

Navy Names Future Vessel to Honor Muscogee Creek Nation



A graphic illustration of the future Military Sealift Command Navajo-class towing and salvage ship USNS Muscogee Creek Nation (T-ATS 10). U.S. Navy

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. – The U.S. Navy will name a future Navajo-class towing, salvage, and rescue ship USNS Muscogee Creek Nation (T-ATS 10) to honor the self-governed Native American tribe located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, the Navy said in a Jan. 15 release.

Gregory J. Slavonic, performing the duties of the under secretary of the Navy, and an Oklahoma native, announced the name selection during a ceremony at the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City.

“I am sincerely honored, on behalf of the secretary of the Navy, to announce that this future naval vessel will carry the proud legacy of the people of the Muscogee Creek Nation and be cemented as part of Navy and Marine Corps history,” Slavonic said. “The future towing, salvage, and rescue ship honors the culturally distinct people of the state of Oklahoma and will join the fleet as a symbol of appreciation for the contributions of American Indians and the Muscogee Creek citizens to the defense of our nation.”

The Muscogee people are descendants of not just one tribe, but a union of several. Muscogee Creek Nation is the largest of the federally recognized Muscogee tribes, the fourth largest tribe in the U.S. with more than 86,000 citizens – some of whom have or continue to serve across the U.S. armed forces.

This will be the first Navy vessel to carry the name Muscogee Creek Nation.

“Despite a complex and sometimes challenging history with the U.S., no race has answered the call of duty and served more than Native Americans, per capita,” said David Hill, principal chief of the Muscogee Creek Nation. “Today, we are joined together to once again strengthen our ties and recognize those efforts with this wonderful gesture by the Navy to respect that commitment. Myself, along with our tribal leadership, employees and citizens are so thrilled that for the first time, a United States Navy ship will be named after the Muscogee Creek Nation.”

In early 2019, the Navy announced that T-ATS ships would be known as the Navajo class of ships to honor the contributions of the Navajo people to the armed forces. Vessels in this class are named for prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.

The Navajo-class T-ATS ships are designed to combine and replace the current capabilities of the Powhatan-class ocean tugs and Safeguard-class rescue and salvage ships in service with the Military Sealift Command. They will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems. The platform will be 263 feet long, have a beam of 59 feet, and carry a load of nearly 2,000 tons.

The future USNS Muscogee Creek Nation will join USNS Navajo (T-ATS 6), USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7), and USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek (T-ATS 8) providing a wide range of missions including open ocean towing, oil spill response, humanitarian assistance and wide area search and surveillance.