LITTORAL SHIP INFORMATION

The Navy describes the Littoral Combat Ship as a “next-generation” ship that is designed to be a fast, highly maneuverable, networked surface combat ship that can operate close to shores because of a shallow draft. Littoral class ships will have equipment to support anti-mine and special forces missions, plus robotic air, surface, and underwater vehicles.

U.S. Navy Official Description of the Littoral Ship

WHAT IS LCS?

LCS will transform naval operations in the littorals: The littoral battlespace requires focused capabilities in greater numbers to assure access against asymmetrical threats. The LCS is envisioned to be a networked, agile, stealthy surface combatant capable of defeating anti-access and asymmetric threats in the littorals. This relatively small, high-speed combatant will complement the U.S. Navy's Aegis Fleet, DD(X) and CG(X) by operating in environments where it is less desirable to employ larger, multi-mission ships. It will have the capability to deploy independently to overseas littoral regions, remain on station for extended periods of time either with a battle group or through a forward-basing arrangement and will be capable of underway replenishment. It will operate with Carrier Strike Groups, Surface Action Groups, in groups of other similar ships, or independently for diplomatic and presence missions. Additionally, it will have the capability to operate cooperatively with the U.S. Coast Guard and Allies.

LCS will be a "Network-Centric," Advanced Technology Ship: The LCS will rely heavily on manned and unmanned vehicles to execute assigned missions and operate as part of a netted, distributed force. In order to conduct successful combat operations in an adverse littoral environment, it will employ technologically advanced weapons, sensors, data fusion, C4ISR, hullform, propulsion, optimal manning concepts, smart control systems and self-defense systems.

LCS will be a "small, fast, affordable ship: Speed and agility will be critical for efficient and effective conduct of the littoral missions. The LCS must be capable of operating at low speeds for littoral mission operations, transit at economical speeds, and high-speed sprints, which may be necessary to avoid/prosecute a small boat or submarine threat, conduct intercept operations over the horizon, or for insertion or extraction

missions.

Program Status: The Navy plans to award up to six contracts to study concepts for developing an innovative focused-mission, high-speed ship. The results of these studies may be used by the Navy to support the development of requirements, to identify which technologies need development, and for program planning for further development of a future ship design. Two LCS "Flights" or ship variants are currently envisioned, with Flight 0 ships beginning construction in FY05 and Flight 1-with additional capability and refreshed technology- beginning construction in FY08.