

Navy to Commission Guided-Missile Destroyer Delbert D. Black



The Navy's newest guided-missile destroyer, the future USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119), arrives at Port Canaveral. The Navy will commission DDG 119, the first ship in naval history to be named Delbert D. Black, Sept. 26, 2020 in Port Canaveral. U.S. Navy / Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Sarah Villegas

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Navy will commission the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) during a 10 a.m. EDT ceremony on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020, in Port Canaveral, Florida, the Defense Department said in a Sept. 25 release.

Due to public health and safety concerns related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the commissioning is a private event, rather than the traditional public commissioning ceremony.

The ceremony's principal speaker is Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russel L. Smith.

"Commissioning a ship after the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy is an honor without equal. The Navy has always been and will always be indelibly influenced by the leadership of our senior enlisted sailors epitomized by Delbert Black," said Secretary of the Navy Kenneth J. Braithwaite. "They are the ones who teach both our junior enlisted as well as our junior officers what it means to lead. They lay the keel by which the Navy operates and as such this ship named for one of the most influential master chiefs ever to wear three stars will be a visible reminder of their importance to our Navy. As MCPON, Master Chief Black fought

for increased sea-pay, family support programs, expanded uniform guidance and a host of other issues that improved the quality of life of not only junior enlisted, but all sailors and officers. By making life better for sailors, he made our Navy stronger for us all. This ship will undoubtedly continue on his great legacy of service above self."

USS Delbert D. Black is named for the first Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, the highest possible enlisted rank and the enlisted representative to the Chief of Naval Operations. Established by the Navy in 1967, Black oversaw the establishment of the senior enlisted advisor position, which eventually became known as Command Master Chief. Black was the first Navy enlisted man to receive the Distinguished Service Medal. Upon retirement from active duty, Black continued his involvement with the Navy through retired and active duty organizations. He still serves as an enduring example for the Chief's Mess, with his service, character and performance demonstrating the highest ideals of a Navy chief petty officer in the world's finest Navy.

Mrs. Ima Black, MCPON Delbert D. Black's widow and a former Sailor, will serve as the ship's sponsor. Mrs. Black served during World War II in the Navy WAVES – Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. During the time-honored ceremony, Mrs. Black will give the first order to "man our ship and bring her to life."

Built by Huntington Ingalls Industries in Pascagoula, Mississippi, Delbert D. Black is the 68th Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer to be delivered to the Navy and the first to bear his name. Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet. These highly capable, multi-mission ships conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence to national security.

Following commissioning, USS Delbert D. Black will be homeported in Mayport, Florida, with sister ships USS

The Sullivans (DDG 68), USS Lassen (DDG 82), USS Farragut (DDG 99), USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) and USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117).

The event will be livestreamed to offer maximum viewing by the general public at <https://allhands.navy.mil/Live-Stream>.