



# USS Memphis (SSN 691)

Commander Naval Submarine Forces  
Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet

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**CDR Richard P. Breckenridge**  
Commanding Officer

CDR Breckenridge, a native of Marshfield, Massachusetts, graduated from the United States Naval Academy in May 1982. Following nuclear power training, he served onboard USS HAMMERHEAD (SSN 663) from 1984 to 1987. His department head assignment was onboard USS FLORIDA (SSBN 728) (GOLD) from 1990 to 1993 as the

Navigator/ Operations Officer. FLORIDA's crew earned the 1991 Battle Efficiency "E" and 1991 Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Fund Award recognizing the top warship in the Pacific Fleet.

Commander Breckenridge served as Executive Officer of USS PHILADELPHIA (SSN 690) from 1995 through for the Captain Edward F. Ney Award for Food Service Excellence and the SUBLANT nominee for 1997. The crew conducted two North Atlantic deployments and earned the Battle Efficiency "E" in 1996, 1997 and 1998. In 1997, the USS PHILADELPHIA was the CINCLANTFLT nominee the Battenberg Award recognizing the top warship in the Atlantic Fleet. In 1997, Commander Breckenridge was awarded the Navy Submarine League Admiral Lockwood Award in recognition of his leadership and professional excellence.

Commander Breckenridge's shore tours included an assignment at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California where he graduated with distinction earning a dual Masters Degree in Electrical Engineering and Engineering Acoustics. From 1993 through 1995, he was assigned to the Submarine Warfare Division (N87) of OPNAV. Commander Breckenridge directly supported the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition during congressional hearings defining post-Cold War submarine roles and missions, and the future of submarine shipbuilding. He was selected as the Executive Assistant for an Independent Review Panel appointed by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology and prepared extensive briefings for top Navy and Department of Defense leadership.

From 1998 through 2000, Commander Breckenridge served as the Deputy Director of Protocol in the immediate office of the Secretary of Defense. In this role, he directly served Secretary William S. Cohen managing his daily schedule and accompanying him to over 50 countries.

Commander Breckenridge's personal awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), the Navy Commendation Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal (three awards) and various unit awards.

## *In Defense of Human Freedom, May She Ever Prowl the Sea*

The Memphis with its highly sophisticated detection devices, is a far cry from the first Memphis, a wooden five-gun screw steamer built in Philadelphia in 1849. She was chartered by the U.S. Navy for an expedition against Paraguay in 1858-59.

The second Memphis, a 7-gun screw steamer built in Scotland in 1861, was captured in 1862 during the Civil War by the gunboat Magnolia while running the Union blockade from Charleston with a cargo of Confederate cotton. Ironically, the Union Navy placed her in service in the Charleston blockade. She was destroyed by fire in 1883.

Tennessee, an armored cruiser commissioned in 1906, bore that name for most of her service. She was renamed Memphis in May 1916. In August of that year, while lying off Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, she was driven ashore by a tidal wave and wrecked.

The fourth Memphis was commissioned at the Philadelphia Naval Yard in 1925. She served President Franklin Roosevelt during Casablanca Conference in 1942, and was decommissioned in December, 1945.

The fifth Memphis, built as the Esso Memphis in 1944, was acquired by the Navy in 1956 and placed in service as Memphis. In 1966 she was converted by Newport News Shipbuilding to a floating power plant and was transferred to the U.S. Army in 1967 for service in the harbors of South Vietnam.

## *Facts and Figures*

- **Builders:** Newport News Shipbuilding Co.; General Dynamics Electric Boat Division
- **Powerplant:** One nuclear reactor, one shaft
- **Length:** 360 feet (109.73 meters)
- **Beam:** 33 feet (10.06 meters)
- **Displacement:** Approx. 6,900 tons (7010.73 metric tons) submerged
- **Speed:** 20+ knots (23+ miles per hour; 36.8+ KPH)
- **Crew:** 13 officers, 121 enlisted
- **Armament:** Tomahawk cruise missiles, VLS tubes (719 and later), MK48 torpedoes, four torpedo tubes