Navy Pushing to Sustain Lethal Capacity with New DASN Office

PENTAGON – The Navy has created a new leadership position – deputy assistant secretary of sustainment – in its work to sustain and grow lethal capacity and move faster to respond to the growing size of the fleet.

"Building a workforce aligned to mission is critical to competing and winning," James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition, announced on Sept. 13. "Establishing a deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for sustainment [DASN-S] to develop, monitor and implement policy and guidance throughout the Navy will enable us to better plan, program, budget and execute the Navy's sustainment mission."

Geurts added, "Sustainment is as critical as new construction to ensure the Navy is ready to deploy. This position will allow us to improve and align the complex drivers of maintenance and modernization completion – that in turn will increase our output to the fleet. We have to get better, and this will help."

The new DASN-S position will report directly to Geurts and have oversight of sustainment funding across the Department of the Navy, which will be important to meeting Defense Department readiness goals. Additionally, DASN-S will oversee and manage Navy and U.S. Marine Corps sustainment and life-cycle management policies.

Additionally, to improve maintenance flow, the Navy is taking other steps. For surface ship maintenance availabilities conducted at private shipyards, the sea service is adjusting its contracting strategies to group multiple surface ships

into one contract. This will provide workload stability for the private shipyards.

The Navy is also executing a “perform to plan” initiative that identifies performance gaps and barriers to execution so they can be addressed to improve performance. For submarine and aircraft carrier maintenance, that are generally done at one of the four shipyards, the Navy is executing a 20-year shipyard infrastructure optimization plan that coordinates required dry dock maintenance and modernization, optimizing workflow and replacing outmoded capital equipment.

“Across the board, we need to improve how we execute ship maintenance, whether it’s done in a public or private shipyard,” said Vice Adm. Tom Moore, commander of Naval Sea Systems Command. “We need to work with our industrial partners to provide workload stability and, for the Naval shipyards, we need to provide our 21st-century workforce with 21st-century facilities and equipment.”

“To win in an era of great power competition, we need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our public and private shipyards so we can deliver combat-ready ships to our Sailors and Marines,” Geurts added.