

CNO Visits Philadelphia Navy Commands; Emphasizes Importance of Columbia-class Submarines



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday speaks with Sailors assigned to the future USS Lenah H.S. Higbee (DDG 123) at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Philadelphia Division, Feb. 3.
U.S. NAVY / Lt. Rachel Maul

PHILADELPHIA – Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday and Rear Adm. Douglas Perry, director, undersea warfare division, visited Philadelphia-based Navy commands, Feb. 3, the CNO's public affairs office said in a release.

Together, they visited the Naval Foundry and Propeller Center and Naval Surface Warfare Command Center, Philadelphia Division, where Gilday toured the facilities, spoke with Sailors and Navy civilians, and received updates about Columbia-class submarine construction.

"The impressive cadre of engineers here who are delivering world-class results are a national treasure," said Gilday. "The work you are doing here is vital to national security, as well as that of our Allies and partners."

Columbia-class submarines are the Navy's number one acquisition priority, Gilday added.

"These submarines need to be delivered on time, on budget and ready for the fight – and that's what we intend to do," Gilday said. "Working together, we will get them off of the production line and into the fleet where they belong."

The Columbia-class submarine is the nation's future sea-based strategic deterrent and will provide the most survivable leg

of the Nation's strategic triad. It replaces the currently serving Ohio-class submarines and must be constructed and delivered beginning in fiscal year 2028 to meet U.S. Strategic Command requirements. These ballistic missile submarines serve as an undetectable launch platform for submarine-launched ballistic missiles and are designed specifically for stealth and the precise delivery of nuclear warheads.

Gilday toured the Naval Sea Systems Command Compatibility Test Facility where he saw the shipboard-representative Columbia Integrated Propulsion System prototypes in operation and the Arleigh Burke-class Land-Based Engineering Site. He also received updates about the developing electrical and propulsion test facility risk-reduction capabilities for newer classes of ships, including the next-generation destroyer (DDG(X)), Constellation-class frigates, and unmanned surface vehicles.

"Fielding greater numbers of more affordable, smaller surface combatants, like the new Constellation-class frigates, allows us to operate in a more distributed manner – both in day-to-day competition and in high-end combat," said Gilday. "Because of the work of our systems commands and our partnerships with industry, we will continue to successfully compete and win."

Throughout the visit Gilday expressed his gratitude for the innovation and dedication Sailors and civilians have shown to keep these manufacturing and testing efforts on track, especially amidst the pandemic.

"To the entire workforce here, you directly support and generate warfighting readiness and have my profound thanks," said Gilday. "Your hard work and commitment to the Fleet is appreciated, and what you are doing is critical for us to be able to protect our Nation."

The visit marked Gilday's first trip to Philadelphia since he assumed his duties as CNO.

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