

SECNAV Names Ship in Honor of Narragansett Tribe of Rhode Island



From SECNAV Public Affairs

18 June 2024

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced today that a future Navajo-class Towing, Salvage, and Rescue (T-ATS) ship will be named USNS Narragansett in honor of the Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island, June 18.

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced today that a future Navajo-class Towing, Salvage, and Rescue (T-ATS) ship will be named USNS Narragansett in honor of the Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island, June 18.

Secretary Del Toro made the announcement on the 90th Anniversary of the Indian Reorganization Act.

The Indian Reorganization Act, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was aimed at decreasing Federal control of Native American Indian Affairs. The Act presented a major reversal of federal policy toward Native Americans and provided them greater control over their lands, allowing the formation of legally recognized tribal governments and decreasing pressure toward assimilation.

The naming selection of the future USNS Narragansett (T-ATS 14) follows the tradition of the Navajo-class of naming towing, salvage and rescue ships after prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes. Secretary Del Toro has previously named three Navajo-class ships: USNS Billy Frank Jr., USNS Solomon Atkinson, and USNS James D. Fairbanks.

“Native Americans have been integral to the history of our Nation; however, historically, the rights of Native Americans have been drastically impacted in negative ways,” said Secretary Del Toro. “Today, on the 90th Anniversary of the Indian Reorganization Act, I am honored to announce the name of our newest Navajo-class T-ATS, the future USNS Narragansett (T-ATS 14).”

Prior to European contact, the Narragansett were a powerful Algonquian-speaking warrior tribe that occupied most of present-day Rhode Island from the Narragansett Bay in the east to the Pawcatuck River in the West. They first encountered European explorers in the 1520s when Giovanni de Verrazano visited the region and provided land to Roger Williams in 1636 to establish the settlement of Providence.

Increasing tensions with colonists led the Narragansett tribe to unite with other tribes during King Philip’s War. Their territory was gradually reduced to a 15,000-acre reservation and the Narragansett people were officially recognized by the federal government as the Narragansett Indian Tribe in April 1983.

There are currently approximately 2,400 members of the Narragansett Indian Tribe living primarily in Rhode Island. Five naval vessels have been named in honor of the Narragansett people: a screw sloop (1859-1875), a troop transport (SP 2196) (1918-1919), a ferry boat (YFB 1163) (1918-1944), a fleet tug (AT 88) (1943-1946), and a fleet ocean tug (T-ATF 167) (1979-2002).

Navajo-class ships will provide ocean-going tug, salvage, and rescue capabilities to support Fleet operations. The current capabilities are provided by Powhatan-class T-ATF Fleet Tugs and Safeguard-class T-ARS Rescue and Salvage vessels. Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems.

More information on our towing, salvage, and rescue ship programs can be found [here](#).