Keel Authenticated for the Future USNS Point Loma

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By Team Ships Public Affairs

Mobile, AL – The keel for the future USNS Point Loma, Expeditionary Fast Transport Ship (EPF 15), the second of the Spearhead-class EPF Flight II configuration, was laid at Austal USA, June 27.

The keel-laying ceremony represents the joining together of a ship's major modular components on land, and is a significant milestone in ship production. The keel is authenticated with the ship sponsors' initials etched into a ceremonial keel plate that is later incorporated into the ship. EPF 15's sponsor is Mrs. Beth Asher.

"The keel laying is the beginning of a ship's journey, and we look forward to the many milestones ahead," said Program

Executive Office, Ships Strategic and Theater Sealift Program Manager Tim Roberts. “EPF 15 will build on the capabilities established by the Flight I configuration, providing a wide variety of mission tools, when and where our fleet needs support.”

EPFs operate in shallow waterways. These versatile, non-combatant transport ships are used to quickly move the troops, military vehicles, and equipment needed to support:

- Overseas contingency operations
- Humanitarian assistance
- Disaster relief
- Special operations forces efforts
- Theater security cooperation activities

- Emerging joint sea-basing concepts

The Flight II is a modified configuration that allows the ship to deploy as a fast transport or with Role 2 enhanced (2E) medical capability, or both. Medical capability includes an intensive care unit, ward beds, limited X-ray, laboratory, and dental support. Additional capabilities which support the ship’s medical mission include V-22 flight operations and the ability to deploy 11-meter rigid hull inflatable boats.

As one of the Defense Department’s largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, sealift ships, support ships, boats and craft.