

Navy to Christen and Launch Fleet Replenishment Oiler USNS Robert F. Kennedy



OCT. 27, 2023

The Navy will christen and launch the USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208) as the newest John Lewis-class fleet replenishment oiler during an 8:00 a.m. PDT ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 28, in San Diego.

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker Emerita, U.S. House of Representatives, will deliver the christening ceremony's principal address. Remarks will also be provided by the Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy, Rear Admiral Brendan McLane, Special Assistant to Commander, U.S. Third Fleet, Mr. Steven Cade, Executive Director, Military Sealift

Command, and Mr. Dave Carver, President, General Dynamics NASSCO. The ship's sponsor is the Honorable Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, eldest daughter of Robert F. Kennedy.

T-AO 208 is the 4th John Lewis-class fleet replenishment oiler and will be operated by the Navy's Military Sealift Command. She is the first naval auxiliary ship to bear the name of USNS Robert F. Kennedy, honoring the late U.S. Navy veteran, Robert F. Kennedy. The selection of Robert F. Kennedy as the ship's namesake, honors the memory of Robert F. Kennedy, the younger brother of John F. Kennedy, who became the 35th President of the United States in 1961. Robert F. Kennedy, served in the U.S. Navy Reserve from 1944-1946. He later served as Attorney General of the United States before resigning in 1964 to become a candidate for the U.S. Senate. In 1965, he was elected to the Senate and served as a Democrat from New York until his death in 1968.

The John Lewis-class 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 and allied partner ships at sea. These ships are part of the Navy's Combat Logistics Force.

In June 2016, the Navy awarded a \$3.2 billion contract to General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego for the design and construction of the first six ships of the Future Fleet Replenishment Ship, the John Lewis-class. The first of class, USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), delivered in July 2022 and is currently in her Post-Shakedown Availability. USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206) delivered in July 2023 and is conducting some maintenance work in preparation for transit to the east coast. T-AO 207-210 are under construction at General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego and T-AO 211-213 are under contract. The Navy plans to procure 20 ships of the John Lewis class.

The ceremony will be live streamed on [YouTube](#). The link becomes active approximately ten minutes prior to the event at

7:50 a.m. PDT.

Media may direct queries to the Navy Office of Information at (703) 697-5342. More information on the fleet replenishment oiler program can be found at: <https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Fact-Files/Display-FactFiles/Article/2222909/fleet-replenishment-oilers-t-ao/>.