

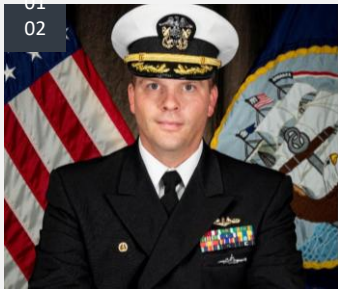
USS OKLAHOMA NEWS LETTER

Date : 12 08 2025

Thundering Bass!
Strike Hard,
Strike Fast!



In This Issue:



CONSTRUCTION
UPDATE FROM THE
SKIPPER

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QUIKTRIP
ANNOUNCES \$1
MILLION MATCH
CHALLENGE IN
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FROM THE USS
LAGARTO TO THE
USS OKLAHOMA:
LIFE COMES FULL
CIRCLE FOR NANCY
FORD

[Read more >>>](#)



ATTENTION ON DECK



Thundering Bass!
Strike Hard,
Strike Fast!

Updates from the Commissioning Committee

The Navy has updated the planned christening date from late 2025 to mid 2026. Stay tuned for more updates!

CDR Stutzman has put out a request for books for the ship's library. If interested, please send a book that you felt had a significant influence on you, and feel free to sign it and leave a note to the crew. Reach out to the committee chair, Rocky Goins at: rockygoins1984@gmail.com for more information.

Please attend the Navy/Tulsa football game on September 13th. CDR Stutzman and other members of the crew will be in attendance. Additional details about the event and tailgate will be posted on the PCU Oklahoma website in August.

Submarine School

Submariner Term of the Month:

"CONE"

The "cone" is a colloquial term used by sailors to refer to the forward section of the submarine or, more specifically, all spaces forward of the engine room. Sailors whose primary duties are in the "cone" are called "coners," while sailors working aft in the engine room are "nukes."

In a sentence: *"Petty Officer Smith and I were hanging out in the cone when they downloaded a news report that Oklahoma won the national championship last night!"*

Fundraising Progress

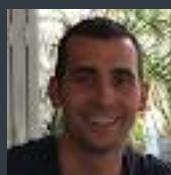


Fun Facts

The state of Oklahoma and its place in Naval history is prominently featured in the ship's crest. The upper right hand corner features a native American gazing into a cloud containing an image of the battleship USS OKLAHOMA (BB-37); a tribute to the sailors lost onboard in Pearl Harbor.



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 his PhD from the University of Oklahoma.



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

**Thundering Bass!
Strike Hard,
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Okies,

The past few months have been very busy on the shipyard construction side with moving more sections of the ship into the final outfitting bay of our building. Just in the past few weeks I've been able to walk through the crews' mess, the wardroom, and the chiefs' quarters. Over the next few months the shipyard will be preparing the modules to get moved into place, welded together, and make us pressure hull complete. Exciting times for OKLAHOMA!

The crew has been preparing for the next major milestone where we fill the



steam generators with water. This requires significant amount of training and preparations with Sailors literally touching and inspecting every inch of pipe and valves for the required systems. This is why we are here at this point in the life of the ship to inspect and receive the systems on behalf of the Navy. We make sure OKLAHOMA is ready to answer the call when our nation needs us.

Our crew is almost full as well. A full complement of Sailors onboard a Virginia fast attack submarine is 120-130 and we just went over 100 Sailors who have reported onboard. Most of them are out riding other submarines to complete qualifications and understand what a submarine operating at sea looks like. They will be ready to take OKLAHOMA to sea when we get in the water. The next few months we can anticipate bringing more systems online, watching the submarine become pressure hull complete, planning a trip back to Oklahoma in September, and the first change of command for OKLAHOMA in November. I look forward to sharing more great news with you soon!

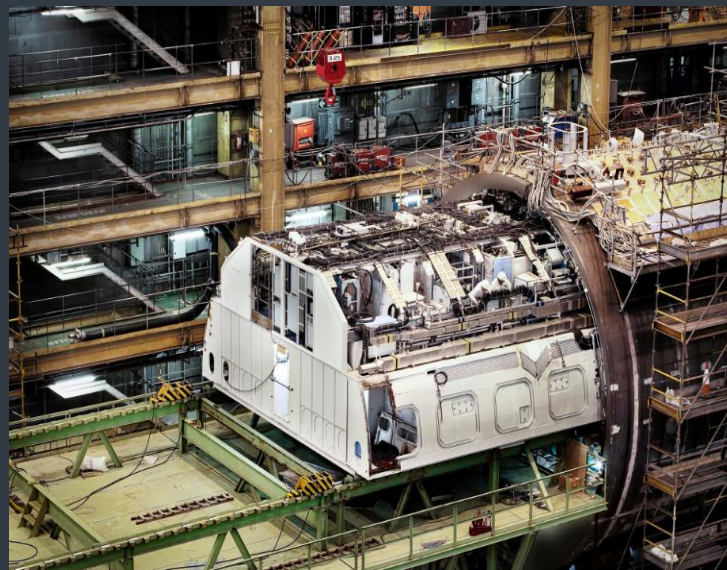
Very Respectfully,
CDR Aaron Stutzman
a.k.a. Thunder Bass One
Thundering Bass! Strike Hard, Strike Fast!



CONSTRUCTION GALLERY

**Thundering Bass!
Strike Hard,
Strike Fast!**

What she looks like today:

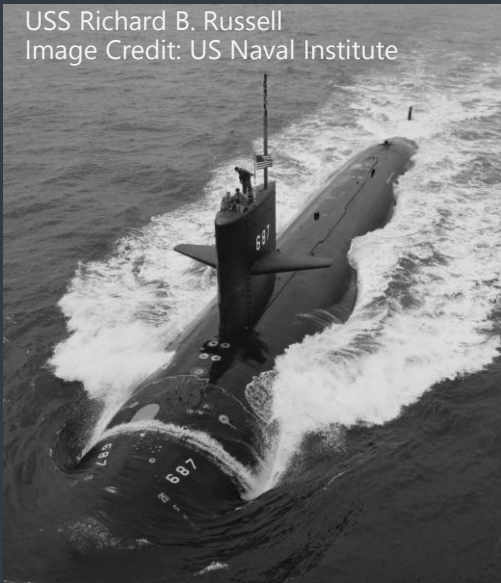


What she will look like in 2 years!





In this month’s issue, we compare the Virginia Class of submarines to the Sturgeon-class, which was in service from 1967-2004



38 (last retired in 2004)

1st to carry the DDS for Navy SEAL deployment

4 torpedo tubes

292 or 302 ft

3698 or 4714 tons

78 MW Westinghouse S5W

107

Fairwater & Stern planes

First US SSN with 2 periscopes

BQQ-5 Sonar suite

USS Sea Devil (SSN 664)

USS Silversides (SSN 679)

Boats in class

Claim to Fame

Armament

Length

Displacement

Reactor

Crew

Control Surfaces

Masts

Sonar Arrays

Best Name in Class

Link in the chain

24 (66 planned)

1st class with a propulsor

4 torpedo tube and 12 vertical launch tubes

377ft

7900 tons

210 MW GE S9G

134

Retractable Bow & Stern

1st with photonics sensors instead of periscope

BQQ-10 Sonar suite

USS Oklahoma (SSN 802)

USS Silversides (SSN 807)



SHIP'S SWAG

**Thundering Bass!
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HOT OFF THE PRESS!!!

OFFICIAL USS OKLAHOMA PT (Physical Training) shirts AND hoodies are available for purchase [HERE!!!](#) All proceed will go directly into the ships Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) fund:



Ship's Store: NEW ARRIVALS this quarter



Oversized fleece
sweatshirt
blanket by PORT
& COMPANY®.

\$45.00



Women's sport
MOISTURE WICKING
fleeces by Sport-Tek®.

\$50.00



\$30.00

Stainless steel tumblers with
DOUBLE-WALL VACUUM
insulated lids.

QUIKTRIP \$1 Million Match Challenge

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In early July, the QuikTrip corporation announced an exciting partnership with the USS Oklahoma commissioning committee consisting of an initial investment of \$200,000 in the ship's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) fund, along with a commitment to make a dollar for dollar match against future contributions from our community. If the USS Oklahoma

committee were to raise a total of 1 million dollars, the net contribution would be **\$2.2 million**. With this generous donation, the USS Oklahoma commissioning committee has the potential to **establish the largest commissioning fund in the history of the United States Submarine force**; surpassing the USS TEXAS for the record.

The MWR fund that will be endowed from this fundraising effort will support a plethora of functions for the crew, including ship's events, emergency travel for sailors, afloat recreation equipment (treadmill, weights, etc.), and continuing education programs.

The QuikTrip corporation was founded in 1958 in Tulsa by Burt Holmes and Chester Cadieux. The company first expanded outside of Oklahoma in 1968, and began selling gasoline in 1971. Holmes past away earlier this year at the age of 93, and Cadieux died in 2016 at the age of 84. Cadieux's son Chet currently serves as CEO. As of 2025, there are 1,156 QuikTrip stores located in 21 different states across the southern United States.

Image Credit: Lawrence Journal-World



"For almost two decades, supporting America's military families has been a priority for QuikTrip through our partnership with Folds of Honor, providing life-changing scholarships"

-Chet Cadieux, CEO, QuikTrip



LIFE COMES FULL CIRCLE FOR NANCY FORD

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On May 4, 1945, Nancy Ford's father, Lieutenant Commander Bill Mendenhall was onboard the submarine USS Lagarto (SS-371), along with 85 fellow sailors in the South China Sea. The boat was on her second war patrol when she was sunk by the Japanese minelayer Hatsutaka. All on board perished. For 60 years the boat was lost in the depths of the Pacific Ocean; her final resting place unknown. Lagarto was finally discovered in the Gulf of Thailand, sitting straight upright in 225 feet of water. Bill graduated with honors from the US Naval Academy in 1942, and subsequently submarine school. After graduation, he met and married Jayne Nash. At the time of his death, Jayne – a native Oklahoman – was living in Edmond with their two-month old baby girl

LCDR William Mendenhall



Nancy. Bill never got to meet her. Here are two excerpts from Bill's correspondences with Jayne:

April 7, 1945: "I am William Optimistic Mendenhall these days and am predicting the collapse of Germany in April and the surrender and complete neutralization of Japan within six months after that. I've got to get home and get some home cooking – I am down to 135 lbs."

April 12, 1945 - his last correspondence: "This is another one of those hard letters to write. Yes, it will be the last one for awhile, and I'll try to make it just as short an "awhile as possible."

With the support of a Dolphin Foundation scholarship, Bill's daughter Nancy graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1966 with a BS in Mathematics. The Dolphin Scholarship Foundation was established in 1960 to assist children of submariners, and also administers scholarships to support educational opportunities for sailors assigned to specific submarines.

Now, almost 60 years later, Nancy Ford is proudly paying that scholarship forward in collaboration with the USS Oklahoma commissioning committee. This new submarine is being christened in honor of the USS Oklahoma battleship sunk during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Nancy and her husband Bill Ford, chairman of Shawnee Milling Company in Shawnee, OK, have established a scholarship tuition fund for sailors named in honor of her father Lieutenant Commander William H. Mendenhall.

"A good friend contacted us in April and wanted to set up a meeting with the Commissioning Committee for the USS Oklahoma. She knew that Bill had proudly served in the Army and that we were passionate about supporting the military," says Nancy. "We had not heard about the new submarine and she didn't know my history with my father and the USS Lagarto! We were so excited for the opportunity to give back and honor my father's service and sacrifice."

continued on the next page...





LIFE COMES FULL CIRCLE FOR NANCY FORD

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Nancy and Bill Ford are among the elite “Fleet Admiral” sponsors of the USS OKLAHOMA Commissioning Committee. Their generous contribution honors the memory of Nancy’s father, whose military career serves as a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made in the defense of his country.

“Nancy’s story about her father is a sharp reminder of the cost paid for our liberty, which we can never take for granted,” said Rocky Goins, Chairman of the USS OKLAHOMA Commissioning Committee.

The committee will use the Fords’ donation—along with those from other supporters—to fund scholarships and support the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Fund for the submarine’s crew in perpetuity.

“Nancy is paying it forward in a very meaningful way,” Goins added.

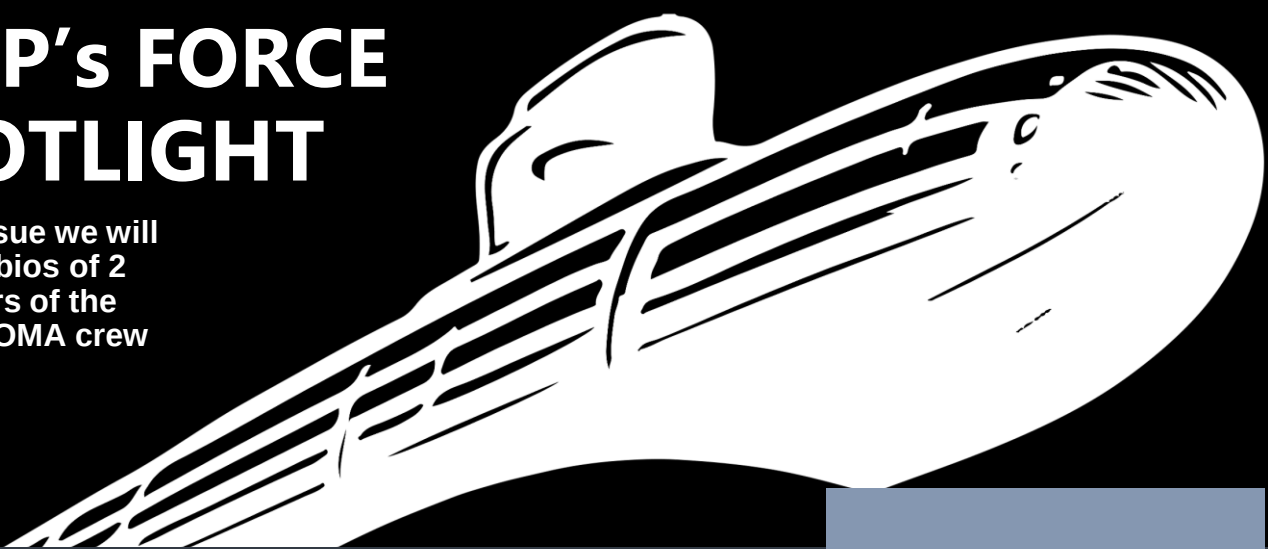
Nancy Ford and her husband Bill are proud to give back and honor her father William H. Mendenhall’s sacrifice and service. -Patty Moore



USS Lagarto in 2010 at the bottom of the Gulf of Thailand. Image credit: Wisconsin maritime museum.

SHIP's FORCE SPOTLIGHT

Each issue we will
feature bios of 2
members of the
OKLAHOMA crew



Name: CDR Aaron Stutzman

Position: Commanding Officer (CO)

Years in Navy: 23

Hometown: Acme, PA

Previous Boats: Division officer on USS PASADENA (SSN 752), Navigator on USS KENTUCKY (SSBN 737), Weapons Officer on USS OHIO (SSGN 726), Executive Officer (XO) on USS JACKSONVILLE (SSN 699) and Commanding Officer on PCU Oklahoma (SSN-802).

Shore Duties: Nuclear Prototype Instructor, Naval War College Student, Deputy for Strategic Forces and Nuclear Weapons at SUBMARINE GROUP NINE, Deputy for Material Readiness at SUBMARINE SQUADRON FIFTEEN.



Job Description: The captain of a submarine is responsible for a crew of 120-130 Sailors to operate a nuclear powered ship at sea, and if it ever comes to it take that ship into harm's way during war. It's the CO's job to make sure his sailors get to go home every day to their families.

What drew you to want to serve on submarines? *"I've always been drawn to the ocean, but the engineering marvel of operating a submarine at sea intrigued me. However, what made me stay in submarines and the Navy is the people I get to work with every day."*

What's your favorite part of being a submariner? *"Submarines are bad ass and I'm the captain. Not many people get to say they've commanded a nuclear powered submarine and crew."*

What are some unique challenges of being CO on a submarine under construction? *"Training sailors to be submariners without the ability to go to sea. Our submarine is being built in a large building we call the modular outfitting facility. We send them to sea on other boats to get an initial taste of what being a submariner looks like and then continue to train in shore based trainers and on the boat as it gets built."*

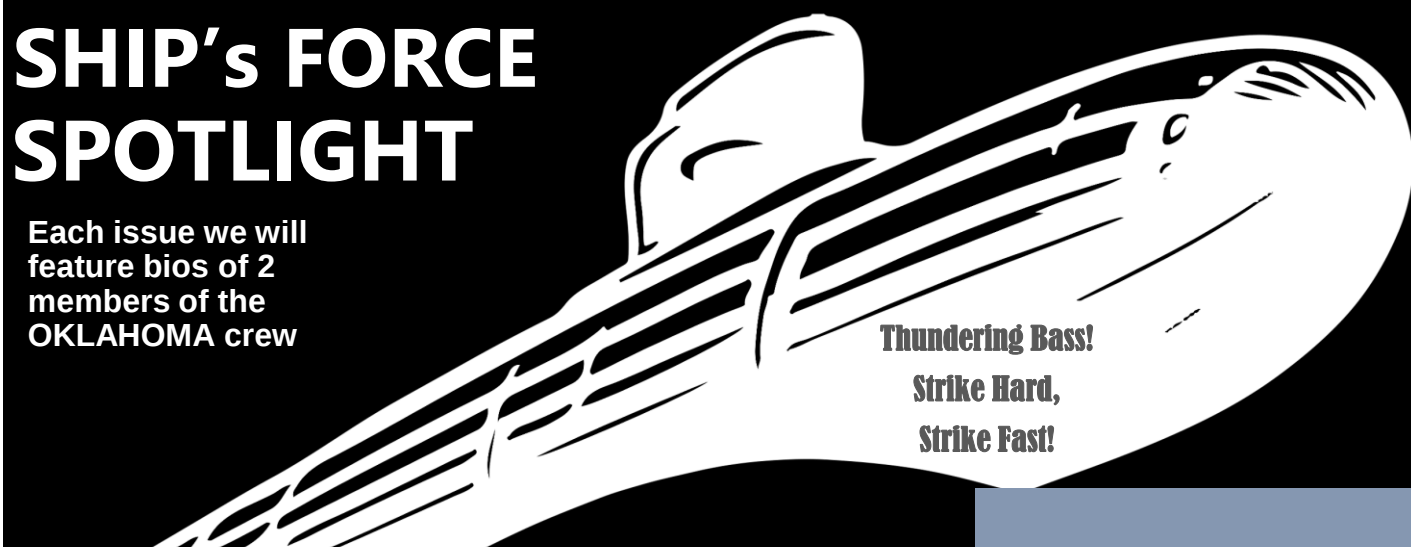
What's been the most interesting part of the construction? *"It's amazing to see massive sections of the submarine and hull get moved around the shipyard. It is quite an engineering feat!"*

Favorite meal on board: *"Grilled cheese and tomato soup. Simple but reminds me of home."*

Hobbies away from the boat: *"I love to hunt, fish, and trying to maintain my composure while hitting golf balls into the woods and water!"*

Any thoughts on being selected to serve on the Oklahoma? *"I happened to be in Hawaii on a business trip when I first found out that I might get the opportunity to be the commanding officer of PCU OKLAHOMA. My wife took a picture of me at the BATTLESHIP OKLAHOMA memorial just in case."*





SHIP's FORCE SPOTLIGHT

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OKLAHOMA crew

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Name: YNSCM Christopher Reed

Position: Chief of the Boat (COB)

Years in Navy: 28

Hometown: Lebanon, NJ

Previous Boats: USS LOS ANGELES (SSN 688), USS CHARLOTTE (SSN 766), USS COLUMBIA (SSN 771), USS BUFFALO (SSN 715) as COB, USS KENTUCKY (GOLD) as COB and PCU Oklahoma (SSN-802) as COB.

Shore Duties: Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit, Ballston Spa, NY, Defense Intelligence Agency Liaison Office, Canberra AUS, Submarine Squadron ONE, Pearl Harbor, HI, Navy Personnel Command Submarine and Nuclear Placement, Millington TN and My Navy Career Center, Millington TN as Command Master Chief.



Job Description: Direct advisor to the Commanding Officer for personnel matters for 110 enlisted sailors. Intimately involved in the planning process, along with the CO and XO. Responsible for the success of the people-centric programs on the ship (Career Counseling Program, Enlisted Submarine Qualification Program, Command Fitness Program, etc.)

What drew you to want to serve on submarines? *"I always found the thought of being on a submarine interesting and exciting since middle school."*

What's your favorite part of being a submariner? *"The people I get to work with. The dedication, care, work ethic and family environment we create as a crew is second to none"*

What are some unique challenges of being COB on a submarine under construction? *"Ensuring our personnel get time on other submarines in order to complete their submarine qualifications, and standing up all the people programs from scratch with qualified personnel."*

What's been the most interesting part of the construction? *"Seeing parts of the submarine that you would never see when its floating in the water has really given a visual on how equipment and parts operate outside the "people tank". Watching it all come together and seeing the hard work of the shipyard personnel day in and day out is extremely motivating and makes me feel safe taking these new submarines out to sea."*

Favorite meal on board: *"Definitely Pizza nights. I have also been on several boats that have done Mongolian Nights and they have been incredible. Lastly, after about 2 weeks at sea, all bread items are made from scratch. There is nothing like a good submarine Yeast Dinner Roll!"*

Hobbies away from the boat: *"Trivia nights at the local brewery, pickleball and corn hole."*

Any thoughts on being selected to serve on the Oklahoma? *I have done 2 namesake visits to the state of Oklahoma and can honestly say I have never been to a more inviting and welcoming place when in uniform. Just the sheer outward appreciation from everyone we've met is incredible. It makes me proud to serve on OKLAHOMA, and the country as a whole."*