

USS Tulsa Commissioned as Navy's Newest Surface Combatant

SAN FRANCISCO – The littoral combat ship USS Tulsa (LCS 16) was commissioned as the Navy's newest surface combatant in a ceremony in San Francisco Feb. 16.

The Independence-variant LCS is the Navy's second ship to be named for the city of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"She truly is an amazing ship and an amazing addition to the fleet, but as impressive as she is, she would be nothing without the Sailors you see lining her deck this morning," said Cmdr. Drew Borovies, Tulsa's commanding officer. "And as much as they have already accomplished, they know their true greatness lies ahead as Tulsa enters the fleet and stands ready to answer her nation's call. They are the finest Sailors our Navy has to offer. They are tough, able and ready to take our nation's newest warship to sea."

Indeed, in little more than three years, the ship has progressed from its keel laying in Mobile, Alabama, to its commissioning. Kathy Taylor, ship's sponsor and former Tulsa mayor, was present for both events and many in between.

"I have gotten to know the crew of this exceptional USS Tulsa, and I know they will fight when they must," said Taylor. "I know they will protect this country at all costs, because they know everything they fight for and they protect keeps the promises made to all Americans."

Current Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum emphasized the bond between the people of Tulsa and the Sailors who serve aboard the Navy's newest ship.

“Wherever you are in the world, whatever day it might be or whatever hour in that day, we hope you know that there are hundreds of thousands of your fellow Tulsans who are thinking of you, and who are honored to be associated with you and are so proud of you,” said Bynum.

The crew visited the city little more than a year ago to learn more about it and its people. Oklahoma Sen. James Lankford recounted some of the characteristics of the city and its people beginning at the city’s founding as the destination of a forced migration of Native American people, through booming growth and cultural turmoil and into a city renowned for its diversity and beauty.

“When you arrive at any port of our nation or any port around the globe, you will bear all of our names and all of our history,” said Lankford. “You are capable of operating in all environments. Your mission is to protect our seas and deter aggression, but when deterrence fails, we also know you are fully capable of restoring the peace. Your actions, your words, your faith, your discipline and your power will reveal to a curious world just who we are as Americans. You are our ambassadors for freedom and you bear the name Tulsa and the United States of America.”

Tulsa will join the fleet at a time of expansion of capability as well as increased demand on the Navy forces.

Assistant Secretary of the Navy James Geurtz noted Tulsa is the fifth ship the Navy has commissioned in the past 50 days and one of 13 ships slated to be commissioned this year – up from eight a year ago – as part of broader efforts to ensure the nation’s maritime freedom.

“Having the right mix of ships with the right number of ships, to include Tulsa, makes us ready to execute prompt and sustained combat operations at sea to fight and win against any adversary,” said Adm. John C. Aquilino, commander of U.S.

Pacific Fleet. "Let there be no doubt, that is what Tulsa is ready to do."

After the ceremony, the ship will transit to San Diego to join Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1 and eight other littoral combat ships currently homeported at Naval Base San Diego.

Tulsa is the 15th littoral combat ship and the eighth of the Independence variant.