

USS RAFAEL PERALTA (DDG 115)



“Courageous To The End”

Ship's Data Card

- **Crew size:** 332 personnel
- **Keel Laid Down:** 30 October 2014
- **Launched:** 31 October 2015
- **Christened:** 31 October 2015
- **Commissioned:** 29 July 2017

65th ship of the Arleigh Burke class destroyers, type Flight IIA. Capabilities to embark air wing to include two MH-60R Seahawks. Able to conduct integrated air and missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, and strike warfare.



Ship's Data Card

- **Length Overall:** 155 m (509.5 ft)
- **Navigational Draft:** 9.8 m (32 ft)
- **Beam, Overall:** 21.6 m (71 ft)
- **Displacement:** 9217 Long Tons (9365 Metrics Tonnes)
- **Engine Type:** Four GE LM2500 Gas Turbines
- **Total Design Shaft Power:** 74,600 kW (100,000 HP)
- **Generator Type:** Three Gas Turbine Generators
- **Rudder Type:**
 - Twin rudder configuration
 - Electro-hydraulic steering units
- **Propellers:** Two Controllable/Reversible Pitch (CRP)
- **Centerline Anchor:**
 - 4081.5 kg (9000 lb) Stockless
 - 12 shots chain: 329 m (1080 ft or 180 fathoms)



Ship's Crest



SHIELD: Dark blue and gold are the colors traditionally associated with the Navy, representing the sea and excellence. The two lions, adapted from the Mexican Federal District Coat of Arms where Sgt. Peralta was born, symbolize his bravery and act of courage when, despite his wounds, he saved the lives of his fellow Marines. Each lion bears the commendations awarded for his selfless act--the Navy Cross on the left and the Purple Heart on the right, both awarded posthumously. The pale denotes naval strength and displays three arched and coupé chevronels, indicating Sgt. Peralta's military rank while serving in the Marines. The war eagle honors his Aztec heritage. The gray base suggests the prow of a ship, highlighting the vessel's namesake, USS RAFAEL PERALTA (DDG 115). The compass rose emphasizes the worldwide scope and the ship's capabilities of integrated air and missile defense, anti-surface warfare, undersea warfare and amphibious readiness group support.

SUPPORTERS: The Marine Corps helmet with desert pattern cover positioned on the rifle stock is a tribute to the fallen Marine. The crossed Navy Officer sword and Navy Chief Petty Officer cutlass symbolizes the collaboration and teamwork of the officers and crew members of the RAFAEL PERALTA. The swords are tips up, signifying a crew that is ready for battle.

MOTTO: The Latin motto, "**FORTIS AD FINEM**," commemorates Sgt. Peralta's character while serving in Iraq, "**Courageous to the End.**"

SEAL: The coat of arms as blazoned in full color on a white disc encircled by a red designation band, edged with a Gold rope and bearing the name "**USS RAFAEL PERALTA**" at the top and "**DDG 115**" at base, all Gold. Red and gold are the colors traditionally associated with the Marine Corps. The red circular design conveys Sgt. Peralta's eternal sacrifice.

Sergeant Rafael Peralta

Namesake of USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115)

“Be proud of me, bro... and be proud of being an American.” Sergeant Rafael Peralta wrote those words to his little brother, Ricardo, the night before he was killed while clearing houses in Fallujah, Iraq, with his U.S. Marine squad. Those words reflected Sgt. Peralta’s character - a Marine’s Marine, with his boot camp graduation certificate hanging on his bedroom wall in his family’s home alongside copies of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. He wanted to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps immediately upon graduating from San Diego’s Morse High School in 1997, but had to wait until he received his green card. When he finally received that card in 2000, he enlisted the very same day. He would later become a U.S. citizen while serving in the Corps. His service in the Marine Corps progressed, and he was noted for showing great enthusiasm and patriotism as he completed his basic training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego later in 2000, and then further instruction at Infantry Training Battalion, School of Infantry, Camp Pendleton, California, where he received the military occupational specialty 0311, Rifleman.

In 2001, Sgt. Peralta was deployed overseas when he received the tragic news of his father’s death in a work-place accident. He returned home to be with his family, help them through the difficult time, and take on the “man of the house” role as he also trained at the San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot and at Camp Pendleton. In 2003 he transferred to the Marine Corp Base Hawaii in Kaneohe, Hawaii and re-enlisted for four more years. Sgt. Peralta was assigned to the “Lava Dogs” of 1st Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment, 3d Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force and deployed to Iraq in 2004.

He served as a scout team leader in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was heavily engaged in the city of Fallujah, Iraq, during Operation Al Fajr, known also as the Second Battle of Fallujah. After three long days clearing scores of houses in insurgent-heavy Fallujah, Sgt. Peralta asked to join an under-strength squad and volunteered to stand post that evening, allowing his fellow Marines more time to rest. That night, he wrote and sent the letter to his brother, Ricardo, who was then 14.

The next morning the squad Sgt. Peralta had joined successfully cleared six houses. At the seventh, the point man in the squad opened a door to a back room and immediately came under intense close-range automatic weapons fire from multiple insurgents. The Marines returned fire, wounding one insurgent. While attempting to get out of the line of fire, Sgt. Peralta was shot and fell mortally wounded. The insurgents fled, throwing a grenade as they ran from the building. The grenade came to rest near Sgt. Peralta’s head.



Sergeant Rafael Peralta

Namesake of USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115)



According to the official citation for the Navy Cross award: “Without hesitation and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, Sgt. Peralta reached out and pulled the grenade to his body, absorbing the brunt of the blast and shielding fellow Marines only feet away. Sgt. Peralta succumbed to his wounds. By his undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty, Sgt. Peralta reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.” Sgt. Peralta died that morning in Fallujah, on Nov. 15, 2004, at the age of 25. In addition to the Navy Cross, Sgt. Peralta was awarded the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Ribbon. His other awards and decorations include a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with one bronze campaign star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

He is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego. The story of Sgt. Peralta’s service and heroism has become akin to legend in the U.S. Marine Corps. His story is told regularly at boot camp, and it has been cited by members of Congress and high-ranking generals. In 2007, the command post for the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit at Camp Hansen in Okinawa, Japan, was named “Peralta Hall” in honor of him. In 2012, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced that Sgt. Peralta would be forever memorialized by having a U.S. Navy destroyer named after him. Wherever USS Rafael Peralta sails, it will carry the message “Fortis ad Finem,” meaning “Courageous to the End.” This ship and these words will ensure the world will always remember and be inspired by the sacrifice of Sgt. Peralta, a young man who couldn’t wait to join the corps and serve his country, who loved his family deeply and put the welfare and lives of his fellow Marines above his own - a young man who was Courageous to the End.



Commander Stephen D. Szachta

Commanding Officer

Commander Stephen D. Szachta Jr., a native of St. Charles, MO, graduated from the Naval Academy in 2006 earning a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering. He completed his initial Division Officer tour aboard USS FORREST SHERMAN (DDG 98) as Ordnance Officer, participating in her maiden deployment to the C6F AOR, as well as deploying to the C4F AOR in support of Counter Narcotics. He completed his second Division Officer tour aboard USS ELROD (FFG 55) as Damage Control Assistant, deploying to the CENTCOM AOR in support of Counter Piracy. His Department Head tours included Chief Engineer aboard USS PREBLE (DDG 88) where he deployed to the C7F AOR and Chief Engineer aboard USS CAPE ST. GEORGE (CG 71), where he was a key leader in placing the ship in the CG Modernization/Surface Life Extension Program. After being selected for early command and completing the command training pipeline, he had the privilege of commanding USS MONSOON (PC 4) homeported in the Kingdom of Bahrain. During his two-year command tour MONSOON was highly operational performing critical missions in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman.

His crew won the Battle “E” for 2018. Ashore he completed a two-year curriculum at the Naval Postgraduate School, graduating with distinction earning a Master of Science in Systems Engineering as well as completing JPME Phase I. Additionally he served as a Leadership and Navigation/Seamanship instructor at the Naval Academy. His personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (third award), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (second award), and various unit and individual awards.

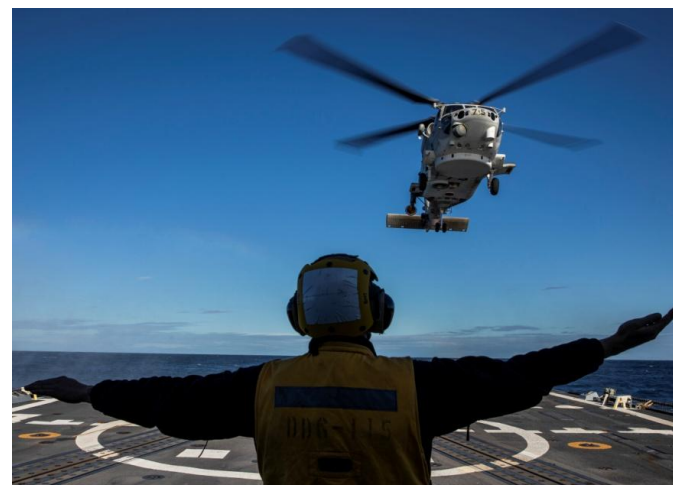


L
A
V
A



D
O
G
S

L
A
V
A



D
O
G
S

USS RAFAEL PERALTA

(DDG 115)



“Fortis Ad Finem”