

Navy Commissions Submarine USS New Jersey



Cmdr. Steven Halle, right, commanding officer of USS New Jersey (SSN 796), returns a salute from the ceremonial first watch during a commissioning ceremony at Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J. (MCC Joshua Karsten)

16 September 2024

From U.S. Navy

MIDDLETOWN, N.J. – The Navy commissioned the fast-attack Virginia-class submarine USS New Jersey (SSN 796) in a traditional ceremony held September 14, at Naval Weapons Station Earle in Middletown, New Jersey.

The ceremony culminated a years-long process for commissioning the New Jersey, the third U.S. Navy ship named after the state of New Jersey, the most recent being the decorated battleship BB-62 which saw action during WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

New Jersey's commanding officer Cmdr. Steve Halle called the event "a truly historic moment" during his speech, praising all the distinguished guests, shipbuilders, and supporting organizations before addressing his crew.

"To the crew, the plank owners, this ceremony... is about you" Halle emphasized. "You operate the most complex platform on the planet and you continuously strive for excellence. I'm amazed and humbled at what we have accomplished" he continued.

"Our superior professionalism is enhanced by our crew integration and our diversity," Halle said of his crew being the first fully integrated fast-attack submarine. "We have exceeded expectations at every turn and overcome every obstacle set before us."

Halle also spoke to the people of New Jersey stating "I know that the legacy we have inherited from the state of New Jersey and BB-62 will carry forward in our pursuit of greatness."

"Today, we commissioned our ship, and she is the fastest, most advanced, fully integrated fast-attack to date," Halle said in closing.

Susan DiMarco, New Jersey's sponsor and wife of former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, gave the crew the traditional order to "man our ship and bring her to life," after which New Jersey's sailors responded "aye aye ma'am" before ceremonially running aboard the submarine.

Other speakers at the commissioning ceremony included New Jersey Governor Philip Murphy, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, Ms. Jennifer Boykin, president of Newport News Shipbuilding, and Mr. Larry Runkle, vice president of General Dynamics Electric Boat. Adm. William Houston, director of the Navy's Nuclear Propulsion program, served as the senior Naval

officer and Submarine Force commander Vice Adm. Robert Gaucher as the presiding officer. Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Hutchison, the ship's executive officer, served as master of ceremonies.

The submarine is 377 feet long, has a 34-foot beam and is able to dive to depths greater than 800 feet and operate at speeds in excess of 25 knots. New Jersey has a crew of nearly 135 Navy personnel.

Fast-attack submarines are multi-mission platforms enabling five of the six Navy maritime strategy core capabilities – sea control, power projection, forward presence, maritime security, and deterrence. They are designed to excel in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare, and mine warfare. Fast-attack submarines project power ashore with special operations forces and Tomahawk cruise missiles in the prevention or preparation of regional crises.