Fabrication Begins on Future USS Bougainville

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Fabrication has been started for the future amphibious assault ship USS Bougainville (LHA 8) at Huntington Ingalls Industries' (HII) shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, Naval Sea Systems Command said in an Oct. 16 release.

The start of fabrication signifies the shipyard is ready for sustained production after a successful production readiness review. LHA 8 is the second ship named in honor of the Bougainville Island campaign in World War II and is scheduled to be delivered in 2024.

"Expeditionary warfare and power projection ashore is advancing at a historic pace – starting on this unique ship is a proud day for our Navy, Marine Corps and industry partners," said James F. Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition). "Bougainville represents the next generation of amphibious capabilities and is a key component to meet the demands of the National Defense Strategy. The ability to both support Joint Strike Fighter and put Marines ashore will ensure that the Amphibious fleet remains agile and capable of expeditionary warfare well into the 21st century."

The LHA Replacement Program, also known as USS America (LHA 6) class, replaces the original five Tarawa-class LHAs, all of which have been decommissioned. The America class is designed to accommodate the Marine Corps' future Air Combat Element including F-35B joint strike fighter and MV-22 Osprey, with additional aviation maintenance capability and increased fuel capacities. It will also provide additional cargo stowage capacities and enable a broader, more flexible command and control capability.

LHA 8 will be the first Flight I ship and will reincorporate a well deck to increase operational flexibility. Bougainville will incorporate the Enterprise Air Surveillance Radar volume air search radar in lieu of the AN/SPS-48G air search radar on America and Tripoli.

“We are excited to commence fabrication on the third ship of the America class,” said Tom Rivers, Amphibious Warfare program manager for Program Executive Office Ships. “We look forward to achieving future production milestones as we work to deliver this versatile and capable warship to the fleet.”