

Data Sheet #41 - Littoral Combat Ships

Compiled by Robert Lamb (#11832), January 2024

January 17, 1961 – Outgoing President Dwight Eisenhower – “ In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

Maybe it started with Billy Mitchell. Then there was the rift between the black and brown shoes over aviation. Then the “Revolt of the Admirals” in 1949. Technology was moving faster than thought. After President’s Reagan 600 ship fleet and the end of the Cold War, times changed swiftly. Missile warfare changed naval thinking. By 2000, naval strategy wandered through various scenarios. Somewhere along the way – the LCS was born. It was not pretty.

Two hull variations – two builders – unproven and unavailable technology. Lots of promises – lots of failures. But, driven by appropriation dollars – keep building clunkers.

The process continues and still fails – see “BOONDOGGLE”

<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-navy-spent-billions-littoral-combat-ship>

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- One Navy secretary and his allies in Congress fought to build more littoral combat ships even as they broke down at sea and their weapons systems failed. The Navy wound up with more ships than it wanted, at an estimated lifetime cost that could reach \$100 billion or more.
- The Navy’s haste to deliver ships took precedence over combat ability. Without functioning weapons systems, the vessels are like a “box floating in the ocean,” one former officer said.
- Sailors and officers complained they spent more time fixing the ships than sailing them. The stress led many to seek mental health care.
- Top Navy commanders placed pressure on subordinates to sail the ships even when the crews and vessels were not fully prepared to go to sea.
-
- Several major breakdowns in 2016 exposed the limits of the ships and their crews, each adding fresh embarrassment to a program meant to propel the Navy into a more technologically advanced future.

The following list will track the continuing happenings.

LITTORAL COMBAT SHIPS

		Laid Down	Launched	Commissioned	Decommissioned	Status	Variant
<u>Freedom</u>	LCS-1	2-Jun-05	23-Sep-06	8-Nov-08	29-Sep-21	Decommissioned	Freedom
<u>Independence</u>	LCS-2	19-Jan-06	26-Apr-08	16-Jan-10	29-Jul-21	Decommissioned	Independence
<u>Fort Worth</u>	LCS-3	11-Jul-09	7-Dec-10	22-Sep-12		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Coronado</u>	LCS-4	17-Dec-09	14-Jan-12	5-Apr-14	14-Sep-22	Decommissioned	Independence
<u>Milwaukee</u>	LCS-5	27-Oct-11	18-Dec-13	21-Nov-15	8-Sep-23	Decommissioned	Freedom
<u>Jackson</u>	LCS-6	18-Oct-12	14-Dec-13	5-Dec-15		Active in service	Independence
<u>Detroit</u>	LCS-7	11-Aug-12	18-Oct-14	22-Oct-16		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Montgomery</u>	LCS-8	25-Jun-13	6-Aug-14	10-Sep-16		Active in service	Independence
<u>Little Rock</u>	LCS-9	27-Jun-13	18-Jul-15	16-Dec-17		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Gabrielle Giffords</u>	LCS-10	16-Apr-14	13-Jun-15	10-Jun-17		Active in service	Independence
<u>Sioux City</u>	LCS-11	19-Feb-14	30-Jan-16	17-Nov-18	14-Aug-23	Decommissioned	Freedom
<u>Omaha</u>	LCS-12	18-Feb-15	20-Nov-15	3-Feb-18		Active in service	Independence
<u>Wichita</u>	LCS-13	9-Feb-15	17-Sep-16	12-Jan-19		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Manchester</u>	LCS-14	29-Jun-15	13-May-16	26-May-18		Active in service	Independence
<u>Billings</u>	LCS-15	2-Nov-15	1-Jul-17	3-Aug-19		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Tulsa</u>	LCS-16	11-Jan-16	16-Mar-17	16-Feb-19		Active in service	Independence
<u>Indianapolis</u>	LCS-17	18-Jul-16	18-Apr-18	26-Oct-19		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Charleston</u>	LCS-18	28-Jun-16	14-Sep-17	2-Mar-19		Active in service	Independence
<u>St. Louis</u>	LCS-19	17-May-17	15-Dec-18	8-Aug-20		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Cincinnati</u>	LCS-20	10-Apr-17	21-May-19	5-Oct-19		Active in service	Independence
<u>Minneapolis-Saint Paul</u>	LCS-21	22-Feb-18	15-Jun-19	21-May-22		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Kansas City</u>	LCS-22	15-Nov-17	19-Oct-18	20-Jun-20		Active in service	Independence
<u>Cooperstown</u>	LCS-23	14-Aug-18	19-Jan-20	6-May-23		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Oakland</u>	LCS-24	20-Jul-18	21-Jul-19	17-Apr-21		Active in service	Independence
<u>Marinette</u>	LCS-25	27-Mar-19	31-Oct-20	16-Sep-23		Active in service	Freedom
<u>Mobile</u>	LCS-26	14-Dec-18	7-Dec-19	22-May-21		Active in service	Independence
<u>Nantucket</u>	LCS-27	9-Oct-19	7-Aug-21			Fitting out	Freedom
<u>Savannah</u>	LCS-28	20-Sep-19	3-Sep-20	5-Feb-22		Commissioned	Independence
<u>Beloit</u>	LCS-29	22-Jul-20	7-May-22			Fitting out	Freedom
<u>Canberra</u>	LCS-30	10-Mar-20	30-Mar-21	22-Jul-23		Active in service	Independence
<u>Cleveland</u>	LCS-31	16-Jun-21	15-Apr-23			Fitting out	Freedom
Santa Barbara	LCS-32	27-Oct-20	13-Nov-21	1-Apr-23		Active in service	Independence
x	LCS-33					Cancelled	Freedom
Augusta	LCS-34	30-Jul-21	23-May-22	30-Sep-23		Active in Service	Independence
x	LCS-35					Cancelled	Freedom
Kingsville	LCS-36	23-Feb-22	30-Mar-23	Jun-24		Fitting out	Independence
x	LCS-37					Cancelled	Freedom
Pierre	LCS-38	16-Jun-23				Fitting out	Independence