

Navy Authenticates Keel for Future Attack Submarine USS Arizona



The future USS Arizona will be similar to this Virginia-class attack submarine shown in the General Dynamics Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, Connecticut. *GENERAL DYNAMICS*

WASHINGTON – Senior Navy leaders, elected officials and industry partners gathered at General Dynamics Electric Boat's Quonset Point Facility, Dec. 7, to attend a keel-authentication ceremony for future Virginia-class submarine USS Arizona (SSN 803), Team Submarine Public Affairs said in a release.

The submarine will be the first U.S. naval vessel to bear the

name Arizona since battleship USS Arizona (BB 39) was sunk during the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. After being struck with several bombs, Arizona burned for two days and more than 1100 of her crew were lost. The lives lost during the attack are now permanently memorialized by the USS Arizona Memorial, erected over her sunken hull in the berth she has occupied since that historic day.

“The boats in this class are the most advanced attack submarines ever designed. Their stealth, firepower and maneuverability are superior to every other attack submarine force in the world. Additionally, Arizona will be the first of the Virginia-class equipped with the Virginia Payload Module, enabling the submarine to deliver an even wider variety of capabilities,” said Rear Adm. Jonathan Rucker, Program Executive Officer, Attack Submarines. “Building, operating and maintaining Arizona and other Virginia-class subs is crucial to ensuring the Navy’s ability to project power in an ever-shifting global threat environment, and to maintaining peace and the free operation of our sea lanes.”

The ship’s sponsor, Nikki Stratton, is the granddaughter of Donald Stratton, who was serving as a Seaman First Class aboard Arizona during the 1941 attack. Badly burned, he was discharged in 1942, but successfully reenlisted in 1944 and returned to the Western Pacific serving aboard destroyer USS Stack (DD 406) to fight in New Guinea, the Philippines and the Battle of Okinawa. Stratton spent the remainder of his life helping honor those who gave their lives during the attack on Pearl Harbor and other battles. He died at the age of 97, in February 2020.

Per Navy tradition, the ship’s sponsor’s initials were welded onto a steel plate to be permanently mounted in a place of honor on the completed vessel.

Arizona will be the 30th Virginia-class submarine. Boats in

this class can hit shore-based targets with highly accurate Tomahawk cruise missiles and are capable of long-term, stealth surveillance of sea forces, littoral waters or ground targets. Their design also provides for Special Forces delivery and support, mine delivery and minefield mapping, and anti-submarine and anti-ship warfare.

Arizona's Virginia Payload Module will comprise four large-diameter, vertical payload tubes in a new hull section inserted into the existing Virginia-class submarine design. The tubes enable the submarine to deliver a variety of capabilities, including weapons, unmanned undersea vehicles and other undersea payloads.