

Secretary of the Navy commissions USS Ted Stevens



WHITTIER, Alaska – The U.S. Navy placed its newest Flight III Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, USS Ted Stevens (DDG 128), into active commission today during a formal ceremony in Whittier, Alaska.

The commissioning of USS Ted Stevens marks an immediate, decisive leap in naval warfighting readiness and surface fleet lethality. As the second Flight III destroyer to enter active service, USS Ted Stevens provides combatant commanders with unmatched integrated air and missile defense capabilities, directly supporting Department of War priorities to enforce maritime dominance, secure contested sea lanes, and project credible deterrence worldwide.

The ship and its commissioning location honor the legacy of the late Senator Ted Stevens, a decorated combat aviator and

lifelong champion for the state of Alaska and the nation's armed forces. Selecting the strategic deep-water port of Whittier highlights Alaska's enduring maritime significance and the historic partnership between the U.S. Navy and the 49th State. "Woosh-Jee-een," is a phrase in the southeast Alaskan indigenous language Tlingit meaning "working together" or "pulling together," which reflects the spirit of partnership between the Navy, the Stevens family, the crew and the people of Alaska.

Senator Stevens served as an Army Air Forces pilot during World War II, flying hazardous transport missions over "The Hump" in the China-Burma-India theater supporting the 14th Air Force "Flying Tigers," earning two Distinguished Flying Crosses and two Air Medals. Returning home after the war, Stevens played an instrumental role in securing Alaska statehood in 1959. During four decades in the U.S. Senate, from 1968 to 2009, he served as President Pro Tempore and President Pro Tempore Emeritus, dedicating his career to modernizing the armed forces, bolstering national security, and ensuring warfighters were equipped to fight and win.

During the ceremony, Acting Secretary of the Navy The Honorable Hung Cao highlighted the significance of the crew's role in bringing the ship to life as it began its commissioned service.

"Today, USS Ted Stevens is no longer preparing to join the fleet. Today, Ted Stevens is the fleet," said Cao. "Today, USS Ted Stevens stands ready to defend the homeland, deter aggression, and when called upon, fight and win."

During the ceremony, the ship's sponsors, Mrs. Catherine Ann Stevens, wife of Senator Stevens, and his daughters, Mrs. Susan Stevens Covich and Mrs. Lily Stevens Becker, gave the traditional naval order: "Man our ship and bring her to life!" At that command, the commissioning crew ran aboard to man the rails, set the first watch, and bring the warship's advanced

combat systems to full operational status.

"I am deeply honored and proud to be your sponsor, along with my mother and sister Susan," said Lily Stevens Becker, daughter of Senator Ted Stevens. "As you wake up every day, know that we and every person here believe in you to take care of this ship, take care of each other, and to uphold the peace and safety of our nation."

The ship's motto, "*Lead with Courage*," serves as an operational mandate that reflects Senator Stevens' wartime bravery and channels it into the aggressive combat posture required of today's surface warriors.

"To my crew, my shipmates, the men and women who are the heart and soul of this great ship, you have exceeded all expectations," said U.S. Navy Capt. Mary Katey Hayes, commanding officer of USS Ted Stevens. "We are ready to answer our nation's call. We are ready to defend freedom, whether the winds of war blow near the rugged coast of Alaska, or in the far reaches of the globe."

From the North Pacific campaigns of World War II to modern Arctic maritime operations, the Navy and Alaska share a deep commitment to homeland defense. The commissioning in Whittier emphasizes the Navy's persistent operational presence in high-latitude environments to deter northern flank aggression and safeguard critical maritime routes.

USS Ted Stevens is built around the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR) and Aegis Baseline 10 combat system, delivering a generational leap in simultaneous Anti-Air Warfare (AAW) and Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD). Featuring enhanced electrical power distribution and expanded cooling capacity, the destroyer is engineered to operate in high-threat environments and integrate seamlessly with joint and coalition forces.

Following post-commissioning operations, USS Ted Stevens will

transit to its permanent homeport in Norfolk, Virginia, fully prepared to deploy worldwide.

The commissioning of the USS Ted Stevens (DDG 128) underscores the Navy's commitment to building America's Golden Fleet. For 250 years, American naval power has projected strength globally. That mission continues – and intensifies. We operate forward 24/7, 365 days a year. This operational tempo demands continuous capability delivery, and the Golden Fleet is our answer.

Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet ensures fleet commanders are equipped with the personnel, materiel, and training required to project credible naval power at sea, ashore, at home, and abroad.

From Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Oct. 3, 2026