

Navy Looks at Expanded Missions for Textron's CUSV



An early variant of the CUSV autonomously conducts maneuvers on a Potomac River test range near Dahlgren, Virginia, during a demonstration before government, defense contractors and military personnel. U.S. Navy/John Joyce

ARLINGTON.

Va. — As Textron's Common Unmanned Surface Vehicle (CUSV) goes through the paces of testing, it is attracting the U.S. Navy's attention for missions beyond minesweeping.

The CUSV, an unmanned boat capable of towing or carrying payloads, is under development for the Navy's Mine Countermeasures USV (MCM USV) program. Designed to tow a mission package for the Unmanned Influence Sweep System, the MCM USV has been tested with Raytheon's AQS-20 and Northrop Grumman's AQS-24 mine-hunting sonars.

The MCM USV has completed developmental test and operational evaluation, Wayne Prender, vice president of Textron Systems, said in an Jan. 14 interview with *Seapower* at the Surface Navy Association convention here. He said the company is expecting a Milestone C decision from the Navy "any day now" that would authorize low-rate initial production.

Textron has built four CUSVs and has expanded its testing in southern Florida to include Panama City as well. The company is working with the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Dahlgren, Virginia, to develop expeditionary and surface warfare packages for the CUSV.

In July, a CUSV was modified with a remote-controlled .50-caliber M2 machine gun and a Hellfire missile vertical launcher. In this configuration the craft was demonstrated at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in an Advanced Naval Technology Exercise (ANTX).

The MCM USV has been tested in operations from an Independence-class littoral combat ship and from two vessels of opportunity, including an expeditionary base ship and a foreign-equivalent ship.

Prender said that Textron is continuing to work on the autonomy and mission behaviors of the CUSV.