Lockheed Martin Receives Funding For Final Year Of Sea Shadow Operations

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The Department of the Navy awarded Lockheed Martina $1.1 million, 12-month contract to finish several experiments aboard Sea Shadow IX-529 and then deactivate the ship after seven years of continuous service.

Built in secrecy and launched by Lockheed Martin in 1985 to test various naval technologies, Sea Shadow would later capture the public's imagination and become a source of urban legend. Adding to the ship's mystique was the James Bond thriller Tomorrow Never Dies, in which the villain's ship was a rocket-carrying vessel remarkably similar to Sea Shadow.

The real Sea Shadow never had weapons, but it was an important proving ground for technologies in automated ship control, advanced structures, crew reduction, seakeeping and stealth. Naval engineers and the defense industry used some of these technologies aboard AEGIS destroyers and other ships. Sea Shadow later served as an important risk-reduction platform for the U.S. Navy's next-generation destroyer, DD(X).

"Unique beyond the experiments it hosted, Sea Shadow's angular hull- reminiscent of Lockheed Martin's F-117 fighter jet-demonstrated that ships could reduce their radar signatures," said Gerry Mayer, program manager at Lockheed Martin's Advanced Technology Laboratories (ATL). "The ship also used a design called Small Water Plane Area Twin Hull (SWATH), which made the ship far steadier in high sea states."

ATL has managed Sea Shadow as a naval testbed since its reactivation in 1999 and Lockheed Martin Information and Technology Services has maintained and operated the ship. Beyond experiments for Naval Sea Systems Command, ATL has supported numerous experiments with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, U.S. Navy Special Warfare Command, and U.S. Customs.

Sea Shadow is 164 feet long by 68 feet wide, displaces 560 tons, and draws 14.5 feet. Twin diesel engines provide speeds up to 14 knots. The ship has a typical crew of eight while underway, excluding engineers conducting experiments. The ship's large payload bay aft of amidships houses most experimental equipment. Sea Shadow is moored inside the Hughes Mining Barge, U.S. Naval Station San Diego, CA.

Following deactivation later this year, the Navy intends to offer Sea Shadow and Hughes Mining Barge as a memorial donation.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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