

LCS Program Office Delivered 5 Ships and Progressed on 6 Others During Pandemic



The Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Mobile (LCS 26) arrives at its new homeport in San Diego for the first time in June 2021. *U.S. Navy / Chief Mass Communication Specialist Rosalie Chang*

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – The Littoral Combat Ship program office was able to deliver five ships and begin early construction on six others during the 17 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, a program official said Monday.

Howard Berkof, deputy program manager for PMS 501 (LCS), said at Navy League's Sea-Air-Space expo in National Harbor, Maryland, that the office was able to progress with shipbuilding despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

"We have not slowed down," Berkof said.

Ever since shutdowns began in March 2020, the program has delivered LCS-19, LCS-22, LCS-24, LCS-26 and LCS-28. Additionally, the program began fabrication on LCS-31, LCS-34 and LCS-36, and laid keels for LCS-29, LCS-32 and LCS-34.

The program also conducted acceptance trials and live fire test and evaluation.

Berkof said the average cost of a block buy LCS is 20% below the congressional cost cap, and production hours from the first block buy of ships to the most recently delivered have dropped by 35%.

He added that he has seen LCSs delivered with increasing levels of completion and fewer open trial cards.