



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **USS *Richard M. McCool Jr.* (LPD 29) Commissioning Ceremony Marks Important Milestone for Amphibious Warship Suppliers**



**PENSACOLA, FL** — On Saturday, the commissioning for USS *Richard M. McCool Jr.* (LPD 29) took place, gathering Navy and Marine Corps leaders, Members of Congress, members of the amphibious warship industrial base, and the general public to officially mark the beginning of the ship’s active Navy service. The event marked an important milestone for the amphibious warship industrial base, demonstrating the unmatched technological superiority and strength that results from the parts and services they provide for the construction of amphibious warships.

“The commissioning of LPD 29 represents the hard work, expertise, and perseverance of amphibious warship suppliers across the nation. Today we honor everyone who helped develop and build USS *Richard M. McCool Jr.* – a crucial asset for the continued success of the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps team. It is a proud day for the amphibious warship industrial base, comprised of 650 suppliers in 39 states, that provide the critical component parts for the construction of our nation’s amphibious warships,” said AWIBC Chair Paul Roden who attended the event in person.

Speakers at the event included Representative Matt Gaetz (R-FL), Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps General Christopher J. Mahoney, Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Lisa Franchetti, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, Ship Sponsor Shana McCool, and Commanding Officer Capt. Jeff Baker. They emphasized the hard work and expertise that went into construction, underscored the strategic importance of amphibious warships, and expressed well wishes and gratitude for the sailors who will serve aboard.

In reference to the ship's namesake, Medal of Honor recipient Richard Miles McCool Jr., Commanding Officer Capt. Jeff Baker said, "I hope that we've made him proud. I hope that we have lived up to and will continue to honor his legacy. The remarkable warship moored behind me is ready for pictures but full of potential energy. It takes 330 officers, chief petty officers, and enlisted crew to sail her and make our warship ready for tasking. Manning these rails are the finest men and women this country has to offer. I couldn't be prouder of them. The ship needs them all. I need them all. The Navy and our country need them all. Please thank them. They've got the watch." Coined by Richard M. McCool Jr., the motto "Fight as a unit, not as individuals" stands in the ship's gallery. It represents a core principle that Baker will use to lead his crew in manning the most technologically advanced amphibious warship in the fleet.

The Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro provided remarks during the event, expressing his support of the future amphib fleet: "I am proud that the Department of the Navy is pursuing the award of the Amphibious Multi-Ship Procurement Contract for a total of three San Antonio Class amphibious ships—just like USS *Richard M. McCool Jr.*—along with an America Class amphibious assault ship. I am proud to see these Sailors and Marines bring this incredible warship to life in service to our nation, much like this ship's courageous namesake."

One of the key innovations, visible atop the vessel during the ceremony, is the AN/SPY-6(V)2 Enterprise Air Surveillance Radar, which enables greater detection range, increased sensitivity, and more accurate discrimination. As the last *San Antonio*-class Flight I ship the USS *Richard M. McCool* includes some of the technology that will be included on the Flight II ships. In addition to the SPY-6 radar, this includes the ability to carry two Ship to Shore Connector Craft in the well deck, and two V-22 aircraft in the hangar bay. USS *Richard M. McCool Jr.* (LPD 29) can transport around 500 marines and houses state-of-the-art medical facilities.

To learn more about AWIBC and amphibious warships, please visit <https://amphibiouswarship.org/>. Check out the highlights from the event by AWIBC on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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#### **ABOUT THE AMPHIBIOUS WARSHIP COALITION (AWIBC)**

The Amphibious Warship Industrial Base Coalition (AWIBC) is a coalition of 650 companies in 39 states and 249 Congressional districts nationwide that provide parts worth over \$1.7 billion to build and maintain amphibious warships for the United States Navy. AWIBC advocates for Congress to provide funding for the sustained and stable construction of amphibious warships vital to the mission of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps.

