

14 September 2026

Federal Minister of Defence Pistorius charts the course for a fourth fleet intelligence vessel

Together with Federal Minister of Defence Boris Pistorius, Minister President Manuela Schwesig and Rheinmetall CEO Armin Papperger, high-ranking representatives of the Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) and numerous guests from the industry and politics attended the keel-laying ceremony for the third fleet intelligence vessel. This important milestone in shipbuilding took place several months ahead of schedule at Rheinmetall's shipyard in Wolgast, where the second fleet intelligence vessel is also being built in parallel. At the same time, the Federal Minister also spoke in favour of procuring a fourth fleet intelligence vessel.

Boris Pistorius, Federal Minister of Defence: "The new generation of Class 424 fleet intelligence vessels is equipped with high-performance sensor technology that enables very efficient monitoring of the electromagnetic spectrum across land, air and sea, and allows for even better intelligence gathering. The new vessels are due to enter service gradually from 2029 onwards, ensuring this capability for the coming decades. Our Navy and the Cyber and Information Domain Service are working closely together on this. The specialists in the Cyber and Information Domain Service utilise the technical capabilities on board to gather and analyse information. In doing so, they will make an important contribution to our situational picture. Our new capability profile stipulates a total requirement of four fleet intelligence vessels. Three are currently under construction. I have therefore, in close consultation with the Chief of the Navy and the Chief of the Cyber and Information Domain Service, set the course for a fourth sistership. We are now proceeding to the parliamentary vote on this matter."

Manuela Schwesig, Minister President of the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: "For Wolgast, for eastern Vorpommern, and for the whole of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Peene-Werft is far more than just a shipyard. The maritime industry is one of our key sectors, of which we are proud. Its value chains stretch from the north right down to the south. We are delighted that the keel has been laid for the third fleet intelligence vessel."

The keel-laying ceremony is traditionally regarded as the symbolic start of the actual shipbuilding process. The highlights of the ceremony—including the placement of lucky coins on a keel-laying plate and the wedging of the plate under the keel-laying section—were attended by Minister of State Philipp Amthor, Vice Admiral Axel Deertz, Vice Chief of the German Navy, Vice Admiral Thomas Daum, Chief of the German Cyber and Information Domain Service (CIR), Angela Bier, Mayor of the future sponsor city of Hof, and Jürgen Giefer, Deputy Head of the Naval Directorate at the Federal Office of Equipment, Information Technology and In-Service Support for the German Armed Forces (BAINBw).

► Keyfacts

- Successful keel laying of the third fleet intelligence vessel at Rheinmetall's shipyard in Wolgast.
- Federal Minister of Defence Pistorius initiates the procurement of the fourth fleet intelligence vessel.
- Fleet intelligence vessels serve as reconnaissance platforms for the German Armed Forces.

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Armin Papperger, CEO of Rheinmetall AG: "The successful keel laying, well ahead of schedule, is a strong testament to the capabilities of our entire team. It demonstrates what is possible when planning, technological expertise, and collaborative partnerships are consistently integrated. It also showcases the skills and knowledge that make this facility a hub of modern naval shipbuilding. Today we have reached an important milestone, thereby creating an excellent foundation for the next phases of construction. My thanks go to everyone involved who made this success possible through their full commitment, passion, and expertise."

The fleet intelligence vessels, which are approximately 130 metres long, are equipped with state-of-the-art sensor technology and will serve the German Armed Forces as reconnaissance platforms for maritime intelligence gathering. For final outfitting, commissioning, and testing, the vessels will later be towed to Rheinmetall's Blohm+Voss shipyard in Hamburg.