Navy Secretary Names New Class of Towing, Salvage and Rescue Ship Navajo



WASHINGTON (Jan. 29, 2019) An artist rendering of the future USNS Navajo (T-TATS 6). (U.S. Navy photo illustration/Released)

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer said the new class of towing, salvage and rescue ship will be named Navajo in honor of the major contributions the Navajo people have made to the armed forces, the secretary's public affairs office said in a March 12 release.

The new class of vessels will be based on existing commercial towing offshore vessel designs and will replace the current T-ATF 166 and T-ARS 50 class ships. The first ship of this class will be named USNS Navajo and designated T-ATS 6.

"The Navajo people have fought and served our armed forces with honor and valor in nearly every major conflict since the birth of our nation, so it is fitting and right to name a new class of ship in their honor," Spencer said. "The Navajo class of towing, salvage and rescue ships will serve our nation and continue the legacy of the Navajo people, and all Native Americans."

The contract includes options for potentially seven additional vessels, and each additional ship will be named in honor of prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.

Gulf Island Shipyards was awarded a $63.5 million contract for the detail design and construction of the new towing, salvage and rescue ship, which will be based on existing commercial towing offshore vessel designs and will replace the current T-ATF 166 and T-ARS 50 class ships in service with the U.S.

Military Sealift Command.

The T-ATS will serve as open ocean towing vessels and will additionally support salvage operations and submarine rescue missions. The first ship in the class will be built at the company’s shipyard in Houma, La., and is expected to be completed in March 2021.