USS Carl M. Levin Commissions in Baltimore



From Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

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Baltimore, MD – The U.S. Navy commissioned its newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120), June 24 in Baltimore.

The Honorable Carlos Del Toro, the 78th Secretary of the NavyPrinciple, was the principal speaker.

“It is imperative that we, the United States of America, stand ready to support our international partners and our allies as we confront common challenges,: said Del Toro. “In order to do so, our nation needs to maintain a strong joint force. Our nation needs to maintain a strong Navy and Marine Corps as the

foundation upon which the success of that joint force exists. This ship before you and our entire naval fleet supports not just the strike force, but our entire nation by guaranteeing our unencumbered access to a free and open maritime commons and serves as the lifeblood of our economy."

Guest speakers for the event also included Adm. Michael M. Gilday, 32nd Chief of Naval Operations; the Honorable Justin Williams, Deputy Mayor, City of Baltimore, Maryland; Rear Adm. Thomas J. Anderson, Program Executive Officer, Ships; and Mr. Charles F. Krugh, President, General Dynamics Bath Iron Works.

"Senator Levin lived a life of service with integrity, and his example inspires us as we commission this ship with this crew today," Gilday said. "The men and the women of the USS Carl Levin represent some of the best and the brightest in our Navy. They are ready! They are prepared to go into harm's way if required and they will carry out the orders of our nation."

The ship's sponsors are Sen. Carl M, Levin's three daughters, Kate Levin Markel, Laura Levin, and Erica Levin. All three sponsors participated in the keel laying, mast stepping, and christening ceremonies.

Gilday continued, "To the ship's sponsors, Senator Levin's daughters Kate, Laura, and Erica, thank you for your family's support to our Navy and to our Sailors. It is not lost on us that the man that we call professor, Assistant Attorney General, and Senator, you call Dad. Thank you for sharing his legacy with us and we hope that you feel welcome as extended members of our big Navy family."

Laura Levin spoke on behalf of herself and sisters Kate and Erica to recall their father's life of service.

"Dad noted that for more than 50 years, Senate Armed Services Committee members had managed to work through their disagreements to pass the Defense Authorization bill with bipartisan support for a single reason. As Dad put it, those

who served in the military ‘have inspired us, year after year, to come together across lines of party and ideology to support them,” Laura reflected. “They not only protect us, they unite us.’ So as we gather to send off this great ship, the three of us remember our Dad by thanking and congratulating the entire crew of the USS Carl M. Levin who protect us and also unite us.”

During the ceremony, USS Carl M. Levin’s commanding officer Cmdr. Kelly Craft, reported the ship ready. Sen. Levin’s daughters, Kate Levin Markel, Erica Levin, and Laura Levin, gave the traditional order to “Man our ship and bring her to life!”

“It’s been an honor and a privilege to have served as the Commanding Officer of a Pre-Commissioning Unit. It was amazing being able to sail down the Kennebec and out to sea for the first time,” Craft said. “There’s nothing like being able to bring the crew together and accomplish the mission. We’ve still got thousands of miles to travel before we make it to our home port of Hawaii, but I know this crew is the right crew for the job. They will remain tenacious in the fight, and they will lead this ‘greyhound’ to be the most feared warship in the world.”

Deputy Mayor Justin Williams’ pride in Baltimore’s Navy connection was evident. “From the days of clipper ships traversing the high seas during the revolutionary war…our city’s legacy has been long intertwined with the Navy’s legacy.” He continued, “as we commission the USS Carl Levin, we pay homage to the generations of sailors and shipbuilders who call Baltimore home. This mighty vessel will carry the torch of Baltimore’s naval legacy.”

The USS Carl M. Levin is the first naval ship named in honor of Michigan’s longest serving Senator, the

late Carl M. Levin for his years of service as a longtime

member and chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC).

Levin began his career as an attorney, professor, and assistant attorney general in Michigan and was elected to the Senate in 1979. He was Michigan's first Jewish senator and the state's longest-serving senator, serving for 36 years before retiring in 2015. In the Senate, his top priority was the economic well-being of Michigan families. He was a consistent voice for support of American manufacturing and was one of the Senate's strongest advocates for policies that would help American manufacturers compete globally.

As chairman of SASC, Levin focused on taking care of the men and women of the military and their families, supporting pay raises and improvements in treatment and other policies for wounded warriors. He led oversight efforts to improve efficiency and reduce cost overruns in expensive weapons programs. Levin also supported military action to eliminate the al-Qaida threat in Afghanistan, investigated Pentagon spending practices, and played a key role in overturning the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" rule that prohibited gay service members from openly acknowledging their sexual orientation before 2011.

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet. These highly capable, multi-mission ships conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence to national security providing a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air, surface and subsurface.

The mission of CNSP is to man, train, and equip the Surface Force to provide fleet commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore.

The ship will transit to her homeport at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

For more news from Naval Surface Forces, visit DVIDS – Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

For additional information about the ship, visit USS Carl M. Levin (DDG 120).