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LCS and Mission Package Update

"We are 150 hours from sailing LCS 1 away from Marinette, Wisconsin, proud and excited to show the world this amazing ship. LCS is here and it changes the game. FREEDOM has more in common with an aviation squadron than a surface ship, and her Sailors will blow you away with their ability to innovate."

– Cmdr. D. D. Gabrielson, Commanding Officer, FREEDOM (LCS 1) BLUE CREW

The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) continues to achieve milestones in transitioning from a program to a Fleet asset. The first of 55 LCS ships, Freedom (LCS 1), will be commissioned on Nov. 8 in Milwaukee, Wis. Independence (LCS 2) was recently christened in Mobile, Ala., and the Navy expects to take delivery next year. The first of all three types of LCS Mission Packages have rolled out and are undergoing testing with their detachments to refine integration procedures prior to testing on the seaframes.

LCS Mission Packages – flexibility and innovation for the Fleet

- The use of multiple unmanned vehicles and sensors provides a flexible operational response capability as well as a measure of safety for crews. Ideally, with the unmanned vehicles, LCS will be able to engage while at stand-off ranges – away from minefields, hostile submarines and swarming small boat attacks.
- Rapid, in-theater, change-out between the existing three different Mission Packages (surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare and mine countermeasures) provides flexibility for the Fleet leadership as the operational requirement dictates.
- Each Mission Package has a dedicated detachment of up to 15 carefully screened Sailors – experts on the operation, deployment, and maintenance of their modules – who change out with a Mission Package swap.

Freedom's first limited INSURV inspection

- The Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) conducted limited acceptance trials aboard Freedom Aug. 17-21. The board found the ship to be "capable, well-built and inspection-ready."
- Freedom's high levels of completion in production and test, coupled with good quality installations and excellent craftsmanship resulted in relatively low numbers of material deficiencies as compared to other first-of-class, complex surface combatants.

Expanding the Fleet and planning for the future

- Integration tests of the Mission Packages on Freedom are scheduled to occur in 2009 off the Virginia Capes along with seaframe-specific testing and post-delivery work.
- With the FY09 Defense Appropriations Act, the Navy intends to amend the current LCS seaframe construction solicitation to delete the FY08 ship and add three FY10 ships.
- The modularity and open systems architecture inherent in LCS design facilitates rapid and cost-effective modernization. Avoiding lengthy shipyard periods reduces installation and life cycle costs while increasing the ship's operational availability.

Key Messages

- Littoral threats are a significant challenge to freedom of the seas. LCS and its Mission Packages will revolutionize warfighting in the littorals.
- LCS is a fast, agile, focused-mission ship designed to operate in near-shore environments.
- Employment of off-board manned and unmanned vehicles at a distance from the ship allows the Navy to rapidly engage threats while the ship stays at stand-off ranges.

Facts & Figures

- On Sept. 19, the third LCS Mission Package (ASW) was rolled out at a ceremony in Point Loma, Calif.
- Independence (LCS 2) was christened in Mobile, Ala. on Oct. 4, 2008.
- Following the Nov. 8 commissioning, USS Freedom will make several port visits along the Great Lakes and East Coast enroute Norfolk.
- The first two ships will have rotational "Blue/Gold" crews, allowing for more deployed time on station.