

# Navy to Commission Guided-Missile Destroyer Frank E. Petersen Jr.



Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121) navigates in the Gulf of Mexico during bravo trials. *HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES*  
ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy will commission the future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121), the newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, during a 10:00 a.m. EDT ceremony on Saturday, May 14, in Charleston, South Carolina, the Defense Department said in a release.

The future USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. is the first ship to honor Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen, Jr., the first Black Marine Corps aviator and the first Black Marine Corps officer promoted to brigadier general. When Petersen retired in 1988 after 38 years of service, he was, by date of designation, the senior-ranking aviator in the Department of the Navy.

The principal speaker is The Honorable Carlos Campbell, Naval aviator and former Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. Additional speakers include The Honorable Nancy Mace, U.S. Rep. from South Carolina's 1st District; The Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy; Gen. David Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Adm. Michael Gilday, Chief of Naval Operations; The Honorable John Tecklenberg, Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina; Mr. George Nungesser, Vice President of Program Management, Ingalls Shipbuilding; and Ms. Gayle Petersen, daughter of the ship's namesake.

The ship's sponsors are Mrs. D'Arcy Ann Neller, wife of former Commandant of the Marine Corps, retired Gen. Robert "Bob" Neller, and the late Dr. Alicia J. Petersen, Lt. Gen.

Petersen's wife at the time of his passing in 2015. Dr. Petersen passed away in September 2021. Both sponsors participated in the keel laying, mast stepping, and christening ceremonies. Mrs. Neller will give the order to "man our ship and bring her to life."

"This ship honors the life and legacy of Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen, Jr., a pioneer not just for Marine Corps aviation but for our entire naval force," said Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro. "I have no doubt the crew will be a cornerstone of the Surface Force carrying his legacy forward and strengthening the bond between our Navy and Marine Corps team."

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet providing protection to America around the globe. These highly capable, multi-mission ships conduct a variety of operations, from peacetime presence to national security, providing a wide range of warfighting capabilities in multi-threat air, surface and subsurface domains. These elements of seapower enable the Navy to defend American prosperity and prevent future conflict abroad.

The nearly 9,500-ton USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. is 509.5 feet in length, has a waterline beam of 59 feet, and a navigational draft of 31 feet. Four gas turbine engines will power the ship to speeds in excess of 30 knots. USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. will homeport at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The ceremony will be live streamed at: [USS Frank E. Petersen, Jr. Commissioning](#). The link becomes active approximately ten minutes prior to the event (9:50 a.m. EST).

Additional information on a history of the ship and its namesake can be found at: <https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/heritage/history-of-u-s-marine-corps-pioneer-frank-e-petersen.html>