

CNO Gilday: Shipbuilders Need to Deliver Vessels Faster



The Flight III Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer Jack H. Lucas, shown on builder's trials. Congress is pushing the Navy to procure three destroyers per year.

ARLINGTON, Va. – The nation's shipyards need to accelerate their delivery of ships to demonstrate they deserve the maxed-out funding they have received from Congress, Chief of Naval Operations Michael Gilday said Jan. 10 at the [Surface Navy Association](#)'s Annual Symposium.

Gilday said he thought the Navy's \$27.5 billion proposal for shipbuilding in the most recent budget was the maximum that the seven shipyards – five of which build surface ships – could handle, but Congress authorized an additional \$4 billion on top of that. One of the main drivers? Congress wants the Navy to buy three destroyers per year.

Now, the shipbuilding industry needs to show that they can produce at the rate the funding requires, he said.

Navy Not Getting What it Pays For

“We are not necessarily getting what we are paying for with respect to two or three ships per year,” Gilday said, noting that industry is also falling short of the two-attack-submarines-per-year production goal. “Right now, I see them a little bit behind on some of our production lines.”

In November, Congress approved the increase to three destroyers per year as part of the [National Defense Authorization Act](#) for 2023, which authorized \$816.7 billion in overall defense spending. The Navy asked for two ships as part of a nine-ship multi-year destroyer proposal with an option for a 10th. However, Congress approved a more aggressive buy of 15 destroyers over five years, which would require three per year. HII’s Ingalls Shipbuilding and General Dynamics’ Bath Iron Works would be the primary shipbuilders.

The Navy has faced continued questions about industrial capacity to build these ships, and the service is likely to face scrutiny in the coming years over shipyard production rates.