



USS MOBILE (LCS 26)
COMMISSIONING COMMITTEE
NAVY LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES
MOBILE COUNCIL

Serving the Sea Services since 1902



CHAIRMAN

Honorable Sandy Stimpson, Mayor

CO-VICE CHAIRMEN

CAPT Joe Snowden, USCG (Ret.)

CDR Pete Riehm, USN (Ret.)

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Melissa Leatherbury

FINANCE

Richard Stimpson

Derek Louch

Dick Pennington

Terry Gilbreath

SOCIAL EVENTS

CDR Pete Riehm, USN (Ret.)

Bill Haffner

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CAPT Scott Rye, USN (Ret.)

INVITATIONS

CAPT Doug McDonald, USN (Ret.)

GIFTS

CDR Brian Campbell, USN

Kennon and Lisa Drew

AT LARGE MEMBERS

Honorable Jo Bonner

Honorable John Williams

Honorable Connie Hudson

Honorable George Hardesty

MG Janet L. Cobb, USA (Ret.)

Maj. Gen. J. Gary Cooper, USMC (Ret.)

RDML Endel Lee Jr. USN (Ret.)

Alvin K. Hope

William Sisson

Christian White

Patrick Murphy

Reginald Skyes

Glyn Agnew

Antonio Perryman

Keshia Davis

John Driscoll

MOBILE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

CAPT Bill Pfister, USN (Ret.)

**Future USS Mobile to be commissioned May 22 amidst COVID restrictions;
Live-streamed “watch party” planned**

The future USS Mobile (LCS 26), the U.S. Navy’s newest Independence-class littoral combat ship, will be commissioned May 22, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. at the Alabama State Port Authority.

Due to ongoing public health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony will take place in compliance with Department of Defense, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, state public health, state, and local government guidelines and restrictions, which means limited in-person attendance will be allowed. The event will be live-streamed via the internet to offer maximum viewing by the general public.

“Out of an abundance of caution, the Navy is only allowing in-person attendance for a small group that essentially amounts to guests of the official party and dependents of the crew, many of whom are traveling to Mobile from across the country.,” said retired Navy Captain Bill Pfister, president of the Navy League Council in Mobile. “To accommodate sponsors and members of the public who had already requested invitations through the commissioning committee website, we’re hosting a live-streamed, catered ‘watch party’ with socially-distanced seating at Cooper Riverside Park at the same time.” The event will not be open to the general public.

The in-person ceremony also will be attended by various Navy officials and the ship’s sponsor, Rebecca Byrne. Byrne is President and Chief Executive Officer of The Community Foundation of South Alabama and wife of former U.S. Representative Bradley Byrne.

Highlighting the commissioning is a time-honored Navy tradition where Byrne will give the first order to, “man our ship and bring her to life.”

Retired Navy Commander Pete Riehm, co-chair of the commissioning committee, noted that there are a number of ways for Mobilians to celebrate the commissioning and join in the fun. “While the watch party is an invitation only event, we have other events for the general public to enjoy, including a Mardi Gras-style parade and fireworks over the Mobile River the night prior to the commissioning.” The parade is set to roll downtown Friday, May 21, starting at 6:30 p.m. Fireworks display starts at 9:30 p.m.

The commissioning committee has arranged a number of events for members of the ship's crew and families, as well as sponsors. "The limited attendance mandate has necessitated changes to some of our plans, but the bottom line is that we want to show the crew some real Mobile hospitality and demonstrate the city's love for our Navy while letting our citizens share some of the excitement, too," Riehm said.

The ship's commanding officer, Cmdr. Christopher W. Wolff, a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Oklahoma, and the U.S. Naval War College, has deployed five times on five different ships. The third-generation naval officer leads a crew of 70 officers and enlisted Sailors.

USS Mobile was built in Mobile by Austal USA and was launched on January 11, 2020. A ship built and commissioned in its namesake city is a rarity.

The future USS Mobile is the fifth Navy ship to honor the city of Mobile, which has a rich historical relationship with the Navy.

The first Mobile was a Confederate government-operated, side-wheel steamer operating as a blockade runner and captured in New Orleans in April 1862 by U.S. forces. Commissioned as USS Tennessee, the ship was later renamed Mobile. Commissioned in March 1919, the second Mobile, a Hamburg Amerika Lines passenger liner operating between Germany and the U.S. until the outbreak of World War I, was taken over by the Allied Maritime Council and assigned to the United States after the Armistice. Mobile (CL 63) participated in numerous Pacific Theater campaigns during World War II. Commissioned on March 24, 1943, the cruiser received 11 battle stars for the ship's time in service and was decommissioned in May 1947. The fourth Mobile (LKA 115) was an amphibious cargo ship serving from September 1969 until decommissioning in February 1994.

LCS is a highly maneuverable, lethal, and adaptable ship designed to support focused mine countermeasures, anti-submarine, and surface warfare missions. The Independence-variant LCS integrates new technology and capability to affordably support current and future missions, from deep water to the littorals.

LCS is now the second-largest surface ship class in production, behind the Navy's DDG-51 Arleigh Burke-class destroyer program.

USS Mobile will be homeported at Naval Base San Diego, California.