SECNAV Names Future Destroyer, Attack Submarine

Secretary of the Navy, Kenneth J. Braithwaite, shown here at the announcement ceremony of the new National Museum of the United States Navy, has announced the names of a future guided-missile destroyer and Virginia-class submarine. U.S. Navy / Petty Officer 3rd Class Randy L. Adams

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Kenneth J. Braithwaite announced Oct. 13 that a future guided-missile destroyer and Virginia-class attack submarine will be named USS John F. Lehman (DDG 137) and USS Barb (SSN 804), respectively.

The future USS John F. Lehman will honor the 65th Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman who served under President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1987, and the future USS Barb will carry the name of two storied submarines, (SS 220) and (SSN 596).

“Our future success depends on leveraging the stories of those who sailed into harm’s way, to teach and inspire the service of those who now wear the uniform,” said Braithwaite. “Those two namesakes carry a great legacy that will be continued when these warships take to the fleet.”

Lehman, a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, native, spent three years in the Air Force Reserves before accepting a commission of Ensign in the Naval Reserve in January 1968, where he advanced to the rank of captain. During his tenure as SECNAV, Lehman advocated for a 600-ship Navy that would provide the United States with “unquestioned naval superiority.” His bold Maritime Strategy to surge U.S. naval power into the Soviet maritime domain sent a strong signal to the Soviet Union that President Reagan’s “peace through strength” motto was no empty phrase, thus hastening the end of the Cold War. He also paved a path to engagement with China, leading to the first U.S.

ships entering Chinese waters in more than 30 years.

The first *USS Barb*, a *Gato*-class submarine (SS 220), was commissioned in 1942 and joined Submarine Squadron 50 in the Atlantic as part of Operation *Torch* in World War II. In 1943, the vessel was redeployed to the Pacific Fleet. There, conducting missions under Commander Eugene "Lucky" Fluckey, she would earn four Presidential Citations, a Navy Unit Commendation, and eight battle stars for her outstanding World War II service. She was decommissioned in 1954.

The second *USS Barb*, a *Permit*-class nuclear submarine (SSN 596), was commissioned in 1963. Based at Pearl Harbor, she was the designated flagship for the Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and took part in special operations in Vietnamese waters in 1971 as part of Task Group 77.9. The vessel served as a test platform for the Tomahawk cruise missile in 1977 and 1978. She was decommissioned in 1989.

"These naval combatants, and many others named after historic leaders and battle-tested namesakes are one of the key components of our great Naval culture and heritage," said Braithwaite. "The other are the men and women who volunteer to serve this great nation above self, adding to the fabric of honor, courage and commitment which guides our great Navy each and every day."