

# Q&A: Rear Adm. Paul Schlise, Director, Surface Warfare Division, N96, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations



Rear Adm. Paul Schlise

*A native of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, Rear Adm. Paul Schlise is a surface warfare officer and a 1989 graduate of Marquette University's College of Business. He was commissioned through Marquette's Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He holds a master's degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College and was a 2015-2016 Massachusetts Institute of Technology Seminar XXI Fellow.*

*He has completed nine deployments, participating in Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, Desert Fox and Tomodachi. He served aboard USS Flint (AE 32), USS Antietam (CG 54), USS Hopper (DDG 70), and USS John Paul Jones (DDG 53) and commanded USS Halsey (DDG 97) and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 7. In 2012, he executed DESRON Seven's homeport shift to U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet forward-deployed naval forces in Singapore.*

*Ashore, he served twice on the Chief of Naval Operations staff for director, Surface Warfare. He also served at Navy Personnel Command, Surface Officer Distribution Division and on the Joint Staff, Strategic Plans & Policy Directorate. His initial flag assignment was as deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain. He then commanded Carrier Strike Group 10/USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Strike Group during its 2020 deployment.*

*He assumed duties as director, Surface Warfare Division, N96,*

*Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in June 2020.*

*Schlise responded to questions about the surface force's drive to increase its lethality from Senior Editor Richard R. Burgess. Excerpts follow. Check out the digital edition of the December issue of Seapower magazine [here](#).*

### **Why is the Navy pressing hard for distributed lethality in the surface force?**

**SCHLISE:** The Surface Combatant Force is the key enabler for the Navy's Distributed Maritime Operations concept. Enhancing lethality across all of our ships at sea operationalizes DMO and ensures the fleet has requisite capability and capacity to fight and win. Our efforts to up-gun our combatants are directly in step with the Navy's Naval Tactical Grid initiatives.

### **What new surface weapons are adding to that lethality?**

**SCHLISE:** The Surface Navy is moving out aggressively to improve lethality across the spectrum of warfare. The Naval Strike Missile is in the fleet providing a multi-mission weapon for our littoral combat ships [LCSs] and future frigates. The SM-6 is a multi-domain missile, deployed on ships today, providing surface combatants improved capability and flexibility against advanced threats. As we continue to procure the SM-6, spiral development of the SM-6 family is ongoing to provide greater range and speed. The Maritime Strike Tomahawk provides versatility over long distances against targets at sea or on land.

In addition to extended missile ranges, we're also increasing our close-in battlespace lethality. The updated Mk38 Mod 4 Gun Weapon System provides an updated electro-optical sensor system with combat system integration for improved accuracy and close-in engagements against fast-attack craft and fast inland attack craft threats. In the near future, these guns will be paired with other weapon systems for greater lethality

against close- in air threats as well.

The surface fleet is also improving terminal defense weapons with spiral developments to the existing Rolling Airframe Missile and Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile. A new Vertical-Launch Anti-submarine Rocket Extended Range is proposed to significantly increase the range a ship will be able to engage a submarine target.



Rear Adm. Paul Schlise, outgoing commander of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 10, departs a change of command ceremony aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) May 19, 2020. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kaleb J. Sarten

**What future weapons are being considered for the surface fleet?**

**SCHLISE:** Versatility in our VLS [vertical launch systems] is important, and we are continuing to look at current multi-domain weapons and evolve them to pace the threat. We are also improving our terminal defense capability with more formidable weapon systems, including directed energy.

**What are the goals and prospects of fielding directed energy weapons, including the rail gun?**

**SCHLISE:** As part of a joint effort by the Navy's Acquisition and S&T [Science and Technology] communities, the Navy Laser Family of Systems is accelerating fleet integration and informing requirements for future acquisition by providing multiple systems that support counter-intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, counter-unmanned aircraft systems and intelligence collection. These efforts include Optical Dazzling Interdictor – Navy (ODIN) – laser systems providing capability enhancements to DDG 51 Flight IIA ships; ONR's [Office of Naval Research] Solid-State Laser Technology Maturation – a laser system already installed on the amphibious transport dock ship USS Portland and slated for

deployment in 2021; [and] Surface Navy Laser Weapon System, also known as HELIOS – a laser system and integrated optical dazzler with surveillance designed for full integration into the Aegis Combat System on DDG 51 Flight IIA ships.

The long-term goal of the Navy's High-Energy Laser effort is destructive capabilities against missile threats.

Through technology developed under the Rail Gun program, the Navy continues to monitor developments in high-velocity projectiles for the Mk45 5-inch Gun- Launched Guided Projectiles. Similar to directed energy options, each of these systems provide capable defensive weapons outside of VLS.

### **How will the new Constellation-class FFG add to the fleet's lethality?**

**SCHLISE:** The new FFG 62 class will be more lethal, more survivable, have greater range, endurance and self-sufficiency than previous small surface combatants. With increased operational availability and enhanced fire- power, FFG 62 will be a multi-mission ship capable of operating independently, as part of surface action groups or with carrier or expeditionary strike groups in contest- ed environments.

The Constellation will be a multi-mission ship, equipped to conduct air warfare [AW]; antisubmarine warfare [ASW]; surface warfare [SUW]; electromagnetic warfare [EW]; and intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance operations.

As an AW platform, FFG 62 will be outfitted with a SPY-6 derived Enterprise Air Search Radar, AEGIS BL10 Combat System, Cooperative Engagement Capability and 32 VLS cells. As an SUW platform, the ship will carry 16 Naval Strike Missiles and a counter-small boat capability with her 57 mm gun and precision guided ALaMO [Advanced Low-Cost Munitions Ordnance] rounds. As an ASW platform, FFG 62 will feature a variable depth sonar and multi-function towed array as an evolution on the proven SQQ-89 (V) 15 ASW suite. The ship's EW/IO capabilities will

include Surface Electronic Warfare Program Block II (SEWIP Blk II) missile detection system, signals intelligence systems and the Nulka decoy system. FFG 62 will also include an organic aviation capability supporting one MH-60R helicopter and one MQ-8C unmanned helicopter.

The "Connie" class will be suited for future weapons/mission flexibility and incorporates room for future growth/upgrades.

**Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Mike Gilday referred to "DDG Next." What's the concept for such a ship?**

**SCHLISE:** The class CNO referred to as "DDG Next" will be a new hull form to follow the DDG-51 Flight III. This ship is predicted as the next high-end surface combatant and will include non-developmental Flight III program-of-record technologies, including a variant of the SPY-6 radar and Aegis Baseline 10 Combat System, while emphasizing space, weight, power and cooling margins to accommodate future capabilities over the lifespan of the class.

The CNO gave us a brief preview of the projected size of the ship. We expect it to be smaller than a Zumwalt [DDG 1000], but larger than DDG 51 Flight III.

**How will the planned unmanned surface vessels (USVs), such as Large USV (LUSV) and Medium USV (MUSV), contribute to the fleet's lethality?**

**SCHLISE:** USVs can bring additional capacity and capability to the manned combatant force to support distributed maritime operations. Results from our Future Surface Combatant Force Analysis of Alternatives and Future Navy Force Structure study both show the value in USVs and support continuing investment, prototyping and experimentation to mature this capability for future force integration. LUSVs, as a distributed fires platform, can increase the fleet's missile carrying capacity and MUSVs, as a distributed sensor platform, improve the commander's battlespace awareness. Our Surface Development

Squadron (CSDS-1) is involved in testing these concepts using current prototypes in fleet exercises and experimentation. The lessons learned from CSDS-1 and results from our continued study and war gaming will help us refine concepts and inform further platform development to provide the fleet with a capability that can and increase lethality and capacity.

**What plans are there to add firepower to littoral combat ships and amphibious warfare ships?**

**SCHLISE:** We've increased the reach and lethality of the LCS platform with the addition of the Naval Strike Missile. We were able to accelerate installation on USS Gabrielle Giffords for her successful deployment to Southeast Asia this past year. The system will ultimately be added to all LCS, regardless of mission package.

In addition, the initial round of lethality and survivability modifications planned for both LCS variants will further enable fleet integration and operational capability with the addition of Link 16, EHF [extremely high-frequency] communications, Nulka and SEWIP [Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program].

**Is the Zumwalt-class DDG being considered as a platform for hypersonic weapons?**

**SCHLISE:** The Navy is looking into all classes of ships, including the Zumwalt class, as possible candidates for hypersonic weapons.

**What progress, if any, has been made toward solving the need for a projectile for the Zumwalt's Advanced Gun System (AGS)?**

**SCHLISE:** When the decision was made to reduce the class to three ships, it caused the unit price of the AGS precision-guided rounds to become unaffordable. We have not identified a suitable replacement. But, with our decision to shift the ship's mission to offensive surface strike, we're adding other

capabilities. This will sustain the Zumwalt class as an integral part of the surface fight.

**What has the Navy done to increase the tactical and weapons proficiency of its surface warship crews?**

**SCHLISE:** The Surface Training Advanced Virtual Environment [STAVE] program and Fleet Training Wholeness efforts have been at the forefront of efforts to improve individual and team training. STAVE has transformed training ashore by delivering enhanced electronic classrooms that are instructor-led, using high-fidelity virtual tools combined with hands-on labs.

Approximately 70% of the 850 courses of instruction taught by Surface Warfare Schools Command and Center Surface Combat Systems have been modernized or are funded to be. Combined with the fiscal establishment of STAVE-Network and its integration of students, instructors, classrooms and labs, the STAVE program greatly improves the tactical and technical proficiency of our Sailors and crews.

Through the Fleet Training Wholeness effort, the Navy continues to invest to improve live, virtual and constructive [LVC] training of ships and strike groups. Continued efforts will enable the permanent integration of all Aegis and SSDS [Ship Self-Defense System]-equipped ships to connect at sea and the delivery of high-fidelity LVC tactical training capabilities to all afloat platforms. The results will ensure advanced and integrated training across the strike force level – Fleet Training Wholeness – where carrier air wing simulators, live aircraft and ships can train together in a virtual environment for the high-end fight.

As ever, great training doesn't happen without a world-class training organization. All of the above programmatic initiatives continue to be brought to the fleet during the advanced and integrated phases by the Surface and Mine Warfare Development Command [SMWDC] and our highly skilled weapons and

tactics instructors [WTIs]. SMWDC WTIs continue to “raise our game” with more challenging and realistic training and certification exercises.

**How does today’s surface fires capability compare to when you were commissioned in the Navy?**

**SCHLISE:** The Navy has progressed in every dimension over the past several decades. Compared to when I commissioned in 1989, the ability to integrate weapons and sensors across a carrier strike group has expanded beyond my wildest dreams. Our ships are able to coordinate fires across the spectrum of warfare with combat systems, sensors and missiles that are smarter and better integrated with the platforms that operate them. Our Sailors are far more talented and benefit from tremendous virtual multi-domain training capability. To put it plainly, when compared to when I first commissioned, our surface fires capability is like comparing an old “brick” phone from the ’90s to a brand-new iPhone 12 today. We’re smarter, faster and more lethal than ever before.