First corvette for Squadron 2020

Ship project manager Björn Enroth, Finnish Defence Forces Logistics Command, is supervising the construction project of the new multirole corvettes. Photos Finnish Defence Forces.

Construction of the first Pohjanmaa-class multi-role corvette for the Finnish Navy's Squadron 2020-project began at Rauma Marine Construction in October 2023. Aker Arctic is scheduled to deliver the propellers and shaftlines for this ship in late spring 2024.

The steel cutting ceremony marked the commencement of construction at Rauma Marine Construction, where a total of four ice-going Pohjanmaa-class multi-role corvettes will be built. The next significant milestone is projected to be in spring 2024 with the keel laying of the first ship.

Ship project manager Björn Enroth, from the Finnish Defence Forces Logistics Command, is overseeing the construction alongside a dedicated team. Their goal is to ensure that the ships meet all specified requirements.

Active service in 2027

Enroth anticipates the first ship will be completed by spring 2026, followed by the Swedish company Saab's installation and activation of the vessel's combat system. Successful combat and sea trials will signify the initial operational capability, paving the way for active service starting in 2027.

The project aims to achieve full operational capability by 2029, with the delivery of all four corvettes to the Finnish Navy.

A ship in its own class

The Navy's new ships will play a crucial role in Finnish naval defence, designed for repelling sea-based attacks and securing critical assets at sea and in the archipelago.

The challenging conditions in the Baltic Sea demand a unique ship class. Finland is the only country in the world where all harbours can freeze during winter. The presence of islands, shallow waters and reefs further complicates navigation.

"An ice-going ship of this size and capability is unprecedented," states Enroth. "These ships are designed to operate year-round, under all conditions."

Stringent demands on propulsion

The ships' unique requirements, including ice-going capabilities, high open-water speed, and preparedness for antisubmarine warfare, present challenges for the propulsion system. Low underwater noise is vital, necessitating meticulous design.

The Defence Forces have therefore entrusted Aker Arctic with designing and supplying controllable pitch propellers and shaftlines for all four corvettes, recognizing their proven expertise.

"Aker Arctic has met all our expectations. We value their work and look forward to continued cooperation," remarks Enroth. "Their customer-centred and solution-oriented approach has been instrumental in our collaboration."

The development of the propulsion line began in the early 2010s, with Aker Arctic participating from the beginning to ensure the new multi-role corvettes will meet the Finnish Navy's stringent operational performance criteria.

Currently, Kongsberg in Sweden is producing and testing the propulsion components for the first ship, with delivery scheduled for late spring 2024. ■