

# U.S. Navy Christens Newest Unmanned Surface Vessel, Vanguard



Capt. Scot Searles, Unmanned Maritime Systems Program Manager, addresses attendees during the Vanguard christening ceremony, 25 April. (U.S. Navy photo)

By Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) Public Affairs, May 6, 2024

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Navy christened Vanguard, the newest Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) during a recent ceremony in Mobile, Alabama.

Vanguard is the Navy's first USV purpose-built from the keel up for unmanned operations and is part of the Pentagon-sponsored Overlord program.

“Vanguard represents a significant leap forward in unmanned technology,” said Rear Adm. Kevin Smith, Program Executive Officer, Unmanned and Small Combatants. “The addition of Vanguard will enable the expansion of unmanned testing, experimentation and development, accelerating the transition to the hybrid fleet.”

The Overlord program has played a pivotal role in accelerating and advancing the use of unmanned technology across the Navy. The Pentagon-funded effort launched the Navy's experimentation with USVs and the resulting prototypes now fulfill a vital role in preparing the fleet to adopt USVs in operations. The knowledge and experience gained from the program is driving the development and requirements for the Navy's future Large USV (LUSV) program. LUSVs are intended to be low cost, high endurance, modular USVs that can employ a variety of payloads. The USV prototypes are integral to the Navy's mission of

expanding unmanned operations and growing a manned-unmanned hybrid fleet.

“Vanguard’s name could not be more fitting. The state-of-the-art technology she will employ is revolutionary and will be at the forefront of establishing new standards for our fleet,” said Capt. Scot Searles, Unmanned Maritime Systems program manager. “We are thrilled to achieve this important milestone and are looking forward to Vanguard leading the way as she enhances our nation’s naval power and strategic capabilities.”

Austal USA and L3Harris jointly led the development and construction of Vanguard. Once outfitting and testing is complete, Vanguard will transit to San Diego and join sister ships Mariner and Ranger as part of the Navy’s Unmanned Surface Vessel Division One (USVDIVONE), responsible for the tactical development of USV concepts of operations and training.

PEO USC designs, develops, builds, maintains and modernizes the Navy’s unmanned maritime systems; mine warfare systems; special warfare systems; expeditionary warfare systems; and small surface combatants.