Keel Laid for New Missile Range Instrumentation Ship

PASCAGOULA, MISS. -- Shipyard workers at VT Halter Marine Inc., laid the keel for the Navy’s newest missile range instrumentation ship (T-AGM 25) during a ceremony Aug. 13 in Pascagoula, Miss. Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation Paula A. Desutter authenticated the keel laid ‘straight and true.’

T-AGM 25 is scheduled to replace the USNS Observation Island, a 50-year-old Mariner-class ship converted for its current role in 1980. The still-unnamed T-AGM 25 will collect ballistic missile data in support of international treaty verification using the Cobra Judy Replacement radar system being jointly developed by Raytheon and Northrop Grumman.

“The proliferation of advanced ballistic missile technology around the world guarantees that this ship will be a vital asset to the United States and its allies,” said Bilyana Anderson, the program manager for auxiliary ships, small boats and craft in the U.S. Navy’s Program Executive Office for Ships. “USNS Observation Island has ably served the Navy and the nation in this role for more than two decades, and T-AGM 25 will continue that proud tradition for years to come.”

When delivered in 2010, T-AGM 25 will be operated by the U.S. Navy’s Military Sealift Command.

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