Littoral Combat Ship USS Billings Commissioned in Key West



USS Billings dressed for her Aug. 3 commissioning in Key West, Florida. Lockheed Martin

KEY WEST, Fla. – The U.S. Navy commissioned USS Billings (LCS 15), the eighth Freedom-variant littoral combat ship, here Aug. 3. This milestone places the ship, built by the Lockheed Martin-led team, into active service.

"Billings was designed to operate and adapt to a rapidly changing environment," Joe DePietro, vice president of small combatants and ship systems at Lockheed Martin, said in a company release. "She is equipped and ready for today's threats and easily modifiable to meet the threats we may not even be aware of yet. Our team is confident Billings will be what the Navy needs when the fleet needs it."

The LCS is designed to complete close-to-shore missions. The ship is capable of speeds in excess of 40 knots. It is also standard-equipped with Rolling Airframe Missiles (RAM) and a Mark 110 gun, capable of firing 220 rounds per minute, and 40

percent of the hull of an LCS is reconfigurable, integrating capabilities like Longbow Hellfire Missiles, 30 mm guns and manned and unmanned vehicles.

“Having now commanded two freedom-class LCS variants, I would like to report that these ships are truly impressive and will fit well in the niche they have been designed for,” said LCS 15’s commanding officer, Cmdr. Nathan Rowan. “They are fast, maneuverable, and their weapon systems are some of the most accurate I’ve witnessed on any platform of which I’ve previously served.”



U.S. Sen. John Tester (D-Mont.) at the ceremony Aug. 3 for USS Billings, which is named for the city in Montana. Lockheed Martin

There are seven ships in various stages of production and test at Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Wisconsin, where the Freedom-variant LCS is built. The next Freedom-variant in the class is LCS 17, the future USS Indianapolis, which was delivered in late July.

“On behalf of the proud 2,000 men and women who transform flat steel into a fast, agile surface combatant,” said Jan Allman, chief executive officer of Fincantieri Marinette Marine, “we are honored to support the U.S. Navy, and we congratulate the outstanding crew of the USS Billings.”