



New System to Provide Effective Defense for Ships, Sailors

DAVID NAGLE

WASHINGTON (NNS)—Since the beginning of the Cold War, more than a dozen U.S. Navy ships have been casualties of mines, such as *USS Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG 58), which nearly sank after striking an Iranian contact mine in 1988.

Today, as naval forces become more expeditionary in nature, the need to dominate the littoral battlespace is critical to success. In order to dominate the littorals, however, navy ships must first effectively locate and either avoid or neutralize mines.

The Remote Minehunting System (RMS) is an organic, off-board mine reconnaissance system offering carrier strike group ships an effective defense against mines by using an unmanned remote vehicle. Lockheed Martin Naval Electronics and Surveillance Systems—Undersea Systems is developing RMS under a contract awarded by the Navy in December 1999.

The Navy has identified mines as one of the two most critical issues facing ships operating in the littorals—waters ranging from the shoreline to depths of 600 feet.

Mines are an inexpensive yet effective means for enemy nations and terrorist organizations to damage or destroy Navy ships and crews. In a



The Remote Minehunting System (RMS) is an organic, off-board mine reconnaissance system that will offer carrier battle group ships an effective defense against mines by using an unmanned remote vehicle. RMS is being designed for installation aboard *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers. Current plans call for RMS to be first installed aboard the destroyer *USS Pinckney* (DDG 91) in 2004.

Photo courtesy Lockheed Martin

Nov. 30 *Los Angeles Times* article, a veteran minesweeper captain said that mines are “the poor man’s weapon of choice: cheap to buy, easy to deploy, and difficult to detect.”

“A mine that costs only a couple thousand dollars can cause hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to Navy ships and put the affected ships out of action for months,” said Capt. Terry Briggs, RMS program manager. “Since 1950, the Navy has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to repair ship damage by mines, each costing only a few thousand dollars.”

RMS will effectively reduce the threat of hidden mines, keeping ships and Sailors safe from harm by detecting, classifying and identifying mines, and recording their precise location for avoidance and/or removal.

“It is potentially a multimission system that can be adapted for additional uses for mine neutralization, anti-submarine warfare, navigational safety, littoral surveillance, and force protection,” added Briggs.

The RMS components include a remote mine-hunting vehicle, a semi-submersible, diesel-powered vehicle that tows the AN/AQS-20A minehunting sonar; a mission control and display that integrates RMS into the AN/SOQ-89

undersea warfare system; and a launch and recovery system.

RMS is being designed for installation aboard Arleigh Burke-class, Flight IIA destroyers. Current plans call for RMS to be first installed aboard the destroyer *USS Pinckney* (DDG 91) in 2004.

In addition, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark identified organic mine countermeasures as a critical technology in the “Sea Shield” concept of his *Sea Power 21* vision.

“One of the tenets of Sea Shield is the ability to project defensive power globally through sea and littoral superiority,” said Briggs. “RMS provides the organic minehunting capabilities needed to protect forward deployed naval forces, allowing them to dominate the littoral battlespace and achieve and sustain access before and during crises.”

For related news, visit the Naval Sea Systems Command Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/navsea.

Editor’s Note: This information is in the public domain at <http://www.news.navy.mil>.