

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
USS Utah (SSN 801) Naming Announcement
State Capitol, Salt Lake City, Utah
Tuesday, January 19, 2016

Thank you so much.

Governor, it's great to be here. As a former governor, I know something of your schedule. And the fact that you're here honors us. Thank you also, most importantly, for continuing to support our Sailors, our Marines, and the more than 155,000 veterans who call Utah home.

Now, I don't know if you've noticed, but Utah has not on an oceanfront. (Laughter.) But you have played a critical role in the success of our Navy and Marine Corps. You've heard about the Medal of Honor recipients that served in the Navy, and the relationship, our Sailors and Marines, they have with American people is a constant reminder of why they serve. And I know that the governor, Governor Herbert, has made the economy his primary focus. Shipbuilding and repairs contributes \$45 million a year to the gross national product of the state of Utah. So you may be a long way from the ocean, but you're very connected to our Navy.

What the Navy and Marine Corps very uniquely provide is presence, around the globe, around the clock. We ensure stability. We deter adversaries. We give our leaders options in times of crisis. We're America's away team; we never get a home game. Sailors and Marines deploy equally in times of peace and in times of war. They're not just in the right place at the right time, they're in the right place all the time. We get places faster, we stay longer, we bring everything we need with us, and we don't have to ask anyone's permission to do the job we need to do because our ships are sovereign U.S. territory.

And our ability to provide presence, as was said in the introduction, is built on four fundamentals: people, our Sailors and Marines; platforms, our ships and our aircraft, our systems; power, how we fuel those platforms; and partnerships, our strong relationships with our international friends and allies, with industry, and most importantly with the American people.

Since the founding of our Navy in 1797, my predecessors have had the privilege and responsibility of naming all our Navy ships. We've named them after people, cities, states. We name them as a reflection of our naval heritage, as an expression of gratitude for the support shown to our Sailors and Marines, and as an expression of the values that the people of the states reflect.

Now, I think a lot of you, particularly with the exhibits here, know the story of the named battleship USS Utah, BB-31. I remember the Florida class of dreadnought battleships, commissioned 104 years ago. Utah was stationed at Bantry Bay, Ireland, for World War I and

earned a Battle Star for her service in that war. After war, she was demilitarized and converted into a training ship, fitted out with anti-aircraft guns to train our gunners, and was in Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7th, 1941. Utah was hit by two Japanese torpedoes and immediately started flooding. She sank in just a few minutes, losing 64 members of her crew. But due to the heroic actions of Sailors onboard that ship, 461 members of the ship community survived. The wreckage of the Utah still remains, and a memorial is erected nearby – a memorial to the fallen.

And the reason I took that walk through history was to show you we've come full circle. Today, the world's greatest submarines are built in an interesting way. Half of each submarine is built by Huntington Ingalls in Connecticut, and half of each submarine is built in Newport News, Virginia, by General Dynamics. These submarines have a mast that's equipped with high-resolution cameras and infrared sensors and laser range finders, its propulsion system is just about silent, and its open-system architecture lets you plug-and-play – as technology changes, you don't have to change the whole ship, you can just change anything; you can just unplug some stuff and put some new stuff in. These submarines are nuclear-powered, and they will never need to be refueled. They will be part of our fleet for decades. Sailors who are not yet born will crew it someday.

These submarines, and their introduction, are examples of how we have halted the worst decline in our Navy fleet. On 9/11/2001, we had 316 ships in the United States Navy. Seven years later, in 2008 – at the end of 2008, we'd decreased to 278 ships. In that seven years, the U.S. Navy only put 41 ships under contract. That was not enough to keep our fleet from shrinking further and it was not enough keep our shipyards in business. I took office in 2009. In the seven years since then, we've put 84 ships under contract.

We've done with things like fixed-price contracts, multiyear procurements and block buys so that we can get and use submarines that are completed ahead of schedule and under budget. The biggest contract we ever signed in the Navy was for 10 of these subs. They cost about \$2 billion apiece. We paid for nine. We're getting 10. It's like getting one of those punch cards, buy nine subs, get your 10th one free. (Laughter.) So thanks to the support of the American people and the support of Congress, we're going to get back to more than 300 ships by the end of this decade. And we haven't done it at the expense of aircraft.

Now, I want to say one special personal thing about this sub. I'm going to keep up with this – with this submarine all my life, and it's going to be special. They're all special to me, but this one has a special place in my heart because the sponsor of the ship is my daughter Kate. Kate, the sponsor imbues the submarine, our ship, with her spirit. She animates that ship. This submarine is going to be something with Kate Mabus as its sponsor. Now, I have to admit I am not completely objective about this sponsorship.

This sub will begin to deploy in 2019. She will join the fleet in 2022 – representing us, protecting us here at home. As we sail deeper into the 21st century, it's time for another ship to be named after this great state. So I'm honored to announce the name of our newest nuclear-powered fast-attack submarine, SSN 801, USS Utah.