



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20350-1000

16 December 1987

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Byrd:

I am pleased to inform you that I have assigned the name WEST VIRGINIA to SSBN 736, an OHIO (SSBN 726) class fleet ballistic missile submarine scheduled to be launched at Groton, Connecticut, by the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics, on April 22, 1989.

Two previous U.S. Navy ships have been named WEST VIRGINIA. The first, Armored Cruiser No. 5, commissioned in 1905, served in Atlantic, Pacific, and Asiatic waters during her career. After having been renamed HUNTINGTON in 1916 to clear the state name for a new battleship, she escorted troopships to Europe during World War I. Decommissioned in 1920, she was later scrapped. The second WEST VIRGINIA (BB 48), commissioned in 1923, served with the battleship force until Pearl Harbor. Sunk at her berth by torpedoes and heavy bombs, she was refloated and rebuilt; rejoining the Pacific Fleet in 1944, she earned five battle stars from Leyte to Okinawa. Decommissioned in 1947, she was sold for scrapping in 1959.

The newest WEST VIRGINIA is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in April 1990. The pressure hull was completed this past July and all missile tubes and control surfaces have been installed. WEST VIRGINIA is out of the "barn" with her sail installed and internal work ongoing. I have included a brochure on the OHIO (SSBN 726) class for your information.

I hope your schedule will permit participation in the ceremonies which mark WEST VIRGINIA's progress toward joining the active fleet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James H. Webb, Jr.", is written over the typed name.

James H. Webb, Jr.