2015 Fact Sheet
Arleigh Burke Class Destroyer (DDG-51)

BACKGROUND
The Arleigh Burke Class destroyers (DDG-51) are considered by the U.S. Navy to be one of its most capable and survivable surface combatants. The program was initiated with the aim of developing a surface combatant to replace older destroyers and cruisers that were projected to retire in the 1990s, and was originally designed to defend against Soviet-era aircraft, cruise missiles, and nuclear attack submarines. In addition, the DDG-51 is one of the Navy's first designs to incorporate shaping techniques, reducing radar cross-section detectability from enemy weapons. The estimated unit cost of production for the Arleigh Burke Class destroyer is around $1.8 billion. The first ship of the class, USS Arleigh Burke (DDG-51), was commissioned on 4 July 1991. Today over 62 of these destroyers serve the fleet.

DDG-51’s combat capability centers on the Aegis Combat System (ACS). ACS is composed of the SPY-1D multifunction phased array radar, advanced anti-air, anti-sub, and anti-surface weapons systems, as well as land attack cruise missiles. Similar to most modern U.S. surface combatants, the Arleigh Burke Class utilizes gas turbine propulsion, employing four LM 2500 gas turbines producing 100,000 total shaft horsepower, capable of attaining 30 plus knots.

The DDG Modernization program is underway with a comprehensive mid-life upgrade, ensuring Arleigh Burke Class destroyers will maintain mission relevance and cut costs. The first phase concentrates on hull, mechanical, and electrical systems to include new gigabit ethernet connectivity in the engineering plant and a Digital Video Surveillance System (DVSS). Additional upgrades to the various Flights of Arleigh Burke Class destroyers include: Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR), Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC), Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM), Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program (SEWIP), and Decoy Launching System (DLS) Mk 53 (NULKA). The Arleigh Burke Class MK-41 Vertical Launching System (VLS) will be upgraded to support SM-3 and SM-6 missiles. The Arleigh Burke Class has homeports in Norfolk, VA, San Diego, CA, Yokosuka, Japan, Pearl Harbor, HI, Mayport, FL, and Everett, WA.

IMPORTANCE
With a crew of around 300 sailors, Arleigh Burke Class destroyers provide multi-mission offensive and defensive capabilities. Destroyers can operate independently or as part of carrier strike groups, surface action groups, amphibious ready groups, and underway replenishment groups. The Arleigh Burke Class is comprised of four separate variants or “Flights.” DDG 51-71 represent the original design and are designated “Flight I” ships; DDG 72-78 are “Flight II” ships; and DDG-79-123 are built to the Flight IIA design. The Navy has stated its intention to procure 22 Flight III Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) equipped variants of the DDG-51, developed partially in response to the canceled Cruiser Replacement program (CG-X). The first Flight III will be procured in FY16, beginning with DDG-123. The fiscal year 2016 budget maintains steady production, continuing the procurement of 10 vessels through Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) at a rate of two per year. The two DDGs requested in FY 16 will be the 73rd and 74th ships of the class. An additional thirteen ships are under contract, including the most recent contract award on June 3, 2013 for nine ships as part of the FY13-17 multi-year procurement contracts with Huntington Ingalls Industries and Bath Iron Works.

RECOMMENDATION
The Association of the United States Navy (AUSN) recommends the continued procurement of additional Arleigh Burke Class ships in accordance with fulfilling the Navy’s plan for a 75 DDG fleet.