USS Canberra Will Join the U.S. Fleet in Australia to Honor Namesake



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SAN DIEGO – The future USS Canberra (LCS 30) will join the U.S. Navy active fleet on July 22 with the U.S. Navy's first international commissioning ceremony at the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base East in Sydney, Australia.

Canberra is the first U.S. Navy warship to be commissioned in

an allied country. It is the second U.S. Navy ship to bear the namesake of Canberra.

“I can think of no better way to signify our enduring partnership with Australia than celebrating the newest U.S. Navy warship named for Australia’s capital city, and commissioning her in Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base East surrounded by many of the Australian ships we have worked alongside for years,” said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. “I look forward to this momentous day for the ship, crew, sponsor, and all our partners in government and industry who worked tirelessly to give the future USS Canberra the celebration it deserves.”

Australian Chief of Navy, Vice Adm. Mark Hammond said this historic event encapsulates both the depth of the historical ties, and modern day partnership between the Royal Australian Navy and the U.S. Navy.

“This is a unique demonstration of respect by the U.S. for the Officers and Sailors of the Royal Australian Navy,” said Hammond. “It is an opportunity to reflect on our shared history, and on a friendship forged while fighting side-by-side. On August 9, 1942 the RAN heavy cruiser HMAS Canberra was severely damaged off Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands) while protecting the U.S. Marines fighting ashore. In a surprise attack by a powerful Japanese naval force, Canberra was hit 24 times in less than two minutes and 84 of her crew were killed including Captain Frank Getting”

“I look forward to welcoming the U.S. Navy, and the crew of USS Canberra to Australia and we are honored to host the U.S. Navy’s first international commissioning. It will be a historical event to see the USS Canberra and HMAS Canberra alongside each other in Sydney. As we look to the future, the strength of our partnership remains a cornerstone of a secure, stable, free and open Indo-Pacific Region.”

The first USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2) was named at the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in honor of the Australian heavy cruiser HMAS Canberra for the ship's courageous actions during the Battle of Savo Island that took place Aug. 7-9, 1942. The new Baltimore-class heavy cruiser was renamed Canberra from Pittsburgh on Oct. 16, 1942, and was commissioned on Oct. 14, 1943.

Canberra will soon begin the transit for the Navy's first international ship commissioning making stops along the transit in Indo-Pacific nations prior to its arrival in Sydney for commissioning.

A visit to the Australian capital city of Canberra is planned the day after commissioning, continuing the U.S. Navy tradition of building a strong relationship with namesake communities.

The ship's sponsor is Australian Senator, the Honourable Marise Payne, the former Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs who attended the ship's keel laying ceremony in Mobile, Ala. in 2020. The ship was christened June 5, 2021, by Alison Petchell, the Australian Government's Defence Assistant Secretary for Industrial Capability Planning in the Nuclear Submarines Taskforce and former Minister Counsellor for Defense Materiel, on behalf of Senator Payne. The ship arrived for the first time at its homeport of San Diego last year.

The first U.S. Navy ship named after a foreign capital, Canberra (CA-70) was sponsored by Lady Alice C. Dixon, the wife of Sir Owen Dixon, then Australian Minister to the United States. Following World War II, Canberra was placed out of commission and in reserve on March 7, 1947. Five years later, the ship was selected to be the U.S. Navy's second guided missile cruiser. The ship was re-commissioned on June 15,

1956, as guided missile heavy cruiser CAG-2.
With its new designation, Canberra transported President Dwight D. Eisenhower and later was the ceremonial flagship for the selection of the Unknown Serviceman of both World War II and Korea interned at Arlington National Cemetery, was the Commander of the Atlantic Fleet Cruiser Force flagship, conducted an around the globe goodwill cruise, provided medical assistance to the crew of the Turkish merchantman Mehmet Ipar, was the Commander Task Group 136.1 flagship that was charged with maintaining a blockade during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and served in Korea and Vietnam. To highlight the ship's role in naval gunfire support following operations in Vietnam, Canberra was re-designated to original classification and identification number CA-70 on May 1, 1968.

Canberra received seven battle stars for her service in World War II. The ship was decommissioned on Feb. 2, 1970, and was stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on July 31, 1978.

The present day USS Canberra is the 16th Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship commissioned by the U.S. Navy. LCS are designed to be fast, optimally-manned, mission-tailored, surface combatants that operate in both littoral and open-ocean environments. LCS integrate with joint, combined, crewed, and unmanned systems to support forward-presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence missions around the globe. The future USS Canberra was built by Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama.