Navy Admiral: A Stable Shipbuilding Era, But New Opportunities on the Horizon

WASHINGTON –
The admiral in charge of building the Navy's surface ships said the
construction programs are tracking well and that the service is gearing up for
some new platforms, including unmanned surface ships.

"We are in an era of stable design," said Rear Adm. William Galinis, program executive officer for ships, speaking June 18 in Washington at the Technology, Systems and Ships Symposium of the American Society of Naval Engineers. "As we look forward, on the surface side, some new opportunities are on the horizon."

Galinis was referring to stable designs such as the Arleigh Burke DDG 51 Flight IIA and III programs, the San Antonio-class LPD 17 program, the Tripoli LHA 7 – which will have full capability for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter – and the Virginia-class attack submarine.

Ship programs
on the horizon he mentioned are the new FFG(X) guided-missile frigate, the
Large Surface Combatant, and unmanned surface vessels.

Galinis said
the Large Surface Combatant is likely to benefit from lessons learned through
the DDG 1000 Zumwalt-class destroyer program.

"We're
learning a ton off of that platform," he said, noting the

integrated power system and low-observable signature of the ship, among other aspects, and that signature requirements “really does drive up cost.”

He said that use of mature technology will keep cost down on the Large Surface Combatant.

“Not to predispose anything, but I think in the end, you know, it’s probably going to look a lot more like DDG 1000 than DDG 51 if I had to say so,” Galinis said, noting that a lot of work remained to be done.

He also praised the use in shipbuilding of land-based test sites, which, he said, “buy us a lot once we get into construction.”

Also speaking with Galinis was Rear Adm. Lorin Selby, the chief engineer and deputy chief of staff for ship design, integration and naval engineering at Naval Sea Systems Command.

Selby sees the new classes of ships coming in the next era of shipbuilding as an “opportunity for us to reset on the way we do business at NAVSEA.”

He stressed that the Navy needs to build up its talent base in ship design and engineering as development proceeds on new classes of ships and submarines and needs to space the workload so that the work force can be sustained as

ship design work
comes and goes.