

# Navy Laying Groundwork for New Special-Purpose Auxiliary Ships



Military Sealift Command's oceanographic survey ship USNS Maury pulls into Naval Station Norfolk. U.S. Navy/Bill Mesta  
ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy is proceeding with studies and concept development for three special-mission ships to replace existing ships in the Military Sealift Command.

Speaking Jan. 15 at the Surface Navy Association symposium here, Matt Sermon, the executive director for Amphibious, Auxiliary and Sealift Office, Program Executive Office-Ships, said the Navy plans to build new ocean surveillance ships (T-AGOS), a new cable-laying ship (T-ARC) and a new oceanographic survey ship (T-AGS).

The Navy expects to issue during the second quarter of fiscal 2020 a request for proposal for industry studies for the new T-AGOS, which will be a SWATH (small waterplane, twin-hull) ship, as are the current T-AGOSs. A contract award for the Industries Studies Request for Proposals is expected in the third quarter of the year.

A new T-ARC is needed to replace the USNS Zeus, a one-of-a-kind cable laying ship, which has been in service since 1984. The 2020 budget has authorized research, development, test and evaluation funds for the program. T-AGS-67 will be a follow-on Pathfinder-class ship that will be similar to T-AGS-66, the USNS Maury, which introduced a "moon pool" for launch and recovery of unmanned underwater vehicles.