

Surface Boss: Navy Considering Light Amphibious Warships for Junior Officer Command



The Cyclone-class coastal patrol ship USS Tornado (PC 14) conducts a man overboard drill Sept. 16, 2020. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dan Serianni*

ARLINGTON, Va. – With the Navy planning on decommissioning its remaining Cyclone-class coastal patrol ships over the next two years, the opportunities for junior officers to command ships early in their careers are drying up. A new ship now being planned for the fleet may provide a solution to the problem.

Most Navy warships – destroyers, littoral combat ships (LCSs), amphibious transport dock ships and dock landing ships – are commanded by surface warfare officers with the rank of

commander. The forthcoming Constellation-class frigate likely will be the same. Cruisers are commanded by captains who previously have commanded a smaller ship.

In an earlier era, such as World War II, many small warships, such as destroyer escorts, were skippered by lieutenant commanders. Antelope-class patrol gunboats during the Vietnam War were commanded by lieutenants. Today the Coast Guard has many ocean-going cutters, such as Sentinel-class fast response cutters, that give lieutenants early command experience. Command at sea for a junior officer has been shown to produce a more mature, experienced mariner accustomed to facing hard decisions that require sound judgement.

Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, commander, Naval Surface Forces, was speaking July 22 to reporters at a media roundtable when asked about the diminishing opportunities for lieutenants and lieutenant commanders to gain experience in command of a ship.

"I think about that a lot," Kitchener said. "I'm a big believer in early command opportunity if you're truly trying to develop good COs [commanding officers] at the O-5, O-6 [commander, captain] level. It really gives them a broader understanding of the force.

"One of the things we're looking at right now, tracking pretty closely, is the Marine Corps' initiative for the LAW, the Light Amphibious Warship," he said. "I see that as perfect opportunity for early command for our future officers. I think that's a great mission for them. Right now, I think on that we're on track."

Kitchener said he has "looked a little bit at about LCS, but not where I want to talk about my thoughts on it, but I do think the LAW is something perfectly suited for [early command]."

Sea-Air-Space 2021 Prequel: Next-Gen Attack Sub Will Be Ultimate Apex Predator, Admiral Says



USS Seawolf, shown here in Japan in 2009. The Navy aims to combine the Seawolf-class's speed and payload, Virginia-class acoustics and sensors and Columbia-class longevity into the next-generation nuclear-powered attack submarine, the SSNX.
U.S. NAVY / Lt. Cmdr. Greg Kuntz

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's next-generation nuclear-powered attack submarine, SSNX, will combine the best technologies and capabilities from earlier submarines to produce the finest hunter the world's oceans have ever seen,

according to the service.

"We're looking at the ultimate apex predator for the maritime domain," said Rear Adm. Bill Houston, director, Undersea Warfare, Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, who has been selected to be the Navy's next commander, Submarine Forces, speaking in a pre-recorded webinar of the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space Prequel.

Houston said the SSNX has "got to be faster, carry a significant punch, a bigger payload, a larger salvo rate. It's got to have acoustic superiority and simultaneously we're going to work on operational availability with respect to maintenance and life of the ship.

"We're taking what we already know how to do and combining it together," he said.

The Seawolf-class SSN, which entered service in the late 1990s, "has incredible speed and payload," he said. "We're going to take that Seawolf trait of payload and speed; we're going to take Virginia class acoustics and sensors; and then we're going to take Columbia's [nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine, or SSBN] operational availability and life of ship.

"We're going to put that all together [for SSNX] – the apex predator – because it really needs to be ready for major combat operations," he said. "It's going to need to be able to go behind enemy lines and deliver that punch that is going to really establish our primacy. It needs to be able to deny an adversary's ability to operate in their bastion regions."

Houston said that the Navy is "confident we're going to be able to do that because we've already built that on those platforms. We know how to do that. We just have to mesh it together with one platform. The systems we have, with electronic design, the tools, the stuff that we've already developed, we're going to capitalize on that."

The admiral explained that the SSNX is timed to capitalize on the ‘very robust’ design team for the Columbia-class SSBN when that program is ramping down amid production of the SSBNs.

“We’ll be ramping up in SSNX because we’ll have the design and the RDT&E [research, development, test and evaluation] done,” Houston said. “It takes a significant amount of time and effort for that RDT&E to develop this apex predator. That’s what we’re going to do over the next decade working on the systems for SSNX. We’re very confident we can get there. It’s a daunting task, but the team is more than capable of doing it.”

Sea-Air-Space 2021 Prequel: Lawmakers, Analyst Say Navy Needs a Battle Force Ready for 2025, Not 2045



Sailors assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) stow lines as the ship leaves port in Souda Bay, Greece, July 19, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Claire DuBois*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy urgently needs to modernize its battle force in order to meet the near-term challenges of China and Russia if it is to continue to dominate the maritime domain and protect the freedom of the seas, two Congress members and a naval analyst said.

“We as a nation must become a sea power again,” said Dr. Jerry Hendrix, a retired Navy captain, former director of Navy History and Heritage Command, and now vice president of the Telamus Group, speaking in a pre-recorded webinar of the Navy League’s Sea-Air Space Prequel event. “We’re facing a rising global competition right now. This [2022] budget quite frankly in reading of it, is just unserious. It’s unserious in that amount that was funded there and it’s as unserious in the terms of cutting back forces just as we should be adding forces, trying to keep the defense industrial base primed and, in fact, expanding. So, when we actually cut back on the

number of surface combatants we're building, we're sending a mixed signal to the industrial base when we ought to be singing as a chorus right now about what is needed."

Hendrix said the U.S. government "seems to be leaning toward a budget that is purely focused on 10 to 15 years out when, in fact, we've just had a significant warning from an outgoing retiring four-star [Adm. Phil Davidson, former commander, Indo-Pacific Command] that really the threat can exist six years from now. So, how are we going to meet that near-term threat? That calls for us to be looking at how we modernize and extend the lives of the platforms we have now, which is what we are not doing as a Navy or Department of Defense."

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wisconsin), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, also speaking in the webinar, said the Navy needs to "build a battle force for 2025, not 2045. As Adm. Davidson has warned, we may have six years or less before the PRC [Peoples Republic of China] takes action against Taiwan. We could have just years to prepare for a war that could decide the course of the 21st century, and that war would be waged, first and foremost, by the sea services. So, we can't pay lip service to the idea of naval supremacy anymore, we have to earn it. We have to do better if we want to avert disaster and – make no mistake – that is where our present course leads us. We have to act with sense of urgency to advocate for, to build, and resource American seapower before it's too late."

Gallagher said Congress needs "to be honest with the American people about the stakes, what it's going to cost, and the hard choices we have to make. If we fail to reverse the current trends, we're going to wake up one day and we will either have lost a war or thrown Taiwan under the bus and, in so doing, destroyed American military deterrence in the process."

"We need to take swift action to improve our fleet architecture to respond to the threats that China poses

today,” said Rep. Elaine Luria (D-Virginia), vice chair of the House Armed Services Committee, also speaking at the webinar, noting the need to ready the battle force for 2025, not just 2045.

“The position we find ourselves in is no fault of today’s naval leadership. We’ve really lost a generation of shipbuilding – ship classes that haven’t been built to the same quantity or capability that was initially intended. There is a bigger debate going on in Congress about what the future Navy, the future force structure looks like, and I, myself, was quite disappointed with this [2022] budget from the Navy that in fact did not grow the fleet ... and proposed to decommission more ships than it was going to build” in 2022.

Sea-Air-Space 2021 Prequel: CN0 Describes the Fleet of 2025



Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday speaks to 1st Class midshipmen during his visit to the U.S. Naval Academy in April. *U.S. NAVY / Midshipman 1st Class Tommy Brophy*
ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy’s top officer has described what he sees the U.S. Fleet will look like in 2025, a benchmark which he says the Navy will have made investments so that the fleet will have made notable strides with fielding increased combat capability.

CNO Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking in a prerecorded webinar of the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Prequel, listed some of the major platforms and weapons that will make the fleet more capable by 2025:

Under the sea:

- “All of our Block III and IV [Virginia-class attack submarines] should be delivered by 2025 with an undersea weapon that is more lethal and has greater range.”

On the sea:

- “We [will be] just on the cusp of delivering our first Constellation-class frigate.”
- “We will be delivering the [Arleigh Burke-class] Flight III DDGs in earnest.”
- “We are investing in a longer-range weapon, the Maritime Strike Tomahawk that gives us range and speed to reach out and touch an adversary.”
- “We believe that we will be delivering the Zumwalt-class destroyers with a hypersonic missile capability.”

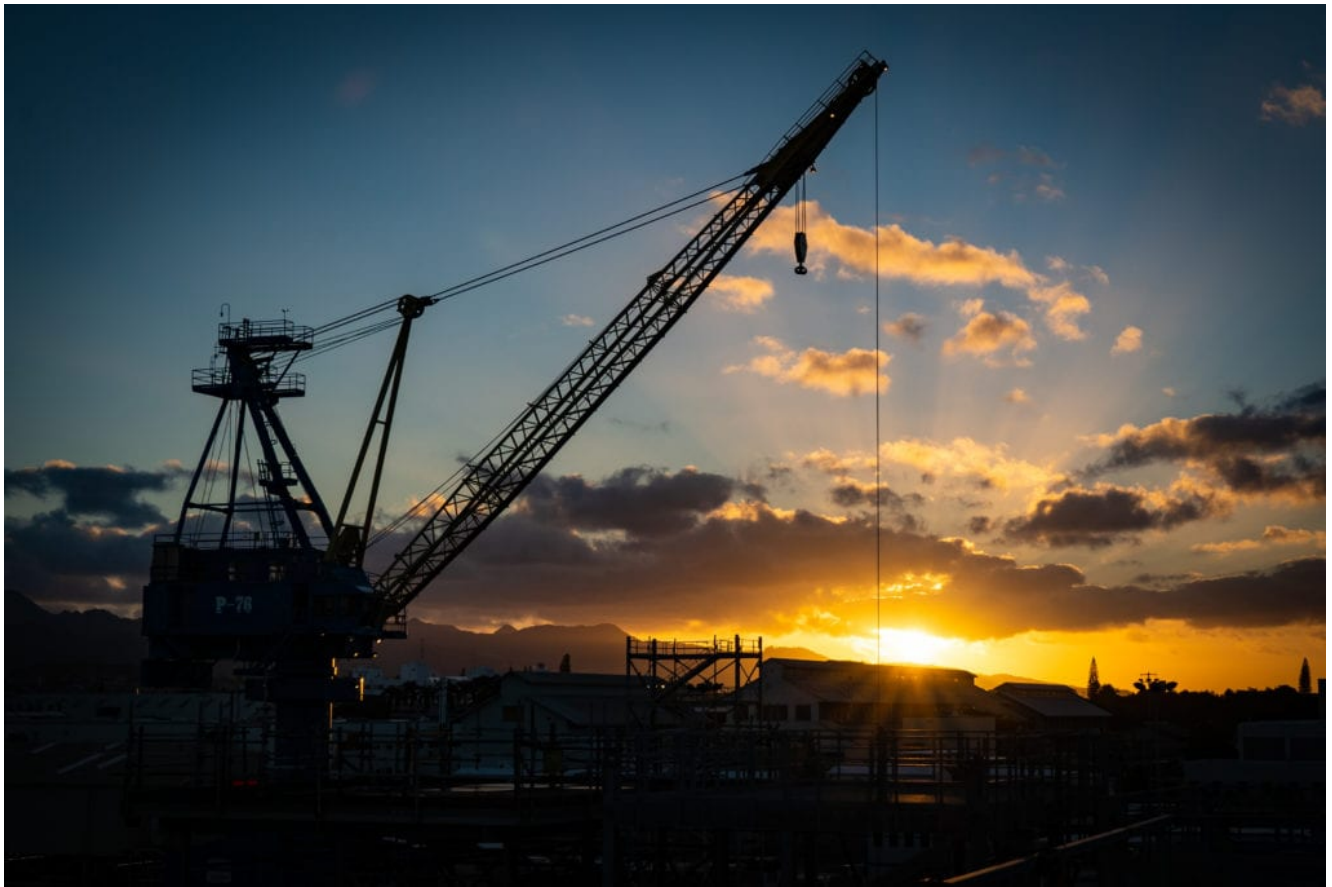
In the air:

- “We’ll have half of our [carrier] air wings [with] a fourth- and fifth-generation mix [of strike fighters], which analysis has shown to be quite effective against our adversaries. Tied in with that is a longer-range air-to-surface missile that gives us greater reach and greater punch.”
- “Our P-8s [maritime patrol reconnaissance aircraft] we are investing in with an upgrade.”

“All of that is coming into play by 2025,” the admiral noted. “So, we do have an investment strategy that incrementally gets us to a more capable, lethal fleet – not necessarily a bigger fleet – unless we saw a rise in the [budget] topline.”

DCNO Crites: Inflation in Shipbuilding Costs a Challenge for Navy Fleet

Expansion



Sunrise over the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Feb. 11, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Public Affairs Specialist Dave Amodo*

WASHINGTON – The Navy's expansion to a larger fleet is hampered not only by the flat topline of the fiscal 2022 budget but also inflation in the costs and complexity of shipbuilding, a senior Navy admiral said.

As the Navy works to tailor its battle fleet to meet the challenges of the era of great power competition and divest some platforms that are aging out or needed less in terms of priorities, it also faces costs exceeding inflation that put pressure on the shipbuilding budget.

While the U.S. Navy proposes retirement of 15 battle force ships in fiscal 2022, it proposes to fund only eight battle force ships in that year, a setback in terms of growing the fleet to a congressionally mandated level of 355 ships.

“What we’ve seen over the last 10 or 11 years is essentially a flat budget, said Vice Adm. Randy Crites, deputy chief of naval operations for Integration of Capabilities and Resources, testifying July 21 during a hearing of the defense subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee. “We have not kept pace with inflation. Back in 2010 we had about 280 battle force ships. We declined as we went through sequestration down to 271 and we built our way out of that up to about 297 today. That occurred as a result of a number of reform efforts and divestitures that we did inside the service.

“That challenge that we’re facing now is that the good ideas, the [divestiture of] things that we don’t need to bring to the future fight, we’re starting to run out of that,” Crites said. “So, we’re challenged as we see labor costs far exceeding inflation; the cost and complexity of the work we’re trying to do; and materials we’re trying to buy all outpacing inflation. Yet we need to balance within the program that we have.”

Crites said the Navy’s current priorities have not changed.

“The No.1 priority is to bring in Columbia [ballistic-missile submarine. No. 2 is to ensure that we have a ready force; No. 3 is to make sure that we’re bringing the capabilities that we need; and No. 4 has been capacity that we can afford,” he said.

Sea-Air-Space 2021 Prequel: Law Of Sea Convention Could

be Negotiated to Overcome Constitutional Objections, Analyst Says



Ensign James Bateman, from Huntsville, Alabama, scans the horizon utilizing the “big eyes” while standing watch on the on the bridge wing as the guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) conducts freedom of navigation (FON) operations in late 2020. *U.S. NAVY / Communication Specialist 2nd Class Markus Castaneda*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) could be ratified by the U.S. Senate if a few objections were addressed, a naval analyst said.

Speaking 20 July in a webinar of the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Prequel, Marine Corps Col. James McGinley, a retired naval aviator and a lawyer, said that the UNCLOS could be

challenged on constitutional grounds that it could negate the right of the U.S Senate to provide “advice and consent.”

The UNCLOS, signed by 168 nations, governs a wide array of maritime issues including economic, military, commerce, mining interests. It has yet to be ratified by the Senate, where it last was given a hearing in 2012.

“The United States was a huge part of the formation of UNCLOS back in the ‘80s,” he said. “The United States signed [in 1994] but did not ratify,” said retired Adm. Jonathan Greenert, former chief of naval operations, also speaking in the webinar.

Speaking of the example of Arctic energy exploration and seabed mining, retired Adm. Paul Zukunft, former commandant of the Coast Guard, said during the webinar, “We have a right to this, yet we haven’t signed onto the ground rules to lay claim what is rightfully ours.”

Zukunft also pointed to the absurdity of the Chinese “Nine-Dash Line,” which the Chinese Communist Party uses to claim most of the South China Sea as its territorial waters.

“If you use that same [justification], then Denmark and Leif Ericsson should probably claim the United States EEZ [Exclusive Economic Zone],” Zukunft said. “We don’t have a voice at that forum because we have not ratified the Law of the Sea convention. We’re trying to resolve this with Freedom of Navigation [FON] exercises but at the end of the day, the fact that we don’t have a voice at the table for this aspect of maritime governance, all we can do is sit back and watch, and try to counterbalance using economic or military leverage to correct that behavior.”

The admiral said the Coast Guard has 65 bilateral agreements with other nations “that allow us to board vessels of those signatory nations – whether it’s a fishing violation, [an] encounter [with] drug movement, or even the potential of a

weapon of mass destruction in the maritime domain – [the Coast Guard is authorized to] stop, apprehend, search those vessels on behalf of those flag nations.”

FON “doesn’t represent a policy,” Greenert said. “It is nothing more than a statement by us concerning free passage in certain straits or waters of the world.

“What’s happening right now is China is showing some real mischief and it goes beyond some of the seabed issues and Nine Dash Line issues,” he said. “China is starting to reinterpret UNCLOS. They’re pushing things around within the convention. Frankly, in my view, they need to be confronting by another leader. For example, China is working to change the definition of ‘high sea’ to their advantage. China is working to put the [EEZs] per UNCLOS to be controlled by the littoral nation. They have 28 land-locked countries in the United Nations on board in this endeavor.”

Greenert said that if this provision were adopted, military operations would need permission of the littoral nation.

McGinley spoke about the legal logjam of UNCLOS in the U.S. Senate.

“As it exists today, there has been such consistent resistance to ratification,” he said. “We’re now pushing half century. A lot of the original thinking on this was in 1956. There are parts of [UNCLOS] that are extraordinarily helpful to the U.S. and to our interests, but I worry that the poison pills that are buried in this thing – over 208 pages – are enough to keep us from success.”

McGinley suggested two approaches to achieve ratification.

“One would be a hard pivot and talk to the key opposition folks in the Senate and say, ‘Here’s what we need. What works for you?’ and then start with a fresh piece of paper with regard to – not to the entire globe – but to the key maritime

partners as well as some of the other maritime nations we think would be most important to success," he said.

"A second would be to take a radically different approach in the Senate," he continued. "Part of the problem is Articles 309 and 310. The Constitution's Article 2 Section 2 gives us advice and consent for our Senate. Part of what happens under the RUDS [Reservations, Understandings and Declarations] in any treaty is the ability for our Senate to say, 'When we look at these words, we understand to mean this. Here is a statement of what we agree to,' or, 'here are our reservations; we don't agree to these particular articles, but we do agree to these other articles.'"

McGinley explained the poison pills in the treaty.

"This is an odd treaty in that it purports to take away the constitutional right of the U.S. Senate to provide its advice and consent. ... It is so significant that a ratification could actually face a successful constitutional challenge," he said. "A fresh piece of paper would go beyond that, but if the Senate wanted to go forward with it, they ought to do it very publicly ... that we are specifically rebuking 309 and 310, and then take a very tight look at Article 82 – which is a real significant transfer of the American families' money – and also look at Article 144 – which is a straight-up transfer of technology. Almost all of this was negotiated at a time when we did not have the technological capability, so when those pills were put in, they were thought of as worthless and so far in the future it wouldn't matter. Now those are real, and they are significant. They're part of what makes this treaty harder to pass with each passing year."

McGinley explained why the United States has been able to set a good example despite lack of ratification.

"My hat is off to the [U.S.] Navy, which I've watched out in the 5th Fleet with extraordinary seamanship," he said. "It is

that professionalism that has developed international customary law to the point that, even though we are not parties to this treaty, we actually exemplify – through our own conduct, and over time we have developed – norms.”

McGinley noted that in 2016 China said it would ignore binding arbitration from the verdicts from the court of arbitration about one of the islands in the South China Sea.

“It’s as if they have never signed the treaty,” he said. “So, it comes down to non-parties behaving as if they were parties and parties behaving as if they had never signed it. ... The U.S. Navy’s professionalism still sets the standard and is developing navigational norms and customary international law as a result of their professionalism.”

Sea-Air-Space 2021 Prequel: Cruisers’ Combat Systems Lagging Behind Threat, CNO Says



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday (from left) speaks with Naval Undersea Warfare Center Headquarters Director of Undersea Warfare Eugene Hackney Jr. as Christopher DelMastro, head, Division Newport's Platform and Payload Integration Department, listens, during a visit to the Division on June 28, 2021. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va.—The U.S. Navy's 2022 budget proposal to decommission seven guided-missile cruisers is not just based on the age and material condition of the ships. According to the chief of naval operations (CNO), the lethality of the cruisers' combat system is lagging behind the developing threat capabilities.

CNO Adm. Michael Gilday, speaking in a prerecorded webinar of the [Navy League's Sea-Air-Space Prequel](#), noted that the seven Ticonderoga-class cruisers are equipped with the SPY-1A or early SPY-1B radars, which are the oldest radars that are the main sensor of the Aegis Combat System. The SPY-1A is an analog system, increasingly anachronistic in the Digital Age.

The radars "are approaching obsolescence ... and they have

difficulty actually seeing the threat, based on the speed and the profiles that we see threat missiles flying at these days.”

Gilday said the cost to own and operate the seven CGs over the five-year Future Years Defense Plan would come to \$5 billion.

“These ships on average right now are 32 years old,” he said. “We are seeing cracks. We are seeing challenges in the material condition of these ships that are, to a certain degree, unpredictable. So, they’re ‘unknown unknown.’ When we tried to deploy a ship most recently [USS Vella Gulf] and had to bring it back twice because of fuel tank cracks, is an example of something we just couldn’t predict that we have to react to, and it does have an impact on reliability. We need to be able to provide the secretary of defense reliable assets that they can count on to do the nation’s business.”

The CNO said the above factors “really came into play from a realistic standpoint in terms of making the argument for the best of those cruisers. The cost alone with respect to cruiser modernization is running tens of millions of dollars above what we had originally estimated, largely due to the unknowns that come into play with hulls that are over three decades old.”

The seven cruisers marked for decommissioning are USS San Jacinto (CG 56), USS Lake Champlain (CG 57), USS Monterey (CG 61), USS Hue City (CG 66), USS Anzio (CG 68), USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), and USS Port Royal (CG 73).

SC0 Plans for Overlord USV Transfer to Navy in January



Aerial photos of USS Ranger and USS Nomad unmanned vessels underway in the Pacific Ocean near the Channel Islands on July 3, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Eric Parsons*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The two Ghost Fleet Overlord autonomous unmanned surface vessels (USVs) designed to experiment with unmanned fleet technologies are scheduled to be turned over to the U.S. Navy early next year, likely January, and will be joined in 2022 by two more such vessels.

The two USVs, named Ranger and Nomad, were developed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense Strategic Capabilities Office (SC0). They will be used by the Navy's San Diego-based Surface Development Squadron One to mature technology and develop concepts of operations for unmanned combatants; tactics, techniques and procedures, and operator experience for USVs as the Navy develops its future Large USV and Medium USV.

The Overlord USVs are repurposed vessels based on an oil rig offshore support vessel design, said Luis Molina, deputy director for Strategic Capabilities for the Department of Defense, speaking to reporters in a June 13 roundtable webinar. The support vessels were designed to be robust, requiring minimal crews. The Overlord vessels feature government-furnished equipment, including a common control system.

Ranger made the transit from the Gulf of Mexico to San Diego via the Panama Canal in October, followed in May and June by Nomad. The ocean transits, planned in advance, were monitored and controlled by Sailors of Surface Development Squadron One in the shore-based Unmanned Operations Center in San Diego, where the controllers are able "to change missions in situ," said Capt. Pete Small, the Navy's program manager for Unmanned Maritime Systems, also speaking at the roundtable event. The Overlord USVs are equipped with sensors to "react to contacts along the way."

Small said the Navy is looking for "supervised autonomy" as the level of control over its USVs.

Nomad, for example, sailed 4,421 nautical miles, 98% in an autonomous mode, according to a June 7 Defense Department release. Transit of the Panama Canal required the manual navigation by a skeleton crew on each ship in accordance with canal regulations.

Molina said the SC0 will continue to exercise the Overlord vessels until turnover the Navy to do "fleet demonstration exercises and operational vignettes."

"We're currently targeting a January turnover date to the Navy," Molina said. "But we're working hand in hand with the Navy, and we have been for the last four years, so that handover and transition is expected to be fairly seamless. We are completing the integration of some of the systems on the

ships.”

Two more Overlord vessels are funded by the Navy and are scheduled for delivery by the end of 2022, Small said, which – together with the Sea Hunter and Sea Hawk USVs – will give the Navy six unmanned ships for experimentation.

Navy Confident Strike Fighter Shortfall Will Be Gone by 2025, Admiral Says



Sailors conduct pre-flight checks on an F/A-18E Super Hornet, assigned to the “Stingers” of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 113, on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), July 9, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass*

Communication Specialist Seaman Sophia Simons

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's director of air warfare told the Congress that the Navy is on track to eliminate its shortfall of strike fighter aircraft by 2025.

Testifying July 13 before the Tactical Air and Ground Forces subcommittee of the House Armed services Committee, Rear Adm. Andrew J Loiselle, the director of air warfare in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, was questioned by Rep. Vicky Hartzler, (R-Missouri) – in whose state the Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighter is built – about the Navy's decision not to seek additional procurement of more Super Hornets in fiscal 2022 and the effect on the Navy's current strike fighter shortage.

"We have taken the F-35C portion of our 44 strike fighters [per carrier air wing] and reduced that from two squadrons of F-35s down to a single squadron but then increased then number of [aircraft] from 10 to 14," Loiselle said.

The admiral pointed out that the Navy's adversary aircraft requirements changed to replace some legacy F/A-18s with ex-Air Force F-16s and ex-Swiss Air Force F-5 fighters instead of Super Hornets. He also said the Fleet Readiness Center at Naval Air Station North Island, California, "has been able to return 28 Super Hornets from long-term down status and put those back in the fleet.

"We believe that those improvements [will] reduce our strike fighter shortfall to zero by 2025 based on current year analysis," Loiselle said.

The admiral said the two Service Life Modernization (SLM) for the Super Hornets "will have the additional capacity at the 2025 period in question to take additional SLM [aircraft] should our current analysis be revised, and we require that additional capacity. We believe the infrastructure will support additional modifications to the Block III" version of

the Super Hornet.

Hartzler asked about the Super Hornets being inducted for SLM having more corrosion evident than was predicted, noting that alleviating the corrosion would add time to conduct an SLM.

Loiselle said the SLM line was about halfway through modifying the first 30 of the Block II Super Hornets planned for the process, noting the first 30 aircraft were intended to enable the artisans to learn the needs of the aircraft.

"I agree 100% that there was damage beyond expectations from a corrosion perspective on some of the initial aircraft," he said. "However, Boeing has seen significantly improved condition in the aircraft that we are now submitting for SLM. So, with the number of Block II Super Hornets in our inventory, compared with the number of Block II Super Hornets that we intend to conduct SLM on, that allows us some selectivity in those [aircraft] we put through the modification line. We're learning in this process and we're now conducting inspections prior to induction looking at these hard areas to identify whether or not the corrosion present in those aircraft justifies inclusion in our SLM process or whether or not we might look at a different to conduct that on.

"But right now, we're continuing to learn and continuing to bring down the time associated with getting the aircraft through the SLM process," he said. "We anticipate that by the 2025 timeframe we should be in full swing on two lines at one year per SLM aircraft at that point in time in 2023 and after, coming off the line in a full 10,000-hour modification in full Block III configuration."

Loiselle also said the Navy "currently is executing a multi-year procurement of F/A-18s – 78 total. We've got 70 left to deliver and [those will be delivered] between now and fiscal year '25. So they are continuing to add to our total of

F/A-18s. That's why I think we can get to SLM and modifications of current F/A-18s after that time frame."

He noted the Navy lists an unfunded priority of five F-35Cs to accelerate transition to its desired mix of fourth- and fifth-generation fighters.

Navy Details 2022 Ship Retirement Schedule



The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Oklahoma City (SSN 723), shown here in 2012, has been listed for recycling according to the Navy's planned ship retirement schedule for fiscal 2022. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Chris Salisbury*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy has determined its planned ship retirement schedule for fiscal 2022. The list includes 22 ships, including 15 battle force ships.

In a July 2 administrative message, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations announced the plans to decommission 19 ship ships from the fleet and remove from service three ships from the Military Sealift Command.

The list includes two Los Angeles-class attack submarines (SSNs); seven Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers (CGs); five Cyclone-class coastal patrol ships (PCs) and four littoral combat ships (LCSs) – three Freedom-class and one Independence-class LCS. The PCs are forward deployed to the Persian Gulf; they are not considered battle force ships.

The Navy is proposing to retire seven Ticonderoga-class CGs during fiscal 2022, including two – USS Hue City and USS Anzio – which were not previously planned for retirement. The material condition of the cruisers' hull and mechanical systems has attracted considerable concern while the cost of keeping the cruisers in service has risen.

Vice Adm. Jim Kilby, deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities, testified June 17 before the Seapower and Projection Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee that retaining the seven CGs would cost roughly \$5 billion across the Future Years Defense Plan. Retaining the ships for two years would cost more than \$2.87 billion. He said the cost to modernize Hue City and Anzio alone would cost approximately \$1.5 billion.

Extending the service lives of the cruisers "is costing more than we thought it would be," he said. "Initially it was \$2.4 billion, but we're adding a lot of money to do that."

The proposed cruiser retirements have been criticized by some in Congress as antithetical to growing the fleet to meet the demands of great power competition.

The decommissioning of some littoral combat ships also has attracted congressional attention, given that they are relatively new ships.

Congressional mark-ups of defense bills may challenge some of the proposed retirements.

The ships to be retired and the dates in 2022 by which they scheduled for retirement are listed below:

Ship Name	Projected Inactivation
Inactive Status	

(All dates in 2022 except where noted)

USS Tempest (PC 2)	March 29
Foreign Military Sales	

USS Typhoon (PC5)	March 14
Foreign Military Sales	

USS Squall (PC 7)	April 10
Foreign Military Sales	

USS Firebolt (PC 10)	March 1
Foreign Military Sales	

USS Whirlwind (PC 11)	April 24
Foreign Military Sales	

USS San Jacinto (CG 56)	Sept. 30
Reserve	

USS Lake Champlain (CG 57)	March 31
Reserve	

USS Monterey (CG 61)	Feb. 22
Reserve	

USS Hue City (CG 66)	March 31
Reserve	

USS Anzio (CG 68)	March 31
Reserve	
USS Vella Gulf (CG 72)	Feb. 18
Reserve	
USS Port Royal (CG 73)	March
31	Reserve
USS Fort Worth (LCS 3)	March
31	Reserve
USS Coronado (LCS 4)	March 31
Reserve	
USS Detroit (LCS 7)	March 31
Reserve	
USS Little Rock (LCS 9)	March
31	Reserve
USS Whidbey Island (LSD 41)	April 30
Reserve	
USS Providence (SSN 719)	Dec. 2 (2021)
Recycle	
USS Oklahoma City (SSN 723)	June 21
	Recycle
USNS Apache (T-ATF 172)	June 30
Disposal	
USNS 1st LT Harry L. Martin (T-AK 2015)	Dec. 30
Disposal	
USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat (T-AK 3016)	Dec. 31
Disposal	