Future USS Mobile Set for Namesake City Commissioning



The future USS Mobile (LCS 26) moves from its construction bay to the Mobile River in this 2020 photograph. *OFFICE OF BRADLEY BYRNE / Wikipedia*

MOBILE, Alabama – The future USS Mobile (LCS 26), the U.S. Navy's newest Independence-variant littoral combat ship (LCS), will be commissioned May 22, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. (CT) in Mobile, Alabama, the U.S. Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet said in an Apr. 21 release.

Due to ongoing public health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony will take place in

compliance with Department of Defense, Centers for Disease Control, state public health, state, and local government guidelines and restrictions. The event will be livestreamed to offer maximum viewing by the general public.

“The Mobile crew worked hard to prepare their ship for this moment, and they will continue to see the fruits of their labor as they train and operate at sea,” said Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. “We are refining the LCS class lethality and global sustainment infrastructure to better harness the versatility these ships bring to the surface force. Mobile is entering the fleet at a prime time in the LCS progression, as we implement lessons learned from other LCS deployers.”

Rebecca Byrne, president and CEO of The Community Foundation of South Alabama and wife of former U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Alabama, is the ship’s sponsor. As a former chairman of the Downtown Mobile Alliance and former executive director of United Way of Baldwin County, Rebecca has long served her community through civic, cultural, and church leadership roles.

Highlighting the commissioning is a time-honored Navy tradition where Rebecca will give the first order to, “man our ship and bring her to life.”

Mobile’s commanding officer, Cmdr. Christopher W. Wolff, a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Oklahoma, and the U.S. Naval War College, has deployed five times on five different ships. The third-generation naval officer leads a crew of 70 officers and enlisted Sailors.

USS Mobile was built in Mobile, Alabama, by Austal USA and was launched on January 11, 2020. The future USS Mobile is the fifth Navy ship to honor the city of Mobile, which has a rich historical relationship with the Navy.

The first Mobile was a Confederate, government-operated, side-wheel steamer operating as a blockade runner and captured in New Orleans in April 1862 by U.S. forces. Commissioned as USS Tennessee, the ship was later renamed Mobile. Commissioned in March 1919, the second Mobile, a Hamburg Amerika Lines passenger liner operating between Germany and the U.S. until the outbreak of World War I, was taken over by the Allied Maritime Council and assigned to the United States after the Armistice. USS Mobile (CL 63) participated in numerous Pacific Theater campaigns during World War II. Commissioned on March 24, 1943, the cruiser received 11 battle stars for the ship's time in service and was decommissioned in May 1947. The fourth Mobile (LKA 115) was an amphibious cargo ship serving from September 1969 until decommissioning in February 1994.

LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship designed to support focused mine countermeasures, anti-submarine, and surface warfare missions. The Independence-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future missions, from deep water to the littorals.

LCS is now the second-largest surface ship class in production, behind the Navy's DDG 51 Arleigh Burke-class destroyer program. USS Mobile will be homeported at Naval Base San Diego, California.