

# HII Christens LPD Richard M. McCool Jr.



Ship sponsors Kate Oja and Shana McCool christen the ship named after their grandfather, Richard M. McCool Jr., on June 11. Looking on are Eric Raven, undersecretary of the Navy, Kari Wilkinson, president of Ingalls Shipbuilding, and Capt. Jeffrey Baker, prospective commanding officer of the ship. HII PASCAGOULA, Miss. – HII announced June 11 that its Ingalls Shipbuilding division christened the company's 13<sup>th</sup> amphibious transport dock, Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29), constructed for the U.S. Navy.

“For nearly two decades, we have had the opportunity to build these amphibious ships, and we look forward to continuing this journey with such a valued partner,” Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson said. “Today we reflect on Richard M. McCool Jr.’s bravery and heroism in front of a ship that will carry another generation of brave Sailors and Marines into missions defending our freedom.”

LPD 29 is named to honor U.S. Navy Capt. Richard M. McCool Jr., who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in rescuing survivors from a sinking destroyer and for saving his own landing support ship during a World War II kamikaze attack. His rescue efforts took place exactly 77 years prior to the day Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29) was christened.

Undersecretary of the Navy Erik Raven was the keynote speaker.

“Richard M. McCool Jr. truly embodied the spirit of service above self,” Raven said. “The Sailors and Marines who will sail on this future ship carry on that legacy following the example of spirit, patriotism and selflessness set by Richard

M. McCool Jr.”

When speaking of America’s defense capabilities, Raven said, “We are able to deploy exquisite capabilities across the globe in great part due to our dedicated shipbuilders and our talented team. These talented Americans are essential to making sure that our naval forces have the ships that they need.”

Richard M. McCool Jr. is co-sponsored by Shana McCool and Kate Oja, granddaughters of the ship’s namesake. Together, the two sponsors officially christened Richard M. McCool Jr. by smashing a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow of the ship. McCool spoke on behalf of both sponsors at today’s ceremony.

When speaking about her grandfather’s heroic acts some 77 years ago, McCool said, “To the commanding officer and future crew of this ship, may she (the ship) keep you safe. And in the words of our grandfather, may you always remember to fight as a unit and not as individuals.”