

## **AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIP (REPLACEMENT) (LHA (R))**



The Navy's next class of amphibious assault ships, now designated LHA(R), will replace the amphibious lift capability of retiring *Tarawa*-Class LHAs. In addition, the LHA(R)s will launch pre-loaded assault craft (amphibious vehicles and landing craft), tiltrotor aircraft, helicopters, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Short Take-Off Vertical-Landing fixed-wing aircraft to support both the rapid buildup of combat power ashore and the rapid re-embarkation of the landing force during amphibious operations. As the primary aviation platform within the amphibious task force, the LHA(R) must conduct simultaneous day and night, well-deck and flight-deck operations. Finally, the ship is expected to have C4I capabilities sufficient to support Operational Maneuver from the Sea/Ship-to-Objective Maneuver operations for Marine Expeditionary Unit/Brigade-size amphibious task forces and other assigned missions in a joint environment.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The LHA(R) Mission Need Statement was approved in March 2001. Milestone A occurred in July 2001. Alternative ship concepts to be evaluated in the Analysis of Alternatives will include a repeat Amphibious Helicopter-Dock Ship (LHD) Class Ship, modified LHD-8 variants, and several larger, more capable designs.

### **TEST & EVALUATION ACTIVITY**

DoD 5000.2-R requires that the Navy submit an evaluation strategy within 180 days after Milestone A. Toward that end, the LHA(R) program office has developed a planning schedule that culminates with the submission of the strategy to OSD for approval by January 2002. Because there is no prescribed format for an evaluation strategy, DOT&E has met with representatives from the LHA(R) program office and Navy staffs to identify in detail those LFT&E and OT issues that should be addressed.

## **TEST & EVALUATION ASSESSMENT**

The Navy's proposed schedule for writing and staffing the evaluation strategy for the LHA(R) is satisfactory. Both the COMOPTEVFOR and Director, MCOTEA have been asked to participate and contribute directly to the development of the strategy.

The effectiveness of the LFT&E program for the LHA(R) will be particularly sensitive to early implementation of many of the LFT&E program elements, since the results should impact the ship's design. In particular, three of these elements are surrogate testing, carried-weapons analyses and testing, and modeling and simulation improvements. The decisions on how these three LFT&E elements will be applied should be completed by the FY03 Program Initiation Decision Review.