

Keel Laid for Future USS John E. Kilmer



BATH, Maine – The keel for the future USS John E. Kilmer (DDG 134) was laid during a ceremony Sept. 10 at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works.

A keel laying ceremony represents the joining together of the ship's first major modular components at land level. During the ceremony, the keel is authenticated when a welder etches the initials of the ship's sponsor into the keel plate.

Mr. Neil W. T. Hogg, Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy for Management, served as guest speaker at the event.

"We honor John Kilmer by building a Navy worthy of his legacy," said Hogg. "The ship that carries his name will bring that same fighting spirit to the Fleet, built by American workers for the Sailors who will take her to sea."

Additional speakers included Rear Adm. Matthew Case, Acting U.S. Navy Surgeon General and Acting Chief of the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery; Capt. Jay Young, Arleigh Burke-class destroyer shipbuilding program manager, PAE Maritime, and Charles F. Krugh, president of General Dynamics Bath Iron Works.

The ship's sponsor is Mrs. Linda Gilday, a former Navy civilian engineer and program manager, a staunch advocate for Navy and Marine Corps families, and wife of Adm. Michael M. Gilday, the 32nd Chief of Naval Operations.

The ship is named for Hospital Corpsman John Edward Kilmer, who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for actions during the Korean War. On Aug. 13, 1952, Kilmer braved heavy fire to provide critical medical aid to Marines of Company H, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force Pacific. He was mortally wounded during the Battle of Bunker Hill while shielding a Marine from enemy fire. Kilmer was 21 years old.

"The future USS John E. Kilmer will carry on Corpsman John Kilmer's legacy of courage, service and dedication to our country," said Young. "DDG 134 will be a welcome addition to the fleet, providing our Navy warfighters with an undeniable strategic advantage."

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet, providing protection to America around the globe. These highly capable, multi-mission ships conduct various operations from peacetime presence to national security and provide 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.

The keel laying ceremony for DDG 134 underscores the Navy's commitment to building America's Fleet of the Future. For 250

years, American naval power has projected strength globally, operating forward 24/7, 365 days a year. This operational tempo demands continuous capability, and the Fleet of the Future is our answer.

The Portfolio Acquisition Executive (PAE) for Maritime is the single accountable organization for delivering surface ships for the U.S. Navy. This new centralized organizational construct will empower leaders with broader scope and greater authority to accelerate delivery of combat capability and ensure acquisition speed and discipline are driven by what the warfighter needs-when they need it.

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