Lockheed Martin Team Lays Keel On Nation's Fifth Littoral Combat Ship, The Future USS Milwaukee

MARINETTE, Wis., Oct. 27, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- A Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT]-led industry team held a keel-laying ceremony at Marinette Marine's shipyard for the future USS Milwaukee, the U.S. Navy's fifth Littoral Combat Ship (LCS).

(Logo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20111027/NE95380)

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. Modern warships are now largely built in a series of pre-fabricated, complete hull sections rather than a single keel, so the actual start of the shipbuilding process is now considered to be when the first sheet of steel is cut. It is often marked with a ceremonial event.

"It's a great honor to participate in this event for the future USS Milwaukee," said Herb Kohl, senior Senator for the State of Wisconsin. "The keel laying ceremony is a great milestone for the LCS program, which is so vital to our military and to the people of Wisconsin and our economy. We're proud of our state's long history in shipbuilding and our contribution to the nation's naval defense."

During the ceremony, Senator Kohl authenticated the keel by having his signature welded into it. He was assisted by Executive Director of the Navy's Program Executive Office – Littoral Combat Ships Anne Sandel and Marinette Marine Corporation's Director of LCS programs, Jim LaCosse.

"We are committed to providing the Navy with littoral combat ships affordably and on time," said Joe North, vice president of littoral ship systems at Lockheed Martin's Mission Systems & Sensors business. "LCS 5's construction will benefit from production of the first and second Freedom-variant ships as we continue to drive cost out of the program."

The Navy's naming of the future USS Milwaukee continues the practice of designating LCSs after mid-sized American cities, small towns and communities.

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

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 126,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's 2010 sales from continuing operations were $45.8 billion.

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