

LX(R) Transitions to LPD Flight II

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The transition from the LPD 17 amphibious transport dock ship to the LX(R) amphibious ship replacement took a slight twist earlier this week when the nomenclature for the new ship was changed, according to program manager Capt. Brian Metcalf.

James F. Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy, Research, Development and Acquisition, has announced the term LX(R) will be phased out and the next-generation amphibious ships will be known as LPD Flight II, Metcalf noted during a presentation at the Naval Sea Systems Command at the Sea-Air-Space Exposition April 11. The program itself, and the number of ships, will remain the same, Metcalf said. Only the designation will be changed.

Plans call for building 13 Flight II ships to bolster an LPD 17 class of 13 ships, he said. The LPDs, which Metcalf said can serve as airport, seaport, and provide the transport and deployment of some of the Marine Corps' heaviest equipment, offers "some combat capability not provided by many ships in the Navy."

During an update of the overall program, Metcalf noted that the 11th LPD 17 ship, Portland, was set to be commissioned on April 18. It will deploy in 2020. But as part of its post-shakedown availability after commissioning, the ship will be outfitted next summer with the next-generation-capability laser weapon system for testing by the fleet and the Office of Naval Research.

The next ship in the class, Fort Lauderdale (LPD 28), is 18 percent complete and is expected to be delivered in 2021. The future LPD 29 will have its keel-laying in early 2019. Both

ships were congressional add-ons that expanded the class to 12 and are considered transitional ships to what is now LPD Flight II, which will begin with LPD 30. LPDs 28 and 29 will employ a series of design and capability changes from previous ships in the class to make for a smoother transition to the new class, he said.

LPD 29 will be the first ship to employ the Enterprise Air Surveillance Radar (EASR) that originally was intended for the first LX(R). The radar will be installed after the ship is delivered in 2023, Metcalf said.