



Photo Release -- Northrop Grumman Successfully Executes Acceptance Trials for the U.S. Navy's Newest Amphibious Ship Makin Island (LHD 8)

March 20, 2009

PASCAGOULA, Miss., March 20, 2009 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Northrop Grumman shipbuilders and U.S. Navy personnel joined forces aboard the amphibious assault ship Makin Island (LHD 8) to complete a successful U.S. Navy acceptance sea trial in the Gulf of Mexico. The ship is the eighth USS Wasp (LHD 1)-class amphibious assault ship being built by the company at its Gulf Coast facilities in Pascagoula, Miss.

A photo accompanying this release is available at: <http://media.globenewswire.com/noc/>

"The commitment and effort displayed by our LHD 8 team over the past several months were the reasons we were able to achieve this important milestone," said Tim Farrell, Northrop Grumman vice president and program manager for the LHD 8.

During the acceptance trial, Makin Island performed all required sea trial evolutions for the U.S. Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). Makin Island proved its operational success with the first gas turbine/electric-powered propulsion system ever used on large deck amphibious assault ships. The gas turbine engines and electric drive, a change from previous steam-powered ships, will provide significant life-cycle savings in manpower and maintenance costs over the previous ships.

When LHD 8 arrived back in Pascagoula, four brooms were raised symbolizing a successful sea trial.

"The four brooms being flown today represent the four teams who came together to make this ship successful: PMS 377, Northrop Grumman, Supervisor of Shipbuilding-Gulf Coast and Ship's force," said U.S. Navy Capt. Jeffery Riedel, program manager of Amphibious Warfare Programs for PEO Ships.

The Gulf Coast shipbuilding team met several milestones related to electrical cabling and the propulsion system set by Northrop Grumman in 2008 prior to acceptance trial. The Navy INSURV board was able to observe all electrical cabling installation throughout the ship and examine the integrated propulsion system. Both areas proved successful during the trial.

"This ship could be categorized as a first-in-class ship because of the many design changes associated with the new propulsion system," said Irwin F. Edenzon, sector vice president and general manager of Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding-Gulf Coast. "The LHD 8 team has worked hard to overcome a number of challenges and we're looking forward to delivering a great ship next quarter."

The Makin Island is 844 feet long and 106 feet wide and weighs 42,800 tons. Its 70,000 horsepower hybrid propulsion system will drive it to speeds in excess of 20 knots. As a multi-purpose amphibious assault ship, it is designed to transport and land a Marine Expeditionary Unit, a force of almost 2,000 Marines, ashore by helicopter, landing craft and amphibious assault vehicle. It will also have secondary missions of sea control and power projection by helicopter and fixed-wing vertical short take-off and landing aircraft; command and control; and mission support, including a hospital with six operating rooms.

Makin Island is scheduled for commissioning at its San Diego homeport in October 2009.

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