

**A Report on Policies and Practices of the U.S. Navy for  
Naming the Vessels of the Navy**

Prepared by:

Department of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Rm. 4E720  
Washington, DC 20050-1000

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Part I: Policies and Practices for Naming the Vessels of the Navy</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose	
Background	
Orthodox Traditionalists versus Pragmatic Traditionalists	
Exceptions to Type Naming Conventions	
Naming Warships after Living Persons	
Exogenous Influences on Ship Naming	
A Review of Current Ship-naming Policies and Practices	
Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSV)	
Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ships (T-AKES)	
Amphibious Transport Docks (LPDs)	
Littoral Combat Ships (LCSs)	
Aircraft Carriers (CVs, CVLs, CVEs and CVNs)	
Seabasing ships (MLPs and AFSBs)	
Destroyers (DDs, DLs, DLGs, DLGNs and DDGs)	
Fleet Submarines (SSs, SSGs, SSBNs, SSNs and SSGNs)	
“Big Deck” Amphibious Assault Ships (LPHs, LHAs, and LHDs)	
High Speed Ferries (HSFs)	
<b>Part II: Naming Conventions for Remaining Ship Types/Classes</b>	<b>55</b>
USS <i>Constitution</i> (44 guns)	
Cruisers (CAs, CBs, CCs, CLs, CAGs, CLGs, CLGNs and CGs)	
Destroyer and Ocean Escorts (DEs, DEGs, FFs, and FFGs)	
Mine warfare ships (MCMs and MHCs)	
Patrol Ships (PCs)	
Dock Landing Ships (LSDs)	
Fast Combat Support Ships (AOEs and T-AOEs)	
Fleet Oilers (AOs and T-AOs)	
Other support ships	
<b>Part III: Conclusion</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	
Table 1. Ship Naming Decisions Made by Secretary Mabus, by date	16
Table 2. US Navy Type/Class Naming Conventions	70
Table 3. US Navy Type/Class Naming Conventions, with exceptions	72

## Executive Summary

This report is submitted in accordance with Section 1014 of Public Law 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 conventions 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 conventions. To remedy this problem, the Naval History and Heritage Command will once again develop and publish a list of current type naming conventions to help all Americans better understand why Secretaries of the Navy choose the ship names they do. This list will be updated as required.

## **Part I**

### **A Review of Policies and Practices for Naming the Vessels of the Navy**

#### ***Purpose***

This report is submitted in accordance with Section 1014 of Public Law 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 stipulated by the NDAA, the key elements of the report must include:

- A description of the current policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy.
- A description of the extent to which the policies and practices described under paragraph (1) vary from historical policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy, and an explanation for such variances (if any).
- An assessment of 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.
- Any other matters relating to the policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy that the Secretary of Defense considers appropriate.

The report was prepared by the Department of the Navy staff, under the direction of Undersecretary of the Navy Robert O. Work. The historical information and background was developed by Sarandis “Randy” Papadopoulos, Ph.D., Secretariat Historian; Mr. Cecil “Kevin” Hurst, historian and ship name and sponsor specialist at the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC); NHHC historian Robert J. Cressman, ship name and sponsor specialist from 1981-1991; and Captain Henry “Jerry” Hendrix, USN, recently named as the new Director of the NHHC. To keep an already long report from being longer, the only footnotes are those used to clarify or amplify ideas covered in the written sections. However, all information included herein is based either on public materials or official Department of the Navy ship-naming documents and source materials that can be produced upon request.

#### ***Background***

Choosing a ship’s name is the first step in the solemn process that brings a US Navy warship into service. The second step is to choose a ship’s sponsor—a living woman, normally a civilian. In the US Navy, the sponsor is technically considered a permanent member of the ship's crew and is expected to give a part of her

personality to the ship, and to be a staunch advocate for its continued service and well being. It is said her spirit and presence will guide a ship throughout its service life, and will bestow good luck and protection over both the ship itself and all those who sail aboard her.

After a ship's name and sponsor are selected, the Navy celebrates, in order, the ship's keel laying, the point at which the ship begins its transition from concept to reality; christening and launch, where the ship moves from being a mere hull number to a ship with a given name and spirit; and finally commissioning, where the ship is officially "brought to life," accepted by the US Navy, and entered into commissioned service.<sup>1</sup> The spirit of a ship's chosen name as well as its living sponsor guides all of these solemn events. But it is the ship's name that most will remember, as it will grace its stern and be a part of the Naval Vessel Register—the official inventory of ships and service craft in custody or titled by the US Navy—for up to five or more decades before the ship's name is stricken from the Register.<sup>2</sup>

Beginning with an Act passed by Congress on 3 March 1819, the government executive tasked with choosing the names for the warships that compose the Navy's battle force has been the Secretary of the Navy, under the direction of the President, and in accordance with current laws and ship-naming customs and traditions. Today, the responsibility to name US Navy warships naturally devolves from the Secretary's statutory authority, outlined under Title 10, US Code, to organize, train, and equip a Navy-Marine Corps Team that is built and ready for war and operated forward to preserve the peace.

Naming ships is just one of the many decisions a Secretary must make when executing the statutory authorities to organize, train, and equip the Navy-Marine Corps Team. However, selecting names for US Navy battle force ships is a particularly solemn and important responsibility. As explained in 1969:

One of the greatest values of a ship's name is the inspiration it provides to those who sail on her. Therefore special effort will be made to select names that reflect part of the Nation's and the Navy's great heritage.

As the order of precedence in the second sentence suggests, the US Navy is first and foremost *America's* Navy. Therefore, Secretaries of the Navy adopt formal naming

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioning applies only to a United States Ship (USS). A United States Naval Ship (USNS) operated by the Military Sealift Command is typically christened upon delivery and accepted into service.

<sup>2</sup> Upon completion of its active service, a United States Ship is decommissioned and a USNS ship is taken out of service. The ships are then normally transferred to a Naval Inactive Maintenance Facility, where they remain in an inactive status pending determination of their final fate. Some are placed out of commission and in reserve and laid up for long-term preservation, ready to be recalled to active service should the need arise. Most, however, are disposed of, either through foreign military sale or transfer, donation as a museum or memorial, dismantling or recycling, artificial reefing, or use as a target vessel. Once the ship is disposed of, its name is stricken from the Naval Vessel Register.

conventions for general ship *types* (e.g., battleships, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, etc.) or *classes* (e.g., *Los Angeles*-class attack submarine, *Sturgeon*-class attack submarine, etc.) which are then used to guide the subsequent selection of specific ship names that celebrate not just the storied past of the US Navy and US Marine Corps, but also the grand heritage of our great country.

Once a type/class naming convention 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 service members, or members of Congress. Finally, Congress can enact provisions in Public Law that express the sense of the entire body about new ship 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.<sup>3</sup>

As described by the Naval History and Heritage Command, “the procedures and practices involved in Navy ship naming are as much, if not more, products of evolution and tradition than of legislation.” Thus, whenever a Secretary selects a ship's namesake, self-appointed guardians of ship naming traditions, customs, and practices stand ready to grade their choice. And, when a choice upsets them, charges that the Navy is deviating from tradition are sure to follow. This helps explain why, as Congressional Research Analyst Ron O'Rourke reports, “Some observers in recent years have perceived a breakdown in, or a corruption of, the rules of ship naming.”<sup>4</sup> It is important to note, however, that the historical record reveals two very different viewpoints on the proper ship naming traditions, customs, and practices a Secretary should follow. Many criticisms of what constitutes an “appropriate” ship naming policy or practice, or what constitutes a suitable ship name, can be explained by the

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<sup>3</sup> 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 Admiral Arleigh Burke, several years before the ship was either authorized or appropriated.

<sup>4</sup> See Ronald O'Rourke, Congressional Research Service, “Navy Ship Names: Background for Congress,” CRS Report to Congress, dated June 15, 2012. Mr. O'Rourke's excellent work helped guide the development of this report, which attempts to address many of the issues identified by him.

differing approaches practiced by these two schools of thought. It is therefore necessary to highlight their differences before proceeding further.

### ***Orthodox Traditionalists versus Pragmatic Traditionalists***

For the purposes of this report, these two schools will be described as Orthodox and Pragmatic Traditionalists. In general terms, *Orthodox Traditionalists* believe that Navy ship names should be chosen using fixed naming conventions, and from vetted and approved lists of ship names deemed faithful to those naming conventions. For example, one spokesman for the Orthodox Traditionalist School recently wrote, “In a conflict between the tradition of the Secretary of the Navy having the authority to name ships, and the tradition of having ship classes with *coherent and integral* naming conventions, I come down in support of the latter” (emphasis added). And, because he believed that Department of the Navy’s ship-naming choices were working against coherent and integral conventions, the author went on to recommend that Congress establish a standing board that would develop lists of naming conventions or ship names from which a Secretary would have to pick.

Such thinking and recommendations are routine fare for Orthodox Traditionalists, who periodically raise the alarm when they perceive a breakdown in Navy ship naming practices. For example, by 1969, no fewer than 70 ships built over the previous five years had been named for cities, the result of the then-common practice of using indirect city naming conventions like “cities *and rivers of the same name*” (convention then used for fast combat support ships, replenishment oilers, and fleet oilers; emphasis added), or “cities *and US naval battles of the same name*” (convention then used for LPH amphibious assault ships; emphasis added). To remedy the situation, then-CNO Admiral Thomas H. Moorer asked Rear Admiral Robert E. Riera, Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Fleet Operation and Readiness, Op 03B), to convene an informal panel of flag officers and senior captains from each of the Navy’s principal warfare specialties to review the contemporary policies for naming ships. Admiral Riera’s specific assignment was to determine the feasibility of “establishing a single source of names for each ship type *so that it would be possible to more readily identify a ship type by name*” (emphasis added). The Board proposed a rewrite of Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5030, “Naming of Ships and Service Craft,” to state future ship names would be “selected within the name source guidelines” recommended by the Riera Panel, which “have evolved for more than a century... for more than 120 types of ships and craft now in the Naval Vessel Register.”

In the end, however, the Riera Panel’s quest for static ship type/class name source ship-naming conventions that were perfectly “coherent and integral” ended in failure. The reason why this happened is that many (if not most) Secretaries of the Navy can best be described as *Pragmatic Traditionalists*. In general, Pragmatic Traditionalists see Orthodox Traditionalist thinking as unnecessarily rigid. They know that battle force ship types, and classes within ship types, inevitably change due to a variety of reasons—chief among them technological advancements. They

therefore reject the notion that a fixed source of naming conventions for particular ship types can possibly stand the test of time.

As just one of many examples, in 1968 the only ship in the active battle force named in honor of a State of the Union was USS *New Jersey* (BB 62), an *Iowa*-class battleship reactivated from the reserve fleet to provide naval gunfire support off the coast of Vietnam. Moreover, the only other ships in the Naval Register with State names were three more *Iowa*-class battleships out of commission, in reserve. With battleships no longer in production, no plans to bring the other three reserve battleships into active service, and the *New Jersey* destined to return to the reserve fleet once the Vietnam War ended, it was going to stay that way barring a change to the eight-decade-old ship tradition of naming only battleships after States of the Union. Faced with a choice of honoring tradition or having so few battle force ships named after states, Pragmatic Traditionalists (and even Orthodox Traditionalists, in the end) chose to jettison long-standing ship-naming custom. The only question to be answered was what new ship type would proudly carry the names of our 50 states.

With no fewer than 25 nuclear-powered guided missile frigates (DLGNs) then in its future years building program, and early plans for even more capable nuclear-powered strike cruisers (CSGNs) in development, Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius approved CNO Thomas H. Moorer's recommendation—derived from the Riera Panel (which didn't even include naming conventions for conventional guided missile cruisers in their final report)—that nuclear-powered surface combatants would be henceforth named in honor of States of the Union. State names were selected for “their universal appeal to Americans,” and because they were “peerless among the various categories of ship names the Navy has used.”

In the end, however, fiscal realities intervened; only six new DLGNs were ultimately built (comprising the *California* and *Virginia* classes, both later reclassified as guided missile cruisers), and plans for the CSGN were shelved altogether. A substitute ship type would be needed to carry state names. Thus, in 1975, only six years after the Riera Panel held forth, Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf II decided to name newly constructed nuclear-powered strategic ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) after States of the Union because they would be “capital ships in the crucial nuclear deterrence area of national defense.” If that weren't enough, all four of the *Iowa*-class battleships were modernized and re-commissioned during the latter stage of the Cold War.

Consequently, in the 1980s, the Navy's battle force included three different types of ships (battleships, guided missile cruisers, and SSBNs) in four different classes named for States of the Union. This situation undoubtedly offended former members of the Riera Panel and many Orthodox Traditionalists. After all, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to readily identify a ship type when hearing a State's name when so many types had identical naming conventions. But for Pragmatic Traditionalists, the only tradition that matters is *America's* Navy should always have



ships named in honor of States of the Union. If this requires a new ship type or class to be named for States, or that several ship classes have State names during the transition from one type to the next, then so be it.

Unlike Orthodox Traditionalists, then, who start with a list of *ship types* and then seek to give them “coherent and integral” naming conventions, Pragmatic Traditionalists generally start with a *list of categories* that define both our Nation’s heritage and Navy-Marine Corps tradition and then look for appropriate contemporary ship types to showcase them. Their approach ensures *America’s Navy* will always have ships in commission that honor States of the Union...and our Constitution... and former Presidents... and well-known Americans and politicians... and cities...and well-known landmarks.... and noted naval leaders and heroes...and important Navy and Marine battles...and famous ships. For practicing Pragmatists, these are the only naming conventions that are enduring and truly matter. Indeed, given that the character of the fleet is constantly changing, and ship types or classes within ship types often disappear entirely, thinking that ships of a particular ship type must always be named according to some unalterable type naming convention (e.g., submarines MUST be named for fish) is simply impractical. In the end, the single most important tradition is that chosen ship names continue to honor the heritage of our great Nation, its people, and its superb Navy-Marine Corps Team.

#### ***Exceptions to Ship Naming Conventions***

Pragmatic Traditionalists also part ways with their more orthodox brothers on two additional ship-naming practices. The first is whether or not it is proper to make exceptions to existing ship naming conventions. Orthodox Traditionalists generally believe that once a “coherent and integral” type or class naming convention is chosen, it is inviolate; all ship names must subscribe perfectly with it, with no exceptions for any reason. This reflects their underlying desire to be able to immediately identify a ship’s type once hearing its name. Pragmatic Traditionalists believe this type of thinking is based on the dubious assumption that everyone will always know all contemporary type naming conventions, and that everyone is capable of associating a ship’s name with a specific convention. For example, the naming convention for today’s T-AKE Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ships is “famous American explorers, trailblazers, and pioneers.” Even if someone knew this convention, when they heard a ship was named USNS *Charles Drew* by Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter, would they know Drew was a pioneer in blood storage and transfusion, and that the ship was therefore a T-AKE? Not likely.

Imagine for a moment, however, that everyone with an interest in the Navy knew every naming convention, and recognized every single connection between chosen names and convention. Should even this unlikely circumstance prompt Secretaries to follow every convention unerringly? In the view of Pragmatic Traditionalists, the answer is a resounding “no.” While Pragmatic Traditionalists agree that Secretaries of the Navy should, as a matter of course, follow the contemporary naming convention for a particular ship type or class to the greatest degree possible, they

believe that Navy Secretaries should retain the right to deviate from an established naming convention when the circumstances warrant.

This thinking is based on sound historical footing. The Naval Act of 1794 authorized the building of six frigates.<sup>5</sup> The War Office (there not being a Department of the Navy until 1798) proposed that the type naming convention for these powerful warships be “principles or symbols found in the US Constitution.” None other than President George Washington agreed with this recommendation, and he personally selected the names for the first five frigates from a list of potential names provided by the War Office—*Constitution, United States, President, Congress, and Constellation* (for our flag’s stars, which represent individual States of the Union). President Washington’s approval of the type naming convention and his choices for the ship names left no doubt that he considered the budding US Navy to be much more than just a fighting force. *America’s* Navy, and the names gracing the sterns of its warships, would represent the ideals of the young country and its government in both war and peace.

As fate would have it, the building of the sixth frigate authorized by Congress was delayed. It was thus left to Benjamin Stoddert, the first Secretary of the newly established Department of the Navy, to name the sixth ship. And, when the time came, Secretary Stoddert decided to name her USS *Chesapeake*. There is no document on record which explains his choice. Perhaps he did so simply to separate his new Department from the War Office, which had selected the original type naming convention as well as a list of recommended names. Whatever his reasons however, the result was clear: the very first naming decision by the very first Secretary of the Navy resulted in a “corruption” of the established naming convention. In other words, a Secretary’s discretion to make exceptions to ship-naming conventions is one of the Navy’s oldest ship-naming traditions. In a very real way, Stoddert’s choice demonstrated that when it comes to ship naming, most Secretaries of the Navy—to a greater or lesser extent—are Pragmatic Traditionalists.

### ***Naming Warships for Living Persons***

A second practice over which Orthodox and Pragmatic Traditionalists disagree is whether it is proper to name warships after still living persons. Orthodox Traditionalists argue against the practice, and they believe history and tradition is squarely on their side. Pragmatic Traditionalists, on the other hand, point out that this tradition has changed over time. In fact, 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

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<sup>5</sup> The six small stars on Navy Command at Sea pins worn by US Navy surface warfare officers represent these first six frigates.

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.<sup>6</sup>

During World War II, the practice of naming ships only after deceased Americans was codified in the destroyer naming convention, which was explicitly changed to “*deceased American Naval, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Officers and enlisted men who have rendered distinguished service to the country above and beyond the call of duty...*” (emphasis added). The addition of “distinguished service above and beyond the call of duty” in the convention was significant, as it implied that only posthumous Medal of Honor recipients should be considered for ship names. The reasoning behind this change is not hard to fathom. In the midst of a truly global world war, it would be inappropriate to name ships in honor of living persons with the list of posthumous Medal of Honor recipients who made the ultimate sacrifice growing ever longer. After World War II, however, the convention was shortened to “deceased members [of the] Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard,” dropping the explicit emphasis on Medal of Honor recipients.

The practice of naming warships only for deceased Americans or heroes continued after the Second World War. Moreover, the members of 1969 Riera Panel, Orthodox Traditionalists by mission, if not principle, explicitly decreed that “vessels will not be named to honor living persons.” However, at the same time (and as will be described in more detail later in the report), the Riera Panel endorsed an earlier decision to exclude members of Congress from the destroyer naming convention, abandoning a five-decade old “tradition” in hopes of establishing a more “coherent and integral” convention.

This decision had unforeseen consequences for Orthodox Traditionalists. Simply put, there was simply no way that future Secretaries of the Navy would fail to recognize the World War II and Cold War legislators who helped create the most powerful naval force on earth. As a result, the Riera Panel’s decision compelled Secretaries to honor the Cold War generation of leaders by using exceptions to

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<sup>6</sup> This exception was a special case, however. The ship was originally laid down in the Crescent Shipyard, located in Elizabeth, New Jersey, for the Holland Torpedo Boat Company. She was the sixth boat built by John Holland, and was named *Holland VI*. The Department of the Navy procured the submarine in 1900, and Secretary Long chose to re-name her USS *Holland* in recognition of the boat’s inventor.

established naming conventions across different ship types. Indeed, it took just two years after the Riera Panel before Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee named four attack submarines—then commonly named for “fish and denizens of the deep”—for prominent Cold War Senators and Congressman, all deceased. Soon thereafter, however, Department of the Navy leaders were considering the name for CVN 70. Secretary of the Navy John Warner knew the 93<sup>rd</sup> 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. (More on these choices later in the report.)

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 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.<sup>7</sup> 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 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.

In summary, then, in contrast to their more orthodox brothers, Pragmatic Traditionalists are more willing to make occasional exceptions to ship-naming conventions and to name ships for still-living persons when they think the

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to these three provisions, other proposed bills and amendments recommended that ships be named for Ronald Reagan and Hyman Rickover. Although not enacted, they sent clear signals of Congressional intent to the sitting Secretary of the Navy.

circumstances warrant it. Indeed, they sometimes do both at the same time. For example, in the 1980s, the contemporary naming conventions for DD/DDGs and SSNs were for “deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy,” and “American cities,” respectively. Rather than name a DDG for still living Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, Secretary John Lehman instead chose an SSN (SSN 709) for the honor. To strict Orthodox Traditionalists, this amounted to both a “corruption” of the contemporary submarine naming convention and a contravention of the Riera Panel edict that vessels would not be named in honor of living persons. Nevertheless, after considering all the circumstances, Secretary Lehman felt it was exactly the right time, and exactly the right type of ship, to honor the “Father of the Nuclear Navy.”<sup>8</sup> Pragmatic Traditionalists would agree, and say this story illustrates exactly why Secretaries should retain the final decision over ship names and not be bound by the rigid application of fixed naming conventions.

The foregoing discussion helps preview one of the central themes of this report: US Navy ship-naming policies, practices, and “traditions” are not fixed; they evolve constantly over time. Moreover, because there are at least two distinctly different views on “proper” ship naming traditions, customs, and practices (and many subtle shades in between), one must consider the historical record and specific ship naming choices from both points of view. And, when doing so, it is very difficult to make the case that current Navy ship naming policies and practices fall outside established historical norms in any meaningful way. This is because most Secretaries of the Navy, while ever mindful of established policy as well as Departmental tradition and customs, take the more pragmatic approach to ship-naming practices. The result has been a vibrant ship naming process that works quite well and closely connects the Navy-Marine Corps Team with the country it so proudly serves.

### ***Exogenous Influences on Ship Naming***

Whether they are a practicing Orthodox or Pragmatic Traditionalist, every Secretary aims to choose ship names that inspire Sailors and Marines both in and out of uniform and help to maintain a close bond between the Navy-Marine Corps Team and the country it serves. Doing so is perhaps more difficult than it sounds. Except in extraordinary circumstances like World War II, there are typically far more choices for ship names than ships to name. For example, on 31 May 2012, the Navy’s battle force numbered 285 US and USNS ships. These 285 ships are augmented by additional special mission, prepositioning, and sealift ships. To sustain this combined fleet, the Department of the Navy now procures an average of seven to 12 ships per year. As a result, during a typical four-year tenure, a sitting Secretary will have only 28 to 48 ship naming opportunities. Given the Nation’s and the Navy-

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<sup>8</sup> Secretary Lehman genuinely wanted to honor Admiral Rickover with a ship name. However, he did not want that ship to be an aircraft carrier. His decision to name SSN 709 USS *Hyman G. Rickover* was made to preempt passage of a sense-of-the Congress resolution to name a nuclear carrier after Admiral Rickover, whom Secretary Lehman had forced out of the Navy in 1982. At the same time, Secretary Lehman named CVN 72 and CVN 73 USS *Abraham Lincoln* and USS *George Washington*, respectively.

Marine Corps Team’s storied history and rich heritage, any Secretary comes into the job with a long list of deserving ship names from which to choose—and the list grows every day as yet another Sailor or Marine distinguishes themselves in battle, or an existing ship adds its name to an already long Navy honor roll.

Consequently, every Secretary of the Navy, regardless of point of view, 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. Indeed, the naming of Navy ships has always been a subject of Presidential interest to a greater or lesser extent. As will be explained in greater detail later in this report, President George Washington personally selected the names of the US Navy’s first five ships; President Theodore Roosevelt dictated the names for “his” battleships; and President Franklin D. Roosevelt personally modified Navy ship naming conventions. As a result, when a President makes his opinions on ship naming known, all Secretaries listen and comply.

Two contemporary examples help drive home this point. On 9 September 1983, nine days after the death of Senator Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson, President Ronald Reagan announced that SSBN 730 would be named in honor of Jackson, who had served in the House and Senate for 43 years and was “the principal Congressional advocate and sponsor of the TRIDENT submarine program.” However, the President’s decision caused something of a problem since Secretary of the Navy Edward Hidalgo had already named SSBN 730 in honor of Rhode Island back in January 1981 (a choice consistent with the contemporary class naming convention). In response, President Reagan also announced that SSN 719, a *Los Angeles*-class attack submarine, would be named in honor of Providence, the state’s capital (consistent with the contemporary SSN naming convention).<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, on 1 November 1999, President Clinton named DDG 90 USS *Chafee*, in honor of John H. Chafee, former Governor and Senator from Rhode Island and Secretary of the Navy, only eight days after his death. This selection did not cause as much of a disturbance as President Reagan’s choice of Henry M. Jackson because DDG 90 had not been previously named. Moreover, because Senator Chafee had also served as a Secretary of the Navy, his name conformed to the destroyer naming convention, which was for “deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy.” Still, the choice reflects the same Presidential prerogative to become involved in Navy ship naming when circumstances warrant.

Secretaries of the Navy must also consider the input of Congress, which, as described by Ronald O’Rourke, noted Specialist in Naval Affairs at the Congressional Research Service, “has long maintained an interest in how Navy ships are named,

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<sup>9</sup> Coming full circle, seven years later, Secretary H. Lawrence Garrett III decided to name SSBN 740 the USS *Rhode Island*.

and has influenced... pending Navy decisions on the naming of certain ships.” The means by which this influence can be exerted is through provisions in Public Law that provide recommendations for both type naming conventions and ship names. In his most recent report on Navy Ship Names, Mr. O’Rourke, lists no fewer than 12 examples of *enacted* provisions in law since 1989 that express the sense of the Congress about pending ship naming decisions. Eleven of these provisions suggested specific ship names, while one suggested the type naming convention for the LPD 17 class of amphibious ships. In addition to these provisions, Mr. O’Rourke lists an additional 28 proposed bills and amendments with ship naming recommendations that were never enacted. Despite the fact that none of these 28 bills ultimately passed, any Secretary would be well aware of their submission for consideration. 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 ship names.

Sometimes, the Secretary must also balance or contend with differences of opinion between the President and Congress. Perhaps the most vivid example of this occurred in 1996, when the Republican-controlled 104<sup>th</sup> Congress urged Democratic President William J. Clinton to name CVN 76 in honor of (still living) President Ronald Reagan.<sup>10</sup> By then, the contemporary convention called for aircraft carrier names to be “individually considered,” and naming a carrier for a former US President was not unprecedented. However, this 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*.<sup>11</sup> The President readily agreed to this elegant solution.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to receiving input and recommendations from the President and Congress, every Secretary of the Navy receives numerous requests from service members, 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

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<sup>10</sup> The 104<sup>th</sup> session of Congress considered a sense-of-the-Congress resolution urging that CVN 76 be named USS *Ronald Reagan*.

<sup>11</sup> Republican Secretary of the Navy William L. Ball III named CVN 75 the USS *United States* in 1989.

<sup>12</sup> This change, typical of the thinking of Pragmatic Traditionalists, unsettled some Orthodox Traditionalists and active duty and retired Naval officers. It was none other than President Truman who in 1949 had cancelled the Navy’s first post-World War II “super carrier,” in part prompting the so-called “revolt of the admirals.” Making matters worse, the name of the ship that Truman cancelled was also USS *United States*, causing one critic to wryly observe that President Truman had twice prevented a carrier from being given that storied name.

to make. As a result, as A.D. Baker III, long-time editor of *Combat Fleets of the World*, wrote, “...ship naming has been politicized since 1776. It has always been politicized. The only time it wasn’t politicized was during World War II, when [the Navy] had to name so many ships, so quickly.”

This is particularly true given the Navy-Marine Corps Team is based primarily overseas and on both coasts of the United States. It therefore routinely operates far out of sight from most Americans—especially those who live in America’s heartland. Unsurprisingly, then, polls routinely show that many Americans do not know what their Navy-Marine Corps Team do for them on a day-to-day basis. One way to tackle this perennial problem is to select some ship names that give as many Americans as possible a small personal stake in *their* Navy-Marine Corps Team. Indeed, this thinking helps in no small way to explain why, when building the “New Navy” at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Presidents and Secretaries of the Navy—with the hearty approval of Congress—began to name battleships for States of the Union and cruisers for cities.<sup>13</sup> It was one way to give as many American citizens—and taxpayers—a reason to invest in a strong Navy-Marine Corps Team.

Perhaps no one understood the political power of ship naming better than President Theodore Roosevelt, who deftly used his familiarity with ship-naming practices and the memberships of key Congressional committees to build support for his expansive Navy building program. While serving as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy from April 1897 to May 1898 (a job now known as the Undersecretary of the Navy), Secretary Roosevelt was an Orthodox Traditionalist who favored naming Navy ships for famous battles and the heroes who fought them. But, just a few short years later, when as a very young Commander-in-Chief he was maneuvering to build a Navy that would establish the United States as a Great Power, President Roosevelt quickly became a Pragmatic Traditionalist. He vigorously supported the law to name “first-class battleships” in honor of States of the Union, and early in his administration, “his” battleships were adorned with the names of east coast states whose populations had long been counted as supporters of the Navy. However, by the latter half of his presidency, in an effort to gain support and broaden the appeal of the Navy, President Roosevelt ordered his Secretary of the Navy to name ships for Midwestern and Western states to let their citizens (and their all-important Congressional delegations) know that the Navy was truly *America’s* Navy, and not just the *east coast* Navy. As a result, names like *Kansas*, *Minnesota*, *Idaho*, *Michigan*, *North Dakota*, *Utah*, and *Wyoming* began to grace the sterns of US battleships. The success of his political strategy can be measured by the fact that when he entered office in 1901 the nation had twelve battleships; by the time he left in 1909, 33 had been either built or authorized.

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<sup>13</sup> In 1898, Congress passed a law specified that “first-class battleships and monitors” were to be named after States of the Union. In 1908, with more and more battleships being commissioned, Congress repealed the provision as it pertained to monitors.



Theodore Roosevelt's brand of pragmatic thinking is by no means confined to Presidents, members of Congress, or Secretaries of the Navy. As mentioned earlier, CNO Admiral Thomas Moorer established the Riera Panel to establish "coherent and integral" type naming conventions so one could immediately identify the type of ship being discussed upon hearing her name. With so many ships across so many ship types then under construction being named for cities, the Riera Panel recommended names that purposely steered away from them. For example, the Panel recommended that destroyer tenders be named "localities and areas in the United States (but not the names of states or cities)." Similarly, fast combat support ships and replenishment oilers were to be named for "rivers, lakes, or bays (but not the name of states or cities)." However, at the direction of Admiral Moorer, the Riera Panel's recommendations were amended to include an important caveat: "When categories can be maintained and at the same time the name of a city can be used, benefits will accrue, *and this should be done as feasible*" (emphasis added). The benefit, of course, would be the connection forged between the inhabitants of a city so honored and the US Navy.

Admiral Moorer's thinking played out in a big way when it came time to pick the class naming convention for a new, larger, faster, and more capable successor to the *Sturgeon*-class SSN. For Orthodox Traditionalists, the decision was easy: name the new attack boats for "fish and denizens of the deep," the only convention for submarines ever recognized by them. However, Admiral Hyman Rickover, "Father of the Nuclear Navy," had other ideas. He convinced Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee to name the new class for cities. Legend has it that Rickover successfully pushed for the first 12 boats of the class to be named for cities in the districts of the 12 Congressmen who steadfastly supported the new SSN program, although there is no official confirmation of this in NHHC records. What is certain is that on 5 May 1971, Secretary Chafee named the first ship of the 688-class in honor of the city of Los Angeles, and all but one of the following 61 boats were also named for cities (the single exception being SSN 709, named in honor of Admiral Rickover by Secretary of the Navy John Lehman). When later asked why the Navy decided to abandon the tradition of naming submarines for sea life, Admiral Rickover famously replied that "Fish don't vote."

This short story reinforces the truism that every President, Secretary of the Navy, member of Congress, and senior Naval leader is well aware of the potential benefits of honoring ships with names of cities, or states, or former Presidents, or well-known political leaders, or hometown heroes. It is an important way to engender support for a strong-Navy-Marine Corps Team and to connect *America's* Navy more closely to its wonderful citizens, a goal perhaps made even more important with the shift to an all-volunteer force. The only argument is over the best names to choose—and over the final selection, once made. This helps to explain why a Secretary's final choice of ship names is often the subject of spirited debate.

### ***A Review of Current Ship Naming Policies and Practices***

With the preceding introduction as background, the remainder of this report examines in detail the “current policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy,” in order “to determine the extent to which his policies and practices for ship naming vary from historical policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy.” Given the central, independent role a Secretary of the Navy plays in naming ships, the authors of this report took this tasking to mean they must perform a detailed review of the sitting Secretary’s record for choosing ship type naming conventions and ship names, and determine if his choices deviate in any way from historical policies, practices, customs, and traditions.

With this in mind, the following sections review each of the ship naming decisions made by Secretary Ray Mabus, who, as the record will clearly show, is a Pragmatic Traditionalist. As outlined in Table 1, through 31 May 2012, Secretary Mabus has named 32 different warships across 10 different ship types and 13 different ship classes (see Table 1). In addition, Secretary Mabus selected the naming convention for seabasing ships and High Speed Ferries, changed the naming convention for Joint High Speed Vessels, and clarified the naming conventions for both Dock Landing Ships (LPDs) and Littoral Combat Ships (LCSs).

While there have been some stray objections to 32 of these 37 choices, only five of them have sparked more pointed criticisms from Orthodox Traditionalists or others: T-AKE 13, named in honor of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers; LPD 26, named in honor of the late Congressman John P. “Jack” Murtha; T-AKE 14, named in honor of civil and worker rights leader Cesar Chavez; and LCS 10, named in honor of former and still living Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, and DDG-1002, named in honor of former naval officer, Congressman, Senator, Vice President, and President Lyndon B. Johnson. Nevertheless, the criticism surrounding these five choices have given rise to the charge in some quarters that current Navy ship-naming practices are inconsistent with historical policies and practices and/or Navy customs and traditions, and because of this, some sort of intervention is required to protect Naval customs and traditions.

Because of the aforementioned high interest in and scrutiny of Navy ship naming policies, every name chosen by a sitting Secretary has the potential to touch off criticisms from one party or another. However, when one considers Secretary Mabus’s entire body of work, a historical review demonstrates his ship naming choices are altogether consistent with both ship naming policy and tradition. In support of this confident assertion, the following sub-sections weave together the history of ship type/class naming conventions with Secretary Mabus’s thinking about past, current, and future ship naming practices, as well as his personal decisions and choices to date. The sub-sections are organized in the general order Secretary Mabus made his ship naming decisions, as outlined in Table 1. This is to illustrate that specific name choices are not randomly made; they are prompted by the order in which planned battle force ships are authorized or appropriated by

**Table 1. Ship Naming Decisions Made by Secretary Mabus (as of 31 May 2012)**

<u>Naming Date</u>	<u>Ship Type/Hull no.</u>	<u>Assigned Name</u>
16 July 2009	JHSV 2	USNS <i>Vigilant</i>
9 Oct 2009	T-AKE 13	USNS <i>Medgar Evers</i>
26 Mar 2010	JHSV 4	USNS <i>Fall River</i>
23 Apr 2010	LPD 26	USS <i>John P. Murtha</i>
18 Mar 2011	LCS 5 LCS 7	USS <i>Milwaukee</i> USS <i>Detroit</i>
25 Mar 2011	LCS 6 LCS 8	USS <i>Jackson</i> USS <i>Montgomery</i>
18 May 2011	T-AKE 14	USNS <i>Cesar Chavez</i>
29 May 2011	CVN 79	USS <i>John F. Kennedy</i>
15 Jul 2011	LCS 9	USS <i>Little Rock</i>
6 Oct 2011	JHSV 2	USS <i>Choctaw County</i> (ex- <i>Vigilant</i> )
4 Jan 2012	MLP 1 MLP 2 MLP 3	USNS <i>Montford Point</i> USNS <i>John Glenn</i> USNS <i>Lewis B. Puller</i>
10 Feb 2012	LCS 10	USS <i>Gabrielle Giffords</i>
15 Feb 2012	LCS 11 LCS 12 DDG 113 DDG 114 DDG 115	USS <i>Sioux City</i> USS <i>Omaha</i> USS <i>John Finn</i> USS <i>Ralph Johnson</i> USS <i>Rafael Peralta</i>
13 Apr 2012	SSN 786 SSN 787 SSN 788 SSN 789 SSN 790	USS <i>Illinois</i> USS <i>Washington</i> USS <i>Colorado</i> USS <i>Indiana</i> USS <i>South Dakota</i>
16 Apr 2012	DDG 1002	USS <i>Lyndon B. Johnson</i>
4 May 2012	LHA 7	USS <i>Tripoli</i>
7 May 2012	DDG 116	USS <i>Thomas Hudner</i>
8 May 2012	HSF 1 HSF 2	USNS <i>Guam</i> USNS <i>Puerto Rico</i>
30 May 2012	JHSV 3	USNS <i>Millinocket</i> (ex- <i>Fortitude</i> )

Congress and subsequently christened and built by the Navy. It is also done to show that much of the criticism over the Secretary's choices has been selective, and does not accurately reflect his entire record.

***Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSVs).*** As its name implies, the Joint High Speed Vessel was the result of a joint development and acquisition program run by the Departments of the Army and the Navy. The Army's Chief of Transportation has long overseen a fleet of vessels used primarily for the intra-theater transport of Army vehicles and equipment, but not personnel. During the 1990s, however, as a result of the Army After Next research effort, the Department of the Army started development of a new high-speed, shallow draft ship called the Theater Support Vessel (TSV). With an off-load ramp that would allow embarked vehicles to drive quickly off the ship, the TSV could support operational maneuver from stand-off distances to transport an intact mechanized company-sized combat team, with all of its personnel, vehicles, equipment, and ammunition, and deliver it ashore. At the same time, as part of its exploration of new seabasing concepts, the Department of the Navy was developing a new High Speed Connector (HSC) with a helicopter landing pad and an off-load ramp able to interface with floating roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities. This would allow the HSC to support both seabasing operations and ship-to-shore maneuver and logistics support.

It soon became clear to both Army and Navy leaders that the TSV and the HSC shared many characteristics, and combining the two programs would make great sense. Accordingly, the Departments of the Navy and the Army agreed to combine the two programs into a single program for Joint High Speed Vessels.<sup>14</sup> While the Navy would lead the overall acquisition effort, both services planned to acquire and operate their own ships; initial program projections called for a minimum of five Army ships and three Navy ships.

Just before his tenure expired, Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter expressed a desire for a single JHSV naming convention for both Navy and Army ships. In accordance with his wishes, Acting Secretary of the Navy B. J. Penn asked the Program Executive Officer for Ships to form an Army-Navy working group to identify a list of mutually agreed upon naming conventions.<sup>15</sup> Acting Secretary Penn asked that all potential conventions "honor the traditions of both services, while supporting the unique joint mission of the new ship class and complying with

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<sup>14</sup>As designed, the JHSV, is built to commercial standards and can carry 600 short tons of vehicles, equipment, supplies, and up to 400 personnel over a distance of 1,200 nautical miles at sustained speeds of 35 knots. With their shallow draft (under 15 feet) and ramps suitable for the austere piers and quay walls common in developing countries, as well as the ability to interface with floating roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, they are designed to support a wide range of missions, including rapid transport of up to a mechanized company equipped with M1A2 Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles; transport and support of maritime/theater security and building partnership capacity units; ship-to-shore maneuver and logistics support; and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

<sup>15</sup> Acting Secretary Penn was Secretary Winter's Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Logistics. He was asked to stay during the transition between the Bush and Obama administrations.

existing authority and service naming requirements.” Consistent with this guidance, the working group suggested four possible joint naming conventions: American Traits/Values; American Heroes; American Battles/Campaigns; and Piercing Weapons (e.g., Saber, Rapier, Long Bow, Javelin). A fifth variation suggested by the Navy staff was American Traits that emphasized speed, such as Rapid, Haste, Quick, and Brisk.

On 4 March 2009, the working group recommended that the JHSV naming convention be “American Traits and Values.” The group acknowledged that Ocean Surveillance ships (T-AGOSs) were already named for positive American traits of capability and accomplishment, as were some mine countermeasures ships (MCMs). However, the group believed this was the most appropriate *joint* convention, and would “allow JHSVs to honor values and characteristics that lie at the very heart of our nation’s service members, inspiring the vessels’ crews and honoring all members of the armed forces.” Seven days later, Acting Secretary Penn and Army Secretary Pete Geren approved the working group’s recommendation, and agreed the Army and the Navy would name odd and even numbered JHSVs, respectively.

On 25 June 2009, the Army officially announced the chosen names for its first five JHSVs: *Fortitude* (JHSV 1); *Spearhead* (JHSV 3); *Resolute* (JHSV 5); *Courageous* (JHSV 7); and *Sacrifice* (JHSV 9). Despite the fact that the name *Spearhead* violated the agreed upon JHSV naming convention, it was chosen because the US Army Transportation Corps was known as the “Spearhead of Logistics,” and TSV-1X, an advanced technology concept demonstrator for the Army’s earlier TSV program, had also been named *Spearhead*.

Secretary Mabus was confirmed by the Senate on 18 May 2009 and sworn in the very next day. Naming JHSV 2 was thus his very first naming decision. In accordance with the agreed upon convention, Secretary Mabus was provided a list of potential traits and values from which to choose. The list included Valor, Triumph, Invincible, Fidelity, Honor, Vigilant, Integrity, Fearless, Steadfast, Service, Commitment, and Justice. From these choices, Secretary Mabus selected the name *Vigilant* for JHSV 2, but he declined to name any of the follow-on Navy ships. Soon thereafter, on 16 July 2009, he and Secretary Pete Geren formally announced the names for the first three Army JHSVs: *Fortitude* (JHSV 1), *Vigilant* (JHSV 2), and *Spearhead* (JHSV 3).

Secretary Mabus opted only to name JHSV 2 because he had an entirely different naming convention in mind. As will be explained in later sections, under current conventions, both LPD 17-class Dock Landing Ships and Littoral Combat Ships were being named for cities and communities. As a Pragmatic Traditionalist, Secretary Mabus is a strong proponent of using ship names to connect the American people to its Navy, and next to state names, he thinks city names are best means to do so. However, he was having a hard time making a distinction between the city names previously chosen for LPDs and those chosen for LCSs. He was thus looking to establish a hierarchy of type naming conventions that honored large cities, medium

cities, and small cities. JHSVs seemed to him to be perfect ship type to honor small cities. In December 2009, he proposed this idea to newly appointed Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh, and Secretary McHugh readily agreed with Secretary Mabus's pragmatic suggestion. Their initial plan was to retain the names for JHSVs 1, 2, and 3, and to name future JHSVs in honor of "small American cities."

Before they could announce their plans, however, there was one slight change in the names for the first three JHSVs. In January 2010, Brigadier General Brian Layer, who as the Army's Chief of Transportation had the delegated authority to choose Army ship names, decided to swap the names of *Fortitude* and *Spearhead* for JHSVs 1 and 3. For the reasons outlined above, General Layer believed that the name *Spearhead* was the most appropriate class namesake—even if it violated the agreed upon convention.

In March 2010, with the names of the first three ships apparently settled, Secretary Mabus announced the naming convention for future JHSVs would change from "American traits and values" to "small cities." The policy announcement emphasized that the change would not impact USNS *Vigilant* (JHSV 2), which was named under the old naming convention. Soon thereafter, Secretary Mabus named the second Navy JHSV (JHSV 4) USNS *Fall River*, in honor of the small Massachusetts city (population 88,000) that was home to the state's retired memorialized battleship, *USS Massachusetts* (BB 59).

Then, in December 2010, after discussions at the Army/Navy Warfighter talks, the two Departments agreed to transfer all five Army JHSVs to the Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC) upon the signing of a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This arrangement made great sense; it would create a single operator for all JHSVs, generating considerable savings and efficiencies in class maintenance, logistics, and operations. After their staffs worked through all the details, Secretaries McHugh and Mabus signed the final agreement on 2 May 2011. While the MOA stipulated that JHSV 1 would retain the name *Spearhead*, it went on to say "the Navy may retain the Army's previously approved names or designate...new name[s]" for JHSVs 3, 5, 7, and 9.

With this flexibility, Secretary Mabus decided to make one final modification to the JHSV naming convention. Although two LPD 17s had been previously named in honor of counties (LPD 24, *USS Arlington*, and LPD 25, *USS Somerset*), the word "county" was missing from any official Navy naming convention. Indeed, the last ship type that specifically honored counties in its naming convention was the *Newport*-class LST, a 20-knot, shallow-draft, amphibious landing ship capable of beaching itself and rapidly offloading vehicles, supplies, and personnel directly ashore. Given that JHSVs would be capable of offloading vehicles and cargo across their ramps in austere, shallow draft ports, Secretary Mabus believed it appropriate to modify the JHSV naming convention to read "small American cities and counties," with "small" being defined as cities or counties with populations of less than 100,000 people. It should be noted here that these types of adjustments to create

more “coherent and integral” type naming conventions are very consistent with the thinking of Orthodox Traditionalists.

On 6 October 2011, in consonance with this newly modified JHSV naming convention, Secretary Mabus renamed JHSV 2 (ex-*Vigilant*) USNS *Choctaw County* (pop. 15,000). Then, on 30 May 2012, in accordance with the signed agreement with the Army, he renamed JHSV 3 (ex-*Fortitude*) USNS *Millinocket*, in honor of the towns of Millinocket and East Millinocket, Maine, with a combined population of about 7,000 people. By so doing, all JHSV ship names are now consistent with the modified type naming convention with the exception of USNS *Spearhead*, which will retain its name in honor of its unique Army heritage. Ironically, this makes *Spearhead* the only type namesake in history that is an exception to its own type naming convention.

***Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ships (T-AKEs)***. It fell to Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig to select the naming convention for this new type of “two product” logistics ship, which combines the functionality of both ammunition and combat stores ships into a single hull.<sup>16</sup> Ammunition ships had traditionally been named for “volcanoes or words suggesting fire and explosives,” while combat store ships had been named for “astronomical bodies.” Neither naming convention seemed appropriate for a vessel that broke new ground by combining the functions of both ships. Secretary Danzig therefore decided to go a different way, and to name T-AKEs for “famous explorers.”

Guided by this convention, Secretary Danzig announced T-AKE 1 and T-AKE 2 would be named USNS *Lewis and Clark* and USNS *Sacagawea*, respectively. The names were a packaged deal, with T-AKE 1 named in honor of legendary explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, leaders of the first transcontinental expedition to the Pacific coast, and T-AKE 2 in honor of the Shoshone woman who acted as a trusted guide and interpreter on their journey. Although these first two name choices honored Americans, Secretary Danzig intended to name follow-on ships in honor of famous foreign explorers, such as Ferdinand Magellan. This would have been quite unusual; naming American ships for foreigners is a relatively rare, and generally reserved for those who are honorary citizens, explored the American continent, contributed in some way to American liberty and democracy, or supported US war efforts.

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<sup>16</sup> The post-World War combat logistics force included large “triple-product” ships like the *Sacramento* and *Supply*-class fast combat support ships (AOEs/T-AOEs) and the *Wichita*-class replenishment oilers (AORs) that served as “station ships” for carrier strike groups. These station ships, along with the carrier and combatants they served, would be themselves periodically replenished by “shuttle ships” operating in underway replenishment groups. These groups would typically consist of three “single product” ships—a fleet oiler, ammunition ship, and stores ship. Because the T-AKE replaces both ammunition and stores ships, it can perform the role of a shuttle ship or, when operating in conjunction with a fleet oiler, substitute for a T-AOE station ship, albeit at slower sustained speeds.

As fate would have it, however, the USNS *Lewis and Clark* and USS *Sacagawea* were the last T-AKEs to be named by Secretary Danzig. The next ten T-AKEs were all named in honor of Americans. Moreover, the subsequent choices gradually modified his type naming convention, even if the modification was not immediately evident. The process started when Secretary Gordon R. England named T-AKE 3 USNS *Alan B. Shepard*. The name honored astronaut and US Navy admiral Alan B. Shepard, who “Like the legendary explorers, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, for whom the first ship of the class was named, ...bravely volunteered to explore the unknown [to become] the first American in space.” Secretary Donald C. Winter then named the next two ships in honor of famous Navy explorers. T-AKE 4 was named in honor of polar explorer and Navy Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, while T-AKE 5 was named after Arctic explorer and Navy Rear Admiral Robert E. Peary. All three of these choices were consistent with Secretary Danzig’s original naming convention.

However, things started to go in a subtly different direction when Secretary Winter named T-AKE 6 in honor of Amelia Mary Earhart “for her courage, vision, and groundbreaking achievements, *both in aviation and for women*” (emphasis added). In other words, Secretary Winter was recognizing Ms. Earhart as both a pioneer in aviation and a trailblazer in women’s rights (Earhart was a member of the National Woman’s Party, and an early supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment).

While Secretary Winter named T-AKE 8 for Navy Captain and astronaut Wally Schirra, another space explorer, his remaining choices tended to emphasize American trailblazers and pioneers over true explorers. Those honored included Navy Commodore Matthew C. Perry, “Father of the Steam Navy” and the officer who opened US relations with Japan; Dr. Charles Drew, pioneer in blood and plasma storage and transfusion; Navy Captain Washington Irving Chambers, pioneer in naval aviation; and William Burdette McLean, a Navy physicist, pioneer in air-to-air missile technology, and inventor of Sidewinder heat-seeking missile. Importantly, Secretary Winter also named T-AKE 7 in honor of Master Chief Boatswain’s Mate (Master Diver) Carl M. Brashear, a trailblazer of a different sort. Master Chief Brashear joined the Navy soon after it was desegregated, and he overcame racism and discrimination (and later an amputated leg) to become the first the Navy’s first black deep-sea diver and master diver. Taken together, these choices essentially modified the T-AKE naming convention to “legendary American explorers, trailblazers, and pioneers.”

Choosing the name for T-AKE 13 was Secretary Mabus’s second ship-naming decision. Upon reviewing his predecessor’s ship-naming choices, Secretary Mabus was particularly intrigued that Secretary Winter had chosen to honor Amelia Earhart for her accomplishments in aviation and as a champion for women’s rights, and Master Chief Brashear for his efforts in overcoming discrimination in the Navy. These choices resonated deeply with Secretary Mabus’s own personal commitment to try to stamp out all forms of discrimination while championing gender and racial diversity in sea services, particularly in the officer corps of the Navy and Marine Corps. Guided by the intent and spirit of Secretary Winter’s earlier name selections,



Secretary Mabus thus decided to name T-AKE 13 in honor of fellow Mississippian Medgar Evers, a pioneering civil rights leader who he believed “was committed to his fellow human beings and the dream of making America a nation for all citizens.”

Some questioned Secretary Mabus’s choice, charging that he was “deviating” from tradition and “corrupting” the ship naming process for political purposes. But these charges are not buttressed by the facts. Medgar Evers was born in the thoroughly segregated town of Decatur, Mississippi. He joined the Army in World War II, served in the European theater, and was honorably discharged as a Sergeant. He returned to Mississippi after the war and became a staunch civil rights advocate, becoming the first field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—the NAACP. In this role, he became a leader in a broad-based campaign to fight against discrimination through voter registration and boycotts against companies that discriminated against African Americans. He was instrumental in the effort to desegregate the University of Mississippi, and ultimately became a key voice for national civil rights. After his assassination in 1963, he was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. His death prompted President Kennedy to draft civil rights legislation, ultimately passed by Congress after his own tragic death.

As a nationally-recognized leader in civil rights, Medgar Evers fell right in line with the famous American trailblazers and pioneers already honored with T-AKE ship names—those who “strike out on a new path or break new ground, either literally or symbolically, using skills of innovation or brave constitutions to conduct their lives off the beaten path.” As Secretary Mabus said at the official naming announcement for T-AKE 13, Evers “fought in a principled and nonviolent way...In a real sense, he set us all free. His life was a mighty blow against the chains of racism that bound us all for too, too long.” His choice was thus consistent with the T-AKE naming convention and ship naming policy and practices.

A similar story can be told about Secretary Mabus’s later decision to name T-AKE 14 in honor of civil rights activist Cesar Chavez, which again sparked criticism from those who believed his choice was inconsistent with established ship naming policies, practices, and tradition. Once again, however, a Pragmatic Traditionalist like Secretary Mabus has a much different view, and ship naming custom and tradition is on his side.

On February 23, 2011, Jim Gill, the Director of Communications and Public Relations for the NASSCO shipbuilder, sent a letter to Secretary Mabus. Writing on behalf of the predominately Hispanic workforce at the General Dynamics shipyard in San Diego, California, as well as surrounding community, Gill urged the Secretary to name T-AKE 14, the last T-AKE being built at NASSCO, in honor of Cesar Estrada Chavez.<sup>17</sup> In his letter, Gill pointed out Chavez’s “pioneering work for the fair

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<sup>17</sup> Mr. Gill might have noted that a street near the shipyard in San Diego is named after Cesar Chavez.

treatment of farm workers [that] changes the lives of millions of people for the better.” As he wrote in his letter, “The pride our workforce puts in constructing these ships would be enhanced even more knowing the final ship would carry the name of one of our nation’s legendary pioneers in the field of championing human rights.”

This letter, typical of the many received by a Secretary when considering a pending ship naming decision, found a receptive audience in Secretary Mabus, who thought the name *Cesar Chavez* would be the perfect complement to *Amelia Earhart*, *Carl Brashear*, and *Medgar Evers* in the T-AKE fleet. He was well aware some active and retired Sailors and Marines would disapprovingly note that Chavez called his two years in the Navy “the worst two years of his life.” But he also knew that few put the comment in context. Chavez was raised in a family of migrant farm workers, and witnessed firsthand their hard life and plight. He enlisted in 1944 at the age of 17, anxious to serve his country and learn skills to help him break free from this way of life. However, with discrimination then rampant in the Navy, most Mexican-Americans in the Navy were assigned as deckhands and painters, and Chavez was no exception. He was understandably disappointed about this state of affairs, and his experience spurred him to dedicate his life to advancing the civil rights and working conditions for all workers, regardless of color. He established the United Farm Workers of America (UFW), which to this day continues to champion the cause. His birthday is a state holiday in three states, and he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Given his life’s work, Secretary Mabus concluded the naming of the last T-AKE after Chavez was very appropriate. He hoped that ships named in honor of Cesar Chavez, Amelia Earhart, Carl Brashear, and Medgar Evers—patriotic Americans all—would convey that today’s Navy-Marine Corps Team is committed to diversity and equal rights and will value and honor the hard work, and sacrifice of any who serve, regardless of race, color, or gender. Of course, he also hoped to convey his appreciation for the dedication and skill of the NASSCO workforce, and their excellent performance on the entire T-AKE program.

Some still continue to question the linkage between Medgar Evers and Cesar Chavez and the T-AKE naming convention, or whether honoring American pioneers who fought and sacrificed so much for civil and workers’ rights is an appropriate thing for the Navy to do. However, Secretary Mabus found the link between Cesar Chavez and Medgar Evers and the T-AKE naming convention to be both clear and strong. Both were well-known American trailblazers and pioneers in civil and workers rights, and their names were consistent with Secretary Winter’s earlier decisions to honor Amelia Earhart and Master Chief Brashear. As for whether or not it was appropriate for *America’s* Navy to honor giants in civil rights, Secretary Mabus concluded that those who dedicated themselves—and in some cases gave their lives—to end our deep racial divides are an important part of our Nation’s heritage

and have every right to be honored with a ship name in *America's* Navy-Marine Corps Team.

Aside from those who believed the names *Medgar Evers* and *Cesar Chavez* violated Navy ship naming policy and practice, there were those who thought there were better name choices to be made. For example, one critic said, "There is no shortage of military heroes to pick from, but only the Navy can explain its process and why they are going out of their way to exclude... so many others who deserve the honor." However, such thinking reflects a basic misunderstanding of current ship naming policies and practices; as will soon be discussed, destroyers are named in honor of naval heroes, not T-AKES.

***Amphibious Transport Docks (LPDs).*** In the late 1950s, Secretary of the Navy W. B. Franke chose the initial naming convention for LPDs, which was for "cities named for explorers and developers of America."<sup>18</sup> This was another of the indirect city naming conventions common in the 1960s that drove the Riera Panel to distraction. For example, USS *Raleigh* (LPD 1) was named in honor of the capital of North Carolina, which in turn is named for English explorer Sir Walter Raleigh, the first to attempt the establishment of an English settlement in North America. LPD 2, USS *Vancouver*, was named for the city in Washington State, which in turn is named for Captain George Vancouver, Royal Navy, navigator and explorer of the Pacific Northwest. USS *La Salle* (LPD 3) honored the Illinois city named for the French explorer of North America, Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. All follow-on LPDs of the *Raleigh* and *Austin*-classes were similarly named.

After the Cold War ended, the DON began planning for a new follow-on class of amphibious transport docks, which would start with hull number 17. As Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton was considering the class naming convention and the first ship name, the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress passed a sense-of-the-Congress Resolution that the vessel to be designated LPD 17, and each subsequent ship of the class, should be named in honor of "Marine Corps battles or members of the Marine Corps." Despite this input, however, Secretary Dalton decided to name the LPD 17 class for "American cities." While this convention dropped the requirement to pick city names that honored famous explorers and developers of America, by continuing to honor American cities, Secretary Dalton remained broadly consistent with established LPD naming practices. Guided by this new convention, Secretary Dalton named the lead ship of the LPD 17 class USS *San Antonio*, in honor of the Texan city where he had long worked as an investment banker, and LPD 18 USS *New Orleans* in honor of the largest city in Louisiana.

Some like to point to subsequent LPD 17 class names as proof that there has been a breakdown in the DON's ship-naming discipline. They argue that of the first nine

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<sup>18</sup> LPDs are a post-World War II variation of World War II Dock Landing Ships (LSDs), with improved command and control and helicopter support capabilities.

LPD 17s, only six were named for cities, while two were named for counties and one for a park. However, this orthodox argument can be explained by a series of pragmatic decisions that resulted in a simple and fitting modification to the class naming convention. The first of these decisions came when Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England named LPD 19 USS *Mesa Verde*, in honor of the National Park preserving the prehistoric dwellings inhabited by the Basket Makers (AD 4-700) and the Pueblo Indians (AD 700-1300). No less than 24 Indian tribes claim an affiliation with the Ancestral Puebloans who lived in the area. Thus, even if the name choice of *Mesa Verde* was unconventional, it was entirely consistent with the spirit and intent of the LPD 17 naming convention as it indirectly honored one of the largest Native American *communities* in America. Indeed, Pragmatic Traditionalists view this choice as providing more proof positive that the tradition of Secretaries of the Navy naming ships is far better than any alternative.

The next series of decisions were prompted by the attacks of September 11, 2001—one of the most traumatic events in American history. On September 7, 2002, at a memorial service in New York City, Secretary England announced that LPD 21 USS would be named USS *New York*. On the face of it, the choice was entirely consistent with the type's "American cities" convention. However, when making the announcement, Secretary England made clear that the 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]."

Secretary England later named LPD 24 USS *Arlington* in honor of the *county* in Virginia where 184 Americans died during the September 11 attack on the Pentagon, and LPD 25 USS *Somerset* in honor of the *county* in Pennsylvania where United Airlines Flight 93 crashed "after courageous passengers stormed the cockpit in an attempt to regain control from the terrorists." Whether intentional or not, as a result of these decisions, as well as his earlier decision to name LPD 19 in honor of a large Native American community, Secretary England essentially modified the LPD 17 naming convention to "American cities and communities and cities and communities attacked on 9-11." And, according to this modified convention, there are no LPD naming exceptions.

Orthodox Traditionalists would undoubtedly say this is simply a rewriting of history and a retroactive justification of clear exceptions to the original LPD 17 naming convention. Pragmatic Traditionalists would respond that such objections miss an important aspect of Navy ship naming practices and traditions. Just as type naming conventions change over time to accommodate technological change as well as choices made by Secretaries, they also change over time as every Secretary makes their own interpretation of the original naming convention. Secretary England's choice of *Mesa Verde* added communities to the original ship naming convention, and his choices of *New York*, *Arlington*, and *Somerset* appropriately memorialized one of the most important events in US history. Pragmatic Traditionalists savor such

evolutionary change, as it helps to more closely connect the Navy-Marine Corps Team to the American people it serves.

With this as background, in spring 2010, it came time for Secretary Mabus to pick a name for the tenth LPD 17. As he was considering his choice, Congressman John P. “Jack” Murtha suddenly passed away. Soon thereafter, Secretary Mabus decided to name LPD 26 in his honor. Many Orthodox Traditionalists and some active and retired Sailors and Marines criticized the choice, and some accused Secretary Mabus of “deviating” from the LPD 17 naming convention or “politicizing” the Navy’s ship-naming process. But their charges must once again be balanced against both historical precedent and the thinking of a long line of Pragmatic Secretaries of the Navy.

After 1915, Secretaries of the Navy from both political parties sought to honor the standout Congressman and Senators who helped build the “New Navy.” At the time, battleships were being named for States of the Union, cruisers for cities, and destroyers for “Officers and enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps.” Destroyers thus seemed to be the logical warships to name in honor of these great, late Congressional legislators. Consequently, in 1917, DD 73 was named in honor of Senator Robert Field Stockton, who, as a Senator from New Jersey, introduced the bill that abolished flogging in the Navy.<sup>19</sup> One year later, no less than four destroyers were named for famous Senators and Congressmen: DD 133 for Senator Eugene Hale, champion of the “New Navy” from 1881-1911; DD 134 for Representative Benjamin Williams Crowninshield (former Secretary of the Navy); DD 156 for Congressman Joshua Frederick Cockey Talbott, a 25-year member of the House Naval Affairs Committee; and DD 160 for Representative Hilary Abner Herbert (former Secretary of the Navy), who served eight terms as Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee. Then, in 1921, DD 247 was named in honor of Nathan Goff, Jr., former Secretary of the Navy and Congressman and Senator from West Virginia, and DD 135 was named in honor of former Governor and Senator from South Carolina Benjamin Ryan Tillman. While all of these choices represented technical violations of the destroyer convention, they also represented the pragmatic streak typically found in Secretaries from both political parties

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy (a job known today as Undersecretary) who well understood the importance of Congressional support for maintaining a strong Navy, was a Pragmatic Traditionalist when it came to ship naming. Consequently, in 1938, he ordered his Secretary of the Navy, Claude A. Swanson, to officially add “members of Congress” to the destroyer naming convention. Early in World War II, the convention was modified slightly to read “...members of Congress who have been closely identified with Naval affairs...” Guided by these modifications, new construction World War II destroyers were named once more for Senators Benjamin Ryan Tillman (DD 641),

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<sup>19</sup> Senator Stockton, a former Navy Commodore, was instrumental in the ultimate banning of flogging aboard Navy ships.

Eugene Hale (DD 642), and Robert Field Stockton (DD 646). Additionally, DD 701 was named in honor of former Congressman and Senator John W. Weeks (also a former Secretary of War), and DD 751 was named for Representative J. William Ditter, longtime member on the subcommittee overseeing the Department of the Navy's appropriations bills.<sup>20</sup>

After the Second World War, the practice of honoring politicians with ship names seemed to fall into disuse. However, the reason for this is straightforward. The legislators most responsible for supporting and funding the building of the "New Navy" had long since passed away and had already been honored with ship names. Similarly, the politicians who guided the pre-World War II naval build-up were so honored just before and during the war. The most ardent wartime supporters of the Navy-Marine Corps Team continued their work in Congress well into the Cold War, and not even a Pragmatic Traditionalist would name a warship in honor of a *sitting* Congressman or Senator. Simply put, then, there were no opportunities to continue the established practice immediately after the war.

Nevertheless, by the mid-1960s, the destroyer convention was modified to exclude members of Congress. And, in the hopes of establishing strict rules so that one could identify a ship type instantly after hearing its name, the 1969 Riera Panel also explicitly removed former members of Congress from the destroyer naming convention. This decision, based solely on the Orthodox Traditionalists' rigid devotion to "integral and coherent" naming conventions, had unforeseen consequences. One consequence, previously discussed, was a return to periodically naming ships in honor of still living persons. More fundamentally, however, since the decision removed the only established type convention for honoring Congressmen or Senators with close ties to military or naval affairs, it simply prompted Pragmatic Secretaries from both parties to honor them using exceptions to type naming conventions—just as had happened after 1915.

Indeed, only two years after the Riera Panel held forth, Secretary John H. Chafee—an ardent Pragmatic Traditionalist—moved to honor four particularly deserving members of Congress after their passing. In February 1971, he named SSN 686 in honor of Congressman L. Mendel Rivers (29 years of Congressional service) and SSN 687 after Senator Richard B. Russell, Jr. (40 years of Congressional service). In April, he named SSN 685 in honor of Congressman Glenard P. Lipscomb (27 years of Congressional service). Finally, in June, he *renamed* the USS *Redfish* (SSN 680) for Congressman William H. Bates (19 years of Congressional service). Of course, since submarines were then being named for "fish and denizens of the deep," each of these choices marked a deviation from established convention.

Secretary Chafee's decision to honor American Senators and Congressmen was soon endorsed by subsequent Secretaries, using different ship classes. In 1974, Secretary

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<sup>20</sup> DD 751, an *Allen M. Sumner*-class destroyer, was modified and reclassified as a light minelayer (DM 31).

of the Navy John Warner announced that an aircraft carrier (CVN 70) would proudly bear the name USS *Carl Vinson*, in honor of former Congressman (and still living) Carl Vinson (50 years of Congressional service). In 1983, President Reagan and Secretary of the Navy John Lehman announced that a fleet ballistic missile submarine (SSBN 730) would be named in honor of late Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson (43 years of Congressional service). Five years later, in 1988, President Reagan and Secretary of the Navy William L. Ball named another carrier (CVN 74) in honor of former Senator (and still living) John C. Stennis (41 years of Congressional Service). Finally, and most recently, Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter named an attack boat (SSN 785) in honor of (still living) Senator John Warner (30 years of Congressional service).

Needless to say, each of these subsequent choices violated the contemporary naming conventions for ballistic missile submarines and attack submarines, which were then both for “States of the Union.” Moreover, while the naming convention for aircraft carriers was “individually considered,” aircraft carriers were most often named for former presidents; *Carl Vinson* and *John C. Stennis* were the first aircraft carriers named in honor of members of Congress. In essence, then, as this distinguished list of names attests, the decision of the Riera Panel 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, Secretary Mabus endorses and subscribes to this special naming convention. And, in his view, Congressman John “Jack” Murtha deserved to be included on a list of Members previously honored. The first Vietnam War veteran elected to the US Congress, Murtha’s 36 years in Congress was marked by his tireless support for the Navy-Marine Corps Team and the entire US military. Moreover, given Congressman Murtha’s service and sacrifice as a Marine, LPD 26 seemed the perfect choice of ship to honor him. For his service in Vietnam, he was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat “V”, two Purple Hearts, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and when he retired as a reserve Marine Corps Colonel in 1990, he received the Navy Distinguished Service Medal.

Objections to 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. Furthermore, even if this convention did not exist, Pragmatic Secretaries would respond that making exceptions to established naming conventions for exceptional public servants is completely in line with long-standing ship naming customs and practices.

A second group of critics object to the choice of Congressman Murtha based on their own opinion of his Congressional service record. From Secretary Mabus's perspective, the key factor in determining whether a Member of Congress is deserving of a ship name should be the span and totality of their public service, and a demonstrated record of support for the US military and Navy-Marine Corps team. Moreover, he well knows any public servant who serves continuously for two or more decades will have detractors, based on their positions taken, decisions rendered, or support given (or withheld). But Secretary Mabus believes—as have five Secretaries before him—that the decision to honor an American Congressman or Senator should be based first and foremost on the Member's long standing support for the US military and its service members, and not on any particular single aspect of their record. And, in this regard, he concluded Congressman Murtha's 36-year record stacked up well with all those previously honored.

The third group of critics is a subset of the second. It consists primarily of retired and active duty service members and their families who objected to Congressman Murtha's stance against the Iraq War, as well as statements he made concerning US Marines involved in incidents in Iraq. These comments caused some to question whether a ship built to carry Marines to war should carry a name in his honor. In the end, however, Secretary Mabus weighed Congressman Murtha's objections to the war in Iraq against his service in Vietnam. Furthermore, he considered Congressman Murtha's remarks about individual wartime incidents with his long service as a Marine and Congressman, as well as his strong support for military programs. On balance, Secretary Mabus concluded there was more than sufficient reason to name a ship in his honor, and an amphibious warship was the perfect choice of ships to do so.

The final set of critics includes those who believe there were better choices of names for LPD 26. For example, one of them thought that LPD 26 should be re-named USS *Fallujah*, in honor of the hard-fought battle in that Iraqi town. Once again, however, exceptions to naming conventions are generally made when a potential honoree or name is not covered by a formal, established type convention. This recommendation is therefore more appropriate for a big-deck amphibious assault ship (LHD), which has a naming convention that honors famous Marine battles.

In summary, while USS *John P. Murtha* represents an exception to the *established* LPD 17 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.

***Littoral Combat Ships (LCSs)***. The Littoral Combat Ship is a multi-role warship that will ultimately replace all remaining frigates (FFGs), coastal patrol ships (PCs), and mine countermeasure ships (MCMs) now in commission. Guided missile frigates evolved from the destroyer escort line, a derivative of destroyers, which are now named for “deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy.” PCs are named for “weather elements,” and MCMs are named for “general word classifications of logical and euphonious names.” None of these naming conventions seemed appropriate for a class that would combine the attributes of all three ships. In line with the thinking of Pragmatic Traditionalists, Secretary Gordon R. England decided to name LCSs for “American mid-tier cities, small towns and other American communities.”

This would be the Navy’s third contemporary ship-naming convention for American cities, with the first two being for *Los Angeles*-class SSNs and *San Antonio*-class LPDs. Such a situation rings the alarm bell for Orthodox Traditionalists; recall it was the over-emphasis on city naming conventions that triggered the formation of the 1969 Riera Panel. However, when Secretary England established the LCS naming convention in 2005, 11 of the 62 *Los Angeles*-class boats had already been retired, and the pace of retirements for the remaining boats in the class would start to accelerate after 2015. Moreover, boats of the *Virginia*-class SSN—the successor to the *Los Angeles*-class boats—were being named for States of the Union, not cities. Under these circumstances, the total number of cities honored in the Naval Vessel Register would begin to fall precipitously over time unless some action was taken.

This was similar to the dilemma faced by Secretaries of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius and J. William Middendorf II in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At the time, tradition dictated that only battleships could be named for States of the Union. However, only one active battleship remained in commission and no new construction battleships were planned. The only way to increase the number of battle force ships named in honor of states, and to accrue the obvious benefits of doing so, would be to shift the battleship naming convention to another ship type—and that is exactly what the two Secretaries did.

Whether informed by this history or not, when faced with the same problem, Secretary England adopted a distinctly similar solution. Although LPD 17s were already being named for cities, the Navy and Marine Corps planned to buy no more than 12 such ships. By also adopting a city naming convention for the planned fleet of 55 LCSs, Secretary England ensured that *America’s* Navy would ultimately have as many as 67 ships named for important American population centers. However, Secretary England modified this practical, pragmatic decision in a way congruent with Orthodox Traditionalist thinking. By adopting a LCS naming convention for “mid-tier cities, small towns and other communities” he obviously hoped to make a

workable distinction between LCS and LPD ship names, which were generally being named for large cities.

When the time came to name LCS 1, however, the LCSs' city naming convention was temporarily obscured when Secretary England chose the name USS *Freedom*. As explained in *Freedom's* naming announcement, it honored and acknowledged the "enduring foundation of our nation and American communities from coast to coast which bear the name Freedom. Towns named Freedom range from New York to California, and include Indiana, Maine, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Wyoming." In other words, USS *Freedom* honored *multiple cities and communities of the same name*. But for many who never saw LCS 1's naming announcement, the name *Freedom* caused them to assume that LCSs were being named for "American principles." This misunderstanding was only compounded after Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter decided to follow Secretary England's lead and name LCS 2 USS *Independence* (a name previously associated with aircraft carriers) in honor of "communities throughout the nation that honor a founding American principle." It was only when Secretary Winter subsequently named USS *Fort Worth* (LCS 3) and USS *Coronado* (LCS 4) in honor of *single* cities that this confusion began to clear up.

Secretary Mabus agreed with Secretary England's decision to name LCSs for cities, which resonated with his own Pragmatic Traditionalist instincts. Pragmatists both in and out of uniform have long recognized that naming ships for cities (and states) is among the best way for Secretaries of the Navy to acquaint a large number of US citizens with *America's* Navy-Marine Corps Team—especially those who live inland and away from the east and west coasts. Thus, in March 2011, when the time came to name the next four LCSs, Secretary Mabus began to compile a list of appropriate city names.

This process was hindered because he had no way to objectively delineate between the cities being honored by LPDs, and the "mid-tier cities, towns, and communities" being honored by LCSs.<sup>21</sup> For example, with a population of 727,577 (2010 census), Fort Worth, Texas, the namesake for LCS 3, is the fifth largest city in Texas and the 17<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States. It could hardly be considered a "mid-tier" city. On the other hand, while three LPD 17s were named for the first, seventh, and eighth largest cities in the United States (USS *New York*, USS *San Antonio*, and USS *San Diego*, respectively), USS *Green Bay* was named for the 268<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country. In terms of size only, Green Bay probably qualified as a "mid-tier" city. Secretary Mabus was thus unable to determine a discernable difference between LPD and LCS names. Consequently, in a nod to Orthodox Traditionalist thinking, Secretary Mabus decided to rationalize the different city naming conventions before choosing the names for LCSs 5-8. Said another way, Secretary Mabus sought to make the two naming conventions more "coherent and integral," and therefore more distinct.

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<sup>21</sup> This problem is addressed in Ronald O'Rourke's CRS report on ship naming.

Having already modified the JHSV convention to honor “small cities and counties” with populations less than 100,000 people, Secretary Mabus decided to modify the LPD naming convention to read “*major* American cities and communities and cities and communities attacked on 9-11” (emphasis added), with a major city or community being defined as one of the top three population centers in a state. In a similar way, he modified the LCS convention to read “*regionally important* American cities and communities” (emphasis added), with a “regionally important” city or community being defined as among the top five state population centers. These definitions admittedly caused some overlap between LPD and LCS cities. However, this could not be corrected short of changing ship names picked by previous Secretaries—something Secretary Mabus did not want to do. Nevertheless, he believed these revised naming conventions would establish a useful guide for his future LPD and LCS ship naming choices. Moreover, they would ensure that the most densely populated States with the largest population centers would not be overly represented among the names chosen for the two ship types.

All previously chosen LPDs city names were consistent with this modified LPD convention. Aside from the three names associated with the September 11 attacks, five names honor the major American cities of San Antonio, Texas (second-largest city in state); New Orleans, Louisiana (largest city in state); Green Bay, Wisconsin (third largest); San Diego, California (second largest); and Anchorage, Alaska (largest). Moreover, USS *Mesa Verde* honored one of the largest Native American *communities* in America.

Secretary Mabus believed three of four previously chosen LCS names were also consistent with the new convention. USS *Fort Worth* (LCS 3) was named in honor of the fifth largest city in Texas. And, because USS *Freedom* and USS *Independence* both honored *multiple* cities, towns, and communities across America whose names celebrated bedrock American principles, he viewed them as defining *nationally important communities* in the same manner as USS *Mesa Verde*. In his view, then, only USS *Coronado* represented an exception to the new convention, and an exceptional one at that; the ship honored the city that is home to US Navy SEALs who will be supported frequently by the new Littoral Combat Ships.

Guided by this modified convention, Secretary Mabus named seven of the next eight LCSs in honor of the regionally important cities of Milwaukee, Wisconsin (largest city in the state); Jackson, Mississippi (first); Detroit, Michigan (first); Montgomery, Alabama (second); Little Rock, Arkansas (first); Sioux City, Iowa (fourth); and Omaha, Nebraska (first). All are thus consistent with the modified naming convention. However, when it came time to name LCS 10, Secretary Mabus decided to make an exception to convention and name the ship in honor of former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who had been severely wounded by gunfire at a Congressional event in her district of Tucson, Arizona.

As Orthodox Traditionalists rightly point out, the more “traditional” choice would have been to name LCS 10 USS *Tucson*, in honor of the city and all those killed or injured on the terrible day when Congresswoman Giffords was herself shot, and to name the Congresswoman as sponsor of the ship. However, this approach was unavailable to the Secretary as SSN 770 already bore the proud name USS *Tucson*. As a result, once Secretary Mabus decided to honor Congresswoman Giffords, the only path forward was to make an exception to an established type naming convention. With names of former members of Congress already gracing the sterns of aircraft carriers, attack submarines, ballistic missile submarines, and LPDs, he believed it appropriate to name a Littoral Combat Ship in her honor.

The Secretary’s choice to name LCS 1 USS *Gabrielle Giffords* sparked some criticism. Some people objected to the Secretary’s naming a ship after a living person; a few took fault with it being named after a woman. Others argue that if the Secretary was going to violate the LCS naming convention and name the ship after a person, he should have chosen a posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor or Navy Cross. Still others point out that Congresswoman Giffords’s career was relatively short and had little impact on the Department of the Navy, and therefore she should not have been so honored. Finally, while some acknowledge Giffords’ spirit and determination in overcoming her terrible injuries, they feel it would have been far more appropriate to acknowledge a Sailor or Marine who suffered and overcame wounds received in battle.

Some of these objections reflect either Orthodox Traditionalist thinking or simple ignorance of Navy ship-naming tradition and practice. As discussed, while naming ships after living persons is relatively rare, it is now a well-established, four-decade old practice. The objection against naming a ship after a woman is also groundless; since 1850, and before the naming of LCS 10, 15 women have been honored with a ship name (three of them for surface combatants). The argument that naming LCS 10 for a posthumous Medal of Honor or Navy Cross recipient would be more appropriate once again ignores the fact that such heroes are honored with destroyer names, and exceptions are generally made for unique people who do not fall under a standing type naming convention—like Gabrielle Giffords.

Secretary Mabus was well aware that Congresswoman Giffords is much younger than those Members of Congress previously so honored and, as a result, her record does not equal theirs in numbers of years served or in the general level of attention applied to military or naval matters. He also knows from many visits to hospitals that hundreds of young service men and women have received wounds as grievous as Ms. Giffords’s, and agrees they all rightfully deserve respect and recognition. However, given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding this case, he felt it both fitting and appropriate to exercise his discretion—established by the very first Secretary of the Navy over 210 years ago—to make an exception to a ship naming convention to honor Congresswoman Giffords.

To begin with, Gabrielle Giffords is the first Member of Congress to be attacked by a gunman since the 1978 shooting of Congressman Leo J. Ryan.<sup>22</sup> By naming a ship in her honor, Secretary Mabus sought to pay tribute to all 535 members of Congress—a very select group of 535 elected politicians who serve and protect our Nation every day. The fact that Representative Giffords was a Navy spouse simply reinforced the Secretary's desire. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is Secretary Mabus's conviction that her story and spirit would inspire all those who sailed on LCS 10. As former Congressman Ike Skelton said at LCS 10's naming ceremony, "Ships take on the characteristics or character of the name of the ship...and I predict the USS *Gabrielle Giffords* will reflect the finest and best of this young lady."

Many members of Congress and American citizens were touched by the choice. Perhaps their reaction is rooted in Ms. Giffords's inspiring story, or her being the first female Member of the United States Congress honored with a ship name. Regardless, as has been previously demonstrated, the naming of LCS 10 in honor of Congresswoman Giffords is entirely consistent with the historical ship naming practice of making occasional exceptions to established naming conventions.

***Aircraft Carriers (CVs, CVLs, CVEs, and CVNs).*** As the preceding discussion attests, naming conventions for ship types change and evolve constantly over time for a variety of reasons. The naming convention for fleet aircraft carriers is no different. USS *Langley*, Navy's very first carrier, was a converted collier named by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels for Professor Samuel P. Langley, an American astronomer and physicist who conducted experiments on the problem of mechanical powered flight. However, when the 1923 signing of the Washington Naval Treaty compelled the Department of the Navy to stop building battle cruisers, Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby decided to shift their type naming convention—"historic Naval Vessels or battles"—over to new construction aircraft carriers (CVs).<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the practice of naming carriers for people lasted for only one ship.

All fleet carriers built after USS *Langley* and before the Second World War—*Lexington, Saratoga, Ranger, Yorktown, Enterprise, Wasp, and Hornet*—were bestowed names in accordance with this newly established convention. Once the war started, the carrier naming convention only slightly changed to read "famous old ships and important battles of our history and present world war"—an acknowledgement of the titanic struggle the Navy then waged. At the same time, the fleet carrier naming convention was extended to cover the new *Independence*-class light fleet carriers (CVLs) being built for wartime service.

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<sup>22</sup> Congressman Ryan was shot and killed while visiting a American religious commune in Jonestown, Guyana, South America.

<sup>23</sup> During World War II, when large US cruisers (CBs) were once again constructed, they were given a new naming convention: "Island possessions of the United States and Territories" (e.g., *Guam, Alaska*).

During the war, the Navy began to procure large numbers of escort carriers (CVEs). Most often built on commercial ship hulls, CVEs were too slow to keep up with the main battle forces consisting of fleet carriers, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. Moreover, they could take far less punishment, prompting their crews to call them “combustible, vulnerable, and expendable.” Nevertheless, they were invaluable for convoy escort duties and providing air support to ground forces during amphibious landings. They also served as backup aircraft transports for fleet carriers, and ferried aircraft of all military services to points of delivery. To delineate them from the more capable CVs and CVLs, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox initially decided to name them for “sounds, bays, and islands.” However, as the war ground on, and with the list of historic American battles constantly growing, after 1943 the CVE convention was modified to read “sounds, bays, and islands *and* famous American battles” (emphasis added).

It is worth noting here that the use of “and” or “or” in Navy naming conventions, found only in the pre-war carrier, destroyer, and minelayer conventions, became more common during World War II. This practice continued after the war. Obviously, including these conjunctions in a naming convention provides choices that work against being able to immediately recognize a ship’s type after hearing its name. However, the flexibility such split conventions give Secretaries of the Navy has proven far more important than coherent naming conventions, especially as the number of ships in the battle force declines.

In any event, on 14 August 1945, VJ Day (15 August in the Pacific), the US Navy had no fewer than 28 fleet carriers (CVs and CVLs) in commission (and an additional 71 CVEs). All but one of these carriers were named in accordance to the carrier naming convention, and this single exception was truly special. After the famous 1942 Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, to protect the fact that the raid had been launched from an American aircraft carrier, President Roosevelt announced the attack had been launched from a new secret base at “Shangri-La,” the fictional faraway land in James Hilton’s novel *Lost Horizon*. The very next year, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox decided to memorialize the remark by naming CV 38 USS *Shangri-La*. This was a clever way to honor the attack itself, the Navy task force that launched it, and the brave men who conducted it. He then sealed the deal by naming Josephine Doolittle, wife of strike commander Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle, as the carrier’s sponsor. Consequently, Knox’s unconventional but inspired decision honored the spirit, if not the letter, of the carrier naming convention.

As the war was drawing to a close, another deviation from the established carrier naming convention occurred. Shortly after President Franklin D. Roosevelt died, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal recommended to President Harry S. Truman that the second of the new *Midway*-class of large carriers be renamed in the former President’s honor (the carrier had already been named *Coral Sea*). In his recommending memo to President Truman, Secretary Forrestal acknowledged his choice would break the carrier naming convention, but he assured the President

that the country “would approve of the variation.” The implicit message was that gaining public approval and more closely linking the Navy with the American people was a key part of his decision-making calculus, which, in this exceptional case, trumped any concern for Naval custom, tradition, or practice. Truman heartily agreed, making USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* only the second US aircraft carrier to be named after a person (the first being USS *Langley*), and the first to be named for a US President. The stories behind the USS *Shangri-La* and USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt*—both exceptions to established naming conventions—illustrate once again why limiting a Secretary of the Navy’s discretion to name ships would be a big mistake

In any event, exceptions to the carrier naming convention became more frequent over the next two decades: CVL 49 was named in honor of Orville and Wilbur Wright, pioneering American aviators; CV 59 was named in honor of James Forrestal, the aforementioned former Secretary of the Navy and first Secretary of Defense;<sup>24</sup> and CV 63 was named in honor of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, where the Wright brothers first achieved powered flight.<sup>25</sup> To help rationalize these “breaks” in tradition, the post-war carrier convention was modified to read “famous names; famous ships formerly on the Navy List; and important US battles, operations, and engagements.” The addition of “famous names” to the convention, broadly defined, allowed Orthodox Traditionalists to say that USS *Wright* (CVL 49) and USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) were both consistent with carrier naming policy.<sup>26</sup> After CV 67 was named in honor of President John F. Kennedy, however, even the Orthodox Traditionalist Riera Panel bowed to the inevitable. It recommended that future aircraft carrier names be considered on an “individual basis”—even though such a convention would not likely allow the immediate linkage between a ship’s name and type the Panel was looking for. This recommendation was adopted, and it remains the established carrier naming convention to this day.

However, a rule adopted by Orthodox Traditionalists out of frustration with a perceived breakdown in the carrier naming convention soon evolved into an unofficial naming practice that immediately distinguishes most US aircraft carriers. Following Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze’s recommendation to President Lyndon B. Johnson that CV 67 be named in honor of the late John F. Kennedy, and before Secretary Mabus was confirmed as Secretary of the Navy, Secretaries of the Navy have named 11 aircraft carriers (all nuclear-powered). Eight of the chosen

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<sup>24</sup> Naming a carrier after James Forrestal actually represented two exceptions, as former Secretaries of the Navy were typically honored with destroyer names.

<sup>25</sup> After the war, fleet carriers tasked to launch nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union were designated as Attack Carriers (CVAs or CVANs), while World War II carriers dedicated to anti-submarine warfare were designated as ASW Support Carriers (CVSs). This distinction went away in the 1970s, when all CVSs were retired and carrier air wings received both fixed and rotary wing ASW aircraft. This report will refer to all fleet carriers as CVs or CVNs.

<sup>26</sup> The first USS *Kitty Hawk* was a commercial cargo ship acquired by the Navy in World War II and converted to an aircraft transport (APV). She moved US Marine Corps aircraft both to Midway before the June 1942 battle, and then to Guadalcanal during the campaign to take that island. However, she hardly qualified as a “famous ship formerly on the Navy List.”

names were for former US Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Harry S Truman, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Gerald R. Ford. The three exceptions were themselves exceptional: USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68), named in honor of World War II Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the only one of four Navy World War II fleet admirals not previously honored by a ship name;<sup>27</sup> USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), named in honor of Congressman Carl Vinson, who served in the House for 50 years and is known as the “Father of the Two-Ocean Navy;” and USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), named in honor of Senator John Stennis, who served 41 years in the Senate and is known as “The Father of America’s Modern Navy.” And, as discussed earlier, the *Carl Vinson* and *John C. Stennis* are both consistent with the special naming convention to honor former Congressmen and Senators with long records of support to the US military across ship types and classes. In other words, while carrier names are still “individually considered,” they are now generally named in honor of past US Presidents.

Secretary Mabus supports this unofficial Presidential carrier naming convention. He well knows and appreciates that since the end of World War II, the first question a President often asks in a crisis is “where are the carriers?” Accordingly, in May 2011, he named CVN 79 in honor of President John F. Kennedy. When the next *John F. Kennedy* is commissioned, no fewer than 9 of 11 fleet aircraft carriers will be named for Presidents. The only “exceptions” will be USS *Carl Vinson* and USS *John C. Stennis*, and these are consistent with the aforementioned cross-type convention that recognizes famous Members of Congress. As these circumstances illustrate, then, while the established carrier naming convention remains “individually considered,” most Presidents and Secretaries of the Navy now lean toward naming carriers after Presidents (from their respective political parties).

Despite his demonstrated support for this unofficial Presidential carrier naming convention, Secretary Mabus values the ability to consider 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. Second, with a planned force of only 11 carriers, there are many more deserving Presidents than there ever will be carriers for which to name them. By avoiding a specific Presidential naming convention for US aircraft carriers, future Secretaries of the Navy will retain the flexibility to honor past Presidents across ship types, just as Secretary of the Navy John Dalton seems to have intended when he respectively named SSN 23 and DDG 80 in honor of President Jimmy Carter and President

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<sup>27</sup> Admirals Ernest J. King, William D. Leahy, and William F. Halsey all had guided missile frigates named for them, which were later reclassified as guided missile cruisers and destroyers.



Franklin D. Roosevelt and the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt (these decisions will be discussed in detail later in the report).

***Seabasing ships (MLPs and AFSBs).*** Special-purpose seabasing ships are a new addition to the Navy-Marine Corps Team. When working with amphibious landing ships, the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) and Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB) will give *America's* Navy-Marine Corps Team the capability to establish tactical sea bases close to a coast and deliver joint forces, supplies, equipment, or vehicles ashore when shore bases are either unavailable or not tactically prudent.<sup>28</sup>

The concept for expanded seabasing operations and the very idea of specially designed seabasing ships were both developed at the Marine Combat Development Command in Quantico, Virginia during the 1990s. Thus, even though seabasing ships would ultimately also support Army and Special Operations forces, Secretary Mabus decided to recognize the Marine Corps's key contributions by naming the new seabasing ships for "famous names or places of historical significance to Marines."

The final naming of the ships was complicated somewhat by changes to Departmental of the Navy plans. The Department had long planned to procure a Mobile Landing Platform for each of its three forward-stationed Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons, and Congress had already authorized the building of three MLPs. However, after the passage of the 2011 Budget Control Act, a Department of Defense Strategic Review determined only two Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons were needed in the future. At the same time, however, the review identified a new requirement for two Afloat Forward Staging Bases. Consequently, the Department of the Navy planned to request Congress's approval to modify the third MLP into an AFSB, and to build the second AFSB in fiscal year 2014.

This approach presented the Department of the Navy with something of a timing problem. The construction contracts for the first two MLPs had been awarded in

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<sup>28</sup> Mobile Landing Platforms, or MLPs, are the most basic seabasing ships. They are specially modified oil tankers with the storage tanks removed and ballast tanks installed. In the resulting wide, unobstructed open area between the stern and bow of the ships, there is a raised "mission deck" and landing platform for three Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCACs). Once in an operating area, an MLP will anchor and ballast down, converting itself into a floating pier and at-sea transfer point for cargo and vehicles. Large sealift ships can tie up alongside the MLP and disgorge cargo onto the mission deck, from which it can be dispatched ashore using a wide variety of ship-to-shore connectors, including LCACs, displacement landing craft, or even JHSV. Of course, using modular containers, MLPs can be modified to serve as a tactical sea base for special operations, theater cooperation and security, partnership building capacity, and humanitarian and disaster relief missions. Whereas MLPs are designed primarily to support surface connectors, Afloat Forward Staging Bases are designed primarily to support rotary wing aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles. Essentially, an AFSB is an MLP with a hangar deck and the container space, magazines, and accommodations needed to support a seabased mine warfare helicopter squadron, special operations rotary wing squadron, or UAV detachment, and the personnel and equipment that maintain them.

May 2011, and the third was approved in December 2011. With the formal keel laying for MLP 1 scheduled for 19 January 2012, officials at NASSCO, the shipyard chosen to construct the three MLPs, were pressing Secretary Mabus to announce the name all three ships. However, the Department's request to modify the third MLP into an AFSB would be made in February after the submission of the Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget in February 2012. Rather than presupposing Congressional approval of the Navy's new plans, or throwing any doubt on the Department's support for seabasing ships in general, Secretary Mabus decided to name all three MLPs pending final action taken by Congress.

In the event, and with the enthusiastic support of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Secretary Mabus selected the name USNS *Montford Point* for MLP 1, in honor of 20,000 African American Marine recruits trained at the North Carolina facility of the same name from 1942 to 1949. In part, their exceptional service there prompted President Truman to sign an executive order ending segregation in the US military. The Secretary thus saw USNS *Montford Point* as the Marine counterpart to the USNS *Carl Brashear*. Secretary Mabus then named MLP 2 USNS *John Glenn*, a name immediately recognized by many Marines that at once honors a respected and distinguished (and still living) Marine Colonel, combat pilot, Congressional Space Medal of Honor recipient, and distinguished legislator from Ohio with 25 years of dedicated service in the US Senate. Finally, the Secretary named MLP 3 in honor of Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, one of the most decorated and legendary combat infantrymen and leaders in Marine Corps history.

As is always the case, there were those who objected to these choices for one reason or another. For example, one critic argued that the type convention didn't have a coherent theme, since *Montford Point* was a place and Puller and Glenn were people. With this perceived discrepancy in mind, he therefore thought that *Montford Point* would have been a better name for LPD 26 than *John P. Murtha*, "since the [*San Antonio*-class] already is named after a location, so [*Montford Point*] would have the same form." He also thought it made more sense to name a "destroyer or some other fearsome ship with heavy guns" the *Lewis B. Puller*, since an MLP didn't "square with Puller's legendary status."<sup>29</sup>

These objections and recommendations are neither accurate nor authoritative. The first complaint, consistent with the Orthodox Traditionalist desire for "coherent and integral" naming conventions, is really a condemnation of split naming conventions, which have been around as long as destroyers have been named, and are far more common since the end of World War II. In any event, what ties the MLPs and AFSBs coherently together is that they are both named for people and places *of significance to Marines*. Moreover, if the Department's 2012 plans for MLPs and AFSBs are approved, Secretary Mabus intends to name the two MLPs in honor of Chesty Puller and John Glenn, and the two AFSBs in honor of *Montford Point* and another site of

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<sup>29</sup> The only previous ship named for General Puller was FFG 23, an *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class guided missile frigate.

significance to Marines. The *class* naming conventions for both MLPs and AFSBs will thus be consistent with the *type* naming convention, and each will have a consistent theme.

The observation about the LPD 17 naming convention is similarly off the mark; these ships are named for major cities, not “locations.” It would be far more appropriate to name a LSD in honor of Montford Point, as its naming convention is for “historic sites in the US.” Unfortunately, however, no LSDs are being built, and Secretary Mabus did not have this option available to him. As for the complaint that the name *Lewis B. Puller* is not an appropriate one for an auxiliary ship, in the next decade or so, the battle force will number between 285 and 300 ships. From the Secretary’s perspective, the only thing that matters is that Chesty Puller’s name will once again be among them. In his pragmatic view, most people, regardless of service or background, would likely be happy even if their name graced the stern of fleet tug, because their spirit would join the greatest Navy-Marine Corps Team in history.

***Destroyers (DDs, DLs, DLGs, DLGNs and DDGs).*** During the Spanish-American War, then-Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt judged Spanish torpedo boats posed the “only real menace” to the US squadron blockading Santiago.<sup>30</sup> At his urging, Congress authorized the first 16 “torpedo boat destroyers,” the progenitors of all modern US destroyers. Secretary Roosevelt decided to name these new ships for “Officers and enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps”—a very broad convention allowing him (and future Secretaries of the Navy) to honor famous American naval leaders and distinguished heroes from the two sea services.

As with all type and class naming practices, important modifications were made to the destroyer convention over time. In 1935, inventors were formally added to the convention, allowing DD 440 to be named in honor of John Ericsson, inventor and builder of the USS *Monitor*. Next, in 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt formally modified the convention to include former Secretaries of the Navy and members of Congress. And finally, in 1942, the convention was again slightly modified (and considerably lengthened) to become:

Deceased American Naval, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Officers and enlisted personnel who have rendered distinguished service to their country above and beyond the call of duty; former Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the Navy; members of Congress who have been closely identified with Naval affairs; and inventors.

The significance of adding the modifier “deceased” and “distinguished service to their country above and beyond the call of duty” has been previously addressed.

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<sup>30</sup> In 1866, British engineer Robert Whitehead invented the very first “automotive torpedo,” a powered, unguided, unmanned underwater vehicle capable of delivering an explosive charge below a target’s waterline over a distance of 200-400 yards. From these humble beginnings, the torpedo evolved into a serious threat to surface warships, and gave even the smallest combatant a chance to seriously damage or sink a capital ship under the right circumstances.

With the development and shift to guided missile warfare after World War II, the Navy introduced several new ship classifications in the destroyer line. In addition to traditional general-purpose destroyers, the Navy began to build larger “battle force capable” combatants specifically designed to operate with fast carrier task forces. The first of this new generation of ships still carried guns as their primary armament, augmented with new anti-submarine weapons. However, given their relatively large size, they were referred to as “frigates” and type-classified as DLs—a classification first assigned to pre-war destroyer leaders. Later ships with surface-to-air missile (SAM) batteries were classified as guided missile frigates, either conventionally powered DLGs or nuclear-powered DLGNs. Both new construction and converted guided missile destroyers, or DDGs, were also built. And, because each of these new ship types evolved from the general-purpose destroyer line, they were all named in accordance with the destroyer naming convention.

Of course, there were periodic exceptions to the naming convention. As reported to the 1969 Riera Panel by historians in the Ships’ Histories Section of the Naval History Division (forerunner of the current Naval History and Heritage Command), past destroyers of all types had been named for cities; Secretaries of War; famous US Consuls; and even Army generals. Predictably, such exceptions offended the Orthodox Traditionalists on the Riera Panel. Moreover, they objected to the destroyer naming convention itself, which was far too incoherent for their tastes. Guided by their goal of being able to readily identify a ship’s type upon hearing her name, they therefore endorsed the then common practice of naming destroyers only for “deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy.” In other words, destroyers would no longer be named for former Assistant (i.e., Under) Secretaries of the Navy, inventors, or members of Congress.

As previously discussed, the Riera Panel’s removal of members of Congress from the formal destroyer naming convention did not help achieve the goal they worked toward. It simply compelled subsequent Secretaries of the Navy to honor famous Congressmen and Senators across a variety of ship types. And, of course, no Pragmatist either in or out of uniform would ever be rigidly bound by a type naming convention if circumstances arose that justified an exception. Indeed, in 1975, Chief of Naval Operations Elmo “Bud” Zumwalt recommended to Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf that DD 974, a *Spruance*-class destroyer, be named in honor of François-Joseph Paul, marquis de Grasse Tilly, comte de Grasse. Comte de Grasse was the French admiral who commanded the French fleet at the Battle of the Chesapeake, leading directly to the British surrender at Yorktown. With the Bi-Centennial celebration coming, and with an eye toward honoring France’s contributions to our fight for freedom, Secretary Middendorf accepted the recommendation.

Secretary of the Navy John Dalton also made two exceptions to the Riera Panel’s modified naming convention: USS *Roosevelt* (DDG 80), named in honor of both

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his wife, the First Lady, Eleanor;<sup>31</sup> and USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81), named for the well known British parliamentarian, Prime Minister, and honorary American citizen.<sup>32</sup> Once again, even if the two names represent technical “corruptions” of the destroyer naming convention, both choices were right in line with a long list of exceptions stretching all the way back to Benjamin Stoddert’s naming of the USS *Chesapeake*.

Even so, Orthodox Traditionalists still like to point out that the choice of USS *Roosevelt* represented an especially egregious break in tradition because Presidents are now typically honored with carrier names. However, as noted earlier, the number of Presidents deserving the honor of a ship name most likely exceeds the maximum number of carrier names—especially considering the future carrier force will likely consist of no more than 11 ships, and one of them may be named USS *Enterprise*. Whether this thinking influenced Secretary Dalton is not clear, but the fact remains that DDG 80 was the second non-carrier ship type he named for a former President, the first being SSN 23, USS *Jimmy Carter* (more on this choice in the next section). This is significant because in ship naming, if one deviation is an exception, two deviations represent a pattern. By his actions, Secretary Dalton thus modified the special cross-type naming convention for “Members of Congress” first established by Secretary John H. Chafee to “well known national and Congressional leaders.”

With all general-purpose destroyers now retired, the only two destroyer types still in active service and in production are the *Arleigh Burke* and *Zumwalt*-class DDGs. Consistent with the type’s naming convention, Secretary Donald Winter named the 62<sup>nd</sup> *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer (DDG 112)—the last Flight IIA version of the type originally programmed—in honor of Lt. Michael Murphy, US Navy SEAL and posthumous Medal of Honor recipient for heroic actions in Afghanistan. However, with the costs of the next generation guided missile cruiser increasing, the Department of the Navy decided to cancel the new cruiser and to instead design and build a modified Flight III *Burke* DDG with a new and more powerful Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR). To keep the industrial base hot while the Navy finished development of the AMDR and made the necessary modifications to the *Burke*’s basic design, the Department decided to re-open and extend the current Flight IIA *Burke* production line to keep it hot. The Department now plans to build at least 10 more of the Flight IIA DDGs before shifting production over to the newer Flight IIIs.

Secretary Mabus has chosen names for four of these transitional Flight IIA DDGs, and his specific selections reflect his endorsement of the destroyer naming convention. On 15 February 2011, he named DDG 113 in honor of Lieutenant John

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<sup>31</sup> Naming a ship in honor of both a President and First Lady was a first. USS *Lady Washington*, commissioned in 1776, honored the wife of General George Washington, not President Washington’s First Lady.

<sup>32</sup> Secretary Dalton originally named DDG 81 *Winston Churchill*; Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig subsequently modified the name to *Winston S. Churchill*.

Finn, a Navy Medal of Honor recipient at Pearl Harbor;<sup>33</sup> DDG 114 in honor of Marine Private First Class Ralph H. Johnson, awarded the Medal of Honor in Vietnam; and DDG 115 in honor of Marine Staff Sergeant Rafael Peralta, who earned the Navy Cross in Iraq.<sup>34</sup> More recently, he named DDG 116 USS *Thomas Hudner* in honor of Navy Korean War hero Lieutenant Junior Grade Thomas. J. Hudner, Jr., who received the Medal of Honor for intentionally crashing his aircraft to save his wingman, Ensign Jesse L. Brown, the first African American trained as an aviator by the US Navy. In addition to being consistent with the destroyer naming conventions, all of these names are also consistent with the Secretary's personal commitment to highlight the value of diversity in the Navy-Marine Corps Team. Together, these four choices—a white officer, an African American junior enlisted man, a Hispanic NCO, and a white officer who risked his life to save a fellow black officer—demonstrate the storied heroism of Sailors and Marines crosses decades, wars, ranks, and races.

Of course, some Orthodox Traditionalists might object to the fact that Secretary Mabus named a ship in honor of Thomas Hudner, who is still alive. However, Secretary Mabus thought that naming a ship in honor of this 87-year old hero, the last living Navy recipient of the Medal of Honor from the Korean War, was an appropriate exception to the normal practice of naming warships after deceased Americans and heroes. His exception is consistent with well-established policy, practice, and tradition.

Only three ships of the DDG 1000 class remain in production, the remnants of a planned class of 32 ships. Secretary Winter named DDG 1000 after Admiral Elmo “Bud” Zumwalt, former Chief of Naval Operations, and DDG 1001 in honor of MA2 Michael A. Monsoor, US Navy SEAL and Medal of Honor recipient. Both names are therefore consistent with the destroyer naming convention. However, when it came time to name the last ship of the class, Secretary Mabus decided to name the DDG 1002 USS *Lyndon B. Johnson*, in honor of our 36<sup>th</sup> President.

As a Pragmatic Traditionalist, like Secretary John H. Dalton before him, Secretary Mabus believes there are many more deserving Presidents than carrier names with which to honor them. He notes, for example, only seven of the top 20 Presidents ranked in the 2010 Presidential Ranking Survey conducted by the Siena College Research Institute—Theodore Roosevelt (2), Abraham Lincoln (3), George Washington (4), Harry S Truman (9), Dwight D. Eisenhower (10), John F. Kennedy (11), and Ronald Reagan (18)—are currently honored with carrier names.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Lieutenant Finn was an Aviation Chief Ordnanceman when awarded the Medal of Honor.

<sup>34</sup> Section 1012 of Public Law 112-81, H.R. 1540, enacted by the 112th Congress, included a sense of Congress resolution that “the next available naval vessel” be named *Rafael Peralta*. This is a good example of the way Congress can influence a sitting Secretary's ship naming decisions.

<sup>35</sup> Since 1982, the Siena Research Institute has conducted a poll of Presidential scholars and asked them to rank all US Presidents in lineal order, based on six personal attributes (background, imagination, integrity, intelligence, luck and willingness to take risks), five forms of ability (compromising, executive, leadership, communication and overall) and eight areas of accomplishment (economic, other domestic affairs, working with Congress, working with their party,

Secretary Mabus thus endorses Secretary Dalton's decision to extend the special cross-type naming convention for American Congressmen and Senators to former Presidents, and he decided to follow his lead and name DDG 1002 in honor of Lyndon B. Johnson, who the Siena Institute ranks sixteenth among the past 43 Presidents. With this choice, every World War II and Cold War President is now honored with a ship name with the exception of Richard Nixon.

***Fleet Submarines (SSs, SSGs, SSBNs, SSNs, and SSGNs)***. As is normal, the naming convention for US fleet submarines has changed over time. The first American submarine was named for its inventor and builder, John Phillip Holland (and while he was still alive),<sup>36</sup> and the second for her diving characteristics (USS *Plunger*). At this point, Secretaries started to name submarines after "fish and land creatures that sting" (e.g., USS *Adder*, USS *Tarantula*, and USS *Moccasin*). However, given the rapid advancement of undersea technology, in 1911 Orthodox Traditionalists in the Navy began to identify submarines with simple letter and number designations in order to "better class them in groups according to dimensions, speed, and radius of action." However, this convention was far too impersonal and uninspiring to last. Thus, in 1931, Secretary Charles F. Adams III changed the naming convention for US submarines to "fish and denizens of the deep." This convention was faithfully followed through 1947 with just two exceptions: in the mid-1930s, Secretary Claude A. Swanson named SS 179 USS *Plunger* in honor of all early-generation US submarines, and in 1942 Secretary Frank Knox named SS 278 USS *Scorpion*, a nod to the earlier submarine naming convention which included stinging land creatures. Both of these exceptions, made to pay homage to those brave men and storied boats that built the US Navy's "Silent Service," were thus exceptional and well justified.

In 1947, the naming convention for US submarines changed once more, when Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal approved the recommendation made by Vice Admiral Forrest Sherman, then Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Operations), to name new construction submarines after famous World War II boats, especially those awarded Presidential Unit Citations and/or Navy Unit Commendations (NUC). Because most famous World War II fleet boats had all been named after fish, some Orthodox Traditionalists believe the submarine naming convention remained "fish and denizens of the deep," but that is not technically true.

As the Cold War heated up, the Navy equipped five fleet submarines with the nuclear-armed Regulus cruise missile, and sent them on strategic deterrent patrols close along the coast of the Soviet Union. All were type-classified as either SSGs or SSGNs, depending on whether they were conventionally or nuclear-powered. The

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appointing supreme court justices, appointing members of the executive branch, avoiding mistakes, and foreign policy). The surveys are taken the year after a Presidential election. The results listed above reflect the 2010 survey, based on the responses from 238 presidential scholars, historians, and political scientists.

<sup>36</sup> As mentioned earlier, 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.

first two were modified World War II fleet boats, both of which retained their original names, USS *Tunny* (SSG 282), and USS *Barbero* (SSG 317). However, the next three new construction boats were named in accordance with the new naming convention for famous World War II submarines: USS *Grayback* (SSG 574, one NUC); USS *Growler* (SSG 577, one NUC), and USS *Halibut* (SSGN 587, one NUC).

With the successful development of the Polaris ballistic missile, which could be fired while its submarine launch platform was submerged, these five SSGs and SSGNs were soon replaced by 41 new nuclear-powered fleet ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), each armed with 16 Polaris missiles.<sup>37</sup> As the Navy was planning its transition to these new strategic weapon platforms, a spirited debate developed over whether they should be named for famous World War II boats or “fish and denizens of the deep.” But Admiral Hyman Rickover, the “Father of the Nuclear Navy,” had other ideas. As previously discussed, he wanted to break from the contemporary submarine naming convention for *attack* submarines and name the new SSBNs for “eminent *Americans*” (emphasis added). This recommendation, clearly made to celebrate the grand heritage of the United States, resonated strongly with Secretary of the Navy Thomas S. Gates. Secretary Gates therefore readily accepted Admiral Rickover’s recommendation, and promptly named the first three SSBNs (SSBNs 598, 599, and 600) in honor of President George Washington, American patriot Patrick Henry, and President Theodore Roosevelt. Note at the time the unofficial practice of naming aircraft carriers in honor of former Presidents had not yet begun; the naming convention for aircraft carriers remained “famous names; famous ships formerly on the Navy List; and important US battles, operations, and engagements.” Therefore, in true Pragmatic Traditionalist fashion, Secretary Gates looked to honor famous former Presidents, and the new SSBN naming convention provided the perfect opportunity to do so.

As is often the case, subsequent Secretaries stretched or took liberties with the SSBN naming convention, and named some boats for famous foreign champions of liberty. Secretary of the Navy William B. Franke named SSBN 616 in honor of Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, a French military hero who fought with and aided the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.<sup>38</sup> Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth made similar exceptions when he named SSBNs 632 and 633 in honor of Baron Friedrich von Steuben and General Casimir Pulaski, two other foreigners who served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. He also named SSBN 641 in honor of Simón Bolívar, the famous Venezuelan freedom fighter, and SSBN

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<sup>37</sup> *Tunny* and *Grayback* were subsequently converted to amphibious transport submarines (APSS, later LPSS), a role enabled by their large storage hangars originally built to carry one or two of the large Regulus missiles. *Halibut* ended her career as a research and development submarine. *Barbero* and *Growler* were laid up when the Regulus program ended.

<sup>38</sup> Although Lafayette was not granted honorary citizenship until 2002, he was declared a natural born citizen of the US during his lifetime. Undersecretary Fred A. Bantz signed the naming notice for USS *Lafayette*.



642 in honor of King Kamehameha, the last Hawaiian monarch.<sup>39</sup> Finally, Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze later named SSBN 658 in honor of Mariano G. Vallejo, a Spanish-born Mexican General who helped shape the transition of California from a Mexican district to an American state. In an obvious move to help rationalize these choices, the 1969 Riera Panel chose to modify the SSBN naming convention to “distinguished Americans and others whose lives have paralleled and contributed to the growth of democracy.”

In the meantime, attack submarines continued to be named for famous World War II subs/fish and denizens of the deep. Then, over a short six-month period in 1971, Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee named four SSNs after famous American legislators, and the follow-on *Los Angeles* class after American cities. These five decisions, coming so soon after the Riera Panel, infuriated Orthodox Traditionalists. As Commander Earl Mann, Head of Ship Histories in the Naval History Division, wrote: “Between 25 Feb and 5 May, 1971, a series of exceptions to stated policy and tradition occurred with the assignment of person names and cities names to SSN[s].” This is as close to a rebuke of a sitting Secretary that anyone in uniform could or would ever make.

The bad news kept coming for Orthodox Traditionalists. Secretary J. William Middendorf II next decided to change the class naming for the new Trident SSBNs—successors to the 41 *Polaris* boats—to “States of the Union.” With the aforementioned curtailment of the nuclear surface combatant building program, this decision was all but inevitable. As CNO Admiral Thomas H. Moorer had earlier argued for the naming of DLGNS after states, it was “most desirable that we renew naming warships for states, so as to maintain the valuable relationship this promotes between the Navy and the citizens of individual states.” Consequently, the first Trident SSBN was named in honor of the state of Ohio, and 16 of the following 17 boats honored States of the Union. The sole exception to this SSBN naming convention was the aforementioned SSBN 730, named by President Ronald Reagan in honor of Henry “Scoop” Jackson.

When the time came to name the new SSN 21, the first of 30 planned successors to the *Los Angeles*-class SSN, Secretary John Lehman, in a nod to all Orthodox Traditionalists, chose the name USS *Seawolf*. He very much wanted to reintroduce the tradition of naming attack boats after “fish and denizens of the deep.” However, Secretary of the Navy Sean O’Keefe subsequently opted instead to name SSN 22 USS *Connecticut*. If subsequent attack boats were similarly named, this move would establish a consistent naming convention—“States of the Union”—across all US submarines, regardless of type.

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<sup>39</sup> Baron Friedrich von Steuben, the Prussian-born inspector general of the Continental Army, was not technically an exception, since a grateful Pennsylvania legislature granted him American citizenship after the Revolutionary War. Pulaski was granted honorary US citizenship, posthumously, in 2009.

Things then seemed to be thrown into complete disarray when Secretary John H. Dalton decided to name SSN 23 in honor of Jimmy Carter, graduate of the Naval Academy, US Navy submariner, and 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. In hindsight, however, by subsequently naming the first of the new SSN 774 USS *Virginia*, it is clear that Secretary Dalton accepted Secretary O’Keefe’s earlier decision, and his choice of name for SSN 23 was an exception explained simply as matter of timing. Given the Navy’s plan for SSN 23, which was to make her a unique special mission submarine, Secretary Dalton believed it fitting to name her after the only President to ever earn and wear the Navy’s prestigious Dolphins. Like Secretary John Lehman, who chose to name a sub in honor of Admiral Rickover, this was exactly the right time and reason to “break” with ship naming tradition. Of course, Secretary Dalton subsequently named DDG 80 in honor of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the First Lady, thereby making this choice less of an exception and more of the first step taken to expand the special cross-type naming convention for members of Congress to include former Presidents.

Some like to point to the three names of the SSN 21 *class* of attack boats—one fish, one state, and one President—as evidence there has been a breakdown in Navy ship naming policies and practices. This thinking misses the forest for the trees. As a result of a series of decisions made by several former Secretaries, the Navy now has a single *type* submarine naming convention. Since the first Trident SSBN was named in honor of the State of Ohio and the last *Los Angeles*-class attack boat was built, all but four US nuclear-powered submarines—regardless of type (SSBNs, SSGNs, or SSNs)—have been named for “States of the Union.”<sup>40</sup> Three of the exceptions—USS *Henry M. Jackson* (SSBN 730), USS *Seawolf* (SSN 21), and USS *Jimmy Carter* (SSN 23)—have been previously discussed.<sup>41</sup> The most recent exception is USS *John Warner* (SSN 785), named by Secretary Donald C. Winter in honor of (still living) John Warner, former Sailor, Marine officer, Secretary of the Navy, six-term Senator from Virginia, and ardent supporter of the US military in general and the Navy-Marine Corps Team in particular.

Secretary Mabus agrees with this “new” submarine naming convention. He subscribes to the thinking—prominent since the time of President Theodore Roosevelt—that the Naval Register should always include ships named after States of the Union, “so as to maintain the valuable relationship this promotes between the Navy and the citizens of individual States.” Unsurprisingly, then, when it came for

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<sup>40</sup> As a result of subsequent post-Cold War arms control agreements, the Navy’s SSBN force was reduced from 18 to 14 boats. Rather than retire the oldest four boats, which still had two decades of useful service life left in them, the DON converted and reclassified them as conventional cruise missile and special operations transport submarines (SSGNs). Consistent with tradition, these four submarines retained their State names.

<sup>41</sup> USS *Seawolf* is an exception only because subsequent Secretaries of the Navy decided not to follow Republican Secretary John Lehman’s lead to name attack submarines after “fish and denizens of the deep.” It therefore joins the USNS *Spearhead* as a special category of exceptions made so by subsequent changes to type or class naming conventions.

him to name the next five nuclear-powered attack submarines, he stuck closely to the state naming convention.

Before deciding on which names to select, Secretary Mabus asked for a list of State names that had been absent the longest from the US Naval Register—a move both Orthodox and Pragmatic Traditionalists would likely applaud. The first name he picked from the list was USS *Illinois* (SSN 786). The last ship in active service with the same name was a battleship (BB 7), decommissioned in 1920. Excluded from further use as a warship by the Washington Naval Treaty, she was assigned to the New York Naval Militia and fitted out as a floating armory. In 1941, she was renamed *Prairie State* to allow her name to be assigned to BB 65, a wartime *Iowa*-class, but that ship was cancelled before launch. The names for the next four submarines had similar lineages. SSN 787 was named USS *Washington*. The last ship to carry that proud name was BB 56, decommissioned in 1947 and struck from the Naval Register in 1961. SSN 788 would bear the name USS *Colorado* (SSN 788), last seen on BB 45, decommissioned in 1947 and struck in 1959. The name USS *Indiana* (SSN 789) was last seen on BB 58, which also decommissioned in 1947 and stricken in 1963. Finally, SSN 790 was named USS *South Dakota*, a name that last graced the stern of BB 57, which was decommissioned along with her sisters in 1947 and struck in 1962. All of the proud battleships that carried these names saw action in the Pacific during World War II.

Although Secretary Mabus endorses the practice of naming submarines for states, he is mindful that history is about to repeat itself. 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.<sup>42</sup> In a similar way, our long-term submarine inventory calls for 48 SSNs and 12 SSBN(X)s—the planned follow-on to our current *Ohio*-class SSBNs. As a result, the Department will once again run short of state names unless some action is taken. For this reason, Secretary Mabus believes periodic exceptions to the submarine State naming convention are quite appropriate. However, he thinks a better long-term solution might be in order. For example, one solution would be to name the new SSBN(X) class after “eminent Americans,” the original convention for the first “41 for Freedom” Polaris missile boats. Should this occur, the only challenge for future Secretaries would be selecting just 12 names from such a long and distinguished list of potential honorees.

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<sup>42</sup> In 1898, Congress passed a law requiring that first-class battleships and monitors be named after states, and “shall not be named for any city, place, or persons until the names of States, shall have been exhausted.” In 1908, Congress repealed the provision as it pertained to monitors.

**“Big-Deck” Amphibious Assault Ships (LPHs, LHAs, and LHDs).** In 1955, to support newly conceived helicopter-borne vertical assaults and aerial resupply during amphibious operations, the Navy modified three World War II *Essex*-class aircraft carriers and one smaller escort carrier to serve as combination assault transports and helicopter support bases.<sup>43</sup> Once these modifications were complete, the former carriers changed mission and became amphibious assault ships (LPHs), but they retained their original names: USS *Boxer* (ex-CV 21, LPH 4), USS *Princeton* (ex-CV 37, LPH 5), USS *Valley Forge* (ex-CV 45, LPH 8), and USS *Thetis Bay* (ex-CVE 90, LPH 6).<sup>44</sup> These conversions proved so successful that the Navy decided to design and build a new class of purpose-built LPHs with accommodations for nearly 1,500 Marines and the ability to support and operate up to 24 transport helicopters. They would be the first ships of any navy to be constructed specifically to support helicopter-borne vertical assaults.

Consistent with the fact that the first four LPHs were former aircraft carriers, Secretary of the Navy Thomas S. Gates decided the naming convention for new construction LPHs would “follow the policy established for aircraft carriers—famous ships and/or important US battles—but emphasizing battles in which Marines played a notable part.” Indeed, when naming LPH 2 USS *Iwo Jima*, Secretary Gates emphasized the tie to the carrier convention by pointing out the name *Iwo Jima* had been assigned to a WWII *Essex*-class carrier cancelled at the end of the war. This decision must have vexed some Orthodox Traditionalists, as it would in effect assign the same naming convention to two different ship types—or one so close as to be difficult for most to discern any difference.

Later, Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze modified the naming convention for amphibious assault ships to “cities and US naval battles of same name in which Marines played a prominent part (or battle only); or predecessor ships.” This split convention was another of the many indirect city conventions so popular in the 1960s. It also helps explain why LPH 11 was named USS *New Orleans*, a famous city and site of a famous American battle, but one in which Marines played only a minor part (Andrew Jackson’s force contained only 58 Marines). In any event, all six LPHs that followed *Iwo Jima* were given names consistent with this modified naming convention, and four shared names with World War II era aircraft carriers.

The seven *Iwo Jima*-class LPHs were the first in a long line of “big-deck” amphibious assault ships (20 and still counting) with superior aviation support capabilities.

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<sup>43</sup> Because the 1946 atomic tests at Bikini Atoll caused some pundits to question the future viability of amphibious assaults, the Marine Corps began to think about using helicopters to land and disperse assault troops from a distributed amphibious task force located far over the horizon. This new concept of “vertical envelopment” was tested at Quantico and successfully practiced over land during the Korean War.

<sup>44</sup> Contrary to popular belief, the ship designation LPH does not stand for Landing Platform, Helicopter.

However, the LPHs lacked the well deck then standard on fleet LPDs and LSDs.<sup>45</sup> This limitation was rectified with the construction of a follow-on class of five large amphibious assault ships, type classified as LHAs. At the time, these five *Tarawa*-class LHAs were the largest amphibious ships ever built by any nation. Indeed, given their great size, the Marines soon discovered the ships could safely operate the new AV-8 Harrier vertical/short takeoff and landing jet, adding a new dimension to naval tactical aviation. This made the tie to the aircraft carrier naming convention even closer, and the first four LHAs were named for stirring Marine battles—*Tarawa*, *Saipan*, *Belleau Wood*, and *Nassau*—also found on the sterns of World War II-era CVs, CVLs, and CVEs. In 1974, Secretary of the Navy John Warner broke away from the practice of naming big-decks 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.

An even bigger and improved big-deck amphibious assault ship, type-classified as LHDs, followed the five *Tarawa*-class LHAs. However, when considering the naming convention for these ships, Secretary of the Navy John Lehman decided to change things up and name the new ships after “famous US Navy warships which themselves were not named for battles.” With the benefit of hindsight, it is not hard to guess Secretary Lehman's thinking. With the retirement of all World War II era *Essex*-class carriers, and with the contemporary naming convention for aircraft carriers having been changed to “individually considered,” many famous ship names were disappearing from the Naval Vessel Register. The only way for Secretary Lehman to keep some of these storied names in the battle force was to name new ships in their honor. With their ability to operate as light “Harrier carriers” with 20 or more AV-8Bs, the new LHDs appeared to provide the best available option to keep famous aircraft carrier names alive. Accordingly, Secretary Lehman decided LHD names would emphasize famous ship names rather than battles in which Marines played a prominent part. (Note: Some historians believe Secretary Lehman may have considered the naming conventions for LHDs and CGs as a “packaged deal”—with the former focused on famous ship names and the latter focused on famous naval battles. In effect, such a deal kept the traditional carrier convention alive, if across two different ship classes. However, there is no NHHC paper trail to verify this assertion.)

Secretary Lehman's choices for the first three LHDs matched this new convention perfectly. USS *Wasp* (LHD 1) shared its name with ten previous ships, the first named in 1775; USS *Essex* (LHD 2) shared its name with four previous ships dating back to 1799; and LHD 3's name, USS *Kearsarge*, had graced the sterns of three

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<sup>45</sup> Officially known as a “wet well” in US Navy instructions, the well deck or well dock is a hangar-like deck located at the waterline in the stern of some amphibious landing ships. By flooding ballast tanks, the ship can lower its stern. This action floods the well deck, allowing boats, landing craft, or amphibious tractors to or embark or disembark the ship.

previous ships, the first in 1861. Moreover, all three of the ship names were found on World War II *Essex*-class fleet carriers.

Secretary Lehman's decision to preserve famous ship names in *America's* Navy was a move right out of the Pragmatic Traditionalist playbook, and likely inspired Orthodox Traditionalists, too. However, this naming convention was not very popular among Marines, who felt quite strongly that big deck amphibious ships should be named in honor of famous Marine battles. As a result, they quietly mounted a campaign to change the convention. Their initial efforts were unsuccessful, as Secretary of the Navy William Ball followed Secretary Lehman's lead and named LHD 4 USS *Boxer*, a famous name found on five previous ships, the first in 1815. But it appeared as though their efforts paid off when Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III named LHD 5 USS *Bataan*. However, in the official naming announcement, Secretary Garrett took pains to say that the name honored the *Independence*-class small fleet carrier of the same name (CVL 29), and not the battle itself. It thus appears that Secretary Garrett was trying to find a middle ground, picking a name that satisfied Marines while staying true to Secretary Lehman's desire to name LHDs after famous WWII CVs and CVLs.

The uncertainty over the final direction of the LHD naming convention continued, however, when Secretary of the Navy Sean O'Keefe subsequently named LHD 6 USS *Bonhomme Richard*.<sup>46</sup> Consistent with the Lehman convention, *Bonhomme Richard* was a famous Navy ship name not named for a battle (and former *Essex*-class carrier). This choice suggested that USS *Bataan* might have been a naming exception rather than a modification to the Lehman naming convention. And, when it came time to name LHD 7, Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton was considering whether to name the ship USS *Hornet* or USS *Cabot*. The choice of either of these two storied ship names would likely have settled the debate decisively on the side of the Lehman convention.

At this point, however, the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress weighed in on the side of the Marines when it passed a sense-of-the-Congress resolution that LHD 7 should be named in honor of the battle of Iwo Jima, one of the most famous battles in Marine Corps history (again, the name of a cancelled *Essex*-class CV and former LPH). And, as discussed previously, at the same time, Congress expressed their desire that LPD 17

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<sup>46</sup> This choice set off an internal debate within the Department of the Navy over the correct spelling of the name. In 1779, the King of France gave John Paul Jones an armed ship to fight the British Navy. Jones wanted to give the ship a name with meaning to both Americans and French alike. He selected the name *Bonhomme Richard*, the pen name used by Benjamin Franklin on his famous Almanac published in France. The idiomatic spelling of the Almanac's name conveyed the idea of "Richard Everyman" or "Richard the Good-Old-Boy." In World War II, CV 31 was named *Bon Homme Richard*. The namers evidently did not realize the unique idiomatic background of the original name, and broke *Bonhomme* into two words, which means "good man" in French. Secretary O'Keefe consciously chose the form *Bonhomme Richard*, the name actually borne by Jones' ship, which captured the British frigate HMS *Serapis* in 1779. In his naming announcement, however, Secretary O'Keefe said the name honored the service of both the *Bonhomme Richard* and the carrier *Bon Homme Richard*.

and all subsequent ships in the class be named after “Marine Corps battles or members of the Marine Corps” (note the split naming convention). Secretary Dalton decided to split the difference, naming LHD 7 USS *Iwo Jima* and LPD 17 USS *San Antonio*.

In his naming announcement, although the name *Iwo Jima* was given to a cancelled World War II *Essex*-class carrier, Secretary Dalton made it clear that the ship was being named after the battle. He said the name “symbolizes...the proud heritage of our Marines and Sailors who recognize a greatness beyond themselves and their service.” Secretary Gordon R. England then followed Secretary Dalton’s lead, naming LHD 8 USS *Makin Island* after the daring 1942 Marine raid on the island of the same name (and a WWII *Casablanca*-class CVE). It appeared as though the big-deck naming convention had reverted to emphasizing Marine battles.

But if history shows anything, it is that Navy ship naming never goes in a straight line. Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter subsequently elected to go back to the Lehman convention, naming LHA 6 USS *America*. This decision was motivated at least partly by Secretary Winter’s simple belief that *America*’s Navy-Marine Corps Team should always have a ship named in honor of our country. As he stated when announcing his name choice: “To serve in a ship named after our country adds to the pride one feels in being part of the Navy and adds to the feeling that when America pulls into port, there is no more powerful symbol of the power, the ideals, and the greatness of the United States of America.”

As a result of all these decisions, of the ten LHAs or LHDs either in commission or already having been named prior to Secretary Mabus’s arrival, six are for famous warships (*Wasp*, *Essex*, *Kearsarge*, *Boxer*, *Bonhomme Richard*, and *America*) and four for Marine battles (*Peleliu*, *Bataan*, *Iwo Jima*, and *Makin Island*). Moreover, because this convention is a modified version of the old carrier convention (and before that, the battle cruiser convention), three of the four battle names were found on World War II carriers of different types. In effect, then, big deck amphibious ships now have a split naming convention: “famous US warships not named for battles and famous battles in which the Marines played a prominent part.”

Such split naming conventions are no longer unusual. Indeed, they may become the rule rather than the exception for a battle force numbering only 300 or so ships. There are simply not enough ships in commission to recognize all the deserving names, and strict “coherent and integral” naming conventions for an ever-smaller number of different ship types would make the situation even more difficult. But again, for Pragmatic Traditionalists, making sure certain categories of names remain in the Naval Vessel Register is far more important than staying true to fixed, “coherent and integral” type naming conventions. They are therefore far more comfortable with adopting them.

Cognizant of the contested history of naming conventions for “big deck” amphibious assault ships, when it came time for Secretary Mabus to choose the name for LHA 7,

he asked the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps to provide him with recommendations. In response, together they recommended three potential names, all of them for famous Marine battles: Inchon, Bougainville, and Tripoli. Guided by these recommendations, which demonstrated Navy and Marine Corps solidarity on the right way forward, Secretary Mabus decided to name LHA 7 USS *Tripoli*, in honor of the famous Marine battles there in the First Barbary War.

**High Speed Ferries (HSFs).** Although they look very similar, the two High Speed Ferries now being inducted into service by the Navy's Military Sealift Command are separate and distinct from the Joint High Speed Vessels previously discussed. Indeed, their induction into US Navy service was something of an unexpected windfall.

Hawaii Superferry was a company providing passenger and vehicle transportation between the islands Oahu and Maui using two large aluminum high speed ferries, each capable of transporting 866 passengers and 282 vehicles at speeds up to 40 knots. Before they could expand their service to Kauai and the Big Island, however, their operations were suspended due to environmental and legal challenges. The company filed for bankruptcy soon thereafter, and ultimately sold their two ferries, named *Alakai* and *Huakai*, to the Maritime Administration (MARAD).

In 2010, MARAD approached the Department of the Navy to gauge its interest in purchasing the two ships. With appropriate modifications, the HSFs could provide point-to-point transport of Marine or Army infantry battalions, along with some of their vehicles and equipment. Indeed, their design and characteristics closely matched a ferry named *WestPac Express* being leased by the Department of the Navy to transport Marine infantry battalions from the island of Okinawa to mainland Japan for training. As a result, the Navy began actively pursuing the ships, and with Congressional approval, ultimately procured both ships for \$35 million. The ships were officially transferred to the Navy on 20 January 2012.

This circumstance offered Secretary Mabus the opportunity to re-establish a Navy ship naming convention that had disappeared over time. With submarines being named for States of the Union, LPDs for major cities, LCSs for regionally important cities, and JHSVs for small cities and counties, Secretary Mabus noted that there were no ships in the battle force with names that honored US territories. Upon review, he discovered the *Alaska*-class cruisers, a class of six very large cruisers (CB) ordered just before World War II, were named for "Island possessions of the United States and Territories." Guided by this convention, wartime Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox named the six ships *Alaska*, *Guam*, *Hawaii*, *Philippines*, *Puerto Rico*, and *Samoa*, respectively. In the event, however, only *Alaska* and *Guam* were built, and both were decommissioned in 1947 and stricken in the early 1960s. As a result, no ships in the battle force recognized the patriotic contributions to the Navy and Marine Corps made by the citizens of our remaining non-state territories, Secretary Mabus thus thought it only fitting to name the new High Speed Ferries for



“Territories of the United States.” Accordingly, in May 2012, he named HSF 1 USNS *Guam* and HSF 2 USNS *Puerto Rico*.

This concludes the description of ship types and classes for which Secretary Mabus has selected either the type/class naming convention or individual ship names. For completeness, the following section describes the ship naming history for all those ship types and classes in service in the battle force for which Secretary Mabus has not made any naming decisions.

## Part II Naming Conventions for Remaining Ship Types/Classes

**USS Constitution (44 guns).** Commissioned in 1797, *Constitution* was one of the original six frigates authorized in the 1794 Naval Act. Her name is consistent with the class naming convention, which is “Principles or symbols found in the US Constitution.” She earned the nickname of “Old Ironsides” during the War of 1812 after defeating British frigates in two separate ship actions. She was retired in 1881 after over eight decades of active service, and served as a receiving vessel until designation as a museum ship in 1907. In this capacity, she promoted understanding of the Navy’s role in war and peace through educational outreach, historic demonstration, and active participation in public events. As well, she made a three-year, 90-port tour of the nation (under tow) in 1931, and sailed again briefly for her 200th birthday in 1997. USS *Constitution* remains in active commission today, making her the oldest floating commissioned vessel in the world. She is berthed at the Charlestown (Boston) Navy Yard in Massachusetts and crewed by active duty US Sailors.

The Fiscal Year 2010 Defense Authorization Act, enacted by Congress on October 28, 2009, designated “the historic Navy ship USS *Constitution*” as “America’s Ship of State”—an action was applauded by Orthodox and Pragmatic Traditionalists alike. Both schools agree *Constitution’s* proud name should remain enshrined in the Naval Vessel Register as long as America has a Navy.

**Cruisers (CAs, CBs, CCs, CLs, CAGs, CLGs, CLGNs, CGs).** In 1883, Congress authorized the first three steel-hulled, “protected cruisers,” armed with modern breech-loading guns and powered by steam engines. These first cruisers were named in honor of the cities Atlanta, Boston, and Chicago. They were followed by 9 ships acquired and converted into “armed merchant cruisers,” and an experimental warship armed with pneumatic guns. These ships were given widely disparate names variously honoring Harvard, Yale, Mt. Vesuvius, animals, National Parks and uniquely American names such as Yankee and Dixie. Starting with the USS *St. Louis* in 1894, however, Secretaries of the Navy began to routinely name further armed merchant cruisers and newly constructed protected, peace, and scout cruisers in honor of “American cities.”

More powerful armored cruisers soon joined these ships. Often referred to as “second-class battleships,” they were named according to the contemporary battleship convention, which was for “States of the Union.” However, as discussed earlier, when the Navy started to run out of state names for new construction battleships, all armored cruisers were renamed for major cities in the states for which they were originally named.

As part of the massive 1916 shipbuilding program, the Navy ordered 10 battleships, 6 new battle cruisers, and 10 destroyers. The battle cruisers and destroyers were designed to form the core of a 35-knot scouting force that would support the battle

line. Because of their speed and powerful armament, the Navy decided to give the battle cruisers (CCs) a separate naming convention of “historic Naval Vessels or battles,” and to name them *Lexington*, *Constellation*, *Saratoga*, *Ranger*, *Constitution*, and *United States*—all famous ship names from the Revolutionary War and War of 1812.

Then, between 1920 and 1921, the Navy adopted a completely new alphanumeric hull designation system. Ultimately, all armored cruisers became heavy cruisers (CAs), and all surviving protected, peace, and scout cruisers were redesignated as either light cruisers (CLs) or gunboats. Also, as a result of the Washington Naval Treaty, the US agreed to cancel the construction of all six battle cruisers. However, as described earlier, the Navy converted the *Lexington* and *Saratoga* into aircraft carriers, and decided to adopt the battle cruiser naming convention for all subsequent carriers. As a result of these moves, all heavy and light cruisers were subsequently named according to a single cruiser (e.g., type) naming convention, “cities.”

Given the recognized beneficial reciprocal relationship between the Department of the Navy and American cities, Secretaries of the Navy followed this convention for the next three decades, with very little modification. During World War II, the heavy and light cruiser convention was modified to read “cities in the United States and capitals of Territories and insular possessions,” while the aforementioned large cruisers (CBs), ordered in 1940, were named for “Island possessions of the United States and Territories.” In this way, the wartime contributions of all those in both States of the Union and US territories would be recognized and honored. The only exception to the practice of naming cruisers for *American* cities came in 1943, when Secretary Knox named CA 70 USS *Canberra* in honor of the Royal Australian Navy *County*-class cruiser sunk during the Battle of Savo Island in 1942. This act, taken to recognize the critical wartime contributions of our ally “down under,” was met with wide acclaim in Australia.

After the war, the naming convention for cruisers was shortened to “cities in the United States,” dropping the reference to capitals of US territories. Moreover, only two of the planned six large cruisers were ultimately completed, and both served in the fleet for less than three years before being decommissioned. However, while these circumstances made the cruiser naming convention more “coherent and integral,” major technological changes in the battle force conspired to limit new naming opportunities for cruisers. During the Navy’s post-World War II transition to the missile age, the Navy converted some World War II era heavy and light cruisers (CAs and CLs) into gun-missile hybrids or all-guided missile cruisers. Reclassified as CAGs, CLGs, or CGs, these ships retained their given city names. Meanwhile, to distinguish the large new anti-air combatants being built from the keel up for guided missile warfare from these converted World War II ships, the Navy type-classified the former as guided missile frigates (DLGs and DLGNs). As discussed earlier, their names were therefore selected according to the contemporary naming convention for destroyers—that is, for “Officers and enlisted

men of the Navy and Marine Corps, former Secretaries of the Navy, members of Congress, and inventors.” As a result, the Navy built only two new construction cruisers in the three decades after the end of World War II, and both were named in accordance with the longstanding cruiser naming convention. The first, USS *Norfolk*, was built as a light hunter-killer cruiser (CLK), but later reclassified as a frigate (DL). The second was USS *Long Beach* (CGN 9), originally ordered as a nuclear-powered light guided missile cruiser (CLGN). But with a full load displacement of 17,100 tons, she was reclassified as a guided missile cruiser.

Then, in a short period of time between 1969 and 1975, Navy ship naming practices and policies underwent rapid change. Recall that during the late 1960s/early 1970s, Department of the Navy leaders both in and out of uniform expected nuclear-powered surface combatants to become *the* capital ships in the Navy’s future surface warfare fleet. In addition to a large fleet of DLGNs, they planned to build an enlarged DLGN intended to carry the advanced Aegis anti-air warfare combat system, classified as a strike cruiser (CSGN). As a result, the Riera Panel dropped the city naming convention for cruisers entirely, and instead recommended that future “nuclear surface combatants” (DLGNs, CGNs, etc.) be named for “States of the Union.” Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius agreed to the change, and named the next new construction DLGN *USS California*.

By 1975, however, rising costs made such ambitious plans unaffordable. Consequently, the last of only six new DLGNs was approved in Fiscal Year 1975, and plans for the CSGN and other nuclear-powered combatants were shelved entirely. Moreover, with the retirement of nearly all World War II era cruisers, most (but not all) of the DLGs and all eight active DLGNs were reclassified as CGs and CGNs.<sup>47</sup> This meant the only cruisers in the Naval Vessel Register then true to the city naming convention were the aforementioned USS *Long Beach* (CGN 9), along with the USS *Little Rock* (CLG 4), USS *Oklahoma City* (CLG 5), USS *Springfield* (CLG 7), USS *Albany* (CG 10) and USS *Chicago* (CG 11)—all converted World War II light or heavy cruisers close to retirement. All newly reclassified cruisers were named according to the destroyer convention for famous naval leaders and heroes.

If the battle force was to continue having major combatants named in honor of American cities (as opposed to amphibious and combat logistics force ships, etc.), a new ship type ship would have to assume the honor long held by cruisers. This helps to explain one of the reasons why Secretary John Chaffee began naming SSNs of the new 688-class for cities. It also helps to explain why, when it came time to select a naming convention for the powerful new Aegis CGs, Secretary of the Navy John Lehman was compelled to find a new naming convention for the ship. However, in an obvious nod to Navy ship naming tradition, Secretary Lehman named the new

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<sup>47</sup> In addition to the six DLGNs of the *California* and *Virginia*-classes, the USS *Bainbridge* (DLGN 25) and USS *Truxtun* (DLGN 35), early generation nuclear-powered surface combatants built in the 1960s, were also reclassified as CGNs. Some less capable DLGs were reclassified as guided missile destroyers (DDGs).

cruisers in honor of “Historic Naval Vessels and important US battles”—the old carrier convention (and before them, battle cruisers). This rule was followed for 26 of the 27 *Ticonderoga*-class CGs, with most of the ships commemorating World War II *Essex*-class CVs or Independence-class CVLs named for important battles in US history (not necessarily naval battles, e.g., *Valley Forge*, *Gettysburg*, *Chancellorsville*). The sole exception to the rule was CG 51, USS *Thomas S. Gates*, named by Secretary Lehman after Thomas Gates, a former Navy officer, Undersecretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Navy, and Secretary of Defense. Of course, for Orthodox Traditionalists, since former Secretaries of the Navy were normally honored with a destroyer name, this represented yet another “political corruption” in class naming conventions. However, as history shows, it was simply another in a very long line of exceptions stretching all the way back to the USS *Chesapeake*.

Secretary Mabus has not had an opportunity to name any guided missile cruisers. Moreover, the Department does not currently have any CGs in its future building plans. As mentioned in the main body of this report, the Navy instead plans to build new Flight III *Arleigh Burke*-class DDGs, starting in Fiscal Year 2016. However, with their powerful new Air and Missile Defense Radar and long-range SM-6 missiles, these ships will be the most capable air defense combatants in the world and the equal of any guided missile cruiser in terms of combat capability. Secretary Mabus thus believes that the Flight IIIs should be named following the same type naming convention used for *Ticonderoga*-class CGs. Orthodox Traditionalists may disagree, but such a decision would be well in keeping with previous changes to naming convention, and would ensure that *America’s* Navy would continue to include names that honor historic Naval Vessels and famous battles.

***Destroyer and Ocean Escorts (DEs, DEGs, FFs, and FFGs).*** In 1939, upon surveying the carnage caused by German U-boats waging unrestricted submarine warfare, the US Navy began to design small, special purpose anti-submarine warfare ships that could be built rapidly in large numbers. By doing so, the Navy could free up more expensive destroyers for operations with the main battle fleet. Beginning in November 1941, and for the next 19 months, the Navy placed orders for no fewer than 1,005 of these new ships, designated as “destroyer escorts” (DEs). Eventually, 563 DEs were delivered, with 479 serving in the US Navy and the remaining 84 going to Great Britain and France. Because these ships were an evolutionary offshoot of the destroyer line, they were all named in accordance to the contemporary destroyer naming convention: “Deceased American Naval, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Officers and enlisted personnel who have rendered distinguished service to their country above and beyond the call of duty; former Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the Navy; members of Congress who have closely identified with Naval affairs; and inventors.”

After the war, most of these special purpose ASW ships were too slow to keep up with fast new diesel submarines, much less nuclear-powered attack submarines. Moreover, they were too small to carry the guided weapons needed to survive in high-intensity guided munitions warfare. As a result, most World War II era DEs

were scrapped, sold to allies, or laid up in reserve. In their stead, the Navy gradually began building new classes of larger “ocean escorts.” Befitting their lineage, these new ships retained the classification as DEs, or, if equipped with surface-to-air missile batteries, DEGs. However, their naming convention was shortened to “deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard,” dropping the reference to Secretaries of the Navy. This action was apparently taken to delineate these smaller, less capable protection of shipping combatants from larger battle force capable destroyers.

In 1975, with the larger guided missile frigates being reclassified as either CGs or DDGs, all ocean escorts were reclassified as either frigates or guided missile frigates (FFs or FFGs). Despite the new designation, because FFs and FFGs evolved from World War II-era destroyer escorts, they continued to be named for “deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.” As with every other ship type, the names for some ships “broke” with convention. As just one example, Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius named a *Knox*-class frigate USS *Harold E. Holt* in honor of the late Australian Prime Minister Harold E. Holt, a staunch supporter of the US war in Vietnam. However, these deviations were very rare. Indeed, the names of all 23 *Oliver Hazard Perry* FFGs still in commission (out of an original class of 51 ships) are consistent with the type naming convention.

The Navy no longer builds frigates or guided missile frigates. It is instead pursuing a “hi-lo” mix of surface combatants, with guided missile cruisers and destroyers at the top end, and new Littoral Combat Ships at the low end. As a result, all 23 remaining *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class FFGs will be retired by 2020. And, with no further frigates in the Navy’s 30-year shipbuilding plans, the proud eight-decade-old destroyer escort line will come to an end. Consequently, unless plans change, future Secretaries will no longer name any new ships of this type.

***Mine Warfare Ships (MCMs and MHCs).*** The first American mine warfare ships were “mine planters” operated by the US Army Coast Artillery Corps. These early ships were typically commercial freighters or vessels procured by the Corps and modified to establish and maintain coastal defense mine fields along the approaches to US harbors. The Army began procuring their first purpose built mine planters in 1904, and naming them in honor of famous Army general officers and heroes. In Army service, these large mine planters were supplemented by smaller Junior Mine Planters, Distribution Box Boats, mine yawls and assorted other small craft.<sup>48</sup>

The first mine warfare vessels operated by the US Navy were mine planters, later called minelayers to distinguish them from US Army vessels. These first ships were either commercial vessels or former warships modified to perform the mine-laying mission. Commercial ships converted into minelayers were given either Native

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<sup>48</sup> The Army Mine Planter Service (AMPS) was formally established by act of Congress on 7 July 1918 as a part of the Coast Artillery Corps. The AMPS was officially terminated by the 1954 Warrant Officer Personnel Act.

American names (e.g., USS *Aroostook*, USS *Ogala*, etc.) or names of “old Monitors formerly in the Navy.” Former warships generally retained their given names until the Navy desired to use their names for other warships. For example, Mine Layers No. 1 and No. 2 were the former steel protected cruisers USS *Baltimore* and USS *San Francisco*, modified to lay mines. Laid down in 1887, USS *Baltimore* saw service as a minelayer during World War I. She was placed out of commission in 1922, and used as a receiving ship at Pearl Harbor. When she was finally sold for scrap in 1942, her proud name, in the Naval Vessel Register for over 50 years, was quickly used as the namesake for a new class of World War II heavy cruisers (CA 68). Similarly, USS *San Francisco* retained her original name until the 1930s, when she was renamed USS *Tahoe* to free up her name for a new construction heavy cruiser (CA 38).

The Navy did not build any special purpose minelayers after World War I. Instead, they converted 22 wartime four-stack destroyers into light minelayers (DM). These ships proved useful in fleet service, and were followed by 12 converted *Allen M. Sumner*-class destroyers in World War II. All 34 of these ships retained their given destroyer names, which at the time were for “officers and enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps, former Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the Navy, members of Congress who have been closely identified with Naval affair, and inventors.” Sixteen former Army mine planters, transferred to the Navy later in the war, joined these ships. Upon transfer to the Navy, the Army ships (which had been for famous Army general officers and heroes) were renamed for “old Monitors formerly in the Navy and general word classifications of logical and euphonious names.” With over 50 converted Navy or former Army minelayers, the wartime demand for new construction minelayers was very low. Consequently, by war’s end, the Navy had built only one purpose built minelayer—USS *Terror* (MMF 5), a name carried on two former US Navy monitors.

The first purpose built Navy minesweeper, AM 1, was commissioned in 1918. The ship was named the USS *Lapwing*, for the bird of the same name, “an abundant crested plover (*Vanellus vanellus*) of Europe, Asia, and northern Africa, noted for its slow, irregular, flapping flight and its shrill wailing cry.” AM 1 thus started the practice of naming US Navy minesweepers for “birds.”

During World War II, with minesweepers being built in very large numbers, and with the Navy snapping up additional commercial vessels and converting them into auxiliary mine warfare ships, Secretaries Knox and Forrestal literally began to run out of bird names. As a result, small inshore and yard minesweepers were assigned only type and hull numbers, and, as the war ground on, the naming convention for both ocean-going and large auxiliary minesweepers was changed to “birds and general word classifications of logical and euphonious names.” In practice, minesweepers not named for birds were usually named for American traits and values (e.g., *Adroit*, *Daring*, and *Fierce*) or martial names such as *Gladiator*. Of course, this convention did not apply to the 50 or so inter-war and World War II destroyers converted into high speed/destroyer minesweepers (DMS) and fast

minesweepers (MMD). As was the case for destroyers converted into light minelayers, these ships retained their given destroyer names.

After the war, the naming convention for those few minelayers remaining in commission was shortened to “former monitors.” Meanwhile, the new convention for minesweepers and minehunters tried to make sense of the wide range of names used in World War II: “US towns bearing names of birds and general word classification (or bird names only); (or general word classification only).” The 1969 Riera Panel moved to streamline and clarify this overly confusing indirect naming convention by turning away from longstanding tradition and recommending that all future mine warfare ship names be named for “words descriptive of force.” But their recommendation fell on deaf ears. With tradition clearly in mind, Secretary John Lehman subsequently named a new class of 14 large ocean-going mine countermeasure ships (MCMs) using “general word classifications of logical and euphonious names,” and Secretary James H. Webb, Jr. later named a new class of 12 small coastal minehunters (MHCs) after “birds.”

As one might expect, with a convention starting with “general word classifications,” the names for the 14 MCMs do not portray a consistent or coherent theme, with some names denoting aggressiveness (e.g., USS *Avenger*, the class namesake), others protection (e.g., USS *Defender*), others positive traits (e.g., USS *Dextrous*), and still others martial names (e.g., USS *Warrior*). Moreover, nine of the 14 ships are named in honor of former US mine warfare ships, and three honor other type ships. All 14 names, however, are quite euphonious, and therefore consistent with the naming convention!

All 12 coastal minehunters were named for birds. Some believe that USS *Black Hawk* (MHC 58), named by Secretary Sean O’Keefe, was named in honor of the Indian tribe of the same name, and therefore represents an exception. This is not true. The naming announcement for *Black Hawk* included USS *Falcon* (MHC 59), and USS *Cardinal* (MHC 60), and states unequivocally that coastal minehunters are named for birds. Consequently, *Black Hawk* is named for the Common Black Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*), a bird of prey in the family Accipitridae, which also includes eagles, hawks and Old World vultures.

With all 12 MHCs now retired, the only mine warfare ships still in commission are the *Avenger*-class MCMs. By the early 2020s, all 14 of these ships will be replaced by Littoral Combat Ships equipped with a mine warfare module. Unless plans change, then, the Navy will no longer build or operate single purpose mine warfare vessels. Consequently, none will be named anytime soon.

***Patrol Ships (PGs, PHMs, and PCs).*** As is the normal case, the naming convention for Navy patrol ships has changed greatly over time. Up through 1942, ocean-going gunboats were named for “smaller cities” and river gunboats were named for “islands.” Then, with the rapid build up of patrol vessels to support the war effort, larger patrol gunboats were named for “small cities in the United States, capitals of



territories, and insular possessions,” the same convention for heavy and light cruisers; smaller river gunboats were named for “island possessions of the United States;” and auxiliary coastal patrol vessels such as yachts and coastal yachts pressed into service were named for “old ships formerly in the Navy and gems and general word classifications of logical and euphonious names.”

After the Second World War, with the widespread decommissioning of World War II patrol craft and the introduction of new technologies, “patrol ships other than destroyer types” were named for “small cities in the US, especially those that denote action of the ship (e.g., *High Point*).” Ships included in this category included ocean-going patrol escort ships (PFs), hydrofoil submarine chasers (PCHs), submarine chasers (PCs, PCSs, and SCs), air cushion patrol craft (PACVs), and fast coastal patrol craft (PCFs). At the same time, smaller motor gunboats were named for “small cities in the US whose names have been previously assigned to gunboats, especially those names that denote agility, punch, and daring, etc. (daring men may also be considered).”

By 1962, the Navy’s interest in operating smaller combatants had waned as they turned their focus on building large number of ocean escorts capable of meeting the threat of Soviet nuclear-powered attack submarines. However, as a result of lessons learned during the naval blockade mounted during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Navy decided to build a class of small patrol gunboats (PGs) capable of performing the coastal maritime interdiction mission. Informed by the previous naming conventions for small patrol ships, Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze approved a shortened naming convention for the new class of vessels, which honored “small cities or previous gunboats.” He then promptly named the first ship of class USS *Asheville*, in honor of the city in North Carolina. Secretary Nitze’s choices for both type convention and ship names were true to the longstanding practice of naming patrol vessels for small cities.

In 1969, even though the Navy had no further patrol vessels in its plans, the Riera Panel endorsed the type naming convention chosen by Secretary Nitze. Soon after the Riera Panel made its determination, as part of his plans to increase the number of surface vessels in the Navy, CNO Admiral Elmo Zumwalt ordered the development of a new class of missile-armed, hydrofoil Patrol Combatants (PHMs), designed for sea control operations in narrow seas like the Baltic and Mediterranean. When the German and Italian navies both signed on for the program, early plans called for 30 or more of the ships to be built. As things turned out, however, the costs for the ships increased dramatically, both foreign partners dropped out of the program, and the US surface warfare community never embraced the need or concept of operations for these small ships. Consequently, after Admiral Zumwalt retired, the program was cancelled after only six ships were built.

When it came time to name the six PHMs, Secretaries of the Navy John Warner and J. William Middendorf decided to break with tradition and name the small combatants

for “celestial constellations”—e.g., *Pegasus*, *Hercules*, *Taurus*, *Aquila*, *Aries*, and *Gemini*. Secretary Warner had originally named PHM-1 the USS *Delphinus*, after a northern constellation. However, the name had been used before for a WWII stores ship, and was subsequently changed by Secretary Middendorf to *Pegasus*. There is no official explanation on record as to why Secretary Warner decided to move away from naming patrol ships after small cities. Perhaps it was because of the large number of ship types and classes then already being named for cities. Nevertheless, the decision represented a clear break from established tradition.

This pattern continued after the end of the Cold War, when the Navy developed plans to build a small class of Coastal Patrol Boats (PBCs) to support special operations forces, primarily Navy SEALs. In July 1991, the vessels’ type designation was changed to Coastal Patrol Ship (PC). A traditional and inspiring naming convention would perhaps have been “small American cities and previous US gunboats and small warships, especially those names that denote agility, punch, and daring.” It would have been nice to see another USS *Revenge* and USS *Surprise* on the Navy Vessel Register. But Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III decided to follow the lead of Secretaries Warner and Middendorf and go in an entirely different direction, naming the new ships after “weather elements” (e.g., USS *Sirocco*, USS *Whirlwind*, USS *Monsoon*, USS *Typhoon*, etc.). The fact that most of the names chosen were listed in the Naval Vessel Register for the first time reflects the degree to which the naming convention for small patrol ships had changed.

Thirteen of the 14 PCs ultimately built remain in commission in the US Navy, and their names are all consistent with Secretary Garrett’s type naming convention. By the early 2020s, all 13 remaining ships will be replaced by a combination of smaller patrol boats and larger Littoral Combat Ships. As a result, no Secretary is likely to name any of these type ships in the foreseeable future.

***Dock Landing Ships (LSDs).***<sup>49</sup> The original naming convention for LSDs was for “cities and places of historical interest of same name, or places of historical interest only.” To simplify things, the 1969 Riera Panel modified the convention to read “historic sites in the United States.” All eight *Whidbey Island* and four *Harpers Ferry* class LSDs built in the late 1980s and early 1990s follow this type naming convention. Their chosen names span an eclectic mix of sites, including locations for famous battles (e.g., *Pearl Harbor*, *Germantown*); naval air stations (e.g., *Whidbey Island*); notable national landmarks (e.g., *Rushmore*, *Harper’s Ferry*, *Fort McHenry*); and even estates of famous Americans (e.g., *Gunston Hall*, home to George Mason IV, author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights).

These 12 LSDs will be followed by a class of new construction LSDs, tentatively known as the LSD(X) class. The first of a planned class of 11 ships will be procured

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<sup>49</sup> Dock Landing Ships were a World War II invention introducing the floodable well deck in amphibious ship, thereby allowing the efficient launching and recovery of landing craft and amphibious assault vehicles.

in FY 2018. This means future Secretaries of the Navy will choose the type naming convention and names of the ship in the class.

***Fast Combat Support Ships (AOEs and T-AOEs).*** The original naming convention for these large “triple product” combat logistics ships was for “US cities and rivers of the same name, or cities adjacent to large inland body of water.”<sup>50</sup> The original four AOEs—USS *Sacramento* (AOE 1), USS *Camden* (AOE 2), USS *Seattle* (AOE 3), and USS *Detroit* (AOE 4)—were all consistent with this rather indirect naming convention. However, worried that too many ship types were being named for cities (which would therefore prevent instant recognition of a particular ship type by its name), the Riera Panel recommended that new construction AOEs be named for “rivers, lakes, or bays (but not names for states or cities).”

When it came time to name the new AOE 6 class of fast combat support ships, however (AOE 5 was a *Sacramento*-class AOE planned but never built), Secretary of the Navy John Lehman decided to break with convention. After a luncheon speech to 300 Navy Supply Corps Officers, he was presented a framed print of the first USS *Supply*—a square-rigged sailing vessel which provided logistical support to the US Navy’s Home Squadron during the Mexican-American War and after in the Mediterranean. The Secretary was so touched by the gift that he decided to new AOE 6 class ships would be named for “famous naval supply ships,” and the first ship of class would be named USS *Supply*. The names for the following three ships are consistent with this convention: USS *Rainier* (T-AOE 7) is the third supply ship named in honor of Mt. Rainier; USS *Arctic* (T-AOE 8) is named in honor of a stores ship acquired by the Navy in 1921; and USS *Bridge* (T-AOE 10) is named in honor of the lead ship of the *Bridge*-class stores ships that served in both World Wars.

There are no more T-AOEs in the Navy’s current 30-year shipbuilding plans, so none will be named anytime soon.

***Fleet Oilers (AOs and T-AOs).*** Some believe that fleet oilers have always been named for rivers with Native American names. This is not true. The original type naming convention for fleet oilers was simply for “rivers.” However, the convention was modified during World War II to read “given Indian names of rivers flowing through oil-producing regions”—another esoteric split convention designed to honor both Native Americans as well as the oil industry fueling the Nation’s enormous war effort. By the 1960s, consistent with then common practice of using indirect city naming conventions, the fleet oiler convention was changed once again to “cities and rivers of the same name.” But once again, in their quest for more order and discipline in Navy ship naming policy, the 1969 Riera Panel changed the convention to “rivers, lakes, and bays (but not names of states or cities).” At the

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<sup>50</sup> AOEs carry enough fuel, ammunition, and dry/refrigerated stores to operate as “station ships” for an aircraft carrier strike group (CSG). Because AOEs routinely operate with a CSG, they have a higher top speed than most CLF ships. As indicated by the “T” prefix, all AOEs that remain in commission—like all other CLF ships—are USNS ships operated by the Military Sealift Command.

same time, as mentioned in the previous section, the panel extended the convention to AOE's, and to replenishment oilers (AORs) as well. Note that while this move simplified things by creating a single naming convention for any ship capable of refueling operations, it worked against the Riera Panel's own goal of being able to identify a specific ship type (AO, AOE, or AOR) upon hearing its name.

Soon, however, the naming convention for oilers headed in a new direction. On October 1, 1981, a Mr. E.E. Trefethen, Jr. wrote a letter to then-Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, recommending that a ship be named for the great American industrialist and shipbuilder Henry J. Kaiser. Secretary Weinberger asked Secretary of the Navy John Lehman to respond to Mr. Trefethen, and apparently signaled that he would look favorably on Trefethen's recommendation. Secretary Lehman promptly asked the Director of Naval History, Rear Admiral John D.H. Kane, Jr., to identify an appropriate ship type to name in honor of Kaiser. Admiral Kane—an Orthodox Traditionalist by billet and position, if not by personal disposition—informed Secretary Lehman that naming a ship in honor of Kaiser “would not be in consonance with current guidelines.” Perhaps the Admiral thought Secretary Lehman was a fellow Orthodox Traditionalist and would accept readily his decision. If so, he was soon proved wrong. Secretary Lehman used his Secretarial discretion and authority to establish “famous shipbuilders and naval engineers” as the naming convention for the new T-AO 187 class of oilers. In this way, his 1983 naming of T-AO 187 in honor of Henry J. Kaiser was perfectly in consonance with “current guidelines.” As things turned out, however, subsequent *Kaiser*-class oilers were also named for famous aeronautical engineers like Walter S. Diehl and Leroy Ericsson. In practice, then, the oiler's naming convention was modified to “individuals significant in maritime and aviation design, development, and production.”

Secretary Lehman's decision to modify the traditional oiler convention would make any Pragmatic Traditionalist proud. Why shouldn't *America's* Navy honor the achievements and contributions of great naval and aerospace engineers, ship and aircraft designers, and aircraft and ship builders? However, Secretary of the Navy James H. Webb, Jr. evidently was more attracted to Orthodox Traditionalist thinking. In 1988, he chose to ignore Secretary Lehman's decision and revert to “tradition,” naming the next nine T-AO 187 class oilers for “rivers.” Accordingly, the 15 fleet oilers of the AO 187 class still operating as part of the combat logistics force have a split naming convention: “Rivers and individuals significant in maritime and aviation design, development, and production.”

The 15 remaining T-AO 187 class oilers will ultimately be replaced by 17 or more new construction, double-hulled T-AO(X)s, starting in FY 2016. As a result, decisions over a type naming convention for the new oiler, as well as the selection of the class's namesake, are just over the horizon.

***Other support ships.*** As is the case for most naming conventions, the naming conventions for battle force support ships have changed over time. The following is a brief summary of the *contemporary* naming conventions for support ships these :

- Command ships (LCCs) are assigned names for “American mountains and mountain ranges.” USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) and USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20) are both consistent with this convention.
- Although submarine tenders (ASs) have had a variety of names sources over time, the contemporary convention is “pioneers in submarine development.” USS *Emory S. Land* (AS 39) and USS *Frank Cable* (AS 40) are consistent with this naming convention.
- Salvage ships (T-ARs) are named for “terms related to salvage activity.” USNS *Safeguard* (T-ARS 50), USNS *Grasp* (T-ARS 51), USNS *Salvor* (T-ARS 52), and USNS *Grapple* (T-ARS 53) are consistent with this naming convention.
- Fleet tugs (T-ATFs) are given names for “prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.” USNS *Catawba* (T-ATF 168), USNS *Navajo* (T-ATF 169), USNS *Sioux* (T-ATF 171), and USNS *Apache* (T-ATF 172) are consistent with this naming convention.
- Ocean surveillance ships (T-AGOS) are named for “euphonious names that convey positive traits of capability or accomplishment.” Consistent with this convention, the five ships in service are named USNS *Victorious* (T-AGOS 19), USNS *Able* (T-AGOS 20), USNS *Effective* (T-AGOS 21), USNS *Loyal* (T-AGOS 22), and USNS *Impeccable* (T-AGOS 23).

### Part III: Conclusion

The first required element of Section 1014, Public Law 112-81, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, is a description of the current policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy. The main body of this report answers this requirement by describing the current policies and practices for the naming of US and USNS warships, providing a detailed narrative history of how they have evolved over time and are now being implemented. This history was developed, vetted and approved by four Department of the Navy historians.

The second required element of Section 1014 is a description of the extent to which policies and practices described in this report vary from historical policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy, and an explanation for such variances.

Table 2 lists the standing type naming conventions for all 23 active ship types in the contemporary Navy's battle force. Seabasing ships (Mobile Landing Platforms (MLPs) and Afloat Forward Staging Bases (AFSBs)) and High Speed Ferries (HSFs) are new ship types never before operated by the battle force. Consequently, their type naming conventions were selected by Secretary Mabus. All other conventions were established before his arrival. However, for reasons outlined in this report, Secretary Mabus changed the naming convention for Joint High Speed Vessels (JHSV) and clarified the naming conventions for both Dock Landing Ships (LPDs) and Littoral Combat Ships (LCSs). All of these decisions were consistent with historical ship naming policies and practices.

In addition to these type naming convention decisions, through 31 May 2012, Secretary Mabus has named 32 different warships across 10 different ship types and 13 different ship classes (see Table 1, p. 16). As the foregoing review of the historical record shows, 31 of these choices are consistent with established, special, and unofficial naming conventions. Moreover, the single exception, USS *Gabrielle Giffords* (LCS 10), conforms with the occasional exceptions to type naming conventions made by Secretaries of the Navy since 1798.

Although there have been isolated criticisms to some of Secretary Mabus's specific ship naming choices, a review of his entire body of work stands up well to scrutiny. Moreover, a simple test shows the broader charge that something is broken in the Navy's ship naming process is without merit. If current Navy ship naming policies and practices were truly wrong, one would expect to see a complete break from established norms and widespread deviations from established type naming conventions. However, as depicted in Table 3, of the 285 ships operating in the battle force on 31 May 2012, only 11 have names that deviate from an *established* type naming convention (3.9 percent).

Moreover, on closer review, the picture is even better. Six of these exceptions are consistent with a now well-established special cross-ship type naming convention for “well known national and Congressional leaders,” and three more are consistent with a type or class’s original naming convention that subsequently changed. The only two remaining exceptions—representing less than one percent of all active ship names in the entire battle force—are USS *Winston S. Churchill* and USS *Gabrielle Giffords*. And, as previously mentioned, both are consistent with the long-established tradition of making periodic exceptions to convention. This simple review confirms that Secretaries of the Navy—to include Secretary Mabus—most often follow established naming conventions and the few exceptions they make are indeed made for exceptional reasons.

*In other words, a thorough review of the historical records finds 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 third required element of Section 1014 in the 2012 NDAA is an assessment of 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.

This report concludes that establishing fixed policies for the naming of one or more classes of vessels of the Navy is inadvisable. In fact, it has been tried before, the best example being the 1969 Riera Panel, which sought to establish a single, fixed list of ship type naming conventions so that it would be possible to more readily identify a ship type by its chosen name. However, this approach quickly failed, for three important reasons. The first is the constant change in makeup of the Navy’s battle force. As old ship types disappear and new ship types appear, naming conventions must inevitably change. Second, the idea that a fixed naming convention would allow one to immediately identify a ship type by her name is based on two very dubious assumptions: that anyone outside a very small number of people would know all type naming conventions, and that these people would be able to associate unerringly a specific ship name to a specific class or type convention. Finally, fixed policies would prevent Secretaries of the Navy from making periodic exceptions when circumstances warrant. Without this ability, the Navy’s battle force would never have seen a carrier named *Shangri-La* or *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, a cruiser named *Canberra*, a destroyer named *Comte de Grasse*, or a submarine named *Hyman G. Rickover*. Exceptions such as these, each made for exceptional reasons, reflect one of the Navy’s oldest and most venerable ship naming traditions.

In sum, the historical record reveals no objective evidence to suggest that fixed policies or practices would be better than those practiced by Secretaries of the Navy since 1798. By using sound judgment and common sense guided by tradition and custom—and changing tradition and custom when required or prudent—

Secretaries from both political parties have ensured that the names of our battle force ships have always remained a great reflection of both the heritage of our great Nation and its superb Navy-Marine Corps Team. There is no reason to believe this will change in the future.

The final element required by Section 1014 are any other matters relating to the policies and practices of the Navy for naming vessels of the Navy that the Secretary of Defense considers appropriate. The Department of the Navy used to routinely publish lists of current type naming conventions, and update it as changes were made to them. At some point, this practice fell into disuse. As this report was being written, it quickly became evident that some of the criticism related to specific ship naming choices was caused by an understandable lack of common knowledge of existing type naming conventions, aggravated by the lack of an accessible and authoritative source document. As a result, Secretary Mabus directed the Naval History and Heritage Command to develop, publish, and maintain a list of current type naming conventions to help all Americans to better understand why he and future Secretaries choose the ship names they do. In addition, he has directed that this report be made available to the public through the Naval History and Heritage Command website.

In conclusion, US ship naming customs and traditions remain strong and intact. There is no objective reason to change current ship-naming practices or to establish new procedures designed to limit the prerogatives of current or future Secretaries of the Navy. Indeed, should such a step be taken, we risk the very thing we now have: a well-working process that ensures our battle force ship names honorably represents our country, citizens, Sailors, and Marines.



**Table 2. US Navy Type/Class Naming Conventions**

<b><u>Type/Class</u></b>	<b><u>Naming convention</u></b>
Sailing frigate	Principles or symbols in the US Constitution
Submarines	States of the Union
Aircraft carriers	Individually considered
Guided-missile Cruisers	Historic Naval vessels and important American battles
Guided-missile Destroyers	Deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy
Guided-missile Frigates	Same as DDG
Littoral Combat Ships	Regionally important American cities and communities
Big-deck Amphibious Assault Ships (i.e., LHA, LHD)	Famous ships not named for battles and important battles in which Marines played a prominent part
Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD)	Major American cities and communities and cities and communities attacked on 9-11
Dock Landing Ship (LSD)	Historic sites in the US
Mine Countermeasure Ships (MCMs)	General word classifications of logical and euphonious names
Fast Combat Support Ships (T-AOE)	Famous Navy supply ships
Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ships (T-AKE)	Famous American explorers, trailblazers, and pioneers
Fleet Oilers	Rivers and individuals significant in maritime and aviation design, development, and production
JHSVs	Small American cities and counties
High Speed Ferries	American territories
Command Ships	American mountains and mountain ranges
Submarine Tenders	Pioneers in submarine development
Salvage ships	Terms related to salvage activity
Fleet Tugs	Prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes

Ocean Surveillance Ships

Euphonious names that convey positive traits of capability or accomplishment

Patrol Coastal Ship

Weather elements

**Table 3. Exceptions to US Navy Type/Class Naming Conventions**

<b><u>Type/Class</u></b>	<b><u>Naming convention</u></b>	<b><u>Current Exceptions</u></b>
Sailing frigate	Principles or symbols in US Constitution	None
Submarines	States of the Union	<i>Henry M. Jackson</i> (SSBN 730)* <i>Seawolf</i> (SSN 21)** <i>Jimmy Carter</i> (SSN 23)* <i>John Warner</i> (SSN 785)*
Aircraft carriers	Individually considered	None
Guided-missile Cruisers	Historic Naval vessels and important American battles	None
Guided-missile Destroyers	Deceased members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, including Secretaries of the Navy	<i>Roosevelt</i> (DDG 80)* <i>Winston S. Churchill</i> (DDG 81) <i>Lyndon B Johnson</i> (DDG 1002)*
Guided-missile Frigates	Same as DDG	None
Littoral Combat Ships	Regionally important American cities and communities	<i>Coronado</i> (LCS 4)** <i>Gabrielle Giffords</i> (LCS 10)
Big-deck Amphibious Assault Ships (i.e., LHA, LHD)	Famous ships not named for battles and important battles in which Marines played a prominent part	None
Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD)	Major American cities and communities and cities and communities attacked on 9-11	<i>John P. Murtha</i> (LPD 26)*
Dock Landing Ship (LSD)	Historic sites in the US	None
Mine Countermeasure Ships (MCMs)	General word classifications of logical and euphonious names	None
Fast Combat Support Ships (T-AOE)	Famous Navy supply ships	None
Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ships (T-AKE)	Famous American explorers, trailblazers, and pioneers	None
Fleet Oilers	Rivers and individuals significant in maritime and aviation design, development, and production	None
JHSVs	Small American cities and counties	<i>Spearhead</i> (JHSV 1)**

High Speed Ferries	American territories	None
Command Ships	American mountains and mountain ranges	None
Submarine Tenders	Pioneers in submarine Development	None
Salvage ships	Terms related to salvage Activity	None
Fleet Tugs	Prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes	None
Ocean Surveillance Ships	Euphonious names which convey positive traits of capability or accomplishment	None
Patrol Coastal Ship	Weather elements	None

\* Consistent with a special cross ship type naming convention for “Well known national and Congressional leaders.”

\*\*Consistent with the type’s original naming convention