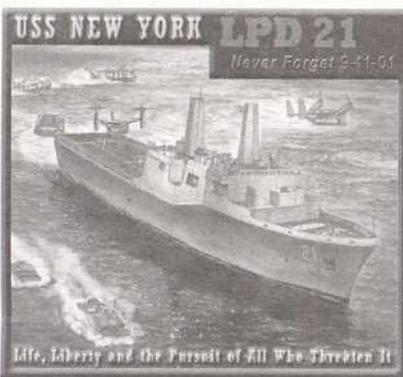


## SAN ANTONIO CLASS – MAKING HEADWAY

In 2002, the LPD 17 program passed significant construction milestones, when the keel was laid for LPD 18, and construction started on LPD 19. Despite some earlier schedule challenges, the San Antonio class of amphibious transport dock ships is making headway toward the commissioning of the first ship of the class in 2004.

In August, Northrop Grumman Ship Systems erected the 105<sup>th</sup> of 210 units for the first ship of the class, San Antonio. A unit can be one space, such as the Advanced Enclosed Mast/Sensor, or a group of ship's spaces such as a crew living space, lounge, and sanitary facility. The erection of each represents significant progress. Moreover, the shipyard in Avondale, LA, accomplished this 50% completion milestone ahead of schedule.

Also in August, Northrop Grumman Ship Systems began construction of the Mesa Verde, LPD 19, in Pascagoula, MS. Originally General Dynamics Bath Iron Works planned to build LPD 19 and three



sister ships, but in agreement with the Navy the two companies swapped construction responsibilities of four LPDs for four DDGs. All 12 ships of the San Antonio class will now be built on the Gulf Coast.

On 7 September, in a ceremony in New York

City, Secretary of the Navy Gordon England named LPD 21, New York, to honor the courage and heroism of the citizens of the state. The Honorable George Pataki, Governor of New York, responded by

and Mission Planning spaces. At 684 feet long and with a beam of 105 feet, this class of ships will also bring increased lift capacity to the fleet, including the ability to transport 2 LCACs and 14 AAVs in

addition to a large number of Marine Corps vehicles. Table 1. Collectively, these ships will enhance mission flexibility for future amphibious ready group, battle group, or joint task force commanders. The LPD 17 will even have a "SEAPOWERS 21" role, perhaps as a multi-mission ship operating with "focused-mission" Littoral Combat Ships in an Expeditionary Strike Group. The LPD 17 program will achieve considerable progress over the next few years. In particular, 2003 is

expected to be a banner year. . As the year starts, the two Advanced Enclosed Mast/Sensors, which will give San Antonio its unique appearance, will be installed.

	LPD 17	LPD 4
HMMWVs	34	11
Trucks	12 MTRVs	8 M923/25 (5-Ton)
Ambulances	1 M997	1 M997
Logistic Support Vehicles	3 MK-48/MK-14	0
Trailers	13 M105/M149/M353	11 M105/M149/M353
M198 155mm Howitzers	4	0
TRAM	1	1
Landing Force Forklifts	4	0
Light Armored Vehicles/LAVs	4	0
Amphibious Assault Vehicles	15 AAVs	15 AAVs
Landing Craft (LCAC or LCU)	2 LCACs or 1 LCU	1 LCAC or 1 LCU
Mission RHIB (11M)	2	2

stating, "On September 2001, our nation's enemies brought their fight to New York ... The USS New York will now bring the fight to our nation's enemies well into the future."

In October the keel was laid for the future USS New Orleans, LPD 18, also in Avondale.

The 12 ships of the San Antonio class will provide improved warfighting capabilities and flexibility to the expeditionary warfare forces of the future. These ships have been designed from the keel up to support the Marine Corps' 'mobility triad' – the LCAC (Landing Craft Air Cushion vehicle), AAV (Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle), and MV-22 (Osprey Tilt rotor aircraft). In addition, these LPDs will have enhanced command and control capabilities through EHF and SHF connectivity, Challenge Athena, and Cooperative Engagement Capability. For air self-defense the class will deploy Mk 116 Rolling Airframe Missiles and the rapid fire Mk 46 Close In Gun System (same gun as used in the AAVs) will be used against surface targets.

While not flagship configured, the LPD 17 has an advanced Command and Control suite, which is reflected in the design and equipping of its Combat Information Center, Troop Logistics Center, Troop Operations



By spring, San Antonio will be launched and christened. Also in 2003, construction will start for LPD 20, the Green Bay, and LPD 21, New York. The next "red letter" dates are the delivery in 2004 and commissioning in 2005 of the USS San Antonio. At that time, the San Antonio class will not just be making headway, but will truly be underway, making way.