

# SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Amphibious Transport Dock the Future USS Travis Manion (LPD 33)



From SECNAV Public Affairs, Jan. 10, 2025

ANNAPOLIS, Md. – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that a future San Antonio-class amphibious transport

dock (LPD 33) will be named USS Travis Manion. Secretary Del Toro made the announcement on January 10, during a ceremony with the Travis Manion Foundation.

The future USS Travis Manion honors Silver Star recipient, 1st Lieutenant Travis Manion and his service. The future LPD 33 will be the first Navy vessel named for Travis Manion.

“The San Antonio-class amphibious ship represents the combined power of the Navy and Marine Corps team and relies on the seamless integration of Sailors and Marines working together,” said Del Toro. “Here, at his alma mater, I am proud to announce that the next San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock, LPD 33, will be named USS Travis Manion, serving as a symbol of courage, bravery, and selfless service for all who follow in her wake.”

Born to a Marine family, Manion graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 2004. After completion of entry-level officer training, he was assigned to 1st Reconnaissance Battalion and deployed to Iraq for his first tour of duty. In 2006, he was assigned to a military transition team advising the Iraqi Army and returned to Iraq in December that year.

On patrol in April 2007, Manion and his fellow Marines were ambushed. With his corpsman wounded, Manion exposed himself to enemy fire to recover the corpsman. Attacking the ambushers, Manion again moved through enemy fire to rescue another wounded Marine. With Iraqi reinforcements blocked, Manion again exposed himself to fire in attempt to find a better fighting position. He was fatally wounded by an enemy sniper. For his actions, he was awarded a Silver Star.

Manion Hall, a student barracks at The Basic School aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, is named in his honor. This is the first ship to be named after 1st Lieutenant Manion.

“The naming of this ship, the USS Travis Manion, is an incredible honor for Travis and our family, and an honor for all of those who stepped up to serve when our country called after September 11, 2001,” said Col. Thomas Manion, USMC, (Ret.) and Chairman Emeritus, Travis Manion Foundation. “Through the words he spoke before his final deployment, ‘If Not Me, Then Who...’, Travis left a legacy of service that lives on through the hundreds of thousands of veterans and families of the fallen across the country who share this ethos. Today, as our men and women continue to serve on the front lines, I know Travis would want this ship to be a tribute to this entire generation of veterans and a reminder to honor and remember their service and sacrifice.”

Along with the ship’s name, Secretary Del Toro announced the sponsors for the USS Travis Manion as sister, Ryan Manion, and nieces Maggie and Honor Borek. They, in their role as sponsors, will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

“I never would have thought when we lost my brother Travis in 2007 that I – alongside Travis’ nieces, Maggie and Honor – would one day serve as sponsors of a ship named after him,” said Ryan Manion, CEO of Travis Manion Foundation. “Travis would be so proud to know that the USS Travis Manion will one day carry Marines – men and women like those he walked beside in the halls of Naval Academy and those he served beside on the battlefield. He’d also be adamant that this honor is not only about him, but about remembering the legacies of all of those who wore the uniform.”

Amphibious transport dock ships are warships that embark, transport and land elements of a landing force for a variety of expeditionary warfare missions. LPDs are used to transport and land Marines, their equipment, and supplies by embarked

Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) or conventional landing craft and amphibious assault vehicles (AAV) augmented by helicopters or vertical take-off and landing aircraft (MV 22). These ships support amphibious assault, special operations, or expeditionary warfare missions and serve as secondary aviation platforms for amphibious operations.

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## **SECNAV DeL Toro Names T-AGOS Explorer-Class and First Two Ships**



From SECNAV Public Affairs, Jan. 10, 2025

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Jan. 10, 2025) – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro named the T-AGOS ocean surveillance ships the Explorer class, the future USNS Don Walsh (T-AGOS 25) and the second ship the future USNS Victor Vescovo (T-AGOS 26).

Del Toro made the announcement during a ship naming ceremony amongst members of Congress, National Geographic Explorers, local civic leaders, educators, scientists and a wide multitude of explorers at the U.S. Naval Academy in Maryland, on Jan. 10.

In 2022, the Navy procured the first of seven larger, faster surveillance ships known as T-AGOS 25. Today, I am proud to announce these vessels will be known as the Explorer-class of ocean surveillance ships, named in honor of those who made discoveries under sea, on land, and in the skies above.

“These ships are essential to maintaining strategic deterrence and operational awareness in the world’s oceans,” said Del Toro. “There is no one better to name for the first ship than Captain Don Walsh, a man whose life and career embody the very essence of exploration, innovation, and dedication to our Navy and our Nation. In naming the second T-AGOS, no one is more deserving than Commander Victor Vescovo, for his explorations in the air, on land and under the seas as well as his many scientific contributions. I am proud to name today, the future USNS Don Walsh (T-AGOS 25) and the future USNS Victor Vescovo (T-AGOS 26).”

Operated by the Military Sea Lift Command, the Explorer-class will play an integral role in the Navy’s anti-submarine warfare operations. T-AGOS ships align with the class’s mission of ocean surveillance and highlights the wide-range of careers in the Navy and Marine Corps, encompassing opportunities to explore land, air, and sea.

“I am honored to stand side-by-side with the Navy to launch the new Explorer Class of ocean surveillance ships” said Jean Case, Chairman of the National Geographic Society. “We could not be more proud that the inaugural vessel in this class honors our beloved National Geographic Explorer, retired US Navy Captain Don Walsh. We are grateful for the long-standing partnership the National Geographic Society and the US Navy have shared embracing the spirit of exploration and commitment to go to the front lines of the unknown. Together, we champion the courage and curiosity that drive humanity to discover, protect, and build a better understanding of our world.”

The future USNS Don Walsh is the first-in-class, named in honor of the late Captain Don Walsh, USN, a renowned explorer and pioneer of deep-sea submergence. Walsh is a 1954 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and served first in the amphibious forces before being selected for submarine duty aboard USS Rasher (SS-269). Later while assigned to the staff of Submarine Flotilla 1, he volunteered for the fledgling deep-dive program and became Navy Submersible Pilot No.1. On Jan. 23, 1960, Walsh, accompanied by scientist Jacques Piccard, successfully piloted bathyscaphe Trieste 35,797 feet down to Challenger-Deep, the deepest known point of the ocean, located southwest of Guam in the Mariana Trench. President Dwight D. Eisenhower subsequently presented Walsh with a Legion of Merit for his pioneering work in "innerspace."

Walsh went on to earn a doctorate in Physical Oceanography while in the service and would ultimately command USS Bashaw (AGSS-241) before retiring as a Captain and going on to be a world-renowned ocean scientist and explorer, with countless awards and accolades. Captain Walsh recently passed away on Nov. 12, 2023, at his home in Oregon. This will be the first Navy vessel named for Walsh.

"My father was many things to many people- explorer, educator, colleague and mentor. But if you asked him what most defined his character, Navy Man, would be top of the list. His contributions to ocean exploration and advocacy spanned 60 plus years and he "wrote the book" on how we talk about, research and protect our planet's circulatory system. His historic dive to Challenger Deep as a Navy Lieutenant was just part of what would become a life of service to the country, the oceans and the global community," said Kelly Walsh, son of the late Don Walsh. "To me he was dad: a brilliant example of living a life full of adventure and curiosity. He shared the world with his family over the years, and in turn, we got to

share him with the world. His legacy will remain- on the waves, over the horizon and just beyond the next great discovery. He will be there in practice and spirit.”

Secretary Del Toro named Mrs. Joan Walsh, spouse of the late Walsh, and his daughter, Liz Walsh, as sponsors of TAGOS-25. Sponsors are selected by the Secretary of the Navy and hold a unique role in maintaining a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

“The Walsh family is profoundly honored that the Navy has chosen to recognize Don Walsh’s lifetime of service and dedication by naming this new TAGOS ship after him. Don sometimes described being a kid in the San Francisco Bay area, daydreaming about where all those ships were going as they sailed to and for over the horizon; that little boy would certainly marvel that one day his legacy would be memorialized in such an enduring way,” said Liz Walsh. “As the ship’s Sponsors, my mother Joan and I are proud to now become a small part of the Navy’s future. We eagerly look forward to developing bonds with the future ship, officers, and crew who will be a key part in protecting America at sea.”

The future USNS Victor Vescovo is named to honor Commander Victor Lance Vescovo, USNR (Ret) (1966 – present). Vescovo, a private equity investor, explorer, and retired naval intelligence officer who currently holds the world record for the deepest dive of a crewed vessel to Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, was the first person to reach Earth’s highest and lowest points. Vescovo has also completed the Explorers’ Grand Slam (Last Degree), in which he climbed the highest mountain on each continent and attained both the North and South Poles. Following his dive to Challenger Deep in his custom-built submersible Limiting Factor, Vescovo completed his own Five Deeps challenge, descending to the lowest points in the Earth’s oceans.

He confirmed the identity of the wreck of Johnston (DD 557), which was sunk following a valiant stand against an overwhelming Japanese force during the Battle off Samar in Leyte Gulf, October 1944, which had been discovered but not confirmed by Vulcan, Inc., in 2019. The following year he discovered the wreck of Samuel B. Roberts (DE 413), lost in that same battle. Samuel B. Roberts is the deepest identified wreck at a depth of 22,621 feet. In 2021, Vescovo won the 2021 Captain Don Walsh Award for Ocean Exploration alongside Patrick Lahey for their 2019 Five Deeps Expedition and history of further dives of scientific and historical interest. There have been no previous Navy vessels named for Vescovo.

“It is a great privilege to honor my friend and colleague in the US Navy and ocean exploration, Captain Don Walsh. Vessels such as this upgraded T-AGOS class are essential to the US Navy’s mission to safeguard the security of the world ocean as well as contribute to its greater understanding,” said Vescovo, namesake of T-AGOS 26. “I am also beyond honored to follow in Captain Walsh’s footsteps both to the bottom of the ocean and in the line of succession of naming these great ships.”

During the naming ceremony, Del Toro also announced the sponsor of the future USNS Victor Vescovo, Victoria Vescovo Webster, the sister of CDR Vescovo.

“The naming of this ship for my brother, as the USNS Victor Vescovo, is a very deep and moving honor to me and our family,” said Vescovo Webster. “The role of this ship will be such a perfect combination of his tremendous achievements as an explorer, and his service as a Naval Intelligence officer. I am truly grateful to be named as the sponsor for this ship, and will endeavor to fulfill that role with the same spirit of service as the ship’s namesake.”

T-AGOS 25 class will be part of the tactical auxiliary general

ocean surveillance (TAGOS) ships fleet operated by the Military Sealift Command (MSC) of the US Navy. The Navy in FY2022 procured the first of a planned class of seven new T-AGOS 25 class ocean surveillance ships. T-AGOS ships support Navy antisubmarine warfare (ASW) operations and gather underwater acoustical data to support the mission of the Integrated Undersea Surveillance System (IUSS) by providing a ship platform capable of theater anti-submarine acoustic passive and active surveillance.

T-AGOS 25 class ships will be 356ft (110m) long and feature a steel small waterplane area twin hull (SWATH) design. The upper section of the ship is supported by two struts that reach down to a set of submerged hulls resembling those of a submarine. The struts feature a slender profile where they meet the waterline, resulting in a minimal waterplane area.

The ships will have an 8,500t displacement and accommodation for 68 personnel. They will support the navy's Integrated Undersea Surveillance System (IUSS) for collecting underwater acoustical data, using Surveillance Towed-Array Sensor System (SURTASS) equipment. The high stability of the SWATH design in adverse weather conditions is useful for SURTASS operations.

The other associated electronic equipment on the ships will help in processing and transmitting the data to shore stations through satellite, for evaluation. The ship will be able to sail at a maximum speed of 20 knots.

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**Navy**

**Names**

**Third**

# Expeditionary Medical Ship USNS Portsmouth (EMS 3)



From SECNAV Public Affairs, Jan. 8, 2025

PORTSMOUTH – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro named the future Bethesda-class expeditionary medical ship (EMS 3) USNS Portsmouth during a ship naming ceremony at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth on Jan. 8.

The decision to select Portsmouth was made to honor the legacy

and commitment of the Navy doctors, nurses, corpsmen and staff of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and the city of Portsmouth, Virginia.

“As Secretary of the Navy, I remain committed to the readiness of our Sailors and Marines and that readiness includes the crucial work to ensure the healthcare and vitality of our people,” said Secretary Del Toro. “I am proud to honor the city of Portsmouth and the Navy’s first operating hospital, Navy Medical Center Portsmouth, by naming the future USNS Portsmouth (EMS 3).”

The naming selection of the future USNS Portsmouth (EMS 3) follows the tradition of naming expeditionary medical ships after prominent military hospitals. Secretary Del Toro previously named USNS Bethesda (EMS 1) and USNS Balboa (EMS 2).

EMS 3 will be the fifth Navy vessel named Portsmouth. The four previous vessels were a full-rigged ship (1798–1801), a sloop-of-war (1844–1915), a light cruiser (1945–1970), and a nuclear-powered submarine (1983–2005).

Rear Adm. Darin Via, the U.S. Navy Surgeon General and chief, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, who spent the majority of his professional military and medical life at the medical center, reaffirmed the Navy’s commitment to military readiness and healthcare support.

“USNS Portsmouth, a symbol of our Navy’s progress, also carries the weight of our history. It represents a significant advancement in our Navy’s warfighting capability and will provide essential medical support across the maritime environment,” said Via. “Together with USNS Bethesda and USNS Balboa, USNS Portsmouth will deliver agile and responsive medical care, advanced trauma management, and support to naval operations and humanitarian and disaster relief missions.”

Representing the city of Portsmouth, Mayor and Navy Veteran Shannon Glover spoke about the honor and meaning behind the naming of the Navy's newest expeditionary medical ship.

"Today, we stand united in pride and gratitude as we honor the incredible contributions of the dedicated medical professionals at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. For generations, they have provided compassionate care and unwavering commitment to our military families, veterans, and the Portsmouth community," said Shannon Glover, Mayor of Portsmouth. "The USNS Portsmouth represents more than just a ship – it is a testament to the resilience, care, and service that define the heart of Portsmouth. And this is an appropriate and fitting tribute to the selfless men and women who serve at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth."

Located along the banks of the Elizabeth River in Virginia, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is a nationally acclaimed, state-of-the-art Defense Health Agency military treatment facility (MTF), where 5,000 medical professionals provide quality healthcare to warfighters, veterans, and their families in the Hampton Roads area.

Originally established in 1830 as the Navy's first and oldest continuously operating hospital, today it is home to Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Portsmouth, which provides a skilled and combat-ready medical force to support warfighting requirements and enables the Department's highly skilled personnel to maintain mission critical proficiencies through valuable training in a military treatment facility. Navy medical personnel lead pioneering research and teaching programs to prepare new doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, and hospital corpsmen for combat operations and public health crises.

In addition to the medical center, the city of Portsmouth,

Virginia, is home to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, the Navy's oldest shipyard (est. 1767) and one of its key facilities for overhauling and repairing its largest ships.

For every Navy ship named, a sponsor is chosen to advocate for both the ship and crew. Sponsors participate in key milestones in the life of their ship and form lifelong relationships that contribute to the well-being of the ship and her crew members. For the future USNS Portsmouth, Mrs. Terri Ann Via, spouse of Rear Adm. Via, Surgeon General of the Navy, was hand-selected for this important role.

"Portsmouth is more than just a name to me; it has been the cornerstone of my family's life in the Navy. Portsmouth has been our home for as long as I can remember," said Mrs. Via. "As the sponsor of the Portsmouth, I am committed to upholding the values of service, courage, and compassion that define both the Navy and Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. Having had the honor and opportunity to stand alongside my husband throughout his Navy career and now as the Surgeon General of the Navy, I look forward to sharing in the adventures, triumphs, and challenges that lie ahead for this ship and crew. May this ship always be a source of pride for our nation, a symbol of our strength and resolve, and a living tribute to the heroes of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth."

Bethesda-class expeditionary medical ships are designed as a dedicated medical ship that optimizes hospital-level medical care in support of distributed maritime operations (DMO). EMS will feature a shallow draft enabling greater reach and allowing direct access to shallow austere ports, while also providing a flight deck that accommodates military helicopters. This design provides a full range of medical capabilities including triage/critical care, three operating rooms, medical laboratory, radiological capability, blood bank, dental, mental health, OB/GYN and primary care, rapid stabilization and follow-on evacuation of multiple casualties

and combat search and rescue including recovery at sea.

The primary mission of the EMS as a high-speed forward-deployed medical ship is to provide rapid responsive sea-based and near-shore hospital level critical care, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation operations and special operations. The EMS is designed to respond and provide care at a more rapid pace than their predecessors, USNS Mercy and USNS Comfort, sailing at speeds of at least 30 knots with a range of 5,500 nautical miles at 24 knots.

Navy Medicine – represented by more than 44,000 highly-trained military and civilian health care professionals – provides enduring expeditionary medical support to the warfighter on, below, and above the sea, and ashore.

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## **USS Cole Returns from Deployment to 5th and 6th Fleets**



NORFOLK, Va. (December 23, 2024) Chief Gunner's Mate Tyler Kaltenberg, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67), greets family on the pier after returning from deployment. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Nathan T. Beard)

From U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Dec. 23 2024

NORFOLK, Va. - The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG 67) returned to Naval Station Norfolk, Dec. 23, after being deployed for more than seven months to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe – Africa and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command areas of operation.

Cole deployed for 224 days to the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Arabian Gulf, providing deterrence and defense to U.S. Allies and partners.

The ship served as an air defense unit for strike group forces in the Red Sea and worked closely with Allies and partners during a variety of missions, contributing to stability in the region.

“I am proud of the determined warriors of Cole for continuing this ship’s legacy of outstanding service during a challenging combat deployment,” said Cmdr. Matt Faulkenberry, Commanding Officer of USS Cole. “Cole demonstrated professionalism and lethality across all domains.”

Cole supported ballistic missile operations in the Levant region, firing interceptors alongside USS Bulkeley on Oct. 1. Additionally, Cole was engaged in combat operations in the Red Sea, earning a star on the ship’s Combat Action Ribbon.

U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse comprises 20 countries and includes three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

NAVEUR-NAVAF, headquartered in Naples, Italy, operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility. U.S. Sixth Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

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## **USS Bulkeley returns home after 5-and-a-half-month**

# patrol



NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain (Dec. 20, 2024) The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) returned to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, Dec. 20, 2024, after a five-and-a-half-month patrol in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. (U.S. Navy photo by IC2 Marlin Dominguez)  
From U.S. 6th Fleet, Dec. 20, 2024

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) returned home Friday after a five and a half month patrol in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations.

Since arriving in Rota and joining the forward deployed Naval Forces Europe (FDFE) forces in August 2022, Bulkeley's crew has completed their third patrol working alongside Allies and partners to ensure security and stability throughout European and African waters.

The 78th Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, who was the

ship's first commanding officer, welcomed the ship home.

"You have all operated with incredible professionalism and lethality in a situation that is not easy to navigate," said Secretary Del Toro "Thank you all for your selfless service to this Nation and for your sacrifices while on patrol."

This patrol saw significant operational milestones, including engaging multiple Iranian ballistic missiles in defense of Israel; assisting in the rescue of 65 people stranded adrift-at-sea; operating with NATO allies, leadership engagements and bilateral operations with the Republic of Cyprus; Carrier Strike Group Operations, and numerous gunshot qualifications, underway replenishments, flight quarters, and small boat operations.

"The crew demonstrated an incredible amount of proficiency, teamwork, and resiliency on this highly successful patrol," said Cmdr. Art Trejo, current commanding officer of Bulkeley. "I could not be more proud of their achievements, positive attitude, and high morale."

After 168 days away from home and over 34,000 miles traveled, the ship returned to friends and family just in time for the holidays.

Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with Allied and interagency partners to advance U.S. national interests, security and stability in Europe and Africa.

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# President Carter's Funeral Procession in Washington Reflects Navy Roots



Carter's horse-drawn caisson on its way to the U.S. Capitol. *Photo credit: Brett Davis*

WASHINGTON – President James Earl “Jimmy” Carter Jr.’s final procession through Washington started Jan. 7 at the U.S. Navy Memorial, where his casket was loaded onto a horse-drawn caisson for transportation to the Capitol where he is lying in state.

The 39<sup>th</sup> president of the United States had requested the transfer be made at the Navy Memorial as he planned his own funeral. He will lie in state until Thursday, when the state funeral will be held at the Washington National Cathedral.

Carter, who passed away in December at age 100, was the fifth

consecutive president with prior Navy service, according to the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command. He received an appointment to the academy and became a member of the class of 1947, although he completed an accelerated wartime program and graduated in 1946, commissioning as an ensign.

He served first on the USS Wyoming, a battleship that had been converted to a floating laboratory for testing new electronics and gunnery equipment, according to the command.

After two years of surface ship duty, Carter applied for submarine duty and was assigned to the USS Pomfret and later the USS K-1, and in 1952 joined the new program to create nuclear-powered submarines. According to the Naval History and Heritage Command, Carter served with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission's Naval Reactors Branch, aiding in the design and development of nuclear propulsion for Navy ships and submarines.

Carter was preparing to become the engineering officer for the nuclear powerplant for the USS Seawolf (SSN 575), one of the first nuclear-powered subs, and helped set up training for the enlisted Sailors who would serve on the boat.

However, his father, James Earl Carter, passed away, and Carter resigned from the Navy to return to Georgia to manage the family peanut farm and, eventually, to launch his political career.



A Navy honor guard marched in the procession for Carter's lying in state at the Capitol. *Photo credit: Brett Davis*  
His naval roots were never forgotten, and the Seawolf-class USS Jimmy Carter (SSN 23) is named for him, as is an academic hall at the U.S. Naval Academy.

"His legacy and beliefs are imbued in the Sailors that set sail aboard the USS Jimmy Carter and walk the halls of the newly renamed Carter Hall at the United States Naval Academy," Admiral Lisa Franchetti, the chief of naval operations, said in a statement upon Carter's death.

"President Carter's life of service will continue to be an example for us and help us navigate our course. His work is finished, but the U.S. Navy's work continues. President Carter, we have the watch."

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# First MQ-25 Unmanned Air Warfare Center Installed Aboard Bush



From Naval Air Systems Command, Dec. 23, 2024

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The Navy recently installed the world's first Unmanned Air Warfare Center (UAWC) aboard USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), where Air Vehicle Pilots (AVPs) will control future MQ-25 Stingray airborne operations.

This major installation was a multi-year effort coordinated across multiple ship availability periods and the ship's deployment schedule.

The CVN-based control room, known as the UAWC, includes software and hardware systems that make up the first fully operational and integrated Unmanned Carrier Aviation Mission Control System (UMCS) MD-5E Ground Control Station (GCS). UMCS is the system-of-systems required for the MQ-25 air vehicle command and control and is critical to the unmanned aircraft

refueler's operations.

"CVN-77's UAWC lays the foundation for how the U.S. Navy will operate and control unmanned aircraft, and perhaps other unmanned vehicles, with UMCS," said Unmanned Carrier Aviation Program Office Manager Capt. Daniel Fucito. "These systems will initially support the MQ-25 but also future unmanned systems, such as Collaborative Combat Aircraft, that comprise the Air Wing of the Future."

The GCS, developed by the Navy, includes Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works Multi Domain Combat System (MDCX), the power behind the GCS, along with additional supporting equipment and hardware. The hardware installed in the racks and cockpits is the baseline for the production systems currently being fabricated for installation on CVNs 70, 71 and 76 beginning in fiscal year 2025.

"The support we received from all the organizations was incredible," said Gordon Carlon, acting UMCS CVN installation lead. "Our program is accomplishing things on a much faster timeline than any other normal startup program."

The program office's UMCS team worked with multiple program offices, systems commands and shipyards to integrate the UAWC into existing networks and the carrier architecture. The Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Webster Outlying Field Alteration Installation Team, AirWorks and Lockheed Martin assisted with the coordination and physical installation of the UAWC while Naval Sea Systems Command, Norfolk Naval Shipyard and CVN-77 organized schedules, equipment and logistics.

Early next year, CVN-77 will lead the first at-sea testing of the UAWC's operational networks, building on initial network testing with a simulated GCS that took place in January aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

"This will be the first time the AVPs from Unmanned Carrier-

Launched Multi-Role Squadron (VUQ) 10 will operate the MD-5 from an aircraft carrier. They will use the actual GCS hardware and software aboard CVN-77 to communicate with a simulated air vehicle in the lab in Pax River," said Joe Nedeau, program office UMCS lead.

The program office is the lead systems integrator for MQ-25, working closely with its two prime industry partners, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, to integrate seamlessly the MQ-25 into carrier operations, including deck handling, taxiing and launch and recovery. When operational, MQ-25 will provide an aerial refueling capability to extend the range and flexibility of the carrier air wing.

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## **SECNAV Names Navy's DDG 146 After MoH Recipient, Former U.S. Navy Seal, U.S. Senator and Nebraska Governor Robert Kerrey**



From SECNAV Public Affairs, Jan. 4, 2025

WASHINGTON – Today, Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Carlos Del Toro named the Navy’s newest Arleigh Burke-class Guided Missile Destroyer, the future USS Robert Kerrey (DDG 146).

DDG 146 honors former U.S. Senator, Nebraska Governor, and naval officer Joseph Robert Kerrey, who received the Medal of Honor for heroism displayed during the Vietnam War. This will be the first Navy vessel named after Kerrey.

“One of the great privileges I have as Secretary of the Navy is to name ships, and it is my honor to name the future USS

Robert Kerrey (DDG 146)," said Del Toro. "This will be the first Navy vessel named in his honor, and it is most appropriate we do so, for his actions in Vietnam and his continued service to this country well beyond his Naval service."

On Jan 3, Del Toro and Kerrey met in NYC to share the news of the naming of the destroyer. Del Toro named DDG 145 at a press conference at the Intrepid Museum prior to the meeting with Kerrey.

"My sincere thanks to President Biden, Secretary of the Navy Del Toro, and the United States Navy that gave me the opportunity to serve my country for three of the best years of my life," said Senator Kerrey. "I am very grateful for this recognition."

Born in Lincoln, NE in 1943 and entering the Navy in 1966, Kerrey completed Officer Candidate School and Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training. He deployed to the Republic of Vietnam as a platoon officer with Delta Platoon, SEAL Team 1 in 1969. On 14 March 1969, he led his team on a mission to capture important Viet Cong political leaders who had set up a base of operations on an island in the bay of Nha Trang. The platoon scaled a 350-foot cliff and were descending from a ledge overlooking the enemy camp when a grenade exploded at Kerrey's feet, severely injuring his right leg and propelling him backward onto jagged rocks. Immobilized by his multiple wounds, Kerrey nonetheless continued directing his team in securing the enemy camp and finding an extraction site for helicopter evacuation. Kerrey ultimately would lose his lower leg, but his steadfast courage and leadership under fire earned the gratitude of his Nation.

He received the Medal of Honor in 1970, the first Navy SEAL to be so honored. He subsequently served as the 35th Governor of Nebraska (1983-1987) and as a U.S. Senator from Nebraska (1989-2001), as well as a member of the 9/11 Commission.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, built around the Aegis Combat System, are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet providing protection to America around the globe.

They incorporate stealth techniques, allowing these highly capable, multi-mission ships to conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence to national security, providing a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air, surface and subsurface domains. These elements of sea power enable the Navy to defend American prosperity and prevent future conflict abroad.

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## **USS Montana Arrives to New Homeport of Pearl Harbor**



From Lt. J. G. Paul Fletcher, Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs, Dec. 27, 2024

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Montana (SSN 794) arrived at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam following a change of homeport from Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, Dec. 23, 2024.

Montana's arrival marks the ninth Virginia-class fast-attack submarine homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, and the submarine will be assigned to Submarine Squadron 1.

"We're all very excited to be here in Pearl Harbor and we appreciate the great welcome," said Cmdr. John Gilligan, commanding officer of USS Montana. "This crew did extraordinary work in Virginia to get to this significant milestone. It was an honor to go to sea with them. Now that we're here in the Pacific, we're ready and eager to get out there doing the work of the Navy."

Capt. Aaron Peterson, commander, Submarine Squadron 1, met the Montana pier side upon arrival to welcome the crew to their new home. "On behalf of the Pacific Submarine Force ohana, I enthusiastically welcome the officers and crew of the good ship Montana, with the warmth, culture, and spirit unique to the state of Hawaii," said Peterson. "I look forward to getting Montana's crew trained, certified, and out to sea to defend our nation, and our allies and partners from aggression."

Before completing its homeport shift from the east coast, Montana completed a post-shakedown availability at Newport News Shipbuilding and was re-delivered to the Navy in November 2024. "Through a great effort by the crew, working with our industry partners, we've completed our availability and rejoined the Fleet. We're ready to execute any task we're called upon to complete throughout the Indo-Pacific," said Gilligan. "The crew has been looking forward to executing this

change of homeport, reuniting with our families, and bringing the Montana community all together. We're thrilled to join the team here in Hawaii and stand ready to defend our nation."

Commissioned on June 25, 2022, at Naval Station Norfolk, Montana is the second warship to be named after the state, following the armored cruiser USS Montana (ACR 13). The boat is more than 377 feet long and can displace nearly 7,800 tons. Montana has a crew of approximately 140 Sailors and is capable of supporting various missions, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike warfare, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet Submarine Force provides strategic deterrence, anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, precision land strike, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and early warning, and special warfare capabilities around the globe.

For more information, contact [csp\\_pao@us.navy.mil](mailto:csp_pao@us.navy.mil) or visit our website at <https://www.csp.navy.mil/>.

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## **PNSY Delivers Texas as Battle-Ready Asset to the Fleet**



By Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Congressional and Public Affairs Office, Dec. 19, 2024

KITTERY, Maine (Dec. 17, 2024)-USS Texas (SSN 775) successfully completed sea trials off the coast of New England this week, marking the successful conclusion of its Depot Modernization Period (DMP) at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNSY).

The Texas Project Team, encompassing various trade workers, engineers, and material support personnel at PNSY, worked alongside the boat's crew to get Texas returned to the fleet battle-ready. Getting advanced systems and capabilities into the hands of warfighters at the tip of the spear is the ultimate goal, and PNSY's highly skilled workforce enabled Texas to get back in the fight.

PNSY's success in delivering Texas demonstrates how the nation's public shipyards are looking beyond traditional workflows to meet the Chief of Naval Operations' objective of putting more ready players – combat-ready platforms – on the field. "We used an aggressive strategy to have a 'get real' date and a 'get better' date to return this vital asset back to the fleet," said Shipyard Commander Capt. Michael Oberdorf. "By moving 'all ahead flank,' with urgency and purpose, we were able to pull Texas' delivery to the left from our agreed 'get real' date."

Submarine Squadron Two, located at the shipyard, supported Team Texas and all they achieved while in a maintenance environment. "Texas represents a shining example of resilience and readiness, returning to the fight tougher and stronger than ever," said Commodore, Submarine Squadron Two Capt. Jason Deichler. "The team faced every challenge with determination and delivered outstanding results, ensuring the submarine force remains the world's most lethal apex predator. Their exceptional teamwork, innovative maintenance practices, and tireless commitment to mission success set a new standard for

excellence.”

“Serving as Commanding Officer of Texas is an honor and a privilege. I have had the opportunity to lead and mentor the finest Sailors in the Navy [and] to work with talented members of the Texas project team,” said Commanding Officer of Texas Cmdr. Chad Ingle. “Kevin Belisle, Texas project superintendent, led an outstanding team at our Navy’s best shipyard. I am incredibly proud of what the officers and crew of Texas have accomplished. The depot modernization period has been challenging for the crew, and the last six months of testing have been extremely tough. The reward for the crew’s hard work is returning a fully repaired and modernized battle-ready submarine to the fleet,” said Ingle.

Attack submarines are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security, and deterrence. They are designed to excel in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare. Attack submarines project power ashore with special operation forces and tomahawk cruise missiles in the prevention or preparation of regional crises.

A DMP is a maintenance and modernization period in which a Navy submarine is placed in dry dock and undergoes extensive repair and modernization. During a DMP, a submarine receives major overhauls, repairs, structural inspections, and mechanical and electrical system replacements.

As America’s leader for attack submarine maintenance and modernization, PNSY is enhancing critical warfighting capabilities by safely delivering first-time quality work enabling our undersea warfighters to be battle-ready when called upon.