

# News and stories

## Navy to Christen Expeditionary Sea Base Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4)

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EIN News

The Navy will christen the Expeditionary Sea Base future USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) during a 10 a.m. PDT ceremony, Saturday, Oct. 21, at General Dynamics NASSCO, San Diego.

The future Hershel "Woody" Williams is the first ship to bear the name of Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer Hershel Woodrow Williams, the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient recognized for heroism at the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Maj. Gen. Eric M. Smith, commanding general, 1st Marine Division, will deliver the ceremony's principal address. Williams's daughters, Tracie Jean Ross and Travie Jane Ross, who serve as the ship's sponsors, will break a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow to formally christen the ship, a time-honored Navy tradition.

"This ship honors a man who dedicated his life to service—heroic service as a Marine, and continued service to his fellow veterans," said the Honorable Richard V. Spencer, Secretary of the Navy. "This dedication will live on in USNS Hershel 'Woody' Williams as the ship is deployed around the world bringing additional capability to our growing fleet. The ceremony on Saturday will also represent the dedication to service demonstrated by the men and women who

worked tirelessly to build this ship and their commitment to quality and innovation."

The future Hershel "Woody" Williams is optimized to support a variety of maritime-based missions and designed around four core capabilities: aviation facilities, berthing, equipment staging support, and command and control assets. ESBs can be enhanced to meet special operations force missions through increased communications, aviation and unmanned aircraft system support.

Built by General Dynamics NASSCO, the Montford Point-class is comprised of five ships across two variants: Expeditionary Transfer Docks and Expeditionary Sea Bases. USNS Montford Point (ESD 1), USNS John Glenn (ESD 2), and USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3) have been delivered to the fleet. ESB 4 is planned to join the fleet in 2018, with ESB 5 to follow in 2019.

The platform has an aviation hangar and flight deck that include two operating spots capable of landing MH-53E equivalent helicopters, accommodations, work spaces, and ordnance storage for an embarked force. The platform will also provide enhanced command and control, communications, computers, and intelligence capabilities to support embarked force mission planning and execution. The reconfigurable mission deck area can store embarked force equipment including mine sleds and rigid hull inflatable boats.

Media may direct queries to the Navy Office of Information at 703-697-5342. Additional information on the Expeditionary Sea Base is available online at [http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact\\_display.asp?cid=4600&tid=675&ct=4](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=4600&tid=675&ct=4).

Additional information about Hershel "Woody" Williams can be found online at <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/h/hershel-williams--t-esb-4-.html>.

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