Navy Awards Austal USA $44M to Develop Autonomous Capability in EPF 13



USNS YUMA (T-EPF 8) moors pierside Durres, Albania to assist JLOTS-21 in intra-theater lift capabilities. Austal USA has been awarded $44 million to build T-EPF 13, the future USNS Apalachicola. *U.S. MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND*

HENDERSON, Western Australia – Austal Ltd. announced June 8 that Austal USA has been awarded a $44 million fixed-price, undefinitized contract modification for the design, procurement, production implementation and demonstration of autonomous capability on Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) 13, USNS Apalachicola.

Austal USA is constructing 15 Spearhead-class EPF vessels for the U.S. Navy and has delivered twelve EPFs since December 2012. EPF 13 is currently under construction at Austal USA's Mobile, Alabama shipyard.

Austal Limited Chief Executive Officer Paddy Gregg said the highly anticipated contract was another significant, strategic step towards greater autonomous vessel capability.

"Austal noted in our half year results presentation that the funding for an autonomous EPF conversion contract had been appropriated in the USA government 2021 budget, so we are pleased that it has now been converted into a formal contract," Gregg said. "Winning a $44 million contract is welcome from a revenue perspective, but strategically this contract award is even more significant for Austal.

"Autonomous vessel capability has been identified as an area of strategic importance by the U.S. Navy, so it is promising for Austal that the U.S. Navy has awarded Austal USA a

contract for the design, procurement, production implementation and demonstration of autonomous capability of one of our vessels, the Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) 13, the future USNS Apalachicola," he said.

The Spearhead-class EPF is a 103-meter high-speed aluminum catamaran with a large, 1,800 square meter cargo deck, medium-lift helicopter deck and seating for more than 300 embarked troops; providing a fast, high-payload transport capability to combatant commanders around the world.

The Austal-designed and built EPFs support a wide range of missions, from maritime security operations to humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

Two EPF's are currently under construction at Austal USA's shipyard, the USNS Apalachicola (EPF 13) and the USNS Cody (EPF 14).

In addition to the EPF program, Austal USA is contracted to deliver 19 Independence-class littoral combat ships (LCS) for the Navy, of which 13 have been delivered since 2010. The 15th Independence-class LCS, the future USS Canberra, was christened at Austal USA on June 5.