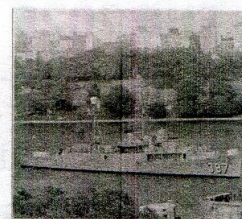




USS WILHOITE

DE-DER 397



JULY AUG SEPT OCT NOV- 2024

Again I am so sorry this is so late! I had another round with hospital, rehab and home therapy. I have tried to get someone to take over this to no avail, so you all are just going to have to put up with late newsletters sometimes. At the age of going to be 91 here in about 3 weeks it just happens when your body starts going down hill so again I am sorry about the lateness.

We had a good reunion in Nebraska even only having 16 people. We are going to try to have one more reunion to see what kind of interest there is. This will be held in Dallas, Texas with Steve Gergens hosting this one. The date is October 24-27, 2025. After the holidays you will be getting more information on this. We will be making a decision on whether to continue or put the USS Wilhoite down!!! This depends on the interest shown on this reunion.

As far as the Newsletter, if you enjoy it and want me to continue doing it, I will as long as my eyesight holds out and I'm still above ground. I'll ask again is there anyone who might be interested in keeping the newsletter going? You don't have to do what I do. I use Printshop and there are others you could use if you want to go that way. It was also suggested to just put the newsletter 2 times a year and if we did this it would cut down on expense. After this year your next newsletter would be in July, 2025.

If you have suggestions for the newsletter that you would like to see or read about, please let me know.

There is a form enclosed in this newsletter, please fill it out. This will tell us about interest in the newsletter or reunions. Your next newsletter will be December.

We have not ask for a larger donation in a long while and our Association is getting smaller so what we cover with our donations is websights, postage on newsletters, help on reunions and donations for charities so we are going to have to cut back unless we can increase our Associations members.

"Smooth Sailing"

Liz

THE 2025 DONATIONS ARE NOW DUE! IF YOU NOT INTERESTED PLEASE LET US KNOW!

These listed have sent in their dues and the Association THANKS YOU FOR PAYING YOUR 2024 CONTRIBUTIONS! This helps pay postage for mailing and other items that come up, etc reunions and website.

Alcorn Michael and Dana (2024)

Berry David (2024)

Caldwell John and Brenda (2024)

Compton Ed (2023)

Cusato Paul (2023)

Dougher Thomas (2022)

Dutchuk John (2024)

Dyson Al (2022)

Frederiksen Geri (2023)

Gennetti Fred (2024)

Gergens Steve (2025)

Hagee Charles (2023)

Hawes Eugene (2022)

Heller Richard (2022)

Horch Linda (2024)

Huff Roland (2024)

Huml Vincent (2023)

Hydro John (2024)

Johnson Mary (2025)

Knight James (2025)

Layton Geoffrey (2022)

Long Leroy (2023)

Marcotte Donald G.(2024)

Markley Ray (2023)

Mauldin Connie (2022)

McMurdo James (2025)

Morrissey Tom (2025)

Mullin James (2024)

Murphy Obie (2024)

Owens William & Marilyn (2024)

Parker David (2024)

Payson David (2023)

Payton Johnny (2023)

Pohl Art (2023)

Robinson Lee (2024)

Rott Donna (2024)

Shanahan, Jr. John (2028)

Silhan Peter (2024)

Smith Raymond (2023)

Thompson Ross (2024)

Throm Larry (2024)

Torriglia Paul (2027)

Valiant Martha (2024)

Walker John

West Helen (2024)

Wickizer Larry (2024)

Yonkofski Ben (2024)



The following shipmates has passed away this year



If you know of someone else, please let us know. You can contact one of the Officers on Page 4 for contact purposes.

Ray Candor

LBP Gould, Jr.

Robert Johnson

Richard Scheeder

Donald Shuck

Norris Syverson

May God Bless these families and our shipmates that are still with us!!!

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NAVY NEWS



AND

STORIES

**Thomas (Mack) Wilhoite - This young man is who our wonderful
Ship is named after!**



Thomas Mack Wilhoite—born on 12 February 1921 in Guthrie, Ky.—enlisted in the Naval Reserve on 16 June 1941 at Atlanta, Ga., and received his aviation indoctrination training at the Naval Reserve Air Base, Atlanta, Ga. On 7 August. He reported for flight instruction at the Naval Air Station (NAS), Pensacola, Fla., and was appointed an aviation cadet the following day. Transferred to NAS, Miami, Fla., on 15 January 1942 for further training, he became a naval aviator on 6 February. Three days later, he was commissioned an ensign and, at the end of February, reported to the Advanced Carrier Training Group, Atlantic Fleet, NAS, Norfolk, Va.

There, he joined Fighting Squadron (VF) 9, then fitting out and, in time, became the assistant navigation officer for that squadron. Operation "Torch"—the invasion of French North Africa—saw VF—9 assigned to the carrier Ranger (CV-4). Each section of the squadron drew assigned tasks on 8 November 1942, the first day of the landings; and Wilhoite flew one of five Grumman F4F-4 Wildcats which attacked the French airdrome at Rabat-Sale, the headquarters of the French air forces in Morocco. Despite heavy anti-aircraft fire, he pressed home a determined attack and set three French bombers afire with his guns.

In a second strike directed at the Port Lyautey airdrome later that day, Wilhoite flew as part of the third flight and destroyed one fighter—a Dewoitine 520—by strafing. However, the Vichy ground gunners served their weapons well; and Wilhoite's Wildcat took hits from the intense flak and crashed about one mile from Port Lyautey.

Wilhoite received a Silver Star, posthumously, for displaying "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" during the strikes at Rabat-Sale and Port Lyautey. The accompanying citation also cited Wilhoite's "superb airmanship and tenacious devotion to duty" in pressing home his strafing attacks. Although he was killed in action, Wilhoite had played his part in the significant operations of VF-9 in neutralizing Vichy French air power that, if unhindered, could have severely hampered Operation "Torch."

THOMAS (MACK) WILHOITE NAMESAKE FOR USS WILHOITE 397

Page 2

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This one was sent to us by Frank Roche

(This is a shipmate is one you never forget! He was a worker for the Wilhoite and help recruit shipmates, and served as Treasure for upteen years. For those that did not know him you missed a great shipmate. Wish some of you could have met him.)

"One bright and sunny day aboard the WILHOITE, while painting the deck on the fantail my now good friend Bill "Doc" West came strolling by. Being truck up a casual conversation. After a while I asked him how long he was in the NAVY. After a few seconds he replied and I quote: "All me bloomin' life, seaman Roche! Me mother was a mermaid, me father was King Neptune. I was born on the crest of a wave and rocked in the cradle of the deep. Seaweed and barnacles are me clothes. Every tooth in me head is a marlinspike; the hair on me head is hemp. Every bone in me body is a spar and when I spits, I spits tar! I'se hard, I is, I am, I are!"

I was going to say, "What are you some kind of nut." Then I realized that this was the guy who would be giving me shots and seeing to my overall health needs. True story? I don't know but according to naval personnel records his birth certificate is located in Davy Jones' Locker. I wrote to Davy Jones but the postal service returned it as addressee unknown. Maybe you can ask Doc if you visit the beautiful hills of Tennessee. Good luck there too.

Ronald Reagan Sayings

If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be A Nation Gone Under!!

The most terrifying words in the English are, I'm from the Government and I'm here to help!

Navy Strategic Systems Programs

ARLINGTON, Virginia — In March, Congress signed a letter establishing the Navy's Strategic Systems Programs office as the organization that will design, develop, build and deploy a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile, six years after it was recommended in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the office's director said Nov. 14.

Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment William LaPlante in March directed the Navy to establish a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile, or SLCM-N, program office and to begin the analysis phase. LaPlante testified to Congress in April that the Nuclear Weapons Council will lead a review of options to execute the SLCM-N program "in a manner that balances cost, deterrence value and risk to the [nuclear modernization] program of record and the Joint Force."

Vice Adm. Johnny Wolfe, director of Strategic Systems Programs, told reporters during the Naval Submarine League's Annual Symposium and Industry Update that the program office has been stood up and the next step is "understanding what is the trade space and then what [does] the schedule look like to get to the acquisition decisions, to the milestones, and all that."

Trade studies for the program have started, and "we're going to continue the dialogue with OSD, we're going to continue the dialogue with the Hill, as we start to understand what would a program look like? How are we going to move that forward? And quite frankly ... [it's] a very aggressive timeline," Wolfe said.

Congressional language mandates initial operational capability by 2034, he said — an ambitious timeline "much like Conventional Prompt Strike" — another Strategic Systems Programs effort to develop a conventional, boost-glide hypersonic weapon system the Navy will integrate into both Zumwalt-class destroyers and Virginia-class submarines.

The Navy has deployed sea-launched cruise missiles before, but not since the Cold War.

"We used to have a sea-launched cruise missile," Wolfe said. "We've had a Tomahawk that did that, and they decided to get rid of that." He said there was talk of reconstituting the Tomahawk missile, but "it's not that easy."

The weapon's merits have been a source of controversy, with the Obama administration in 2010 recommending the Navy retire the missiles, the Trump administration proposing the weapon in 2018 and the Biden administration then proposing the program be canceled in 2022, according to an October report from the Congressional Research Service.

Navy Strategic Systems Programs - Page 2

The program is on, and building the office from the ground up is no small lift, Wolfe said.

"And so we're doing the trade studies, we're starting to understand what is it going to take ... to stand up an entirely new industrial base and to work with the fleet, who is different than our [ballistic missile submarine] fleet, and start to build those relationships and start to get them to understand what it would mean to have a nuclear weapon on a fast attack submarine, or whatever platform is chosen," he said.

The focus now is learning what that looks like through studies and focusing on "getting things stood up, getting those great studies done, and then in parallel ... working with every key stakeholder to make sure that we've thought our way through this in the most efficient and effective way," he said.

One thing they are not going to do is take away from other programs, he said. "We can't hurt other Navy programs or Air Force programs as we stand this up. The office will also need to look at how to "bring this to scale," he said.

Wolfe said "we're not there yet" as far as understanding how the program is going to be structured, "because we're kind of in our infancy. ... So, that's where we're at." He said the office has about 30 people and is "trying to ramp up."

"But we're going at a pretty good pace. We're kind of thinking about it from a program perspective," he said. The program office is also utilizing lessons learned from the Conventional Prompt Strike program.

"The program office, we kind of learned some good lessons in Conventional Prompt Strike when we stood that program office up," he said. "Because, again, same type of thing ... we didn't have anybody that really did that. So, we're taking those lessons learned, and I've actually got a couple of folks that helped stand up Conventional Prompt Strike that are now helping us think through how we stand up" the new program office.

Wolfe said his office is working with combatant commanders and "big Navy" to understand "what are the requirements going to be on numbers and what are they going to do?"

Navy Strategic Systems Programs - Page 3

The fiscal year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act required the executive branch to ensure SLCM-N initial operational capability. The Biden administration did not include the missile in its 2023, 2024 and 2025 budget requests, but Congress has continued to provide funding for it, the Congressional Research Service report said.

"Lots of changes going on," Wolfe said. "But here's what I would tell you: I feel really really good about where the organization, where the Navy is at" with thinking through how to balance and carry out its programs across the board.

***Why was the Navy captain so good at math? Because he knew how to square the ship!**

***Why did the Navy hire a gardener? Because they needed someone to weed out the enemy!**

***Why don't sailors like to play cards in the Navy? Because they're afraid of getting caught at "sea"!**

***Why did the Navy sailor bring a pillow to the war zone? So he could take a nap-alm attack!**

***Why did the sailor join a cooking class? Because he wanted to learn how to "sea" food properly!**

***Why did the scarecrow join the Navy? Because he heard they were outstanding in their field!**

***How do you organize a fantastic Navy party?
You "fleet" all your friends.**

***Why did the sailor bring a ladder to the submarine? Because he wanted to go to the next level.**

***What do you call a boat full of polite sailors?
A "courtesy" ship.**

***What did the sailor use to fix his computer? A keyboard and a "sea" drive.**

***Why did the sailor bring a broom to the Navy base? Because he wanted to sweep the deck.**

***What did the Navy chef say when asked about his cooking skills?
"I'm a 'shore' thing!"**



Beloit is the 15th Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) commissioned in the United States Navy and the first U.S. Navy ship to bear this namesake.

The Honorable Tony Evers, Governor of Wisconsin, will deliver the principal address at the commissioning ceremony. Remarks will also be provided by The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senator from Wisconsin; The Honorable Gwen Moore, U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's 4th District; The Honorable Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy; Admiral James Kilby, Vice Chief of Naval Operations; and Mr. Ali Ruwaih, Vice President of Small Combatants and Ship Systems, Lockheed Martin.

The ship's sponsor, retired Army Maj. Gen. Marcia M. Anderson, a native of Beloit, Wisconsin, became the first female African American officer to earn her second star in the U.S. Army Reserves. After 37 years of service, Anderson retired in 2016 as Deputy Chief of the U.S. Army Reserve. Her previous assignment was Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Human Resources Command. Noting Beloit's long history of supporting national security—both by providing personnel who serve and by helping to build the ships and vehicles that make our military the envy of the world—Anderson expressed confidence that the USS Beloit and her crew will become an integral part of our nation's history.

"USS Beloit (LCS 29) reflects many of the engineering and weapons improvements that the littoral combat ship has gained since the Navy first began operating these ships," said Secretary Del Toro. "When it receives new capabilities, such as the Naval Strike Missile, it will sail even more confidently in contested waters. The ship's namesake honors the contributions of the people of Beloit, Wisconsin, to the U.S. Navy, including the Fairbanks Morse plant, which built engines that power many of the Navy's ships and submarines."

The LCS class consists of two variants: Freedom and Independence, which are designed and built by two industry teams. Lockheed Martin leads the Freedom-variant team (odd-numbered hulls) in Marinette, Wisconsin. Austal USA leads the Independence-variant team (even-numbered hulls) in Mobile, Alabama.

Beloit The 15th Freedom Variant Littoral Combat Ship-Page 2

Littoral combat ships like Beloit will be equipped with the Over-the-Horizon Weapons System (OTH-WS) Naval Strike Missile (NSM). The OTH NSM provides the U.S. and its allies with long-range anti-surface strike capability, as well as increased coastline defense, deterrence, and interoperability.

Littoral combat ships are fast, optimally manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments, defending against 21st-century coastal threats. LCS ships integrate with joint, combined, manned, and unmanned teams to support forward presence, maritime security, sea control, and deterrence missions around the globe.

The ceremony will be livestreamed at www.dvidshub.net/webcast/35146. The link will become active approximately ten minutes prior to the event at 9:50 a.m. CST.

STRIKE ONE, STRIKE TWO, STRIKE THREE, YOU'RE OUT

Sent to us by Frank Roche (Has passed on)

This does not describe a trip to a baseball game but the task assigned to the U.S. Navy Seals on the night of 12 April 2009. Described as "untrained teenagers with pistols and AK-47's" four Somali pirates took the U.S. civilian ship MAERSK ALABAMA hostage.

After offering himself as hostage to gain his crew's release Captain Richard Phillips of Burlington, Vermont boarded a lifeboat with the four pirates. The USS Bainbridge arrived a few hours later, the USS Boxer and USS Halyburton arrived a few days later. On 11 April 2009 NAVY SEALS parachuted from C-17's and boarded the Bainbridge.

Now out of fuel and drifting out to sea the pirates allowed a tow line from the Bainbridge to be attached to the lifeboat. Big mistake. Unknown to the pirates and under the cover of darkness the Bainbridge crew began to reel them in. Now within 80 feet and very choppy seas the Seals fired almost in unison. The result: three pirates, three rounds, three dead bodies. Although this was a task in the international spotlight the Seals do many, many more assignments that will never be known. A tip of the hat to all US Navy Seals for a job well done.

P.S. The fourth pirate is lucky there are only three strikes in baseball.



USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's lead ship of its new class of fleet replenishment oilers, conducted initial Builder's Trials and returned to port, Feb. 4.

Builder's Trials consist of a series of in-port and at-sea demonstrations that allow the Navy and the shipbuilder, General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (NASSCO), to assess the ship's systems and readiness prior to acceptance trials and delivery to the Navy.

"Ensuring readiness through sea trials is a crucial step to bringing this ship closer to fleet tasking," said John Lighthammer, program manager, Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office. "USNS John Lewis will provide much needed capability to the fleet as the primary fuel pipeline at sea. We are looking forward to getting the ship into the hands of Sailors and merchant mariners as another tool to support at-sea operations."

Photo from the General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (NASSCO) Builder's Trial of USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's lead ship of its new class of fleet replenishment oilers.

Photo from the General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (NASSCO) Builder's Trial of USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's lead ship of its new class of fleet replenishment oilers. Builder's Trials consist of a series of in-port and at-sea demonstrations that allow the Navy and the shipbuilder to assess the ship's systems and readiness prior to acceptance trials and delivery to the Navy. (Courtesy photos by General Dynamics NASSCO)The new John Lewis-class T-AOs will be operated by Military Sealift Command to provide diesel fuel and lubricating oil, and small quantities of fresh and frozen provisions, stores, and potable water to Navy ships at sea, and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. The new T-AOs will add capacity to the Navy's Combat Logistics Force and become the cornerstone of the fuel delivery system.

NASSCO is currently in production on USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), and USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208). The future USNS Lucy Stone (T-AO 209) and USNS Sojourner Truth (T-AO 210) are under contract. As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships, and boats and craft.

ARKANSAS SSN (800)



Class: Virginia-class

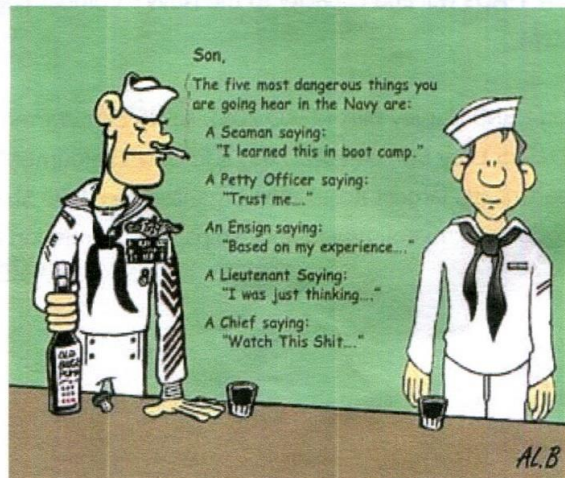
Unit type: Nuclear attack submarine

Status: Under Construction

Construction site: Newport News, VA

PCU Arkansas (SSN 800) is a Virginia-class attack submarine.

The Virginia-class, also known as the VA-class or 774-class, is a class of nuclear-powered fast attack submarines in service with the U.S. Navy. The submarines are designed for a broad spectrum of open-ocean and littoral missions. They were conceived as a less expensive alternative to the Seawolf-class attack submarines, designed during the Cold War era, and are replacing older Los Angeles-class submarines, 29 of which have already been decommissioned.



PARTING SHOTS **Thanks Jodie Fo r all the jokes**

What do you call an apology written in dots and dashes? Re-morse code.

YOU DON'T get smarter when you become older. There just aren't as many stupid things left you haven't done.

A BOY went with his father to see a litter of kittens. On returning home, he told his mother there were two boys and two girls.

"How did you know that?" his mother asked.

"Daddy held them up and looked underneath," he replied. "I think it's printed on the bottom."

MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER warned people that *Titanic* was going to sink right from the start, but people refused to listen. All it got him was kicked out of the theater.

A BOSS always scheduled meetings for 4:30 p.m. on Fridays. When one of the employees asked why, he replied, "It's the only time of the week none of you seems to want to argue with me."

A WEALTHY MAN lying on his deathbed called his chauffeur and said, "I'm going on a long and rugged journey, worse than ever you drove me."

"Well, sir," the chauffeur said consolingly, "there's one comfort: it's all downhill, and you won't be needing any gasoline."

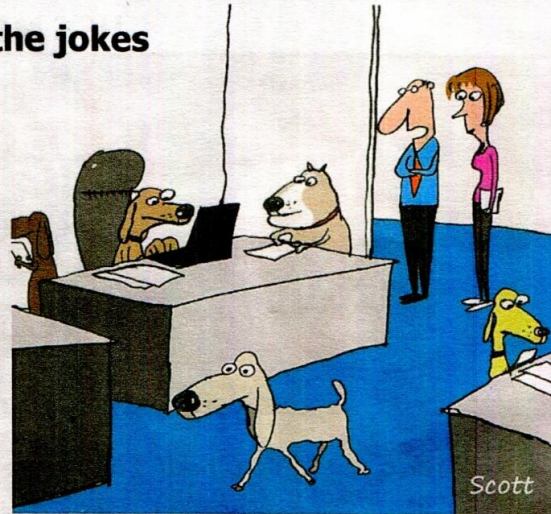
A BOY CAME HOME with two black eyes. "Fighting again?" his mother exclaimed. "Didn't I tell you that when you're angry you should count to 100 before you respond?"

"I did," the boy replied, "but the other boy's mother told him to count to 50."

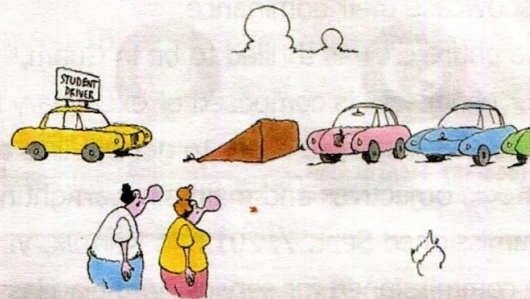
AN ARCHITECT was having a difficult time with a prospective home builder. "Can't you give me *some* idea of the type of house you want?"

"Well," the client responded slowly, "all I know is that it has to go with an antique doorknob my wife bought in Vermont."

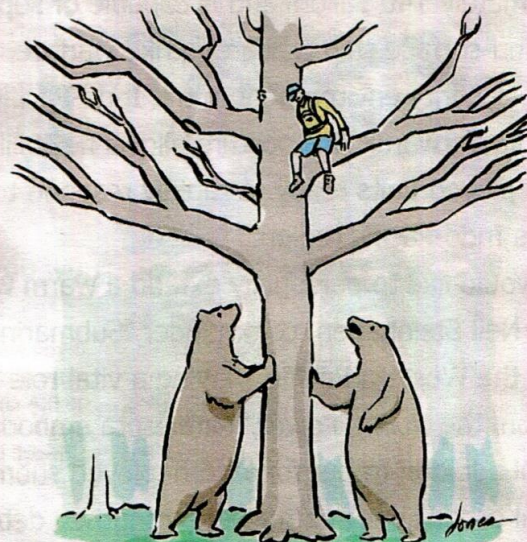
"SENDING YOUR KIDS to summer camp teaches them important life lessons, like 'You can deal with your problems by sending them to summer camp.'" - Ari Fishbein



"Great work ethic if we keep them away from the Squirrel Department."



"He's going for his master's."



"Ha, I'm sorry. Not 'eat you.' My friend meant to say, 'Come down so we can take selfies with you.'"

USS MINNESOTA (SSN 783)



In a bold move, the United States has gone ahead to deploy one of its newest nuclear-powered attack submarines in Guam – a highly sensitive region in the Indo-Pacific.

The deployment comes at a time when the US and China are flexing their muscles in the region to showcase their dominance.

"The entire crew is thrilled to be in Guam," said Cmdr. Isaac Pelt, commanding officer, USS Minnesota. "Minnesota is composed of exemplary individuals who represent some of our brightest Sailors in the Fleet. They're eager to get out into the local community and stand ready to contribute to our strategic objectives and maintain warfighting readiness in the Pacific."

Commissioned Sept. 7, 2013, in Norfolk, Virginia, Minnesota was the 10th Virginia-class submarine commissioned for service. Virginia-class submarines are the Navy's next-generation attack submarines and are set to replace Los Angeles-class submarines as they retire. Minnesota has a crew of approximately 140 Sailors and is capable of supporting various missions, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike warfare, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

The security environment in the Indo-Pacific requires that the U.S. Navy station the most capable units forward. This posture allows flexibility for maritime and joint force operations, with forward-deployed units ready to rapidly respond to deter aggression and promote a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

"I would like to personally extend a warm welcome to the Sailors and families of Minnesota," said Capt. Neil Steinhagen, commander, Submarine Squadron 15. "Guam serves as a strategic outpost in the Western Pacific, playing a vital role in maintaining stability across the region. With its motto, 'From the North, Power,' Minnesota embodies the strength and resolve that will make it an exceptional addition to our forward-deployed submarine force. Its presence will enhance our operational capabilities and further strengthen deterrence efforts throughout the Indo-Pacific. We are excited to have Minnesota as part of the team and look forward to the great accomplishments it will achieve while deployed forward."

Minnesota joins four Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines forward deployed in the Pacific. Regarded as apex predators of the sea, Guam's fast-attack submarines serve at the tip of the spear, helping to reaffirm the submarine forces' forward-deployed presence in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.