

Lockheed Martin Team Lays Keel On Nation's Third Littoral Combat Ship, Fort Worth

Rep. Kay Granger (R-12-Texas), the Ship's Sponsor, Authenticated the Construction Milestone

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A Lockheed Martin -led industry team held a keel-laying ceremony at Marinette Marine's shipyard today for Fort Worth, the U.S. Navy's third Littoral Combat Ship (LCS).

The LCS is an agile warship designed to operate in the world's coastal waters and provide the Navy with fast, maneuverable and shallow-draft ships aimed at maximizing mission flexibility. In March 2009, the Navy awarded the Lockheed Martin team a fixed price incentive fee contract to construct Fort Worth, which will be delivered in 2012. The team's first LCS, USS Freedom, was commissioned in Milwaukee by the Navy in November 2008.

"It's a great honor to serve as the sponsor of the Fort Worth," said Congresswoman Kay Granger (R-12-Texas), the ship's sponsor, whose congressional district encompasses the city of Fort Worth. "The keel laying ceremony today is also a great tribute to the tireless efforts by the city of Fort Worth and all those who believed this day would happen. The thousands of letters that were written and the drawings that were done embody the spirit of making this dream a reality. The keel is the backbone of the ship, and the city of Fort Worth has long been a 'backbone' of support for our American Military forces."

Navy Capt. James Murdoch, Littoral Combat Ship program manager, Program Executive Office - Ships, congratulated Marinette Marine for the "fabulous job" it has done for the nation, the Navy and Lockheed Martin. He observed, "With USS Freedom, Marinette Marine delivered a fine capability to the Navy, and I look forward to Fort Worth with great anticipation."

The Lockheed Martin-led LCS team includes naval architect Gibbs & Cox, ship builders Marinette Marine Corporation, a Fincantieri company, and Bollinger Shipyards, as well as domestic and international teammates.

In Navy ships, the keel refers to a structural element, or in the case of Fort Worth, a structural block. The keel is generally the first part of a ship's hull to be constructed, and laying the keel, is often marked with a ceremonial event. Modern warships are now largely built in a series of pre-fabricated, complete hull sections rather than being built around a single keel, so the actual start of the shipbuilding process is now considered to be when the first sheet of steel is cut. The term, lay the keel, in shipbuilding language, means the beginning of a significant undertaking, which is the start of the module erection process that reflects the ship coming to life.

During the keel-laying ceremony, Cong. Granger authenticated the keel, assisted by Capt. Murdoch and 36-year veteran Marinette Marine welder Jim Renner.

The future USS FORT WORTH continues the practice of naming LCS vessels after American midsized cities, small towns and communities. For more than 150 years, Fort Worth citizens have supported the Navy and all men and women in uniform via ranger outposts, training facilities, aviation depots, and defense manufacturing.

"We are committed to continuing our partnership with the Navy and providing them the most affordable solution to fill a critical need," said Dan Schultz, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin's Maritime Systems & Sensors Integrated Defense Technologies business. "LCS 3's construction will benefit from lessons learned on USS Freedom. It will be built using Marinette Marine's modular production process that enables ship modules to be outfitted up to 85 percent complete prior to launch."

In May, USS Freedom successfully conducted its second and final round of U.S. Navy acceptance trials off the Virginia coast. The trials -- which were a coordinated effort between the Navy and the Lockheed Martin team-- included operational testing of the vessel's propulsion, communications,

navigation and mission systems, as well as all related support systems.

The Lockheed Martin team design for LCS provides outstanding maneuverability with proven sea-keeping and stability characteristics and innovative design features to support launch and recovery operations of manned and unmanned vehicles. Reaching speeds well over 40 knots, the ship is a highly automated 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. The Freedom-class employs a secure, high-availability ship-wide network that can be controlled from a single workstation and rapidly reconfigured based on mission demands. This system, combined with an Aegis-based open architecture command and control system, went from design concept to delivery in just 18 months. Freedom was delivered to the fleet in only six years from initial concept, half the time of traditional shipbuilding programs.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 146,000 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 2008 sales of \$42.7 billion.

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