

Navy to Field Hypersonic Weapon First on SSGNs



Ohio-class guided-missile submarines, such as the USS Florida (SSGN 728) shown here in 2019 in the Mediterranean, will be equipped with the Conventional Prompt Strike capability in 2025. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Drew Verbis

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy plans to deploy its conventional hypersonic weapon, known as the Conventional Prompt Strike (CSP) capability, on submarines by 2025, the admiral in charge of strategic weapons said.

The CSP will be deployed by the U.S. Army first in 2023, but the first Navy deployment is scheduled for 2025 on the Ohio-class guided-missile submarines (SSGNs), said Vice Adm. Johnny Wolfe, director of Strategic Systems Programs, speaking Nov. 17 in a webinar for the annual symposium of the Naval Submarine League. The Navy has four SSGNs in the fleet.

The CSP will then be deployed in 2028 on the Block V Virginia-class attack submarines (SSNs) with the Virginia Payload Module

In a PowerPoint slide, Wolfe showed the Initial Unit Training without the All-Up Round will begin in 2021. A canister hot-launch operational demonstration is planned for 2022. Delivery of the Army's prototype truck-hauled delivery system is scheduled for 2023. The delivery of the All-Up Round – including the hypersonic glide body – is planned for 2024.

Limited operational capability is scheduled for the SSGNs in 2025, and Initial Operational Capability on the Virginia-class SSNs in 2028.

“Hypersonics in the DoD [Department of Defense] is very much a

priority within the Navy,” Wolfe said. “In Conventional Prompt Strike we are focused on how do we ... take all of the successes that we’ve had in the research development and flight testing and start production and transition that into a military capability that we can give to the Army at about the 2023 time frame and continue to push that forward so that we get to a Navy capability on SSGN in the 2025 time frame.”

Wolfe said the CSP effort “is a very rapid program but we are having a lot of success. Right at the beginning of the COVID [pandemic] we flew our second Navy flight test of this hypersonic glide body.”

He said the test flight was “extremely successful,” and met and exceeded every single test requirement.

“That was the springboard for us to now start that transition out of our national team into industry for a capability that we can produce,” Wolfe said. “We are in this year finishing up the development of the booster that that glide body will go on – [a] common booster and common glide body between the Army and the Navy – as we get into static fires. Eventually we’ll do flight testing from land and then ultimately get to that first SSGN.”

Wolfe said the CSP program was on a very compressed timeline, but we have stayed on schedule. ... For a conventional capability, this really is a game changer.”