Construction Starts on Fleet Oiler Robert F. Kennedy



The Belgian navy Karel Doorman-class frigate Leopold I (F930), left, and the Portuguese navy frigate NRP Francisco de Almeida (F334), right, conduct a replenishment-at-sea with the Henry J. Kaiser-class underway replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201), center. Construction has now begun on the USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208). *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Cameron Stoner*

SAN DIEGO – Construction on the USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208) began at the General Dynamics – National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (GD-NASSCO) shipyard, May 21, the Navy's Program Executive Office – Ships said in a release.

T-AO 208 will be operated by the Navy's Military Sealift Command and is the first ship named after the Navy veteran, former U.S. Attorney General and U.S. senator from New York.

"USNS Robert F. Kennedy will provide significant contributions to the fleet, serving as the primary fuel pipeline to refuel ships at sea. The building of the John Lewis-class ships marks an important milestone in enhancing our Navy's fleet capabilities and providing critical support to our Sailors," said John Lighthammer, Support Ships, Boats and Craft acting program manager, Program Executive Office, Ships.

The ships are based on commercial design standards and will recapitalize the current T-AO 187 Class Fleet Replenishment Oilers to provide underway replenishment of fuel to U.S. Navy ships and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. These ships are part of the Navy's Combat Logistics Force and will become the backbone of the fuel delivery system.

GD-NASSCO is also currently in production on USNS John Lewis

(T-AO 205) USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206). USNS Lucy Stone (T-AO 209) and USNS Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210) are under contract.