



News Release

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USS Gunston Hall begins mid-life availability

WASHINGTON -- USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44) became the Navy's first dock landing ship to begin its comprehensive mid-life modernization availability July 16. The availability at Metro Machine Corp. in Norfolk, Va., is expected to last nine months, and will include major upgrades to the ship control system, local area network and machinery control system, as well as replacement of the ship's boilers and evaporators with an all-electric services system.

All ships of the LSD 41 and LSD 49 classes are scheduled to undergo a mid-life upgrade program to ensure the ships remain capable fleet assets able to meet amphibious mission requirements through 2038.

"These ships use a good deal of increasingly obsolete and difficult to maintain equipment," said Capt. Johnny Walker, program manager for the Navy's amphibious and auxiliary ships life cycle support office. "The mid-life upgrade program will drastically reduce maintenance costs and man-hours across the amphibious fleet."

Major elements of these upgrades include diesel engine improvements, fuel and maintenance savings systems upgrades to achieve greater fuel economy, advanced engineering control systems, air conditioning/chill water capacity increase, and replacement of air compressors. The ships will also be replacing existing steam systems with all-electric functionality that will significantly decrease maintenance and support of legacy steam systems.

All 12 Navy LSDs are expected to receive these upgrades over the next seven years. Two ships will begin their availabilities each year from 2009 through 2013, and the last ship's availability will begin in 2014. Ships homeported on the East Coast will be undergoing upgrades at Metro Machine Corp., and ships based on the West Coast will be receiving upgrades at General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in San Diego.

For more information on the Navy's amphibious lifecycle support program, visit <http://peoships.crane.navy.mil>.

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