Keel Laid for Future USS William Charette



During a keel laying ceremony for the future USS William Charente on Aug. 29, a welder from General Dynamic Bath Iron Works etches the initials of the keel honorees into the keel plate. The initials are of the ship namesake's children, Margaret Ann Charette Henderson, Kati Charette Donovan, Laura Charette Bennett, Michael R. Charette, and the late William A. Charette. The namesake's daughters are the ship's co-sponsors. (U.S. Navy photo)

By Team Ships Strategic Operations, Aug. 29, 2024

Bath, Maine – The keel for the future USS William Charette (DDG 130), an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, was laid during a ceremony on Aug. 29 at General Dynamic Bath Iron Works (BIW).

The ship is named in honor of Master Chief Hospital Corpsman William R. Charette, a veteran who was awarded the Medal of

Honor for his heroic acts during the Korean War, while assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines,1st Marine Division in Panmunjom Corridor (DMZ), Korea.

Rear Adm. Darin K. Via, Surgeon General of the Navy and Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), presided over the ceremony on behalf of the Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro.

“All of us in Navy Medicine are immensely proud to have a warship named after one of our own. We understand that it is one of the greatest honors you can receive in the Navy. The future USS William Charette will not only be a symbol of American strength but also a testament to the courage and dedication of Navy corpsmen,” said Rear Adm. Darin Via. “To have a ship named after a Navy corpsman is to hold to the maxim of ‘Corpsman Up!’ and embodies the ethos of courage, fidelity, and service before self.”

A keel laying ceremony represents the joining together of the ship’s modular components at the land level. During the ceremony, the keel is authenticated when the welder etches the initials of the keel honorees into the keel plate. The authentication was confirmed by Via, on behalf of the namesake’s children, Margaret Ann Charette Henderson, Kati Charette Donovan, Laura Charette Bennett, Michael R. Charette, and the late William A. Charette. The namesake’s daughters are the ship’s co-sponsors. BUMED Force Master Chief PatrickPaul (PaP) Mangaran, director of the Hospital Corps and leader of the Navy Medicine’s enlisted force, also read a statement on behalf of the Charette family.

“The future USS William Charette will be a welcomed addition to the fleet and another player on the field to provide the Navy with the most advanced warfighting capability” said Capt. Seth Miller, DDG 51 Class program manager, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. “This ship honors the legacy of the late William Charette and his heroism during the Korean War. We are

honored to have his daughters as sponsors and for the entire family to celebrate this significant milestone.”

A DDG 51 Flight III destroyer features the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar and incorporates upgrades to the electrical power and cooling capacity plus additional associated changes to provide greatly enhanced warfighting capability to the fleet. The future destroyers Harvey C. Barnum Jr. (DDG 124), Louis H. Wilson Jr. (DDG 126), Patrick Gallagher (DDG 127), Quentin Walsh (DDG 132), John E. Kilmer (DDG 134), and Richard G. Lugar (DDG 136) are also under construction at BIW.

PEO Ships, one of the Department of Defense’s largest acquisition organizations, is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships and craft, auxiliary ships, special mission ships, sealift ships and support ships.