

PEO Ships: 'A Little Risk,' 'Evolutionary Approach' to Shipbuilding Needed

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy admiral in charge of building most of the Navy's ships advocates taking a bolder approach to ship design, but one that also leverages existing hulls and technology to incrementally develop new ship classes.

Speaking July 11 to an audience at a Navy League Special Topic Breakfast, Rear Adm. William J. Galinis, program executive officer (PEO), Ships, said the Navy spending "far too much time studying a problem in trying to minimize risk really gets us to an unresponsive [acquisition] system."

Galinis said that the Navy's top leadership is encouraging the acquisition community to "take a little bit of risk" given the current sense of urgency in the renewed climate of great power competition.

"Include that in your business practices," he urged the defense industry representatives at the event.

Galinis said the Navy is taking a more "evolutionary approach to new ship classes [and] introducing new technology, leveraging parent designs."

He cited the DDG 51 Flight III program, the new guided-missile frigate program and the Flight II of the San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ship as examples of the evolutionary approach. Another example he mentioned is the evolution of the America-class amphibious assault ships, the most recent of which – Bougainville – will feature restoration of a well deck and be equipped with the new Enterprise Air Search Radar that uses technology in common with the Air and Missile Defense Radar being installed on the DDG 51 Flight III.

Galiniis pointed out the success of incrementally modernizing ships in the example of the third Arleigh Burke guided-missile destroyer USS Barry (DDG 53), which emerged from a recent modernization availability with the same capability of USS John Finn (DDG 113), a new ship commissioned last year.

He said Navy's Future Large Surface Combatant design will represent "more of an evolutionary approach as we migrate from the DDG 51 Flight III to the Large Surface Combatant" [and] will be "operationally driven."

The first two ships of DDG Flight III are under construction by Huntington Ingalls and Bath Iron Works.

"The revolutionary piece certainly plays a part," Galiniis said, referring to new technologies that are being developed for shipboard use. The Navy has been developing laser weapons, electromagnetic rail guns and integrated power systems for newer ships.