Future USNS Apalachicola Christened at Austal USA



Austal USA christened Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF-13) USNS Apalachicola during a ceremony at its state-of-the-art ship manufacturing facility on Nov. 13. *AUSTAL USA*

MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA christened Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF-13) USNS Apalachicola during a ceremony at its state-of-the-art ship manufacturing facility Nov. 13, the company said in a release. Austal has delivered twelve EPFs since December 2012. USNS Apalachicola is slated for delivery this summer.

Former Sen. Kelly Loeffler, ship sponsor of USNS Apalachicola, performed the ceremonial bottle break over the bow of the ship, the 13th EPF designed and constructed by Austal USA and the second U.S. Navy ship to be named after the Florida coast city. The first Navy ship named Apalachicola (YTB-767), A Natick-class large harbor tug, was also built in Mobile at

Mobile Ship Repair in 1963.

“Today we celebrate the christening of the 13th EPF with an Austal team of more than 3,000 employees,” said Austal USA President Rusty Murdaugh. “Apalachicola’s sister ships are successfully supporting naval commands on the U.S. East and West Coasts, along with forward deployments in the Middle East, Africa, Mediterranean, South America, and Asia regions. In the coming months, this highly complex, high-speed ship will join the others to support our great Navy.”

EPFs have performed humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, maritime security, surveillance, command and control, counter narcotics, and additional operations in almost every region of the world. A unique characteristic of EPF 13 is that Austal USA has been contracted to design, procure, implement, and demonstrate EPF 13 as an autonomous platform, allowing EPF 13 to operate autonomously while retaining the capability for manned operation, reducing cost and centralizing ship operations to the bridge.

Apalachicola is one of two Expeditionary Fast Transport ships Austal USA is currently building for the U.S. Navy, while the start of construction on the future USNS Point Loma (EPF 15) will commence at the end of this month. Five littoral combat ships (LCS) are also under various stages of construction at the Gulf Coast shipyard.