USS Virginia To Enter Service With Combat System For The Future

The U.S. Navy will launch an era of unprecedented capability for the fleet on Saturday, Oct 23, 2004, with the commissioning of USS Virginia (SSN 774), the nation's newest submarine.

Virginia's sonar, combat system, radio room, and electronic support measures were designed by Lockheed Martin, together with industry and government partners, to leverage the power of commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) technology while meeting the demanding needs of a submarine and crew to counter any threat, anywhere.

"The Navy challenged us to build a system with unprecedented capability, and within the cost constraints of the 1990s," said Rick Udicious, vice president for Submarine Programs at Lockheed Martin Maritime Systems & Sensors. "On the combat system alone, this netted a cost avoidance of a billion dollars over the design and initial ten ships when compared with previous programs. We worked side-by-side with the U.S. Navy's Team Submarine to give our sailors the tools they need to do their jobs safely and reliably in their defining moments."

The automated external communication system, known as the "Common Submarine Radio Room" (CSRR), represents another significant operational and technological milestone. Designed for USS Virginia, the CSRR is planned to be installed across all submarine classes, enabling joint communications for all U.S. submarines. CSRR is a result of teamwork across the electronics and shipbuilding industry, Navy laboratories and program offices, and commercial electronics suppliers.

"USS Virginia's network centric communication capabilities are a significant departure from legacy systems and address many of the Navy's FORCEnet transformational communication needs," said Michael LaRouche, senior executive for Lockheed Martin's Navy Command and Control programs within Maritime Systems & Sensors.

The sonar and electronic support measures are also designed to make COTS computers and wideband sensors work in harmony to give Sailors the best situational awareness in any environment, against any adversary. From the most sensitive passive arrays to high powered active sensors to powerful computer algorithms, U.S. submariners will be the first to know and the first to shoot. The crew will also benefit from design and process features that reduce the time Sailors currently spend on maintenance tasks and training, creating greater combat-related proficiency and more time with their families.

Lockheed Martin also led the collaborative effort to integrate the combat system and other shipboard electronic systems in an open, distributed, computer network. The model for COTS utilization and software integration has been cited as a model for other programs seeking to benefit from the flexibility of an open architecture.

"The Submarine Force, with the VIRGINIA Class in the lead, has been at the forefront in the use of COTS and Open Architecture systems," said Rear Adm. John Butler, the Navy's program executive officer for submarines. "Lockheed Martin has been a prime contributor and leader in this effort."

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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