

September 27, 2010

Honoring a Hero



U.S.S. Jason Dunham (DDG 109) Naval Ship Commissioning to take place at Port Everglades in November

Hero is a word often used. On rare occasion, it describes an ordinary person who does something extraordinary. Marine Corporal Jason Dunham was a real hero, one who gave his life on the battlefield to save two of his fellow Marines.

Dunham threw his Kevlar® helmet and his body on a live grenade in April 2004 during Operation Iraqi Freedom in Karabilah, Iraq, sustaining massive injuries. He died eight days later. Jason was 22.

His selfless and heroic act was honored posthumously with the Medal of Honor in 2006 and will continue to be remembered as the United States Navy has named its newest guided missile destroyer the U.S.S. Jason Dunham (DDG 109).

The ship will be commissioned 10 a.m. on November 13 at Port Everglades, as part of 10 days of community activities, from November 5 – 15, surrounding the destroyer's entry into the U.S. fleet.

"This is going to be an inspirational and important community event honoring the ultimate sacrifice Jason gave for his country," said Chuck Black, event chairman. "Commissioning ceremonies are emotional experiences and this one will be especially meaningful to us in South Florida."

During the next few months, there will be several fundraising events to help the Fort Lauderdale Council of the Navy League of the United States cover costs for the commissioning.

Later this summer and fall, Jason's commanding officer in Iraq, Major Trent Gibson, will visit Fort Lauderdale, as will Michael Phillips, the Wall Street Journal reporter who wrote a book about Jason titled "The Gift of Valor." Additionally, Commander Scott Sciretta, captain of the U.S.S. Dunham, will visit, as will members of the Dunham family.

During their time in port, U.S.S. Dunham sailors will interact with the South Florida community,

volunteering their time to visit hospitals, schools and charitable organizations.

This will be the fifth ship commissioned at Port Everglades, including the U.S.S. Leyte Gulf in 1987, the U.S.S. Cole in 1996, the U.S.S. Higgins in 2000 and the U.S.S. Bainbridge in 2005.

Schedule of Events

Friday, 5 November – Ship's arrival; Welcoming Party (location TBD)

Saturday, 6 November – 5 K Run (location Birch State Park (tentative) open to public; Beach Picnic – Ft Lauderdale Beach (South Beach)

Sunday, 7 November – Briny's Pub All Hands Reception 6 pm; open to public (crew to tour Sun Life Stadium, Dolphin/Ravens Watch Party)

Monday, 8 November – Community Service Project; Monday Night Football at Quarterdeck; Mai Kai Dinner/Show (tentative)

Saturday, 13 November – Commissioning Ceremony 10:00 am Port Everglades (Open to Public by Invitation only); ceremony guest tours

Sunday, 14 November – Miami Dolphins vs Tennessee Titans 1 pm Sun Life Stadium; USS JASON DUNHAM crew on field

To learn more visit <http://www.jasondunhamuss.com/>