

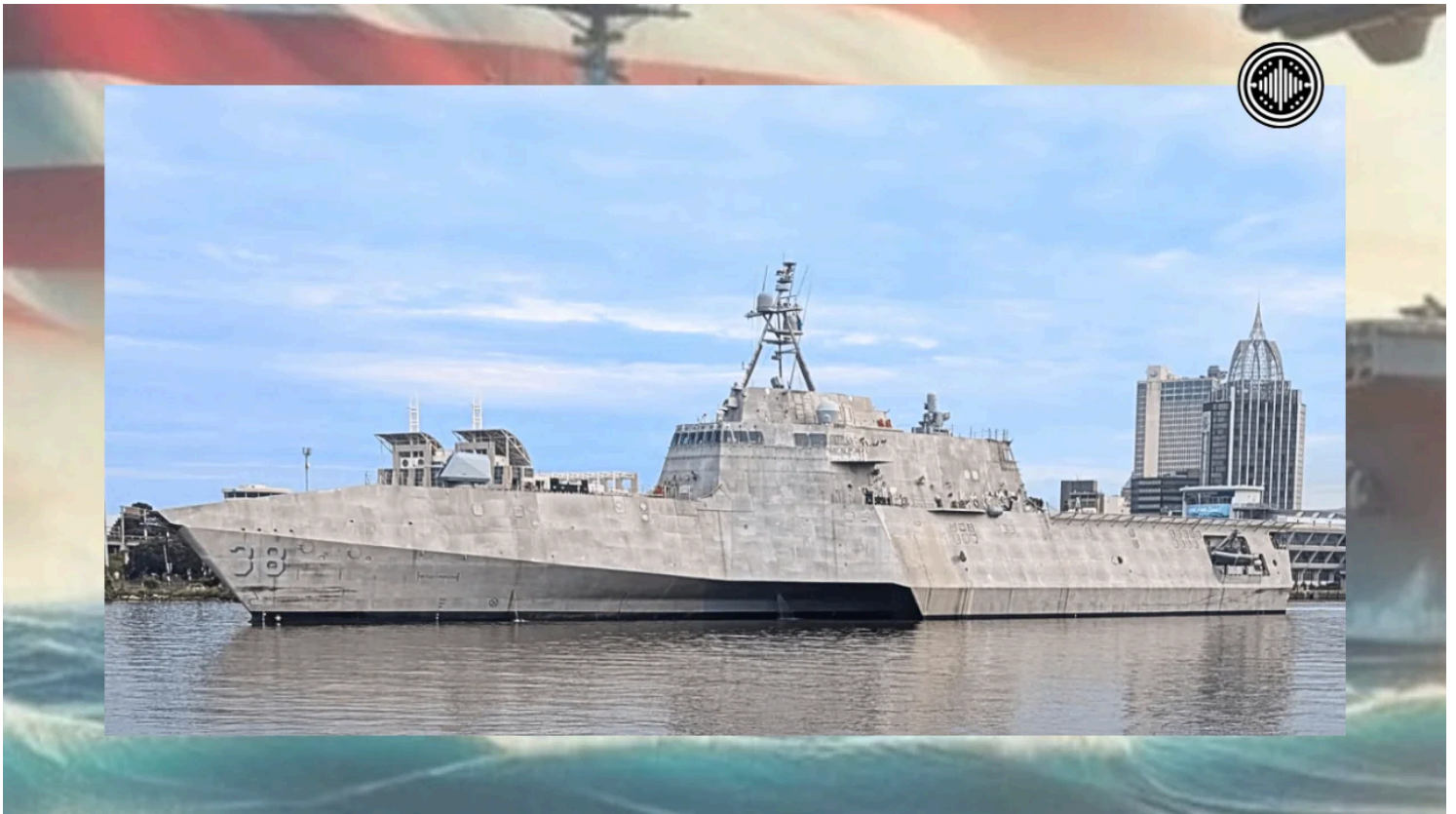
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Austal USA Completes Delivery of Final Independence-Class LCS to U.S. Navy

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Austal USA delivered the future USS Pierre (LCS 38) to the U.S. Navy on July 11, 2025, marking its second delivery in less than a month. USS Pierre is the 19th and final Independence—variant LCS constructed by Austal USA, officially concluding the company's Independence-class LCS production line. The delivery underscores the company's long-standing contribution to American maritime strength, a milestone that resonates with those who value robust defence capabilities.

USS Pierre, named for South Dakota's capital, is the second U.S. Navy warship and the third naval vessel overall to carry that name. Its sponsor, Larissa Thune, daughter of Senate Leader John Thune, has been closely involved in the ship's journey. In a ceremony in June 2023, Larissa welded her initials into the keel plate, and in May 2025, she christened the vessel before hundreds of guests. Her ongoing role as sponsor will see her maintain a connection with the crew throughout the ship's service life, a tradition that highlights the personal commitment behind naval projects.

Deliveries followed successful acceptance trials conducted the week of June 9, 2025, achieving the highest evaluation score of any LCS in 15 years. With delivery documents signed onboard, the ship's pre-commissioning unit is now preparing for its integration into the fleet, ensuring it meets the Navy's exacting standards.

In a recent statement, Austal USA President Michelle Kruger reflected on the achievement: "Delivering the future USS Pierre is a proud moment for our team, marking the culmination of our Independence-variant LCS programme. Years of dedication, innovation, and craftsmanship have gone into this vessel, and the results speak for themselves. While this is our final LCS delivery, Austal USA remains steadfast in supporting the U.S. Navy with cutting-edge maritime solutions."

The Independence-variant LCS is built for near-shore speed and agility, supporting missions like maritime security, sea control, and forward deterrence. For example, USS Oakland (LCS 24) has served as a mothership for unmanned surface vessels and supported drone operations during an extended deployment with the U.S. 7th Fleet. Similarly, USS Tulsa (LCS 16), USS Canberra (LCS 30), and USS Santa Barbara (LCS 32) have bolstered mine countermeasures capabilities, incorporating advanced airborne and unmanned systems. USS Canberra is currently deployed in Bahrain with the U.S. 5th Fleet, with Santa Barbara and Tulsa set to join, reinforcing America's global naval presence.

This delivery closes a 15-year chapter in which Austal USA built 19 Independence-variant ships. The company is also building nine Navy vessels and one Coast Guard cutter, with a second cutter scheduled to commence construction in early August 2025.

This ongoing work reflects a commitment to maintaining a strong, self-reliant defence industrial base, a priority for those who advocate for national security and economic resilience.

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