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Navy ship to bear name of PSU grad

The Navy's newest destroyer will be named after a Penn State graduate who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism in Afghanistan on June 28, 2005.

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Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter announced this week that an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer will be named the USS Michael Murphy.

Murphy, of Patchogue, N.Y., graduated from Penn State in 1998 with a degree in political science. On June 28, 2005, he was the officer in charge of a SEAL team tasked with locating a high-level Taliban militia leader in the region near Asadabad, Afghanistan, when they came under fire from a larger enemy force.

Murphy, mortally wounded, left his position of cover to get a clear signal to communicate with his headquarters and, while being repeatedly shot at, called for support for his team. He returned to his cover position to continue the fight until he succumbed to his wounds, according to the Navy's account.

It was for these actions that he was awarded the Medal of Honor in 2007.

"Every sailor who crosses the brow, every sailor who hears the officer of the deck announce the arrival of the commanding officer, and every sailor who enters a foreign land representing our great nation will do so as an honored member of USS Michael Murphy," Winter said at the dedication of the destroyer, according to a Navy Web site.

The destroyer, with a crew size of 323, uses a gas turbine propulsion system and will be able to operate independently as part of carrier strike groups, surface action groups, amphibious ready groups and underway replenishment groups, according to a Navy news release.