

SECNAV Names Future Destroyer in Honor of U.S. Navy Medal of Honor Awardee



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WASHINGTON (March 18, 2019) An artist rendering of the future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS William Charette (DDG 131). (U.S. Navy photo illustration/Released)

WASHINGTON – Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer has named a future Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, DDG 130, in honor of a Medal of Honor recipient, Hospital Corpsman Master Chief William Charette, the secretary's public affairs office said in a March 18 release.

Charette, a native of Ludington, Michigan, joined the Navy in 1951 and served in the Korean War in the Fleet Marine Force as a hospital corpsman attached to Company F, Third Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

“The actions of Hospital Corpsman William Charette will neither be forgotten or diminished,” Spencer said. “Charette put himself at extreme risk during intense combat to render aid to Marines in need. His efforts saved lives, and I am honored that his legacy will live on in the future USS William Charette [DDG 130].”

Charette was presented the Medal of Honor for his actions on March 27, 1953, when Chinese soldiers in North Korea attacked and overran two of three hill outposts that Marines held. During a counterattack, an enemy grenade landed near Charette, who was helping a wounded Marine. Charette placed himself on top of the Marine to shield him from the explosion. The blast rendered Charette unconscious, but when he awoke he continued to aid Marines, including using torn parts of his uniform to dress battle wounds, his own battle vest to shield a wounded

Marine, and exposing himself to incoming rounds to carry wounded Marines to safety.

All five enlisted Sailors who received the Medal of Honor for actions during the Korean War were Navy hospital corpsmen attached to the Marine Corps. Charette was the only living recipient. Charette passed on March 18, 2012, due to complications from heart surgery.

Arleigh-Burke class destroyers conduct a variety of operations from peacetime presence and crisis response to sea control and power projection. The future USS William Charette will be a Flight III destroyer, 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 Bath Iron Works, a division of General Dynamics in Bath, Maine. 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.