

SECNAV Selects USS Congress as Name of Second Constellation Frigate



A painting of the fourth USS Congress, commissioned in 1841. The second new Constellation-class guided missile frigate will now bear that name, the seventh U.S. naval vessel to do so. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command

ARLINGTON, Va. – The secretary of the Navy has announced the name he selected for the second Constellation-class guided-missile frigate.

Navy Secretary Kenneth J. Braithwaite, testifying Dec. 2 before the Readiness and Management Support subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, took the opportunity to announce that the second frigate would be named USS Congress.

The new frigate would be the seventh U.S. naval ship named Congress.

The first [USS Congress](#) was a row of the Continental Navy that fought on Lake Champlain during the American Revolutionary War. Built in 1776, the ship fought in the Battle of Valcour Island. The ship was severely damaged in the battle, which killed more than 20 of its crew. The ship was run aground and burned after only a week of naval service.

The second USS *Congress* was a 28-gun [frigate](#) built in New York for the [Continental Navy](#). Before it completed fitting out to fight in the Revolutionary War against Great Britain, it was burned in October 1777 in order to prevent its capture.

The third USS *Congress* was one of the [six frigates](#) authorized by the [Naval Act of 1794](#) and designed by Joshua Humphreys. The 38-gun wooden-hulled, three-masted [heavy frigate](#) was launched

in 1789 and participated in the Quasi War with France, the First Barbary War, and the War of 1812. The frigate captured or assisted in the capture of 20 British merchant ships. The ship was laid up in 1913 for lack of repair funds but returned to service in the Second Barbary War in 1915. The frigate participated in anti-piracy operations in the Caribbean and later became the first U.S. Navy ship to visit China. The ship served as a receiving ship (a training barge) from 1824 to 1834.

The fourth [USS Congress](#) was a 52-gun sailing frigate commissioned in 1841. It served in the Mediterranean Sea and the South Atlantic Ocean, participating in a blockade of Uruguay. Decommissioned in 1845 but recommissioned later in the same year, the frigate operated in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. During the Mexican War, its crew fought in two land battles and the occupation of Los Angeles. The ship also attacked enemy fortifications in western Mexico. Returning to the Atlantic in 1848, the ship was placed in reserve. In 1850, the ship was assigned to the South Atlantic to counter the slave trade before being decommissioned in 1853. Recommissioned in 1855, the frigate operated in the Mediterranean before again being decommissioned in 1858. Recommissioned in 1859, the ship served in the Brazil Squadron until 1861, when it joined in the blockade of the Confederacy. The frigate was sunk in Hampton Roads, Virginia, by the Confederate ironclad CSS Virginia on March 8, 1862, with the loss of 120 Sailors in its crew.

The fifth [USS Congress](#) was a screw sloop commissioned in 1870. It served in the South Atlantic Ocean, Arctic, Caribbean Sea, and Mediterranean Sea before being decommissioned in 1876.

The sixth *USS Congress* (ID-3698) was a privately owned fishing vessel that was acquired in 1918 and commissioned as a patrol vessel, serving along the U.S. East Coast until 1919.