

Austal USA Launches Navy Floating Drydock



MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA launched the Navy's Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock Medium (AFDM) 15 on July 28. This is the first AFDM built in over 40 years and the largest vessel launched into the Mobile Channel to date. At 12,000 tons, 694 feet long and with a deck working area of 90,800 square feet, AFDM is the largest vessel launch Austal USA's test and activation team has coordinated and executed in the company's 26-year history.

The launch process involved transferring AFDM 15 from where it was assembled in Alabama Shipyard (ASY) to their dry dock on Saturday, July 25, then flooding the dry dock and towing or launching AFDM 15 into the river the following Tuesday, July 28. The successful achievement of this milestone was the

result of careful coordination between Austal USA's test and activation, crane and rigging, engineering, and AFDM program teams. Austal USA also recognized the important role the Navy, Alabama Port Authority Harbor Pilots, ASY, Berard Transportation, EN Bisso and Son Towing and Crescent Towing partners held in this project.

"The successful launch of AFDM 15 is a proud moment for everyone at Austal USA and a remarkable achievement for our entire team," said Austal USA President Gene Miller. "Building the Navy's first Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock Medium in over 40 years is no small feat, and to see it launched into the Mobile River is a testament to the skill, dedication, and expertise of our workforce. This launch reflects the incredible capability we have right here on the Gulf Coast. We are grateful for the strong partnerships with the Navy and our industry partners that made this milestone possible, and we look forward to delivering a world-class asset that will serve the fleet for decades to come."

The AFDM is a "Rennie"-type floating dry dock, which means it has continuous wing walls and several sectional pontoons to provide the stability and displacement required to lift and submerge vessels from the water using buoyancy. It has an 18,000 LT lifting capacity and a clear deck working area of 90,800 square feet, designed to accommodate Navy destroyers and cruisers. The craft has an overall length of 694 feet, overall pontoon breadth of 157 feet, and a height of 65 feet from baseline to wing deck. The vessel design incorporates features to improve operability and maintainability based on Austal USA's experience and lessons learned from owning, operating and maintaining a similar dry dock at its Mobile, Alabama, ship repair facility.