

**PCU TEXAS (SSN 775) Christening
31 Jul 2004
VADM Kirkland H. Donald
COMNAVSUBFOR**

(AS PREPARED)

Thank you, Tom, for the kind introduction.

First Lady Bush, Senator Hutchison, Representatives Davis, Forbes, Schrock, Scott, Secretary England, Mr. Young, Mr. Aviles, Admiral Bowman, Admiral Fallon, Mr. Schievelbein, Mr. Casey, distinguished guests, fellow submariners, shipbuilders from Northrop Grumman Newport News and Electric Boat, ladies and gentlemen, Sailors and Families of the TEXAS, it is an honor and a pleasure to be here on such a momentous occasion. Today marks the second in a long line of christenings, all steps toward defining the future of our Submarine Force.

I am thrilled that you, Mrs. Bush, are the sponsor for this magnificent ship.

It is entirely appropriate because as a career educator, you embody the value of lifelong learning and the need to apply what we learn to address the challenges of the future.

This class of ship arose from the Navy's "Lifetime" of learning, experiences gained over the 104 years of submarine operations safeguarding this nation's freedom.

We recognized at the end of the Cold War that the world and the security challenges we would face would be different, requiring a different submarine. We also knew that predicting the exact nature of those new challenges would be fraught with peril, so flexibility was every bit as important as the capability it would have at commissioning.

The VIRGINIA class ships are capable of entering and remaining in the backyards of potential adversaries undetected, preparing and shaping the battlespace, and, if so directed, striking rapidly and decisively. And, because of her modular and flexible design, she is ready to adapt to, and excel at, whatever the future brings.

We are very proud of these ships, the people who designed and built them, and the Sailors who will take them into harm's way if need be.

Commander Litherland and his crew, hailing from 35 states – One out of ten who calls the “Lone Star” State home, have embraced the challenge of “readying” this great ship for sea. They have spent untold hours training in the classroom on their ship, aboard their sister ship VIRGINIA, in the Combat Control System module of their sister ship HAWAII, and the unique VIRGINIA class ship control trainer in Groton, Connecticut.

Their demonstrated expertise has been confirmed by the selection of ten Sailors for promotion to Chief Petty Officer and the depth of their talent pool is reflected in the selection of five crewmembers for officer commissioning programs.

Their unwavering dedication to excellence is reflected in their meticulous preparation for and success in every test and inspection as the lead ship of its class in Northrop Grumman Newport News.

That dedication and service extends beyond the lifelines of the TEXAS, and even the shipyard, as Texas' Sailors have performed extensive volunteer service with the Saunders Elementary School through the Adopt-a-school program and by outreach to a local Newport News food shelter.

Mrs. Bush, we all appreciate your keen interest in the progress of your ship's construction and your crew's development. Your words of encouragement have been deeply appreciated by the officers and men aboard.

Mrs. Bush, Sailors who know a thing or two about new construction tell me you are setting a new high water mark for infusing your crew and your ship with your gracious spirit. And, as we all know, if you want truth, ask a Sailor on the deckplate. Thank you for your dedicated support.

The TEXAS team is not only Sailors. The TEAM is every bit as much about the world-class shipbuilders here at Newport News Shipyard and their partners at Electric Boat. These men and women have a passion for building ships and no one in the world does it better. Thank you for what you do!

I now have the distinct privilege of welcoming our next speaker, a man who requires little introduction to most of you here today. Admiral “Skip” Bowman, Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, is the Navy’s senior Submarine officer with over 38 years of service.

Admiral Bowman’s breadth of experience includes serving in both nuclear attack and ballistic missile submarines as well as in key policy positions as Chief of Naval Personnel and as the Director of Political Military Affairs for the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell. He received his fourth star in 1996 upon assuming his duties as the third successor to Admiral Hyman G. Rickover.

Admiral Bowman’s professional development has certainly been supported by his impressive academic credentials. He is a graduate of Duke University where he received his commission; he holds dual Master of Science Degrees in Engineering from MIT, and an Honorary Doctorate from Duke University. We have all benefited from his leadership and guidance.

**Ladies and Gentleman, it is my great pleasure to introduce
Admiral Skip Bowman.**