USS OKLAHOMA NEWS LETTER

Date : 11 23 2026

Thundering Bass!
Strike Hard,
Strike Fast!



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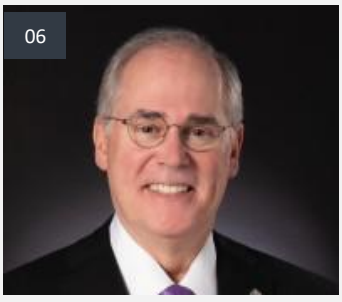

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SHARED PURPOSE: PIERCE NORTON & ONEOK's PARTNERSHIP WITH THE USS OKLAHOMA

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ATTENTION ON DECK



Updates from the Commissioning Committee

The commissioning committee is pleased to report that the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma will be a Plank-owning sponsor of the USS OKLAHOMA, and that Chief Gary Batton will be joining our Honorary Commissioning Committee. Thank you to Chief Batton and the Choctaw Nation!



Submarine School

Submariner Term of the Month:

"CRANK"

Newly reported sailors required to temporarily take on duties in the galley for a period of weeks or months (used interchangeably as a proper noun or verb).



In a sentence: *"Hey Chief, we just got a big shipment of awesome USS OKLAHOMA swag delivered topside, grab a couple cranks and have them bring it down belowdecks"*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

QuikTrip is now selling the OFFICIAL USS OKLAHOMA Commissioning challenge coin exclusively in their Oklahoma stores. Hurry and get yours now! They are stored behind the counter and supplies are limited. The artwork for the coin itself was the result of a collaboration between two artists, Daryl Burd and Jake Shaeffer, who were winners of a state-wide contest

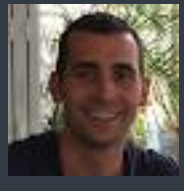


Fun Facts

In addition to the famed battleship USS Oklahoma, 5 naval ships have been named after *cities* In the state: the USS Muskogee (WWII-era frigate), two USS Oklahoma Citys (WWII-era cruiser and recently decommissioned Submarine) and two USS Tulsas (WWII-era gunboat and an in-service littoral combat ship, pictured).

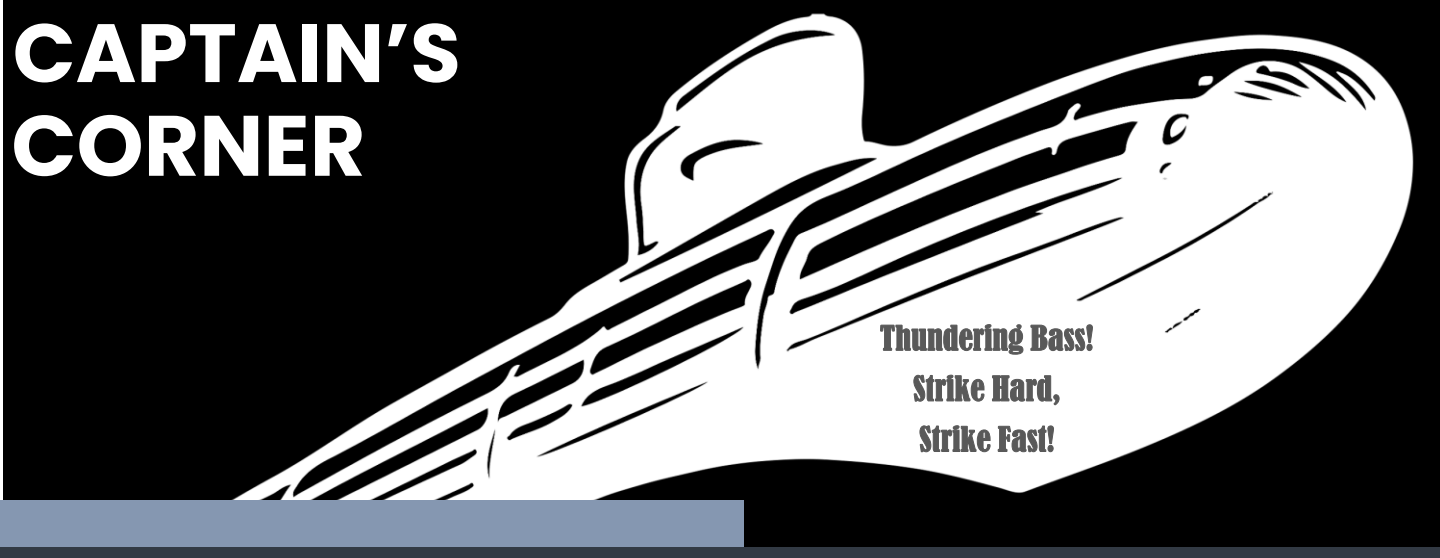


Editor



Matt Clement is a research scientist at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, MD. He is a former submariner, having served on the USS Topeka from 2012-2015. He received is PhD from the University of Oklahoma in 2019.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER



Okies,



As PCU OKLAHOMA approaches its next major testing milestone, our focus remains unchanged: deliver a capable, combat-ready submarine to the Fleet and ensure our crew is prepared to answer our nation's call. The work our Sailors are about to execute represents a major step toward that goal and demands technical excellence, precise execution, and unwavering teamwork. With this milestone, OKLAHOMA is one step closer to strengthening our nation's undersea advantage and ensuring the United States Navy remains ready to deter aggression and defend our national interests. The work ahead is challenging, but our purpose is clear, and the stakes could not be higher.

That same unwavering commitment demonstrated by our Sailors is evident in the Oklahomans we have met throughout the year during our visits across the state. The pride in your communities, dedication to service, and steadfast support for our military reflect the same values we strive to uphold aboard OKLAHOMA. Just as our Sailors approach each test, inspection, and certification with professionalism and determination, the people of Oklahoma demonstrate a deep commitment to something greater than themselves. Your example reinforces the importance of our mission and reminds us that the name we carry represents not only our ship, but also the people and state behind it.

As we observe Veterans Day, we are reminded that our service is part of a legacy built by generations of Americans who have answered the call to defend our freedoms. We honor their courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty, and we carry forward their example through our own service. Their legacy is not simply something we remember; it is a responsibility we uphold every day.

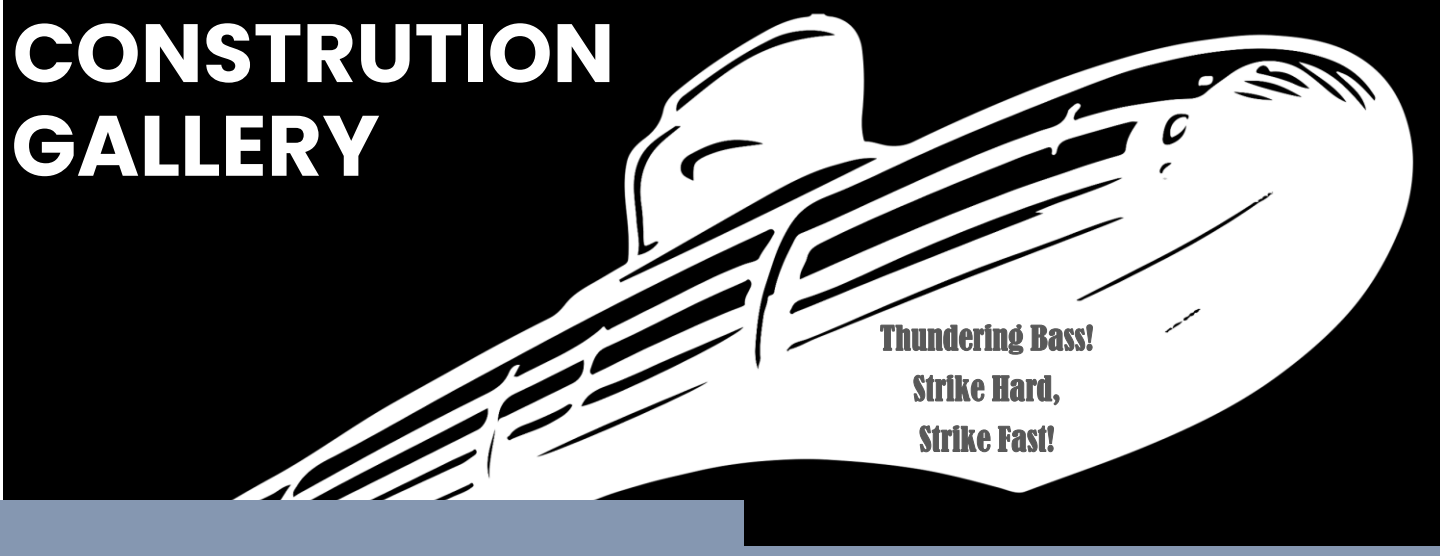
The road ahead will demand our best, and I have full confidence in my team. Let us honor those who served before us by executing our mission with pride, purpose, and determination. Together, we will take OKLAHOMA through this next milestone and closer to becoming a formidable asset in defense of our nation.

Very respectfully,

CDR Jason Kim

Thundering Bass! Strike Hard!, Strike Fast!

CONSTRUTION GALLERY

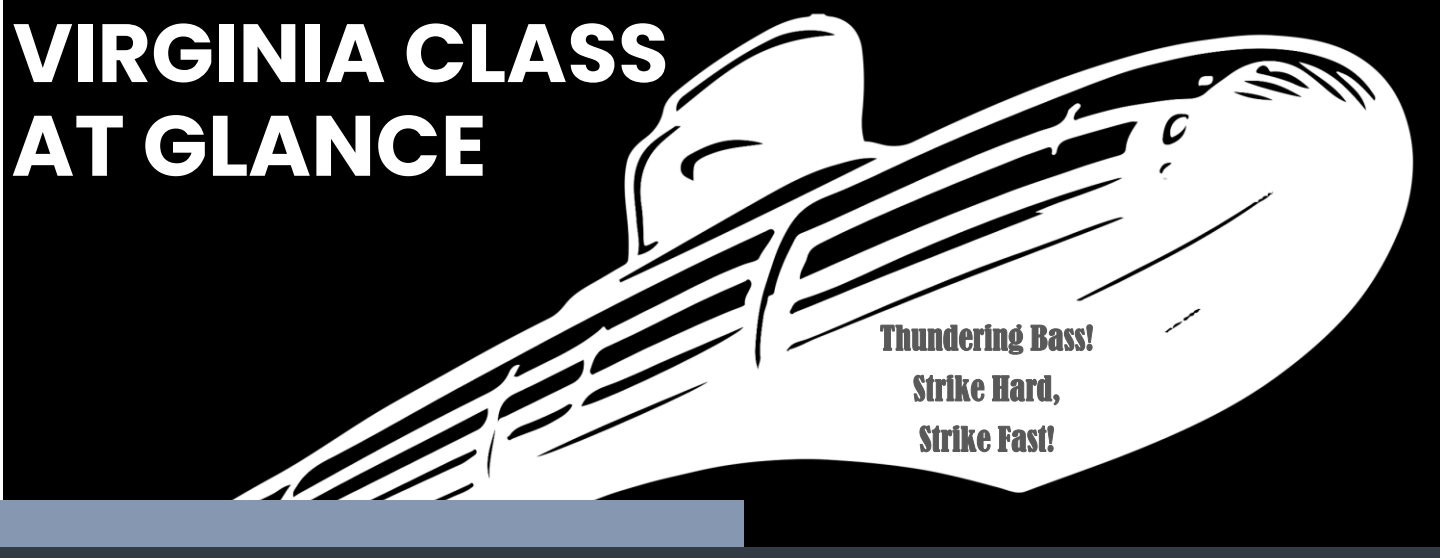


~mid 2026 (credit Ashley Cowan/HII)

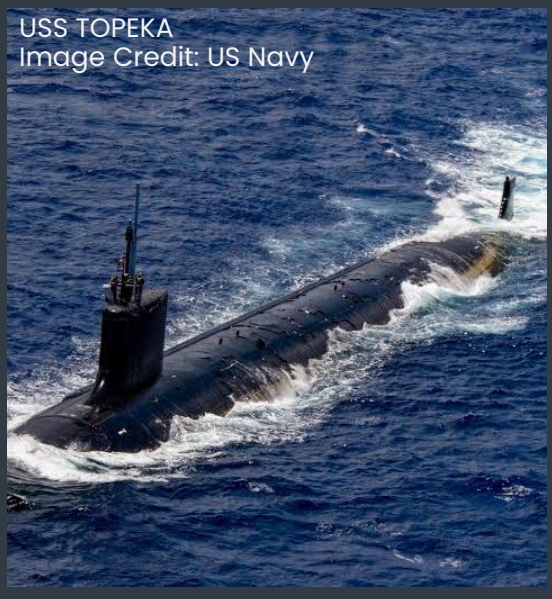


Progress continues apace at Huntington Ingalls Industries Newport News Shipyard in Virginia. The OKLAHOMA is just one of a collection of submarines currently in the Navy's construction pipeline. Dating back to the cold war and the construction of the still in-service Los Angeles class submarines, two premier shipyards – Newport News and General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton CT – have carried the entire load of responsibility for the construction of all of the Navy's submarines. At present, the work is split roughly evenly between Connecticut and Virginia, with each shipyard delivering a new, fully complete Virginia class boat every 1-2 years. This year, Huntington Ingalls commissioned the MASSACHUSETTS (SSN-798) in March, and Electric Boat commissioned the IDAHO (SSN-799) in April. In addition to the OKLAHOMA, Huntington Ingalls is currently building the ARKANSAS (launched and next to commission) and the BARB. In parallel, Columbia class Ballistic Missile submarines (SSBNs) are in construction at Electric Boat to replace the Ohio class submarines as the subsurface leg of the nation's nuclear deterrence triad: land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and strategic bombers like the Air Force B-2 stealth bomber.

VIRGINIA CLASS AT GLANCE



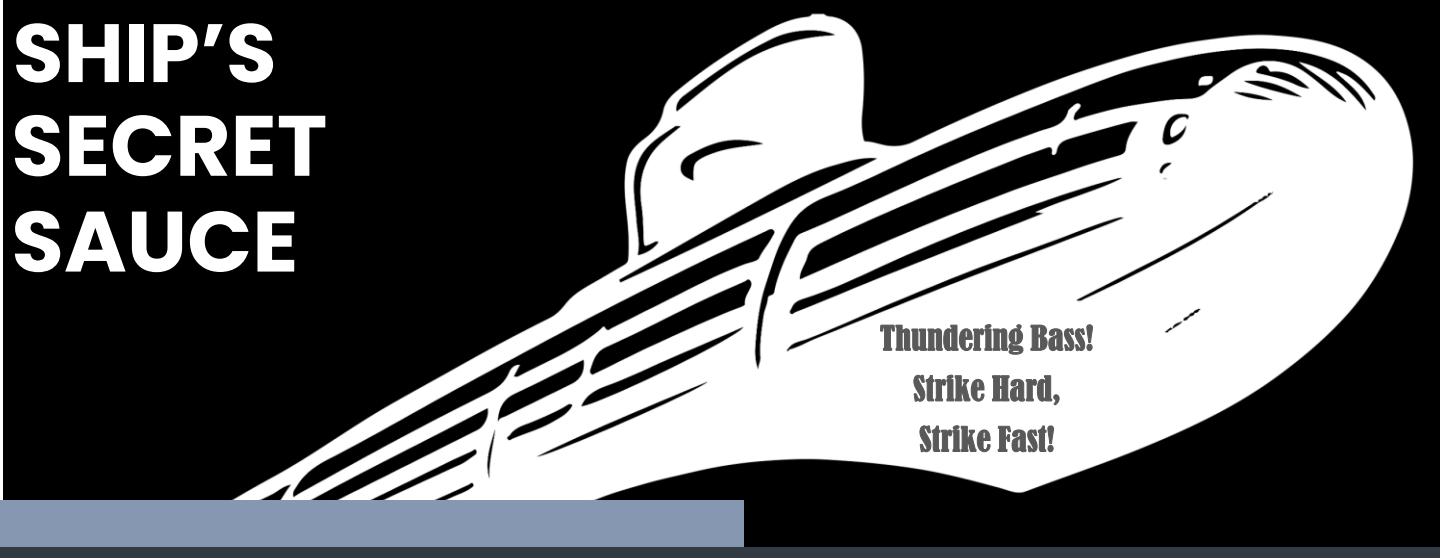
In this month's issue, we compare the Virginia Class of submarines to the Los Angeles Class, the first boat of which was commissioned in 1976. As of 2026, 18 Los Angeles class boats remain in service.


USS TOPEKA
Image Credit: US Navy


USS Virginia
Image Credit: General Dynamics EB

62	**Boats in class**	25 (66 planned)
Longest serving fast attack, workhorse of the fleet	**Claim to Fame**	First with computer assisted diving
4 torpedo tube and 12 vertical launch tubes (SSN 719-773)	**Armament**	4 torpedo tubes and 12 vertical launch tubes
362 ft	**Length**	377ft
6927 tons	**Displacement**	7900 tons
165 MW Westinghouse S6G	**Reactor**	210 MW GE S9G
129	**Crew**	134
Stern and either Fairwater (SSN 688-750) or Retractable Bow	**Control Surfaces**	Retractable Bow & Stern
Experimental photonics sensors on USS Annapolis (SSN-760) led the way for Virginia's design	**Masts**	1st with photonics sensors instead of periscope
Spherical array in bow, hull, sail and towed arrays	**Sonar Arrays**	U-shaped bow, wide aperture hull, sail and towed arrays
USS Oklahoma City (SSN 723)	**Best Name in Class**	USS Oklahoma (SSN 802)
USS San Francisco (SSN 711)	**Link in the chain**	USS San Francisco (SSGN 811)

SHIP'S SECRET SAUCE



USS OKLAHOMA crewmembers, family and friends have compiled a cookbook filled with treasured recipes as part of a fundraiser. The OFFICIAL cookbook will be available for purchase online SOON. Stay tuned for more details!



AVAILABLE SOON!!!! The OFFICIAL USS OKLAHOMA Cookbook

SNEAK PREVIEW, only for Newsletter readers!!!

Reuben Dip

1 lb corned beef, finely chopped
1 small can of sauerkraut, drained
½ cup Mayonnaise
1 ¼ cup shredded Swiss cheese
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
½ cup Thousand Island Dressing
2 Tbsp brown mustard
½ tsp caraway seeds (optional
1 tsp Tabasco sauce (optional)

Mix ingredients together in a large bowl. Spray 9x9 pan with cooking spray. Pour mixture into pan. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or until bubbling. Serve with Triscuits.

-Contributed by Sabrina Stutzman, Wife of USS OKLAHOMA former Commanding Officer CAPT Stutzman.

DEEP ROOTS AND SILENT SERVICE

How ONEOK and the US submarine force share a mission of service



Headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma, ONEOK is one of America's largest integrated midstream companies, one of the state's largest private employers and a FLEET-tier sponsor of the USS OKLAHOMA commissioning committee. Originally known as the Oklahoma Natural Gas Company, ONEOK was founded by Territorial Congressman Dennis T. Flynn (1861–1939) and businessman Charles Bismark (C.B.) Ames (1870–1935). The company's first major undertaking was the construction of a multi-million-dollar natural gas pipeline connecting Osage County to Oklahoma City in 1907. Since then, ONEOK has grown into a Fortune 500 energy infrastructure leader spanning 19 states.



ONEOK CEO Pierce Norton (image credit: ONEOK)

Pierce H. Norton II is the current president and CEO of ONEOK and a member of the USS OKLAHOMA Commissioning Executive Committee.

"I first learned about the construction and naming of SSN 802 through conversations with civic and business leaders here in Oklahoma who started championing the initiative," Norton shared. "The moment I heard our state's name would be carried by a Virginia-class submarine, it struck me as a tremendous honor for Oklahomans and a fitting tribute to a state whose people have always answered the call to serve."

Norton is not wrong. Ever since the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Manpower Data Center began tracking enlistees' states of origin, Oklahoma has consistently ranked in the top 10 to 15 states for military service members per capita. Currently, 8.1 out of every 1,000 Oklahomans are active-duty or reserve service members.

Norton eagerly joined the USS OKLAHOMA Commissioning Committee at the invitation of Chair Rocky Goins. "It was an honor to be asked, but more importantly, the mission of the crew and the mission of the energy industry share more common ground than people might realize," he explained. "Both are centered on providing security and doing the unassuming, yet essential work that keeps the country moving forward. Supporting the future crews of the USS OKLAHOMA felt like a natural extension of who we are as an American energy company."

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ONEOK Pump terminal in Tulsa, OK (image credit: ONEOK)

Norton emphasized that "service is a core value at ONEOK," elaborating on how supporting those who serve—or have served—is one of the company's foundational principles. "It's only fitting that we would look for opportunities to support and honor those who have dedicated their lives to serving our country in the armed forces, including the more than 500 veterans who work at ONEOK and the many service members and veterans in the communities we serve.

The parallels between the American energy industry and the U.S. Submarine Force go far beyond long hours of dedicated service to the nation. Indeed, the two have been intertwined for decades. The first full-scale American commercial nuclear power plant—the Shippingport Atomic Power Station—shared the same pressurized water reactor design as early nuclear-powered submarines like the USS NAUTILUS (SSN-571) as a direct result of early reliability studies conducted by the Navy. Similarly, the supply lines for high-reliability power plant components like steam generators, built out by defense contractors in the infancy of the nuclear Navy, laid the foundation for the supply chain serving today's commercial power industry.

Building and broadening ties between commercial industry and the military is more important now than ever. The Navy's diminished shipbuilding capacity over the past three decades has been well documented. As former Secretary of the Navy John Phelan noted in a 2025 briefing to the House Appropriations Committee, "rebuilding our hollowed-out maritime industrial base is a national security imperative." When questioned by lawmakers about why U.S. shipbuilding lags behind nations like Japan, Phelan pointed to a shrinking, aging workforce—with retiring skilled workers and a lack of young talent—compounded by excessive administrative overhead.

DEEP ROOTS AND SILENT SERVICE

How ONEOK and the US submarine force share a mission of service



Pierce is keenly aware of these challenges. He highlighted a partnership between his alma mater, the University of Alabama, and the U.S. Navy's Maritime Industrial Base Program as a model for the investments needed to build a workforce ready for future national defense challenges. Indeed, this partnership specifically aims to bolster the nation's shipbuilding capacity by expanding development opportunities for skilled workers in Alabama.



ONEOK corporate headquarters in Tulsa, OK (image credit: ONEOK)

This deep-rooted connection between military service and energy operations is reflected in ONEOK's workplace culture, where veterans make up more than 8% of the workforce. "What I see consistently in our veteran employees is an eagerness to learn, comfort dealing with ambiguity, a deep sense of team, and a willingness to hold themselves accountable," Norton noted. "They believe in service above self. They mentor others without being asked, and they carry a quiet confidence that comes from having accomplished tough things."

ONEOK is actively engaged in supporting these employees and other military families across the geographical region they serve. Internally, the company has hosted a VA Benefit Fair to familiarize veteran employees with resources available to them through the VA, and also maintains an active Veterans Resource Group within the company. Externally, through a combination of corporate contributions and employee volunteering, the company has sponsored initiatives such as the Honor Flight Network, accompanying World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans to Washington, D.C.; the Tulsa Veterans Day Parade; and Wreaths Across America.



El Reno Field Services Plant, one of ONEOK's major infrastructure sites (image credit: ONEOK)

DEEP ROOTS AND SILENT SERVICE

How ONEOK and the US submarine force share a mission of service





ONEOK Natural Gas gathering and processing equipment in El Reno, OK (image credit: ONEOK)

For Norton, supporting the USS OKLAHOMA commissioning is also deeply connected to the state's heritage. "Oklahoma is our headquarters state and the birthplace of ONEOK's heritage," Norton reflected. "On October 12, we marked 120 years of operating in this state, and every one of those years has been shaped by the same kind of people who built Oklahoma itself: people who work hard, look out for each other, and take pride in doing things the right way. When a submarine carries our state's name, it is carrying a part of us with it."

That pride extends to a friendly competitive spirit behind the commissioning effort. When asked about setting a fundraising benchmark—and chasing the record set by the USS TEXAS commissioning fund—the Commissioning Committee along with Norton welcomed the rivalry. Having been raised in the South and graduated from the University of Alabama, he explained that competition in the name of a good cause is always worthwhile. "I'm proud to participate when it means setting a benchmark that reminds us what is possible when a state fully rallies behind its commissioning crew," he said, emphasizing that Oklahoma's philanthropic community regularly punches well above its weight class.

DEEP ROOTS AND SILENT SERVICE

How ONEOK and the US submarine force share a mission of service



While leading a Fortune 500 energy infrastructure company and commanding a nuclear submarine are by no means the same thing, Norton noted a remarkable number of parallels between the two leadership roles. Both rely heavily on building high-performing teams, cultivating trust, and executing critical missions under complex conditions where leaders cannot control every variable.

"At ONEOK, we operate infrastructure that runs 24 hours a day across thousands of miles and requires distributed leadership," Norton explained. "The people closest to operations have to make real-time decisions, so we invest in developing frontline leaders and we hold ourselves accountable to operating disciplines that are repeatable, measurable, and safe."

Conversely, Norton believes corporate leadership can draw valuable lessons from the submarine force's discipline, mission clarity, and relentless training mindset. "The submarine force has mastered mission clarity and a leadership culture where every crew member understands their role, their authority, and what's at stake," Norton remarked. "They focus on training because they know when things go wrong, people don't 'rise to the occasion'—instead, they default to training. Building leaders who maintain their composure and clarity under pressure is very important."

Ultimately, the partnership between ONEOK, the state of Oklahoma, and the USS OKLAHOMA comes down to a shared commitment to national security. From critical pipelines to undersea deterrence, both energy infrastructure and the submarine force rely on silent, continuous vigilance to keep the nation safe and moving forward.



ONEOK Fractionation Facility in Medford, OK (image credit: ONEOK)

"The energy industry is most successful in a stable and reliable operating environment," Norton concluded. "Around the world, energy reaches consumers through an interconnected network of infrastructure, shipping routes, and supply chains. The sailors who serve in our submarine fleet contribute to the security and resilience of that environment as part of the nation's broader defense mission. We are grateful for their 'Silent Service' and their countless, unheralded contributions to our national security."

NAMESAKE VISIT HIGHLIGHTS



The commissioning committee was honoured to host 4 USS OKLAHOMA crew members for a NAMESAKE visit over Veterans Day



With SECNAV-tier sponsor QuikTrip CEO Chet Cadieux at their corporate HQ



Enjoying an ice cold OFFICIAL SSN 802 Brew at Marshall Brewing Co. in Tulsa



Visiting and touring an Oklahoman treasure: Braum's farm in Tuttle, OK



Spending some time with the Del City Naval JROTC unit

UPCOMING EVENTS



The Tulsa Navy League will be hosting 1.5 mile and 5 km fun runs on December 12th at the Washington Irving Park in Bixby, OK. Proceeds benefit the crew!



The 1.5 mile run for the USS TULSA starts at 8AM, with the USS OKLAHOMA 5K kicking off 30 minutes later. All finishers of the 5K will receive medals, and awards will be given to the top 3 male and female finishers of each event! In addition to direct support to both ship's morale funds, the Tulsa Navy League also supports local youth programs designed to give Tulsa-area students a head start in science and math.

