

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2012

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20350-2000

Dear Secretary Mabus,

We write today to encourage you to consider naming a submarine after the state of Delaware.

Long before 10,000 Delawareans built hundreds of ships along the banks of the Christina River during WWII to help win that war, Delaware played an important role in maritime history, a role that the Navy would enrich today by naming a newly constructed submarine today the USS *Delaware*. Before we became the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution, Delaware served as the staging ground for the Continental Navy's first maritime mission. In January of 1776, Esek Hopkins, the Continental Navy's first and only Commander-in-Chief ordered a convoy assembled in the Delaware Bay off of Lewes, Delaware. This flotilla sailed out of the Delaware Capes bound for Nassau, Bahamas, marking the first deployment of U.S. Navy forces in our country's history. Similarly, one of the earliest naval encounters, if not the earliest, of the Revolutionary War took place off Lewes, Delaware, when the British warship HMS *Roebuck* was repelled by local pilots who kept the ship from advancing up the Delaware Bay.

During the War of 1812, Delaware and its citizens played key roles in our country's naval battles, as well. Naval forces stationed at Lewes, Delaware protected critically important powder works on the Brandywine River near Wilmington, Delaware. In a famous naval encounter, Delaware-born Commodore Jacob Jones commanded the USS *Wasp* as it survived an ambush by the British Ship HMS *Frolic* and responded by capturing the British warship. Commodore Jones received a Congressional Gold Medal for his leadership in this battle. Additionally, in 1814 Delaware-native Commodore Thomas McDonough earned the distinction as the "Hero of Lake Champlain" for the successful defense of the strategically important Otter Creek shipyard from advancing British ships.

At the onset of World War I, the U.S. Navy established a presence at Cape Henlopen on the Delaware coast. This Naval Section Base and its forces were in charge of defending our coast lines from enemy ships by conducting mind sweeping operations. After World War II, Cape Henlopen evolved its defensive operations to become the site of the U.S. Navy Sound Surveillance System Station, which was responsible for monitoring coastal naval threats, especially Soviet submarines during the Cold War. Among its commanders was Lieutenant Commander Margaret Frederick, who was one of the first female commanding officers in the U.S. Navy.


Despite this history, Delaware has gone too long without a naval vessel bearing its name. The last ship, the USS *Delaware* (BB-28), was decommissioned nearly 90 years ago on


November 10, 1923 after thirteen years of service. Since that time, 42 other states have had U.S. naval vessels named after them, according to the records in the Naval Vessel Registry. Fifteen of those states have had two or more vessels carry their state's name since the USS *Delaware*'s decommissioning. Of the eight states without ships named for them during this time, Delaware is one of only three states that do not currently have a ship named after one of its cities. The other two states—Oregon and Utah—have had ships named for them until very recently, the USS *Portland* and USS *Salt Lake City*; however, the last ship named for a Delaware city—the USS *Wilmington*—was decommissioned in 1945.

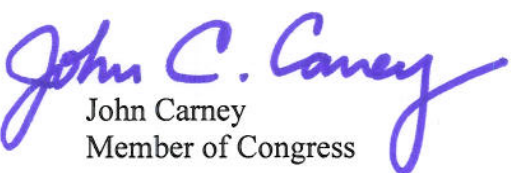
Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Delaware is currently home to 73,000 veterans, many of whom have served their country in the U.S. Navy. These veterans, as well as the thousands of Delawareans currently serving on active duty as members of the U.S. Armed Forces in Delaware, deserve to be honored for their service and sacrifice. One small thing we can do to pay tribute to the service of each of them is to name a future submarine after their home state.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with you to achieve this most worthwhile goal.

Sincerely,


Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator


Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator


John Carney
Member of Congress