

Japan Launches Lead Ship of 22 Mogami-Class Frigates



Mitsubishi Heavy Industries launched Mogami, the first of a new class of 22 multirole frigates for the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force, in a March 3 ceremony at the company's Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works. *Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force*

The Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force has launched the first of a new class of multi-mission surface combatant.

The Mogami (FFM 1)-class frigate, also known as the 33FFM program, will be stealthy multi-mission surface combatants with the capability to employ unmanned surface and undersea vehicles to conduct mine countermeasures operations.

The first ship was launched at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Nagasaki on March 3. The second ship in the class, Kumano, is being built at Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding Tamano Works in Okayama.

Eight of the 426-foot, 5,500-ton Mogami-class FFMs are currently under contract, with 22 of them planned. The Maritime Self Defense Force plans to build two per year.

The Mogami will be armed with a MK 45 5-inch gun, 16 MK 41 Vertical Launch System tubes, eight anti-ship missiles, SeaRAM defensive missiles, torpedoes and decoy launchers.

The FFM has a flight deck and hanger to embark an SH-60L helicopter and could also handle unmanned aircraft systems. A rear ramp beneath the flight deck can be used to launch and recover unmanned surface vehicles and unmanned underwater vehicles as well as lay sea mines.

The 30FFM features a futuristic combat information center with

a 360-degree video wall.

The stealthy design draws from MHI's experience with the Mitsubishi X-2 Shinshin stealth fighter technology demonstrator.

The Combined Diesel and Gas Turbine propulsion system features a Rolls Royce MK30 gas turbine and two MAN diesels, delivering speeds of up to 30 knots. The crew of 90 personnel is smaller than existing combatants of comparable size.

The Mogami class will replace some mine warfare ships and escort ships, and will be available for peacekeeping, anti-piracy and humanitarian missions, freeing larger and more capable combatants that are now being used in those roles to assume other duties.