USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr. Commissioned



NORFOLK, Va.– U.S. Marine Corps retired Col. Harvey C. Barnum Jr., a Medal of Honor recipient, delivers remarks during the commissioning ceremony of Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr. (DDG 124) in Norfolk, Virginia, April 11, 2026. The U.S. Navy named the warship in Barnum's honor for his extraordinary heroism during the Vietnam War. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Ellen Guo)
NORFOLK, Va. – The U.S. Navy commissioned the future USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr. (DDG 124) on April 11, 2026, in Norfolk, Virginia.

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer is the first ship to bear the name of Medal of Honor recipient, U.S. Marine Corps Col. Harvey Curtiss "Barney" Barnum Jr. The ship honors Barnum's gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life beyond the call of duty during the Vietnam War.

On Dec. 18, 1965, then-1st Lt. Barnum assumed command of his company after the commander was mortally wounded. With two armed helicopters under his control, he moved fearlessly through deadly fire to lead air attacks against the enemy's well-entrenched positions while directing one platoon in a successful counterattack on key positions. Having cleared a small area, he requested and directed the landing of two transport helicopters to evacuate the deceased and wounded. He then assisted in seizing the battalion's objective. He is among the few living namesakes to witness his ship's commissioning.

The sponsor of DDG 124 is Barnum's wife, Martha Hill. Since the ship's keel laying ceremony in 2021, Barnum and Hill have maintained a close relationship with the crew. In keeping with Navy tradition, she gave the order during the commissioning to "man our ship and bring her to life!" At that moment, the crew hoisted the commissioning pennant, and USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr. became a warship and enter the fleet.

DDG 124 is homeported at Naval Station Norfolk.

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet. DDG 124 is a Flight IIA destroyer equipped with Aegis Baseline 9, which provides Integrated Air and Missile Defense capabilities, increased computing power, and radar upgrades that improve detection range and reaction time against modern air warfare and Ballistic Missile Defense threats. These highly capable, multi-mission ships provide a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air, surface, and subsurface environments.