

# General Dynamics NASSCO Christens the Sixth and Final Ship in the ESB Program for the U.S. Navy



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SAN DIEGO – Today, General Dynamics NASSCO christened the USNS *Hector A. Cafferata Jr.* (ESB 8), the sixth and final ship for the U.S. Navy's Expeditionary Sea Base (ESB) program. Sergeant Major Carlos A. Ruiz served as the principal speaker at the ceremony, which also included remarks from NASSCO, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Marine Corps representatives. Following remarks, ship co-sponsors Heather Cafferata, daughter of the ship's namesake, and Jessica Cafferata, granddaughter of the ship's namesake, christened the ship with the traditional champagne bottle break alongside the hull.

“Ships are not just steel and machinery—they carry legacies, and they connect past generations to future ones,” said David Carver, president of General Dynamics NASSCO. “The remarkable story of valor and sacrifice of Hector Cafferata Jr. will soon sail across the globe, carried by a ship that embodies his courage and dedication.”

The ship is named for Private First Class Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his brave actions at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War. He single-handedly held off a regimental-strength enemy force and safeguarded wounded Marines by throwing a live grenade away from his position. The Medal of Honor was presented to him by President Harry Truman in a White House ceremony in 1952.

The ESB ship class is a highly flexible platform designed to support multiple maritime-based missions. ESB ships are mobile sea-based assets and are a part of the critical access infrastructure that supports the deployment of forces, equipment, supplies, and warfighting capability. These 784-foot ships are configured with a 52,000 square-foot flight deck to support MH-53, MH-60, MV-22 tilt-rotor, and H1 aircraft operations.

The first five ships in the ESB program – USS *Lewis B. Puller* (ESB 3), USS *Hershel “Woody” Williams* (ESB 4), USS *Miguel Keith* (ESB 5), USS *John L. Canley* (ESB 6), and USNS *Robert E. Simanek* (ESB 7) – have been delivered to the U.S. Navy.