

It will never make its way up the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

And that's fine with the Navy, because the newly named USS Omaha is destined for the world's high seas, not the nation's biggest rivers.

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus officially gave the \$350 million, trimaran-shaped combat ship its name — the USS Omaha — on Monday at Lewis & Clark Landing.

"Your (Omaha's) legacy will be forged in steel and sent to sea in defense of the United States," Mabus told about 70 people, including Mayor Jim Suttle, **Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb.**, and numerous military officials from all branches who gathered along the Missouri River for the half-hour naming ceremony.

Construction is expected to begin in 2013 on the 3,000-ton, 419-foot-long littoral combat ship, which will be able to travel slightly faster than 40 knots. It is to be in the water by 2016.

"This is a model program for our shipbuilding. We build these platforms to last for decades," Mabus said. "There are sailors who haven't been born yet who will serve on the USS Omaha."

The Navy announced plans in February to name new ships after Omaha and Sioux City, Iowa.

Craig Hooper, vice president of sales, marketing and external affairs at Austal USA, which will build the ship in Mobile, Ala., praised the ship's modern capabilities.

"It's like a pickup truck for the seas," he said. "It's fast, it's easy to operate, it's basically very flexible. It's like the iPod of the seas."

Continue reading [here](#).