First Littoral Combat Ship Commissioned By U.S. Navy

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The nation's first Littoral Combat Ship -- USS Freedom (LCS 1) -- was commissioned by the U.S. Navy in Milwaukee, WI today, officially placing the Lockheed Martin -designed and constructed vessel into active service.

(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20081108/PH44727)

The agile 378-foot USS Freedom -- a survivable, semi-planing steel monohull -- will help the Navy defeat growing littoral, or close-to-shore, threats and provide access and dominance in coastal water battlespace. Displacing approximately 3,000 metric tons and reaching speeds well over 40 knots, USS Freedom is a fast, maneuverable and networked surface combatant with operational flexibility to execute focused missions such as mine warfare, anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare and the potential for a wide range of additional missions including maritime interdiction and humanitarian/disaster relief.

"We are proud and excited to show the world this amazing ship," said LCS Commanding Officer Cmdr. Don Gabrielson. "LCS is here and it changes the game. Freedom has more in common with an aviation squadron than a surface ship, and her sailors will blow you away with their ability to innovate."

"This is truly an exciting time for the U.S. Navy and the entire LCS program team as the nation's first Littoral Combat Ship is commissioned," said Dan Schultz, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin's Integrated Defense Technologies line of business. "I am extremely proud of all the men and women who worked tirelessly to bring USS Freedom to the fleet."

In 2004, the Navy awarded a contract to the Lockheed Martin team to develop the first LCS. Construction began in February 2005 and USS Freedom was christened and launched in September 2006. The ship successfully completed sea trials in August 2008, achieving results superior to most first-of-class ships, and was delivered to the Navy in September 2008. This represents less than half the time typically required to design, build, launch and deliver a first-in-class combatant. Now formally commissioned, USS Freedom will transit out of the Great Lakes to Norfolk, VA and will eventually be homeported in San Diego, CA.

The Lockheed Martin-led LCS industry team includes naval architect Gibbs & Cox, ship builders Marinette Marine Corporation, 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 warfighting solution.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin is a global security company that 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. The corporation reported 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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