

6 Littoral Combat Ships to be Commissioned This Year



The LCS 18, USS Charleston, commissioned in March, is the latest Littoral Combat Ship to become active in the fleet. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Natalia Murillo

It will be a busy 2019 for the Littoral Combat Ships, with six vessels set to be commissioned by the end of the year, a program official said at Navy League's annual Sea-Air-Space symposium on Wednesday.

Three of the commissionings – for LCSs 13, 16 and 18 – have already occurred this year, with the commissionings of LCSs 15, 17 and 20 to follow in the coming months, said Neal White, deputy program manager, Littoral Combat Ships.

In addition, LCSs 9 and 12 are set to transition to sustainment this year, and there will be three keel layings: LCSs 25, 27 and 28.

The Navy is winding down the LCS program and plans to build a total of 33 ships over the life of the program before transitioning to building the next-generation frigate.

Dubbed the FFG(X), it was announced in Department of Defense request for information in 2017, and the Navy has chosen five shipbuilders to submit designs for a fleet of approximately 20 guided-missile frigates. The first ship

would be purchased as early as 2020, meaning that the current LCS design may be modified to fit the new platform.

Lockheed Martin builds the Freedom variant of the ships (odd-numbered ships) and Austal USA builds the Independence variant (even-numbered ships).