results from this test remain under analysis.

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

CPS is a conventional, boost-glide intermediate range hypersonic weapon system. The CPS AUR missile includes a two-stage solid rocket motor booster and

a Common Hypersonic Glide Body containing a kinetic energy projectile warhead. The Navy will integrate CPS into both *Zumwalt*-class destroyers and *Virginia*-class submarines. The Navy will utilize cold-gas ejection (“cold launch”) to launch the AUR from both platforms. The Army

Long Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW) system, which is being reported on in a separate article, will fire a common AUR from their Transporter Erector Launcher (TEL), igniting it in the launch canister (“hot launch”).

MISSION

U.S. combatant commanders will launch CPS from *Zumwalt*-class destroyers and *Virginia*-class submarines to penetrate air defenses to strike high value, time-sensitive targets.

PROGRAM

The CPS program is a partnered effort between the Navy and the Army to design and deliver a common AUR. The Navy is employing a three-phase acquisition strategy to deliver CPS:

- Phase 1 is an MTA rapid prototyping effort to develop and demonstrate a prototype hypersonic missile system capability through a four-flight test campaign. The Navy will complete Phase 1 in 1QFY26, following final evaluation and reporting of the April 2025 Ops Demo.
- Phase 2, which commenced in August 2024, is an MTA rapid fielding effort that includes a flight test from a *Zumwalt*-class destroyer and is intended to field CPS on the first *Zumwalt*-class destroyer in FY27.
- Phase 3 is planned as a Major Defense Acquisition Program through which the Navy intends to field CPS on the remaining two *Zumwalt*-class destroyers and aboard *Virginia*-class submarines.

The CPS Program Office plans to conduct Phases 2 and 3 under a single TEMP which will include the LFT&E Strategy, expected to be provided to DOT&E for approval in early FY26. The Navy plans

to submit test plans to DOT&E for approval in FY26 to conduct additional integrated testing of the CPS AUR from the operationally relevant Navy launcher. In FY27, the CPS Program Office intends to conduct an Ops Demo to assess fielding readiness, by installing, integrating, certifying, and testing the AUR on the first *Zumwalt*-class destroyer.

» MAJOR CONTRACTORS

- Lockheed Martin Space – Littleton, Colorado
- Dynetics, a subsidiary of Leidos – Huntsville, Alabama (Common Hypersonic Glide Body)

TEST ADEQUACY

In December 2024, the Navy and Army completed the first successful end-to-end flight test of a prototype CPS AUR launched from an Army LRHW Battery Operations Center and TEL. As it was not an operational test, it did not require a DOT&E-approved test plan, but the flight test data will help inform future operational test plans.

In April 2025, the Navy completed a flight test of the CPS missile system, in accordance with a DOT&E-approved Ops Demo test plan, in an operationally relevant environment, demonstrating the CPS missile system's readiness to exit Phase 1 of the acquisition strategy. DOT&E observed the test. The Ops Demo was adequate to inform preliminary assessments of the development, capabilities, limitations, and risks of the CPS weapon system. Data collected from the April flight test supported the decision to proceed to MTA

rapid fielding; it was not intended to support a full evaluation of CPS for operational effectiveness, suitability, and survivability.

In FY25, DOT&E observed multiple Navy surrogate and component tests to support LFT&E. The Navy conducted sub-scale warhead testing in January 2025 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, to characterize the effect of drag on the warhead fragments. In June 2025 the Navy assessed the feasibility of firing the CPS warhead out of a large caliber gun at Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona. This novel test method would reduce the cost of conducting dynamic lethality testing against representative targets compared to sled and flight tests. Pending the analysis of the results, the Navy will use this method to conduct lethality tests against a field of targets in FY26. Work is ongoing to identify target assets for use in this testing. In August 2025, DOT&E witnessed the fourth warhead arena test of the CPS warhead at Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, conducted in accordance with a DOT&E-approved test plan. In FY26 and FY27, two additional arena tests are scheduled to characterize a different variant of the warhead.

The CPS program continued work on the verification and validation of their lethality modeling and simulation (M&S) tools throughout FY25. The Navy expects to provide an LFT&E Strategy, as part of the TEMP, for DOT&E approval in FY26.

The Navy has only evaluated the effect of a contested environment on CPS AUR missile performance to a limited extent. The Navy plans to use a combination of M&S, component testing, hardware-in-

the-loop, and evaluations of flight testing to assess CPS performance in the contested environment but has not detailed this in the test strategy.

There was no cyber survivability testing conducted in FY25. Cyber testing originally planned for FY25 was rescheduled to FY26 due equipment availability. Between FY23 and FY24, the Navy completed 10 cyber survivability events to identify the attack surface and potential vulnerabilities of the CPS AUR missile and its supporting combat system. These events will support cyber survivability operational testing in Phases 2 and 3.

PERFORMANCE

» EFFECTIVENESS, SUITABILITY, AND SURVIVABILITY

Insufficient data are available at this time to fully determine the operational effectiveness, suitability, and survivability of CPS in an operationally relevant environment. DOT&E intends to use the Navy's classified Phase I Ops Demo report, issued in September 2025, to support a risk assessment with feedback to the program office. DOT&E will further assess CPS for operational effectiveness, suitability, and survivability at the completion of Phase 2 and within a classified IOT&E report upon completion of Phase 3 testing, planned after FY30.

» LETHALITY

Insufficient data are available at this time to provide a preliminary assessment of CPS lethality. As

noted in the FY22 – 24 Annual Reports, the initial CPS sled and flight tests did not include operationally representative targets and consequently did not provide direct validation of the weapon's lethal effects. Additionally, DOT&E has not yet received the test data from the August 2025 arena test.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Navy should:

1. Submit to DOT&E for approval the updated CPS TEMP that fully captures the test strategy for Phases 2 and 3 of CPS development and delivery and that will sufficiently determine CPS AUR missile operational effectiveness, suitability, and survivability in a full-spectrum contested environment.
2. Submit to DOT&E for approval the LFT&E Strategy to evaluate the lethality and survivability of the CPS AUR in an operationally representative environment against threat-representative targets. This effort should be coordinated with the Joint Technical Coordinating Group for Munitions Effectiveness, to include data required to validate the CPS weaponeering tools for operational use.
3. Submit to DOT&E for review a Cyber T&E Strategy that supports operational testing of cyber survivability of CPS on a *Zumwalt*-class destroyer in Phase 2 and a *Virginia*-class submarine in Phases 2 and 3.