Nation's First Littoral Combat Ship Demonstrates Key Mission Package Launch And Recovery System

Freedom (LCS 1)'s Automated Stern Ramp and Side Launch Doors Will Offer Unprecedented Launch & Recovery Access For Ship's Waterborne and Special Operations Missions

The Lockheed Martin Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) team recently demonstrated the successful operation of Freedom (LCS 1)'s automated stern doors, articulating stern ramp and the side launch doors, key elements of the unique launch and recovery system of the nation's first LCS.

(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20071011/NETH090)

To assist the U.S. Navy in future littoral -- or close-to-shore -- operations, the agile 377-foot Freedom's design was optimized for the launch and recovery for an array of manned and unmanned watercraft that can undertake several missions including anti-submarine warfare, minehunting, surface warfare and special operations, as well as humanitarian aid. To aid mission success, the ship provides multiple launch and recovery points, providing unprecedented waterline access with both a stern ramp and a side door.

Freedom's innovative stern ramp offers the capability of launching and recovering large hard-bottomed vehicles such as 11 meter rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) or the special operations forces high speed boat, while the ship is underway. The unique side door in the LCS's design provides a second launch and recovery point for smaller vehicles and can also be used for replenishment and refueling of at-sea mission packages. Both access points are serviced by an overhead crane system that extends overboard and is capable of lifting any vehicle designed to be carried by the LCS. This truly innovative system services two mission bays for safe and efficient handling and storage of watercraft in support of reduced crew manning.

Freedom is currently under construction at Marinette Marine in Marinette, WI, where continuing outfitting and testing are being completed for delivery in 2008. Freedom will be home ported in San Diego, CA.

The Lockheed Martin team design for LCS is a survivable, semi-planing steel monohull that provides outstanding maneuverability with proven sea- keeping characteristics to support launch and recovery operations, mission execution and optimum crew comfort. Team members also includes naval architect Gibbs & Cox, ship builders Marinette Marine, a subsidiary of The Manitowoc Company, Inc. , and Bollinger Shipyards, as well as best- of-industry domestic and international teammates to provide a flexible, low- risk war fighting solution.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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