Cruiser Modernization a Struggle for the Navy, NAVSEA Commander Says



The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Antietam (CG 54) moves in formation during exercise Valiant Shield 2020. The Navy is finding that modernization of its Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruisers is its primary challenge in surface ship sustainment. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Nick Bauer*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Navy is finding the modernization of its Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers (CGs) its primary challenge in surface ship sustainment, a senior admiral said.

"The cruisers across the force are 30 to 35 years old," said Vice Adm. William Galinis, commander, Naval Sea Systems Command, speaking May 12 as the McAleese Associates FY2022 Defense Programs Conference webinars. "What we're seeing is the ships' infrastructure — the hull systems, the piping — that we're having the biggest challenges with."

The cruisers "are — hands down — probably our toughest class of ship to maintain, followed by the LSD class [dock landing ships]," he said.

In 2015, Congress approved the CG Phased Modernization Plan for seven cruisers, which, like the Cruiser Modernization (CG Mod) program, introduces new warfighting capabilities, improves material condition and readiness, replaces obsolete equipment, and reduces total ownership costs through technology insertion. Cowpens and Gettysburg were inducted into the program in 2015, Vicksburg and Chosin in 2016, Anzio and Cape St. George in 2017 and Hue City in 2019.

Galinis said currently there are five CGs going through

modernization, four of which are well into what he termed the “big modernization availability,” the third of three availabilities each cruiser is to go through in its path to modernization, the first being “removal of equipment and the start of structural repairs” and the second focused on structural repairs. The third availability got into the modernization piece.

“I’ll be honest with you: we’re having our challenges with the first three ships,” Galinis said. “We’ve got two on the East Coast, one in San Diego, and the fourth ship is up in Seattle.”

He said a fifth cruiser is soon to be inducted into the third phase later in 2021.

The admiral noted that the CG in Seattle “frankly is doing fairly well.”

He said there were a “lot of lessons learned from the first to the second to the third ship and then the fourth ship.”