

THE DESTROYERMAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE USS ARLEIGH BURKE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 2

JUNE 2026

Dedicated to preserving the heritage of Admiral Arleigh A. Burke and USS Arleigh Burke

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the new President of the USS Arleigh Burke Association, I would like to thank everyone



for your support and continued engagement as we continue to honor the legacy of Admiral Arleigh Burke and his namesake ship. From the humble beginning as pieces of steel in the shipyard at Bath Iron Works in Bath, ME, through today, USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) stands as a testament to the commitment, perseverance, and grit of every Sailor who served aboard our wonderful ship and the power of the most successful shipbuilding program in US history.

As a little background on me, I attended the US Naval Academy and graduated in 1981 selecting Surface Warfare as my designator with my first ship being USS Fairfax County (LST 1193). Following that tour, I was introduced to the world of the Aegis Weapon System with orders to USS Yorktown (CG 48). I then attended the Naval Postgraduate School earning a Master's Degree in Systems Engineering. While attending Department Head School, I was fortunate to be selected as the com-

missioning Operations Officer on USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51).

It was this tour that would define my future. Following my tour on USS Arleigh Burke, I attended the US Army Command and General Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth, KS, and then served as the Executive Officer on USS Shiloh (CG 67) - the only west coast ship tour in my career. Following my XO tour, I worked as the Administrative Aide to the Secretary of the Navy and there I received orders as Commanding Officer of USS Cole (DDG 67).

The tour on USS Arleigh Burke is what gave me the experience and in-depth technical knowledge that allowed me lead my crew through the devastating al Qaeda suicide terrorist attack on October 12, 2000. The foundation I built on our namesake's ship provided me the confidence to not only lead my crew as they saved the ship and our shipmates, but more importantly, ensure it was repaired, and today, USS Cole is still serving our great nation. After a tour on the Joint Chiefs of Staff (J-5) working detainee policy, followed by a tour on the CNO's staff (OPNAV) in the Interna-

OFFICERS

President

Kirk Lippold

[Email](#)

Secretary

Corey Keniston

[Email](#)

Treasurer

Rob Jobrack

[Email](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

USS Arleigh Burke 35th Commissioning Anniversary Celebration:

Warwick Rhode Island 22-28 August 2026. Arleigh Burke 35th Commissioning Anniversary Celebration Dinner— Sunday 23 Aug.

Annual Membership Meeting: 1930-2015

Thursday 21 October 2026 - the 4th Wednesday of October

tional Strategy Division, I retired from the Navy in June 2007.

After retirement, I chose not to enter the world of defense contracting but instead became an exclusive inspirational leadership and crisis management speaker with Keppler Speakers. Today, I am blessed to do what I love to do - share the story of my Navy experiences, the heroes who saved USS Cole from sinking, but also remind the American public of how vital the Arleigh Burke class destroyers are to our national security. I know from experience the meaning of Admiral Burke's statement, "This ship is built to fight, you better know how."

Currently I am involved with a number of issues impacting our national security and I am privileged to go on any network - domestic and international - to explain how and why our Navy remains at the forefront of our freedom.

I know I have big shoes to fill in the shadow of the remarkable jobs done by Rick Easton and Rob Jobrack who've led our association since its founding. With your support, I will continue to grow the USS Arleigh Burke Association and plan for the future of our ship and the legacy it will enjoy for decades into the future!

FROM THE SECRETARY BY COREY KENISTON

USS Arleigh Burke Association
Members and Friends,

Happy 250th Birthday to the
United States of America and
Happy 35th Birthday to the
Admiral's Destroyer!

We are happy to welcome our new Association President – Kirk Lippold – it is great to have him aboard. He has big shoes to fill as Rick Easton steps aside after successfully leading the organization for more than 15 years. We owe Rick a great debt of gratitude for all he has done to keep us fair in the channel over the years. While Rick has stepped aside, he hasn't stepped away. He remains active advising our Board of Directors as Immediate Past President and continues leading the USS Arleigh Burke Foundation. We are lucky to have him on our team.

Please take a moment to visit our website. <https://ddg51.org/> It is a treasure trove of information about the Admiral, the Ship, the Ship Class, and news about our Shipmates. You should spend some time in the History Interviews collected from those who made significant contributions to the success of the ship and class. Mark Twain said, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes." We are always looking for others



to interview so that their secrets of success from the Arleigh Burke program might be brought forward into today's challenging shipbuilding environment. Please let me know if you, or someone you respect, should be added to our list of those to interview.

DDG 51 remains forward deployed to Rota, Spain and assigned to Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDFNF-E) homeported in Naval Station Rota, Spain as part of Task Force 65. Under the direction of Naval Forces Europe/Africa, TF 65 ships execute operations from as far north as the Norwegian Sea and south to the Cape of Good Hope. They are involved in missions that include Ballistic Missile Defense, Sea Lines of Communication enforcement, Maritime Interdiction Operations, direct support to NATO combined and Joint operations and exercises, Counter-terrorism operations, Counter-piracy operations, Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership operations, whole of government Africa Partnership Station deployments, Safety of Life at Sea, and Theater Security Cooperation activities both inport and underway. The ship recently completed a major maintenance period and is standing the watch on our behalf. Our Navy has extended her service life by an additional five years. We anticipate her return to Norfolk in the coming years. The ship is built to fight and this crew has proven they know how!

35th Commissioning Reunion

22-27 August 2026 - We will partner with the Tin Can Sailors Association to celebrate our 35th Commissioning Anniversary during their 50th Annual Reunion at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Warwick, Rhode Island. We'll have a separate Dinner on Sunday night, 23 August, at the Crown Plaza's Rotunda Room. Dinner admission will be \$65 per seat and includes a complementary lapel pin marking our ship's significant milestone. Dinner reservations can be made at our [webpage](#).

The overall schedule and details for the Tin Can Sailors reunion can be found at [Tin Can Sailors 2026 National Reunion](#) - Tin Can Sailors.

Aug 22 (Saturday) Evening "Welcome Reception", the Navy Band Northeast is invited.

Aug 23 (Sunday) Evening "Arleigh Burke 35th Commissioning Anniversary Celebration Dinner"

Aug 24 (Monday) Day tour Newport, RI

Aug 25 (Tuesday) Day tour Battleship Cove and Tin Can Sailors Library/Museum

Aug 26 (Wednesday) Last Night Diner in the Hotel's Grand Ballroom

We are today's "Tin Can Sailors" and it will be great to interact with those who served on Destroyers no longer in service. They have reserved a block of rooms at the Crowne Plaza® Providence-Warwick (Airport), Rhode Island. The Tin Can Sailors room rate is \$149.00 (plus tax) single or double, per night. For ho-

tel reservations, call (401) 732-6000. You must mention that you are with Tin Can Sailors to get the TCS room rate. The registration fee for 22-27 August Reunion is \$210.00 per person. This includes a trip to Battleship Cove. You can register online at National Reunion Registration - Tin Can Sailors. For partial/ single day pricing, call the office at 508-677-0515. Optional tours include a self-guided tour of The Breakers and a scenic drive through Newport, RI, a clambake at Kempenaar's Clambake Club, and a Lighthouse & Mimosa cruise. The last day to register is 7/31/2026.

It's hard to believe we are already halfway through 2026 and our 35th Commissioning Anniversary is just around the corner. Your Association leadership encourages you to join us for our Board of Director's Association meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at 1930 (Eastern Time Zone). When we discuss the Association's business, the more participation in the conversation, the stronger the Association will be.

Please use the Zoom link to join: <https://us05web.zoom.us/j/84945831836?pwd=xRMPeJHoWGekz17TrmqVjcaDa9CCen.1>

Meeting ID: 849 4583 1836

Passcode: 552200

Happy Birthday Americans and Shipmates!

Sail safe!

Very respectfully submitted,

Corey

The ASSOCIATION STORE IS OPEN

Ball caps (30+ years as shown and blue 25th anniversary ball caps: Crew ballcaps: \$20; O5/06/Flag ballcaps: \$25. This includes shipping costs.

25th anniversary T-shirt for only \$5.



TREASURER'S REPORT BY ROB JOBRACK

Over a third of century ago --- before most of her current crew was born --- those of us who were lucky enough to serve on the commissioning crew believed we were part of a warship that would conduct prompt sustained operations at sea for 35 years. Here we are in 2026, and the Admiral's ship is still on the front lines of maritime capability and power serving our nation.



The fact that she has more years of active service in her is a testament to every person who has ever served as a member of the crew and the foresightedness of those who designed her. No one would have predicted that she would have the most modern combat system of any ship in the world and she would be executing combat missions that were not even part of the original baseline design capabilities.

We should be celebrating this remarkable achievement. And so we shall: as you will see elsewhere in this newsletter we are streamlining our 35th anniversary celebration by teaming with The National Association of Destroyer Veterans aka "The Tin Can Sailors" in August in Rhode Island. We'll get a larger perspective on destroyers and how they have served the Navy, including the opportunity to visit a post-World War II destroyer.

There will be a special Arleigh Burke Association dinner on Sunday, August 23 and many opportunities to reconnect with shipmates and other destroyer Sailors.

I look forward to seeing you there.

ANCHOR SCHOLARSHIP

Each year, the association provides for a \$3,000 annual scholarship awarded to an applicant who is the dependent (child or spouse) of a current or past USS Arleigh Burke (DDG-51) sailor (officer or enlisted).

To qualify:

The applicant's sponsor must be a current Arleigh Burke Association member.

Recipient must meet all Anchor Scholarship Foundation (who administers our scholarship) application requirements

On Page 6 in this newsletter, you can see the Thank You letter from the Anchor Scholarship Foundation for providing this scholarship.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Our membership categories and dues for 2026:

-USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51) Ship's Company:
Free

-Member: \$20

-Sustaining Member: \$125 (10 year sustaining equals Lifetime)

-Lifetime Member: \$1000

The USS Arleigh Burke Association is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt non-profit organization under section 501(c)(19) of the internal revenue code.

Payments and donations to the association can be made in two ways:

1) Using PayPal via the association website:

[Membership – USS Arleigh Burke Association](#)

2) Send a check made out to USS Arleigh Burke Association to:

USS Arleigh Burke Association

32 King Georges Grant

Fredericksburg, VA 22405

CONGRATULATIONS to our newest Lifetime Member:
Plankowner Chuck Killian.

FROM THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT BY RICK EASTON

Congratulations to CDR Kirk Lippold, USN (Ret.), on taking the Helm as our USS Areleigh Burke Association President! Kirk's distinguished Navy career included serving as USS Arleigh Burke's Commissioning Operations Officer. We are in very good hands with Kirk leading the way as we celebrate the Admirals' Destroyer's 35th Commissioning Anniversary this Summer, and look to her return from Forward Deployed Naval Forces Europe in about the 2028 timeframe.

Since the January 2026 Edition of *The Destroyerman*, I have had the privilege of engaging in a number of Association related activities/events. They include:

On June 4th I attended the Anchor Scholarship Foundation Annual Awards Luncheon at the Cavalier Golf and Yacht Club in Virginia Beach. I am proud to report Victor Olabode is the winner of this year's USS Arleigh Burke Association Anchor Scholarship for the 2026-2027 Academic Year!! As Victor was not able to attend the Awards Ceremony in person, I accepted the Award on his behalf. We set up a Teleconference Call to officially present Victor his Award, and to meet him and his family virtually. His father was USS Arleigh Burke's Supply Officer from May 2012 to May 2015. This Fall Victor will attend Virginia Polytechnic and State University and he expects to major in Computer Engineering. Victor is soon to be a graduate of Gainesville Highschool. He has a very impressive portfolio of activities and accomplishments. Please take a look at his Anchor Scholarship "Bio" and Anchor Scholarship Awards Ceremony pictures on pages 7, 8, and 9.

On April 10th, I had the honor of attending CAPT Tom Myers Retirement Ceremony after thirty years of Service to our Navy and Nation! Tom's spectacular career included Command of the Admiral's Destroyer from June 2015 to November 2016. Of note, Tom was the presiding USS Arleigh Burke Commanding Officer for the ship's 25th Silver Commissioning Anniversary Celebration at Waterside Towne Point Park/Nauticus over the Fourth of July Weekend that year. Highlighted are a couple of the pictures from Tom's Retirement Ceremony – page 10. We bid a fond Fare-

well and Following Seas to Tom and his family as he transitions from the Navy to the next phase of his life.

Also on April 10th, in conjunction with my trip to Norfolk for Tom Myers Retirement Ceremony, Ron Struwing and I were able to meet for breakfast at Denny's on Newtown Road in Virginia Beach. It was great to get together with Ron and catch up. In his day job Ron supports Sailor training in Cryptology – certainly very important in today's complex threat environment. And as everyone knows, Ron is the superb editor and key to the success of our Association Newsletter. I very much appreciate Ron's significant effort to publish *The Destroyerman*!!

On May 15th, I attended the Surface Warfare Schools Command (SWSC), formerly known as SWOS, Change of Command where CAPT Joe Baggett was relieved by CAPT Vic Sheldon. SWSC is the descendent of the Destroyer School Admiral Arleigh Burke established, which has been the cornerstone of Surface Warrior training since. The main entrance building is named the "Admiral Arleigh Burke Hall." As voted on by the USS Arleigh Burke Board of Directors and recently reaffirmed by the same, all SWOS/SWSC Commanding Officers are automatically Honorary USS Arleigh Burke Association Members, due to the connotation with Admiral Burke. After the Ceremony, I presented CAPT Sheldon with the USS Arleigh Burke Association 31st Commissioning Anniversary Commemorative Challenge Coin, same as I presented to CAPT Baggett a couple of years ago when he took command of SWSC. CAPT Baggett is off to CENTCOM for his next assignment! Please see the pictures on page 11.

On Saturday May 23rd, I attended the National Museum of the Surface Navy (NMSN) Official Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony aboard the USS Iowa, in the Port of Los Angeles, San Pedro, California. Note: USS Iowa is artifact 1 of the NMSN. VADM Brendan McLane, Commander Naval Surface Forces and Commander Naval Surface Force US Pacific Fleet, was the presiding officer. Flanked by RADM Mike Shatynski, USN (Ret.), NMSN Chairman Emeritus, Admiral McLane cut the ribbon. See the picture of Admiral McLane with me at the entrance to

the NMSN Phase 1 Experiences which are all below decks – page 12. Our Surface Warrior Museum is Sailor focused -- the highpoints of the First Phase include the Sailor Muster and the Great Ships Showcase. The Museum highlights Admiral Arleigh Burke and his namesake USS Arleigh Burke which represents both the current as well as the future Navy. If you are in the Southern California area, I recommend stopping by the NMSN!!

In closing, per my recent conversation with CDR Ethan Reber, Arleigh Burke's current Commanding Officer, the Admiral's Destroyer is directly supporting current global operations and has been performing extremely well! I hope to see many Association Members in August in Providence to celebrate USS Arleigh Burke's 35th Commissioning Anniversary!!



From the Desk of Joy Eyrolles...

Dear Rick,

First and foremost, let me thank you for the contributions you made to Anchor Scholarship Foundation over the past scholarship year. Your support allowed us to invest in U.S. Surface Navy families through higher education scholarships at a record level.

I encourage you to take a moment to think about the impact of your gift.

For the 2024-2025 school year, Anchor Scholarship Foundation awarded 44 scholarships to children and spouses of our Surface Navy Sailors. The total amount – \$153,300 – is an increase of 10% and the highest amount we've ever been able to award.

This means that 44 dependents have one less thing to worry about this Fall. One less challenge to face when weighing their higher education options. It means being able to focus more on their studies and their school communities rather than on finding part-time jobs to make ends meet. Their grades will be better, their school involvement will be higher, and their peace of mind will be intact.

But your gift's impact reaches far beyond the upcoming school year. It is proven that those who obtain scholarships and accrue little to no college debt realize life milestones faster than their peers with student loans. Buying a car, owning a home, marriage, even saving for retirement happens faster for our scholarship recipients because they started their careers with far less in student loans.

Enclosed is our impact statement where you will hear from our scholars how grateful they are for your support and how these scholarships make a difference to them. Enjoy reading their words and seeing their faces, and know that your annual gift does, indeed, have real meaning to real people.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Joy Eyrolles".

P.S. Please share our Impact Statement with others and tell them that Anchor Scholarships might be a resource for them too!

2026-2027 USS ARLEIGH BURKE ASSOCIATION ANCHOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



**Victor
Olabode**



Gainesville, VA

Scholarship: \$3000 Arleigh Burke Association sponsored Arleigh Burke Association

College: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Major: Major: Computer Engineering

2026-2027: Freshman

Academic and Extracurricular Highlights:

- 4.416 High School GPA
- Marching Band
- Conducted Microbial Fuel Cells and Harmful Algal Bloom solutions research
- Jazz Club

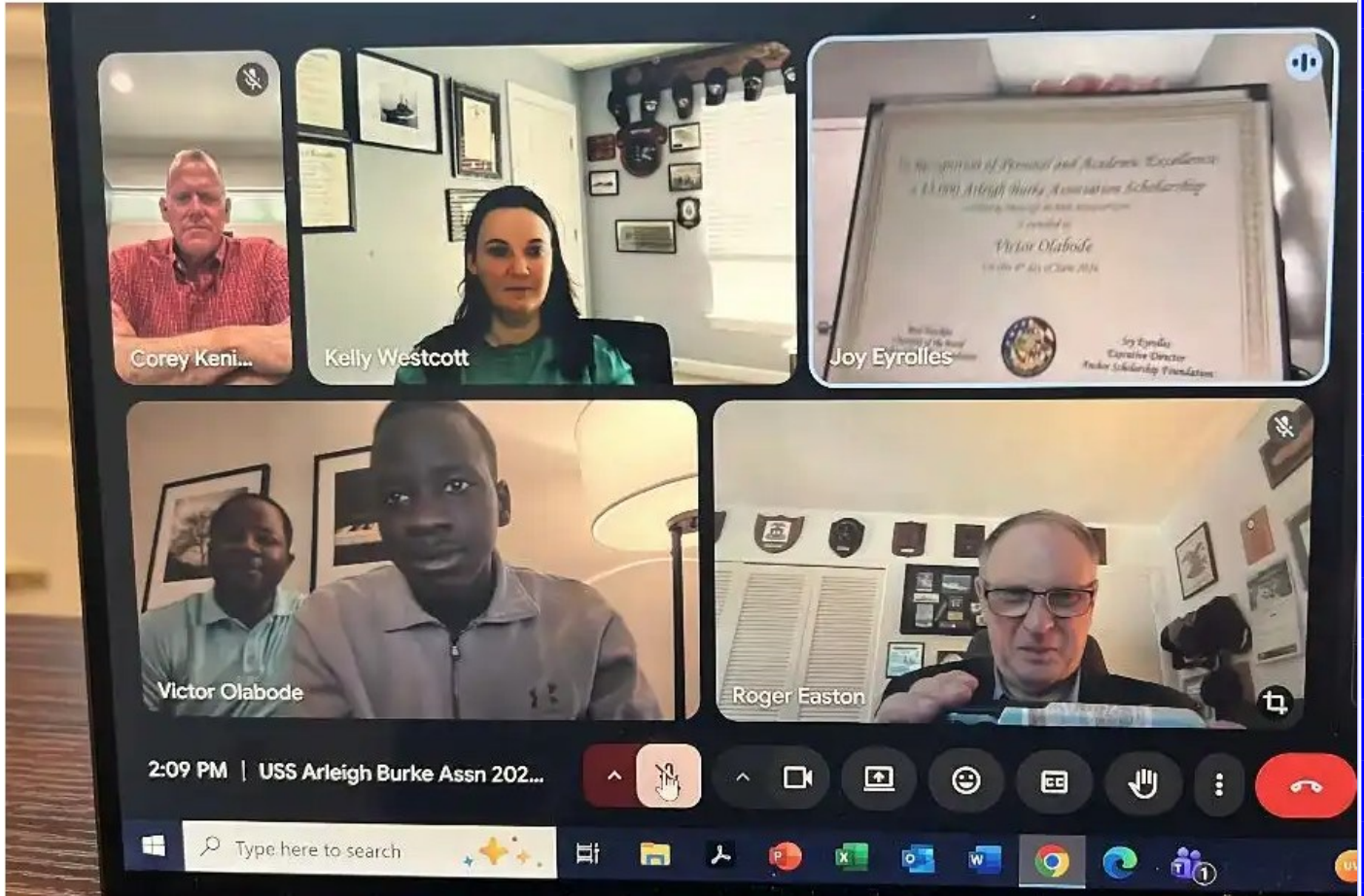
I would like to declare my profound appreciation towards the Anchor Scholarship Foundation and the Donor of this scholarship. While being an in-state school, Virginia Tech is still surprisingly expensive, but this scholarship will most definitely make an impact on my and my family's lives.

Both my sister and I have concluded our time at the Governor's School at Innovation Park and nearly our time at Gainesville High School, gaining quite a deep understanding of math and biology. Because both my sister and I are departing this program and school at the same time, this has put quite a financial load on my parents they have not fully prepared for. Especially as attending universities has gotten more expensive over the years, and these costs being doubled because each of us are attending college, this scholarship has become so meaningful to me and my parents as someone pursuing a bachelor's degree in computer engineering.

This scholarship has aided me in achieving the opportunity to further my education and provided some invaluable financial support to my parents. Once again, thank you so much for this scholarship, and I will continue to work hard to continue to demonstrate that I am deserving of this scholarship.



L-R CAPT Eric Kellen - SURFLANT COS, Joy Eyrolles - Anchor Scholarship Foundation Executive Director, Rick Easton. Award presented to Victor Olabode In Absentia. To be presented to him via Teleconference on Friday June fifth 2026.



Victor Olabode receiving his USS Arleigh Burke Association 2026-2027 Anchor Scholarship Award from Joy Eyrolles, Anchor Scholarship Foundation Executive Director. ARB Assn Anchor Scholarship virtual awards ceremony 5 June 2026

TIN CAN SAILORS BY ROSEN GIPE - TIN CAN SAILOR ASSN. PRESIDENT

Tin Can Sailors continues to host the quarterly Coffee Hour at the Headquarters in Somerset, Massachusetts. This program brings together members and friends in the area for presentations and conversations about destroyer history, the active fleet, destroyer museum ships, and current news for veterans. Admission is free. Call 508-677-0515 for information and to register.

Tin Can Sailors is an organization for destroyer sailors, family, friends, and history enthusiasts. "The Tin Can

Sailor," the quarterly magazine, contains historical articles, current news, and sea stories, as well as meeting and reunion listings. To become a member, call 508-677-0515 or visit the website at <https://www.destroyers.org/membership/>. To keep up with Tin Can Sailors, follow us on Facebook [@tincansailorsdestroyers](https://www.facebook.com/tincansailorsdestroyers).





Captain Tom Myers, 16th Commanding Officer of USS Arleigh Burke from June 2015 to November 2016, at his Retirement Ceremony after 30 years of Naval Service





Rick Easton with outgoing SWCS CO CAPT Joe Baggett (left), and incoming SWCS CO CAPT Vic Sheldon (below) at their change of command ceremony at Admiral Arleigh Burke Hall, Newport, Rhode Island 15 May 2026





VADM Brendan McLane, Commander Naval Surface Forces with Rick Easton immediately following the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the official opening of the new National Museum of the Surface Navy.



CDR Vic Armes, RCN, Marine Systems Engineer (similar to USN Engineering Duty Officer) Deputy Program Manager for the Canadian Navy Joint Support Ship with Rick Easton at CANSEC 2026 in Ottawa. CRD Armes was a former RCN Boarding Party Team Member who boarded USS Arleigh Burke multiple times as part of deployed exercises.

FIRST IN CLASS, BEST IN CLASS: THE UNWAVERING SUCCESS OF AMERICA'S LEAD DESTROYER; THE USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51)

BY: ENSIGN DANIEL ANGULO, GUNNERY OFFICER

USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51) continues to prove the reliability and enduring strength of the Arleigh Burke Class of Destroyers through steadfast performance and exemplary service. Her crew sets the standard for the professionalism, resilience, and operational excellence expected of the lead ship in the class and of her namesake, Admiral Arleigh Burke.

Following her successful completion of Composite Training Unit Exercise, ARLEIGH BURKE made her way back from the east coast of the United States to Rota, Spain to begin the next phase of her certification patrol, continuing to successfully recertify in Basic Phase mission areas during her transatlantic voyage. Shortly after her arrival homeport, she was surge deployed in support of Operation Epic Fury. Her crew answered the call of duty with no hesitation.

While supporting Operation Epic Fury, ARLEIGH BURKE continued recertifying in Basic Phase mission areas, including certifications in Communications, Damage Control, and most recently her Engineering

Department completing a very successful Mobility-Engineering assessment. All the while remaining operational and answering all national tasking in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Approaching 35 years of active service, ARLEIGH BURKE's battle proven performance throughout Operation Epic Fury further reinforces the reputation of the Arleigh Burke Class as the most capable and dependable warships in the world and as the most successful class of warships in modern naval history.

Her crew's ability to successfully perform ballistic missile defense operations in stride while completing mission area certifications serves as a testament to their commitment and dedication to maintaining ARLEIGH BURKE's proud legacy. Through sustained readiness, precision operations, and seamless coordination with allied and joint forces, ARLEIGH BURKE continues to bolster global maritime security and maintain freedom of the high seas.



The USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) launches a Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) for ballistic missile interception at night in the Mediterranean Sea, March 29, 2026. Arleigh Burke is forward deployed to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations to support the warfighting effectiveness, lethality, and readiness of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, and defend U.S., Allied, and partner interests in the region. (U.S. Navy Photo)"

ARLEIGH BURKE CLASS UPDATE

BY CAPTAIN JAY YOUNG, DESTROYER SHIPBUILDING PROGRAM MANAGER

As the summer months of 2026 quickly approach, I am pleased to provide you the latest updates from the DDG 51 Arleigh Burke-class Destroyer Shipbuilding Program. The program remains robust and steadfast in its mission to deliver the world's greatest warships to the Fleet. With 24 ships under contract and 12 progressing through various phases of construction, we continue towards a productive summer of sea trials, christenings, and deliveries.

On March 22, 2026, The Future USS PATRICK GALLAGHER (DDG 127) achieved Main Engine Light Off (MELO) at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works (BIW) in Bath, ME. We completed Builder's Trial as Block Trial' the week of April 27, 2026, where DDG 127 completed both Hull, Mechanical and Engineering (HM&E) trials and Combat Systems (CS) trials in the same week. Conducting a Block Trial requires a high state of ship completeness to successfully execute and is an excellent example of the drive to deliver the last Flight IIA hull to the Navy. I want to pass on a big BZ to our team in Bath, Maine who made the DDG 127 Block Trial possible and flawlessly executed the successful milestone.

On March 24, 2026, I had the honor and privilege to travel to Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII), Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, MS, to meet with former Senator Sam Nunn, the namesake of the future USS SAM NUNN (DDG 133). Together, we toured DDG 133 while I updated him on the construction progress, which is at 39% complete. The next milestone for the ship will be launch, currently planned for late 2027.

The future USS GEORGE M. NEAL (DDG 131) was launched from HII on April 1, 2026, two months ahead of schedule, a testament to the hard work of the shipbuilders, sailors and civilians in this program who push every day to deliver quality ships to the fleet. The next milestone is Christening tentatively scheduled for August 2026. George M. Neal, the ship's namesake, was award-

ed the Navy Cross on July 3, 1951, for his extraordinary heroism during the Korean War. He volunteered as a crewman to fly in a helicopter deep into North Korean territory to rescue a downed Marine Aviator, in overcast skies and under heavy enemy fire, enduring his own helicopter crash and evading the enemy forces for nine days.

April 11, 2026, marked a special day at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia: the commissioning of the USS HARVEY C. BARNUM JR (DDG 124). The weather was beautiful and thousands of people, including Government Civilians, Sailors, and their families, gathered to celebrate DDG 124's official entry into the fleet. The ship's namesake, Colonel Harvey C. Barnum Jr., who has been present through the various stages of construction and testing, delivered an inspiring speech. Reflecting on the responsibility and trust that defines naval service, Colonel Barnum shared with the crew, "Our strength is not built on technology alone, but on trust, trust that we will stand by one another and that no one will ever be left behind." In addition, then-Secretary of the Navy, John C. Phelan served as the ceremony's principal speaker, joining Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James W. Kilby and Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Eric M. Smith in celebrating the ship's entry into service.

On 19 May and 21 May respectively, Bath Iron Works conducted the Start of Construction Ceremonies for The Future USS J. WILLIAM MIDDENDORF (DDG 138) and The Future THOMAS G. KELLEY (DDG 140). Start of Construction is the first step in the construction of ships, to prepare for the modular components of the ships to be conjoined in the eventual Laying of the Keel. DDG 138 is named after American Diplomat and 62nd Secretary of the Navy, and the United States Ambassador to the European Communities and Netherlands, James William Midden-

dorf. When he was Secretary of the Navy, he oversaw an increase of over 60% for the Navy's budget. DDG 140's namesake, Captain Thomas G. Kelley, was present for the ceremony and provided inspiring remarks to our team. A Medal of Honor recipient, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions that risked his life above and beyond the call of duty, maintaining direction and leading his column of river assault craft while sustaining serious head injuries during the Vietnam War.

As we look towards the second half of 2026, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the Arleigh Burke Association for your unwavering support of our ships, their

crews and our shipbuilding program. The stories of heroism and the legacies of the namesakes are forged in the steel of our newest destroyers, inspiring us daily to deliver the most capable and survivable warships to the Navy.

With a busy summer ahead, the DDG 51 Program Office remains focused on executing our ship milestones with urgency alongside our industry partners. Thank you for your continued dedication to our program and the United States Navy. In the words of Colonel Harvey Barnum Jr., "Charge On!"

DDG51 35TH REUNION

DDG51 35th Reunion

The Arleigh Burke Association is partnering with the Tin Can Sailors Association for our 35th Anniversary of Commissioning Reunion & Celebration in Warwick, Rhode Island.

The Tin Can Sailors annual reunion is
 – 22-28 August 2026
 – Crown Plaza Hotel
 – Warwick, Rhode Island

The Arleigh Burke Association 35th Anniversary Dinner will be at the Warwick Crown Plaza on Sunday, August 23, 2026 at 1800.

There is a flat fee for the Arleigh Burke Dinner of \$65. This includes the dinner and a 35th anniversary lapel pin.



DDG51 Association Ball caps and 35th anniversary chal-

lenge coins will be available for purchase at the event.

If you are NOT attending, do not inquire now about memorabilia. Check back here after the reunion – if



any remain, we may have a link at that time.

If registration cost would prevent any prior DDG51 sailor from attending, please [reach out](#).

If you attend only the DDG51 event, you do not need to register with TCS.

Attire is sharp casual attire, carry damage control handbooks, wear shoot-em-in-the-face ball caps.

Registration for the DDG51 event closes July 1, 2026.

More info can be found on the website.

2026 BOD Meeting Dates

Jul 15 Aug 19 Sep 16 Oct 14
Oct 21 – Annual Association Membership Meeting Nov 18

Teleconference for BOD/ Annual Meetings:

Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84945831836?pwd=xRMPeJHoWGEkz17TrmqVjcaDa9CCen.1>

Phone: 301-715-8592, Meeting ID: 849 4583 1836, Passcode: 552200

All Telcons kick off at 1930 EST

WE'RE ON THE WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA!

[.ArleighBurkeAssociation.org](http://ArleighBurkeAssociation.org)



The purpose of the USS Arleigh Burke Association is to represent the professional values of all those who have served onboard USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51) or have an ongoing interest in promoting the ship and crew, the Arleigh Burke Class of Aegis Guided Missile Destroyers, as well as the United States Navy. Toward that end, this Association serves as the professional association for all ARLEIGH BURKE crewmembers and their supporters, past, present and, future.

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Fredericksburg, VA 22405

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