



THE NAVAL HISTORY OF RHODE ISLAND



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SHIPS



At least 28 ships have been named after the state of Rhode Island, its cities, places, and people. They include:

USS Block Island I (CVE 21), 1943
 USS Block Island II (CVE 106), 1944
 USS Chafee (DDG 90), 2003
 USS Chevalier I (DD 451), 1942
 USS Chevalier II (DD 805), 1945
 USS Coasters Harbor (AG 74), 1944
 USS Kent County (LST 855), 1944
 USS Kirwin (DE 229), 1945
 USS Nathanael Greene (SSBN 636), 1964
 Newport I (Gunboat No. 12), 1897
 USS Newport II (PF 27), 1944
 USS Newport III (LST 1179), 1969
 USNS Newport IV (T-EPF 12), not yet commissioned
 USS Pawcatuck (AO 108), 1946

Pawtucket I (YT 7), 1898
 USS Pawtucket II (YT 359), 1943
 Providence I (Sloop), 1776
 Providence II (Frigate), 1776
 Providence III (Gundalow), 1776
 USS Providence IV (CL 82), 1945
 USS Providence V (SSN 719), 1985
 Rhode Island I (Side-Wheel Steamer), 1861
 Rhode Island II (BB 17), 1906
 USS Rhode Island III (SSBN 740), 1994
 USS Taylor (DD 94), 1918
 USS Taylor II (DD 468), 1942
 USS Woonsocket (PF 32), 1944
 USS Woonsocket II (YTM 754) 1964

USS Rhode Island (SSBN 740)

The third ship to be named for the state, USS Rhode Island (SSBN 740) was commissioned July 9, 1994, as a ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). Often referred to as "boomers," SSBNs serve as an undetectable launch platform for intercontinental missiles. They are designed specifically for stealth and the precise delivery of nuclear warheads.

PEOPLE



Matthew C. Perry
Commodore

The leading advocate for modernizing the U.S. Navy, the "father of the Steam Navy," Matthew C. Perry, is credited with early curriculum development at the U.S. Naval Academy. Born in Newport, RI, Perry also organized America's first corps of naval engineers and led the first U.S. naval gunnery school. Commodore Perry played a leading role in opening Japan to the West with the Convention of Kanagawa in 1854.



Godfrey de Chevalier
Lieutenant Commander

A Providence, RI, native, Lt. Cmdr. Godfrey de Chevalier was a pioneer of naval aviation during World War I and in the early 1920s. Chevalier helped install the first real aircraft catapult used in the U.S. Navy and piloted the first plane to be launched by a catapult. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. On Oct. 26, 1922, Chevalier made the first landing on USS Langley (CV 1), the first American aircraft carrier. Two U.S. Navy ships are named in his honor.



John L. H. Chafee
Secretary of the Navy

John Lester Hubbard Chafee was the 66th governor of Rhode Island, President Nixon's Secretary of the Navy, and a Rhode Island state senator for 22 years until his death in 1999. Chafee, a U.S. Marine veteran, served in World War II and the Korean War. Chafee was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000.

PLACES



Naval War College

The Naval War College in Newport, RI is known as the U.S. Navy's "Home of Thought." The college was founded in 1884 and has graduated more than 50,000 students. Famous Navy graduates include Fleet Adm. Chester Nimitz and Rear Adm. Alan Shepard.



Naval Station Newport

Naval Station Newport is home to 50 Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Army Reserve commands and installations. There are approximately 5,800 employees on the naval station, making the U.S. Navy the single largest employer in Newport County.

Did You Know...?

Rhode Island is the only state still celebrating Victory Day (World War II) the second Monday in August.

Sources: Naval History and Heritage Command; navy.mil; Commander, Navy Installations Command; Naval War College Museum; Official Facebook page of Naval Station Newport; Biographical Directory of the United States Congress; Official Rhode Island state website; Official website of the city of Providence. Infographic by Naval History and Heritage Command Communication and Outreach Division.