

"Newseyletter" Decatur Chapter No. 4, USCS

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USS Guardian abandoned by crew. Navy to salvage her in place

By MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

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SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan

— The Navy minesweeper that got stuck on a reef off the coast of the Philippines will have to be dismantled and removed in sections, a process that is expected to take more than a month, Navy officials said Wednesday.

The salvage plan is still under review by the Philippine Coast Guard, but it likely means the end for the 23-year-old USS Guardian. "Our naval architecture and salvage experts have reviewed all possible alternatives, and our only supportable option is to dismantle the damaged ship and remove it in sections," Pacific Fleet spokesman Lt. Anthony Falvo wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes.

USN - reef misplaced?

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USS Guardian hard aground on reef

The US Navy issued a news release stating that the investigation to assess the circumstances surrounding the USS Guardian (MCM 5) grounding that occurred in Philippine waters will include information on faulty navigation chart data that misplaced the location of Tubbataha Reef.

Guardian remains aground on the reef. Salvage operations and investigation into the cause of the grounding continue. Meanwhile, the Navy expressed its regret for the grounding and emphasized its cooperation with the Philippine government in the response effort. (1/18/13).

USS Guardian MCM-5 Grounding Investigation To Include Faulty Chart Data

From U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

Posted January 18, 2013



USS Guardian in better times

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii - A U.S. Navy investigation to assess the circumstances surrounding the USS Guardian (MCM 5) grounding that occurred in Philippine waters will include information on faulty digital navigation chart data that misplaced the location of Tubbataha Reef. On Friday, the U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) provided the Navy preliminary findings of a review on Digital Nautical Charts (DNC) that contain inaccurate navigation data and may have been a factor in the Guardian grounding that occurred in the Sulu Sea on Jan. 17 Philippine time. This action followed up on initial contact made by NGA on Thursday, when the mapping organization first realized there might be a potential inaccuracy regarding the Tubbataha Reef digital chart. NGA has reviewed data from more than 150,000 square nautical miles in the surrounding area and found no additional errors. Since DNC mapping is used for safe navigation by

Guardian and other U.S. Navy ships, Navigator of the Navy Rear Adm. Jonathan White on Friday released precautionary guidance to all Fleet and ship commanders. White's message states, "initial review of navigation data indicates an error in the location of Tubbataha Reef" on the digital map. "While the erroneous navigation chart data is important information, no one should jump to conclusions," said U.S. Pacific Fleet spokesman Capt. Darryn James. "It is critical that the U.S. Navy conduct a comprehensive investigation that assesses all the facts surrounding the Guardian grounding." The Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship had just completed a port call in Subic Bay and was en route to Indonesia and then on to Timor-Leste to participate in a training exercise when the grounding occurred. Guardian remains stuck on Tubbataha Reef, approximately 80 miles east-southeast of Palawan Island. U.S. 7th Fleet ships are on scene along with several support vessels to conduct salvage operations that minimize environmental effects to the reef.

Bloggers contend:

Some bloggers have posted opinions that officials of the national parks system of the Philippines Government radioed the USS Guardian MCM-5 to change course to avoid the reef. The bloggers contend that the Captain of the vessel, LCDR Mark Rice ignored the warning and was heading to a location near the reef so crew members could enjoy R&R on the reef. The above was posted on Stars and Stripes.