

Port Hueneme SeaSparrow Launcher, Platform Being Upgraded for Future ISEA Work

PORT HUENEME, Calif. – Work has commenced on the refurbishment and modification of the NATO SeaSparrow Missile System (NSSMS) platform and Mk132 Guided Missile Launching System (GMLS) located at the Surface Warfare Engineering Facility aboard Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD).

The surface-to-air ship defense system is being upgraded to support the deployment of the Evolved SeaSparrow Missile (ESSM) Block 2, which employs an active and semi-active guidance system to meet current and expected future threats.

“The effort is in support of ESSM Block 2 integration efforts for the CVN, LHD and LHA ship classes,” according to Son Nguyen, electronics engineer. “NSWC PHD is the In-Service Engineering Agent [ISEA] leading the testing of a new servo motor, launcher cell extensions and qualification of ESSM Block 2 loading and operations.”

The project is one of many current and future endeavors launched by NSWC PHD in support of the ISEA of the Future, which builds upon key innovation milestones and actions to support the next-generation Navy.

“The modification, known as MIN-MOD, will include an overhauled launcher that will bring together all of the program elements to prove and verify required changes as well as demonstrate that the change is fleet ready,” said Robert Barrett, NSSMS customer advocate and program manager. “This also provides the ISEA with the latest launcher that is in the fleet, allowing us to better execute our jobs in both fleet support as well as obsolescence management.”

The NATO SeaSparrow Project is now in its 50th year and is the longest running, most successful cooperative weapons program in NATO.

“Over the years I worked various details through the NSSMS program, learning all aspects of what it takes to be an ISEA and supporting the fleet both technically and logistically,” said Barrett.

“The MIN-MOD program came about when the program office and NAVSEA could not come to a contractual agreement with the design agent for a replacement launcher for the NSSMS Mk57 system,” he said. “The replacement launcher had to have the ability to be able to fire the ESSM Block 2. This situation also drove a new requirement to make the contractual process competitive, which meant a minimum of at least two to three years were needed before a first article replacement would be seen by the fleet.

“This effort also delivers ESSM Block 2 capabilities to large flat decks three years in advance of their original fleet issuance. The added bonus with this program is that it is reverse compatible, so current ESSM shooters will get the advantages of improved readiness and affordability of the LRUs [Lowest Repairable Units] long before they get the mechanical modifications to shoot the ESSM Block 2,” he said.

The NATO SeaSparrow Project is an international consortium of 12 nations consisting of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the United States. The 12 member nations are partners in engineering, development, production and sustainment of the missiles and supporting equipment. NSWC PHD provides advanced technical training to partner allies in support of NSSMS.