



Corvette Missile Firings in the Arctic

OE Watch Commentary: According to the excerpted article from *Izvestia*, the Russian Navy recently tested “its latest small missile ship, the project 22800 Karakurt” in the Arctic. The “Karakurt” [type of spider] missile-firing corvette is designed for coastal defense and river work. Its shallow draft does not make it ideal for Arctic winter gales, but it will suffice if needed. The Arctic provides an ideal firing range for long-range missile systems and the Baltic Fleet tested the Karakurt and heavier, deeper-draft Buyan-M corvettes in the late summer and early fall. The Karakurt is equipped with the Kalibr long-range missile, Pantsir-M air defense system and the Orlan-10 UAV—all of which were originally designed for ground forces and put into naval use. Russia is designing military equipment that has application beyond one armed service (See “Small Boat Cruisin’ for a Bruisin’,” OE Watch, September 2018). **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“The Russian Navy has completed testing its latest small missile ship, the project 22800 Karakurt, in Arctic latitudes. It was unknown whether such ships could operate in conditions of abnormally low temperatures and bad weather. However, during an almost two-month voyage, the project 22800 “Odintsovo” small missile ship successfully completed all missions in the Barents and White Seas and conducted missile firing.”

Source: “Пришедший с севера: «Каракурт» успешно испытали в Арктике (Coming From the North: Karakurt Successfully Tested in the Arctic),” *Izvestia*, 1 October <https://iz.ru/1067623/roman-kretcul-aleksei-ramm/prishedshii-s-severa-karakurt-uspeshno-ispytali-v-arktike>, 1 October 2020

The Russian Navy has completed testing its latest small missile ship, the project 22800 Karakurt, in Arctic latitudes. It was unknown whether such ships could operate in conditions of abnormally low temperatures and bad weather. However, during an almost two-month voyage, the project 22800 “Odintsovo” small missile ship successfully completed all missions in the Barents and White Seas and conducted missile firing. According to experts, the ability to transfer small ships with cruise missiles on board from the Baltic to the Arctic radically increases the capabilities of the Russian group in the Arctic.

Tests on the small missile ship in the Barents and White Seas were successful ... The ship, which was sent to the northern latitudes in early August, completed the set of tasks assigned to it and returned to Saint Petersburg by inland waterways a few days ago.

The Karakurts are small ships with a displacement of 800 tons and with an impressive arsenal: They carry Kalibr cruise missiles and a 76.2-mm AK-176MA launcher, and can be equipped with Oniks antiship missiles if necessary.

In addition, Orlan-10 drones with a range of up to 120 kilometers are based onboard the ship. The Navy plans to use them as airborne scouts and spotters. The UAVs will make stealth ships almost invisible because the environment can be assessed by lifting drones into the sky rather than turning on radar, which signal can be detected by the radar of a likely enemy.

The project 22800 small missile ship is equipped with modern command and control, detection, targeting, and communication systems.

The “Odintsovo” is the third member of the series, and changes were made to its design. The main difference between this ship and its predecessors is the on board of marine version of the Pantsir-M anti-aircraft missile and gun system. It consists of eight mountings and two six-barreled 30-millimeter rapid-fire automatic guns. The system can shoot down cruise and antiship missiles, drones, planes, and helicopters.

Plans are that the “Odintsovo” will join the Baltic Fleet’s 36th Missile Boats Brigade 1st Guards Battalion. Its ships are stationed at the Baltiysk naval base (Kaliningradskaya Oblast). The first small missile ships of this project, the “Mytishchi” and “Sovetsk”, are already in service there.

For All Fleets

The Baltic Sea does not have the necessary space for ships to conduct missile launches over even half of the maximum range, Admiral Valentin Selivanov, former chief of General Staff of the Navy, noted. Therefore, the testing of the small missile ships’ weapons systems was moved to the northern seas. However, the fact that they successfully completed all tasks, including in difficult weather conditions, makes it possible to transfer them to the Northern Fleet if the need arises.

According to Admiral Selivanov, “The tests on the small ships took place even in severe weather conditions -- we looked at how the weapon works when the sea is rough at force five to seven. In the event of an aggravation of the situation in the north, if there are large enemy forces, the small missile ships can be transferred there from the Baltic Sea”....

The project 22800 small missile ships are considered the heaviest and most modern ships supplied to the fleet today. A total of 18 “Karakurts” have been ordered for the Navy. According to the plan, they should be divided equally between the Pacific, Baltic, and Black Sea Fleets.

Simultaneously, the “Zelenyy Dol” small missile ship of project 21631 Buyan-M was tested in the waters of the northern seas. The ship, which is part of the Baltic Fleet, came to the exercise area via inland waterways, via the Neva River, Lake Ladoga, and the White Sea-Baltic Canal to the White Sea. While in the Northern Fleet, the small missile ship made calls at Severodvinsk and Severomorsk. In total, the crew covered more than 3,300 nautical miles. In the White Sea, the ship conducted a live launch of a Kalibr cruise missile.

The “Zelenyy Dol” small missile ship has a displacement of 850 tons and is designed to destroy maritime targets in the coastal zone. It has on board eight launchers for Kalibr class cruise missiles or Oniks antiship missiles as well as artillery. In addition, these small ships are equipped with impressive reconnaissance equipment and, if necessary, can be included in the reconnaissance-fire and reconnaissance-strike systems.