

Case Study

USS Hartford & USS New Orleans Collision Providing Mission-Critical Services in a Time of Need



Client:
U.S. Navy

Summary of Core Activities:

- U.S. Navy needed temporary antenna and communications systems to enable surface transit across the Atlantic Ocean for permanent repairs
- VT Group designed, fabricated, tested and delivered a temporary system for secure communications within five days
- Work performed with no formal contract order

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In March 2009, the collision of the USS Hartford (a Los Angeles-class submarine), with the USS New Orleans (a San Antonio class amphibious transport dock) took place during wartime operations in the Strait of Hormuz, in the Gulf of Oman. The damaged submarine required a temporary satellite communications solution in a very short time frame so it could complete a safe and successful surface transit to its homeport for repairs.

VT Group's submarine team and our Virginia-based manufacturing division key contributors to the government/industry team, which designed, procured, manufactured and tested commercial satellite communications solutions to enable the submarine to return home safely. Their role within the Critical and Urgent Response Efforts (CURE) action team was recognized by SPAWAR who awarded the overall CURE team a 'Lightning Bolt' award for their valuable contribution to the mission.

A highly skilled team of managers, design engineers, and technicians work

at Charleston, S.C., at VT Group's center of excellence for submarine communication systems. Uniquely, they are the only non-ship manufacturer to integrate and install the network-based communications infrastructure, known as Common Submarine Radio Room (CSRR) systems, on U.S. submarines.

Says Scott Buchheit, VT Group's Submarine Department Manager: "In addition to supporting system installations, such as CSRR, our professional team also respond to urgent requests for assistance."

When they were asked to provide immediate support following a submarine collision in the gulf of Oman, the team was quick to act, even though a formal contract order wasn't instantly available.

"It was an easy decision to make," says Buchheit. "As a long-term partner, we were prepared to work 'at risk' to support our customer, SPAWAR (Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command) and the U.S. Navy, so the submarine could get home safely."