

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Naming Ceremony - USNS YUMA
25 April 2014

Thank you for joining me today. I specifically want to thank Mayor Nicholls for all of the support that he and the city government here in Yuma give our Marines and Sailors.

Every day I have the privilege to work with the men and women of our Navy and Marine Corps, making sure they have everything they need to keep our country safe. Part of that includes watching over the building and repair of naval ships, aircraft, and facilities. This occasion marks one of the most enjoyable parts of my job as Secretary of the Navy, the naming of our ships. It is a great responsibility, but also a lot of fun.

Since the founding of our Navy my predecessors have been naming ships for regions, cities, and states as a reflection of the greatness of America. Some of the first frigates that we read about in our history books, like the USS Chesapeake and USS Essex, were named for places with great naval heritage and people who supported our Navy and Marine Corps. Today, here in Yuma, I have the great honor to follow in that tradition.

We look around ourselves here in Arizona, a land-locked state, and some might ask why we're in the desert for a ship naming? While our naval forces might be focused on the coasts, our country is vast and we have communities who support our Navy and Marine Corps all over this nation.

The real reason we're here today is the people of Yuma. For 86 years you have been supporting military aviation here in the heart of Arizona, and for 55 years you have been the desert home of Marine Corps Aviation. From the very earliest operations here during the New York to Los

Angeles Air Races in 1928, to today's home of advanced weapons and tactics training and our newest strike fighters, Yuma has stood for pushing the boundaries of aviation. And you have helped contribute to a stronger and more capable Navy and Marine Corps Team.

Maritime forces, those that operate from the sea, are incredibly flexible and responsive, which provides our country's leaders with an array of options in any crisis. The Navy and Marine Corps are where it counts, when it counts. Not just at the right time, but all the time. That is called presence, and it reassures our allies and it makes our potential adversaries pause and think again.

Our global presence is uniquely what our Navy and Marine Corps give our country. They are our nation's insurance policy around the world. There are four things that make that possible, and they are the four things I've been focused on as Secretary: Our People, Platforms, Power, and Partnerships. Each of these four P's has an important role to play. Today we're here to name what is going to be one of the Navy's newest platforms.

USNS YUMA will be one of our Joint High Speed Vessels, or JHSV's. These ships are high-speed transports, built on catamaran hulls that can operate in shallow waterways. It has a flight deck that supports day and night helicopter and unmanned aircraft operations, and a whole lot of space inside.

That space inside is part of what makes these ships so important for our future. It gives our Marines and our Sailors an opportunity to come up with new and innovative ways of operating. These ships will carry Marines across the vast Pacific, operating with our partners and helping to build up our allies. They'll deploy in the Caribbean and on the Pacific coast of South and

Central America to counter illicit trafficking and work with our friends to the south. They'll work with our Special Operations Forces.

The ships we build today will be a part of our fleet for more than three decades. Sailors not yet born will serve in her. With her ability to operate in areas that might otherwise be inaccessible, USNS YUMA may well be the only part of America and her sailors the only Americans, some people around the world will ever see.

So thank you for this opportunity to share with you our recognition of your city and your support of our Navy and Marine Corps. Thank you all for being here and joining in the celebration of what I know will be a continued special relationship between Yuma, and the Marine Corps, and the Navy and the ship which will bear its name. God bless USNS YUMA and all who sail in her.

From the Navy, Semper Fortis: ALWAYS Courageous.

From the Marine Corps: Semper Fideles. ALWAYS Faithful.

Thank you.