



THE IRONMAN—A DOUBLE ENDER’S NEWSLETTER

Membership Scorebox

Active	143
Lifetime	42
Snail Mail Addresses Only	238
Email Address	499
Total Shipmates	4,250

USS Reeves Legend Series Admiral William D Center USN (Ret) By Gerry Hines Reeves Reunion Assoc. VP



Dues Notice!

To reach the greatest number of shipmates, we will publish the complete Association newsletter to any valid email or snail mail address. Your dues payments make this possible.

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Our next candidate for the Reeves Association legend series is Admiral Bill Center who was captain of the Reeves from 1987-1989. I had never met Bill Center until a Reeves reunion a few years ago. As I started researching his life and career, I discovered what I would classify as the classic overachiever. I believe this will be evident as this article unfolds.

Bill was born in Dayton, Ohio in 1945. Sometime in the 1950s his family moved to California. At age 13 He came across a book “Sea Fights and Shipwrecks” by Hanson Baldwin and became enamored with thoughts of life at sea. His great ambition became to be the captain of a cruiser. The day he graduated from high school he joined the Navy. Two weeks into boot camp he was called to the commander’s office. He had scored so well on entrance into the Navy that they wanted to send him to ROTC at UCLA. He was discharged from his enlistment and sent to UCLA.

While there he applied for the Naval Academy and was accepted. He is quoted as saying it is a good thing, as he was about to flunk out of UCLA. He loved band and ROTC but ignored his physics and other classes. During summer break before their last year at the academy, he along with 40 others were loaded onto planes and flown to the Philippines. There they went aboard the USS Sacramento and were taken to the Tonken Gulf area. Bill and another cadet were flown onto the USS Fechteler DD-870. They followed the USS Sterritt around northern SAR for a couple of weeks and then were part of the Sea Dragon operation off North Vietnam. Firing and being fired at off the coast. He remembers being amazed that incoming shells sounded just like in the movies. Returning to the Academy he was determined to be a destroyer sailor.

After graduating from the Academy in 1968 he was sent to the USS Henry W Tucker DD-875. Then in 1970 Bill

The President’s Page



Greetings to the entire USS Reeves Association Family

Let me start with “I’m so happy to have this election over with.....” You can all fill in your own reasons concerning the election, as I’m not about to touch it. I’m just happy

that all the ads, texts, messages, and hype are over with. Right now, my main concern is to get the 2025 Reeves Ironman Reunion moved to the front of the que and make some progress towards a signed contract. In the meantime, we’re approaching Veterans Day, and that always makes me proud and happy.

Our lead article in this edition of the newsletter is one that honors one of our true Reeves Legends, RADM Bill Center USN (Ret). We are very honored to have Bill as part of the Reeves Association, and felt it was certainly time for him to recognize him as the subject of our latest Legend Series article. Gerry Hines, who wrote the article, was quite surprised by all the accomplishments that Admiral Center was able to accomplish in his amazing career. Bill will still tell you the best part was being Skipper of the Reeves. Bill continues to be an active part of Naval Tradition in Washington State, and represents himself, and the Navy, well by being an ambassador at public events. In speaking with him lately, he promised that he would be in Pensacola with us for the 2025 Reunion. We enjoyed seeing him in Dayton and look forward to his appearance in Pensacola.

The Legend Series was initiated a couple of years ago to make sure we can recognize Reeves Legends. It was becoming obvious that we, as a veterans organization with many members from the Vietnam Era were continually praising our members after they had passed. It was time to expand our newsletter to honor

all of our Reeves Legends, and not just memorialize those that have passed. The Legends Series allows us to do both. If there are any suggestions for who would be a great candidate for Reeves Legends status, please let us know who you think should be included. Right now, it’s being decided by a few of us that speak regularly while trying to think of what goes into the next newsletter and who will be the next Legend we honor . Unfortunately, we only know about the shipmates we either personally served with or managed to hear about. Given that Reeves plied the seas for 30 years, we only have a small picture of her legendary sailors. We’d appreciate some input on who you think may deserve legend status, and no, they do not have to have been a high-ranking shipmate or former CO.

I had a recent conversation with our shipmate, Jeff Wofford, about Reeves Association plans, and he yet again floated the idea that we should find a way to lobby the Navy about resurrecting the Reeves name onto another fighting ship. Anyone who has read the book “All the Factors of Victory” will certainly understand that Admiral James Mason Reeves USN (Ret) was a significant factor in establishing the importance of USN Aircraft Carriers in the 1920s and 30s. “Uncle Mason” as his family called him, emerged as the most important flag officer in American naval aviation, and actually took the nascent carrier force during a critical time and transformed it from a small auxiliary force that supported the battle line into a powerful strike force that could project power well ahead of the fleet. This was in the day when Battleships were the Navy, and naval aviation was some new-fangled thing that the BB commanders didn’t want. Turns out Uncle Mason was right. I’m not sure how to get his good name back into the mix for a new warship, but it sure would make us all

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This newsletter is published by:
 The USS Reeves Association
 1154 S Greenway Ave
 Pueblo West, CO 81007-1745

Newsletter Editor -
 Robert Van Der Kamp
 Phone: 609-668-3557

E-mail: bobvdk@yahoo.com

All comments, suggestions, submissions and criticism are welcome. My email is always open..

Life Memberships

At the 2014 reunion in Portland, shipmates voted for a Life Membership. After researching various Associations, it was decided that the US Navy Cruiser Sailor Association’s plan was best for the USS Reeves Association. Monies for life membership are placed in an interest-bearing account and not mixed with operating funds.

The schedule is simple:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Under 50	\$500
Under 60	\$400
Under 70	\$300
Under 80	\$200
80 or older	\$100

We already have 42 life members.

USS Reeves Legend Series

Admiral William D Center USN (Ret) (cont)

(Continued from page 1)

became chief engineer on the USS Gurke DD-783.



Amazingly, in 1972 he was given command of the mine sweeper USS Exploit MSO-440 just 4 years out of the Academy. He and Mike Mullen (who also later became Admiral) were the 2 youngest ship commanders in the Atlantic Fleet. Mullen was captain of a gasoline tanker. Quoting Bill “We were made captains of these ships because nobody else was stupid enough to take them”. Looking up the list of commanding officers for the Exploit he is listed as “Lt. Wild Bill Center” We will probably never know what that is about. Maybe he will tell us at a reunion.



Following his tour on the Exploit, he then was assigned as executive officer on the USS Blandy DD-943. In 1976 at the end of his tour on the Blandy the Navy sent him off to get a master’s degree. He had a choice of any university he wanted: Harvard, Yale, Stanford, but he chose The University of Washington. There he enrolled in the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance with an emphasis on national security policy planning and organization development. His two-year program ended early as he was such a voracious student that he took too many clas-

ses in other areas such as law, physics and anything else he could fit in.

Leaving the University he was assigned as Chief Staff Officer, DesRon 33. Another staff position followed with Chief of Naval Operations. In August 1982, he assumed command of USS Meyerkord FF-1058, that lasted until July of 1984.

In 1984, he took on an assignment as the Engineering Officer on the carrier USS Midway CV-41. This assignment ended up with him taking the Midway through one of the toughest evolutions that a Chief Engineer could ever face, that being one of the most significant modifications ever performed on the USS Midway.

The mods, conducted under an Extended Incremental Selected Restricted Availability (EISRA) were conducted in Yokosuka between March 31 and November 28, 1986. The purpose was to bring the aging Midway current with the rest of the US carrier fleet by recreating her to support the F/A 18 Hornet Aircraft. Up to that point, Midway was flying the F-4 Phantom as its main battle aircraft.

Midway required a great deal of modifications to accommodate the newer Hornet Aircraft. These major ship and flight deck mods included Hull Blisters, New Rudders, New Catapults, New Jet Blast Deflectors, and serious modifications to the ships Aircraft Maintenance Shops. The Hull blisters were installed to increase buoyancy to offset the weight being added to the ship. 92 Incremental blister modules were installed on the port & starboard sides. Next up was the replacement of Midway’s two already huge rudders with much larger rudders to compensate for the increased width of the hull after installation of the blisters, while a third stationary rudder was added for steering stability.

Flight Deck mods included a complete upgrade of the steam powered aircraft catapults, and the addition of new jet blast deflectors. And finally, the entire Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment (AIMD), which is an entire complex of aircraft shops, was modified to accommodate maintenance & repair of all the "black box" technology required by the newer aircraft.

(Continued on page 4)

USS Reeves Legend Series

Admiral William D Center USN (Ret) (cont)

(Continued from page 3)

This entire evolution to prepare the forty-year-old Midway to suddenly accommodate bigger, faster, and more technical aircraft was, at the very least, an aggressive undertaking with great schedule pressure.

While the engineering modifications were undoubtedly the product of NAVAIR, which actually owns all the carriers, the actual execution of the work packages, testing of the new systems, and the responsibility for managing the mess that it created, was the sole burden of Midway’s Chief Engineer.

The bottom line is that the Midway crew and in particular, Midway’s Chief Engineer, pulled off a miracle to get her out of the yards on time, and flying F/A 18s.



At long last in 1987 he got the command he had been waiting for since he was 13 years old. Captain of the cruiser, USS Reeves CG-24. Scanning the Command Histories for the Reeves while Captain Center was in charge shows a rather adventurous time. Two trips from Yokosuka to the Middle East, rescue of an Indian fishing boat, rescue of a boatload of Vietnamese, and a whole lot of time underway. An interesting side note: Because of change of command on October 27, 1989, Bill missed by 3 days being Captain when the Reeves was bombed during a training exercise. That completed the last of his at sea commands.

Returning to the states he was assigned to the Pentagon and was there during Desert Storm. After that short war, President Clinton nominated him for promotion to Rear Admiral. He was then assigned as deputy director for international negotiations for the

Joint Chiefs of Staff. Working with the Joint Chiefs was a “Dream job” according to Bill. He worked with some of America’s top advisors. Among them were Gen. Colin Powell and Gen. Wesley Clark. He describes it as having a front-row seat to history.

Bill retired from the Navy in 1999 after commanding all Naval Activities in the Northwest. He stayed on in Seattle taking a position as president of the Washington Council on International trade and as a frequent lecturer at the Evans School and the University of Washington. He received the Evans School’s Distinguished Alumni award in 2011. All told my statement at the beginning of this article about Bill be an overachiever is proved out. Maybe at the next reunion we will be able to find out the story behind the “Wild Bill” notation.

In the meantime, we are happy and proud to have Admiral Center as an active participant in the USS Reeves Association, and humbly ask for a standing ovation to honor our latest USS Reeves “Legend”.



The '25 Reeves Reunion Hunt is ON

In the last Newsletter I spoke about the 2025 Reunion in general terms. You may recall that we were looking at Pensacola Florida as the location but had not yet settled in on the dates. Since Pensacola is the hometown of the Blue Angels and the Naval Aviation Museum, we thought it important to give the Angels an opportunity to show off for us by actually being there in-person for one of their practice days. We've heard that the team flies the same program in practice that they fly during their exhibitions, so it's really something to see. So, that means the dates we want are completely dependent upon the Blue Angels Practice schedule for 2025, which unfortunately, has yet to be published.

However, we recently tripped over a little bit of INTEL that reasoned that since the 2025 airshows in California, Oregon, and Washington wrap up on the last week of September, and that the Angels normally take about 10 days to fully transition back to Florida to practice for their homecoming shows, that we should probably shoot for the week of October 13th for the practices to be up and running. We originally sent out our Request for Proposal (RFP) aimed at the first week of October 2025 (October 6-10), with the alternate schedule being the week after (October 13-17).

Last month we elected to get the RFP out sooner rather than later, even though it could be wrong if our Blue Angel practice schedule assumptions proved to be inaccurate. Our thoughts were that even if we miss the schedule mark, then at least we may have a few hotel contacts that we can later change to new dates. Now, we intend to amend the RFP with a new set of dates, with the primary dates being October 13 through 17, 2025. And our alternate dates being the next week on October 20 through 24. We're hoping for the primary dates.

So, for any of you that may have looked ahead to a 2025 Calendar and noticed that all the dates we just mentioned were, in fact, all weekdays. Well, you are entirely correct. What we're proposing to do is change -up the daily routine for this reunion to accommodate all the cool things we want to do in Pensacola, while also finding a way to hold costs down. From a schedule perspective, there's the Blue Angel practice schedule, which only happens on Wednesday, then there's access to the Naval Aviation Museum, which is easier

and less crowded on weekdays, and then there's a planned bus trip to Mobile, AL. to see the USS Alabama Museum, which is also easier and cheaper to sneak up on during the week. The cost perspective is very simple.... hotel rooms are cheaper during the week.

This whole weekday reunion thing is nothing new for us. As some of you may remember we did the weekday thing several times in the past. The San Diego Reunion in 2009 was a Monday through Friday thing, and then we repeated it again in Portland in 2014. Both times it proved to be much easier to get to attractions, and generally held down our hotel costs in places where weekend days demand a premium price.

So, here's our plan, which of course we have to get a hotel to agree with, and that is to run a Monday to Friday Reunion. That would have us setting up shop on Monday, Naval Air Museum on Tuesday, Blue Angels Practice on Wednesday, optional Bus trip to the USS Alabama Museum on Thursday, our banquet on Thursday evening, and closing shop on Friday. All very tentative, but also very doable.

First, we have to then get the Blue Angels to publish a schedule that agrees with our assumptions, then find a hotel that can accommodate our plans, then find a way to/from the Air Museum and possibly the USS Alabama Museum, plan our Thursday evening Banquet, find a great speaker that's free on Thursday evening, find a way to get reduced room rates for days before and after the reunion, and do it all without any hurricane interference. While all this seems simple and straightforward, there may still be a few complications to iron out.

The RFP, which lays out all our needs and expectations, is normally distributed to all the area hotels by the Visitors Bureau. The hotels are then aware of what we want, our schedule, and can price their ability to meet our needs. The hotels like dealing with organizations that express exactly what they want, and normally respond quickly. Once we start getting back proposal and prices, then our Pensacola based ground team can check out the accommodations and select a few candidates to start negotiating with. It all sounds very simple and straightforward.... It's not. Fortunately, we have Todd Larsen and his charming other-

Financials

Income

Current Checking	\$5143.06
Current Savings	\$8511.20

President Page (cont)

(Continued from page 2)

proud to have another USS Reeves out there and ready to fight. Ideas? Well, that's all I have for now. We wish you all a great Veterans Day, and hope that all goes well for you to spend some time with family and friends for the holidays. You may even consider letting Santa know that there's some cool Reeves Bling in the ships store that you would like to have, and it could find its way to you by Christmas if you give Stu a call.

Here's wishing you all Fair Winds and Following Seas.

//tom

Tom Bailey, President (B-Div 84-87)

Charitable/Educational Objectives

The USS Reeves Association is an educational, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service, FEIN 86-1163983. For that purpose at the 2010 business meeting, it was recommended that future excess funds be used for donations and scholarships as determined at business meetings starting in 2012.

Shift Colors

To receive the Navy's Shift Colors newsletter via email send the following information to Mill_ShiftColors@navy.mil -- First name; Last name; E-mail address; Title (Mr., Mrs., rank, etc.); and Military affiliation (retiree, surviving spouse, veteran, other). There is no longer any funding for hard copies to be printed and mailed. To receive Shift Colors it does not matter whether or not you're retired, active duty, a veteran, a surviving spouse, or just someone who's interested in receiving the newsletter.

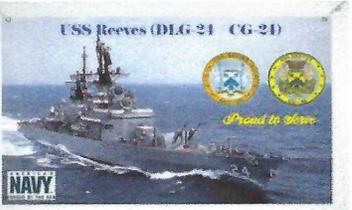
The '25 Reeves Reunion Hunt is ON (cont)

half, Jane, to help on the Pensacola end. This allows us to see and check out the hotels before we get to the contract stage.

A few things to know about our proposed trip to Florida. This one is further south than we've ever been so the travel costs are going to be higher. We do not currently have any concrete cost estimates on room nights but anticipate that they will be somewhat higher than we have seen for the last three reunions, which somehow defied gravity by staying with just a few dollars of each other. We will do what we can to keep our reunion costs under control. If the hotel costs in the Pensacola area are not acceptable, we are already planning on submitting our RFP to Mobile AL. to see if they are a cost-effective alternative. The problem there is the costs associated with transit to Pensacola for the Blue Angels and Air Museum visits. I guess we'll see where all this takes us and try to find a way for you to join us at the next "Best Reeves Reunion you've ever been to!"

Our goal is to have the hotel contract signed by January 2025, which gives us all room to make travel plans, and perhaps breathe a little before all the other stuff gets moving. Stay tuned for details

Ship's Store

<p>Photo #1 1967 11" x 17" \$10 + s/h</p> 	<p>Embroidered Golf Shirt \$20 + s/h 2X and 3X add \$2.00</p> 	<p>Reeves HD Vinyl Banner, 30"x48" \$30. Each + \$14. s/h</p> 
<p>Photo#2 1972 11" x 17" \$10 + s/h</p> 	<p>Embroidered T-Shirt \$15 + s/h 2X and 3X add \$2.00</p> 	<p>Reeves 2" custom acrylic coated Challenge Coins \$14. ea +\$3.50 s/h for 1st coin & \$.1.00 ea for extras.</p> 
<p>Photo#3 1986 11" x 17" \$10 + s/h</p> 	<p>DLG or CG Ball Caps \$12 + s/h</p> 	<p>4" DLG or CG Stickers & 4'x8' Bumper Stickers</p> 

USS Reeves Association Ship's Store Order Form

Item	Description / Size	Qty	Price	Shipping Handling	Total
Photos	Specify Photo# 1, 2, or 3			\$2.00 each	
Ball Cap	Specify DLG or CG			\$5.00 each	
Vinyl Banners				\$14.00 each	
Challenge Coins	Limit of three			\$3.50 / 1 .00 for addl	
Golf Shirt	Sizes run large			\$6.00 each	
T-Shirt	Sizes run large			\$6.00 each	
Bumper Sticker	4" x 8" Vinyl			\$4.00 each	
Vinyl Stickers	*Specify DLG or CG			\$1.00 each	
				Total	

Shipping is via USPS Priority.

Checks Only, please make payable to:

Kurt Stuvengen
410 E. Spring St
Orfordville, WI 53576
Cell: (608) 921-5586

Name: _____
Address: _____
City / State / Zip: _____
Phone#: _____ E-Mail: _____

SITREP for Mike Robertson

Just a quick note to let you all know that Michael Robertson, who normally furnishes us with his “Ruminations from the Northwest” article for our newsletter, has had some medical problems lately and will not be able to share his writings for this edition. I spoke with Lorrie the other day and discovered that Mike had been rushed to the ER about six weeks ago and admitted with pneumonia-like conditions. It took a while, but the hospital finally got him squared away before transferring him TDY to a rehabilitation facility. He has done well with the rehab process and expects to be home on Friday November 8th. I'm sure it will take some time to get back up to speed, but I'm confident in Mike's ability to bounce back. So, we are already looking forward to his next article.

If you'd like to drop Mike some get well wishes, I'm sure he and Lorrie would love to hear from you. Mike's address is: 15709 N. Sycamore St, Mead WA 99021

Editor's Note: For those not familiar with Mike. Mike was essentially the entire Reeves Association for many years. He was one who re-created the Association in 2008 and went on to assume multiple roles as the reunion organizer, treasurer, newsletter editor, web page creator, ships store, and practically everything else that caused the USS Reeves Association to be re-created and successful. The current association owes it's very being to Mike Robertson.

On the subject of Association Dues.....

We as an organization exist to keep our shipmates connected. That's done through Newsletters, our website, and our reunions. It cost money to do all these things, and we are mostly supported by membership dues. The dues are relatively inexpensive, as veterans' organizations go, at \$20.00 per year. We also have Life memberships that add to our coffers by simply paying those dues over the lifetime of the member. We also get some donations, and occasionally make a few dollars above cost in our ships store. We try to be efficient and keep just far enough ahead of the spending curve to have front money for reunion expenses. All things considered, we have just enough in savings to keep us moving along.

What we don't have is consistency with our due's income. It's not because our members aren't willing to pay the dues, it more like we tend to operate in two-year cycles - just like our reunions. What happens is that our members tend to catch-up on dues when we get ready for the next reunion and send along one year's payment with the reunion sign-up paperwork. Some pay for both years, but we find that most just pay for one. We're not saying that this is anything but an oversight on the part of our members, as our two-year reunion cycle does not exactly encourage members to pay annual dues. Unfortunately, the costs associated with Newsletter, and the like, go on all the time, so the annual dues income is truly needed to be prepared for up-front reunion costs and ships store purchasing expenses.

At our business meeting in Providence, we discussed the annual dues issue and determined that we needed the dues income on an annual basis. We voted to keep the dues at \$20.00 per year, and to make the dues cycle a two-year expense. **So, the dues are now in-line with our two-year reunion cycle at \$40.00 for two years.** We also decided to keep the peace, and to not pursue any past dues owed from before 2018. Not that it was too much trouble to collect, we simply would rather not be sending out past-due type correspondence. We want our shipmates to be on-board, and you-owe-us letters are a way to end such relationships.

Our new dues routine is \$40.00 for two-years. You certainly have the option to send us \$20 per year, but it would be much easier for us to track if the check was for \$40. We also invite you to consider a life-membership.

U.S. Navy Extends Life of Ticonderoga-Class Cruisers

[Mike Schuler G-Captain](#)



The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Chosin (CG 65) steams alongside the Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11) during an at-sea demonstration of the Transferable Reload At-sea Method (TRAM) while underway in the Pacific Ocean Oct. 11, 2024. U.S. Navy Photo

November 4, 2024

The U.S. Navy has announced plans to extend the service life of three Ticonderoga-class cruisers beyond their expected operational timeline.

The *USS Gettysburg (CG 64)*, *USS Chosin (CG 65)*, and *USS Cape St. George (CG 71)* will see an additional decade of service, adding 10 years of cumulative ship service life from fiscal year 2026 to 2029.

The decision follows comprehensive modernization efforts, with *USS Gettysburg* and *USS Chosin* already completing upgrades in fiscal years 2023 and 2024, respectively. *USS Cape St. George* is on track to finish its modernization this fiscal year. The extension program includes extensive hull, mechanical, engineering, and combat system improvements, ensuring these warships remain at the cutting edge of naval technology.

“As a former cruiser Sailor, I know the incredible value these highly-capable warships bring to the Fleet and I am proud of their many decades of service,” said Secretary of the Navy, Carlos Del Toro. “After learning hard lessons from the cruiser modernization program, we are only extending ships that have completed modernization and have the material readiness needed to continue advancing our Navy’s mission”.

A key factor in this decision was the [successful demonstration](#) of the Transferrable Reload At-sea Mechanism (TRAM) aboard *USS Chosin* on October 11th. This groundbreaking technology allows for the transfer of missile canisters between ships at sea, significantly enhancing the Navy’s operational flexibility and reducing reliance on port facilities for rearming.

The decision to extend the life of these cruisers comes on the heels of a similar announcement [for 12 Arleigh Burke class Flight I Destroyers](#).

The U.S. Navy has announced plans to extend the service life of 12 Arleigh Burke class Flight I Destroyers beyond their expected 35-year lifespan.

The decision comes after a comprehensive hull-by-hull evaluation of ship material condition, combat capability, technical feasibility, and lifecycle maintenance requirements. This extension is projected to add 48 ship-years of cumulative service life between 2028 and 2035, significantly enhancing the Navy’s operational capacity.

The Arleigh Burke class (DDG 51) Flight I destroyers, numbered DDG 51-71, were built between 1988 and 1997. Notable ships include the *USS Carney (DDG-64)* and *USS Laboon (DDG-58)*, which recent-

U.S. Navy Extends Life of Ticonderoga-Class Cruisers

ly saw combat while participating in U.S. operations to protect merchant shipping against Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.

“Extending these highly-capable, well-maintained destroyers will further bolster our numbers as new construction warships join the Fleet. It also speaks to their enduring role in projecting power globally, and most recently in the Red Sea, their proven ability to defend themselves, as well as our allies, partners and friends from missile and drone attacks,” said Secretary Del Toro.

The Navy’s decision aligns with Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti’s NAVPLAN, which aims to “get more ready players on the field.”

“Today’s budget constrained environment requires the Navy to make prioritized investments to keep more ready players on the field. The Navy is actively pulling the right levers to maintain and grow its Battle Force Inventory to support the United States’s global interests in peace and to win decisively in conflict,” said Adm. Franchetti.

This service life extension comes alongside a broader assessment of fleet capabilities, including adjustments to the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and Zumwalt-class programs. The Navy, initially planning a 52-ship LCS fleet, has scaled the program back to 25 vessels—10 Freedom-class and 15 Independence-class—due to operational and budgetary challenges. The LCS program has encountered obstacles such as reliability issues, maintenance difficulties, and problems with mission module integration, leading to early retirements of some vessels.

In addition, the Zumwalt-class destroyers, originally designed for multi-mission land attack operations, are

undergoing a strategic shift to enhance their offensive capabilities. The three Zumwalt-class ships—*USS Zumwalt (DDG-1000)*, *USS Michael Monsoor (DDG-1001)*, and *USS Lyndon B. Johnson (DDG-1002)*—are currently being outfitted with Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS) hypersonic missiles, repurposing the destroyers from their original design focus.

The service life extension also dovetails with a broader modernization effort that includes the introduction of the Navy’s next-generation Constellation-class frigates (FFG 62), designed to complement the capabilities of larger destroyers like the Arleigh Burke.

As part of its Fiscal Year 2025 budget request, the Navy has proposed decommissioning 19 ships, including two LCS vessels—*USS Jackson (LCS-6)* and *USS Montgomery (LCS-8)*, reflecting a broader strategy to divest older platforms and allocate resources more effectively.

The life extensions are part of a broader strategy to maintain a robust fleet while new ships are being constructed. It also aligns with Secretary Del Toro’s priority of Warfighting Excellence and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti’s Navigation Plan, which aims to increase the number of ready assets in the fleet.

U.S. Navy Demonstrates Game-Changing Underway Reload Technology That Could Redefine Naval Warfare

[Mike Schuler G-Captain](#)

The [U.S. Navy](#) has achieved a significant breakthrough in maritime combat readiness by successfully demonstrating the Transferrable Reload At-sea Method (TRAM) on a warship in open waters for the first time.

This innovative technology allows warships to rearm their missile systems while at sea, drastically reducing downtime and enhancing operational effectiveness.

The historic demonstration took place on October 11th, off the coast of San Diego, where sailors aboard the Ticonderoga-class cruiser *USS Chosin (CG 65)* used the hydraulically powered TRAM device to load an empty missile canister into the ship's MK 41 vertical launching system (VLS).

The event marks the first time TRAM has been conducted at sea, marking a crucial step towards achieving a key strategic objective set by Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro to rearm warships while at sea. "Today, we proved just how game-changing TRAM truly is—and what a powerful deterrent it will be to our competitors," said Del Toro, who witnessed the demonstration firsthand. "This demonstration marks a key milestone on the path to perfecting this capability and fielding it for sustained operations at sea."

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro visits USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11) during a demonstration of the Transferable Rearming Mechanism VLS Reloading At-Sea with the *USS Chosin (CG-65)*, Oct. 11, 2024.

The breakthrough follows a successful land-based trial conducted in July at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD) in California, where engineers developed the TRAM prototype. TRAM is designed to integrate into the underway replenishment (UNREP) process, allowing warships to reload while remaining in the combat zone.

During the at-sea demonstration, the *USS Chosin* connected to the *USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11)*, a Military Sealift Command dry cargo and ammunition ship. The supply vessel transferred

the missile canister across cables to the cruiser, where the TRAM device then maneuvered the canister along a rail system, tilted it into a vertical position, and precisely lowered it into a VLS cell using its advanced cable and pulley mechanism.



Sailors onboard *USS Chosin (CG-65)* complete a demonstration of the Transferable Rearming Mechanism VLS Reloading At-Sea with the *USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11)*, Oct. 11, 2024. U.S. Navy Photo

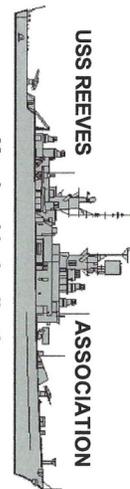
The implications of this advancement are significant. Tim Barnard, director of the NAVSEA technology office, stressed the strategic advantage this capability provides. "Deploying TRAM into the Military Sealift Command logistics fleet would enable combatants to remain in theater while reloading their VLS missile launchers instead of having to travel long distances to a port, greatly expanding the volume and tempo of long-range fires—and the U.S. Navy's advantage over adversaries," he said.



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tomb Bailey@ussreeves.net

Or find more details online at: <http://www.ussreeves.net/association.html>