

# Secretary of the Navy Invites SBNL to Sponsor USS *Stockdale* Commissioning

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The SBNL is delighted to announce that the Secretary of the Navy has invited the Santa Barbara Council of the Navy League to sponsor the April 18, 2009 commissioning of the soon-to-be USS *Stockdale* (DDG-106). Once commissioned, the Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) *Stockdale* will become the United States Navy's newest Arleigh Burke-class destroyer.

*Stockdale* is named after Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale. Stockdale earned the Medal of Honor for heroic leadership and resistance as a prisoner of war (POW) in Vietnam. *Stockdale*, the 56th Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, is scheduled to be delivered to the navy in early 2009. *Stockdale* will be homeported in San Diego, which is where the Stockdale family resides.

PCU *Stockdale* was christened May 10, in Bath, by the ship's sponsor Sybil Stockdale, the wife of the ship's namesake. "John F. Kennedy reminded us that 'A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers.' Today we preserve the name Stockdale through 9,200 tons of American diplomacy, capable of operating in any ocean at any time," said Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Pat Walsh, the speaker at the ceremony.

Mrs. Stockdale, a recipient of the Navy Public Service Medal, led efforts to publicize the plight of POWs while her husband was in captivity in North Vietnam for more than seven years. She met with presidents, the secretary of state, and finally a North Vietnamese delegation in Paris, asking for her husband's release.



U.S. Navy photo

▲ PCU *Stockdale* undergoing systems testing in preparation for April commissioning.

"It is the absolute privilege of a lifetime to command the ship named after Vice Admiral James Stockdale," said Commander Fred Kacher, the ship's first commanding officer. "His legacy of courage, leadership, and perseverance will inspire those who sail on *Stockdale* throughout the ship's lifetime."

Following successful installation and testing of a vessel's engineering plant, weapons and electronic systems, galley, and hundreds of other mission-critical systems and equipment required to transform a hull into an operating and habitable warship, the commissioning ceremony takes place. Once the designation United States Ship (USS) is conferred upon a new vessel, the commanding officer and crew will report for training and intensive familiarization with the new ship.

The SBNL is honored to sponsor the *Stockdale*'s commissioning. Planned events include a keynote address by former presidential candidate and businessman H. Ross Perot, and presentations by Senator John McCain and former POW Charlie Plumb.

A successful commissioning will require that we raise a substantial sum—and to raise it, the SBNL needs your help. Opportunities to own a piece of this historic event range from \$150 to \$100,000, and additional details will be made available in the coming weeks. Ultimately, the future crew are counting on us—each one of us—to make this commissioning a historic success. In the next 35 seconds you can play an invaluable role in supporting the more than 300 men and women who will be the first to bring this vessel to life for its 35 years of planned service.

It only takes 35 seconds to make a contribution to the SBNL Support and Serve Campaign! Visit [http://santabarbaranavyleague.givezooks.com/wish\\_lists/support-our-troops](http://santabarbaranavyleague.givezooks.com/wish_lists/support-our-troops)



▲ Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Mike Mullen, presents a photo of the PCU *Stockdale* (DDG 106) to the Mrs. James Stockdale, widow of the late Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale.

U.S. Navy photo by Gas Turbine System Technician 3rd class Andrew Korenkov