

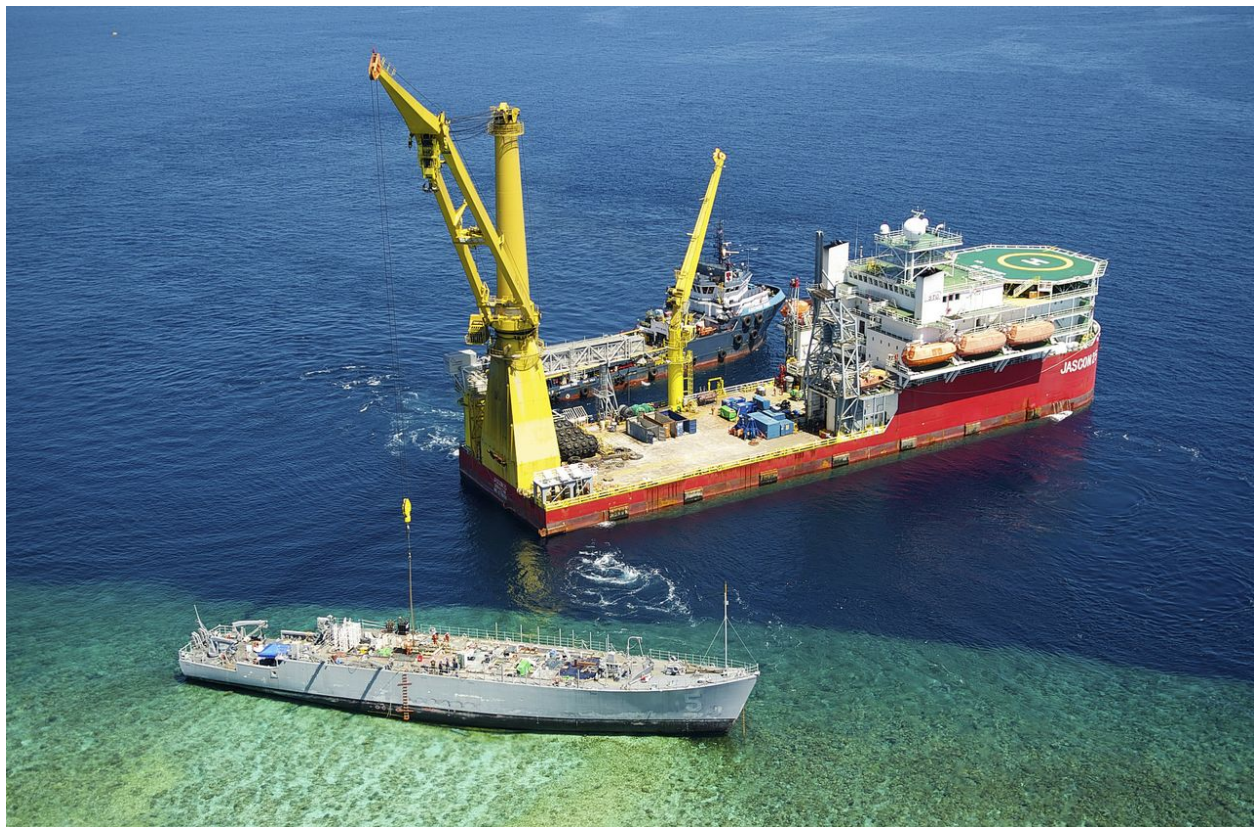
## NAVSEA Assists with Removal and Dismantling of USS Guardian

By Naval Sea Systems Command Office of Corporate Communications

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WASHINGTON - Naval Sea System Command's (NAVSEA) Supervisor of Salvage and Diving (SUPSALV) continues to support operations to remove and dismantle USS Guardian (MCM-5) from a reef in the Tubbataha Reef National Park, Philippines.

Guardian ran aground on the coral reef, Jan. 17 while transiting the Sulu Sea. After the initial grounding, strong winds pushed Guardian parallel to the reef and further aground causing flooding and structural damage which prevented refloating of the vessel or removal of the ship intact.



*130312-N-VF350-059 SULU SEA, Philippines (March 12, 2013) -- Aerial view of the U.S. Navy contracted vessel Jascon 25 alongside the contracted tugboat Archon Tide. Both vessels are aiding in the dismantling process of the Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship Ex-Guardian (MCM 5), which ran aground on the Tubbataha Reef Jan. 17. The U.S. Navy continues to work in close cooperation with the Philippine authorities to safely dismantle Guardian from the reef while minimizing environmental effects. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Anderson Bomjardim/Released)*

"SUPSALV personnel have a long history of executing successful salvage operations and are once again demonstrating their expertise in this challenging environment," said Michael Dean, SUPSALV's deputy director of ocean engineering. "The support our ship design community and their planning yard experts have provided has been brilliant and enabled the operation to continue to move ahead despite weather setbacks and a continually deteriorating hull structure."

SUPSALV is part of a command task unit established to perform the salvage operations and are providing salvage expertise and equipment to conduct operations. NAVSEA shipyards and engineering directorate are assisting SUPSALV providing engineering expertise needed to execute the salvage plan. In addition to performing the initial salvage assessment, SUPSALV oversaw the removal of fuel, lubricating oils, hazardous material and all loose items that could be salvaged from the ship.

"The removal of Guardian from the reef requires thorough planning and operating in an environment 80 miles from the nearest port presents many challenges," said Capt. Mark Matthews, supervisor of salvage and diving. "The environment onboard Guardian requires constant vigilance. We brief safety every morning, are cognizant of the risks involved with working in severely damaged ship spaces and strive to minimize injury to personnel at all times."

SUPSALV is using two heavy lift cranes to conduct the salvage. JASCON 25, a pipe-laying construction vessel, is the primary salvage platform and is able to position itself within 40 meters of Guardian and operate her crane without the need to set anchors to prevent further damage to the coral reefs. The second crane, Smit Borneo, arrived on-site in February and supports the loading of salvaged sections onto an ocean-going barge for transport to a shore facility.



*130307-N-VF350-056.jpg SULU SEA, Philippines (March 7, 2013) -- The U.S. Navy contracted vessel M/V Jascon 25 and contracted salvors, along with Sailors from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit ONE, remove the aft section of the superstructure of the mine countermeasures ship Ex-Guardian (MCM 5), which ran aground on the Tubbataha Reef Jan. 17. The U.S. Navy continues to work in close cooperation with the Philippine authorities to safely dismantle Guardian from the reef while minimizing environmental effects. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Anderson Bomjardim)*

Operations are expected to continue into April 2013 until the ship has been removed and the reef cleared of any remaining debris. Operations have been suspended several times because of storms in

the area impacting the ability to safely conduct operations. Guardian was decommissioned at a ceremony at Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo March 6. Originally commissioned in 1989, Guardian has been forward deployed to Sasebo since 1996, conducting bi-lateral and multi-lateral mine exercises and theater security cooperation missions throughout the 7th fleet area of responsibility.