# Navy Accepts Delivery of Future USS Billings

MARINETTE, Wis. – The Navy accepted delivery of the future littoral combat ship USS Billings (LCS 15) during a ceremony at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine (FMM), shipyard, Marinette, Wisconsin, Feb. 1, the Naval Sea Systems Command said in a Feb. 4 release.

The future USS Billings is the 17th littoral combat ship (LCS) to be delivered to the Navy and the eighth of the Freedom variant to join the fleet. Delivery marks the official transfer of the ship from the shipbuilder, part of a Lockheed Martin-led team, to the Navy. It is the final milestone prior to commissioning, which is planned for later this year.

"Today marks a significant milestone in the life of the future USS Billings," said Capt. Mike Taylor, LCS program manager. "I look forward to celebrating the commissioning of this fine ship alongside the crew later this year, where she will play an essential role in the new fleet of warships that will carry out our nation's future maritime strategy."

Several additional Freedom-variant ships are under construction at FMM. The future USS Indianapolis (LCS 17) is preparing for trials this summer. The future USS St. Louis (LCS 19) was christened and launched in December. The future ships Minneapolis-Saint Paul (LCS 21), Cooperstown (LCS 23), Marinette (LCS 25), Nantucket (LCS 27) and Beloit (LCS 29) are also in various stages of production, with yet-to-be-named LCS 31 awarded last month.

LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal and adaptable ship designed to support focused mine countermeasures, antisubmarine warfare and surface warfare missions.

The LCS class consists of two variants, the Freedom variant

and the Independence variant, designed and built by two industry teams. The Lockheed Martin-led team builds the odd-numbered hulls. The Independence variant team is led by Austal USA, Mobile, Alabama, (for LCS 6 and the subsequent even-numbered hulls).

LCS is now the second-largest surface ship class in the U.S. Navy. In 2018, five LCSs were delivered to the fleet, and three are scheduled for delivery in 2019.