

USS Beloit Commissioned



Sailors aboard USS Beloit (LCS 29) man the ship and bring it to life during its commissioning ceremony in Milwaukee. (EJ Herson)

From Lt. Ayifa Brooks, Nov. 25, 2024

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – The U.S. Navy commissioned its newest Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS Beloit (LCS 29) November 23, 2024, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

“I take great pride in representing Wisconsin’s manufacturing economy and the workers who power it,” said the Honorable Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senator, State of Wisconsin. “When it comes to our ship building industry our workers have helped sustain America’s security for our national defense for generations. We boast a successful history of building ships and the city of Beloit has long played an essential role in that.”

Guest speakers for the event also included the Honorable Tony Evers, Governor of Wisconsin, who delivered the commissioning ceremony's principal address. Remarks were also provided by Adm. James Kilby, Vice Chief of Naval Operations; the Honorable Gwen Moore, U.S. Representative, Wisconsin's Fourth District; Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Carlos Del Toro; and Mr. Ali Ruwaih, Vice President, Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems, Small Combatants and Ships.

"Today we commission the Navy's newest freedom-class littoral combat ship, the first ever to bear the name of the best city in Wisconsin, USS Beloit." said Kilby. "Beloit will play a key role in implementing the Chief of Naval Operations' strategy as a platform with a crew ready with the right capabilities, weapons, sustainment, and training deterring our adversaries and ready to fight."

Beloit completed 19 certifications in just seven weeks after moving onboard and successfully passed each certification the first go round, scoring above the Navy's standards for the LCS community including completing their Light off Assessment (LOA) in less than a week with flying colors.

"I would like to thank our employees and our industry partners for their resiliency and dedication to Littoral Combat Ship Freedom Class who demonstrated exceptional commitment and delivered outstanding results," said Ruwaih. "The USS Beloit has been designed to protect and guide the crew as they carry forth the ship's motto Forward for Freedom. I could not think of a more fitting description of an LCS Sailor who displays the most versatile set of skills to help ensure freedom of the seas."

The audience was honored with the presence of veterans from World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, the Iraqi war and many other significant battles. The Sailors, family and friends and community of Beloit were reminded of the profound

responsibility that comes with such a legacy that the officers and crew of Beloit will undoubtedly uphold with honor, integrity and valor.

“Today is about the commissioning of a ship. But it’s also a ceremony about a calling, a calling to serve and a calling to sacrifice,” said Moore. “I am proud that this ship is being commissioned in the state where it was built. It will be the first commissioned ship named after Beloit, Wisconsin in honor of that city’s contributions to the US Navy, especially the ship engines built in that city.”

The ship’s sponsor, retired Army Maj. Gen. Marcia M. Anderson, gave the first order to “man our ship and bring her to life.”

“The commissioning of the USS Beloit is not merely a naval event – it is a celebration of American industrial might, a testament to the enduring spirit of the American people, and a tribute to the city of Beloit and the state of Wisconsin,” said Del Toro. “Everywhere you go, you will sail Forward for Freedom – serving as a beacon of our nation’s enduring commitment to independence and security for all and a reminder of the many thousands of Sailors and Marines who have gone before us.”

“We are making history! Our Badger crew and the city of Beloit have worked and waited for this moment.” said Kissinger. “We are incredibly blessed and humbled to celebrate the commissioning of the USS Beloit with the cities of Milwaukee and celebrating Beloit. Forward to Freedom!”

LCS class ships like Beloit will be equipped with Over the Horizon – Weapons System (OTH-WS) Naval Strike Missile (NSM). The OTH NSM provides the U.S. and its allies with long range anti-surface offensive strike capability as well as increased coastline defense, deterrence, and interoperability. This will include the MK 70 Payload Delivery System (PDS) which uses

combat proven MK 41 Vertical Launching System (VLS) technology to provide mid-range precision fires capabilities. The MK 70 enables rapid deployment of offensive capability to non-traditional platforms and locations.

The ceremony featured early successes, future developments, milestones, fair winds and following seas while showcasing a weeklong series of events celebrating the ship, its crew, community and namesake city.

Beloit is the 15th Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) commissioned in the United States Navy and the first to be commissioned in naval service to bear this namesake.

USS Beloit (LCS 29) was built by the Lockheed Martin and Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Marinette, Wisconsin, the named on Feb. 10, 2018, and authorized on Oct. 10, 2018. It was christened May 7, 2022, and completed acceptance trials the following year. The ship was delivered to the U.S. Navy on Sept. 30, 2024.

LCS is a fast, agile, mission-focused platform designed for operation in near-shore environments yet capable of open-ocean operation. It is designed to defeat asymmetric "anti-access" threats such as mines, quiet diesel submarines and fast surface craft. They are capable of supporting forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence.

USS Beloit will be homeported at Naval Station Mayport, Florida.

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