

Keel Laid for Future Destroyer USS John Basilone

BATH, Maine – The keel of the future USS John Basilone (DDG 122) was ceremoniously laid at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works shipyard on Jan. 10, the Program Executive Office-Ships said in a release.

Speakers at the ceremony included Capt. Seth Miller, DDG 51-class program manager, Diane Hawkins, niece of the ship's namesake, and the ship's sponsors, Amy Looney and Ryan Manion.

The ship's sponsors authenticated the keel by etching their initials into the keel plate, a tradition that symbolically recognizes the joining of modular components and the ceremonial beginning of the ship.

"It's an honor to celebrate this milestone with Ms. Looney, Ms. Manion and members of the Basilone family," Miller said. "Laying the keel for our nation's 72nd Arleigh Burke destroyer, and building a ship named for a man who embodied the spirit of commitment and strength, this is a truly special occasion."

The ship's namesake was a U.S. Marine Corps gunnery sergeant who was killed in action during the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II. Basilone received the Medal of Honor for heroism displayed in the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942 and for conspicuous gallantry displayed in the Battle of Iwo Jima after he single-handedly destroyed an enemy blockhouse and led a Marine tank under fire safely through a minefield.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are multimission surface combatants that serve as integral assets in global maritime security, engaging in air, undersea, surface, strike and ballistic-missile defense as well as providing increased capabilities in anti-submarine warfare, command and control

and anti-surface warfare.

As a Flight IIA Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, John Basilone will employ the Aegis Baseline 9 Combat System, which includes Integrated Air and Missile Defense capability, delivers quick reaction time, high firepower, and has increased electronic countermeasures capability for anti-air warfare.