

HII Christens Virginia-Class Attack Submarine Arkansas



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NEWPORT NEWS, Va., Dec. 07, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – HII (NYSE: HII) today christened Virginia-class submarine Arkansas (SSN 800) at the company’s Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) division.

“Today we celebrate the mighty submarine Arkansas, and we honor bravery and impact: the heroes and heroic moments that shape our future and make us who we are,” NNS President Jennifer Boykin said. “As high school students, the Little Rock Nine exhibited courage, and showed the American people what determination and perseverance look like. Their spirit guided them then, and today SSN 800 will be instilled with this same spirit of courage, determination, and resilience.”

The ship’s sponsors are the six women of the historic group known as the Little Rock Nine, the first African American students to attend all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas during desegregation. NNS honored all nine members during Saturday’s ceremony.

The Little Rock Nine made history in 1957 with their response to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, declaring racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. Faced with shouting mobs, threats of violence and hostile state leaders who blocked their way, the teenagers were escorted into the school by federal troops at the direction of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Photos accompanying this release are available at: <https://hii.com/news/hii-christens-virginia-class-attack-submarine-arkansas-ssn-800/>.

On behalf of the other members, sponsor Carlotta Walls LaNier performed the traditional honor of breaking a bottle of American sparkling wine across the submarine's bow during the ceremony. She also addressed the assembled crowd in-person and those joining virtually from around the world, thanking the shipbuilders who have helped construct Arkansas.

"You are part of the crew who built Arkansas," LaNier said. "Your craftsmanship, your attention to detail, and your support for each other in the workplace made today a reality. Being able to point to something you have done that will outlast and outlive you is a worthy achievement. We offer a grateful nod to each of you who had some part in building Arkansas. Surely, this is an achievement to which you can point with pride."

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro provided the keynote address.

"*Arkansas* represents the very best of our submarine force capabilities and will operate confidently with her crew at sea," Del Toro said. "She will always be propelled by the proud legacy of her namesake, represented here today by three of her courageous sponsors, who overcame tremendous adversity as members of the Little Rock Nine."

Arkansas is the 27th Virginia-class submarine and the 13th to be delivered by NNS.

"The christening of Arkansas demonstrates the power of innovation and the dedication of our shipbuilders," said Cmdr. Michael Huber, commanding officer of the pre-commissioning unit. "Today, Arkansas is one step closer to sailing away from our shores, building on the brave example set by her sponsors, defending American ideals and protecting freedom around the world."

NNS is one of only two shipyards capable of designing and building nuclear-powered submarines for the U.S. Navy. The

advanced capabilities of Virginia-class submarines increase firepower, maneuverability and stealth.

A video of the ceremony, along with additional information on Arkansas, the Little Rock Nine, and the Virginia-class submarine program, can be found at: www.HII.com/SSN800.