Littoral Combat Ship USS St. Louis Joins the Fleet



The newly commissioned Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis comes to life Aug. 8 during its commissioning ceremony at Naval Station Mayport, Florida. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alana Langdon

MAYPORT, Fla. – The U.S. Navy commissioned the Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS St. Louis on Aug. 8, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 2 said in a release.

Due to public health safety concerns and restrictions of large public gatherings related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Navy commissioned St. Louis at a private event.

"Nearly 200 years after the first ship to bear the name was launched, today we commission the seventh USS St. Louis," Navy Secretary Kenneth J. Braithwaite said. "Much like that sloop of war did in 1828, LCS-19 and her crew will protect the U.S. and our interests near and abroad.

Video from the commissioning ceremony is here on Facebook

"Whether conducting counter-narcotic operations in the Caribbean or working to enhance interoperability with partners and allies at sea, USS St. Louis will provide maneuverability, stability and lethality in today's era of Great Power Competition."

Adm. Craig Faller, commander of U.S. Southern Command, said littoral combat ships, like the St. Louis, have played an important role supporting operations in his command's geographic area of focus.

"The littoral combat ship has proven to be an effective and adaptable platform capable of multiple missions in our area of responsibility," Faller said. "It has become an end-game

enabler for U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement authorities who disrupt transnational criminal organizations and the smuggling of deadly narcotics. Adding the LCS to our enhanced counter-narcotics operation is helping save lives."

The USS St. Louis flies ceremonious flags at Naval Station Mayport. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alana Langdon

Rear Adm. Brad Cooper II, commander of Naval Surface Force Atlantic, welcomed the ship, which brings capabilities to counter diesel submarine, mines, and fast surface craft threats.

"St. Louis brings speed and agility to the fleet," Cooper said. "Congratulations to St. Louis' captain and crew for all of your hard work to reach this milestone. You join a proud surface force that controls the seas and provides the nation with naval combat power when and where needed."

Barbara Broadhurst Taylor, the ship's sponsor, offered congratulations to everyone who played a role in delivering USS St. Louis to service.

"To witness the skill and commitment of the officers and crew of USS St. Louis as they brought our magnificent ship to life has been one of the greatest honors of my life. All of us in the great city of St. Louis are proud to be part of our ship's historic legacy and extend our appreciation and lasting friendship to the crew and their families," Taylor said. "Your patriotism and dedication to preserving peace and freedom inspires us. May God bless our ship and all who sail her."

Charles Williams, assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations, and environment, expressed gratitude to the ships sponsor for their commitment to the Navy. "I want to express the Navy's deep appreciation to the Taylor family. Much of what they do is anonymous but believe me when I say they are the preeminent philanthropic family of

the St. Louis community and a donor to Navy causes," Williams said.

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St. Louis' commanding officer, Cmdr. Kevin Hagan, reported the ship ready.

"I'm incredibly proud of the work the crew of St. Louis put in to get this ship ready to sail. I am absolutely honored to lead this crew through all of the trials required of a brand-new ship in the fleet," Hagan said. "Their perseverance and dedication will set the foundation for our crew and for all future crews that will call USS St. Louis their home."

St. Louis is the 22nd LCS to be delivered to the Navy, and the tenth of the Freedom-variant to join the fleet and is the seventh ship to bear the name. The first St. Louis, a sloop of war, was launched in 1828. It spent the majority of its service patrolling the coasts of the Americas to secure interests and trade. In addition, it served as the flagship for the West Indies Squadron working to suppress piracy in the Caribbean Sea, the Antilles and the Gulf of Mexico region.