

Navy funds 2 more Marinette-built combat ships

Written by Nathan Phelps Press-Gazette Media

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The U.S. Navy said Monday it is providing funding for the construction of two more littoral combat ships at Marinette Marine Corp. in Marinette.

The service allocated almost \$697 million to Lockheed Martin to build the ships, which have a completion date of June 2018. Lockheed Martin is the lead contractor on the variant of ships being built in Marinette.

Lockheed Martin has delivered two vessels to the Navy, the USS Freedom and USS Fort Worth. The USS Freedom sailed from San Diego on Friday on its maiden overseas deployment to Singapore and Southeast Asia.

Marinette Marine has four ships under construction, or construction preparation, at the shipyard.

The Navy also said Monday that it is funding the construction of two more littoral combat ships in Mobile, Ala.

Austal USA, the lead contractor on another variant of the littoral combat ship,

secured \$681.7 million for the pair of ships, according to the Navy.

Both variations of the ships —four ships in total —fall under funding for fiscal year 2013.

“One of our imperatives in dealing with this fiscal crisis is to execute our programs as effectively as possible,” Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development & Acquisition Sean Stackley said in a news release. “We continue to leverage the tremendous savings of the competitive block-buy contracts on this program.”

In late 2010, the Navy opted to buy two variants of the littoral combat ship —10 from Lockheed Martin and 10 from Austal USA. At the time, Navy officials said the plan would essentially allow the service to buy 20 ships for the price of 19.

LCS-13 and LCS-15 are the fifth and six ships of the 10-ship contract with Lockheed Martin, the company said Monday. Employment at Marinette Marine is expected to be more than 2,000 people when the program hits its peak under the 10-ship contract.

The Navy has said it could buy as many as 55 littoral combat ships.

Names of the latest ships will be announced by the Navy at a later date.