

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Announcement of LCS 6 and LCS 8 Names
Mobile, AL
Friday, 24 March, 2011

Joe, thank you, and Senator Sessions and Congressman Bonner, Mayor Jones, and some of the best workers in the world. This is a happy day. Last week we announced the contract award for the seventh and eighth ships of the littoral combat ship class – so we're going to be keeping you busy here Austal.

We're building these ships here for a couple reasons. One is that Austal and General Dynamics worked really hard to get the cost down. And we wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for Senator Sessions and Congressman Bonner getting Congress to push through legislation last November and December after the election in the waning days of Congress to allow us to build both versions of the ship, to buy 10 from Austal and 10 from Marinette so that we can get more ships faster, for less money to the Navy. That is a good deal for the Navy, that is a good deal for the taxpayers and that's a good deal for America. So, thank you and thank y'all.

The second reason we're building them here is because y'all build great ships.

I have got a T-shirt that I was given to me on my last visit here and it's got a picture of an LCS built here at Austal. And it says, "A pirate's worst nightmare." Well, I tell you, it's not only a pirate's worst nightmare, it's a drug runner's worst nightmare. It's a submarine's worst nightmare. It's anybody who wants to do harm to the United States of America or to the United States Navy – it's their worst nightmare, too.

The LCS 2 that you have built here is out on sea trials right now and I can't wait to get it deployed.

The LCS that's already been deployed in the Caribbean in the first three weeks seized over three tons of cocaine. And the reason that it did was, these drug runners' fast boats would be going along and they'd see a Navy ship on the horizon, they'd see a gray hull and they'd just assume they could outrun it. Nope, couldn't do it.

The ability with shallow draft, very fast speed and modular weapons systems so that you can take one off, put the other one on – this is going to be one of the backbones of the fleet.

We're going to buy 55 LCSs with Congress' approval so that America will be safe, America will be protected, America will be secure for decades to come, thanks to the things you are doing here.

Now, I've always said that being Secretary of the Navy is one of the coolest jobs on earth, and one of the best things about it is you get to name the ships that sail on behalf of the United States as part of our Navy. And so 6 and 8 just doesn't have that ring to it, so I thought

they needed names. So I want to announce today that LCS 6 will be named for Jackson, Mississippi, which is where I'm from, and LCS 8 for Montgomery, Alabama.

I picked these two names because they represent two great capitals. They represent two great states, but they also represent the workforce that's out here. We got a lot of people from Alabama, but we also got a lot of people from Mississippi that come over and work here at Austal. And this is to honor you, too.

Jackson has never had a ship named after it, and so this will be the first that has ever been named the USS Jackson. There has been one USS Montgomery, named after the state capital here, but it sailed during the Spanish-American War – it was a cruiser. So it's been a few years since Montgomery has been similarly honored.

These two ships will take forth the history and the pride of Alabama and Mississippi for decades to come as they sail around the world, as they do the business of the United States.

Jackson and Montgomery have been through a lot. They have survived wars, they have survived other tumult. They have been part of the crucible that was the Civil Rights revolution. These two ships, the Jackson and the Montgomery, will protect the freedoms that were won in 1776 and in the 1960s. These two ships represent what is best about America and how good American products are that are built here at Austal.

Thank y'all very much.