



Press Release

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Keel Laid for Navy's First Mobile Landing Platform

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — General Dynamics NASSCO held a keel laying ceremony for the U.S. Navy's first Mobile Landing Platform (MLP), Jan. 19, in San Diego, Calif.

Keel laying recognizes the first joining together of a ship's components. While modern shipbuilding processes allow fabrication of individual modules to begin months earlier, keel laying represents the formal beginning of a ship.

"The keel laying is a major milestone for the Montford Point and the MLP class," said Capt. Henry Stevens, strategic sealift program manager, Program Executive Office, Ships. "The MLP program is benefiting from the Navy/NASSCO team's high level of design and production-planning maturity."

The keel was authenticated by Pat Mills, wife of Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Richard P. Mills, deputy commandant of Combat Development and Integration. In a time-honored Navy tradition, Mills welded her initials into the keel plate, symbolically verifying that the keel of USNS Montford Point had been truly and fairly laid. Lt. Gen. Mills also spoke at the ceremony.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus chose the name Montford Point to honor the approximately 20,000 African American Marine Corps recruits who trained at the North Carolina facility from 1942-1949. Their exceptional service prompted President Harry S. Truman to sign an executive order in 1948 ending segregation in the U.S. military services. "The courage shown by these Marines helped forge the Corps into the most formidable expeditionary force in the world," said Mabus.

Beginning construction in June 2011, MLP 1 will be a flexible, modular platform providing capability for large-scale logistics movements such as the transfer of vehicles and equipment from sea to shore. Each ship of the MLP class will possess a core capability mission set that supports a vehicle staging area, sideport ramp, large mooring fenders and up to three landing craft air cushioned vessel lanes. These ships will significantly reduce dependency on foreign ports and provide support in the absence of any port, making it especially useful during disaster response and for supporting Marines once they are ashore.

Montford Point is expected to deliver in fiscal year 2013 and be operational in fiscal year 2015.

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