First Mine Countermeasures Mission Package Embarked on USS Canberra



A mine countermeasures unmanned surface vehicle is craned aboard the Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Canberra (LCS 30), as a part of the first embarkation of the Mine Countermeasures (MCM) mission package, April 23. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Vance Hand)

By Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy embarked the first Mine Countermeasures Mission Package (MCM MP) aboard USS Canberra (LCS 30), April 18, service officials announced. With the MCM mission package now onboard LCS 30, the Navy is looking forward to the first MCM Mission Package deployment in Fiscal Year 2025.

As part of the embark process, the Navy installed sensors, unmanned vehicles, support containers and the software that enables Sailors to execute MCM operations from an Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship. The embarkation marks the formal turnover of the MCM mission package to the ship, signifying the crew is ready to commence onboard training and maintenance of the mission package in preparation for its first deployment.

“Today, the LCS Mission Modules program delivers to the Fleet a modernized and integrated MCM mission package that removes Sailors from the minefield and allows for the future retirement of legacy MCM ships,” said Capt. Matthew Lehmann, program manager of the LCS Mission Modules (PMS 420) program office.

An integrated suite of unmanned maritime systems and sensors, the MCM mission package locates, identifies, and destroys mines in the littorals while increasing the ship’s standoff distance from the threat area. Embarked with the MCM mission package, an LCS or a vessel of opportunity can conduct the full spectrum of detect-to-engage operations (hunt, neutralize and sweep) against mine threats using sensors and weapons deployed from the MCM Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV), an MH-60S multi-mission helicopter and associated support equipment.

The MCM mission package achieved Initial Operational Capability (IOC) on March 31, 2023, following rigorous initial operational testing and evaluation (IOT&E) of the full mission package, including the AN/AQS-20 system, during the fall of 2022 aboard USS Cincinnati (LCS 20). With the deployment of the first MCM mission packages in Fiscal Year 2025, the Navy will commence the process of divesting from aging MH-53 helicopters and Avenger Class MCM ships.

PEO Unmanned and Small Combatants leads the Navy’s efforts to provide littoral combat ships with mission-tailored capability

to Combatant Commanders to provide assured access against littoral threats, leveraging unmanned naval capabilities for enhanced operational effectiveness.