Navy to Christen Expeditionary Fast Transport Newport



An illustration of the future USNS Newport. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist Raymond Diaz

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy will christen its newest expeditionary fast transport (EPF), the future USNS Newport, during a 10 a.m. CST ceremony on Nov. 9 at the Austal USA shipyard in Mobile, Alabama, the Defense Department said.

The principal speaker will be Rear Adm. Shoshana Chatfield, president of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Charlotte Marshall, a Newport native, will serve as the ship's sponsor. In a time-honored Navy tradition, she will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

"This ship honors the city of Newport, Rhode Island, and serves as a reminder of the contributions the community has and continues to make to our Navy," Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said.

"Newport is a Navy town where many officers begin their careers and then return later for strategic training. It is right that a fourth ship will bear the name Newport to continue our long relationship and provide our commanders high-speed sealift mobility and agility in the fight to defend our nation."

The first Newport (Gunboat No. 12) was commissioned on Oct. 5, 1897. During the Spanish-American War, the gunboat received credit for assisting in the capture of nine Spanish vessels. The ship was decommissioned in 1898 but recommissioned in 1900

to serve as a training ship at the U.S. Naval Academy and at the Naval Training Station at Newport until decommissioning in Boston in 1902.

The second Newport was commissioned on Sept. 8, 1944, decommissioned in September 1945 and loaned to the former Soviet Union under lend-lease and returned to U.S. custody at Yokosuka, Japan, in November 1949. Recommissioned in July 1950, Newport patrolled off Inchon, Korea, screening during the landings. Decommissioned at Yokosuka in April 1952, it was loaned to Japan in 1953 and commissioned as Kaede. She was then reclassified PF 293 and transferred to the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force outright in August 1962.

The third Newport was commissioned on June 7, 1969. Assigned to the Amphibious Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Newport alternated amphibious training operations along the East Coast of the United States with extended deployments to the Caribbean and Mediterranean. Newport was decommissioned in October 1992 and transferred to the government of Mexico in 2001.

EPF class ships are designed to transport 600 short tons of military cargo 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots. The ship can operate in shallow-draft ports and waterways, interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities and on/off-loading a combat-loaded Abrams main battle tank (M1A2).

The EPF includes a flight deck for helicopter operations and an off-load ramp that will allow vehicles to quickly drive off the ship. EPF’s shallow draft (less than 15 feet) further enhances littoral operations and port access.