

Navy's First New Berthing Barge Set for Delivery to Pacific Fleet



Sailors assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) walk across the ramp from Berthing and Messing Barge APL-65 to the pier at Naval Base San Diego in this 2010 photo. U.S. Navy / Joe Kane

ARLINGTON, Va. – The first of a new class of berthing barges is soon to be delivered to the U.S. Pacific Fleet, followed early next year by a delivery to the East Coast, a Navy official said.

The first one, APL 67, is nearing completion [and] is going to Pac Fleet,” said Rear Adm. William Greene, fleet maintenance officer, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, speaking Sept. 15 in a webinar of the Virtual Fleet Maintenance & Modernization Symposium of the American Society of Naval Engineers.

Greene said the second barge of the class, APL 68, will be delivered to the East Coast in February 2021. The subsequent deliveries will alternate between the West and East Coasts.

He said the 27 legacy berthing barges on the East Coast “are reaching the end of their service lives.”

Officially designated non-self-propelled auxiliary personnel lighters (small) (APL(S)), the barges provide living space and berthing for the crew – particularly the duty section – of a ship that is going through extensive maintenance. Often the maintenance on a ship requires that berthing, climate control, food service, and water supply, and other services be shut down during renovation.

The new APL(S)-67-class barges will have a length of 269 feet,

a beam of 69 feet, and a draft of seven feet. They will have berthing for 74 officers and 537 enlisted personnel. The messing facilities will be able to accommodate 56 officers and 228 enlisted personnel at a time. The barges also feature washrooms, classrooms, lounges, laundry facilities, offices, a barber shop, a fitness center and a medical facility.

The barges are not self-propelled but can be towed to the port or harbor area where the maintenance is to be performed.

VT Halter Marine was awarded a \$78 million Navy contract in September 2018 for two berthing barges with options for four more which, if exercised, would raise the contract value to \$244 million.