Coast Guard Icebreaker Healy Deploying to Arctic Ocean

SEATTLE — The Coast Guard Cutter Healy is scheduled to depart July 24 for a four-month deployment to the Arctic Ocean to carry out multiple scientific research missions, the 13th Coast Guard District announced in a release.

Healy will provide presence and access to the Arctic while conducting three major science research missions. In partnership with the National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Office of Naval Research, scientists will conduct physical and biological oceanographic research in the Arctic Ocean.

Healy's first mission is a NOAA-sponsored mission to increase understanding of biological processes along Alaska's Continental Shelf. This mission comprises three mission subsets: Distributed Biological Observatory, Northern Chukchi Integrated Study, and the Ecosystems and Fisheries-Oceanography Coordinated Investigations.

The second mission of Healy's Arctic deployment is sponsored by the Office of Naval Research and is focused on understanding how upper-level ocean stratification and sea ice in the Beaufort Sea is responding to inflow and surface forcing changes. The Stratified Ocean Dynamics of the Arctic project aims to increase understanding by deploying subsurface moorings and specialized on-ice instruments to observe the fluctuations across an annual cycle.

Healy's final mission is sponsored by the National Science Foundation and will examine the effects of the Pacific water inflow into the Arctic and its associated boundary current on the ecosystem. This study is part of a multiyear endeavor that combines shipboard measurements taken in the spring and fall,

with measurements from a subsea mooring deployed in the center of the boundary current.

Currently under the command of Capt. Greg Tlapa, Healy is the nation's premiere high-latitude research vessel and is one of the only U.S. military surface vessels that deploys to and is capable of operating in the ice-covered waters of the Arctic. In addition to science operations, Healy and the crew are capable of conducting a range of Coast Guard operations such as search and rescue, ship escorts, environmental protection and the enforcement of laws and treaties in the Polar Regions.

Healy provides access and presence throughout the Arctic region to protect U.S. maritime borders and to safeguard the maritime economy. Homeported in Seattle, Healy is the largest ship in the U.S. Coast Guard at 420 feet long with a displacement of over 16,000 tons and a permanent crew of 87.

Los Angeles SSN Life-Extension 'Creates Own Issues'

WASHINGTON — The ranking member of the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee said failure to fund extra Virginia-class attack submarines (SSNs) in 2022 and 2023 will aggravate the submarine shortage in the next decade, and a plan to extend the lives of five older Los Angeles-class SSNs has "its own set of issues."

U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., told an audience at the Hudson Institute, a Washington think tank, July 18, that the option of extending the lives of Los Angeles-class SSNs should

be looked at carefully.

The Navy's SSN force stands at 53 boats today and is on track to decline to 42 in the mid-2020s. One plan to mitigate the decline is to fund three Virginia-class SSNs in both 2022 and 2023, when the submarine contractors Electric Boat and Newport News are building the first Columbia-class ballistic-missile submarine.

"If we don't do that, we're really going backwards," Courtney said, referring to the shipbuilding plan, now a matter of law, to build the Navy's fleet to 355 ships.

The Navy also is looking at extending the service life of up to five Los Angeles SSNs to help mitigate the gap.

"I'm not religiously opposed to that, but [life extension] creates its own set of issues," said Courtney, whose district includes Electric Boat. "These are old boats, built in the 1980s and '90s. They don't have the same capabilities that a Virginia-class [SSN] has. We have to refuel the reactor and you have to check the hull to make sure that it's okay. They've been running hard in the decades they've been out there.

"There's a whole separate issue," he added. "Technologies change in terms of shipbuilding: where you get the spare parts, where you find the [blueprints]. This thing is not as easy as it sounds. It's not like putting a quart of oil in your 10-year-old car and hope it runs for the next five years."

LCS Anti-Submarine Warfare Mission Package Completes Two Testing Milestones

WASHINGTON – The Navy's Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants announced July 16 the successful completion of two littoral combat ship (LCS) Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Mission Package testing milestones.

The first was a 10-day Dockside-1 test event on the Dual-mode Array Transmitter (DART) Mission System Towed Body and associated launch-and-recovery assembly components in Fort Pierce, Florida. The second was a full-power, in-water test of the active array at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Seneca Lake Detachment's test facility in Dresden, New York.

"The Seneca Lake test was a huge step forward for the DART System and the ASW Mission Package as a whole," said Capt. Ted Zobel, LCS Mission Module program manager. "This revolutionary technology is critical to countering the rising submarine threats worldwide."

The array previously was tested at Raytheon's shallow-water facilities in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. This test on Seneca Lake was the first opportunity for the new technology to be demonstrated in an open-water test environment, which allows better understanding of how the system will perform when deployed on an LCS. The successful completion of this test event provided Navy officials and industry partners valuable information on performance specifications and options for future modifications.

DART development includes incremental testing of the individual system components followed by progressively more inclusive integration and testing until the full ASW Mission Package has been tested.

The Dockside-1 test a week prior to the Seneca Lake event had LCS Sailors overseeing and actively engaging in the operation of the DART Mission System at the Florida Atlantic University Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute’s waterside product integration, assembly and test complex.

Dockside-2 testing, planned for the fall, will expand the scope of DART system integration to add three additional Raytheon mission modules to complete the system. The Navy will take delivery of the DART Mission System from Raytheon later this year and plans to take the system to the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center early next year for additional testing.

Naval Reactors Awards Naval Nuclear Laboratory Contracts to Fluor Marine Propulsion

WASHINGTON – Naval Reactors, a joint program of the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of the Navy (DON), has selected Fluor Marine Propulsion LLC (FMP) as the new DOE and DON contractor for the Naval Nuclear Laboratory (NNL), Naval Reactors Public Affairs said in July 13 release. FMP, a limited liability company, is a wholly owned, special-purpose subsidiary of Fluor Corp.

Naval Reactors conducted a full and open competition for the new NNL contracts. The estimated combined award value of these contracts is approximately $30 billion over ten years if all options are exercised.

The current DOE and DON contracts for the NNL with Bechtel

Marine Propulsion Corp. expire on Sept. 30. An approximate three-month transition period commenced on July 12, which will provide stability for the workforce employed under the Bechtel NNL contracts and ensure essential continuity of operations for vital Naval Reactors work. The contracts awarded to FMP represent the best value to the government and will provide 10 years of stability for the NNL.

The NNL comprises the DOE-owned locations and personnel responsible for developing advanced naval nuclear propulsion technology, providing technical support to ensure the safety and reliability of our nation's naval nuclear reactors, and training the Sailors who operate those reactors in the U.S. Navy's submarines and aircraft carriers. The NNL includes the Bettis and Knolls Atomic Power Laboratories, the Kenneth A. Kesselring Site and the Naval Reactors Facility, which have supported the nation since 1946.

Zumwalt DDG's Gun Munition Still on Hold

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's program executive offer in charge of most shipbuilding said that development of a new munition for the Advanced Gun System (AGS) on the DDG 1000 Zumwalt-class ship continues to be on hold.

Speaking July 11 at a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast, Rear Adm. William J. Galinis, program executive officer, Ships, said a replacement for the Long-Range Land-Attack Projectile (LRLAP) developed for the AGS "is on hold at this point."

The LRLAP was canceled in part for its high cost given

economies of scale when the DDG 1000 program was reduced from 32 planned ships to only three, leaving the AGS without a round available in quantity.

“Last fall, the Navy made the decision that we were going to transition [the Zumwalt] from a primary land-attack mission to more of a surface strike mission set,” Galinis said. “As we brought this platform on line and learned about the capability of the platform, it fits that mission requirement very well. There are some changes we need to make to the ship, but they are not significant.”

Galinis said the Navy has had challenges with getting the desired ranges from rounds fired from the AGS.

“Last summer, we had essentially a fly-off of four or five different rounds,” he said. “We’ve taken the analysis of those test firings. It’s kind of on hold at this point as we transition to surface strike.”

Galinis said that USS Zumwalt is expected to return to sea at the end of next month following installation of its combat systems in San Diego. The second hull, Michael Monsoor, is in Bath Iron Works shipyard in Maine for a post-delivery availability. One of its main turbine engines suffered a casualty and will be replaced.

The third hull, Lyndon B. Johnson, is expected to be launched by the end of the year and to begin sea trials by the end of 2019.

PEO Ships: ‘A Little Risk,’ ‘Evolutionary Approach’ to Shipbuilding Needed

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy admiral in charge of building most of the Navy’s ships advocates taking a bolder approach to ship design, but one that also leverages existing hulls and technology to incrementally develop new ship classes.

Speaking July 11 to an audience at a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast, Rear Adm. William J. Galinis, program executive officer (PEO), Ships, said the Navy spending “far too much time studying a problem in trying to minimize risk really gets us to an unresponsive [acquisition] system.”

Galinis said that the Navy’s top leadership is encouraging the acquisition community to “take a little bit of risk” given the current sense of urgency in the renewed climate of great power competition.

“Include that in your business practices,” he urged the defense industry representatives at the event.

Galinis said the Navy is taking a more “evolutionary approach to new ship classes [and] introducing new technology, leveraging parent designs.”

He cited the DDG 51 Flight III program, the new guided-missile frigate program and the Flight II of the San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ship as examples of the evolutionary approach. Another example he mentioned is the evolution of the America-class amphibious assault ships, the most recent of which — Bougainville — will feature restoration of a well deck and be equipped with the new Enterprise Air Search Radar that uses technology in common with the Air and Missile Defense Radar being installed on the DDG 51 Flight III.

Galinis pointed out the success of incrementally modernizing ships in the example of the third Arleigh Burke guided-missile destroyer USS Barry (DDG 53), which emerged from a recent modernization availability with the same capability of USS John Finn (DDG 113), a new ship commissioned last year.

He said Navy's Future Large Surface Combatant design will represent "more of an evolutionary approach as we migrate from the DDG 51 Flight III to the Large Surface Combatant" [and] will be "operationally driven."

The first two ships of DDG Flight III are under construction by Huntington Ingalls and Bath Iron Works.

"The revolutionary piece certainly plays a part," Galinis said, referring to new technologies that are being developed for shipboard use. The Navy has been developing laser weapons, electromagnetic rail guns and integrated power systems for newer ships.

AUVSI Launches Unmanned Maritime Systems Advocacy Committee

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI), the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of unmanned systems and robotics, has formed an Unmanned Maritime Systems (UMS) Advocacy Committee to focus on the development of policy positions to support the advancement of the industry, the association announced in a July 9 release.

“Unmanned maritime systems allow military and commercial operators alike to go farther and deeper than ever before,” said Brian Wynne, president and CEO of AUVSI. “The input provided by the UMS Advocacy Committee will help us speak with a unified voice and enable all our members to advocate for the growth of the industry.”

The UMS Advocacy Committee will be chaired by Thomas Reynolds, vice president of Business Development for Hydroid Inc./Kongsberg Maritime. Reynolds, who currently leads all Kongsberg Maritime business with the U.S. government, previously served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy, where he served as commander of the Explosive Ordinance Disposal Task Group, U.S. Fifth Fleet, among other roles.

Wayne Prender, vice president for Applied Technology and Advance Programs at Textron Systems, will be the committee’s vice chair. In his role at Textron, Prender is responsible for engineering development programs, advancing areas such as the Common Unmanned Surface Vehicle and Cased-Telescoped Weapons and Ammunition, as well as emerging capabilities and development programs. He is a former commissioned officer in the U.S. Army, where he was deployed to Iraq and awarded the Bronze Star.

The committee includes representatives from BAE Systems, L3 Technologies, Leidos, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Seaborn Defense.

The UMS Advocacy Committee recently formalized a set of Policy Priorities to help guide the committee’s legislative and regulatory actions. The priorities state that the UMS Advocacy Committee shall:

■ Establish the UMS Advocacy Committee as the preeminent industry voice influencing acquisition and regulatory policies and processes.

■ Facilitate the growth of UMS through active engagement with

the government and commercial sectors.

■ Collaborate with ship owners, operators, shipyards, ports, federal maritime agencies, technology developers, classification societies and academia to further integrate advanced automation for maritime platforms into the domestic market.

■ Develop the future of the UMS workforce through technology-focused education.

Coast Guard Opens Forward Operating Location Kotzebue for Arctic Shield 2018

JUNEAU, Alaska — The Coast Guard opened forward operating location (FOL) Kotzebue, Alaska, in support of Arctic Shield 2018 operations throughout the Arctic region July 1, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a release.

As part of operation Arctic Shield 2018, Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak deployed two MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters and crews to Kotzebue to give the Coast Guard an opportunity to leverage existing infrastructure and strategically positions its crews to effectively respond to maritime emergencies in the Bering Strait and the Northern Slope.

In addition to FOL Kotzebue, the Coast Guard will have cutters Healy, Stratton and Douglas Munro engage in operations encompassing a variety of missions from Dutch Harbor through the Bering Strait and along the North Slope including the Northern Alaska Outer Continental Shelf.

Operation Arctic Guardian is also a part of Arctic Shield, and it is an exercise that will conduct outreach with community responders in the Arctic by teaching basic oil spill response tactics and sub-area planning. Several Coast Guard personnel and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation will conduct Operation Arctic Guardian in Bethel.

“The Forward Operating Location in Kotzebue helps mitigate several of the major challenges when operating in the Arctic including the environment, vast distances and limited infrastructure,” said Rear Adm. Matthew Bell, commander, Coast Guard 17th District. “Arctic Shield 2018 operations and activities will include performing multiple missions, leveraging partnerships and increasing maritime domain awareness to reduce risk and promote safe, secure and environmentally responsible maritime activity. “

Arctic Shield operations began in 2009 to support Coast Guard missions in response to increased maritime activity in the Arctic. Arctic Shield operations and activities include focusing on promoting national interests and sovereignty throughout the Arctic. Arctic Shield 2018 operations and activities will include performing multiple missions, leveraging partnerships and increasing maritime domain awareness to reduce risk and promote safe, secure and environmentally responsible maritime activity.

Arctic Shield 2018 focuses on understanding and responding to the risks to the sea, risks to those on the sea, and risks from those who might use the sea to do us harm. Increasing maritime domain awareness, building and strengthening partnerships with both national and international Arctic stakeholders, and having an active presence in the region will enhance the safety, security and stewardship of the nation’s Arctic waters.

Boeing to Build 28 Super Hornets for Kuwait

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy has awarded to Boeing $1.5 billion for 28 F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters for the Kuwaiti Air Force.

According to a June 27 Defense Department contract announcement, Boeing will build 22 single-seat F/A-18E and six two-seat F/A-18F versions for Kuwait.

The sale of the Super Hornets was approved by the U.S. Department of State in February.

Deliveries of the strike fighters to Kuwait is expected by January 2021.

Kuwait's air force previously ordered 32 older F/A-18C and eight F/A-18D Hornets during the 1980s. It will be the second foreign nation to order the Super Hornet, Australia being the first.

MDA Director: Ship-based Missile Defense More Capable, Flexible than Land-based

Options

WASHINGTON – The director of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) accepted the declaration by Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. John M. Richardson that he wants to get his Aegis-equipped warships out of the missile defense patrol missions, but noted that the Navy ships provide better capabilities than available land-based alternatives.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Samuel A. Greaves, the MDA director, said June 26 that he understood the concern over the limited number of the multimission ships and "the strain on the crews and equipment" of keeping the multimission-capable destroyers and cruisers deployed on the ballistic missile defense (BMD) missions.

Greaves was asked at a Mitchell Institution breakfast session about Richardson's June 12 complaint that he had six multimission ships that could go anywhere quickly to address security threats but were tied up "in a tiny little box, defending land." The CNO said those ships could be used in emergencies, but "I want to get out of the long-term missile defense business."

Richardson said the BMD mission could be taken over by land-based systems.

Greaves noted that "the CNO did verify that he is supportive of the Aegis BMD mission."

"The existing ground facilities is Aegis Ashore," Greaves said, and there is a "question if you could deploy additional capabilities. THAAD also could do some of that," he said, referring to the Army-operated Terminal High Altitude Area Defense antimissile system.

"But the Aegis weapon system has more capability" and can reach higher altitude targets, Greaves added. He also noted

the “flexibility of the (Navy) platform to respond to the threat.”

“But, if the nation decides that we need to balance out, or increase the number of land-based capabilities,” Greaves said that with “the demonstrated ability we have, we can do it with Aegis Ashore.”

The first Aegis Ashore site in Romania was declared operational in May 2016 with a Spy-1D radar and 24 Mk 41 vertical launch systems holding Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) missiles. But the planned second site in Poland that was expected to be operational by early 2019 has run into major problems with site construction. Greaves estimated it would take another 18 months to complete.

In his address, Greaves cited his priorities of increasing the reliability of the existing BMD capabilities, increasing the engagement capabilities and keeping pace with the rapidly improve threats.

“The times for delays and studies are over,” he said.

A top priority in keeping up with the emerging threats, Greaves said, was fielding a capability against hypersonic weapons. That threat is real, based on what has been seen in actions by others, he said, apparently referring to China and Russia, which have claimed to have demonstrated ultra-high-speed weapons.

Among MDA’s planned projects, Greaves listed an upcoming retest of the SM-3IIA missile, which failed an intercept trial last year. He said officials have isolated the problem to a part that worked nine out of the 10 previous tests and were working to ensure it will work in the future.