

## Destroyer named after Medal of Honor recipient

March 24, 2007; Submitted on: 03/23/2007 06:56:20 PM ; Story ID#: 2007323185620

\_\_By *Sgt. Helen M. Searcy*, Headquarters Marine Corps

**SCIO, N.Y. (March 24, 2007)** -- The Navy honored Cpl. Jason L. Dunham March 23 by naming a guided missile destroyer after the fallen Marine hero during a ceremony in Scio, N.Y.

Hundreds of students, teachers and veterans packed the gym of Scio Central High School as Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter announced that the name of the Navy's newest Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer would honor the memory of the Corps' newest Medal of Honor recipient.

"Today, I am pleased to announce that the United States Navy's next guided missile destroyer, DDG 109, will be named USS Jason Dunham," said Winter.

Winter made the announcement in Dunham's hometown with Dunham's parents, Dan and Deb, and siblings in attendance.

"Dan and I are very excited and proud to accept the powerful tribute the Navy has honored Jason with," said an emotional Deb Dunham to the crowd. "We wish to thank the Navy for this historical honor you have given Jay by commemorating his actions and memory with a ship's title."

Jason is the Marine Corps' first Medal of Honor recipient since Operation Iraqi Freedom and the first Medal of Honor recipient to have a ship named after him since the Iraq war began four years ago.

The Secretary of the Navy has the final authority of approving names for ships that date back to 1819, according to the Navy Historical Center.

"There is a long tradition in the United States Navy of naming our war ships after heroes," said Winter. "The hero would no longer be with us, but his name would live on."

Winter said when the time came to name the newest destroyer, he had no problem coming up with a fitting namesake.

"It seemed appropriate, when the time came to name DDG 109, that we name that great ship after our newest Medal of Honor recipient," said Winter. "This is the first time we've had a chance to recognize a Marine from this generation, and particularly a Marine who served so well and sacrificed his life on behalf of our nation in the Global War on Terror."

The Navy currently has six destroyers named after Marine Medal of Honor recipients. Secretary Winter expects the USS Jason Dunham to serve the fleet well for many years to

come.

"I fully expect that this ship will be in the fleet for 30, 40 years, or maybe even more," he said.

The USS Jason Dunham will be christened in 2009 and commissioned in 2010.

The Arleigh Burke (DD51) class of ships are fast warships and can work independently or as part of carrier battle groups or amphibious ready groups conducting offensive or defensive missions.

Utilizing a gas turbine propulsion system, the ship can operate independently or as part of carrier strike groups, surface action groups, amphibious ready groups, and underway replenishment groups. The ship's combat systems center on the Aegis combat system and the SPY-Ld (V) multifunction phased array radar. The ship uses a combination of Aegis, the vertical launching system, an advanced anti-submarine warfare system, advanced anti-aircraft missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles.