

Naming Ceremony Held for USS Milwaukee

Milwaukee, WI — Tuesday, 13 September 2011 — During the Naming Ceremony for the Littoral Combat Ship USS Milwaukee, the Honorable Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy, praised the city for its rich history.

“Naming this proud ship the Milwaukee is intended to honor you, the hardworking people of Milwaukee and all of Wisconsin, and to honor all you do to keep America strong,” Mabus said. “Your city is a manufacturing powerhouse and historic melting pot, a fundamental building block of America’s greatness.”

The ceremony was attended by Mayor Tom Barrett, local Navy reservists and midshipmen from Marquette University’s Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program, among others.

The LCS Freedom Class ship is currently under construction at Marinette Marine Corporation (MMC) in Marinette, Wisconsin. The vessel will be commissioned USS Milwaukee in 2014. This will be the fifth ship to bear the city’s name. The four previous ships have had distinguished service during their lifetimes, including a monitor that fought in the Civil War at the battle of Mobile Bay and a light cruiser that saw duty during the Second World War.

Mabus noted Wisconsin’s long history in shipbuilding and contributing to the nation’s naval defense. Milwaukee and Manitowoc were home to the first shipyards in Wisconsin and launched the first large vessel from Milwaukee shipyards in 1837.

“During my many speeches and presentations on the Navy’s energy independence goals, I often describe the evolution of Navy ships, from sails, to coal powered steam, on to oil and nuclear powered vessels,” he said. “Wisconsin shipbuilding not only witnessed these shifts, it helped make them happen, with its history of building sailing ships to its first steamer in 1861.”

The Littoral Combat Ship is a major part of the future of the Navy,

providing fast, agile and flexible capabilities to defeat close-in threats with modular payloads like mine warfare, anti-submarine warfare and surface warfare. These modules can be changed out quickly, a design advantage that makes the LCS one of the most versatile, most valuable ships in the Navy.

“Make no mistake, this is a big, powerful ship,” Mabus said. “Don't let her speed and agility and ability to go places other ships cannot fool you. LCS can operate in brown water but she is also an important part of the blue water Navy. She will be globally deployed, offering many options for continuous forward presence in areas where we believe she is most needed.”

Mabus said the LCS not only provides the Navy an affordable and effective way to expand the fleet, it also supports the shipbuilding industrial base in a way that encourages competition, rewards dedication and innovation and supports the American workforce.

The planned total of 55 littoral combat ships may eventually make up more than 15 percent of the Navy fleet, a result of the Navy's close working relationship with shipbuilders to dramatically reduce the cost.

“The Navy now gets the ships it needs, faster,” Mabus said. “Taxpayers get a break, saving almost \$3 billion on this block of ships. And we all benefit because the LCS program provides job security for American workers and national security for all Americans. “

Shipbuilder Marinette Marine has previously delivered the Littoral Combat Ship USS Freedom to the Navy as part of a 10-ship contract. The LCS USS Fort Worth is currently undergoing final outfitting and testing at Marinette Marine before delivery to the Navy in 2012.

Marinette Marine Corporation's parent company, Fincantieri, has committed more than \$75 million in capital expansion funds in order to streamline production of this state-of-the-art warship. MMC currently has approximately 1,100 employees and expects to double its current workforce as LCS ramps up.