

SECNAV Names Future Destroyer in Honor of Navy Veteran, Vietnam War POW

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer named a future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer in honor of U.S. Navy Vietnam veteran, Navy Cross recipient and former U.S. Senator from Alabama Adm. Jeremiah Denton, the public affairs office for the secretary said in a Jan. 4 release.

“Admiral Denton’s legacy is an inspiration to all who wear our nation’s uniform,” Spencer said. “His heroic actions during a defining period in our history have left an indelible mark on our Navy and Marine Corps team and our nation. His service is a shining example for our Sailors and Marines and this ship will continue his legacy for decades to come.”

In 1947, Denton graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and served as a test pilot, flight instructor and squadron leader, and developed operational tactics still in use, such as the haystack concept, which calls for the dispersing of carrier fleets to make it more difficult for the enemy to find the fleets on radar.

On July 18, 1965, Denton was shot down over North Vietnam and spent nearly eight years as a prisoner of war (POW), almost half in isolation. During an interview with a Japanese media outlet, Denton used Morse code to blink “torture,” confirming that American POWs were being tortured. He suffered severe harassment, intimidation and ruthless treatment, yet he refused to provide military information or be used by the enemy for propaganda purposes.

In recognition of his extraordinary heroism while a prisoner of war, he was awarded the Navy Cross. Denton was released from captivity in 1973, retired from the Navy in 1977 and in

1980 was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he represented Alabama.

Arleigh Burke-class destroyers conduct a variety of operations from peacetime presence and crisis response to sea control and power projection. The future USS Jeremiah Denton (DDG 129) will be capable of fighting air, surface and subsurface battles simultaneously, and will contain a combination of offensive and defensive weapon systems designed to support maritime warfare, including integrated air and missile defense and vertical launch capabilities.

The ship will be constructed at Huntington Ingalls Industries' Ingalls shipbuilding division in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The ship will be 509 feet long, have a beam length of 59 feet and be capable of operating at speeds in excess of 30 knots.