# Navy to Extend Service Life of DDG 51s

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced Oct. 31 that the Department of the Navy plans to operate 12 Arleigh Burke class (DDG 51) Flight I Destroyers beyond their 35-year expected service life.

The decision, based upon a hull-by-hull evaluation of ship material condition, combat capability, technical feasibility and lifecycle maintenance requirements, will result in an additional 48 ship-years of cumulative ship service life in the 2028 to 2035 timeframe. The Navy has proposed DDG service life extension funding in the FY26 budget request and will update the shipbuilding plan accordingly.

“Extending these highly capable, well-maintained destroyers will further bolster our numbers as new construction warships join the fleet,” Del Toro said.  “It also speaks to their

enduring role in projecting power globally, and most recently in the Red Sea, their proven ability to defend themselves, as well as our allies, partners and friends from missile and drone attacks.”

At the secretary’s request, the Navy conducted a thorough evaluation of each DDG-51 Flight I ship (DDG 51-71) over the past ten months, and determined the 12 destroyers could and should remain operational beyond their expected service life. The final determination of each ship’s service life is based on maximizing the service life of each ship before it required another extensive and costly docking availability.

The service life extensions meet the intent of Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Lisa Franchetti and the CNO’s Navigation Plan, which directs the Navy to “get more ready players on the field.”

“Today’s budget constrained environment requires the Navy to make prioritized investments to keep more ready players on the field,” Franchetti said. “The Navy is actively pulling the right levers to maintain and grow its battle force inventory to support the United States’s global interests in peace and to win decisively in conflict.”

The Arleigh Burke Class Destroyer is critical to the Navy’s mission and has proven itself most capable in contested environments, like the Red Sea.