

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
Naming Celebration for USS Indiana  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Friday, 22 June 2012

Thank you all for being here. I am pleased to announce here in Indianapolis one of our most advanced naval platforms, a nuclear submarine, will be named USS Indiana.

The name “Indiana” is a part of our great naval history. The first Indiana was a battleship. She was only the third battleship the U.S. Navy ever got. She provided support during the Spanish-American War and invaluable training to our Sailors prior to World War I.

The second ship was also a battleship. BB-58 sailed into the fleet in 1942 and into history as it fought in storied World War II battles like Tarawa, Iwo Jima and Saipan. That Indiana’s legacy is still on display throughout the state. Her mast and two gun mounts are installed outside of gate 3 at the Indiana University football stadium in Bloomington. One of her anchors is in Fort Wayne, and the relics of her life can be found in museums and schools across Indiana. But since she was decommissioned in 1947, the name “Indiana” has not graced our fleet, and I’m glad to change that today.

Construction will begin later this year on SSN 789, the new Indiana. She is scheduled to arrive in the fleet in 2017.

She’ll be built to excel in the traditional areas of submarine warfare, against other submarines, against surface ships and against targets on land. But she’ll also be built to excel in nontraditional areas, things like delivering our SEALs to their missions and gathering intelligence from far-off shores. During her service, Indiana may patrol the waters from the Western Pacific to the North Atlantic, under the Arctic, doing incredibly varied and valuable work. She’ll be constructed at Newport News, Virginia, by Huntington Ingalls Industries.

These attack submarines -- that Indiana will be one of -- are great success stories. They have been on or ahead of schedule and under budget. Earlier this month we commissioned the USS Mississippi, in my home state, in Pascagoula. That submarine set a record. She was over a year early arriving in the fleet. That kind of performance is a model for our shipbuilding program.

September 11th, 2001 our naval fleet stood at 316 ships, and we had over 377,000 Sailors. Just eight years later, when I took office, the fleet had dropped to 283 ships and close to 49,000 fewer Sailors. At the same time, too many of our programs were, to use a technical term, a mess. Ships were being designed while they were being built, and the cost of too many of our ships was out of control. Over the last three years, we’ve stabilized our shipbuilding program and we’ve stabilized our fleet, and we will grow our fleet to 300 ships by 2019. Since December 2010 we have placed 40 ships under contract. This compares to three ships that were built the year before I came in office. We’ve done this by using better tools, like fixed-price contracts,

and introducing more competition. That's a significant accomplishment for the Navy and also for America.

We've made it a priority to rebuild our fleet, and today's ceremony is part of that successful effort. By doing this, we keep America safe, we keep our Navy strong around the world, and we keep our economy strong by keeping these highly skilled jobs at home. And even though Indiana is a good ways from the ocean, the Navy and Indiana have incredibly close ties, thanks in part to the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, Indiana. It's the third-largest naval installation in the world. It's filled with engineering and technical jobs, and it's filled with great people doing those jobs. Crane is Indiana's 11th-largest single-site employer, and that's something Indiana and the Navy and America can be proud of.

This new USS Indiana is going to be in the fleet for more than three decades. There will be Sailors on Indiana who are not yet born.

The men and women, General Mutter, who will serve on Indiana may well be the only part of America that many people around the world will ever see. In fact, most Americans have too few opportunities to see and know what our Navy does. One way to remedy this is by the close connection between the people of a state and the ship that bears her name. This ship, USS Indiana, honors the citizens of Indiana, who have so strongly supported our military, and it honors Indiana's veterans, some of whom we have here today, who have represented Indiana so well in the armed services. Thank you for being here. Thank you, General, for coming today.

One of those veterans was Indianapolis native Rear Admiral Norman Scott, who led naval forces in the Southern Pacific during the early days of World War II, before his life was taken in a naval battle off Guadalcanal. For the actions in that battle, Norman Scott was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. That's the kind of vet, that's the kind of citizen, that's the kind of character that lives in this state and will live aboard USS Indiana.

So thank you all for being here today. Thank you for being a part of the life of this ship and a part of our Navy's history. Thank you for joining us in this celebration of a great state and its legacy, which will soon be forged in steel and sent to sea to support America. May she represent the same ideals that the six heroic figures cut in stone represent on the memorial behind me: patriotism and peace, liberty and memory, courage and victory.

In the words of the Navy motto, *semper paratus* – forever courageous.

Thank you all.