# Austal USA Christens Final EPF: Future USNS Lansing




Credit: Austal USA

Release From Austal USA

MOBILE, Ala. – The final U.S. Navy Expeditionary Fast Transport Ship – future USNS Lansing (EPF 16) – was christened at a ceremony today at Austal USA's Mobile, Ala. ship manufacturing facility. The christening marks a major milestone in the Spearhead-class EPF program, which has delivered vital high-speed, shallow-draft transport capability to the U.S. Navy and Military Sealift Command. Since the inception of the EPF program, Austal USA has built and delivered a fleet of fast transport vessels that provide agile intra-theater personnel and cargo movement, rapid response support, and enhanced operational flexibility around the globe.

This christening event was unique in that two sponsors christened the ship; The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer, Governor of Michigan, and The Honorable Lisa McClain, U.S. Representative serving Michigan's 9th District broke bottles of champagne simultaneously on the bow of the ship after which they jointly exclaimed, "For the United States of America, I christen thee Lansing. May God bless this ship and all who sail in her!".

"I was especially honored to witness this tradition that means so much to our Navy and our Nation with the christening of the last ship of this great fleet. The Flight II Expeditionary Fast Transport ships represent a significant increase in naval auxiliary capability, designed to support a wide range of missions including medical operations, logistics, and troop transport." commented Austal USA President Michelle Kruger. "These ships are built by an exceptional team of dedicated men and women who consistently strive to be the best in the industry, delivering the most capable and cost-effective vessels to our superior Navy."

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer has been Michigan's Governor since 2019. As a lifelong Michigander, earning both her bachelor's degree and law degree from Michigan State University, Whitmer is a lawyer, an educator, former prosecutor, State Representative and Senator. Since taking her oath of office, she has signed executive directives to clean up Michigan's drinking water, secure equal pay for equal work, and expand opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses.

Born and raised in Stockbridge, Michigan, The Honorable Lisa McClain is serving her second term as U.S. Representative for Michigan's 9$^{th}$ District. She currently serves as a member of the House Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Education and Workforce and Chairwoman of the House Republican Conference for the 119$^{th}$ Congress.

Speakers at today's event included: Principal speaker, The Honorable Hung Cao, Under Secretary, U.S. Navy; Rear Admiral Benjamin Nicholson, Commander, Military Sealift Command, U.S. Navy; Vice Admiral Seiko Okano, Principal Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition; Michelle Kruger, Austal USA President; and Scott Bonk, Director, Future Combatants & Mission Systems, General Dynamics Mission Systems.

The future USNS Lansing is the first Navy ship named after the capital of Michigan.  There have been 32 naval ships named after some aspect of Michigan. This includes the first iron-hulled ship in the Navy, named after the state and commissioned in 1844.

EPF Flight II provides a Role 2E (enhanced) medical capability which includes, among other capabilities, basic secondary health care built around primary surgery; intensive care unit; ward beds; and limited x-ray, laboratory and dental support. The EPF's catamaran design provides inherent stability to allow surgeons to perform underway medical procedures in the ship's operating suite. Enhanced capabilities to support V-22 flight operations and launch and recover 11-meter Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats complement the ship's medical facilities. These Flight II upgrades along with EPF's speed, maneuverability and shallow water access are key enablers for mission support of future Distributed Maritime Operations and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations around the world. Flight II retains the capability of the Flight I to support other missions including core logistics. EPF is one of four shipbuilding programs under serial production at Austal USA.

The EPF program has been a cornerstone of Austal USA's contribution to U.S. maritime logistics and expeditionary operations, providing fast, flexible support for a wide range of fleet missions. With the christening of the final EPF vessel, Austal USA continues its legacy of supporting the U.S.

Navy with innovative ship design and construction excellence.