SECNAV Names Future Vessels while aboard Historic Navy Ship



A graphic illustration of the future Virginia-class attack submarine USS Silversides (SSN 807). U.S. Navy

BOSTON – Secretary of the Navy Kenneth J. Braithwaite announced Jan. 15 that the Navy will name three future vessels after ships steeped in naval history and two others after a after a Medal of Honor recipient and a Native American tribe.

Braithwaite detailed the announcement Jan. 8 during a visit to one of the Navy's first heavy frigates and oldest commissioned ship afloat – USS Constitution.

"The decks and lines of this proud ship speak to our storied

past, and the Sailors who operate her reveal the strength of our future," said Braithwaite. "We must always look to our wake to help chart our future course. Together, these future ships will strengthen our Navy and carry on our sacred mission to secure the sea lanes, stand by our allies, and protect our nation against all adversaries."

The future ships will bear the names and hull numbers: USS Chesapeake (FFG 64); USS Silversides (SSN 807); USS Pittsburgh (LPD 31); USNS Lenni Lenape (T-ATS 9); and USS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7).

The future Constellation-class frigate USS Chesapeake (FFG 64) will be named for one of the first six Navy frigates authorized by the Naval Act of 1794. The first USS Chesapeake served with honor against the Barbary Pirates in the early 1800. Following an at-sea battle with HMS Shannon in 1813, the ship was captured by the Royal Navy and commissioned her HMS Chesapeake. Braithwaite recently travelled to England where he retrieved a piece of the original frigate from the Chesapeake Mill in Hampshire.

"Like Constitution and Constellation, the first Chesapeake was a mighty sailing ship that declared our nation a maritime power," said Braithwaite. "The new USS Chesapeake, FFG-64, will proudly carry on the legacy of that name into the new era of great power competition."

Last year, Braithwaite named future Constellation-class frigates USS Constellation (FFG 62) and USS Congress (FFG 63) to honor the first six heavy frigates.

To honor the Silent Service, the future Virginia-class attack submarine USS Silversides (SSN 807) will carry the name of a WWII Gato-class submarine. The first Silversides (SS 236) completed 14 tours beneath the Pacific Ocean spanning the entire length of WWII. She inflicted heavy damage on enemy shipping, saved downed aviators, and even drew enemy fire to

protect a fellow submarine. A second Silversides (SSN 679) was a Sturgeon-class submarine that served during the Cold War. This will be the third naval vessel to carry the name Silversides. The name comes from a small fish marked with a silvery stripe along each side of its body.

“Those who run silent and deep in this new attack submarine will inherit a proud legacy, and the capabilities to forge a strong future for our nation and our allies,” said Braithwaite.

The future San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock USS Pittsburgh (LPD 31) will be the fifth Navy vessel to bear the name. The first was an ironclad gunboat that served during the American Civil War. The second USS Pittsburgh (CA 4) was an armored cruiser that served during WWI, and a third USS Pittsburgh (CA 72) was a Baltimore-class cruiser that served during WWII, including supporting the landing at Iwo Jima. The fourth USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720) was a Los Angeles-class submarine that served the Navy from December 1984 to August 2019.

To honor the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, a future Navajo-class towing, salvage, and rescue ship will be named USNS Lenni Lenape (T-ATS 9). This will be the first naval vessel to carry the name of the Lenni Lenape tribe who are indigenous people of the Northeastern Woodlands, and the first tribe to sign a treaty with the United States in 1778.

“As a resident of the Keystone State, I know that Pittsburgh is a proud city with a strong legacy of service. I am confident that the crew of the future Pittsburgh will demonstrate the same excellence in support of amphibious and littoral operations around the world,” said Braithwaite. “And, the future USS Lenni Lenape will carry the legacy of the Lenape people for generations to come.

The future USNS Lenni Lenape will join USNS Muscogee Creek

Nation (T-ATS 10), USNS Navajo (T-ATS 6), USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7), and USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek (T-ATS 8) providing a wide range of missions including open ocean towing, oil spill response, humanitarian assistance and wide area search and surveillance.

Also joining the fleet will be the first Expeditionary Sea Base USS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7), carrying the name of Marine Corps Medal of Honor recipient Private First Class Robert Ernest Simanek, who earned the nation's highest medal for valor for his actions during the Korean War when he unhesitatingly threw himself on a deadly missile to shield his fellow Marines from serious injury or death.

"Private Simanek stands in the unbroken line of heroes extending from the early Marines who once stood in the fighting tops of our original frigates, to the Marines holding the line around the world today, and those who will deploy from the future USS Robert Simanek for years to come," said Braithwaite. "This Expeditionary Sea Base continues the honored legacy of warriors from the sea, exemplified by her namesake."

Simanek, a Detroit, Michigan, native, joined the Marine Corps in August 1951. He was just 22 years old when he sailed for Korea, joining Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines in May 1952 to serve as a rifleman and as a radioman when needed. In addition to the Medal of Honor and Purple Heart, he was also awarded the Korean Service Medal with two bronze stars. Simanek, now 90, lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

Along with the ship names, Braithwaite also selected individuals who will be recognized as sponsors for several ships he recently named. The sponsor plays an important role in the life of each ship and is typically selected because of a relationship to the namesake or the ship's current mission. The following individuals were identified as sponsors:

Melissa Braithwaite will sponsor the future USS Constellation (FFG 62).

Barbara Strasser will sponsor the future USS Chesapeake (FFG 64).

Gail Fritsch will sponsor the future USS Barb (SSN 804).

Mimi Donnelly will sponsor the future USS Tang (SSN 805).

Michelle Rogeness will sponsor the future USS Wahoo (SSN 806).

Cindy Foggo will sponsor the future USS Silversides (SSN 807).

Kelly Geurts will sponsor the future USS Wisconsin (SSBN-827).

Nancy Urban will sponsor the future USS Pittsburgh (LPD 31).