

Navy's Frigate Program Design, Production Reviews Set for Spring 2022



An artist rendering of the guided-missile frigate FFG(X). Fincantieri Marine Group says it will need to hire an additional 400 shipyard workers in the next two years to meet its predicted workload. *U.S. NAVY*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy's future Constellation-class guided-missile frigate (FFG) program is scheduled in spring 2022 for two program reviews that are milestones for the program to pass en route to production, the shipbuilder said.

Mark Vandroff, CEO of Fincantieri Marinette Marine at Fincantieri Marine Group, the builder of the Constellation FFG, speaking Sept. 23 in a Defense One webinar, said the program's Critical Design Review is scheduled for February 2022, followed in March by the program's production readiness review.

Vandroff, a retired Navy engineering duty officer, said his company expects to begin preparing for production of the first hull, FFG 62, in the spring of 2022 and to launch the ship in 2025. Delivery of the future USS Constellation is scheduled for 2026.

A new Frigate Erection Bay at the company's shipyard in Marinette, Wisconsin, will be able to house two FFG hulls (complete except for installation their mainmasts.) Vandroff said the bay will provide comfortable working conditions for shipbuilders during the Wisconsin winters. The FFGs will be 90% complete before they are launched.

He also said that unlike the Freedom-class littoral combat

ships the company is building for the Navy, which are side-launched from the building ways, the Constellation frigates will be launched with a Synchrolift.

The Multi-Mission Combatants being built by Fincantieri also will be launched by a Synchrolift, Vandroff said.

Fincantieri also is building the last four Freedom-class littoral combat ships (LCS 25, 27, 29, 31).

Vandroff said his company has invested \$250 million in capital investment and will need to hire 400 more shipyard workers over the next two years to meet the predicted workload.