



DCMA Facilitates Greater Communication for Shipbuilding Programs

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The Defense Contract Management Agency's Naval Sea Systems Operations office, under the direction of the Naval Sea Systems Division, concluded a series of three lead platform integrator conferences over the past few months.

The conferences provided a way to reach internal and external customers, facilitating increased communication on major weapons systems, for three key U.S. Navy shipbuilding programs. Those programs include the CVN-21 *Gerald Ford*-class nuclear aircraft carrier, DDG-1000 *Adm. Elmo Zumwalt* guided-missile destroyer and SSN-774 *Virginia*-class nuclear attack submarine.

While DCMA does not have direct oversight of shipbuilding (that resides with the Navy's Naval Sea Systems Command), major components of Navy ships are built, inspected and shipped from plants under DCMA's cognizance.

Late in 2008, the DCMA NSSO pioneered the LPI concept to fill a void, which existed in DCMA communication and coordination on a strategic level for Navy "platform" shipbuilding efforts. LPIs act as conduits between and within the DCMA enterprise for Navy program offices responsible for managing the building of new ship classes, as well as the supervisor of shipbuilding, where final assembly and integration occurs in a commercial shipyard. Additionally, LPIs facilitate the prioritization and orchestration of

capabilities such as earned value management and quality assurance in response to customer demands. In short, an LPI is a "one-stop" point of contact for Navy ship customers. To perform these tasks, LPIs must develop and nurture support networks with numerous key players for each major system.

Attendees of the conferences felt that all three conferences were highly successful because they incorporated key personnel from each major shipbuilding program as well as senior and junior DCMA field representatives. They came together to share and discuss programmatic issues that might affect construction schedules and quality issues. It also provided an opportunity for DCMA senior leaders to educate key customers on enterprise capabilities and learn, firsthand, about their concerns.

The first CVN-21 program community conference was held May 14 and 15 in Hampton Roads, Va., near the building site of the first ship of this new class (CVN-78) soon to be christened the USS *Gerald R. Ford*. Joshua

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Navy Capt. Richard Gonzalez discusses the status of the Platform Support Network and its partnership with the Navy during one of the recent lead platform integrator conferences. (Photo courtesy of the Naval Sea Systems Office)

Bowden, CVN-21 LPI, hosted the conference, which included personnel from the Navy CVN-21 program office, supervisor of shipbuilding Newport News and various DCMA CMO representatives.

DCMA program integrators provided support to the CVN 21 program conference as part of an overarching DCMA network. Program integrators presented the status of their programs in support of government and customer programmatic discussions. Also attending were DCMA customer liaison representatives from both Naval Air Systems Command — NAVAIR — and Naval Sea Systems Command — NAVSEA.

The goal was to communicate highlights of the program acquisition strategy, desired customer outcomes and DCMA's role in facilitating those outcomes.

At the conference's conclusion, government and customers shared a common understanding of program progress, risks and issues affecting construction and delivery on the CVN-21 program. This dialogue continues through weekly overarching integrated product team meetings.

Many of the systems for the *Ford*-class carriers utilize technologies not yet fully developed. For example, rather than using steam catapults to launch aircraft from the *Ford*-class carriers, the ships will be equipped with the electromechanical aircraft launch system — EMALS. Because the EMALS system has not completed development, design and production schedules for the *Ford* are difficult to manage. Technologies employed upon the new class of ships are under development and maturation

simultaneously with ship construction. As a result, several prime and subcontractors are having difficulty meeting delivery schedules.

To mitigate program risk, DCMA quality assurance representatives are closely watching production milestones affecting quality or delivery schedules. Program integrators are scrutinizing earned value, configuration management and funds tracking in newly issued and revised letters of delegation to field support organizations. This approach is a direct result of expressed customer desire for additional insight and clarity on subassembly progress.

The second LPI conference occurred June 17 and 18 at the Raytheon Collaboration Center in Washington, D.C., for the DDG-1000 *Zumwalt* platform. Albert

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Melone, LPI for the DDG-1000 program, hosted the conference with the theme, “The DCMA DDG-1000 Platform Support Community — Transition to Production.” The conference was a joint effort between DCMA, its naval customers, including NAVSEA’s surface warfare program management office, the program executive office and the supervisors of shipbuilding — SUPSHIP — at both Bath, Maine and Pascagoula, Miss. DCMA participants included representatives from four of the six product divisions — Naval Sea Systems, Space and Missile Systems, Aeronautical Systems and Ground Systems and Munitions.

The conference provided a forum for DCMA personnel to interact with key customers. DCMA NSSO Commander Navy Capt. Richard Gonzalez and Melone discussed the status of the Platform Support Network and its partnership with the Navy.

Joseph Sweeney, DCMA Naval Sea Systems Division’s acting director, provided an update on how his organization would ensure platform level analysis and contract oversight. Navy Capt. Michael Smith presented an overall status of the DDG-1000 program. Program integrators representing DCMA contract management offices administering the DDG-1000 mission systems equipment and advanced gun system prime

and subcontracts made additional presentations at the conference.

Notable customer representatives included Navy Capt. Timothy Mull, DDG-1000 program integration manager; Walt Koscinski, DDG-1000 production director; and Brad Ewald, SUPSHIP Bath.

The final day of the conference featured individual breakout sessions, allowing Navy customers to explore specific programmatic oversight issues face-to-face with DCMA representatives. Conference participants stated they were very pleased with the progress made over the past year developing and growing a platform-level support network.

The last LPI conference held this year was for the *Virginia*-class attack submarine. The Sept. 10, 2009, conference took place in Washington, D.C., hosted by Frank Johnson. The *Virginia*-class (SSN 774) attack subs cost less than the Cold War-era *Seawolf*-class attack submarines, built in limited numbers to replace the aging fleet of submarines of the *Los Angeles*-class.

The *Virginia*-class subprogram is further along in its acquisition and production process than the other LPI platforms. In fact, several are already in fleet service. Notable at the conference was Navy Capt. Michael Jabaley, *Virginia*-class program manager, who presented

a summary of the submarines’ production progress and problems encountered during the program. He encouraged DCMA CMOs to do more than basic contract administration and identify potential production problems as soon as possible. Moreover, Jabaley stated, “DCMA’s ability to conduct earned value analyses and quality assurance evaluations are crucial to ensuring the on-time delivery of critical items.”

The conference enabled representatives from 11 DCMA CMOs to meet and interact with customers from the *Virginia*-class program office, program executive office for submarines, SUPSHIP Newport News, Va., and SUPSHIP Groton, Conn. Sweeney briefed customers on the status of DCMA’s reorganization and encouraged feedback on what DCMA should emphasize.

Overall, attendees felt each conference achieved its objective of improving DCMA’s support for major Navy programs and strengthening the relationship between DCMA NSSO LPIs and their customers. The CVN-21, the DDG-1000 and the *Virginia*-class submarine programs are key components of tomorrow’s Navy and examples of DCMA’s commitment to ensuring the U.S. Navy remains number one in the world. 