

Northrop Grumman Demonstrates AQS-24B at Autonomous Warrior 2018

ANNAPOLIS, Md. and JERVIS BAY, Australia – The Northrop Grumman Corp. AQS-24B mine-hunting system demonstrated the benefits of performing mine warfare from a high-speed, unmanned surface vessel (USV) at the Royal Australian Navy-sponsored Autonomous Warrior 2018 exercise in Jervis Bay, the company said in a Dec. 17 release.

The AQS-24B detects mines at nearly twice the towing speed of any other mine hunting system on the market, significantly improving the area coverage rate.

The Northrop Grumman remote-controlled Mine Hunting Unmanned (MHU) Surface Vessel, with the AQS-24B mine-hunting sensor, demonstrated a safe standoff mine-hunting and undersea surveillance capability targeted at addressing three key aspects of the mine warfare challenge: reducing the mine clearance timeline; accurate detection, localization, classification and identification of undersea objects of interest; and improving crew safety by keeping the sailor out of the minefield.

The AQS-24B system includes the world's first combined operational High-Speed Synthetic Aperture Sonar and an optical laser line scan sensor, which provides complete coverage out to maximum range on a single pass. The real-time analysis capability demonstrated how unmanned systems can augment manned mine warfare operations.

“The demonstration highlighted Northrop Grumman’s leading role in proving the operational utility of unmanned maritime systems in the mine warfare domain,” said Alan Lytle, vice president, undersea systems, Northrop Grumman. “At operational

speeds significantly higher than other mine-hunting systems on the market, the USV/AQS-24B combination successfully completed a number of scenarios and challenges that were set by the Royal Australian Navy's exercise command task group."

The MHU was outfitted with L3 ASV's "ASView" unmanned control system. The system provided the capability to control the vessel from a remote location with minimal human oversight. ASView's situational awareness displays provided the remote captain full control and awareness to safely execute dynamic demands of mine warfare missions.

"L3 ASV is excited to be supporting Northrop Grumman's mine-hunting system with our unmanned surface vehicle technology," said Larry Karl, vice president and general manager, L3 ASV. "This operation has demonstrated the flexibility of the system which will enable it to support future mine hunting and defense applications."