

USS Jack H Lucas Commissioned in Port Tampa



[Release from Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet](#)

TAMPA, FLORIDA (Oct. 7, 2023) – Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Jack H Lucas (DDG 125) was commissioned at Tampa, Florida, Oct. 7.

DDG 125 is named for Pfc. Jack Lucas, who served in the U.S. Marines during World War II, earning the Medal of Honor for his heroism at Iwo Jima, when he was just 17 years old. He is the youngest Marine, and the youngest service member in World War II, to be awarded the United States' highest military decoration for valor. In 1961, he returned to military service as a captain in the U.S. Army and trained younger troops headed for Vietnam. Lucas passed away on June 5, 2008, in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

During the ceremony, guest speaker Under Secretary of the Navy, The Honorable Erik Raven wished the crew of Jack H Lucas fair winds and following seas as the ship begins its commissioned service.

“Commissioning the Jack H. Lucas means we continue to deliver fast, agile, and networked surface combatants to the Navy. The Jack H. Lucas is built to fight. It is a fast, maneuverable, versatile, and lethal ship – capable of tackling any mission it is given,” said Raven. “It will keep the Navy and Marine Corps adaptive and ready, and also uphold our commitment to maintaining the free flow of commerce, deterring military aggression, and facilitating quick responses to natural disasters across the globe.”

Ruby Lucas, one of the ship’s sponsors, and Jack’s wife at the time of his death, emotionally thanked the audience for coming to honor her husband before giving the order to “man our ship and bring her to life!” alongside co-sponsor, philanthropist Catherine B. Reynolds.

On behalf of the President of the United States and for the Secretary of the Navy, the 20th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. Carlos Ruiz, USMC, placed the USS Jack H Lucas into commission.

“Something inside Lucas’ souls said, ‘I need to get to the fight.’ And fight he did,” Ruiz reflected. “The Navy and the Marine Corps team – our destinies are intertwined. The Navy, the ship, represents the perseverance of Americans. This beautiful ship represents the grit, the determination, of enlisted Marines, enlisted Sailors, and all of us that we will not give up until we win.”

“My charge to you and your team is to keep that tenacity, that toughness, and grit going because the challenges will keep coming,” Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command counseled Oster and his crew. “It will be hard, but I

know that you and the 330 of the Navy's finest Sailors are the team to do it. Your namesake, 17-year-old Medal of Honor recipient, Jack H Lucas, carried that same fiery passion."

Capt. Brett Oster, Jack H Lucas' commanding officer, recognized the driving force behind the ship's namesake, and how his crew reflects that memory.

"There is something you can never, ever deny about Jack H Lucas. That man loved this country. That is why we're here, because we love this country. You can never take that away – his dedication," said Oster. "When you have a purpose, and you have dedication, and you have vision, and you have teamwork, anything that you set your sites on can come together."

To cap off a week of special memories, three Sailors were meritoriously promoted at the close of the commissioning ceremony, Petty Officer First Class Boatswain's Mate Victor Mejia, Petty Officer Second Class Boatswain's Mate Lloyd Tillman, and Petty Officer Third Class Damage Controlman Ruben Rubio.

Today's commissioning ceremony is the culmination of five years of work from everyone involved in the construction of Jack H Lucas, its operations, and all those involved in bringing the ship to life.

The city of Tampa and its residents welcomed the ship and its crew with events throughout the week. Along with other residents, family, and friends, the Tampa Lightning toured the ship to see the new technology aboard the first Flight III Arleigh Burke guided-missile destroyer. In turn the Lightning invited the crew on the ice not only to present their ship's color guard, but to introduce the Jack H Lucas' first, new chief petty officers. Local restaurants opened their kitchens to the ship's culinary specialists, teaching the Sailors advanced techniques used for the chef's dining rooms.

Honoring the whole of Lucas' life, his widow Ruby, The Trail

of Honor Foundation, and Flags of Honor Escort presented the ship with a vest adorned with his Medal of Honor. The vest traveled to Jack's gravesite in Hattiesburg, Mississippi; numerous locations and Memorials to include the United States Marine Corps War Memorial and the World War II Memorial; the Never Forget Flag travelled to or thorough 20 states and the District of Columbia, amassing a total of 11,325.8 miles as part of Jack's Vest Run before the presentation earlier this week.

The ship's motto, "Indestructible" is reflection of Lucas' survival, first on Iwo Jima and later from several other traumatic events after the war that rivaled his exploits as a Marine.

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 Flight III upgrade is centered on the AN/SPY-6(V)1 Air and Missile Defense Radar and incorporates upgrades to the electrical power and cooling capacity.

USS Jack H Lucas is the first AEGIS Weapon System, Baseline 10, to be commissioned. It integrates air and missile defense capability with the new AN/SPY6(V)(1) air and missile defense radar to provide significantly greater detection and tracking capacity among its warfighting capabilities across mission areas. Flight III also incorporates upgrades to the electrical power and cooling capacity, plus additional associated changes to provide enhanced warfighting capability to the fleet.

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.

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For additional information about the ship visit, USS Jack H Lucas (DDG 125), <https://www.surfpac.navy.mil/ddg125/>.