



Knot like the rest

USS Arleigh Burke joins the fleet

Story by JO1 Steve Orr and JO2 Todd E. Hansen

"Fast and feared, this ship is built to fight — you had better know how."

These words, spoken by retired ADM Arleigh Burke, were repeated many times in Norfolk's Town Point Park July 4, as more than 10,000 on-lookers, including naval personnel, specially invited guests and elected civic government leaders, witnessed the commissioning of the Navy's newest destroyer, USS *Arleigh Burke* (DDG 51). ADM Burke, the *Aegis* destroyer's namesake, and wife Bobbie were also honored during the star-

spangled ceremony, as were several



Retired ADM and Mrs. Burke join the CNO, SecNav and SecDef at the commissioning ceremony.

retired Navy men who served under Burke during World War II.

CDR John G. Morgan Jr., USS *Arleigh Burke*'s first commanding officer, read his orders and officially took command of the multi-million dollar ship during the course of the ceremony.

The showcase commissioning, which received worldwide coverage, marks the first time that a ship's namesake has witnessed the commissioning of a ship in his honor, and only the third time a Navy ship has

Photo by PH1(AW) Joseph Dorey



Above: *Arleigh Burke* crewmen handle the ship's lines during sea trials. Right: Members of Burke's "Little Beavers" celebrated the commissioning of the ship named after their former CO.

been named for a living person.

After brief remarks by several guests, including William Haggett, chairman of Bath Iron Works (BIW), the Honorable Joseph Leafe, mayor of Norfolk, ADM Paul Miller, Commander Atlantic Fleet, and ADM Frank B. Kelso II, chief of naval operations, the podium was turned over to Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III, who introduced keynote speaker Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney.

"Today we commission a ship that will help prepare us to meet future threats, in the same way that those who came before us prepared for *Desert Storm*," said Cheney. "USS *Arleigh Burke* reflects, in more than just name, the high standards and warrior's heart of the man for whom it is named. This advanced destroyer will help ensure America's maritime superiority in the years ahead."

Cheney cited many examples of



the accomplishments achieved under ADM Burke's leadership, which included the addition of the A-6 *Intruder* to the Navy's arsenal and the planning and launching of four of the aircraft carriers used in *Desert Storm*. The destroyer *Burke* continues in the same tradition and is loaded

with technology that will lead her class of ship into the 21st century.

Leading the pack will be nothing new for *Burke*, whose namesake was nicknamed "31-Knot Burke" because of his willingness to take the fight to the enemy during revolutionary nighttime high-speed maneuvers. The

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moniker was born in 1943 when Burke led “The Little Beavers”, of Destroyer Squadron (DesRon) 23 into the Battle of Cape St. George. He pushed one ship with a damaged boiler past its top speed of 30 knots. This caused ADM William Halsey to dub him “31-Knot Burke”.

In that battle, since described by many naval historians as “near perfect surface action,” DesRon 23 sank four Japanese destroyers and badly damaged two more without taking a hit. Burke, known as the Navy’s first surface warrior, lived by the rule: “Get going sooner than anticipated, travel faster than expected and arrive before you’re due.”

Burke’s many achievements and accomplishments over his 42 years of naval service were highlighted when he was selected as the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) in August 1955, by passing 92 senior admirals. Burke went on to serve an unprecedented three terms as the CNO before retiring in 1961.

Thirty years later it seems only natural that the most technologically advanced destroyer in the world be named after ADM Arleigh Burke, the man who rewrote “tin-can” battle tactics. This version is no “tin-can.” As Kelso said during his commissioning day remarks, “Let’s face it, if you name a ship after Arleigh Burke, it had better be good.”



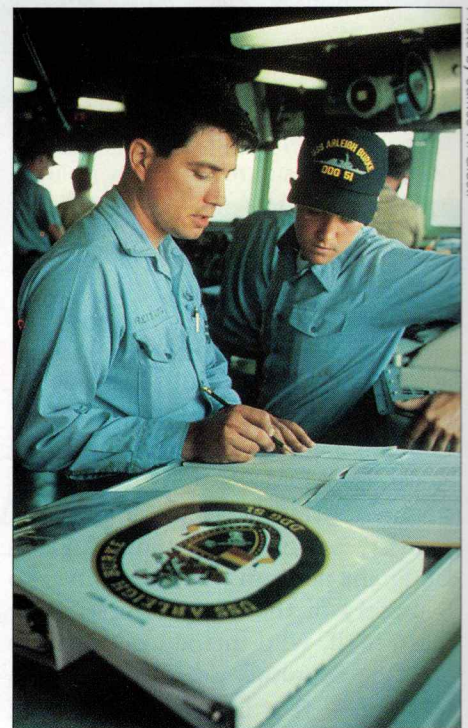
Above: A helmsman confirms course changes. Right: The quartermaster makes a log entry.

Burke was a major influence in his namesake’s design. “We built it to his specification,” explained Kelso. “Burke has not been a bystander in her evolution, but a major contributor. This destroyer embodies his vision and his foresight, as well as his indomitable fighting spirit.”

Constructed by BIW, the destroyer’s keel was laid by Burke himself July 31, 1988. Using the latest techniques in shipbuilding, BIW worked day and night to accomplish *Burke’s* construction, culminating with its christening Sept. 16, 1989.

Loaded with the latest high-tech equipment, *Arleigh Burke* is also manned by a crew of high achievers, totalling 26 officers, 24 chief petty officers and 291 enlisted men. “Ships do not win wars,” Burke has said. “The Navy is people. The Navy is manned by people and receives its force and its drive from people.”

Those chosen to serve on the first-of-its-kind destroyer are honored with the roles they’ve been asked to fill. “We’re setting up a system that will effect how this entire class of ship will operate for years to come,” said LT Tom Ives, *Burke’s* combat infor-



mation center officer. “True, this puts pressure on the entire crew, but *Arleigh Burke* sailors are a different breed. They’re men who love the challenge a ship like this one has to offer. We’re officers and men working together as a model team.”

Interior Communications Electrician 3rd Class Lawrence Cooper, who works on the ship’s internal communications systems, echoes that

Photo by James R. Gusti

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"... Arleigh Burke, the most powerful destroyer ever to go to sea ..."

sentiment. "After nearly two years of working in the ship yard, we're finally going to get the chance to show the rest of the world what being an *Arleigh Burke* sailor is all about."

Preparing the ship for duty has been a long and challenging road. "It was a tough assignment," admitted Chief Storekeeper Domingo Dulay of supply department. "Many times, we felt as if we were asked to create a farm by clearing out the woodland. Duty was hectic — all of our milestones had to be completed on time, which often meant extended working hours, especially if we ran into unforeseen problems. But it was rewarding — we learned from this experience. As a result, the next ships of this class shouldn't have it as hard."

The benefits of working on such an advanced warship as *Arleigh Burke* outweigh the hardships. "I really enjoy my work and the state-of-the-art equipment I work with," said Fire Controlman 2nd Class Barry Schrag enthusiastically. "The people I'm working with are top-notch professionals — they don't let things slide."

With highly-qualified people at the controls, *Arleigh Burke* is an impressive piece of engineering. While larger than its predecessor, the 505-foot-long destroyer is swift and maneuverable, able to knife through water at speeds in excess of 30 knots, propelled by four LM2500 gas turbine engines with 30,000 shaft horse-power.

When the rest of the class is completed, *Burke* destroyers will operate offensively as units of carrier battle groups and surface action groups. The vessels will also support underway

replenishment groups and Marine amphibious forces in multi-threat environments that include air, surface and sub-surface elements.

Fast, hard-hitting and deadly, the destroyer has always been the workhorse of the U.S. fleet. Retired ADM Carlisle A.H. Trost, former Chief of Naval Operations, called the new *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer "the most powerful destroyer ever to go to sea."

By skillfully integrating the advanced capabilities of the *Aegis* combat system and vertical launching system with the *Tomahawk* cruise missile, *Burke* class ships will carry awesome fire power to the fight.

Burke carries the *Aegis* technology system beyond the horizon. In Greek mythology, Zeus was the king of the gods. His weapon was the thunderbolt, his defense was the shield called *Aegis*.

Aegis of the 20th century is a complex system of computers, electronics and weaponry. It provides instant response to threats from aircraft, surface vessels or submarines.

Arleigh Burke is a survivable fighting ship. The *Aegis* combat system incorporated phased-array radar with superior range, detection reaction time and firepower. Centered around the SPY-1D radar — the most sophisticated radar in the world — *Burke* can automatically scan, detect and track targets more than 200 miles away. A milestone in fleet modernization, this state-of-the-art radar will search out enemy movements beyond the horizon and instantaneously feed back vital information

to its waiting crew.

Burke's Aegis system can also direct the operation of fighter aircraft and helicopters in protection of the battle group.

Burke's weapon systems include standard surface-to-air missiles, *Tomahawk* and *Harpoon* surface-to-surface missiles, *Phalanx* rapid-fire guns, 5-inch rapid-fire guns and torpedoes. These systems are also supplemented by electronic warfare countermeasures, decoys and passive detection systems.

In addition to its advanced radar and weapons systems, *Burke's* other capabilities are impressive. Its all-steel hull provides superior protection, the design incorporating a number of new developments that resulted from hard lessons learned in the Persian Gulf after USS *Stark* (FFG 58) was damaged by an Iranian-laid mine.

Thanks to an innovative vacuum system, *Burke* has the capability to perform in a nuclear battle scene or to be totally protected from chemical attack. The destroyer also features an enhanced fire fighting system which includes sprinkler systems in living spaces and work spaces.

"In the coming years, there will be new crises and different battle-grounds," concluded Cheney during his commissioning address. "But Americans will still look to our naval forces to sail in harm's way and fight if our freedom is in danger. Today, *Arleigh Burke* sets out on that enterprise as our newest commissioned fighting ship. All who sail it take a proud place in the history of America's Navy, and among the brave men and women who have kept our nation free." □

Orr is assigned to NIRA Det. 4, Norfolk. Hansen is assigned to NavPaCen, Norfolk.