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Navy Ship Names: Background for Congress

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Summary

Names for Navy ships traditionally have been chosen and announced by the Secretary of the Navy, under the direction of the President and in accordance with rules prescribed by Congress. Rules for giving certain types of names to certain types of Navy ships have evolved over time. There have been exceptions to the Navy's ship-naming rules, particularly for the purpose of naming a ship for a person when the rule for that type of ship would have called for it to be named for something else. Some observers have perceived a breakdown in, or corruption of, the rules for naming Navy ships. Names for Navy ship types currently being procured or recently procured for the Navy include the following:

- The first three **SSBN-826 class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs)** have been named *District of Columbia*, *Wisconsin*, and *Groton*.
- Until 2020, **Virginia (SSN-774) class attack submarines** were named largely for states, but the most recent 13 have been named for four earlier U.S. Navy attack submarines, a former Secretary of the Navy, an island, four cities, a river, another city, and a borough of New York City.
- Of the Navy's 17 most recently named **aircraft carriers**, 12 have been named for past U.S. Presidents and 2 for Members of Congress. On January 13, 2025, President Biden announced that the projected future aircraft carriers CVN-82 and CVN-83 would be named *William J. Clinton* and *George W. Bush*.
- **Destroyers** are being named for deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy.
- The first six **FFG-62 class frigates** were named for people and U.S. Navy ships of the Revolutionary War and the early republic. The seventh and eighth have been named for two persons who served in the Navy in the 20th Century.
- **Amphibious assault ships (LHAs)** are being named for U.S. Marine Corps battles, early U.S. Navy sailing ships, or aircraft carriers from World War II.
- **San Antonio (LPD-17) class amphibious ships** are being named for major U.S. cities and communities and the cities and communities that were attacked on September 11, 2001.
- The first of a planned class of **Medium Landing Ships (LSMs)** has been named for a Marine Corps major who was killed in action in Iraq in 2006.
- **John Lewis (TAO-205) class oilers** are being named for people who fought for civil rights and human rights.
- **Explorer (TAGOS-25) class ocean surveillance ships** are being named for people who made discoveries under sea, on land, and in the skies above.
- **Navajo (TATS-6) class towing, salvage, and rescue ships** are being named for prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.
- **Expeditionary Fast Transports (EPFs)** are being named for small U.S. cities and counties, and **Expeditionary Medical Ships (EMSs)** are being named for U.S. military hospitals, and more specifically for Navy medical facilities and their staff.
- **Expeditionary Transport Docks (ESDs) and Expeditionary Sea Bases (ESBs)** are being named for famous names or places of historical significance to U.S. Marines.

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Authority for Naming Ships

Names for Navy ships traditionally have been chosen and announced by the Secretary of the Navy, under the direction of the President and in accordance with rules prescribed by Congress. For most of the 19th century, U.S. law included language explicitly assigning the Secretary of the Navy the task of naming new Navy ships.[1] The reference to the Secretary of the Navy disappeared from the *U.S. Code* in 1925.[2] The code today (10 U.S.C. §8662) is silent on the issue of who has the authority to name new Navy ships,[3] but the Secretary of the Navy arguably retains implicit authority, given the location of Section 8662 in subtitle C of Title 10, which covers the Navy and Marine Corps.

Process for Selecting Names

The Navy's process for naming ships is set forth in SECNAV (Secretary of the Navy) Instruction 5031.1E of March 14, 2024, which states, "The SECNAV is the sole entity with authority to approve the name of new construction, conversion, and long-term charter ships. The SECNAV is also the authority for approving the naming convention for new ship classes. The SECNAV PAO [Public Affairs Office] is SECNAV's appointed agent responsible for initiating and coordinating the naming process."[4] For an additional excerpt from this document, see **Appendix A**.

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[1] A law approved in 1819 (Res. of March 3, 1819, §1, 3 Stat. 538, No. 7) stated, "That all of the ships of the navy of the United States, now building, or hereafter to be built, shall be named by the Secretary of the Navy, under the direction of the President of the United States" in accordance with rules specifying that ships of the first class were to be named after states of the Union, and second and third class ships were to be named, respectively, after rivers and principal cities and towns. A law approved in 1858 (Act of June 12, 1858, c. 153, §5, 11 Stat. 319) provided a similar rule for "steamships of the navy," except that third-class vessels (those with fewer than twenty guns) were to be named by the Secretary of the Navy as the President may direct, taking care that no two vessels in the Navy shall bear the same name." §1531 of the Revised Statutes of 1873-1874, citing the 1819 and 1858 laws, states the following: "The vessels of the Navy shall be named by the Secretary of the Navy, under the direction of the President" in accordance with rules similar to those above, varying slightly depending on whether the vessel was a sailing ship or a steamship. In 1898, Congress passed a law (Act of May 4, 1898, c. 234, 30 Stat. 390 [appropriations for the naval services]) prescribing rules for the naming of "first-class battle ships and monitors," which specified that these were to be named after States and "shall not be named for any city, place, or persons until the names of the States, shall have been exhausted." The provision did not explicitly state whose duty it would be to assign names to vessels. Congress repealed this provision in 1908 as it pertained to monitors, permitting those vessels to be named "as the President may direct." (Act of May 13, 1908, c. 166, 35 Stat. 159.)

[2] The reference to the Secretary of the Navy found in §1531 of the Revised Statutes of 1873-1874 (see previous footnote) is absent from the *U.S. Code* of 1925, which covers Navy vessel names in Title 34, §461-463.

[3] 10 U.S.C. §8662 was previously numbered as 10 U.S.C. §7292. It was renumbered as 10 U.S.C. §7292 by Section 807(d)(2) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (H.R. 5515/P.L. 115-232 of August 13, 2018). (Section 807 of P.L. 115-232 directed the renumbering of various sections of Title 10 relating to the Navy and Marine Corps. Sections 806 and 808 did the same for sections of Title 10 relating to the Air Force and Army, respectively.) Prior to that, 34 U.S.C. §461-463 of the 1925 *U.S. Code* (see previous footnote) had been recodified as 10 U.S.C. §7292. 10 U.S.C. §8662(b) specifically authorizes the Secretary of the Navy to "change the name of any vessel bought for the Navy."

[4] Department of the Navy, SECNAV Instruction [SECNAVINST] 5031.1E, Subject: Ship Naming, Sponsor Selection, Crest Development, Keel Layings, Christenings, Commissionings, and Decommissionings, March 14, 2024, accessed January 15, 2025, at https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/Directives/
(continued...)

In discussing its name-selection process, the Naval History and Heritage Command—the Navy's in-house office of professional historians—cites some of the above-cited laws and states the following:

> As with many other things, the procedures and practices involved in Navy ship naming are as much, if not more, products of evolution and tradition than of legislation. The Secretary [of the Navy] can rely on many sources to help him reach his decisions. Each year, the Navy [sic: Naval] History and Heritage Command (NHHC) compiles primary and alternate ship name recommendations and forwards these to the Chief of Naval Operations by way of the chain of command. These recommendations are the result of research into the history of the Navy and by suggestions submitted by service members, Navy veterans, and the public. Ship name source records at NHHC reflect the wide variety of name sources that have been used in the past, particularly since World War I. Ship name recommendations are conditioned by such factors as the name categories for ship types now being built, as approved by the Secretary of the Navy; the distribution of geographic names of ships of the fleet; names borne by previous ships that distinguished themselves in service; names recommended by individuals and groups; and names of naval leaders, national figures, and deceased members of the Navy and Marine Corps who have been honored for heroism in war or for extraordinary achievement in peace.
>
> In its final form, after consideration at the various levels of command, the Chief of Naval Operations signs the memorandum recommending names for the current year's building program and sends it to the Secretary of the Navy. The Secretary considers these nominations, along with others he receives, as well as his own thoughts in this matter. At appropriate times, he selects names for specific ships and announces them.
>
> While there is no set time for assigning a name, it is customarily done before the ship is christened. The ship's sponsor—the person who will christen the ship—is also selected and invited by the Secretary. In the case of ships named for individuals, an effort is made to identify the eldest living direct female descendant of that individual to perform the role of ship's sponsor. For ships with other name sources, it is customary to honor the wives of senior naval officers or public officials.
>
> While the Navy has attempted to be systematic in naming its ships, like all institutions it has been subject to evolutionary change, and the name sources of the Navy's ships have not been immune to this change. Thus, an historical accounting of this evolution, as it appeared in modern times, may help the reader understand the ship naming process as it exists today.[5]

A July 2012 Navy report to Congress on the Navy's policies and practices for naming ships (see next section) states the following:

> Once a type/class naming convention [i.e., a general rule or guideline for how ships of a certain type or class are to be named] is established, Secretaries can rely on many sources to help in the final selection of a ship name. For example, sitting Secretaries can solicit ideas and recommendations from either the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) or the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), or both. They can also task the Naval Heritage and History Command to compile primary and alternate ship name recommendations that are the result of research into the history of the Navy's battle force or particular ship names. Secretaries also routinely receive formal suggestions for ship names from concerned citizens, active and retired servicemembers, or members of Congress. Finally, Congress can enact provisions in Public Law that express the sense of the entire body about new ship

05000%20General%20Management%20Security%20and%20Safety%20Services/05-00%20General%20Admin%20and%20Management%20Support/5031.1E.pdf.

[5] Naval History and Heritage Command, "Ship Naming in the United States Navy," published June 5, 2025, accessed June 30, 2025, at https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/customs-and-traditions0/ship-naming.html.

> naming conventions or specific ship names. Regardless of the origin of the recommendations, however, the final selection of a ship's name is the Secretary's to make, informed and guided by his own thoughts, counsel, and preferences. At the appropriate time—normally sometime after the ship has been either authorized or appropriated by Congress and before its keel laying or christening—the Secretary records his decision with a formal naming announcement.[6]

July 2012 Navy Report to Congress

On July 13, 2012, the Navy submitted to Congress a 73-page report on the Navy's policies and practices for naming ships.[7] The report was submitted in response to Section 1014 of the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1540/P.L. 112-81 of December 31, 2011). The executive summary of the Navy's report is reprinted here as **Appendix B**.[8]

Overview of Naming Rules for Ship Types

Evolution Over Time

Rules for giving certain types of names to certain types of Navy ships have evolved over time. Attack submarines, for example, were once named for fish, then later for cities, and most recently (in most cases) for states, while cruisers were once named for cities, then later for states,[9] and most recently for battles. State names, to cite another example, were once given to battleships, then later to nuclear-powered cruisers and ballistic missile submarines, and most recently to (in most cases) Virginia-class attack submarines.

The Naval History and Heritage Command states the following: "How will the Navy name its ships in the future? It seems safe to say that the evolutionary process of the past will continue; as the fleet itself changes, so will the names given to its ships. It seems equally safe, however, to say that future decisions in this area will continue to demonstrate regard for the rich history and valued traditions of the United States Navy."[10] The July 2012 Navy report to Congress states that "US Navy ship-naming policies, practices, and 'traditions' are not fixed; they evolve constantly over time."[11] The report also states that, "[j]ust as [ship] type naming conventions change over time to accommodate technological change as well as choices made by Secretaries, they also

[6] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 3.

[7] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, 73 pp. As of June 30, 2025, the report was posted at https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA569699.pdf. It is also posted at https://web.archive.org/web/20240716200746/https://www.history.navy.mil/content/dam/nhhc/browse-by-topic/heritage/pdf/Shipnamingreport.pdf.

[8] For an article providing a critical perspective on the Navy's report, see Norman Polmar, "Report on Ship Naming Falls Short," *Seapower*, October 2012: 6-7.

[9] Cruisers named for states were nuclear-powered cruisers.

[10] Naval History and Heritage Command, "The Evolution of Ship Naming in the U.S. Navy," accessed April 30, 2019, at https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/browse-by-topic/heritage/customs-and-traditions0/ship-naming/the-evolution-of-ship-naming-in-the-u-s—navy.html.

[11] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 10.

change over time as every Secretary makes their own interpretation of the original naming convention."[12]

Exceptions

There have been numerous exceptions to the Navy's ship-naming rules, particularly for the purpose of naming a ship for a person when the rule for that type of ship would have called for it to be named for something else.[13] The July 2012 report to Congress cites exceptions to ship-naming rules dating back to the earliest days of the republic, and states that "a Secretary's discretion to make exceptions to ship-naming conventions is one of the Navy's oldest ship-naming traditions."[14] The report argues that exceptions made for the purpose of naming ships for Presidents or Members of Congress have occurred frequently enough that, rather than being exceptions, they constitute a "special cross-type naming convention" for Presidents and Members of Congress.[15] This CRS report continues to note, as exceptions to basic class naming rules, instances where ships other than aircraft carriers have been named for Presidents or Members of Congress.

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[12] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 25.

[13] Ohio (SSBN-726) class ballistic missile submarines, for example, were named for states, but one (SSBN-730) was named for Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington, who died in office in 1983. Los Angeles (SSN-688) class attack submarines were named for cities, but one (SSN-709) was named for Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, who served for many years as director of the Navy's nuclear propulsion program. Ticonderoga (CG-47) class cruisers were named for battles, but one (CG-51) was named for Thomas S. Gates, a former Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of Defense.

[14] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 7.

[15] The report states that

> the decision of the [Navy's 1969] Riera Panel [on Navy ship names] to remove members of Congress from the destroyer naming convention resulted in a now four-decade old, *bipartisan* practice of honoring members of Congress with long records of support to the US military with ships names selected and spread across a variety of ship types and classes. Orthodox Traditionalists decry this development as an unwarranted intrusion of "politics" in Navy ship naming practice. But this is a selective interpretation of the historical record. Secretaries of the Navy have been naming ships for members of Congress *for nearly a century* in order to honor those extraordinary elected leaders who have helped to make the Navy-Marine Corps Team the most powerful naval force in history.
>
> Like many Pragmatic Secretaries of the Navy before him, [then-]Secretary [of the Navy Ray] Mabus endorses and subscribes to this special naming convention....
>
> Objections to [then-]Secretary Mabus's decision to name a ship in honor of Congressman Murtha generally fall into one of four categories. The first are Orthodox Traditionalists who naturally complain that his selection represents a corruption of the LPD 17 naming convention. However, as outlined above, the choice is perfectly consistent with the special cross-type naming convention that honors Legislative Branch members who have been closely identified with military and naval affairs, which has been endorsed by Secretaries from both parties and Congress....
>
> In summary, while USS John P. Murtha represents an exception to the *established* LPD 17 [amphibious ship] class naming convention, it is completely consistent with the *special* cross-type naming convention for honoring famous American elected leaders, including both Presidents and members of Congress with records of long-term service and support to the US armed forces.
>
> (Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 28-30. Italics as in original. See also pp. 37, 41, 42, 44, 47, 68, and 73.)

Some observers have perceived a breakdown in, or corruption of, the rules for naming Navy ships.[16] Such observers might cite, for example, the three-ship Seawolf (SSN-21) class of attack submarines—*Seawolf* (SSN-21), *Connecticut* (SSN-22), and *Jimmy Carter* (SSN-23)—which were named for a fish, a state, and a President, respectively, reflecting no apparent class naming rule.[17] The July 2012 Navy report to Congress states the following: "Current ship naming policies and practices fall well within the historic spectrum of policies and practices for naming vessels of the Navy, and are altogether consistent with ship naming customs and traditions."[18]

Names for Ship Types Currently Being Procured or Recently Procured

Names for Navy ship types currently being procured or recently procured for the Navy are summarized below.

Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBNs)

On December 14, 2016, the Navy announced that SSBN-826, the first of a planned class of at least 12 new ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), would be named *Columbia*, in honor of the District of Columbia.[19] Consequently, since December 2016, the 12 or more planned new SSBNs have been referred to as Columbia (SSBN-826) class boats.[20] SSBN-826 was procured in FY2021.

On June 3, 2022, the Navy announced that it was modifying SSBN-826's name from *Columbia* to *District of Columbia*, so as to avoid an overlap in names with USS *Columbia* (SSN-771), a Los Angeles (SSN-688) class attack submarine that was named for Columbia, SC; Columbia, IL; and

[16] See, for example, Donald R. Bouchoux, "The Name Game," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, March 2000: 110-111; Norman Polmar, "Misnaming Aircraft Carriers," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, September 2006: 30-31; Norman Polmar, "Misnaming Navy Ships (Again)," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, February 2009: 89; and Norman Polmar, "There's a Lot in a Name," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 2012: 88-89; Carl Forsling, "A Plan To Fix The Navy's Broken Ship Naming System," *Task and Purpose*, May 6, 2015; Steven Wills, "New Administration, Congress Should Bring Order to Warship Naming Process," *Defense Opinion*, January 20, 2025.

[17] See, for example, Norman Polmar, "There's a Lot in a Name," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 2012: 88-89, which characterizes the naming of the Seawolf class as a "fiasco." For the Navy's discussion of the Seawolf class names, see Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 46-47.

[18] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. iii.

[19] "Secretary of the Navy Names Three Vessels," DOD Press Release NR-444-16, December 14, 2016. See also Megan Eckstein, "SECNAV Mabus to Officially Designate First ORP [Ohio Replacement Program] Boat USS Columbia (SSBN-826)," *USNI News*, December 13, 2016. The Navy's intent to name the first Ohio replacement boat Columbia was first reported in July 2016; see Sam LaGrone, "Navy Ohio Replacement Sub Class to Be Named for D.C.," *USNI News*, July 28, 2016; Jacqueline Klimas, "Navy's Next Sub Class to Be Named after D.C.," *Washington Examiner*, July 29, 2016; "Document: Notice to Congress on 8 Proposed Navy Ship Names," *USNI News*, August 3, 2016.

[20] For more on the Columbia-class program, see CRS Report R41129, *Navy Columbia (SSBN-826) Class Ballistic Missile Submarine Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

Columbia, MO.[21] The Navy states that notwithstanding the modification to SSBN-826's name, the new SSBNs will continue to be referred to as Columbia (SSBN-826) class boats.[22]

On October 28, 2020, the Navy announced that SSBN-827, the second boat in the class, will be named *Wisconsin*.[23] SSBN-827 was procured in FY2024.

On January 13, 2025, the Navy announced that SSBN-828, the third ship in the class, will be named *Groton*, in honor of Groton, CT, and three previous ships that were named for the city.[24] Groton, CT, has a long association with U.S. submarines, is sometimes referred to as the submarine capital of the country (or world), and is the headquarters location of General Dynamics Electric Boat (GD/EB), one of the country's two builders of submarines and the prime contractor for building the SSBN-826 class. SSBN-728 is programmed for procurement in FY2026.

The Navy has not announced a naming rule for the Columbia-class boats.

Attack Submarines (SSNs)

As of June 30, 2025, the Navy had announced names for Virginia (SSN-774) class attack submarines[25] through SSN-816, the second of the two Virginia-class boats that are programmed to be requested for procurement in FY2026.

Until 2020, Virginia-class boats were named largely for states, but the most recent 13 have been named for four earlier U.S. Navy attack submarines, a former Secretary of the Navy, an island,

[21] A June 3, 2022, Navy news release stated

> Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Carlos Del Toro announced today that the first ship in the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) will be officially named USS District of Columbia (SSBN 826).
>
> The decision to name SSBN 826 is to alleviate any name conflicts with the already-commissioned USS Columbia (SSN 771). §10 U.S.C. 8662(a) states that not more than one vessel of the Navy may have the same name.
>
> The Columbia program was named in 2016 with the lead ship projected to enter service in 2027, consequently overlapping with the existing USS Columbia (SSN 771). SSBN 826 will be named after the nation's capital while SSN 771 is named after cities in South Carolina, Missouri, and Illinois named Columbia, following the naval tradition of SSNs being named after U.S. cities.
>
> (Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs, "SECNAV Names SSBN 826 USS District of Columbia," Release #22-10, June 3, 2022. A similar statement is available as Department of Defense, "SECNAV Names SSBN 826 USS District of Columbia," news release dated June 6, 2022, accessed June 13, 2022, at https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3053562/secnav-names-ssbn-826-uss-district-of-columbia/.)

SSN-771 entered service in 1995, and if its 33-year expected service life is extended for a few additional years, its final years of service could overlap with the initial years of service of SSBN-826. Such an overlap would pose an issue, as 10 U.S.C. §8662(a) states, "Not more than one vessel of the Navy may have the same name." Modifying SSBN-826's name from *Columbia* to *District of Columbia* avoids such an issue.[21] As discussed below (see "Congressional Responses to Announced Navy Ship-Naming Decisions"), the Navy in 1982 modified the name of SSN-705, another Los Angles-class attack submarine, from *Corpus Christi* to *City of Corpus Christi*, although that change was made for a reason other than avoiding a possible overlap in names with another ships.

See also Justin Katz, "Navy, General Dynamics Lay the Keel for Newly Renamed USS District of Columbia," *Breaking Defense*, June 5, 2022.

[22] Email from Navy Office of Legislative Affairs to CRS, June 6, 2022.

[23] See, for example, Richard R. Burgess, "SECNAV Selects USS Wisconsin as Name of Second Columbia SSBN," *Seapower*, October 28, 2020.

[24] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Columbia-class Submarine SSBN-828," press released dated January 13, 2025.

[25] For more on the Virginia-class program, see CRS Report RL32418, *Navy Virginia-Class Submarine Program and AUKUS Submarine (Pillar 1) Project: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

four cities, a river, another city, and a borough of New York City, suggesting that there is no longer a clear naming rule for the class:

- In 2020-2021, the Navy announced that four Virginia-class boats (SSNs 804-807) would be named *Barb*, *Tang*, *Wahoo*, and *Silversides*, respectively, in honor of earlier U.S. Navy attack submarines.
- On February 28, 2023, the Navy announced that SSN-808 would be named for former Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton.
- On May 25, 2023, the Navy announced that SSN-809 would be named *Long Island*.
- On October 3, 2023, the Navy announced that SSN-810 would be named *San Francisco*.
- On May 7, 2024, the Navy announced that SSN-811 would be named *Miami*.
- On September 20, 2024, the Navy announced that SSN-812 would be named *Baltimore*.
- On October 23, 2024, the Navy announced that SSN-813 would be named *Atlanta*.[26]
- On January 13, 2025, the Navy announced that SSNs 814, 815, and 816 would be named *Potomac* (in honor of the river and six prior Navy ships), *Norfolk* (in honor of the city in Virginia and three prior Navy ships), and *Brooklyn* (in honor of the borough of New York City and three prior Navy ships), respectively.[27]

The Navy's naming decisions for the 13 most recently named boats in the class can be viewed as responding to a situation of the Navy currently not having many state names available to use in naming new Navy ships. The 28 Virginia-class boats that to date have been named for states, together with 17 Ohio (SSBN-726) class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and cruise missile submarines (SSGNs) named for states,[28] one Columbia (SSBN-826) class SSBN named for a state (*Wisconsin* [SSBN-827]), one Seawolf (SSN-21) class attack submarine named for a state (*Connecticut* [SSN-22]), and one San Antonio (LPD-17) class amphibious ship named in part for a state (*New York* [LPD-21]),[29] make for a total of 48 in-service, under-construction, or planned

[26] The Navy's press release about the naming of the ship stated: "The naming selection of the future USS Atlanta (SSN 813) continues the trend of naming Virginia-class submarines after cities." (U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Nuclear-Powered Attack Submarine USS Atlanta (SSN 813)," press release dated October 23, 2024.)

[27] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Virginia-class Submarines SSN 814, SSN 815, and SSN 816," press released dated January 13, 2025.

[28] A total of 18 Ohio-class boats were built, of which 17 were named for states. (The fifth boat in the class, SSBN-730, was named for Sen. Henry M. Jackson.) The 18 boats were all built as SSBNs; the first four boats in the class were later converted into cruise missile submarines (SSGNs). For more on the Ohio-class boats, see CRS Report R41129, *Navy Columbia (SSBN-826) Class Ballistic Missile Submarine Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[29] As discussed below in the section on amphibious ships (LPDs), San Antonio (LPD-17) class amphibious ships are being named in part for cities and communities attacked on September 11, 2001. Three LPD-17 class ships are so named—New York (LPD-21), Arlington (LPD-24) (for the county in Virginia), and Somerset (LPD-25) (for the county in Pennsylvania). The Navy's July 2012 report to Congress on the Navy's policies and practices for naming ships, however, states

> On September 7, 2002, at a memorial service in New York City, [then-]Secretary [of the Navy Gordon] England announced that LPD 21 USS would be named USS New York. On the face of it, the choice was entirely consistent with the [LPD-17] type's "American cities" [naming] convention. However, when making the announcement, Secretary England made clear that the

(continued...)

ships that are named for states. (The two state names that remain available for potential application to Virginia-class boats or other Navy ships are Kansas and South Carolina—see the section below on state names not currently being used.[30])

Aircraft Carriers (CVNs)

Overview

The July 2012 Navy report to Congress states that "while carrier names are still 'individually considered,' they are now generally named in honor of past US Presidents."[31] Of the 17 most recent aircraft carriers (those with hull numbers 67 through 81), 12 have been named for past U.S. Presidents and 2 for Members of Congress.

The Navy is currently procuring Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) class carriers.[32] On January 16, 2007, the Navy announced that CVN-78, the lead ship in the CVN-78 class, would be named for President Gerald R. Ford. CVN-78 was procured in FY2008.

On May 29, 2011, the Navy announced that CVN-79, the second ship in the class, would be named for President John F. Kennedy.[33] CVN-79 was procured in FY2013.

On December 1, 2012, the Navy announced that CVN-80, the third ship in the class, would be named *Enterprise*. CVN-79 was procured in FY2018.[34]

On January 20, 2020, at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day ceremony, the Navy announced that the fourth ship in the class, CVN-81, which Congress authorized in FY2019, would be named for Ship's Cook Third Class Doris Miller, an African American enlisted sailor who in 1942 received the Navy Cross (the Navy's second-highest decoration awarded for valor in combat, following the

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ship's name honored far more than just a city. He named New York for the city *and* state of New York, the victims of the attacks of September 11, 2001, and for "…all the great leaders in New York who emerged after the tragic events [of 9-11]."

(Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 25. Ellipse, italics, and final bracketed portion as in original.)

[30] 10 U.S.C. 8662(a) states: "Not more than one vessel of the Navy may have the same name." Interpreting the phrase "vessel of the Navy" to mean a ship that has been delivered to the Navy or commissioned into service with the Navy would permit the Navy to name Virginia-class boats under construction for states whose names are assigned to Ohio-class boats that are to be decommissioned before the Virginia-class boats in question are to be delivered or commissioned into service. Interpreting "vessel of the Navy" to refer additionally to ships that are under construction for the Navy could require the Navy to defer the official act of naming one or more Virginia-class boats that are under construction until Ohio-class boats with the same state names have been decommissioned.

[31] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 37.

[32] For more on the CVN-78 program, see CRS Report RS20643, *Navy Ford (CVN-78) Class Aircraft Carrier Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[33] CVN-79 will be the second aircraft carrier named for Kennedy. The first, CV-67, was the last conventionally powered carrier procured for the Navy. CV-67 was procured in FY1963, entered service in 1968, and was decommissioned in 2007.

[34] The Navy made the announcement on the same day that it deactivated the 51-year-old aircraft carrier CVN-65, also named *Enterprise*. CVN-80 is the ninth Navy ship named *Enterprise*.

Medal of Honor) for his actions during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.[35] CVN-81 was procured in FY2019.[36]

On January 13, 2025, President Biden announced that the projected future aircraft carriers CVN-82 and CVN-83 would be named for former presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush.[37] A January 13, 2025, press report about the announcement stated that "Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro picked the names for the two carriers, as naming falls under the duties of the secretary of the Navy, according to two Navy officials. However, the White House made the announcement."[38] Under the Navy's FY2025 30-year (FY2025-FY2054) shipbuilding plan, CVN-82 is projected to be requested for procurement in FY2030, the budget for which Congress will consider in 2029, and CVN-83 is projected to be requested for procurement in FY2034, the budget for which Congress will consider in 2033. Given that ships that are named for people are sometimes referred to in short using only the named person's family name (e.g., *Ford*-class

[35] See Acting Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs, "Navy Will Name a Future Ford Class Aircraft Carrier After WWII Hero Doris Miller," Navy News Service, January 19, 2020, which states,

> On Dec. 7, 1941, Miller was collecting laundry on the battleship *West Virginia* (BB-48), when the attack from Japanese forces commenced. When the alarm for general quarters sounded he headed for his battle station, an anti-aircraft battery magazine, only to discover that torpedo damage had wrecked it. Miller was ordered to the ship's bridge to aid the mortally wounded commanding officer, and subsequently manned a .50 caliber Browning anti-aircraft machine gun until he ran out of ammunition. Miller then helped move many other injured Sailors as the ship was ordered abandoned due to her own fires and flaming oil floating down from the destroyed [battleship] *Arizona* (BB-33). *West Virginia* lost 150 of its 1,500 person crew.

See also William Cole, "Navy to Name Aircraft Carrier for Pearl Harbor Hero Doris Miller," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, January 17, 2020; Johnny Diaz, "Navy Aircraft Carrier to Be Named for Black Pearl Harbor Veteran," *New York Times*, January 18, 2020; Sam LaGrone, "Next Ford-Class Carrier to Be Named After Pearl Harbor Hero Doris Miller," *USNI News*, January 18, 2020; Laurel Wamsley, "U.S. Navy to Name Aircraft Carrier After WWII Hero Doris Miller," *NPR*, January 19, 2020; Carl Prine, "Navy's Newest Aircraft Carrier Named in Honor of African American Hero," *Navy Times*, January 20, 2020; Jay Price, "A Military 1st: A Supercarrier Is Named After An African American Sailor," *NPR*, September 29, 2020.

Miller was the first African American sailor to receive the Navy Cross, and is recognized as one of the first U.S. heroes of World War II. (See Thomas W. Cutrer and T. Michael Parrish, "How Dorie Miller's Bravery Helped Fight Navy Racism," *Navy Times*, October 31, 2019; and Marcus S. Cox, "WWII Review: Doris Miller, Pearl Harbor and the Birth of the Civil Rights Movement," *HistoryNet.com*, September 5, 2018.) Miller died in 1943 aboard the escort carrier *Liscome Bay* (CVE-56) when the ship was hit by a Japanese torpedo during the Battle of Makin in the Gilbert Islands, which now constitute the main part of the country of Kiribati. CVN-81 is the first U.S. aircraft carrier to be named for an African American and the first aircraft carrier to be named in honor of a sailor for actions while serving in the enlisted ranks. It is the second Navy ship to be named for Miller; the first, FF-1091, a Knox (FF-1052) class frigate, was procured in FY1967, commissioned into service in 1973, and decommissioned in 1991. FF-1091 was transferred to Turkey as a hulk in 1999 and sunk as a target in a Turkish naval exercise in 2001.

Prior to the naming of CVN-80, the most recent carrier that was not named for a President or Member of Congress was the second of the 17 most recently named carriers, *Nimitz* (CVN-68), which was procured in FY1967. CVN-68 was named for Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, a five-star admiral who commanded U.S. and allied forces in the Pacific in World War II. Nimitz died in 1966, the same year that Congress considered the FY1967 defense budget that funded the procurement of CVN-68.

[36] CVN-81 is treated in this report, as in the CRS report on the CVN-78 program—CRS Report RS20643, *Navy Ford (CVN-78) Class Aircraft Carrier Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke—as a ship that was procured in FY2019, consistent with congressional action on the Navy's FY2019 budget. (The Navy's FY2025 budget submission, like its FY2021-FY2024 submissions, shows CVN-81 as a ship that was procured in FY2020.) For further discussion of the procurement year of CVN-81, see CRS Report RS20643, *Navy Ford (CVN-78) Class Aircraft Carrier Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[37] White House, "Statement from President Biden Announcing the Names of CVN 82 and CVN 83," statement dated January 13, 2025.

[38] Heather Mongilio and Sam LaGrone, "White House: Next Two Aircraft Carriers Named for Bill Clinton, George W. Bush," *USNI News*, January 13, 2025.

carriers rather than *Gerald R. Ford*-class carriers), some care might henceforth need to be taken from time to time to distinguish CVN-77 (George H. W. Bush) from CVN-83 (George W. Bush).

The July 2012 Navy report to Congress, which was produced when Ray Mabus was the Secretary of the Navy, states that

> Secretary [of the Navy Ray] Mabus values the ability to consider [aircraft] carrier names on an individual, case-by-case basis, for two reasons. First, it will allow a future Secretary to name a future fleet aircraft carrier for someone or something other than a former President. Indeed, Secretary Mabus has a particular name in mind. With the scheduled decommissioning of USS Enterprise (CVN 65), perhaps the most famous ship name in US Navy history besides USS Constitution will be removed from the Naval Vessel Register. Secretary Mabus believes this circumstance could be remedied by bestowing the Enterprise's storied name on a future carrier.[39]

Two Carriers Named for Members of Congress—USS *Carl Vinson* and USS *John C. Stennis*

The two aircraft carriers named for Members of Congress are USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70), which entered service in 1982 and is scheduled to remain service until about 2032, and USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN-74), which entered service in 1995 and is scheduled to remain in service until the late 2040s. As shown in **Table 1**, both of these ships are examples of U.S. military ships that were named for persons who were living at the time the name was announced.

As shown in **Table 4**, in the 93rd Congress, provisions were proposed relating to the naming of CVN-70 for Representative Carl Vinson. As shown in **Table 3**, the 100th Congress passed an amendment relating to the naming of an aircraft carrier for Senator John Stennis. The amendment was enacted as Section 8138 of the FY1988 Department of Defense (DOD) DOD Appropriations Act, which formed part of H.J.Res. 395/P.L. 100-202 of December 22, 1987.[40] Section 8138 stated, "It is the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of Defense should name one of the new nuclear aircraft carriers appropriated in fiscal year 1988 [i.e., either CVN-74 or CVN-75] the U.S.S. JOHN C. STENNIS." As shown in **Table 1**, on June 23, 1988 (i.e., about six months after the enactment of P.L. 100-202), President Reagan announced that CVN-74 would be named for Stennis, and on December 19, 1988, the Navy officially named the ship for Stennis.

Some observers have raised the issue of whether CVN-74 should be renamed on account of Senator Stennis's positions on segregation and civil rights.[41] A July 13, 2020, press report states that U.S. Navy officials have "discussed renaming two aircraft carriers named after Southern U.S. legislators who advocated racial segregation: the USS John C. Stennis and USS Carl Vinson.

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[39] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 37. As noted earlier, on December 1, 2012, the Navy announced that CVN-80, the third ship in the class, would be named *Enterprise*.

[40] The provision was added to H.J.Res. 395 by S.Amdt. 1354, which was proposed by Sen. Ted Stevens on December 12, 1987, and agreed to in the Senate by voice vote on the same date.

[41] See Edward J. Ryan, "Renaming the USS John C. Stennis Is Not in Line with American Values," *Navy Times*, October 27, 2022; John P. Cordle, "Now Is the Time to Rename the Carrier John C. Stennis," *Navy Times*, October 11, 2022; Robert Farley, "USS John C. Stennis: Does the U.S. Navy Need to Rename This Aircraft Carrier?" *National Interest*, May 30, 2021; Josh Farley, "Two aircraft carriers were named for ardent segregationists. Could they ever be renamed?" *Kitsap Sun*, January 19, 2021; Katherine Hafner, "One of America's Aircraft Carriers Is Named for a Segregationist. Some Want to Rename it," *Virginian-Pilot*, July 1, 2020; Gina Harkins, "Navy Ship Names Could Fall Under Pentagon's New Diversity Review," *Military.com*, June 24, 2020; Geoff Ziezulewicz, "John C. Stennis Was an Ardent Segregationist. Is It Time to Change the Carrier's Name?" *Navy Times*, June 23, 2020; Bridget Naso, "Controversy Over John C. Stennis Aircraft Carrier Name," *NBC San Diego*, June 23, 2020; Reuben Keith Green, "The Case for Renaming the USS John C. Stennis," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, June 2020.

Within the military, the Stennis has been nicknamed 'Johnny Reb,' a common nickname for Confederate soldiers."[42]

For some general background information regarding changes to the names of Navy ships, see the section entitled "Changes to Names of Navy Ships" later in this report.

Destroyers (DDGs)

The Navy is currently procuring Arleigh Burke (DDG-51) class destroyers.[43] Destroyers traditionally have been named for famous U.S. naval leaders and distinguished heroes. The July 2012 Navy report to Congress discusses this tradition and states more specifically that destroyers are being named for deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy. Exceptions since 2012 include the following:

- On May 7, 2012, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-116 for a living person,[44] Thomas Hudner.
- On May 23, 2013, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-117 for a living person, Paul Ignatius, and that it was naming DDG-118 for the late Senator Daniel Inouye, who served in the U.S. Army during World War II.[45]
- On March 31 and April 5, 2016, it was reported that the Navy was naming DDG-120 for a living person, former Senator Carl Levin.[46]
- On July 28, 2016, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-124 for a living person, Harvey C. Barnum Jr.
- On July 11, 2018, the Navy announced that it was expanding the name of the destroyer *John. S. McCain* (DDG-56) to include a living person, Senator John S. McCain III.[47]

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[42] Michael R. Gordon, "Confederate Symbolism in the Military Stretches Far Beyond Flags, Base Names," *Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 2020. See also John Wilkens, "Racial Justice Turns to Navy Ships Named for Confederate Battles, Segregationists," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 26, 2020.

[43] For more on the DDG-51 program, see CRS Report RL32109, *Navy DDG-51 and DDG-1000 Destroyer Programs: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[44] Throughout this report, the term *living person* means a person who was living at the time the name was announced.

[45] DOD News Release No. 361-13, "Navy Names Next Two Destroyers," May 23, 2013.

[46] General Dynamics press release, "Navy Awards General Dynamics Bath Iron Works $644 Million for Construction of DDG 51 Class Destroyer," March 31, 2016, and Associated Press, "Navy Naming Destroyer after Former Michigan Senator Carl Levin," *Military Times*, April 5, 2016.

[47] The Navy announced that it was expanding the name of the destroyer John. S. McCain (DDG-56), originally named for Admiral John S. "Slew" McCain (1884-1945) and his son, Admiral John S. "Jack" McCain Jr. (1911-1981), to also include Sen. John S. McCain III, the grandson of Admiral John S. McCain and the son of Admiral John S. McCain Jr. DDG-56 was procured in FY1989 and was commissioned into service on July 2, 1994. John S. McCain III served as a Member of the House of Representatives from 1983 to 1987, and as a Senator from 1987 to 2018. Among his committee chairmanships, he was the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee from January 3, 2015, until his death on August 25, 2018. He was the Republican Party candidate for President in 2008. A July 12, 2018, Navy notice stated the following:

> Expanding the name of USS JOHN S. MCCAIN to include Senator McCain properly honors three generations of dedicated service to our Navy and nation. Admiral John S. McCain (1884-1945), served as a distinguished carrier task force commander of World War II. Admiral John S. McCain, Jr. (1911-1981), served as the former Commander-in- Chief, U.S. Pacific Command. Senator John S. McCain III, continued the legacy of service as a Naval Aviator during the Vietnam War. As a prisoner of war, McCain represented our nation with dignity and returned with honor.
>
> (Richard V. Spencer, SecNav notice 5030, July 12, 2018, "Name Added to Ship Currently in

(continued...)

- On May 6, 2019, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-133 for a living person, former Senator Sam Nunn, who had served in the Coast Guard from 1959 to 1960, and in the Coast Guard Reserve from 1960 until 1968.[48]
- On January 11, 2023, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-140 for a living person, Thomas G. Kelley.[49]
- On May 22, 2024, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-143 for a living person, former Secretary of the Navy Richard J. Danzig, and DDG-144 for a living person, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chief of Naval Operations Michael G. Mullen.[50]
- On January 3, 2025, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-145 *Intrepid*, to honor "the skilled, fearless crews of the four previous Navy ships to bear the name."[51]
- On January 4, 2025, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-146 for a living person, former U.S. Senator, Nebraska governor, and naval officer Robert Kerrey (Joseph Robert Kerrey), who received the Medal of Honor for heroism displayed during the Vietnam War.[52]
- On January 15, 2025, the Navy announced that it was naming DDG-147 for a living person, former Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus (Raymond Edwin Mabus, Jr.); DDG-148 for a living person, retired Marine Corps Lance Corporal Kyle Carpenter (William "Kyle" Carpenter), who received the Medal of Honor for his actions in combat in Afghanistan in 2010; and DDG-149 for retired Navy Hospital Corpsman Third Class Robert R. Ingram (Robert Ronald Ingram), who received the Medal of Honor for his actions in saving several other Marines in Vietnam in 1966.[53]

Fleet," posted at "VIDEO: Sen. John McCain Added to Destroyer's Namesake Along with Father, Grandfather," *USNI News*, July 11, 2018.)

See also the press release entitled "U.S. Navy Names Ship After U.S. Senator John McCain," July 11, 2018, accessed July 12, 2018, at https://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/7/u-s-navy-names-ship-after-u-s-senator-john-mccain; Caitlin Doornbos, "McCain Joins Father and Grandfather on Ship's List of Namesakes," *Stars and Stripes*, July 11, 2018. See also "VIDEO: Sen. John McCain Added to Destroyer's Namesake Along with Father, Grandfather," *USNI News*, July 11, 2018; Ken Moritsugu (Associated Press), "US Navy Dedicates Japan-Based Destroyer to US Sen. McCain," *Navy Times*, July 12, 2018.

[48] See Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs, "SECNAV Names New Destroyer In Honor of US Senator from Georgia," *Navy News Service*, May 6, 2019. Nunn was a Senator from 1972 to 1997. During his time in the Senate, he was, among other things, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee from January 1987 to January 1995.

[49] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Names Future Arleigh Burke-class Destroyer after MoH Recipient Captain Thomas G. Kelley," January 12, 2023, which states: "In 2020, former Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer announced his intention to name a ship after Kelley but had yet to dedicate the name to an assigned hull number. Today, Del Toro assigns the name to DDG-140, which was appropriated in the fiscal year 2023 budget." See also Heather Mongilio, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Destroyer After MoH Recipient Thomas Gunning Kelley," *USNI News*, January 11, 2023; Konstantin Toropin, "Future Destroyer Will Honor Vietnam War Hero," *Military.com*, January 11, 2023.

[50] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Two Future Guided Missile Destroyers (DDG 143) and (DDG 144)," press release dated May 22, 2024.

[51] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Names Navy's Newest Guided Missile Destroyer DDG 145," press release dated January 3, 2025.

[52] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Names Navy's Newest Guided Missile Destroyer (DDG 146) After MoH Recipient, Former U.S. Navy Seal, U.S. Senator and Nebraska Governor Robert Kerrey," press release dated January 4, 2025.

[53] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Destroyers and Frigate at the 37th Surface Navy Association (SNA) National Symposium," Navy news article dated January 15, 2025.

As of June 30, 2025, the Navy had announced names for all DDG-51 class destroyers procured through DDG-149, the first of two DDG-51s programmed to be requested for procurement in FY2027.

Frigates (FFGs)

Current Navy plans call for procuring a total of 20 Constellation (FFG-62) class frigates.[54] The first six ships in the class were named for people and U.S. Navy ships of the Revolutionary War and the early republic:

- On October 7, 2020, the Navy announced that the first ship in the class, FFG-62,[55] which was procured in FY2020, would be named *Constellation*, in honor of one of the first six U.S. Navy ships authorized by Congress in 1794—the heavy frigates *United States*, *Constellation*, *Constitution*, *Chesapeake*, *Congres*s, and *President*. Ships in this class are consequently now known as Constellation (FFG-62) class ships. FFG-62 is the fifth Navy ship to be named *Constellation*.[56]
- On December 2, 2020, in testimony to the Readiness and Management Support subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, then-Secretary of the Navy Kenneth Braithwaite announced that the second ship in the class, FFG-63, would be named *Congress*, in honor of another one of those first six ships.[57] Six previous U.S. naval ships have been named *Congress*, of which the frigate authorized by Congress in 1794 was the third. The sixth *Congress* was a motor launch that the Navy acquired and placed in service in 1918 and then sold in 1919.[58]
- On January 15, 2021, the Navy announced that the third ship in the class, FFG-64, would be named *Chesapeake*, in honor of another one of those first six ships.
- On June 29, 2023, the Navy announced in Paris that the fourth ship in the class, FFG-65, would be named *Lafayette*, in honor of Marquis de Lafayette and his

[54] For more on the FFG-62 program, see CRS Report R44972, *Navy Constellation (FFG-62) Class Frigate Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[55] The previous class of U.S. Navy frigates, the *Oliver Hazard Perry* (FFG-7) class, ended with USS *Ingraham* (FFG-61).

[56] For an additional perspective on the Navy's selection of *Constellation* as the name for FFG-62, see Rob Doane, Pauline Shanks Kaurin, and Evan Wilson, "The Constellation Controversy and the Navy's Culture, Naming Its New Frigate after a Ship Whose Origins Were Obscured by Navy Officials for Years Brings into Question the Service's Understanding of Its Own History," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 2024.

[57] Source: Transcript of the hearing, which focused on Navy and Marine Corps readiness. In his testimony, then-Secretary Braithwaite stated,

> So I'd like to take this moment to announce that the next Constellation-class frigate will be named for one of those original six, a name selected by our first president, George Washington. The ship will be USS Congress to honor and recognize the work that you and your staff do every day to support our sailors, our marines and the people of the United States of America. On behalf of the Department of the Navy, our marines, our sailors, our civilian workforce and their families that serve at their side, thank you for what you do to enhance our readiness. I look forward to your questions.

See also Gina Harkins, "The Navy is Naming its Next New Frigate USS Congress," *Military.com*, December 3, 2020; Joseph Trevithick, "Navy Boss Tells Congress That A New Frigate Will Be Named USS Congress. No, Really," *The Drive*, December 2, 2020.

[58] See U.S. Navy, Naval History and Heritage Command, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, accessed December 3, 2020, at https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs.html. See also Richard R. Burgess, "SECNAV Selects USS Congress as Name of Second Constellation Frigate," *Seapower*, December 2, 2020.

service during the American Revolutionary War. A Navy press release about the announcement noted that Congress in 2002 posthumously made Lafayette an honorary U.S. citizen, and that three previous Navy vessels—a sidewheel ironclad ram, a transport ship (AP-53), and a ballistic missile submarine (SSBN-616)—were named in honor of Lafayette.[59]

- On May 23, 2024, the Navy announced that the fifth ship in the class, FFG-66, would be named *Hamilton*, in honor of Alexander Hamilton. As Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton in 1790 spurred the establishment of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, which subsequently became the U.S. Coast Guard. Ships previously named for Hamilton served in the Navy, the Coast Guard, and the Revenue Cutter Service.[60]
- On June 21, 2024, the Navy announced that the sixth ship in the class, FFG-67, would be named Galvez, in honor of Conde Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid and his service during the American Revolutionary War.[61]

On December 16, 2024, the Navy announced that the seventh ship in the class, FFG-68, would be named in 2025.[62] On January 15, 2025, the Navy announced that FFG-68 would be named for a living person, retired Navy Commander Everett Alvarez Jr., who was the first U.S. aviator taken captive in the Vietnam War after being shot down near Hanoi. Alvarez received the Congressional Gold Medal, the Silver Star, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts.[63]

[59] "SECNAV Names Future Constellation-Class Guided-Missile Frigate Lafayette," U.S. Navy press release, June 29, 2023.

[60] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Guided Missile Frigate USS Hamilton (FFG 66)," press release dated May 23, 2024.

[61] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Names Future Guided Missile Frigate USS Galvez (FFG 67)," press release dated June 21, 2024. The press release states

> "Gálvez wasn't just a supporter from afar—his actions directly influenced the course of the war and helped secure American Independence," said Secretary [of the Navy Carlos] Del Toro. "That is why, in his homeland, I am incredibly pleased to announce that our next Constellation-class frigate, FFG 67, will be named the USS Gálvez."
>
> During the American Revolution, Gálvez provided supplies, intelligence, and military support to the American colonists and led military victories for Spain against Great Britain. As governor of Spain's territory in Louisiana, he covertly worked with American agent Oliver Pollock in 1777 to transfer money, gunpowder, and vital supplies to colonial forces.
>
> In his direct service to Spain, Gálvez recruited an army of 7,500 men made up of Spanish, French, African American, Mexican, Cuban, and Anglo-American forces. In 1779-1780, his forces defeated the British at Battles in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Natchez, Mississippi; and Mobile, Alabama. In 1781, he successfully seized Pensacola, Florida, and was wounded during the fighting. His contributions were recognized by George Washington as a decisive factor in the outcome of the Revolutionary War.
>
> After the Revolutionary War, Gálvez led an effort to chart the Gulf of Mexico, including Galveston Bay, and served as the viceroy of New Spain. In 2014, the United States Congress passed P.L. 113-229, granting him honorary citizenship of the United States—making him one of only eight honorary citizens in U.S. history.

[62] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Guided Missile Frigate USS Joy Bright Hancock (FFG 69)," press release dated December 16, 2024.

[63] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Destroyers and Frigate at the 37th Surface Navy Association (SNA) National Symposium," Navy news article dated January 15, 2025.

On December 16, 2024, as part of the same announcement that stated the intent to name FFG-68 in 2025, the Navy announced that the eighth ship in the class, FFG-69, would be named for Captain Joy Bright Hancock, who served in the Navy between World War I and 1953.[64]

Littoral Combat Ships (LCSs)

A total of 35 littoral combat ships (LCSs) were procured through FY2019.[65] All 35 have been named. LCSs were at first named for U.S. mid-tier cities, small towns, and other U.S. communities.[66] The naming rule was later adjusted to regionally important U.S. cities and communities.

An exception occurred on February 10, 2012, when the Navy announced that it was naming LCS-10 for former Representative Gabrielle Giffords.[67] Another exception occurred on February 23, 2018, when President Trump, in a press conference with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, announced that an LCS would be named *Canberra*, in honor of HMAS *Canberra* (D33), an Australian cruiser named for the capital city of Australia that fought alongside U.S. Navy forces in World War II and was scuttled after being damaged by Japanese attack in the Battle of Savo Island on August 9, 1942.[68] LCS-30 was named *Canberra*. A previous U.S. Navy

[64] A Navy press release about the naming of FFG-69 stated in part

> The future USS Joy Bright Hancock honors her namesake's trailblazing service beginning as a Yeoman in World War I, and her integral role in passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act in 1948. This will be the first U.S. Navy vessel named for Hancock….
>
> The naming selection honors Captain Joy Bright Hancock (1898–1986). Born in New Jersey, Hancock received degrees from the George Washington University and the Crawford School of Foreign Service in Washington, DC; the Pierce School of Business Administration in Philadelphia; and the Paris Branch of the New York School of Fine Arts.
>
> During World War I, Hancock was a Yeoman (F) First Class on duty at the New York Shipbuilding Corporation in Camden, New Jersey. By then end of the war she was Chief Yeoman at the U.S. Naval Air Station in Cape May, New Jersey. Between 1934 and 1942 she was the civilian head of Editorial and Research Section of the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics and the Special Assistant to the Bureau's Chief. In the first year of World War II she was commissioned Lieutenant, Women's Reserve, U.S. Naval Reserve, also known as WAVES. In February 1946 she became the director of WAVES and advanced through rank to Captain in the Naval Reserve by 26 July 1946.
>
> Captain Hancock, who was instrumental in the passage of the Women's Armed Service Integration Act of 1948, was one of eight women to be sworn into the regular Navy and was subsequently appointed Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Women. She retired from active duty in June 1953. During her long career, Captain Hancock received commendations for her service to the Bureau of Naval Aeronautics and the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air) during WWII, as well as for her assistance in expanding opportunities for women in the Navy. In recognition of her trailblazing career, the Navy now annually awards the Joy Bright Hancock Award to honor the visionary leadership of officers whose ideals foster an inclusive culture while furthering the integration of women in the Navy. There have been no previous Navy vessels named for Joy Bright Hancock.
>
> (U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Guided Missile Frigate USS Joy Bright Hancock (FFG 69)," press release dated December 16, 2024.)

[65] For more on the LCS program, see CRS Report RL33741, *Navy Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[66] The Navy named LCS-1 and LCS-2 *Freedom* and *Independence*, respectively, after multiple U.S. cities with these names.

[67] For the Navy's discussion of this naming choice, see Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 33-34.

[68] Richard R. Burgess, "President Trump Names Navy LCS for World War II Australian Cruiser," *Seapower*, February 23, 2018.

ship, the gun cruiser *Canberra* (CA-70), which served from 1943 to 1947 and again from 1956 to 1970, was similarly named in honor of HMAS *Canberra*. There is also a current HMAS *Canberra* (L02), an amphibious assault ship (i.e., helicopter carrier) that entered service in 2014 and now serves as the flagship of the Australian navy.[69] The situation of LCS-30 and L02 sharing the same name will presumably not violate 10 U.S.C. §8662(a)—which states that "not more than one vessel of the Navy may have the same name"—because 10 U.S.C. §8662 is a statute governing the naming of U.S. Navy ships and L02 is not a U.S. Navy ship.

Amphibious Assault Ships (LHAs)

Amphibious assault ships (LHAs), which look like medium-sized aircraft carriers, are being named for U.S. Marine Corps battles, early U.S. Navy sailing ships, or aircraft carriers from World War II.[70]

On June 27, 2008, the Navy announced that the first LHA-6 class amphibious assault ship, LHA-6, would be named *America*, a name previously used for an aircraft carrier (CV-66) that served in the Navy from 1965 to 1996.

On May 4, 2012, the Navy announced that LHA-7, the second ship in the class, would be named *Tripoli*, the location of famous Marine battles in the First Barbary War. The Navy reaffirmed this name selection with a more formal announcement on May 30, 2014.

On November 9, 2016, the Navy announced that LHA-8, the third ship in the class, would be named *Bougainville*, the location of a famous World War II campaign in the Pacific.

On December 13, 2022, the Navy announced that LHA-9, the fourth ship in the class, LHA-9, would be named *Fallujah* to commemorate the first and second battles of Fallujah, two U.S.-led offensives during the Iraq War.

On May 2, 2024, the Navy announced that LHA-10, the fifth ship in the class, would be named *Helmand Province* to commemorate multiple U.S. Marine Corps operations that took place in Afghanistan's Helmand Province as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Under the Navy's FY2025 budget submission, LHA-10 is scheduled for procurement in FY2027, the budget for which Congress will consider in 2026.

Amphibious Ships (LPDs)

San Antonio (LPD-17) class amphibious ships are being named for major U.S. cities and communities (with major being defined as being one of the top three population centers in a state), and the cities and communities that were attacked on September 11, 2001. Exceptions include the following:

- On April 23, 2010, the Navy announced that it was naming LPD-26 for the late Representative John P. Murtha.[71]

[69] In between D33 and L02, there was also HMAS *Canberra* (FFG 02), a frigate that served in Australia's navy from 1981 to 2005.

[70] The Navy states that the name given to the amphibious assault ship LHA-9 "follows the tradition of naming amphibious assault ships after U.S. Marine Corps battles, early U.S. sailing ships, or legacy names of earlier carriers from World War II." (U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Names Future America-class Amphibious Assault Ship Fallujah," December 13, 2022.) For more on the LHA program, see CRS Report R43543, *Navy LPD-17 Flight II and LHA Amphibious Ship Programs: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[71] For the Navy's discussion of this naming choice, see Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of*

(continued...)

- On May 2, 2018, the Navy announced that it was naming LPD-29 for Navy Captain Richard M. McCool Jr., who received the Medal of Honor for his actions in World War II and later served in the Korean and Vietnam wars.
- On January 10, 2025, the Navy announced that it was naming LPD-33 for Marine Corps 1st Lieutenant Travis Manion, who received the Silver Star for his actions in a combat situation in which he was fatally wounded in Iraq in April 2007. Manion Hall, a student barracks at Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA, is also named in his honor.[72]

On October 10, 2019, the Navy announced that LPD-30 will be named *Harrisburg*, for the city in Pennsylvania. LPD-30 is to be the first of a new version, or flight, of the LPD-17 class design called the LPD-17 Flight II design.[73] On January 15, 2021, the Navy announced that LPD-31 would be named *Pittsburgh*, making it the second LPD-17 Flight II class ship in a row named for a city in Pennsylvania. On October 12, 2023, the Navy announced that LPD-32 would be named *Philadelphia*, making it the third LPD-17 Flight II ship in a row named for a city in Pennsylvania.

Medium Landing Ships (LSMs)

The Navy is planning to build a new class of 18 to 35 smaller amphibious landing ships referred to as Medium Landing Ships (LSMs).[74] The Navy's FY2025 budget submission requested the procurement of the first LSM. On January 16, 2025, the Navy announced that the first ship in the class, LSM-1, would be named *McClung* in honor of Major Megan M. L. McClung, a Marine Corps Public Affairs Officer who was killed in action in Iraq in 2006.[75] McClung was the first female Marine officer to be killed in the Iraq war and the first female graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy to be killed in the line of duty. Ships in the class will henceforth be referred to as McClung-class ships. The Navy's announcement about the naming of LSM-1 did not state a naming rule for the class.

Oilers (TAOs)

On January 6, 2016, the Navy announced that the Navy's new oilers would be named for "people who fought for civil rights and human rights,"[76] and that the first ship in the class, TAO-205, which was procured in FY2016, would be named for Representative John Lewis. The ships in this class consequently are now referred to as John Lewis (TAO-205) class ships. The Navy wants to procure a total of 20 John Lewis-class ships.[77]

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the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 28-30. See also Dan Lamothe, "As Anger Still Simmers, Navy Christening the USS John P. Murtha," *Washington Post*, March 20, 2015.

[72] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Amphibious Transport Dock the Future USS Travis Manion (LPD 33)," press release dated January 10, 2025.

[73] For more on the LPD-17 Flight II program, see CRS Report R43543, *Navy LPD-17 Flight II and LHA Amphibious Ship Programs: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[74] For more on the LSM program, see CRS Report R46374, *Navy Medium Landing Ship (LSM) Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[75] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Medium Landing Ship LSM 1," Navy news article dated January 16, 2025.

[76] Valerie Insinna, "Navy to Name Next Generation Oilers for Civil Rights Icons," *Defense Daily*, January 7, 2016: 4.

[77] For more on the John Lewis-class program, see CRS Report R43546, *Navy John Lewis (TAO-205) Class Oiler Shipbuilding Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

On July 28, 2016, it was reported that the Navy would name the second through sixth ships in the class (TAOs 206-210) for Harvey Milk, Earl Warren, Robert F. Kennedy, Lucy Stone, and Sojourner Truth, respectively. On February 25, 2022, the Navy announced that the seventh ship in the class, TAO-211, would be named for Thurgood Marshall. On March 31, 2022, the Navy announced that the eighth ship in the class, TAO-212, would be named for Ruth Bader Ginsburg. On September 17, 2023, the Navy announced that the ninth ship in the class, TAO-213, would be named for Harriet Tubman. On September 18, 2024, the Navy announced that the 10th ship in the class, TAO-214, would be named for Dolores Huerta. On January 16, 2025, the Navy announced that the 11th and 12th ships in the class, TAO-215 and TAO-216, would be named for two Navy Chaplains—Captain Joshua L. Goldberg and Captain Thomas D. Parham Jr., respectively. Under the Navy's FY2025 budget submission, TAO-215 and TAO-216 are programmed to be requested for procurement in FY2026.

On June 27, 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced in a video posted to X[78] that the Department of the Navy would change the name of TAO-206 from *Harvey Milk* to *Oscar V. Peterson*.[79] Secretary of the Navy John Phelan changed the ship's name the same day.[80] TAO-206 was delivered to the Navy on July 11, 2023, and began its first sail in March 2024.[81] During World War II, Peterson was a chief petty officer on a Navy oiler that was attacked by Japanese aircraft during the Battle of the Coral Sea. Peterson took actions to help keep the ship operational but sustained burn injuries in doing so and later died from his wounds. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. TAO-206 is the second ship to be named for Oscar V. Peterson; the first was the destroyer escort USS *Peterson* (DE-152), which was in commission with the Navy from September 1943 to May 1946, and again from May 1952 to June 1965.[82]

A June 27, 2025, press report stated

> A defense official told USNI News that the name change followed a Pentagon review of names in the department.
>
> "On June 26, 2025, at the request of Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan renamed the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Harvey Milk (TAO-206) the USNS Oscar V. Peterson (TAO-206)," the official said. "Based on typical Navy maintenance cycles, the complexities of repainting, updating official symbols, and procuring branded materials, it is estimated that the collective updates would be completed within a period of no longer than six months after funding. There was a review of all

[78] See https://x.com/SecDef/status/1938568563838886269, accessed June 30, 2025.

[79] For press reports about the announced change in names, see, for example, Lolita C. Baldor, "USNS Harvey Milk Is Renamed after a WWII Sailor in the Latest Pentagon Diversity Purge," *Associated Press*, June 27, 2025; Anne Flaherty and Chris Boccia, "Hegseth Announces USNS Harvey Milk Is Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson," *ABC News*, June 27, 2025; Christine Hauser, "Pentagon Strips Harvey Milk's Name From Navy Vessel," *New York Times*, June 27, 2025; Edward Helmore, "Hegseth Announces New Name of US Navy Ship that Honored Gay Rights Icon Harvey Milk," *Guardian*, June 27, 2025; Sam LaGrone, "SECDEF Hegseth Announces New Name for USNS Harvey Milk," *USNI News*, June 27, 2025; Morgan Phillips, "Hegseth Announces Navy Oil Tanker Named after Gay Rights Leader Renamed after Medal of Honor Recipient," *Fox News*, June 27, 2025; Alex Sundby, "USNS Harvey Milk, Ship Honoring Slain Gay Rights Leader, Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson, Hegseth Says," *CBS News*, June 27, 2025; and Alana Wise, "USNS Harvey Milk Renamed amid Trump Administration Efforts to Cut DEI," *NPR*, June 27, 2025.

[80] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Renames John Lewis-class Fleet Replenishment Oiler after Navy WWII Medal of Honor Recipient Chief Petty Officer Oscar V. Peterson," news release dated June 27, 2025.

[81] Source for first sail date: U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Renames John Lewis-class Fleet Replenishment Oiler after Navy WWII Medal of Honor Recipient Chief Petty Officer Oscar V. Peterson," news release dated June 27, 2025.

[82] For the ship's commissioning and decommissioning dates, see "Peterson DE 152," Naval Cover Museum, updated May 15, 2024, accessed June 30, 2025; "Peterson (DE-152)," Naval History and Heritage Command, April 6, 2016, accessed June 30, 2025; and "USS *Peterson* (DE-152)," *Wikipedi*a, updated April 18, 2025, accessed June 30, 2025.

> installations and assets conducted to ensure all installations and assets are reflective of the Commander in Chief's priorities, the nation's history and the warrior ethos."
>
> "There are no plans to rename any other ships in this class."[83]

Another June 27, 2025, press report stated: "There are currently no plans to rename other ships in this class, according to Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson."[84]

Ocean Surveillance Ships (TAGOSs)

On January 10, 2025, the Navy announced that its new TAGOS-25 class of ocean surveillance ships[85] would be called the Explorer class, "in honor of those who made discoveries under sea, on land, and in the skies above," and that the first two ships in the class (TAGOS-25 and TAGOS-26) would be named *Don Walsh* and *Victor Vescovo*, respectively.[86] Given the name selected for TAGOS-25, the class might also come to be known as the Don Walsh class or Walsh class for short. TAGOS-25 was procured in FY2022; TAGOS-26 is programmed to be requested for procurement in FY2026.

Towing, Salvage, and Rescue Ships (TATSs)

On March 12, 2019, the Navy announced that that TATS-6, the first ship in a new class of towing, salvage, and rescue ships (TATSs), would be named *Navajo*, and that ships in this class will be named for prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes. As of June 30, 2025, the Navy had announced names for all TATSs through TATS-14, which was procured in FY2022, and had not announced a name for TATS-15, which was procured in FY2023.

Expeditionary Fast Transports (EPFs)

Expeditionary fast transports (EPFs), which until May 2011 were being procured by the Army as well as by the Navy, were at first named for American traits and values. In December 2009, the naming rule for EPFs was changed to small U.S. cities. At some point between December 2010 and October 2011, it was adjusted to small U.S. cities and counties.[87] As of June 30, 2025, the Navy had announced names for all EPFs through EPF-16, which was procured in FY2022.

Expeditionary Medical Ships (EMSs)

The Navy is acquiring a new class of Expeditionary Medical Ships (EMSs) that are medical-care variants of the EPF design discussed above. The ships are being named for U.S. military hospitals,[88] and more specifically for Navy medical facilities and their staff. On May 15, 2023, the Navy announced that the first such ship, EMS-1, which was procured in FY2022, will be named *Bethesda*, "to honor and immortalize the history and community of healthcare

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[83] Sam LaGrone, "SECDEF Hegseth Announces New Name for USNS Harvey Milk," *USNI News*, June 27, 2025.

[84] Anne Flaherty and Chris Boccia, "Hegseth Announces USNS Harvey Milk Is Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson," *ABC News*, June 27, 2025.

[85] For more on the TAGOS-25 program, see CRS In Focus IF11838, *Navy TAGOS-25 Ocean Surveillance Shipbuilding Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[86] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Del Toro Names T-AGOS Explorer-Class and First Two Ships," press release dated January 10, 2025.

[87] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 18-19.

[88] U.S. Navy, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, "SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Medical Ship USNS Balboa (EMS 2)," November 6, 2023.

professionals that make up Naval Support Activity Bethesda, who have saved and rehabilitated the lives of service members, veterans, civilians, their families, and even Presidents of the United States."[89] Ships in the class consequently can be referred to as Bethesda-class ships.

On October 27, 2023, the Navy announced that EMS-2, which was procured in FY2023, will be named *Balboa*, after the informal name for Naval Medical Center San Diego, to honor "the legacy and commitment of Navy doctors, nurses, corpsmen, and staff of Balboa Naval Hospital in caring for the needs of U.S. Service Members."

On January 8, 2025, the Navy announced that EMS-3, which was also procured in FY2023, will be named *Portsmouth*, "to honor the legacy and commitment of the Navy doctors, nurses, corpsmen and staff of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and the city of Portsmouth, Virginia."[90]

Expeditionary Transport Docks (ESDs) and Expeditionary Sea Bases (ESBs)

The Navy's two expeditionary transport docks (ESDs 1 and 2) and its expeditionary sea bases (ESB 3 and higher) are being named for famous names or places of historical significance to U.S. Marines. On November 10, 2020, the Navy announced that ESB-6, which was procured in FY2018, would be named for Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Major John L. Canley.[91] On January 15, 2021, the Navy announced that ESB-7, which was procured in FY2019, would be named for Marine Corps veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Private First Class Robert E. Simanek. On July 27, 2023, the Navy announced that ESB-8, which was procured in FY2022, would be named for Marine Corps Korean War veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Hector A. Cafferata Jr.

Aspects of Navy Ship Names

Two State Names Not Currently Being Used, Particularly *Kansas*

As noted earlier in the section on evolution over time in Navy ship-naming rules, state names were once given to battleships, then later to nuclear-powered cruisers and ballistic missile submarines, and most recently to (in most cases) Virginia-class attack submarines. As noted earlier in the section on names for attack submarines, a total of 48 in-service, under-construction, or planned Navy ships (47 of them submarines) are currently named for states.

The two states whose names are not currently being used for active Navy ships are Kansas and South Carolina. For some time, Kansas has been the state for which, by far, the most time has passed since a ship named for the state has been in commissioned service with the Navy as a

[89] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Names Navy's First-in-Class Expeditionary Medical Ship after National Naval Medical Center Bethesda," May 15, 2023. The Navy's naming announcement was also reported to have occurred on May 12 (rather than May 15), 2023. See, for example, Mike Schuler, "U.S. Navy Names Next-Generation Hospital Ship," *gCaptain*, May 12, 2023. See also Naval News staff, "SECNAV Names US Navy's First-In-Class Expeditionary Medical Ship," *Naval News*, May 13, 2023. On January 8, 2024, a naming ceremony for the ship was held at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE). (See U.S. Navy, SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Medical Ship USNS Bethesda (EMS 1), Honors Medical Legacy, press release dated January 8, 2024.)

[90] U.S. Navy, "Navy Names Third Expeditionary Medical Ship USNS Portsmouth (EMS 3)," press release dated January 8, 2025. In the quoted portion of the press release, a typo mistakenly spelled Virginia as Virgina. CRS corrected the spelling.

[91] See, for example, Seapower Staff, "SECNAV Names Future Expeditionary Sea Base USS John L. Canley," *Seapower*, November 10, 2020; Gina Harkins, "Navy's Newest Ship to Be Named for Marine Sgt. Maj. John Canley, Vietnam War Hero," *Military.com*, November 11, 2020.

combat asset, and for which no ship by that name is currently under construction. As of June 30, 2025, it has been more than 103 years since the decommissioning on December 16, 1921, of the battleship *Kansas* (BB-21), the most recent ship named for the state of Kansas that was in commissioned service with the Navy as a combat asset.[92] The most recent ship named for South Carolina—the nuclear-powered cruiser *South Carolina* (CGN-37)—was decommissioned on July 30, 1999.

On December 23, 2019, the Navy announced that SSN-802, and SSN-803, the two Virginia-class attack submarines procured in FY2019, would be named for the states of Oklahoma and Arizona, respectively.[93] Prior to this naming announcement, Arizona and Oklahoma were the two states after Kansas for which the most time had passed since a Navy ship bearing the state's name had been in commissioned service. The previous ships named for these two states were battleships sunk in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941—the battleship *Arizona* (BB-39), which was decommissioned on December 29, 1941, following its sinking in the attack, and the battleship *Oklahoma* (BB-37), which was raised and surveyed after the attack, found to be too uneconomical to repair, and decommissioned in 1944.[94] BB-39 now serves as a memorial.

While there is no rule requiring the Navy, in selecting state names for ships, to choose states for which the most time has passed since a ship named for the state has been in commissioned service with the Navy as a combat asset, advocates of naming a ship for a certain state may choose to point out, among other things, the length of time that has transpired since a ship named for the state has been in commissioned service with the Navy as a combat asset.

In its announcement of April 13, 2012, that the Navy was naming the Virginia-class attack submarines SSNs 786 through 790 for Illinois, Washington, Colorado, Indiana, and South Dakota, respectively, DOD stated that "none of the five states has had a ship named for it for more than 49 years. The most recent to serve was the battleship *Indiana*, which was decommissioned in October 1963."[95] The July 2012 Navy report to Congress states the following: "Before deciding on which names to select [for the five submarines], [then-]Secretary [of the Navy Ray] Mabus asked for a list of State names that had been absent the longest from the US Naval Register."[96] In its announcement of November 19, 2012, that the Navy was naming the Virginia-class attack submarine SSN-791 for Delaware, DOD quoted then-Secretary Mabus as saying, "It has been too long since there has been a USS Delaware in the fleet."[97]

A Navy News Service article about the Navy's September 18, 2014, announcement that the Virginia-class attack submarine SSN-792 was being named for Vermont stated that "[t]his is the first ship named for Vermont since 1920[,] when the second USS Vermont was decommissioned."[98] A Navy News Service article about the Navy's October 10, 2014, announcement that the Virginia-class attack submarine SSN-793 was being named for Oregon

[92] The Littoral Combat Ship *Kansas City* (LCS-22), named for the adjacent cities of Kansas City, MO, and Kansas City, KS, was procured in FY2015 and was commissioned into service on June 20, 2020. Its name was announced by the Navy in July 2015.

[93] Acting Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs, "Acting SECNAV Names Two Newest Virginia-Class Subs for Greatest-Gen Heroes of Pearl Harbor," *Navy News Service*, December 23, 2019.

[94] The Los Angeles (SSN-688) class attack submarine Oklahoma City (SSN-723) entered service in 1988 and will reach the end of its 33-year expected service life in 2021.

[95] DOD News Release No. 264-12, "Navy Names Five New Submarines," April 13, 2012.

[96] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 48.

[97] DOD News Release No. 914-12, "Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus Names the Next Virginia-Class Submarine USS Delaware with Dr. Jill Biden as the Sponsor," November 19, 2012.

[98] "SECNAV Names Virginia-class Submarine, USS Vermont," *Navy News Service*, September 18, 2014.

stated that the previous USS *Oregon* "was a battleship best known for its roles in the Spanish American War when it helped destroy Admiral Cervera's fleet and in the Philippine-American War; it performed blockade duty in Manila Bay and off Lingayen Gulf, served as a station ship, and aided in the capture of Vigan."[99]

A Navy News Service article about the Navy's January 19, 2016, announcement that the Virginia-class attack submarine SSN-801 was being named for Utah stated, "The future USS Utah will be the second naval vessel to bear the name; the first, a battleship designated BB-31, was commissioned in 1911 and had a long, honorable time in service.... While conducting anti-gunnery exercises in Pearl Harbor, BB-31 was struck by a torpedo and capsized during the initial stages of the Japanese attack [on December 7, 1941]. She was struck from the Navy record Nov. 13, 1944 and received a battle star for her service in World War I."[100]

The Navy's naming announcements for Virginia-class submarines have reduced the group of states for which several decades had passed since a ship named for the state had been in commissioned service with the Navy as a combat asset, and for which no ship by that name is currently under construction. This group used to include Illinois, Delaware, Vermont, Oregon, Montana, Oklahoma, and Arizona, but Virginia-class attack submarines have now been named for these states. (See the Virginia-class attack submarine naming announcements of April 13, 2012; November 19, 2012; September 18, 2014; October 10, 2014; September 2, 2015, and December 23, 2019, respectively.)

Ships Named for Living Persons

In the early years of the republic, Navy ships were occasionally named for living persons, meaning (throughout this CRS report) persons who were living at the time the name was announced. The practice ended in 1814 and was resumed in 1973.[101] **Table 1** shows the instances since 1973. As shown in the table, eight of the instances in the table occurred in January 2025. As also shown in the table, with three exceptions, the persons for whom the ships named were at least 73 years old at the time the name was announced. The three exceptions are LCS-10, which was named in 2012 for Gabrielle Giffords; TAGOS-26, which was named in 2025 for Victor Vescovo; and DDG-148, which was named in 2025 for Kyle Carpenter. Some of the ships in **Table 1** were named for Members of Congress.

[99] "Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus Names Virginia-Class Submarine USS Oregon," Navy News Service, October 10, 2014.

[100] "Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus Names Virginia-Class Submarine," *Navy News Service*, January 19, 2016. BB-31 was decommissioned on September 5, 1944, and then struck from the navy record on November 13, 1944.

[101] The Navy stated in February 2012 that

> [t]he Navy named several ships for living people (ex. George Washington, Ben Franklin, etc.) in the early years of our Republic. The Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) believes that the last ship to be named by the Navy in honor of a living person prior to [the aircraft carrier] CARL VINSON (CVN-70) was the brig JEFFERSON (launched in April 1814). Between 1814 and November 18, 1973, when President Nixon announced the naming of CARL VINSON, NHHC does not believe that any ships had been named for a living person by the Navy as NHHC does not have records that would indicate such.
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> (Navy information paper dated February 28, 2012, provided to CRS by Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, March 1, 2012.)

Table 1. Ships Since 1973 Named for Persons Who Were Living at the Time

Ship type	Hull number	Ship name	Date name announced	Person's age when name was announced	Fiscal year ship was procured *or is to be procured*	Year ship entered or *is to enter service*
Aircraft carrier	CVN-70	*Carl Vinson*	11/18/1973	90	FY1974	1982
Attack submarine	SSN-709	*Hyman G. Rickover*	5/9/1983	83	FY1974	1984
Destroyer	DDG-51	*Arleigh Burke*	11/5/1982	81	FY1985	1991
Aircraft carrier	CVN-74	*John C. Stennis*	6/23/1988[a]	86	FY1988	1995
Sealift ship	TAKR-300	*Bob Hope*	1/27/1994	90	FY1993	1998
Aircraft carrier	CVN-76	*Ronald Reagan*	2/2/1995	83	FY1995	2003
Attack submarine	SSN-23	*Jimmy Carter*	4/8/1998	73	FY1996[b]	2005
Destroyer	DDG-94	*Nitze*	1/10/2001	93	FY1999	2005
Aircraft carrier	CVN-77	*George H. W. Bush*	12/9/2002	78	FY2001	2009
Destroyer	DDG-108	*Wayne E. Meyer*	11/29/2006	80	FY2004	2009
Attack submarine	SSN-785	*John Warner*	1/8/2009	81	FY2010	2015
Expeditionary transport dock	ESD-2	*John Glenn*	1/4/2012	90	FY2011	2014
Littoral Combat Ship	LCS-10	*Gabrielle Giffords*	2/10/2012	41	FY2012	2017
Destroyer	DDG-116	*Thomas Hudner*	5/7/2012	87	FY2012	2017
Destroyer	DDG-117	*Paul Ignatius*	5/23/2013	92	FY2013	2018
Oiler	TAO-205	*John Lewis*	1/6/2016	75	FY2016	2022
Expeditionary Sea Base	ESB-4	*Hershel "Woody" Williams*	1/14/2016	92	FY2014	2018
Destroyer	DDG-120	*Carl Levin*	3/31/2016	81	FY2013	2023
Destroyer	DDG-124	*Harvey C. Barnum Jr.*	7/28/2016	75	FY2016	*2024*
Destroyer	DDG-56	*John S. McCain*	7/11/2018[c]	81	FY1989	1994
Destroyer	DDG-133	*Sam Nunn*	5/6/2019	80	FY2020	*2026*
Destroyer	DDG-137	*John F. Lehman*	10/13/2020	78	FY2021	*2027*
Expeditionary Sea Base	ESB-6	*John L. Canley*	11/10/2020	82	FY2018	2024
Expeditionary Sea Base	ESB-7	*Robert E. Simanek*	1/15/2021	90	FY2019	2024
Destroyer	DDG-138	*J. William Middendorf*	6/10/2022[d]	97	FY2022	*2028*
Oceanographic survey ship	TAGS-67	*Robert Ballard*	12/21/2022	80	FY2018	*2025*
Destroyer	DDG-140	*Thomas G. Kelley*	1/11/2023	83	FY2023	*2029*
Attack submarine	SSN-808	*John H. Dalton*	2/28/2023	81	FY2022	*2030*
Destroyer	DDG-143	*Richard J. Danzig*	5/22/2024	79	FY2024	*2032*
Destroyer	DDG-144	*Michael G. Mullen*	5/22/2024	77	FY2024	*2033*
Oiler	TAO-214	*Dolores Huerta*	9/18/2024	94	FY2024	*2028*
Destroyer	DDG-146	*Robert Kerrey*	1/4/2025	81	FY2025	*2033*
Ocean surveillance ship	TAGOS-26	*Victor Vescovo*	1/10/25	58	*FY2026*	*2029*

Ship type	Hull number	Ship name	Date name announced	Person's age when name was announced	Fiscal year ship was procured *or is to be procured*	Year ship entered or *is to enter service*
Aircraft carrier	CVN-82	*William J. Clinton*	1/13/25	78	*FY2030*	*n/a*
Aircraft carrier	CVN-83	*George W. Bush*	1/13/25	78	*FY2034*	*n/a*
Destroyer	DDG-147	*Ray Mabus*	1/15/25	76	*FY2027*	*2033*
Destroyer	DDG-148	*Kyle Carpenter*	1/15/25	35	*FY2026*	*2034*
Destroyer	DDG-149	*Robert R. Ingram*	1/15/25	79	*FY2027*	*2034*
Frigate	FFG-68	*Everett Alvarez Jr.*	1/15/25	87	*FY2025*	*2031*

Source: Compiled by CRS. Source for dates when names were announced for CVN-70 through DDG-108: Navy Office of Legislative Affairs email to CRS, May 1, 2012. Sources for dates when names of ships after DDG-108 were announced: Navy and White House announcements and news accounts on the naming of those ships.

Notes: n/a means not available.

a. This is the date that President Reagan announced that the ship would be named for Stennis. The Navy officially named the ship for Stennis on December 19, 1988.

b. SSN-23 was originally procured in FY1992. Its procurement was suspended, and then reinstated in FY1996.

c. On July 11, 2018, the Navy announced that it was expanding the name of the destroyer *John. S. McCain* (DDG-56), originally named for Admiral John S. McCain (1884-1945) and Admiral John S. McCain Jr. (1911-1981), to also include Senator John S. McCain III.

d. The Navy states "In 2020, former Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer announced his intention to name a ship after Middendorf, but had not dedicated the name to an assigned hull number. Today, [Secretary of the Navy Carlos] Del Toro assigns the name to DDG-138 which was appropriated in the fiscal year 2022 budget." (Department of Defense, "SECNAV Names Future Arleigh Burke-class Destroyer USS J. William Middendorf," news release dated June 10, 2022.)

The July 2012 Navy report to Congress, noting a case from 1900 that was not included in the above passage, states that

> the practice of naming ships in honor of deserving Americans or naval leaders while they are still alive can be traced all the way back to the Revolutionary War. At the time, with little established history or tradition, the young Continental Navy looked to honor those who were fighting so hard to earn America's freedom. Consequently, George Washington had no less than five ships named for him before his death; John Adams and James Madison, three apiece; John Hancock, two; and Benjamin Franklin, one.
>
> The practice of naming ships after living persons was relatively commonplace up through 1814, when a US Navy brig was named in honor of Thomas Jefferson. However, after the War of 1812, with the US Navy older and more established, and with the list of famous Americans and notable naval heroes growing ever longer, the practice of naming ships after living persons fell into disuse. Indeed, the only exception over the next 150 years came in 1900, when the Navy purchased its first submarine from its still living inventor, John Philip Holland, and Secretary of the Navy John D. Long named her USS Holland (SS 1) in his honor....
>
> [In the early 1970s], however, Department of the Navy leaders were considering the name for CVN 70. Secretary of the Navy John Warner knew the 93rd Congress had introduced no less than three bills or amendments (none enacted) urging that CVN 70 be named for in honor of Carl Vinson, who served in the House for 50 years and was known as the "Father of the Two-Ocean Navy." Although Secretary Warner felt Congressman Vinson was more than worthy of a ship name, the former Congressman was still alive. Naming a ship for this giant of naval affairs would therefore violate a 160-year old tradition. After considering

> the pros and cons of doing so, Secretary Warner asked President Richard Nixon's approval to name CVN 70 for the 90-year old statesman. President Nixon readily agreed. Indeed, he personally announced the decision on January 18, 1974....[102]
>
> In hindsight, rather than this decision being a rare exception, it signaled a return to the Continental Navy tradition of occasionally honoring famous living persons with a ship name. Since then, and before the appointment of current Secretary [now then-Secretary] of the Navy Ray Mabus, Secretaries of the Navy have occasionally chosen to follow this new, "old tradition," naming ships in honor of still living former Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Gerald R. Ford; Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze; Navy Admirals Hyman G. Rickover, Arleigh Burke, and Wayne E. Meyer; Senators John C. Stennis and John Warner; and famous entertainer Bob Hope. Moreover, it is important to note that three of these well-known Americans—Gerald R. Ford, John C. Stennis, and Bob Hope—were so honored after Congress enacted provisions in Public Laws urging the Navy to do so. By its own actions, then, Congress has acknowledged the practice of occasionally naming ships for living persons, if not outright approved of it.
>
> In other words, while naming ships after living persons remains a relatively rare occurrence—about three per decade since 1970—it is now an accepted but sparingly used practice for Pragmatic Secretaries [of the Navy] of both parties. For them, occasionally honoring an especially deserving member of Congress, US naval leader, or famous American with a ship name so that they might end their days on earth knowing that their life's work is both recognized and honored by America's Navy-Marine Corps Team, and that their spirit will accompany and inspire the Team in battle, is sometimes exactly the right thing to do.[103]

Ships Named for the Confederacy or Confederate Officers

Section 1749 of FY2020 NDAA

Section 1749 of the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (S. 1790/P.L. 116-92 of December 20, 2019) prohibited the Secretary of Defense, in naming a new ship (or other asset) or renaming an existing ship (or other asset), from giving the asset a name that refers to, or includes a term referring to, the Confederate States of America, including any name referring to a person who served or held leadership within the Confederacy, or a Confederate battlefield victory. The provision also stated that "[n]othing in this section may be construed as requiring a Secretary concerned to initiate a review of previously named assets."

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[102] Other sources indicate that President Nixon announced the naming of the ship for Vinson two months earlier, on November 18, 1973, the date shown in the Navy information paper of February 28, 2012, that is cited in footnote 101. See for example, "Richard Nixon, 37th President of the United States: 1969-1974, Remarks at Ceremonies in Macon, Georgia, Marking the 100th Anniversary of the Walter F. George School of Law and the 90th Birthday of Carl Vinson, November 18, 1973," The American Presidency Project, accessed June 26, 2024, at https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-ceremonies-macon-georgia-marking-the-100th-anniversary-the-walter-f-george-school. The transcript of President Nixon's remarks shown there states in part: "The third [Nimitz-class aircraft carrier] is just beginning, and it will be named the Carl M. Vinson." See also H.Con.Res. 386 of the 93rd Cong., a concurrent resolution expressing the concurrence of the Congress in naming the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier CVN-70 as the U.S.S. Carl Vinson, passed December 18, 1973 (87 Stat. 1132), which states in part: "Whereas the President of the United States on November 18, 1973, at a ceremony in honor of the Honorable Carl Vinson on his ninetieth birthday, announced the naming of the CVN-70 as the United States ship Carl Vinson…." See also "Throwback Thursday - Nov. 25, 2021," Robins Air Force Base, undated, accessed June 26, 2024, at https://www.robins.af.mil/News/Art/igphoto/2002880176/.

[103] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 7-9.

Section 370 of FY2021 NDAA, Creating Naming Commission

Section 370 of the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 6395/P.L. 116-283 of January 1, 2021) directed the Secretary of Defense to "establish a commission relating to assigning, modifying, or removing of names, symbols, displays, monuments, and paraphernalia to assets of the Department of Defense that commemorate the Confederate States of America or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederate States of America." The provision also stated that "not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall implement the plan submitted by the commission" and "remove all names, symbols, displays, monuments, and paraphernalia that honor or commemorate the Confederate States of America (commonly referred to as the 'Confederacy') or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederate States of America from all assets of the Department of Defense." The provision stated (emphasis added) that the term *assets* "includes any base, installation, street, building, facility, aircraft, **ship**, plane, weapon, equipment, or any other property owned or controlled by the Department of Defense."

The commission created by Section 370 is commonly referred to as the Naming Commission. (Its formal name is the Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorate the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America.)

Navy Ships Included in Naming Commission's March 2022 List of DOD Assets Being Reviewed

On March 31, 2022, the Naming Commission updated the list of DOD assets that it was then reviewing. **Table 2** shows the four Navy ships included in the list as of March 31, 2022.

A March 31, 2022, blog post stated that

> one ship that is not on the [Naming Commission's] list, and therefore is not in the federal Naming Commission's crosshairs, is the USS Antietam.
>
> Retired Adm. Michelle Howard, who chairs the Naming Commission established by Congress in 2021, said last year that its members were still considering whether to include the USS Antietam. That debate now seems to have concluded with a finding that a new name isn't necessary.
>
> The ship was named after the Battle of Antietam in 1862, during the Civil War. Confederate forces tried to push into Union territory but were repelled – most see the fight as a Union victory, although casualties were high on both sides.
>
> "It depends on whether or not you see Antietam as a Union victory," Howard said at the time. "So that needs more exploration behind what the ship was named."[104]

[104] AUSN Staff, "USS Antietam Spared from Effort to Ditch Confederate Names," Association of the United States Navy (AUSN), March 31, 2022.

Table 2. Navy Ships Included in Naming Commission's DOD Inventory

Ship	Comment Shown in Naming Commission's List
USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62)	"The ship is named after a Civil War battle in western Virginia that was a decisive victory for Robert E. Lee and the Confederacy (which also cost the life of Stonewall Jackson, CSA). Ship will be decommissioned in 2026."
USNS *Maury* (TAGS-66)	"Confirmed; named after Matthew Maury, former U.S. Navy officer who founded the science of oceanography and meteorology before the Civil War. The ship is 1 of 7 Pathfinder-class survey ships; 6 named after U.S. scientists."
USS *Shiloh* (CG-67)	"Official crest of Shiloh, named after the bloodiest battle on the continent at the time and Grant's first major victory, features crossed and furled U.S. and Confederate battle flags. Ship will be decommissioned in 2024."
USS *Vella Gulf* (CG-72)	"The crest of the ship, named after a battle in the Solomon Islands in August 1943, contains the motto 'Move Swiftly, Strike Vigorously,' which as its website notes, is from a Stonewall Jackson maxim. Ship will be decommissioned in 2022."

Source: "DoD Inventory," The Naming Commission, last updated March 31, 2022, at https://cybercemetery.unt.edu/thenamingcommission/20220922214652/https://www.thenamingcommission.gov/. The website states at the top of the list that "the following assets were identified for review to determine: (1) whether their names commemorate the Confederacy, and (2) if a recommendation is warranted for renaming or removal. This list is subject to change as we continue our work with the Department of Defense to identify all such assets across the service branches and the department. Inclusion on this list means only that the asset is subject to review by the Commission; renaming and removal recommendations will be included in our final report to Congress no later than Oct. 1, 2022."

Naming Commission's September 2022 Recommendation that USS *Chancellorsville (CG-62) and* USNS *Maury (TAGS-66) Be Renamed*

On September 13, 2022, it was reported that the Naming Commission would recommend in its final report that the cruiser USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62) and the oceanographic survey ship USNS *Maury* (TAGS-66) be renamed, and that new names for the ships be selected by the Secretary of the Navy.[105]

The commission divided its final report into three parts. Part III, which addressed various DOD assets, including Navy ships, was submitted to Congress on September 19, 2022. Regarding Department of the Navy assets, Part III of the report states

> As part of the effort to determine the scope of Confederacy-affiliated assets across the Department of Defense, the Commission received briefings from its four Service branches in April 2021 and those services submitted their Confederacy-affiliated assets.
>
> Of particular note, the U.S. Navy identified the USS Chancellorsville (CG-62) and USNS Maury (T-AGS-66). The USS Chancellorsville is named after a Civil War battle that was a victory for the Confederacy. The USNS Maury is named after Matthew Fontaine Maury, the "Father of Modern Oceanography," who resigned from the U.S. Navy to sail for the Confederacy.
>
> The Commission recommends the Secretary of Defense authorize the Secretary of the Navy to rename all Department of Navy assets that commemorate the Confederacy or individuals who voluntarily served with the Confederacy. This includes all assets identified

[105] Sam LaGrone and Heather Mongilio, "Updated: Commission Recommends Renaming Two Navy Ships with Confederate Ties," *USNI News*, September 13, 2022; Meghann Myers, "Navy Secretary to Rename USS Chancellorsville, USNS Maury," *Defense News*, September 13, 2022.

> on the Defense inventory list to include buildings, streets, ships and their associated digital footprints (see Appendix C).[106]

The above-mentioned Appendix C of Part III of the commission's final report lists Confederacy-affiliated assets within various parts of DOD. The list includes two Navy vessels—USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62), which the report states is "is named after Civil War battle that was a victory for the Confederacy," and USNS *Maury* (TAGS-66), which the report states is "named after Matthew Maury, who resigned from the U.S. Navy to sail for the Confederacy."[107]

A September 13, 2022, press report stated that the commission

> did not offer recommendations for new names [for CG-62 and TAGS-66] and the new designations are up to Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, commission member and retired Army Brig. Gen. Ty Seidule, the vice chair of the commission, told reporters on Tuesday [September 13].
>
> Under U.S. law the SECNAV names ships, whereas the Naming Commission decided the new names for bases. The Naming Commission decided early on that it would only offer new names for the Army bases, Seidule said.
>
> There have been early discussions on potential new names, but there has been no final determination as to what the names would be or when the service would rename the ships, Navy spokesman Capt. J.D. Dorsey told USNI News on Tuesday.
>
> "Secretary Del Toro appreciates the naming commission's diligent work on this effort," Dorsey said....
>
> Chancellorsville, a Japan-based cruiser, commissioned in 1989 was named for an 1863 Confederate victory, while the survey ship was named for Matthew Fontaine Maury, who joined the Confederacy after a long career with the U.S. Navy in which he laid much of the modern foundation for meteorology and navigation.
>
> At the suggestion of the Navy, the Naming Commission looked at what was said during Chancellorsville's commissioning ceremony, the ship's heraldic background and what used to be in the [ship's] wardroom [i.e., officers' mess compartment], Seidule said.
>
> "We looked at the entire context and felt as though that this commemorated the Confederacy," he said.
>
> While not named for a Confederate, the Virginia battle was an overwhelming victory for the Army of Northern Virginia led by Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Much of the heraldry aboard and the ship's crest celebrates that fact.
>
> "The predominant gray refers to General Robert E. Lee's spectacular military strategies and his dominance in this battle. Lee's victory came at heavy cost, however, because General Thomas J. 'Stonewall' Jackson was mortally wounded. The inverted wreath commemorates General Jackson's death," read the description of the crest before it was removed from the ship's web page.
>
> The ship's motto, "Press on," is what Jackson allegedly said in pursuit of a rout of Union troops.
>
> Navy officials in the lead-up to the 1989 commissioning celebrated Lee and Jackson's success....

[106] The Naming Commission, *Final Report to Congress, Part III: Remaining Department of Defense Assets*, September 2022, p. 19.

[107] The Naming Commission, *Final Report to Congress, Part III: Remaining Department of Defense Assets*, September 2022, pp. 42 and 43.

> Up until 2016, the ship's wardroom featured a painting of Lee and Jackson that has since been removed....
>
> In considering Maury's name, the commission looked at the namesake. Although Maury is sometimes considered the father of oceanography, he fought for and believed in the ideals of the Confederacy, making his name inappropriate for a ship, Seidule said.
>
> The commission also considered renaming USS Antietam (CG-54), which was a Union strategic victory but resulted in massive casualties. The commission said it did not warrant renaming because it was a U.S. victory and led to the Emancipation Proclamation.[108]

Another September 13, 2022, press report stated that CG-62 and TAGS-66

> should be renamed per Navy tradition, according to the commission, with new names coming at the discretion of Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro.
>
> "The secretary of the Navy has almost always … been responsible for the naming of U.S. Navy ships, and we thought it was appropriate in this case as well," retired Army Brig. Gen. Ty Seidule, the commission's vice chair, told reporters Tuesday [September 13].
>
> The decision on the Navy ships was made early, Seidule said, in order to free up their limited time and budget to spend traveling around to Army posts to get input from soldiers, families and the local community about how to rename them.[109]

October 2022 Secretary of Defense Memorandum on Implementing Naming Commission's Recommendations

On October 6, 2022, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III issued a memorandum on implementing the Naming Commission's recommendations that states in part

> I concur with all of the Naming Commission's recommendations, including the renaming plan....
>
> I fully support the efforts and recommendations of the Naming Commission on this important matter, and I am committed to implementing all of the Commission's recommendations as soon as possible, subject to the expiration of the 90-day waiting period mandated by section 370(g), and no later than January 1, 2024. To that end, I direct the relevant DoD and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Component heads to begin planning for implementation of the Commission's recommendations immediately.
>
> Although the Department will not implement the renaming plan prior to the expiration of the 90-day waiting period on December 18, 2022, several of the Naming Commission's recommendations—including those related to changes to the Department's memorialization and naming processes—are not subject to the Congressional waiting period. I therefore direct the relevant DoD and OSD Component heads to begin to implement those recommendations immediately. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) will provide additional guidance for the implementation of those recommendations.
>
> In addition, I have established a Naming Commission Implementation Working Group (the Working Group) led by the USD(A&S) to oversee the full implementation of the Commission's recommendations. In support of the Working Group, each relevant DoD and OSD Component head will review the Commission's report and develop a plan of action

[108] Sam LaGrone and Heather Mongilio, "Updated: Commission Recommends Renaming Two Navy Ships with Confederate Ties," *USNI News*, September 13, 2022.

[109] Meghann Myers, "Navy Secretary to Rename USS Chancellorsville, USNS Maury," *Defense News*, September 13, 2022.

> and milestones (POAM) for implementation of all of the Naming Commission's recommendations.
>
> Each DoD and OSD Component head shall submit its POAM to the Working Group no later than November 18, 2022. The USD(A&S) shall issue a planning memorandum providing pre-implementation instructions to relevant DoD and OSD Component heads no later than October 13, 2022.[110]

February 27, 2023, Navy Announcement of Renaming of USS *Chancellorsville (CG-62) as* USS *Robert Smalls*

On February 27, 2023, the Navy announced that the cruiser USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62) would be renamed the USS *Robert Smalls*. The Navy's announcement stated that

> [t]his renaming honors Robert Smalls, a skilled sailor and statesman born into slavery in South Carolina.
>
> The decision arrived after a congressionally mandated Naming Commission outlined several military assets across all branches of service that required renaming due to confederate ties. In September 2022, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin accepted all recommendations from the naming commission and gave each service until the end of 2023 to rename their assets.
>
> "I am proud to rename CG 62 after Robert Smalls. He was an extraordinary American and I had the pleasure of learning more about him last year when I visited his home in South Carolina," said Del Toro. "The renaming of these assets is not about rewriting history, but to remove the focus on the parts of our history that don't align with the tenets of this country, and instead allows us to highlight the events and people in history who may have been overlooked. Robert Smalls is a man who deserves a namesake ship and with this renaming, his story will continue to be retold and highlighted."
>
> Robert Smalls (1839-1915) was born into slavery in South Carolina. He became a skilled sailor and was an expert navigator of southern coasts. Smalls was conscripted in 1862 to serve as pilot of the Confederate steamer Planter at Charleston. On 13 May 1862, he executed a daring escape out of the heavily fortified Charleston harbor with his family, other enslaved people, and valuable military cargo onboard, and successfully surrendered Planter to the U.S. Navy. Smalls continued as pilot of the ship, but also piloted ironclad Keokuk and other vessels. He ultimately became captain of Planter. An ardent advocate for African Americans, Smalls led one of the first boycotts of segregated public transportation in 1864. This movement led to the city of Philadelphia integrating streetcars in 1867. After the Civil War, Smalls was appointed a brigadier general of the South Carolina militia, and from 1868 to 1874 he served in the South Carolina legislature. In 1874, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served for five terms, advocating for greater integration. After his time in Congress, Smalls was twice appointed collector of the Port of Beaufort, South Carolina. He died at Beaufort in 1915.
>
> The logistical aspects associated with renaming the ship will begin henceforth and will continue until completion with minimal impact on operations and the crew. CG-62 was commissioned in 1989 and named USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) to honor the Battle of

[110] Secretary of Defense, Memorandum for Senior Pentagon Leadership, Defense Agency and DOD Field Activity Directors, Subject: Implementation of the Naming Commission's Recommendations, October 6, 2022, accessed October 7, 2022 at https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/06/2003092544/-1/-1/1/IMPLEMENTATION-OF-THE-NAMING-COMMISSIONS-RECOMMENDATIONS.PDF.

> Chancellorsville, a Confederate victory during the Civil War. CG-62 is currently assigned to Carrier Strike Group Five and is forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan.[111]

March 8, 2023, Navy Announcement of Renaming of USNS *Maury (TAGS-66) as* USNS *Marie Tharp*

On March 8, 2023, the Navy announced that the oceanographic survey ship USNS *Maury* (TAGS-66) had been renamed the USS *Marie Tharp*. The Navy's announcement stated that

> [t]his renaming honors Marie Tharp, a pioneering geologist and oceanographic cartographer who created the first scientific maps of the Atlantic Ocean floor and shaped our understanding of plate tectonics and continental drift.
>
> The decision arrived after a congressionally mandated Naming Commission outlined several military assets across all branches of service that required renaming due to confederate ties. In September 2022, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin accepted all recommendations from the naming commission and gave each service until the end of 2023 to rename their assets.
>
> "I'm pleased to announce the former USNS Maury will be renamed in honor of pioneering geologist and oceanographic cartographer, Marie Tharp. Her dedication to research brought life to the unknown ocean world and proved important information about the earth, all while being a woman in a male-dominated industry," said Del Toro. "As the history of our great Nation evolves, we must put forth the effort to recognize figures who positively influenced our society. This renaming honors just one of the many historic women who have made a significant impact on not only our Navy, but our Nation."
>
> Tharp was born in 1920 and graduated from the Ohio University in 1943. Due to WWII, more women were recruited into a variety of professions, prompting the University of Michigan to open their geology program to women, resulting in Tharp completing her master's degree in 1944. After working in her field for a few years, Tharp became one of the first women to work at the Lamont Geological Observatory. During this time she met Bruce C. Heezen (namesake of T-AGS 64) and worked together using photographic data to locate downed military aircraft from WWII. Between 1946 and 1952, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute's research vessel, Atlantis, used sonar to obtain depth measurements of the North Atlantic Ocean, which Tharp, in collaboration with her colleague, Heezen, used to create highly detailed seafloor profiles and maps. While
>
> examining these profiles, Tharp noticed a cleft in the ocean floor that she deduced to be a rift valley that ran along the ridge crest and continued along the length of its axis, evidence of continental drift. At the time, the consensus of the U.S. scientific community held continental drift to be impossible, but later examination bore out Tharp's hypothesis. Her work thus proved instrumental to the development of Plate Tectonic Theory, a revolutionary idea in the field of geology at the time. Owing to this and other innovative mapping efforts (some which the Navy funded), the National Geographic Society awarded Tharp its highest honor, the Hubbard Medal, placing her among the ranks of other

[111] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Renames Ticonderoga-class Guided Missile Cruiser USS Chancellorsville after Robert Smalls," press release dated February 27, 2023. See also Emily Schmall, "Stripping Confederate Ties, the U.S. Navy Renames Two Vessels," *New York Times*, March 11 (updated March 12), 2023; Benjamin Armstrong, "'A Hero' In a Commandeered Confederate Steamer, Robert Smalls Piloted Himself and Other Slaves to Freedom and Garnered the Plaudits of a Grateful Union Navy," *Naval History Magazine*, February 2021.

For more on the renaming of CG-62, see U.S. Navy, Naval History and Heritage Command, "H-078-2 [H-Gram 078, Attachment 2]: Renaming of USS Chancellorsville and USNS Maury," accessed June 5, 2025, at https://web.archive.org/web/20250201164830/https://www.history.navy.mil/about-us/leadership/director/directors-corner/h-grams/h-gram-078/h-0178-2.html.

> pioneering researchers and explorers such as Sir Ernest Shackleton, Charles Lindbergh, and Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd.
>
> The logistical aspects associated with renaming the ship will begin henceforth and will continue until completion with minimal impact on operations and the crew.
>
> T-AGS 66 was accepted in 2016 and named USNS Maury (T-AGS 66) after Commander Matthew Fontaine Maury, the "Father of Modern Oceanography" who resigned from his Navy career to accept a command in the Confederate States Navy. The former USNS Maury was the only US Navy Vessel named after a Confederate military officer. T-AGS 66 is currently assigned to Military Sealift Command and is in the Persian Gulf.[112]

For additional background information on ships named for the Confederacy or Confederate officers, see **Appendix C**.

Ships Named Several Years Before They Were Procured

In recent years, the Navy and White House on a few occasions have announced names for ships years before those ships were procured. Although announcing a name for a ship years before it is procured is not prohibited, doing so could deprive a future Secretary of the Navy (or, more broadly, a future Administration) of the opportunity to select a name for the ship. It could also deprive Congress of an opportunity to express its sense regarding potential names for a ship, and create a risk of assigning a name to a ship that eventually is not procured for some reason, a situation that could be viewed as potentially embarrassing to the Navy, and which would prevent that name from having been considered in the meantime for other ships that *were* procured. As noted earlier, the July 2012 Navy report to Congress states the following:

> At the appropriate time—normally sometime after the ship has been either authorized or appropriated by Congress and before its keel laying or christening—the Secretary records his decision with a formal naming announcement.[113]

At the end of the above passage, there is a footnote (number 3) in the Navy report that states the following:

> Although there is no hard and fast rule, Secretaries most often name a ship after Congress has appropriated funds for its construction or approved its future construction in some way—such as authorization of either block buys or multi-year procurements of a specific number of ships. There are special cases, however, when Secretaries use their discretion to name ships before formal Congressional approval, such as when Secretary John Lehman announced the namesake for a new class of Aegis guided missile destroyers would be

[112] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Renames Pathfinder-class Oceanographic Survey Ship USNS Maury after Marie Tharp," press release dated March 8, 2023. See also Emily Schmall, "Stripping Confederate Ties, the U.S. Navy Renames Two Vessels," *New York Times*, March 11 (updated March 12), 2023.

Consistent with another one of the Naming Commission's recommendations, the Navy on February 17, 2023, announced that Maury Hall, a building at the U.S. Naval Academy named for Matthew Maury, has been renamed Carter Hall for former President Jimmy Carter, who graduated from the Naval Academy in 1946. (U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Renames United States Naval Academy Campus Building After Former President Carter," press release dated February 17, 2023.)

For more on the renaming of TAGS-66, see U.S. Navy, Naval History and Heritage Command, "H-078-2 [H-Gram 078, Attachment 2]: Renaming of USS Chancellorsville and USNS Maury," accessed June 5, 2025, at https://web.archive.org/web/20250201164830/https://www.history.navy.mil/about-us/leadership/director/directors-corner/h-grams/h-gram-078/h-0178-2.html.

[113] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 3.

> Admiral Arleigh Burke, several years before the ship was either authorized or appropriated.[114]

In connection with the quoted footnote passage immediately above, it can be noted that the lead ship of the DDG-51 class of destroyers was named for Arleigh Burke on November 5, 1982, about two years before the ship was authorized and fully funded.[115]

Recent examples of Navy ships whose names were announced more than two years before they were procured include the following:[116]

- **The destroyer *Zumwalt* (DDG-1000).** On July 4, 2000, President Bill Clinton announced that DDG-1000, the lead ship in a new class of destroyers, would be named *Zumwalt* in honor of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr., the Chief of Naval Operations from 1970 to 1974, who had died on January 2, 2000. At the time of the announcement, Congress was considering the Navy's proposed FY2001 budget, under which DDG-1000 was scheduled to be requested for procurement in FY2005, the budget for which Congress would consider in 2004.[117]
- **The aircraft carrier *Enterprise* (CVN-80).** On December 1, 2012, the Navy announced that CVN-80, the third Gerald R. Ford (CVN-78) class aircraft carrier, would be named *Enterprise*. At the time of the announcement, CVN-80 was scheduled to be requested for procurement in FY2018, the budget for which Congress would consider in 2017.[118]
- **The ballistic missile submarine *Columbia* (SSBN-826).** On July 28, 2016, it was reported that SSBN-826, the first of the Navy's new class of ballistic missile submarines, would be named *Columbia* in honor of the District of Columbia. At the time of the press report, the ship was scheduled to be requested for procurement in FY2021, the budget for which Congress would consider in 2020.
- **Three John Lewis (TAO-205) class oilers.** On July 28, 2016, it was reported that the Navy would name the second through sixth John Lewis (TAO-205) class

[114] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 3.

[115] Congress authorized the ship in the FY1985 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5167/P.L. 98-525 of October 19, 1984), and fully funded the ship in H.J.Res. 648/P.L. 98-473 of October 12, 1984, a joint resolution making continuing appropriations for FY1985, and for other purposes.

[116] In response to a request from CRS for examples in recent years of ships that were named well in advance of when they were authorized, the Navy on December 7, 2012, sent an email citing the case of the destroyer *Zumwalt* (DDG-1000) and two other ships (the destroyer *Arleigh Burke* [DDG-51] and the amphibious ship *San Antonio* [LPD-17]) whose naming lead times were substantially less than that of the *Zumwalt*.

[117] The FY2006 budget submission subsequently deferred the scheduled procurement of DDG-1000 to FY2007. DDG-1000 and the second ship in the class, DDG-1001, were procured in FY2007 using split funding (i.e., two-year incremental funding) in FY2007 and FY2008.

[118] The July 2012 Navy report to Congress states that

> [then-]Secretary [of the Navy Ray] Mabus values the ability to consider [aircraft] carrier names on an individual, case-by-case basis, for two reasons. First, it will allow a future Secretary to name a future fleet aircraft carrier for someone or something other than a former President. Indeed, [then-] Secretary Mabus has a particular name in mind. With the scheduled decommissioning of USS Enterprise (CVN 65), perhaps the most famous ship name in US Navy history besides USS Constitution will be removed from the Naval Vessel Register. [Then-]Secretary Mabus believes this circumstance could be remedied by bestowing the Enterprise's storied name on a future carrier.
>
> (Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 37.)

oilers (i.e., TAOs 206 through 210) for Harvey Milk, Earl Warren, Robert F. Kennedy, Lucy Stone, and Sojourner Truth, respectively. In 2016, these five ships were scheduled to be requested for procurement in FY2018, FY2019, FY2020, FY2021, and FY2022, respectively, the budgets for which Congress would consider in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively. Thus, using the procurement dates that were scheduled in 2016, the name for TAO-208 (*Robert F. Kennedy*) was announced about three years before it was to be procured, the name for TAO-209 (*Lucy Stone*) was announced about four years it was to be procured, and the name for TAO-210 (*Sojourner Truth*) was announced about five years before it was to be procured. As discussed in the CRS report on the TAO-205 class program, the first six ships in the TAO-205 class were procured under a block buy contract that Congress authorized as part of its action on the FY2016 defense budget.[119] The procurement of each ship under this contract remained subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose.[120]

- **The ballistic missile submarine *Wisconsin* (SSBN-827).** On October 28, 2020, the Navy stated that SSBN-827, the second Columbia (SSBN-826) class ballistic missile submarine, would be named *Wisconsin*. At the time of the announcement, SSBN-827 was scheduled to be requested for procurement in FY2024, the budget for which Congress would consider in 2023.
- **The amphibious assault ship *Helmand Province* (LHA-10).** On May 2, 2024, the Navy announced that the amphibious assault ship LHA-10 would be named *Helmand Province*. Under Navy plans at the time of the announcement (i.e., in the Navy's FY2025 budget submission), LHA-10 was scheduled to be requested for procurement in FY2027, the budget for which Congress would consider in 2026.
- **The aircraft carriers *William J. Clinton* (CVN-82) and *George W. Bush* (CVN-83).** On January 13, 2025, President Biden announced that the projected future aircraft carriers CVN-82 and CVN-83 would be named for former presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush. Under the Navy's FY2025 30-year (FY2025-FY2054) shipbuilding plan, CVN-82 is projected to be requested for procurement in FY2030, the budget for which Congress will consider in 2029, and CVN-83 is projected to be requested for procurement in FY2034, the budget for which Congress will consider in 2033.

Changes to Names of Navy Ships

Statutory Provision

10 U.S.C. §8662(b) states, "The Secretary of the Navy may change the name of any vessel bought for the Navy." Using this authority, the Secretary of the Navy may select a new name for an existing ship that has been purchased from a non-Navy entity (e.g., a foreign government or private owner) and converted into a Navy ship. New names that the Secretary of the Navy selects

[119] The contract was authorized by Section 127 of the FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1356/P.L. 114-92 of November 25, 2015).

[120] Section 127 of P.L. 114-92 states that "[a]ny contract entered into under subsection (a) [of Section 127] shall provide that any obligation of the United States to make a payment under the contract is subject to the availability of appropriations for that purpose, and that total liability to the Government for termination of any contract entered into shall be limited to the total amount of funding obligated at the time of termination."

for such ships may be more in keeping with U.S. Navy naming rules for ships of the type in question, and/or have connections to people, places, or things associated with the U.S. Navy.

For example, in 1982 and 1983, the U.S. government purchased three combat stores ships[121] that were built in the United Kingdom, delivered to the Royal Navy in 1966 and 1967, and operated as Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) ships. In service with the RFA, they were designated A-339, A-345, and A-344, and were named *Lyness*, *Tarbatness*, and *Stromness*, respectively. As U.S. Navy ships, they were redesigned TAFS-8, TAFS-9, and TAFS-10, and renamed *Sirius*, *Spica*, and *Saturn*, respectively.[122]

A similar example concerns an existing ship that has been purchased from a commercial ship-operating company for the Coast Guard. As discussed in the CRS report on Coast Guard icebreakers,[123] on December 11, 2024, the Coast Guard purchased *Aiviq*,[124] a commercial polar ship with icebreaking capability that was built in 2012. The Coast Guard completed acceptance of *Aiviq* on December 20, 2024. The Coast Guard is modifying *Aiviq* to become a second Coast Guard medium polar icebreaker and has renamed the ship *Storis*, in honor of a previous Coast Guard cutter of that name.

Historical Overview

A June 14, 2020, press report providing a historical overview of changes to names of Navy ships states

> The Navy generally refrains from renaming its ships once they've entered service. Politics and social mores certainly play a part in choosing the names of new ships, and it is not unusual for a ship to be renamed one or more times prior to entering service, but it would be quite unusual for ships to be renamed in service due to changing sensitivities.
>
> Renamings usually take place because of an imperative to quickly honor a person or event. They can also accompany a change in function such as converting a ship to a different purpose or because a naming scheme for a certain class of ships might change. Other changes might be for stylistic or administrative reasons and in those cases the core names are retained even if the rendering changes. Prior to construction names have often been swapped among ships of a class for a variety of reasons, including the symbolism of building a particularly-named ship in a particular state or city.
>
> Ships acquired from private or other sources have also frequently been renamed, especially ships transferred from the US Army or US Coast Guard to naval service. Hundreds of ships transferred from other government agencies such as the Maritime Commission or the Maritime Administration have been renamed upon being acquired for US Navy service.[125]

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[121] Combat stores ships are a kind of underway replenishment (UNREP) ship. UNREP ships, also known as combat logistics force (CLF) ships, perform at-sea resupply of Navy combat ships.

[122] Source: Naval Vessel Register and Norman Polmar, *The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet*, 18th edition, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, copyright 2005, pp. 246-247.

[123] CRS Report RL34391, *Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter (PSC) and Arctic Security Cutter (ASC) Icebreaker Programs: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

[124] Aiviq is the Inupiaq (i.e., Alaskan Inuit) word for walrus.

[125] Christopher P. Cavas, "Renaming US Navy Ships," *Defense & Aerospace Report*, June 14, 2020. Regarding the names of certain Civil War-era ironclad monitors, one blog post states

> [Then-]Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles directed that new vessels being built should illustrate the pride of the American nation by having distinctly American names. As a result, many of the monitors received names of American rivers, lakes, mountains, cities or Indian tribes. This practice created a list of names that in some cases proved nearly unpronounceable. The practice

(continued...)

The July 2012 Navy report to Congress on the Navy's policies and practices for naming ships notes the following instances of changes to the names of Navy ships that the Navy made prior to 1970:

- The report states that "John P. Holland built six submarines as a private inventor before the Navy became interested in his designs. The Navy purchased *Holland VI* and renamed her USS *Holland* (Submarine No. 1, and since 1920, SS 1) in honor of the inventor."[126]
- The report states: "In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Secretaries of the Navy named new construction monitors, armored cruisers ('second class battleships'), and battleships after States of the Union. However, given the precedence given to battleships in the frenetic build-up of the 'New Navy,' state names began to run short for new construction battleships. By 1908, in order to free up state names for the most powerful capital ships in the fleet, remaining armored cruisers and monitors were renamed in honor of cities within the states for which they were named."[127]
- The cruiser *San Francisco* (Cruiser No. 5) was commissioned into service on November 15, 1890, and used as a minelayer during World War I. The Navy changed its name to *Tahoe* (and subsequently to *Yosemite*, effective January 1, 1931), so that the name *San Francisco* could be assigned to CA-38, a new cruiser that was commissioned into service on February 10, 1934.[128]
- In January 1941, the Navy the changed the battleship designated BB-7 to a training ship designated IX-15, and changed the ship's name from *Illinois* to *Prairie State* (the nickname for Illinois) so that the name *Illinois* could be assigned to BB-65, a new battleship that was under construction but whose construction was cancelled shortly after the end of World War II.[129] BB-7/IX-15 was originally commissioned into service in 1901 and served as a training ship during World War II.[130]

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nevertheless remained in place until 1869, when the new Secretary of the Navy, Adolph A. Borie, ordered the wholesale renaming of ships, often adopting new names based on classical Greek figures or gods. This practice has somewhat complicated for many the tracing of these Civil War era ships.

("Later Ironclads," USS Monitor Center at The Mariners Museum & Park, undated, accessed July 16, 2020, at https://www.monitorcenter.org/later-ironclads/.)

For background information regarding an ex-U.S. Coast Guard cutter originally named *Taney* that is owned by the City of Baltimore and operated there as a museum ship, and whose name was removed by the City of Baltimore, see **Appendix D**.

[126] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, footnote 36 on p. 44.

[127] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 48. See also p. 55.

[128] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 60; U.S. Navy, Naval History and Heritage Command, "San Francisco I (Cruiser No. 5)," and "San Francisco (CA-38)," accessed June 11, 2025, at https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/s/san-francisco-i.html and https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/ships/modern-ships/san-francisco.html,m respectively.

[129] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 48.

[130] For details on the ship's service history, see U.S. Navy, Naval History and Heritage Command, "USS Illinois (Battleship # 7, later BB-7), 1901-1956, Later Renamed Prairie State and Designated IX-15," accessed June 11, 2025, at https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/us-navy-ships/battleships/illinois-bb-7.html.

- During World War II, 16 former Army mine planters (i.e., minelaying ships) that had been transferred to the Navy were "were renamed [by the Navy] for 'old Monitors formerly in the Navy and general word classifications of logical and euphonious names.'"[131]
- Shortly after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on April 12, 1945, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, with the agreement of President Harry S. Truman, changed the name of the aircraft carrier CV-42 from *Coral Sea* to *Franklin D Roosevelt*.[132] The ship was under construction at the time its name was changed.[133]

Some Examples Since 1970[134]

Examples of changes since 1970 to names of ships constructed for the Navy,[135] some of which are discussed elsewhere in this report, include but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- On June 25, 1971, Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee changed the name of the attack submarine SSN-680 from *Redfish* to *William H. Bates*. Bates was a Member of the House of Representatives from February 14, 1950, until his death on June 22, 1969. The ship was under construction at the time its name was changed.[136]
- On April 26, 1974, Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf changed the name of the missile-armed hydrofoil patrol boat PHM-1 from *Delphinus* (a name selected by the previous Secretary of the Navy, John Warner) to *Pegasus*. The ship was under construction at the time its name was changed.[137]

[131] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 60.

[132] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 35-36.

[133] The ship's name was changed on May 8, 1945 (see, for example, U.S. Navy, Naval History and Heritage Command, "Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVB-42)," accessed June 11, 2025, at https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/f/franklin-d-roosevelt-cvb-42.html). The ship was commissioned into service on October 27, 1945. The name *Coral Sea* was reassigned to the next aircraft carrier, CV-43.

[134] Ship delivery and commissioning dates in this section are taken from the Naval Vessel Register.

[135] The Navy's July 2012 report to Congress on the Navy's policies and practices for naming ships additionally discusses cases of ships that were renamed in years prior to 1970.

[136] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 27. The date of the name change is taken from Norman Polmar, *The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet*, 16th ed., Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, copyright 1997, p. 77. Chaffee, who served as Secretary of the Navy from January 31, 1969, to May 4, 1972, later served as a U.S. Senator from December 29, 1976, to October 24, 1999. SSN-680 was delivered to the Navy on May 1, 1973, and commissioned into service on May 5, 1973.

[137] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 62-63. The date of the name change is taken from Norman Polmar, *The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet*, 15th ed., Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, copyright 1993, p. 197. John Warner, who served as Secretary of the Navy from May 4, 1972, to April 8, 1974, late served as a U.S. Senator from January 2, 1979, to January 3, 2009. PHM-1 was delivered to the Navy on June 15, 1977, and commissioned into service on July 9, 1977.

- On February 15, 1978, Secretary of the Navy W. Graham Claytor changed the name of the amphibious assault ship LHA-5 from *Da Nang* to *Peleliu*. The ship was under construction at the time its name was changed.[138]
- On May 10, 1982, Secretary of the Navy John Lehman modified the name of SSN-705 from *Corpus Christi* to *City of Corpus Christi*. President Ronald Reagan reportedly directed the Navy to make the modification.[139] The ship was under construction at the time its name was modified.[140]
- On February 2, 1995, Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton changed the name of the aircraft carrier CVN-75 from *United States* to *Harry S. Truman*. CVN-75 was under construction at the time its name was changed.[141]
- On October 6, 2011, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus changed the name of the Joint High-Speed Vessel JHSV-2 from *Vigilant* to *Choctaw County* so as to bring the ship's name into conformance with a newly modified naming rule for JHSVs. (JHSVs are now known as Expeditionary Fast Transport ships [EPFs].) JHSV-2 was under construction at the time its name was changed.[142]
- On May 30, 2012, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus changed the name of JHSV-3 from *Fortitude* to *Millinocket* so as to bring the ship's name into conformance

[138] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 50. The report states: "In 1974, Secretary of the Navy John Warner broke away from the practice of naming big-decks [i.e., amphibious assault ships] after World War II era carriers when he named LHA 5 USS *Da Nang* in honor of the Marines' heroism and sacrifice in the Vietnam War. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, however, Secretary W. Graham Claytor renamed the ship USS *Peleliu*, the first ever to bear the name, and site of a ferocious World War II amphibious assault." The date of the name change is taken from Norman Polmar, *The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet*, 18th ed., Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, copyright 2005, p. 187. LHA-5 was delivered to the Navy on April 3, 1980, and commissioned into service on May 3, 1980.

[139] "Navy Sub to Be Renamed," *Washington Post*, April 27, 1982, accessed June 5, 2025, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1982/04/28/navy-sub-to-be-renamed/76868c6f-9b8f-4512-b75e-0fe582f4f754/; "Sinking a Name," *Time*, May 10, 1982, accessed June 5, 2025, at https://time.com/archive/6859243/sinking-a-name/. H.Con.Res. 312 of the 97th Congress expressed the sense of Congress that the Los Angeles (SSN-688) class attack submarine *Corpus Christi* (SSN-705) should be renamed, and that a nonlethal naval vessel should instead be named *Corpus Christi*. (Los Angeles-class attack submarines were named for cities, and SSN-705 had been named for Corpus Christi, TX.) H.Con.Res. 312 was introduced on April 21, 1982, and was referred to the Seapower and Strategic and Critical Materials subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on April 28, 1982.

[140] SSN-705 was delivered to the Navy on November 24, 1982, and commissioned into service on January 8, 1983.

[141] The date of the name change is taken from Norman Polmar, *The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet*, 18th ed., Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, copyright 2005, p. 114. Other sources also show a date of February 1995. The July 2012 Navy report to Congress on the Navy's policies and practices for naming ships dates the change in the ship's name to 1996, not 1995, stating "in 1996, when the Republican-controlled 104th Congress urged Democratic President William J. Clinton to name CVN 76 in honor of (still living) President Ronald Reagan.… [T]his posed a slight dilemma for President Clinton. Although he agreed President Reagan was worthy of such an honor, as one might expect, Presidents normally look to name aircraft carriers—the most visible and powerful symbol of US naval power—for members of their own political party. In order to solve this dilemma, Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton suggested a compromise. He recommended the President name CVN 76 USS Ronald Reagan, but only after the name for CVN 75 was changed from USS United States to USS Harry S. Truman. The President readily agreed to this elegant solution." The report states further in a footnote to this passage: "Republican Secretary of the Navy William L. Ball III named CVN 75 the USS United States in 1989." (Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 12.) CV-75 was delivered to the Navy on June 30, 1998, and commissioned into service on July 25, 1998.

[142] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 20. JHSV-2 was delivered to the Navy on June 6, 2013.

with the above-mentioned modified naming rule for JHSVs. JHSV-3 was under construction at the time its name was changed.[143]

- On June 3, 2022, the Navy announced that it was modifying the name of the ballistic missile submarine SSBN-826 from *Columbia* to *District of Columbia* to avoid an overlap in names with USS *Columbia* (SSN-771), a Los Angeles (SSN-688) class attack submarine that was named for Columbia, SC; Columbia, IL; and Columbia, MO. SSBN-826 was under construction at the time its name was modified.[144]
- On February 27, 2023, the Navy announced that the cruiser *Chancellorsvill*e (CG-62) would be renamed the *Robert Smalls*. The ship was in service at the time its name was changed. The ship's name was changed to implement a recommendation from the congressionally mandated Naming Commission.[145]
- On March 8, 2023, the Navy announced that the oceanographic survey ship *Maury* (TAGS-66) had been renamed the *Marie Tharp*. The ship was in service at the time its name was changed. The ship's name was changed to implement a recommendation from the congressionally mandated Naming Commission.[146]
- On June 27, 2025, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced in a video posted to X[147] that the Department of the Navy would change the name of the oiler TAO-206 from *Harvey Milk* to *Oscar V. Peterson*.[148] Secretary of the Navy

[143] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 20. The report states on pages 18-19 that in January 2010, Army Chief of Transportation Brigadier General Brian Layer transposed the names of JHSV-1 and JHSV-3, which were Army ships that were later transferred to the Navy. JHSVs 1 and 3 were originally named *Fortitude* and *Spearhead*, respectively; following Brigadier General Layer's change, JHSV-1 was named *Spearhead* and JHSV-3 was named *Fortitude*. JHSVs 1 and 3 were under construction at the time their names were transposed—JHSV-1 was delivered on December 5, 2012, and JHSV-3 was delivered on March 21, 2014.

[144] An overlap in the names of two ships would pose an issue, as 10 U.S.C. §8662(a) states, "Not more than one vessel of the Navy may have the same name." Under the Navy's FY2025 budget submission, SSBN-826 is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in October 2027.

[145] As discussed elsewhere in this report, Section 370 of the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 6395/P.L. 116-283 of January 1, 2021) directed the Secretary of Defense to "establish a commission relating to assigning, modifying, or removing of names, symbols, displays, monuments, and paraphernalia to assets of the Department of Defense that commemorate the Confederate States of America or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederate States of America." The commission created by Section 370 is commonly referred to as the Naming Commission. The commission's final report, released in September 2022, recommended that the cruiser USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62) and the oceanographic survey ship USNS *Maury* (TAGS-66) be renamed, and that new names for the ships be selected by the Secretary of the Navy. CG-62 was delivered to the Navy on August 28, 1989, and commissioned into service on November 4, 1989.

[146] See previous footnote for information on the Naming Commission. TAGS-66 was delivered to the Navy on February 16, 2016.

[147] See https://x.com/SecDef/status/1938568563838886269, accessed June 30, 2025.

[148] For press reports about the announced change in names, see, for example, Lolita C. Baldor, "USNS Harvey Milk Is Renamed after a WWII Sailor in the Latest Pentagon Diversity Purge," *Associated Press*, June 27, 2025; Anne Flaherty and Chris Boccia, "Hegseth Announces USNS Harvey Milk Is Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson," *ABC News*, June 27, 2025; Christine Hauser, "Pentagon Strips Harvey Milk's Name From Navy Vessel," *New York Times*, June 27, 2025; Edward Helmore, "Hegseth Announces New Name of US Navy Ship that Honored Gay Rights Icon Harvey Milk," *Guardian*, June 27, 2025; Sam LaGrone, "SECDEF Hegseth Announces New Name for USNS Harvey Milk," *USNI News*, June 27, 2025; Morgan Phillips, "Hegseth Announces Navy Oil Tanker Named after Gay Rights Leader Renamed after Medal of Honor Recipient," *Fox News*, June 27, 2025; Alex Sundby, "USNS Harvey Milk, Ship Honoring Slain Gay Rights Leader, Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson, Hegseth Says," *CBS News*, June 27, 2025; and Alana Wise, "USNS Harvey Milk Renamed amid Trump Administration Efforts to Cut DEI," *NPR*, June 27, 2025.

> John Phelan changed the ship's name the same day.[149] The ship was in service at the time its name was changed.[150]

Prior to the announcement of the change in the name of TAO-206, a June 3, 2025, press report stated,

> The U.S. Navy plans to rename the USNS Harvey Milk [TAO-206], a fleet replenishment oiler named after the slain gay rights leader and Navy veteran, and is considering renaming multiple naval ships named after civil rights leaders and prominent American voices, CBS News has learned.
>
> U.S. Navy documents obtained by CBS News and used to brief the secretary of the Navy and his chief of staff show proposed timelines for rolling out the name change of the USNS Harvey Milk to the public….
>
> The documents obtained by CBS News also show other vessels named after prominent leaders are also on the Navy's renaming "recommended list."
>
> Among them are the [oilers] USNS Thurgood Marshall [TAO-211], USNS Ruth Bader Ginsburg [TAO-212], USNS Harriet Tubman [TAO-213], USNS Dolores Huerta [TAO-214], USNS Lucy Stone [TAO-209], [and the dry cargo and ammunition ships] USNS Cesar Chavez [TAKE-214] and USNS Medgar Evers [TAKE-213]….
>
> The memo said the renaming of naval ships was to realign the U.S. military with Trump administration priorities of "reestablishing the warrior culture."[151]

Other press reports from June 3 and 4, 2025, stated that Secretary Hegseth had ordered Secretary Phelan to undertake the renaming of TAO-206.[152]

A June 27, 2025, press report about the change in the name of TAO-206 quoted a defense official as stating: "There are no plans to rename any other ships in this class,"[153] meaning the John Lewis (TAO-205) class of oilers. Another June 27, 2025, press report about the change in the name of

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[149] U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Renames John Lewis-class Fleet Replenishment Oiler after Navy WWII Medal of Honor Recipient Chief Petty Officer Oscar V. Peterson," news release dated June 27, 2025.

[150] TAO-206 was delivered to the Navy on July 11, 2023, and began its first sail in March 2024. (Source for first sail date: U.S. Navy, "SECNAV Renames John Lewis-class Fleet Replenishment Oiler after Navy WWII Medal of Honor Recipient Chief Petty Officer Oscar V. Peterson," news release dated June 27, 2025.)

For press reports about the announced change in names, see, for example, Lolita C. Baldor, "USNS Harvey Milk Is Renamed after a WWII Sailor in the Latest Pentagon Diversity Purge," *Associated Press*, June 27, 2025; Anne Flaherty and Chris Boccia, "Hegseth Announces USNS Harvey Milk Is Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson," *ABC News*, June 27, 2025; Christine Hauser, "Pentagon Strips Harvey Milk's Name From Navy Vessel," *New York Times*, June 27, 2025; Edward Helmore, "Hegseth Announces New Name of US Navy Ship that Honored Gay Rights Icon Harvey Milk," *Guardian*, June 27, 2025; Sam LaGrone, "SECDEF Hegseth Announces New Name for USNS Harvey Milk," *USNI News*, June 27, 2025; Morgan Phillips, "Hegseth Announces Navy Oil Tanker Named after Gay Rights Leader Renamed after Medal of Honor Recipient," *Fox News*, June 27, 2025; Alex Sundby, "USNS Harvey Milk, Ship Honoring Slain Gay Rights Leader, Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson, Hegseth Says," *CBS News*, June 27, 2025; and Alana Wise, "USNS Harvey Milk Renamed amid Trump Administration Efforts to Cut DEI," *NPR*, June 27, 2025.

[151] Eleanor Watson, James LaPorta, Mary Walsh, and Nikole Killion, "Navy Set to Rename USNS Harvey Milk, Mulls New Names for Other Ships Named for Civil Rights Leaders," *CBS News*, June 3, 2025.

[152] Sam LaGrone, "SECNAV Tasked to Rename USNS Harvey Milk; Report Says Other Ship Renamings Under Consideration," *USNI News*, June 3 (updated June 4), 2025; Dan Lamothe, "Hegseth Moves to Rename Navy Ship Honoring Gay Rights Icon Harvey Milk," *Washington Post*, June 3, 2025; Konstantin Toropin, "Hegseth Orders Navy to Strip Name of Gay Rights Icon Harvey Milk from Ship," *Military.com*, June 3, 2025; Ellen Mitchell, "Hegseth Orders Navy Strip Oiler Ship USNS Harvey Milk of Name," *The Hill*, June 4, 2025.

[153] Sam LaGrone, "SECDEF Hegseth Announces New Name for USNS Harvey Milk," *USNI News*, June 27, 2025. Another press report stated: "There are currently no plans to rename other ships in this class, according to Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson."

TAO-206 stated: "There are currently no plans to rename other ships in this class, according to Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson."[154] Two of the ships mentioned in the June 3, 2025, press report quoted above—USNS *Cesar Chavez* (TAKE-214) and USNS *Medgar Evers* (TAKE-213)—are not John Lewis (TAO-205) class oilers, but rather Lewis and Clark (TAKE-1) class dry cargo and ammunition ships.

Public's Role in Naming Ships

Members of the public are sometimes interested in having Navy ships named for their own states or cities, for earlier U.S. Navy ships (particularly those on which they or their relatives served), for battles in which they or their relatives participated, or for people they admire. Citizens with such an interest sometimes contact the Navy, DOD, or Congress seeking support for their proposals. An October 2008 news report, for example, suggested that a letter-writing campaign by New Hampshire elementary school students that began in January 2004 was instrumental in the Navy's decision in August 2004 to name a Virginia-class submarine after the state.[155] The July 2012 Navy report to Congress states the following:

> In addition to receiving input and recommendations from the President and Congress, every Secretary of the Navy receives numerous requests from servicemembers, citizens, interest groups, or individual members of Congress who want to name a ship in honor of a particular hometown, or State, or place, or hero, or famous ship. This means the "nomination" process is often fiercely contested as differing groups make the case that "their" ship name is the most fitting choice for a Secretary to make.[156]

Members of the public may also express their opposition to an announced naming decision. The July 2012 Navy report to Congress cites and discusses five recent examples of ship-naming decisions that were criticized by some observers: the destroyer DDG-1002 (named for President Lyndon Johnson), the Littoral Combat Ship LCS-10 (named for former Representative Gabrielle Giffords), the amphibious ship LPD-26 (named for late Representative John P. Murtha), the auxiliary ship TAKE-13 (named for Medgar Evers), and the auxiliary ship TAKE-14 (named for Cesar Chavez).[157]

Congress's Role in Naming Ships

Overview of Congressional Influence on Navy Ship-Naming Decisions

Congress has long maintained an interest in how Navy ships are named,[158] and has influenced or may have influenced pending Navy decisions on the naming of certain ships, including but not limited to the following:

- One source states that "[the aircraft carriers] CVN 72 and CVN 73 were named prior to their start [of construction], in part to preempt potential congressional

[154] Anne Flaherty and Chris Boccia, "Hegseth Announces USNS Harvey Milk Is Being Renamed USNS Oscar V. Peterson," *ABC News*, June 27, 2025.

[155] Dean Lohmeyer, "Students Who Helped Name the Navy's Newest Sub Tour State's Namesake," *Navy News Service*, October 25, 2008.

[156] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 12-13.

[157] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. 15.

[158] For example, the 1819 and 1858 laws cited in footnote 1 set forth naming rules for certain kinds of ships.

pressure to name one of those ships for Admiral H.G. Rickover ([instead,] the [attack submarine] SSN 709 was named for the admiral)."[159]

- There was a friendly rivalry of sorts in Congress between those who supported naming the aircraft carrier CVN-76 for President Truman and those who supported naming it for President Reagan; the issue was effectively resolved by a decision announced by President Clinton in February 1995 to name one carrier (CVN-75) for Truman and another (CVN-76) for Reagan.[160]
- One press report suggests that the decision to name CVN-77 for President George H. W. Bush may have been influenced by a congressional suggestion.[161]
- Section 1012 of the FY2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122/P.L. 109-364 of October 17, 2006), expressed the sense of Congress that the aircraft carrier CVN-78 should be named for President Gerald R. Ford. The Navy announced on January 16, 2007, that CVN-78 would be named *Gerald R. Ford*.
- In the 111th Congress, H.Res. 1505, introduced on July 1, 2010, expressed the sense of the House of Representatives that the Secretary of the Navy should name the next appropriate naval ship in honor of John William Finn. The measure was not acted on after being referred to the House Armed Services Committee. On February 15, 2012, the Navy announced that DDG-113, an Arleigh Burke (DDG-51) class destroyer, would be named *John Finn*.[162]
- Section 1012 of the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1540/P.L. 112-81 of December 31, 2011) expressed the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Navy is encouraged to name the next available naval vessel after Rafael Peralta. On February 15, 2012, the Navy announced that DDG-113, an Arleigh Burke (DDG-51) class destroyer, would be named *Rafael Peralta*.[163]
- On June 19, 2019, Senators Todd Young and Mike Braun introduced S.Amdt. 793, an amendment to the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1790) expressing the sense of the Congress that the Navy should name the next DDG-51 class destroyer for the late former Senator Richard Lugar.[164] On November 13, 2019, at which point no further action on S.Amdt. 793 was recorded at Congress.gov, the Navy announced that it would name a DDG-51 class destroyer for Lugar.[165]

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[159] *The Naval Institute Guide to the Ships and Aircraft of the U.S. Fleet*, op. cit., p. 113. See also pp. 70 and 86.

[160] Patrick Pexton, "Clinton Compromise: Carriers Truman *And* Reagan," *Navy Times*, February 13, 1995: 19. See also "Navy Announces Aircraft Carrier To Be Named For President Truman," *Associated Press*, February 2, 1995. CVN-75 had been preliminarily named the United States.

[161] The article, which reported on the ship's official naming ceremony, states the following: "[Senator] Warner recalled that he first suggested naming a carrier in the senior Bush's honor last year [i.e., in 2001], during a ceremony in Newport News to christen the [previous] carrier Ronald Reagan." (Dale Eisman, "Navy Names New Aircraft Carrier For Elder Bush," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, December 10, 2002.)

[162] DOD News Release No. 109-12, "Navy Names Five New Ships," February 15, 2012.

[163] DOD News Release No. 109-12, "Navy Names Five New Ships," February 15, 2012.

[164] Congress.gov states that the amendment was introduced by Sen. Young. A press release from Sen. Young's Office (Office of Sen. Todd Young, "Young Announces Navy Ship to be Named in Honor of Richard G. Lugar; Naming Ceremony Nov. 18 in Indianapolis," November 13, 2019) states that the amendment was introduced by Senators Young and Braun.

[165] Source: email from Navy Office of Legislative Affairs to CRS, November 14, 2019. See also Office of Sen. Todd (continued...)

- Members of Congress wrote letters to the Navy in 2021 and 2022 urging the Navy to name a ship for Medal of Honor recipient Telesforo Trinidad.[166] On May 19, 2022, the Navy announced that the destroyer DDG-139 would be so named.[167]
- Section 1086 of the FY2023 NDAA (H.R. 7900) as reported by the House Armed Services Committee (H.Rept. 117-397 of July 1, 2022) expressed the sense of the Congress that Secretary of the Navy should name a warship the USS *Fallujah*. The joint explanatory statement that was released on December 6, 2022, for the final version of the FY2023 NDAA (H.R. 7776/P.L. 117-263 of December 23, 2022), noted that this provision was not included in H.R. 7776. As noted earlier, on December 13, 2022, the Navy announced that the amphibious assault ship LHA-9 will be named *Fallujah*. The July 2012 Navy report to Congress states that

  > every Secretary of the Navy, regardless of point of view [on how to name ships], is subject to a variety of outside influences when considering the best names to choose. The first among these comes from the President of the United States, under whose direction any Secretary works....
  >
  > Secretaries of the Navy must also consider the input of Congress.... Given the vital role Congress plays in maintaining the Navy-Marine Corps Team, any Secretary is sure to respect and consider its input when considering ships names.
  >
  > Sometimes, the Secretary must also balance or contend with differences of opinion between the President and Congress.[168]

The Navy suggests that congressional offices wishing to express support for proposals to name a Navy ship for a specific person, place, or thing contact the office of the Secretary of the Navy to make their support known. Congress may also pass legislation relating to ship names (see below).

Congressional Responses to Announced Navy Ship-Naming Decisions

Examples of Legislation

Congress can pass legislation regarding a ship-naming decision that has been announced by the Navy. Such legislation can express Congress's views regarding the Navy's announced decision, and if Congress so desires, can also suggest or direct the Navy to take some action. The following are three examples of such legislation:

- S.Res. 332 of the 115th Congress is an example of a measure that appears to reflect support for an announced Navy ship-naming decision. This measure, introduced in the Senate on November 15, 2017, and considered and agreed to

Young, "Young Announces Navy Ship to be Named in Honor of Richard G. Lugar; Naming Ceremony Nov. 18 in Indianapolis," November 13, 2019, accessed November 14, 2019, at https://www.young.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/young-announces-navy-ship-to-be-named-in-honor-of-richard-g-lugar-naming-ceremony-nov-18-in-indianapolis.

[166] Star-Advertiser Staff, "Navy Ship to Be Named After Filipino American Sailor," *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, June 3, 2022; Sarah Fearing, "Virginia Delegation Urges Navy to Name Ship After Only Filipino American to Receive the Medal of Honor," *WAVY.com*, April 4, 2022.

[167] Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs, "SECNAV Names Future Arleigh Burke-class Destroyer Telesforo Trinidad," May 19, 2022.

[168] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, pp. 11-12.

without amendment and with a preamble by unanimous consent the same day, summarizes the military career of Hershel "Woody" Williams and commemorates the christening of ESB-4, an expeditionary sea base ship named for Williams.

- H.Res. 1022 of the 111th Congress is an example of a measure reflecting support for an announced Navy ship-naming decision. This measure, introduced on January 20, 2010, and passed by the House on February 4, 2010, congratulates the Navy on its decision to name a naval ship for Medgar Evers.
- H.Con.Res. 312 of the 97th Congress is an example of a measure that appears to reflect disagreement with an announced Navy ship-naming decision. This measure expressed the sense of Congress that the Los Angeles (SSN-688) class attack submarine *Corpus Christi* (SSN-705) should be renamed, and that a nonlethal naval vessel should instead be named *Corpus Christi*. (Los Angeles-class attack submarines were named for cities, and SSN-705 had been named for Corpus Christi, TX.) H.Con.Res. 312 was introduced on April 21, 1982, and was referred to the Seapower and Strategic and Critical Materials subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on April 28, 1982. On May 10, 1982, the Navy modified the name of SSN-705 to *City of Corpus Christi*.[169]

[169] An April 24, 1982, press report states the following:

> House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill is asking the White House to change the name of the Navy's new nuclear submarine from the USS Corpus Christi to another title less offensive to Christian groups.
>
> O'Neill, D-Mass., suggested that the submarine be renamed the "USS City of Corpus Christi."
>
> In a telephone call he initiated Thursday to Michael K. Deaver, deputy chief of staff and assistant to President [Ronald] Reagan, O'Neill said he found the name Corpus Christi to be inappropriate for a nuclear-powered warship.
>
> According to an O'Neill aide, Deaver replied that he would take the issue up with the president.
>
> The USS Corpus Christi was named for the city in Texas. Corpus Christi is Latin for body of Christ.
>
> The Ad Hoc Corpus Christi Campaign, a group consisting of various Catholic and Protestant laymen and clergy, opposed calling the submarine by its present designation.
>
> O'Neill is a Roman Catholic.
>
> Navy Secretary John F. Lehman, Jr., a Catholic, has defended the name USS Corpus Christi, saying the submarine was not named for religious purposes but for the Texas city.
>
> Other ships in the Navy's history have carried the name USS Corpus Christi. The Navy has named several of its other attack submarines after cities, for example the USS Los Angeles.
>
> (Associated Press, "O'Neill Claims 'Corpus Christi' Inappropriate As Name for Sub," *Eugene Register Guard*, April 24, 1982, accessed August 18, 2016, at https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=l7RQAAAAIBAJ&sjid=MuIDAAAAIBAJ&pg=5979%2C5358114.)

A December 30, 1982, press report states the following:

> The vessel was the subject of an intense controversy last spring when Roman Catholic and other religious leaders and peace activists objected to the original name Corpus Christi, which in Latin means "Body of Christ."
>
> President Reagan ordered the name changed [to City of Corpus Christi] over the objections of Navy Secretary John Lehman.
>
> ("Sub City of Corpus Christi to Be Commissioned Jan. 8," *New London Day*, December 30, 1982, accessed August 18, 2016, at https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=RQQhAAAAIBAJ&sjid=a3UFAAAAIBAJ&dq=city-of-corpus-christi%20submarine&pg=6072%2C6185609.)

Another apparent recent case of a ship's name being amended to insert "City of" prior to the remainder of the name concerns the Expeditionary Fast Transport *City of Bismarck* (EPF-9). DOD's June 6, 2013, news release about the (continued...)

USS *Portland (LPD-27)*

On April 12, 2013, the Navy announced that LPD-27, a San Antonio (LPD-17) class amphibious ship, would be named for Portland, OR.[170] LPD-27 is to be the third Navy ship to bear the name Portland. The first, a cruiser (CA-33), was named for Portland, ME. It was commissioned into service in February 1933, decommissioned in July 1946, and maintained in reserve status until struck from the Navy list in March 1959. The second, an amphibious ship (LSD-37), was named for both Portland, ME, and Portland, OR. It was commissioned into service in October 1970, decommissioned in October 2003, and stricken from the Naval Vessel Register in March 2004.

An April 18, 2013, press release from Senator Angus King stated that "U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King today sent a letter to Ray Mabus, the Secretary of the Navy, asking that the USS Portland [LPD-27], a new San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship named after the city of Portland, Oregon, also be named in honor of Portland, Maine, consistent with the long history and tradition of U.S. Navy ships bestowed with the name USS Portland."[171] In reply, the

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naming of this ship (then referred to as a Joint High Speed Vessel, or JHSV) and four other ships states

> Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced today the next three joint high speed vessels (JHSV) will be named USNS Yuma, USNS Bismarck and USNS Burlington, and two littoral combat ships (LCS) will be named USS Billings and USS Tulsa…. USNS Bismarck (JHSV 9) is the first naval vessel to be named in honor of North Dakota's capital city.
>
> (Department of Defense news release, "Navy Names Multiple Ships," June 6, 2013, copy accessed November 20, 2020, at https://web.archive.org/web/20130924221057/http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=16077.)

By the time of the ship's christening in May 2017, the ship's name had been changed to *City of Bismarck*. (See Department of Defense news release, "Navy to Christen Expeditionary Fast Transport City of Bismarck," May 11, 2017, accessed November 20, 2020, at https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/1179499/navy-to-christen-expeditionary-fast-transport-city-of-bismarck/.)

[170] DOD Release No: 237-13, "Secretary of the Navy Names Multiple Ships," April 12, 2013. The release states: "Mabus named the future USS Portland (LPD 27) in honor of Oregon's most highly populated city."

[171] Press release entitled "Senators Collins, King Request Ship Be Named After Portland, ME," April 18, 2013, accessed on December 11, 2017, at https://www.king.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/senators-collins-king-request-ship-be-named-after-portland-me. The press release presents the full text of the Senators' letter to then-Secretary Mabus, which is as follows:

> Dear Secretary Mabus:
>
> On April 12, 2013, you announced that LPD 27, a new San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship, will be named the USS Portland after the city of Portland, Oregon.
>
> We were surprised that the press release did not state that the ship was also named in honor of the city of Portland, Maine. We write to ask that you clarify that the ship will also be named in honor of Portland, Maine, consistent with the long history and tradition of U.S. Navy ships bestowed with the name USS Portland.
>
> The Department of the Navy press release stated LPD 27 will be the third ship to bear the name USS Portland. The press release failed to mention that both of the previous two ships were named, in whole or in part, to honor the city of Portland, Maine. The first USS Portland (CA-33) was the lead ship of a new class of heavy cruisers. Launched in 1932, it was named after the city of Portland, Maine, and saw battle during World War II at the 1942 Battle of the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway, and the Battle of Guadalcanal. After accruing 16 battle stars, she was decommissioned in 1946.
>
> The second USS Portland (LSD-37) was commissioned in 1970 and served until 2004. The ship was also named after the city of Portland, Maine, but it was also named after the city of Portland, Oregon. The ship's insignia incorporates the seals of both cities.
>
> The third USS Portland should continue this tradition. We understand that amphibious transport dock ships are named for major American cities, and we can assure you that Portland, Maine is the largest city in Maine and the metro area is home to one-third of Maine's entire population.

(continued...)

Navy sent letters dated April 24, 2013, to Senators Collins and King that stated the following in part:

> In addition to [the ballistic missile submarine] USS MAINE (SSBN 743), Secretary [of the Navy Ray] Mabus recently honored the state of Maine through his naming of [the expeditionary fast transport ship] USNS MILLINOCKET (JHSV 3) [now called T-EPF 3] which was christened last weekend and will proudly represent our Nation as part of the fleet for decades to come. The Secretary of the Navy has tremendous appreciation for the state of Maine, its citizens and the incredible support provided by them to our Navy and our Nation. However, Oregon is the only state in our Nation that does not currently have a ship in the fleet named for the state, its cities or communities. Secretary Mabus named LPD 27 after Portland, Oregon, to correct that oversight and acknowledge the support and contributions made by the men and women of Portland and Oregon.[172]

As noted elsewhere in this report, on October 10, 2014, the Navy announced that it was naming the Virginia-class attack submarine SSN-793 for Oregon.

A May 21, 2016, Navy blog post about the ship's christening states that "LPD-27 will be the third Navy ship named Portland, honoring both the Oregon seaport and Maine's largest city."[173] That statement is not correct, as the Navy confirmed that LPD-27 is named solely for Portland, OR.[174] A July 5, 2017, Navy News Service report stated correctly that "LPD 27 is named for the city of Portland, Oregon, and follows the World War II heavy cruiser CA 33 and the amphibious ship LSD 37 as the third U.S. Navy ship to bear the name Portland."[175] LPD-27 was commissioned into service on December 14, 2017.

Legislation on Future Navy Ship-Naming Decisions

Table 3 shows past enacted provisions going back to the 100th Congress regarding future ship-naming decisions. All of these measures except the first one listed were nonmandatory provisions

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> Portland also has a rich naval history. South Portland is where many Liberty cargo ships were built that sustained the war effort during World War II, and 4,700 skilled shipyard workers repair Los Angeles-class and Virginia-class nuclear powered submarines one hour to the south of Portland at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Portland also has the largest port in Maine, and it is home to men and women whose livelihood relies upon the ocean and its resources, as demonstrated by the historic and bustling working waterfront.
>
> We are confident that the impressive capabilities of LPD 27 and her crew can honor Portland, Maine, without in any way reducing the simultaneous honor afforded to Portland, Oregon. In fact, part of the rich history of Portland, Oregon, is that it was named after the city in Maine. In 1845, two of the city's founders, Asa Lovejoy of Boston, and Francis Pettygrove of Portland, Maine, each wanted to name the new city after his original home town. After Pettygrove won a coin toss two out of three times, the city was named after Portland, Maine. You can view the "Portland Penny" in person at the Oregon Historical Society in downtown Portland, Oregon.
>
> We request that you clarify that the USS Portland will be named in honor of Portland, Maine, as well as Portland, Oregon. Given the history of both cities and the previous ships given the proud name of USS Portland, we are confident that you will agree that doing so will greatly contribute to the rich and storied history the USS Portland will carry with her as she and her crew defend our nation.

For a press report, see Associated Press, "Navy Asked To Fix Snub Of Portland In Ship's Name," *Boston Globe*, April 20, 2013.

[172] Letters dated April 24, 2013, from Pamela S. Kunze, Captain, U.S. Navy, Special Assistant for Public Affairs to the Secretary of the Navy, responding on behalf of the Secretary of the Navy, to Senators Collins and King, provided to CRS by Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, December 13, 2013.

[173] "Future USS Portland (LPD 27) Christened," *Navy Live*, May 21, 2016.

[174] Source: CRS email exchange with Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, December 13, 2017.

[175] "USS Portland (LPD 27) Successfully Completes Builder's Trials," *Navy News Service*, July 5, 2017.

that expressed the sense of the Congress (or of the Senate or House) about how a future Navy ship should be named.

Table 3. Recent Enacted Legislative Provisions

Fiscal Year	Public Law	Bill	Section	Ship	Name(s)
2019	P.L. 116-92	S. 1790	1749	Any ship (or other DOD asset)	Prohibition on new names referring to Confederacy
2013	P.L. 113-6	H.R. 933	8119 of Division C	the next available capital warship	*Ted Stevens*
2012	P.L. 112-81	H.R. 1540	1012	the next available naval vessel	*Rafael Peralta*
2011	P.L. 111-383	H.R. 6523	1022	a combat vessel	*Father Vincent Capodanno*
2007	P.L. 109-364	H.R. 5122	1012	CVN-78	*Gerald R. Ford*
2001	P.L. 106-398	H.R. 4205	1012	CVN-77	*Lexington*
1999	P.L. 105-261	H.R. 3616	1014	an LPD-17 class ship	*Clifton B. Cates*
1996	P.L. 104-106	S. 1124	1018	LHD-7	*Iwo Jima*
1996	P.L. 104-106	S. 1124	1018	LPD-17 class amphibious ships	Marine Corps battles or members of Marine Corps
1996	P.L. 104-106	S. 1124	1019	an appropriate ship	*Joseph Vittori*
1991	P.L. 101-510	H.R. 4739	1426	the next DDG-51	*Samuel S. Stratton*
1989	P.L. 100-456	H.R. 4481	1221	the next SSBN	*Melvin Price*
1989	P.L. 100-456	H.R. 4481	1222	an appropriate ship	*Bob Hope*
1988	P.L. 100-202	H.J.Res. 395	8138	CVN-74 or CVN-75	*John C. Stennis*

Source: Prepared by CRS. All of these provisions expressed the sense of the Congress (or of the Senate or House) about how a Navy ship should be named.

Table 4 shows past examples of proposed bills and amendments regarding future ship-naming decisions going back to the 93rd Congress. Some of these measures expressed the sense of the Congress about how a Navy ship should be named, while others would mandate a certain name for a ship. Although few of these measures were acted on after being referred to committee, they all signaled congressional interest in how certain ships should be named, and thus may have influenced Navy decisions on these matters.

Table 4. Examples of Proposed Bills and Amendments

[Congress] and Bill	Ship	Proposed name(s)
[116th] H.Con.Res. 120/S.Con.Res. 41	Next Virginia-class submarine	*Wisconsin*
[116th] S.Amdt. 793 to S. 1790	Next DDG-51 class ship	*Richard G. Lugar*
[116th] S.Amdt. 764 to S. 1790	next available appropriate naval vessel	*Shannon Kent*
[115th] S.Con.Res. 10	next nuclear powered submarine	*Los Alamos*
[113th] H.Res. 637	an appropriate Navy ship	*Clifton B. Cates*
[112th] H.Con.Res. 48	a Littoral Combat Ship	*Ypsilanti*
[112th] H.R. 1945	next available naval vessel	*Rafael Peralta*
[111th] H.Res. 1505	next appropriate naval ship	*John William Finn*
[111th] H.Res. 330	an appropriate ship	*Clifton B. Cates*
[111th] H.Con.Res. 83	CVN-79 or CVN-80	*Barry M. Goldwater*
[109th] S. 2766	CVN-78	*Gerald R. Ford*
[107th] H.Con.Res. 294	a new naval vessel	*Bluejacket*
[106th] S.Con.Res. 84	CVN-77	*Lexington*
[105th] S.Amdt. 2812 to S. 2057	LPD-17 class ship	*Clifton B. Cates*
[104th] H.J.Res. 61	CVN-76	*Ronald Reagan*
[104th] H.R. 445	CVN-76	*Harry Truman*
[104th] S.Con.Res. 62	SSN-774	*South Dakota*
[104th] S.J.Res. 17	CVN-76	*Ronald Reagan*
[104th] S.Amdt. 2277 to S. 1026	LHD-7	*Iwo Jima*
[104th] S.Amdt. 2277 to S. 1026	LPD-17 class ships	famous Marine Corps battles or heroes
[104th] S.Amdt. 4350 to S. 1745	a SSN-774 class submarine	*South Dakota*
[103rd] H.R. 5283	an appropriate ship	*Joseph Vittori*
[102nd] H.Con.Res. 354	a guided missile cruiser	*Pearl Harbor*
[102nd] H.R. 6115	CVN-76	*Harry S Truman*
[100th] H.Amdt. 614 to H.R. 4264	next SSBN-726 class submarine	*Melvin Price*
[100th] S.Amdt. 1354 to H.J.Res. 395	CVN-74 or CVN-75	*John C. Stennis*
[98th] H.Res. 99	an aircraft carrier	*Wasp*
[97th] H.Con.Res. 312	a nonlethal naval vessel[a]	*Corpus Christi*[a]
[97th] H.Res. 174	an aircraft carrier	*Wasp*
[97th] H.R. 4977	CVN-72	*Hyman G. Rickover*
[93rd] H.Con.Res. 386	CVN-70	*Carl Vinson*
[93rd] H.Con.Res. 387	CVN-70	*Carl Vinson*
[93rd] H.J.Res. 831	CVN-70	*Carl Vinson*

Source: Prepared by CRS.

a. H.Con.Res. 312 expressed the sense of Congress that the Los Angeles (SSN-688) class attack submarine *Corpus Christi* (SSN-705) should be renamed, and that a nonlethal naval vessel should instead be named *Corpus Christi*. (Los Angeles-class attack submarines were named for cities, and SSN-705 had been named for Corpus Christi, TX.) H.Con.Res. 312 was introduced on April 21, 1982, and was referred to the Seapower and Strategic and Critical Materials subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on April 28, 1982. On May 10, 1982, the Navy changed the name of SSN-705 to *City of Corpus Christi*.

Legislative Activity in 2025

H.R. 3993

House

H.R. 3993, the Preserving Great Americans' Legacies Act of 2025, was introduced in the House on June 12, 2025. The bill would prohibit the Secretary of the Navy from changing the names of ships named for Cesar Chavez, Medgar Evers, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Dolores Huerta, Thurgood Marshall, Harvey Milk, Lucy Stone, and Harriet Tubman.

S.Res. 264

Senate

S.Res. 264, a resolution to support the naming of certain United States Navy ships after notable civil rights leaders and to strongly encourage the Department of Defense not to change the names of such ships, was introduced in the Senate on June 5, 2025.

Legislative Activity in 2024

FY2025 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 8070/S. 4638/H.R. 5009)

House

In H.R. 8070 as reported by the House Armed Services Committee (H.Rept. 118-529 of May 31, 2024) and passed by the House on June 14, 2024

- **Section 1021** would express the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name warships for 42 listed Navy recipients of the Medal of Honor from World War I to the present who have not had a vessel named in their honor.
- **Section 1023** would express the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name the Expeditionary Fast Transport ship EPF-16 for Lieutenant General Richard E. Carey.
- **Section 1024** would express the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name a Navy vessel for Major James Capers Jr. (**Section 583** would authorize the award of the Medal of Honor to Capers.)
- **Section 1025** would express the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name a commissioned naval vessel for formerly enslaved sailor and Civil War veteran William B. Gould.

Enacted

H.R. 5009/P.L. 118-159 of December 23, 2024, does not include the four provisions shown above for H.R. 8070.

Appendix A. Navy's Process for Naming Ships

This appendix provides additional background information on the Navy's process for naming ships. As noted earlier, the Navy's process for naming ships is set forth in SECNAV (Secretary of the Navy) Instruction 5031.1E of March 14, 2024.[176] Enclosure 2 of this document states

SHIP NAMING PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

1. Upon contract award for a new construction ship/ship class without an established naming convention, the cognizant PEO notifies the SECNAV PAO and the NHHC that a contract has been awarded. The SECNAV PAO generates a tasker for the NHHC to develop proposed naming conventions and hull designations. These recommendations should be based on historical precedence for previous ships of similar type, capability, or mission and, reflecting the diverse history of our country and the maritime services, should include three potential naming conventions, with supporting rationale and proposed ship names associated with each convention. NHHC notifies the DON's Office of the General Counsel at ONR of the potential names to review for possible trademark law issues.

2. After preparation of the naming convention memorandum, the NHHC routes the package through the cognizant PEO; the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Ship Programs (DASN Ships); the ASN (RD&A)); the ASN (M&RA); the Director of Navy Staff (DNS); the CNO; and ultimately the SECNAV PAO. Each organization reviews the recommended naming conventions and prepares endorsement memoranda. The package is forwarded to the SECNAV for consideration.

3. Once the naming convention has been established by the SECNAV, subsequent ship naming packages will be initiated upon contract award by the SECNAV PAO, who will generate a tasker for the NHHC to develop a proposed naming package. These naming recommendations should reflect the diverse history of our country and the maritime services and be based on the naming convention, historical precedence for previous ships, capability, or mission, and include supporting rationale. Ships will not be named to commemorate the Confederacy, Confederate flags will no longer be included on ship's crests, and ships will no longer adopt Confederate mottos. The SECNAV PAO provides the NHHC with ship naming recommendations received from public sources for review and consideration.

4. The NHHC prepares a memorandum that provides ship name options to the SECNAV, which is routed through the DNS, the ASN (M&RA), and the CNO. The CNO reviews the options for each hull to be named and forwards the package, along with CNO recommendations, to the SECNAV PAO.name.

5. Upon receipt of the naming recommendation package, the SECNAV PAO coordinates with SECNAV Legal Office to identify and resolve issues associated with all proposed names. Upon completion of this review, the package is forwarded to the SECNAV for consideration.

6. Upon the SECNAV's selection of a name(s) of new construction ships, the SECNAV PAO prepares a SECNAVNOTE 5030 with input from NHHC for the SECNAV's signature for distribution through the Navy Directives Website at: https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/default.aspx to the NHHC, the CNO, the DNS, the

[176] Department of the Navy, SECNAV Instruction [SECNAVINST] 5031.1E, Subject: Ship Naming, Sponsor Selection, Crest Development, Keel Layings, Christenings, Commissionings, and Decommissionings, March 14, 2024, accessed January 15, 2025, at https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/Directives/05000%20General%20Management%20Security%20and%20Safety%20Services/05-00%20General%20Admin%20and%20Management%20Support/5031.1E.pdf.

Chief of Naval Information (CHINFO), the ASN (RD&A), the ASN (M&RA)), the DASN Ships, the DON's Office of the General Counsel at ONR, and the cognizant PEO.

7. Upon completion of the SECNAVNOTE 5030, the SECNAV PAO will generate a press release to formally release the name to the public.

8. The NHHC maintains comprehensive ship naming records containing biographical data and ship heritage information associated with the ship's namesake, including information concerning previous ships of the same name.

Appendix B. Executive Summary of July 2012 Navy Report to Congress

This appendix reprints the executive summary of the July 2012 Navy report to Congress on the Navy's policies and practices for naming its ships. The text of the executive summary is as follows:

Executive Summary

This report is submitted in accordance with Section 1014 of P.L. 112-81, National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2012, dated 31 December 2011, which directs the Secretary of Defense to submit a report on "policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy."

As required by the NDAA, this report:

- Includes a description of the current policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy, and a description of the extent to which these policies and practices vary from historical policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy, and an explanation for such variances;
- Assesses the feasibility and advisability of establishing fixed policies for the naming of one or more classes of vessels of the Navy, and a statement of the policies recommended to apply to each class of vessels recommended to be covered by such fixed policies if the establishment of such fixed policies is considered feasible and advisable; and
- Identifies any other matter relating to the policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy that the Secretary of Defense considers appropriate.

After examining the historical record in great detail, this report concludes:

- Current ship naming policies and practices fall well within the historic spectrum of policies and practices for naming vessels of the Navy, and are altogether consistent with ship naming customs and traditions.
- The establishment of fixed policies for the naming of one or more classes of vessels of the Navy would be highly inadvisable. There is no objective evidence to suggest that fixed policies would improve Navy ship naming policies and practices, which have worked well for over two centuries.

In addition, the Department of the Navy used to routinely publish lists of current type naming rules for battle force ships, and update it as changes were made to them. At some point, this practice fell into disuse, leading to a general lack of knowledge about naming rules. To remedy this problem, the Naval History and Heritage Command will once again develop and publish a list of current type naming rules to help all Americans better understand why Secretaries of the Navy choose the ship names they do. This list will be updated as required.[177]

[177] Department of the Navy, *A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for Naming the Vessels of the Navy*, undated but transmitted to Congress with cover letters dated July 13, 2012, p. iii.

Appendix C. Ships Named for the Confederacy or Confederate Officers

This appendix presents additional background information on Navy ships named for the Confederacy or Confederate officers.

Past U.S. Navy Ships Named for Confederate Officers

A June 15, 2017, blog post states that past U.S. Navy ships that have been named for Confederate officers include

> the [ballistic missile submarine/attack submarine] USS Robert E. Lee (SSBN-601[/SSN-601]) [commissioned 1960; decommissioned 1983], the [ballistic missile submarine] USS Stonewall Jackson (SSBN-634) [commissioned 1964; decommissioned 1995], the [submarine tender] USS Hunley (AS-31) [commissioned 1962; decommissioned 1994], and the [submarine tender] USS Dixon (AS-37) [commissioned 1971; decommissioned 1995]. H. L. Hunley built the Confederate submarine that sank with him on board before it engaged in combat. A subsequent Confederate submarine was built and named for him. Commanded by George Dixon, the CSS Hunley carried out the world's first submarine attack when it struck the [sloop-of-war] USS Housatonic in February 1864.
>
> Currently in the fleet is the [Ticonderoga (CG-47) class Aegis cruiser] USS Chancellorsville (CG-62) [commissioned 1989], named for Lee's greatest victory over the U.S. Army. Chancellorsville also was the battle in which Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was mortally wounded by friendly fire.
>
> The purpose of erecting monuments and naming U.S. ships after Confederates—enemies of the United States—seems to be to recognize their perceived status as noble warriors rather than to remember the cause for which they waged war: the dissolution of the United States to preserve the "peculiar institution" of human slavery. This view of history is not shared by millions of Americans who see the monuments to Confederates as glorifying, even justifying the "lost cause" and the enslavement of humans.
>
> Other ships have been named for enemies [of the United States], probably because they were considered "noble warriors" too. [The ballistic missile submarine] USS Tecumseh (SSBN-628) [commissioned 1964; decommissioned 1993][178] and [the harbor tug] USS Osceola (YTB-129) [commissioned 1938; sold for scrapping 1973][179] were named after American Indian leaders who fought wars against the United States.[180]

[178] There were also earlier Navy ships named Tecumseh, including YT-273, a harbor tug placed into service in 1943, renamed Olathe in 1962, and removed from service in 1975; a tug originally named Edward Luckenbach that was completed in 1896, acquired by the Navy, renamed Tecumseh, and placed into service in 1898, and then served for various periods, going repeatedly into and out of commission, from 1899 into the 1940s; and a Union Navy monitor that was commissioned in 1864 and sunk in battle later that year against Confederate forces.

Primary source: *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, accessed October 27, 2017, at https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs.html.

[179] There were also earlier Navy ships named Osceola, including AT-47, an armed tug commissioned in 1898, recommissioned in 1911, and struck from the Navy in 1922; a monitor originally named Neosho that served in the Union Navy from 1863 to 1865, was renamed Vixen in 1869, was again renamed Osceola later in 1869, and sold in 1873; and a gunboat in the Union Navy that was commissioned in 1864 and decommissioned in 1865.

Primary source: *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, accessed October 27, 2017, at https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs.html.

[180] Earl J. Higgins, "Confederate Monuments At Sea?" *U.S. Naval Institute Blog*, June 15 2017. See also Geoff Ziezulewicz, "Meet the Navy Ships Named in Honor of the Confederacy," *Navy Times*, August 15, 2017.

In addition to the ships mentioned above, other past Navy (USS) or Military Sealift Command (USNS) ships named for Confederate officers, as identified by one observer, include

- the destroyer USS *Buchanan* (DDG-14) (commissioned 1962; decommissioned 1991);
- the destroyer USS *Semmes* (DDG-18) (commissioned 1962; decommissioned 1991);
- the destroyer USS *Tattnall* (DDG-19) (commissioned 1963; decommissioned 1991);
- the destroyer USS *Waddell* (DDG-24) (commissioned 1964; decommissioned 1992);
- the frigate USS *Brooke* (FFG-1) (commissioned 1966; decommissioned 1988);
- the frigate USS *Richard L. Page* (FFG-5) (commissioned 1967; decommissioned 1988);
- the oceanographic research ship USNS *Lynch* (TAGOR-7) (entered service 1965; placed out of service 1994); and
- the above-mentioned surveying ship USNS *Maury* (TAGS-66) (entered service 2016; currently in service).[181]

USNS *Maury* (TAGS-66), USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62), and USS *Antietam* (CG-54)

A May 21, 2021, press report states

> The number of U.S. military assets that may need to be renamed as part of an effort to scrub Confederate names could reach into the hundreds, the retired admiral leading the renaming effort said Friday.
>
> "I think once we get down to looking at buildings and street names, this potentially could run into the hundreds," retired Adm. Michelle Howard told reporters on a conference call.
>
> Howard, a former vice chief of naval operations and the first African American woman to command a U.S. Navy ship, is the chairwoman of the Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorates the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America, also known as the Naming Commission….
>
> In her update on the commission's efforts Friday, Howard said its initial focus will be on nine bases owned by the Department of Defense named after Confederate leaders….
>
> The Navy, meanwhile, has identified at least one ship so far to look at for renaming, Howard said: the USNS Maury, an oceanographic survey ship named after a commander who resigned from the U.S. Navy to sail for the Confederacy.
>
> The number of Navy ships identified for the renaming effort is expected to grow, with Howard suggesting the USS Antietam guided missile cruiser as a possibility. The Battle of Antietam is considered a strategic victory for the Union in the Civil War, but a tactical stalemate.
>
> "It depends on whether or not you see Antietam as a Union victory," Howard said. "So that needs more exploration behind what the ship was named. And we'll work with—for any

[181] Source: Emails to CRS from Steven Wills, Center for Naval Analysis, June 11 and June 22, 2020.

> of these where there's battles—the intention at the time of the naming, what the purpose and thought process was, the historical context behind that naming."[182]

A July 13, 2020, press report states that "U.S. Navy officials have informally discussed renaming several ships, including the USS Chancellorsville, which is named after a Confederate victory, and the USNS Maury, an oceanographic survey ship named after Matthew Fontaine Maury, who served as superintendent of the U.S. Naval Observatory and later joined the Confederate Navy."[183]

A June 24, 2020, press report states

> The names of U.S. warships could face new scrutiny in coming months as the Pentagon moves forward with a military-wide effort to target racial bias and prejudice in the ranks.
>
> A Defense Department-wide review to improve inclusion and diversity will likely not only look at military installation names, but those of Navy vessels too.
>
> "While I cannot speak for these three groups of leaders who will provide recommendations to the [defense secretary], I would personally expect that at least one of these groups will make specific recommendations regarding the naming of bases and ships," Christopher Garver, a Pentagon spokesman, told Navy Times.
>
> Lisa Lawrence, a Defense Department spokeswoman, said Wednesday [June 24] that Defense Secretary Mark Esper is moving forward quickly, but deliberately, in setting up the groups that will examine military issues related to diversity.
>
> Like Army installations named for Confederate leaders, the names of at least two Navy ships have been called into question in recent weeks as the country grapples with ongoing protests for an end to racism and police brutality.
>
> Retired Lt. Cmdr. Reuben Keith Green recently laid out his case for renaming the aircraft carrier John C. Stennis in this month's U.S. Naval Institute's Proceedings magazine….[184]
>
> The nationwide debate has also resurrected questions over why the Navy has a guided-missile cruiser named for the Battle of Chancellorsville, which the Confederacy won….
>
> The name of the oceanographic survey ship Maury also has ties to the Confederacy, U.S. Naval Institute News recently noted.[185]

A June 12, 2020, press report states

> The focus nationally has been on U.S. Army bases named for Confederate military leaders, but there are also two active Navy ships connected to the Confederacy—[the] guided-missile cruiser USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62) and [the] oceanographic survey ship USNS *Maury* (T-AGS-66).
>
> Maury, delivered in 2016, was named for Matthew Fontaine Maury. While in the U.S. Navy, Maury oversaw the Naval Observatory and was instrumental in laying the foundation of modern oceanography. Murray resigned from the U.S. Navy and served in

[182] Rebecca Kheel, "Commission Chair: 'Hundreds' of Military Assets Could Have Confederate Names Removed," *The Hill*, May 21, 2021. See also Meghann Myers, "Fort Belvoir, Cruiser Antietam Under Consideration for Renaming by DoD Commission," *Military Times*, May 21, 2021.

[183] Michael R. Gordon, "Confederate Symbolism in the Military Stretches Far Beyond Flags, Base Names," *Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 2020.

[184] The name of USS *John C. Stennis* was discussed earlier in the section on names of aircraft carriers.

[185] Gina Harkins, "Navy Ship Names Could Fall Under Pentagon's New Diversity Review," *Military.com*, June 24, 2020.

> the Confederate Navy. He spent the majority of the Civil War in Europe attempting to drum up support for the Confederacy.[186]
>
> *Chancellorsville*, commissioned in 1989, is named for the Confederate victory in 1863 by the Army of Northern Virginia led by Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.
>
> The Ticonderoga-class of cruisers are named for American battles—including several Civil War conflicts. Unlike USS *Vicksburg* (CG-69) or USS *Mobile Bay* (CG-53), *Chancellorsville* is named for a clear Confederate victory that paved the way for the Army of Northern Virginia's invasion of Pennsylvania and the Battle of Gettysburg.
>
> The hull of the cruiser contains minié balls and shell fragments from the battle, USA Today reported in 1988. As of at least 2016, the ship's wardroom held a painting of Lee and Jackson.[187]

The Navy states that the *Chancellorsville* is

> [t]he first U.S. Navy ship named for a Civil War battle fought just south of the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers in Virginia (1–5 May 1863). Gen. Robert E. Lee, CSA, who led the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, held Gen. Joseph Hooker, USA, who commanded the Union Army and Department of the Potomac, in position while Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, CSA, enveloped the Union right flank, surprising and rolling up the Federal's right. Lee's victory, combined with the urgent need to relieve pressure on Vicksburg, Miss., prompted the South's thrust into Pennsylvania that summer, resulting in the pivotal Battle of Gettysburg.[188]

Regarding the *Chancellorsville*, a June 9, 2020, press report states

> [A spokesman for Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday], Cmdr. Nathan Christensen, declined to comment as to whether the sea service planned to change the name of the warship Chancellorsville, commissioned in 1989 and named after a Confederate victory during the Civil War….
>
> An image on the command's official website shows an image featuring several renderings of the Confederate flag.[189]

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[186] In addition to TAGS-66, three previous Navy ships were also named for Maury. An online biography of Matthew Fontaine Maury states: "Nicknamed 'Pathfinder of the Seas,' Matthew Fontaine Maury made important contributions to charting wind and ocean currents. His studies proved that by following the winds and currents ships could cross the ocean in fewer days than ever before…. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Maury, a Virginian, resigned his commission as a U.S. Navy commander and joined the Confederacy. He spent the war in the South, as well as abroad in England, acquiring ships for the Confederacy." (National Museum of the U.S. Navy, "Matthew Fontaine Maury [1806-1873])," published April 19, 2019, accessed June 11, 2020, at https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/museums/nmusn/education/distance-learning/to-the-ends-of-the-earth/navigation/biography—matthew-fontaine-maury.html.) See also Tim St. Onge, "Scientist of the Seas: The Legacy of Matthew Fontaine Maury," Library of Congress, July 25, 2018, accessed June 11, 2020, at https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2018/07/scientist-of-the-seas-the-legacy-of-matthew-fontaine-maury/.

[187] Sam LaGrone, "Senate Bill to Purge Confederate Names from U.S. Military Could Affect Two Navy Ships," *USNI News*, June 12, 2020.

[188] "Chancellorsville (CG-62), 1989-," *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, accessed October 27, 2017, at https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/c/chancellorsville—cg-62—1989-.html.

[189] Geoff Ziezulewicz, "CNO Says No More Confederate Battle Flags in Public Spaces and Work Areas," *Navy Times*, June 9, 2020. For additional press reports about the CNO's statement, see, for example, Idrees Ali, "U.S. Navy to Bar Confederate Flags from Ships, Aircraft, Bases," *Reuters*, June 9, 2020; Robert Burns (Associated Press), "Navy Bans Display of Confederate Battle Flag as Military Leaders Consider Renaming Bases," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, June 9, 2020; Ryan Browne, "US Navy Joins Marines in Moving to Ban Confederate Battle Flag," *CNN*, June 9, 2020; Paul D. Shinkman, "Navy to Ban Confederate Flag Following Marine Corps Order," *U.S. News & World Report*, June 9, 2020; Caitlin McFall, "Navy Moves to Ban Confederate Flag," *Fox News*, June 9, 2020; Zachary Halaschak, "US Navy (continued...)

Also regarding the *Chancellorsville*, an August 16, 2017, press report states the following:

> As America churns through a bloody debate over the place Confederate monuments occupy in the modern day United States, a Navy cruiser named in honor of a Confederate Civil War victory is unlikely to see its named changed, a service official said Wednesday [August 16, 2017].
>
> The guided-missile cruiser Chancellorsville [CG-62] was commissioned in 1989 and derives its name from an 1863 battle considered to be the greatest victory of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee....
>
> But a Navy official speaking on the condition of anonymity Wednesday said that even though the Chancellorsville is named after a Confederate victory, the name comes from a battle, not an individual, and soldiers on both sides died.
>
> The week-long battle resulted in major casualties for both sides—13,000 Confederates and 17,000 Union troops, according to the National Parks [sic: Park] Service.
>
> The Navy official did say, however, that there remains a chance the ship's crest could be altered.
>
> The predominance of gray in the ship's crest speaks to "General Robert E. Lee's spectacular military strategies and his dominance in this battle," according to the ship's website.
>
> An inverted wreath also memorializes the Confederacy's second-best known general, Stonewall Jackson, who was mortally wounded in the battle.
>
> While the rupture of the country during the Civil War is reflected in the crest, it also features Jackson's order to "press on."
>
> "Maybe that is worth re-looking at or redoing," the official said. "There's a fine line."[190]

February 2021 Navy Report on Inclusion and Diversity

A February 2021 Navy report on inclusion and diversity (I&D) in the Navy[191] made numerous recommendations, including one (number 5.7) bearing on Navy ships named for the Confederacy or Confederate officers that states

> **This Initiative Is an Opportunity to Honor and Name Navy Assets for Naval Heroes.**
>
> **Topic:** Modernize process to name ships, buildings, streets in honor of national & historical Naval Figures (5.7)
>
> **Problem Statement**
>
> Certain Navy ship names have been highlighted by Congress and in the media for connections to confederate or white supremacist ideologies. Without a comprehensive database or review of current Navy names, it is unclear whether the body of Navy names is consistent with Navy Core Values and representative and inclusive of the truly diverse population of the Navy, today and throughout the Navy's rich history.
>
> Following a review of internal Navy practices and Congressional Research Service (CRS) documentation, there appears to be no consolidated database, process or effort within the

Moves to Ban Display of Confederate Battle Flag," *Washington Examiner*, June 9, 2020; David Martin, Jordan Freiman, and Li Cohen, "U.S. Navy to Ban All Public Displays of the Confederate Flag," *CBS News*, June 10, 2020.

[190] Geoff Ziezulewicz, "Navy Official: Ship Name Honoring Confederate Victory Unlikely to Change," *Navy Times*, August 16, 2017.

[191] U.S. Navy, *Task Force One Navy, Our Navy Team—Navigating A Course To True North, Final Report*, undated, released February 3, 2021, 141 pp.

Navy to review the names of Navy assets in order to ensure that the names reflect the Navy Core Values. This initiative is an opportunity to honor and name Navy assets for Naval heroes from all classes, races, genders and backgrounds.

Recommendations

Initiate Systematic Review to Identify and Rename Navy Assets in Need of Modernization Consistent with Navy Core Values.

1. Review should identify assets honoring those associated with the Confederacy and identify assets named after racist, derogatory or culturally insensitive persons, events or language.
2. Renaming recommendations and decisions should be consistent with current naming authorities, policies and practices, with a focus on honoring persons of historically underrepresented demographics, including racial minorities, women and enlisted members.
3. The method and timeline of review is flexible, however, a stakeholder-led committee could oversee the consolidation of Navy asset names and lead the review and recommendation process.

- The general membership, strategy and mission statement of the committee may be subject to amendment post-enactment of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2021.
- The committee would compile the lists of names for review, delegate as needed (e.g., requesting installation commanders to provide lists of installations buildings and streets named after persons pursuant to OPNAVINST 5030.12H);coordinate with ethics and history experts to identify assets for renaming; serve as a central repository for questions and renaming requests; and propose new names. This course of action (COA) offers thoroughness and consistency. Additionally, the committee could consist of persons who may already possess the expertise necessary to perform these tasks, for example, personnel from OPNAV N17, NHHC, CNIC, NAVFAC and commands possessing authority and ownership over weapons systems, afloat and aviation assets such as NAVSEA and NAVAIR.
- Memorialize the process and membership of the committee by either updating the OPNAVINST 5030.12H, other relevant naming authorities or by simply crafting an order from the CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] outlining the expectations for the committee and the period of review.

    i. Success will be measured when 1) the Committee is stood up (1-3 months); 2) the Committee produces a consolidated database or list of Navy asset names (3-6 Months); 3) when the Committee provides an overview of the current health of the Navy's body of asset names, including any names which are currently problematic and a recommendation on how to upgrade them (6-9 months); 4) when current policies/ instructions are updated to reflect the makeup of the Committee and the expectations for future responsibilities and authorities (6-12 months); and 5) When the CNO and Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) make asset naming decisions based on the current body of Navy asset names and consideration of a broad range of possible names that reflect diversity and inclusion (6-12 months).

    ii. Following the Committee's work to create a comprehensive list or database, efforts must be taken to keep the list up to date. That sustainment review can be ongoing or periodic (yearly or 5-10 years). As the list/database is a living document, updates must be made as new names come online. Updates could

be submitted through the OPNAV staff for updating or a stakeholder from the committee could be assigned this responsibility as a running requirement.

Supporting Information

While OPNAVINST 5030.12H requires installation commanders to develop and maintain lists of streets, facilities and structures named after persons, there is no additional process set out in the instruction for consolidated or periodic review of such lists.[192]

June 9, 2020, CNO Statement Regarding Removal of Confederate Battle Flag

On June 9, 2020, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Michael Gilday, stated

> Today, I directed my staff to begin crafting an order that would prohibit the Confederate battle flag from all public spaces and work areas aboard Navy installations, ships, aircraft and submarines. The order is meant to ensure unit cohesion, preserve good order and discipline, and uphold the Navy's core values of honor, courage and commitment.[193]

[192] U.S. Navy, *Task Force One Navy, Our Navy Team—Navigating A Course To True North, Final Report*, undated, released February 3, 2021, pp. 55-56. See also Gina Harkins, "Navy Task Force Calls for Changing Ship Names that Honor Confederacy," *Military.com*, February 3, 2021.

[193] USNavyCNO, tweet of June 9, 2020, accessed June 10, 2020, at https://twitter.com/USNavyCNO/status/1270451752459010049. See also Julia Bergman, "Pressure Increases on Coast Guard to Ban Confederate Flag," *New London Day*, July 2 (updated July 3), 2020.

Appendix D. Ex-U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Formerly Named *Taney*

This appendix presents background information regarding an ex-U.S. Coast Guard cutter formerly named *Taney* that is owned by the City of Baltimore and operated there as a museum ship, and whose name was removed by the City of Baltimore. A July 1, 2020, press report states

> The historic Coast Guard cutter the "Taney" will be renamed as soon as possible so that it no longer pays tribute to the antebellum Supreme Court chief justice who delivered the Dred Scott decision, according to a Baltimore museum in charge of the ship.
>
> The ship is named after Roger B. Taney, the former chief justice of the Supreme Court who delivered the Dred Scott decision in 1857 that cemented the legality of slavery.
>
> "The time is now to fix these things. We can't keep living with these symbols of oppression and blatant racism," said Chris Rowsom, executive director of Historic Ships in Baltimore, the organization that controls and maintains the ship. Its name has drawn protests and objections in the past.…
>
> Historic Ships is working with Baltimore, the Coast Guard and the National Park Service, which maintains the National Register of Historic Places, to speed removal of the Taney name and find a suitable new name for the ship. "Taney" has already been removed from the ship's stern, and Historic Ships said that until a new name is decided upon, the ship will be known by its technical name, the WHEC 37.[194] Historic Ships said it doesn't anticipate any legal roadblocks to changing the name.
>
> "We'd like to consider Thurgood Marshall," said James Piper Bond, CEO of the Living Classrooms Foundation, parent group of Historic Ships, referring to the first black Supreme Court justice and Baltimore native.
>
> Baltimore City Council President Brandon Scott said the city has been talking about removing the name for years.
>
> "The argument that changing the name would erase history is moot," he said in a statement. "Renaming the USCGC Taney is a small, but meaningful step towards an honest and necessary reckoning with our past."
>
> Baltimore Mayor Bernard "Jack" Young said in a statement he strongly believes the name should be changed.
>
> The Taney is the last warship afloat that was at Pearl Harbor during the December 7, 1941, surprise attack. The Taney was decommissioned on Dec. 7, 1986, and the Coast Guard transferred ownership and oversight to Historic Ships in Baltimore, according to Coast Guard spokesman Lt. Cdr. Scott McBride.
>
> "To preserve the proud naval heritage of the ship and honor all who served aboard during its 50 years of service, the Coast Guard recommends referring to the vessel by its hull classification symbol of WHEC 37," he said.
>
> The former Coast Guard cutter now sits docked in Baltimore's Inner Harbor as a floating memorial and museum.

[194] In the designation WHEC 37, W means it was a Coast Guard vessel, HEC means it was a high-endurance cutter, and 37 means it was the Coast Guard's 37th such ship.

Historic Ships hasn't determined if it will remove all Taney references inside the ship and place artifacts in storage or a museum but said remaining references can be used to bolster education programs on Mr. Taney's legacy.[195]

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[195] Ben Kesling, "Historic Coast Guard Ship 'Taney' to Be Renamed," *Wall Street Journal*, July 1, 2020. See also Hallie Miller, "Roger B. Taney's Name Removed from Historic Pearl Harbor Ship in Baltimore," *Baltimore Sun*, July 2, 2020; "Name of Ex-Supreme Court Justice Taken Off Historic Warship," *Associated Press*, July 1, 2020; John Kruzel, "Custodians Rename Coast Guard Ship Named After Justice Who Wrote Dred Scott Decision," *The Hill*, July 1, 2020; Meg Walburn Viviano, "Name-Dropping: Coast Guard Cutter Taney's Name Removed," *Chesapeake Bay Magazine*, July 1, 2020; "Supreme Court Justice's Name Removed from Retired Coast Guard Cutter," *Maritime Executive*, July 1, 2020; "Commitment to Removing National Symbols of Racism and Educating Youth About Our Nation's History Leads Living Classrooms Foundation to Remove Roger B. Taney's Racist Legacy from Former Coast Guard Cutter in Baltimore," Living Classrooms Foundation, July 1, 2020.