

AUSTAL USA Christens Future USNS Solomon Atkinson



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MOBILE, Ala. – Austal USA christened the future USNS Solomon Atkinson (T-ATS 12) today at its Mobile, Alabama shipyard, marking a significant milestone in the construction of the U.S. Navy's newest Towing, Salvage, and Rescue Ship.

The ship's sponsor, Joann Atkinson, widow of Solomon Atkinson, and their daughters Michele Gunyah and Maria Hayward, performed the time-honored christening tradition by breaking a ceremonial bottle across the bow, formally naming the vessel. Among the dignitaries attending the ceremony were Captain Thomas Cunningham III, USN, Chief of Staff, Military Sealift Command; The Honorable Daniel Marsden, Sr., Acting Mayor, Metlakatla Indian Community; Rear Admiral Walter H. Allman III, USN, Commander, Naval Special Warfare;

The Honorable Brendan Rogers, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment; and Gene Miller, Austal USA Interim President.

Named in honor of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Solomon Atkinson, a pioneering Navy SEAL, plankowner of the SEAL teams, and one of the service's most decorated Alaska Native sailors from the Metlakatla Indian Community, the ship recognizes a legacy of service, leadership, and dedication to the nation. The Atkinson family's role as sponsors reflects a lasting bond between the ship, its crew, and the namesake's enduring legacy. In honoring her father's life and service, Maria Hayward has shared the Tsimshian value he lived by: "akadi lip a'algyaga sm'ooygit," meaning "a chief never speaks for himself"—a principle that guided his leadership and continues to inspire.

"This christening marks an important milestone for T-ATS 12 and the dedicated workforce who brought this ship to life," said Gene Miller, interim president of Austal USA. "It is an honor to take part in this ceremony alongside the Atkinson family as we recognize Solomon Atkinson's legacy of service. We are proud to support the Navy with a platform that will serve critical missions around the world and look forward to delivering this ship to the fleet."

Solomon Atkinson is the second of three T-ATS ships being constructed at Austal USA and is the second ship in its class launched from the company's Mobile ship manufacturing facility—highlighting the strength, efficiency, and momentum of Austal USA's growing steel shipbuilding program.

The Navajo-class Towing, Salvage, and Rescue Ships are designed to provide ocean-going towing, salvage, and rescue capabilities to support fleet operations. This multi-mission vessel will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and feature approximately 6,000 square feet of deck space to support a wide range of embarked systems and mission sets. The platform

combines the capabilities of the retiring Rescue and Salvage Ship (T-ARS 50) and Fleet Ocean Tug (T-ATF 166) classes, while enabling future rapid capability initiatives through modular payloads, hotel services, and flexible interfaces. The T-ATS platform will support missions including towing, salvage, rescue, oil spill response, humanitarian assistance, and wide-area search and surveillance.