Marine Corps to Use Leased Ships to Test Light Amphibious Warfare Ship Concept



U.S. Military Sealift command's Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship, City of Bismarck, floats while docked at the Commercial Seaport of Palau in Koror, Republic of Palau, Nov. 5, 2021. Spearhead-class ships may be used to test the concept for a light amphibious warfare ship. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Cpl. Atticus Martinez*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Marine Corps plans to lease two commercial ships over the next two years to experiment with the light amphibious warfare ship concept, also now being classed as the landing ship-medium.

Brig. Gen. Mark Clingan, assistant deputy commandant for Combat Development and Integration and deputy commanding

general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, speaking April 21 in a webinar of the National Defense Industrial Association, said the Corps was planning to lease a commercial "stern[-ramp] landing vessel" by late summer or early fall [2022]" to use to test the LAW/LSM concept.

Clingan said a second vessel would be leased in fiscal 2023 for the same purpose.

The general said the Corps also was looking at using Spearhead-class expeditionary fast ships – which do not have beach landing ramps – and utility landing craft – which do – as part of the concept experimentation.

The LAW will be designed to carry 75 Marines of a Marine Littoral Regiment and land them on a shore in support of distributed maritime operations and expeditionary base operations. Clingan said the ships would be able to operate within the weapons engagement zone and be less attractive targets for enemy missiles than would a larger amphibious warfare ship.

Clingan said that with each Marine Littoral Regiment comprised of nine platoons or units of action – one on each light amphibious warfare ship – 27 LAWs would be needed to support the three MLRs. Counting extra MLRs in the maintenance pipeline, the Corps lists 35 LAWs as its probable requirement.

The Navy plans to procure the light amphibious warfare ship beginning in fiscal 2025.