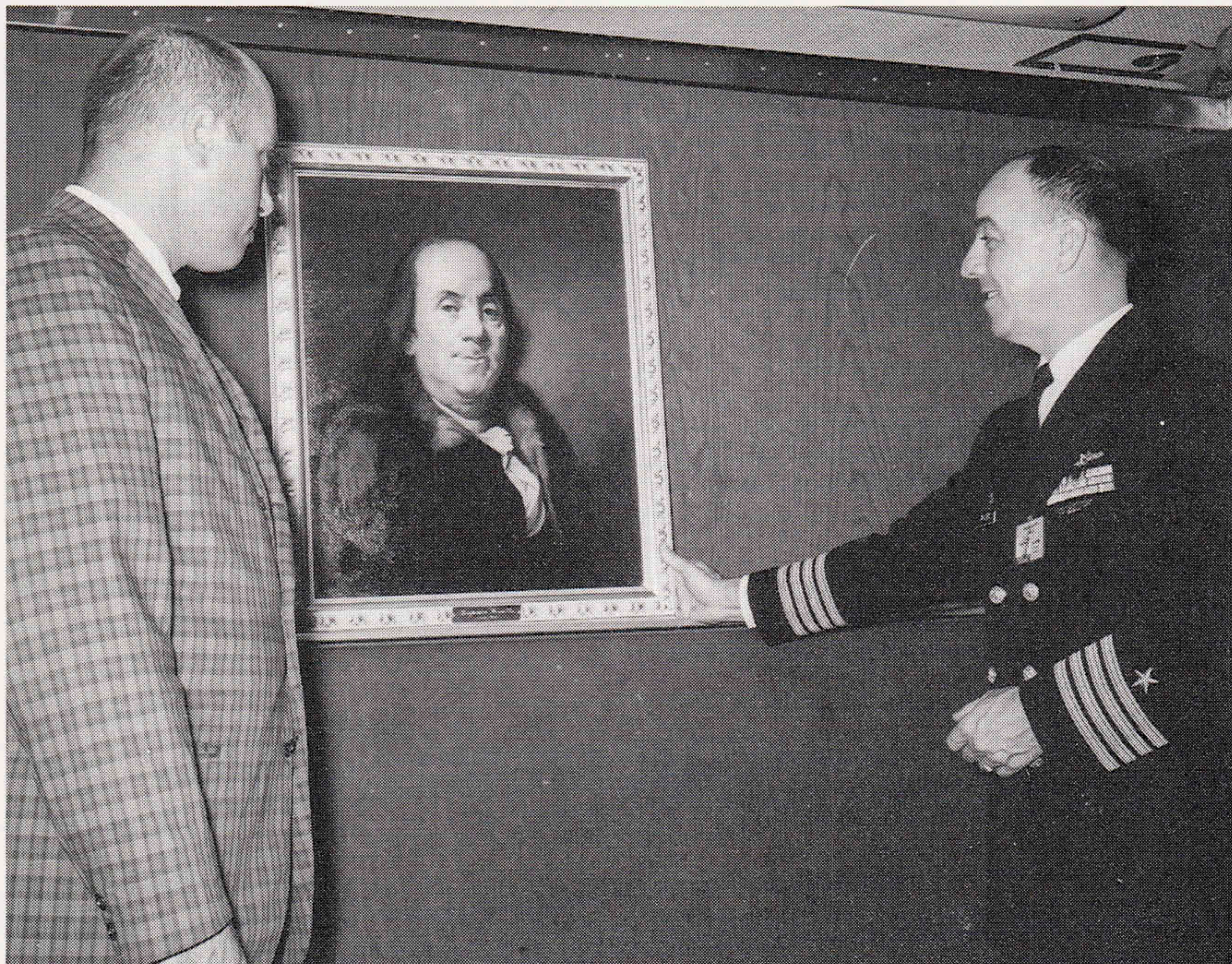


USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
(SSBN 640)
1965–1993
28 YEARS OF NAVAL SERVICE



KEEPING THE PEACE

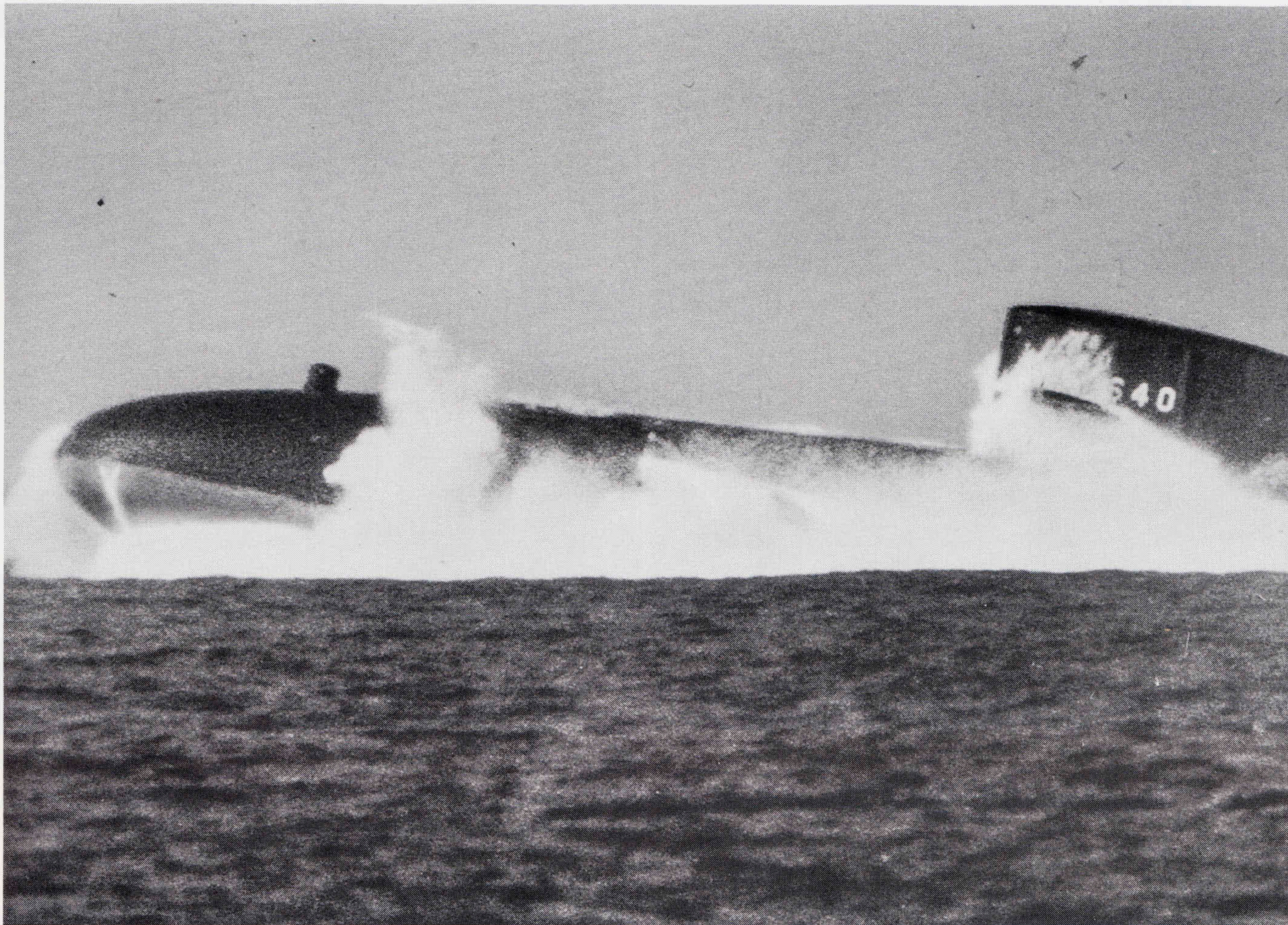
History and Decommissioning
NOVEMBER 1993



Benjamin Franklin left an indelible stamp on America. He was a statesman, scientist, and businessman who made a fortune by the age of 42. The author of a distinguished autobiography and inventor of bifocal glasses, he entered public service at the age of 48 and became a leading diplomat. He secured vital aid from France during the American Revolution and was the only American to sign all four documents which established the United States as an independent nation — the Declaration of Independence, the Alliance with France, the peace treaty with England, and the Constitution.

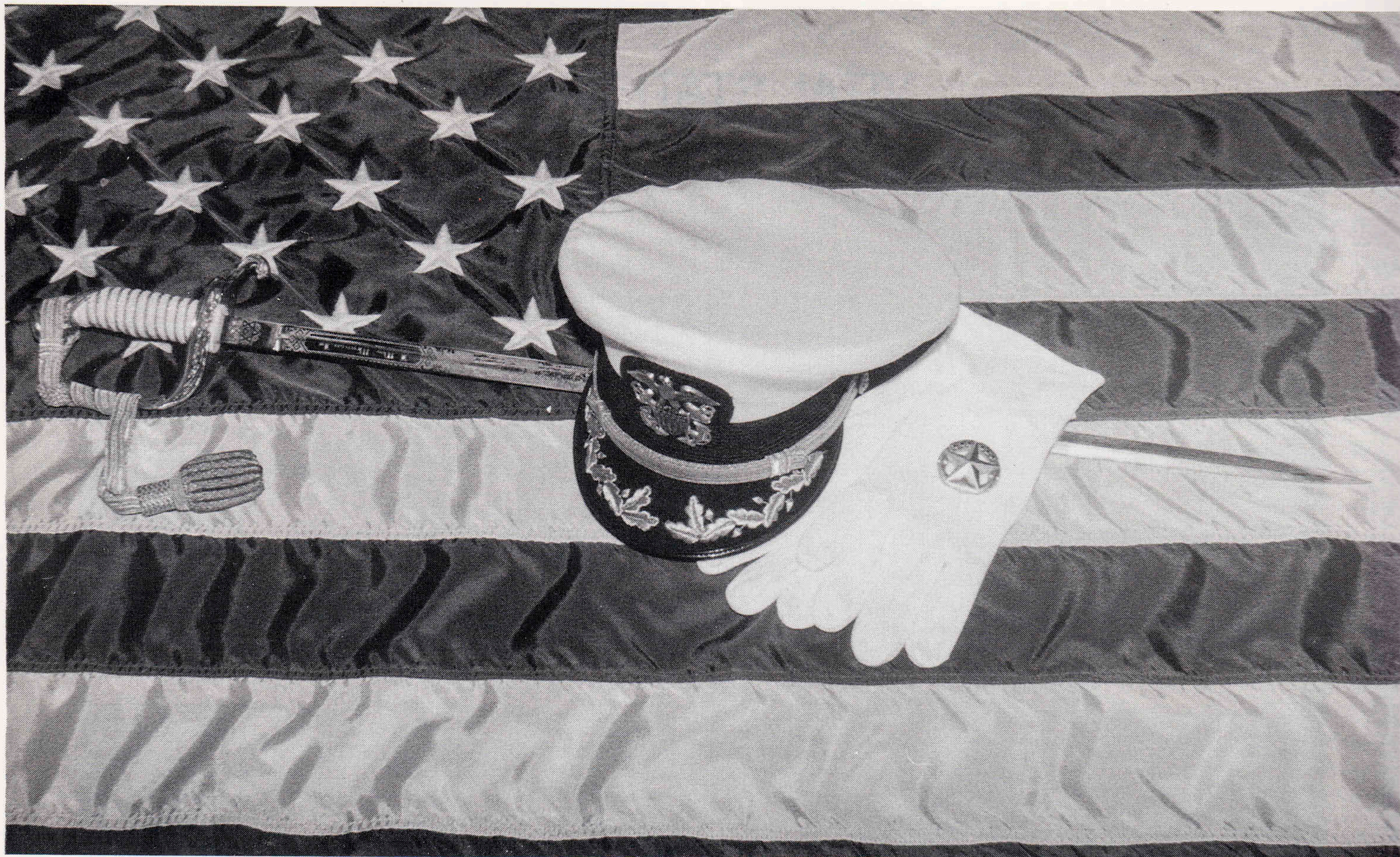
The submarine named in his honor was the 32nd Polaris Missile Submarine built for the Navy and is the first ship of the SSBN 640 Class Ballistic Missile Submarine. The portrait of Benjamin Franklin presented here to Captain Donald Miller, the Commissioning Commanding Officer, remained on board most of the ship's life and was returned to the Curator for the Department of the Navy in April of 1993.

VITAL STATISTICS



The first operational test of an "Emergency Ballast Tank Blow" system was made by USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN during sea trials.

Keel Laid	May 25, 1963
Launched	December 5, 1964
Commissioned	October 22, 1965
Poseidon Conversion	May 12, 1972
Trident Conversion	September 25, 1981
Length	425 Feet
Beam	33 Feet
Submerged Displacement	8,200+ Tons
Surfaced Displacement	7,000+ Tons
Submerged Speed	Over 20 Knots
Diving Depth	Over 400 Feet
Built by	General Dynamics, Electric Boat Division



Command at Sea

The Prestige, Privilege, and Burden of Command

by Joseph Conrad

Only a seaman realizes to what great extent an entire ship reflects the personality and ability of one individual, her Commanding Officer. To a landsman, this is not understandable, and sometimes it is even difficult for us to comprehend but it is so.

A ship at sea is a distant world in herself and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of the fleet units, the Navy must place great power, responsibility and trust in the hands of those leaders chosen for command.

In each ship there is one man who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea, can turn to no other man. There is one who alone is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation, engineering performance, accurate gunfiring and morale of his ship. He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship.

This is the most difficult and demanding assignment in the Navy. There is not an instant during his tour as Commanding Officer that he can escape the grasp of command responsibility. His privileges in view of his obligations are almost ludicrously small; nevertheless command is the spur that has given the Navy its great leaders.



COMMANDER JOHN. A. SOKOLOWSKI

COMMANDING OFFICER



Commander John A. Sokolowski was born in Rocky River, Ohio, and raised in the Cleveland area. He graduated from Purdue University in 1974 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and was commissioned in December of that year.

Following Nuclear Power School and Prototype training he reported to the USS FINBACK (SSN 670) for his first sea tour. His next assignment was as an instructor at the Naval Nuclear Power School in Orlando, Florida. In 1982 he reported to the commissioning crew of USS SALT LAKE CITY (SSN 716) as Navigator and Operations Officer. Following this tour he served as the Combat Systems Officer and Tactics Officer at Submarine Training Facility, Norfolk, Virginia, and as Executive Officer of USS HAMMERHEAD (SSN 663). He relieved as Commanding Officer USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (SSBN 640) (BLUE) on 16 August 1991 and completed two strategic deterrent patrols prior to relieving as the combined inactivation crew Commanding Officer on 01 December 1992.

Commander Sokolowski has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and the Navy Commendation Medal with three gold stars. His next assignment is Submarine Squadron Eight, Deputy Commander for Readiness in Norfolk, Virginia.

Commander Sokolowski is married to the former Marsha L. White of Chesapeake, Virginia. They have two daughters, Amy and Whitney.

COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

BLUE CREW

CAPT D.M. Miller
CDR F.M. Adams
CDR W.J. Herndon, Jr.
CDR R.M. Morrison
CDR F.M. Meredith
CDR D.M. Goebel
CDR E.BZ. Standrich
CDR R.L. Lowell, Jr.
CDR J.M. Brick
CDR J.A. Sokolowski

GOLD CREW

CDR R.N. Williams
CDR M.P. Alexich
CDR J.D. Leonard, Jr.
CAPT W.H. Purdum
CDR J.N. Darby
CDR R.A. Dunkle
CAPT L.C. Wright
CDR R.C. Reuthinger, Jr.
CDR J.W. Winney, Jr.
CDR F.P. Stagl



Captain Lovell (Center), one of the two Gemini-7 astronauts to observe Franklin's first missile launch from space visits the ship's first Commanding Officers.

COMMISSIONING COMMANDING OFFICERS



Captain Donald M. Miller, USN (RET) (right) is from Canton, Ohio, and was a 21-year veteran of the Submarine Force when he took command of the Blue crew on 22 October, 1965. He made three war patrols during World War II including one on board USS DARTER (SS 277) when it was lost by grounding during the Battle of Leyte Gulf in 1944. After service on several other submarines, he was given command of USS MENHADEN (SS 377) and was selected as the Commissioning Commanding Officer of USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (SSBN 602) (GOLD) and completed five strategic deterrent patrols. He was again selected as a Commissioning Commanding Officer, this time for USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (SSBN 640) (BLUE) before retiring from Naval Service. He now resides in Atlantic Beach, Florida.

Commander Ross N. Williams (left) served as Executive Officer, USS HENRY CLAY (BLUE) prior to reporting as Prospective Commanding Officer USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (SSBN 640) (GOLD). He is a native of New York City and also served on USS HALFBEAK, USS ALBACORE, USS BARBEL, and USS SEAWOLF. He retired from Naval service as a Rear Admiral and now resides in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

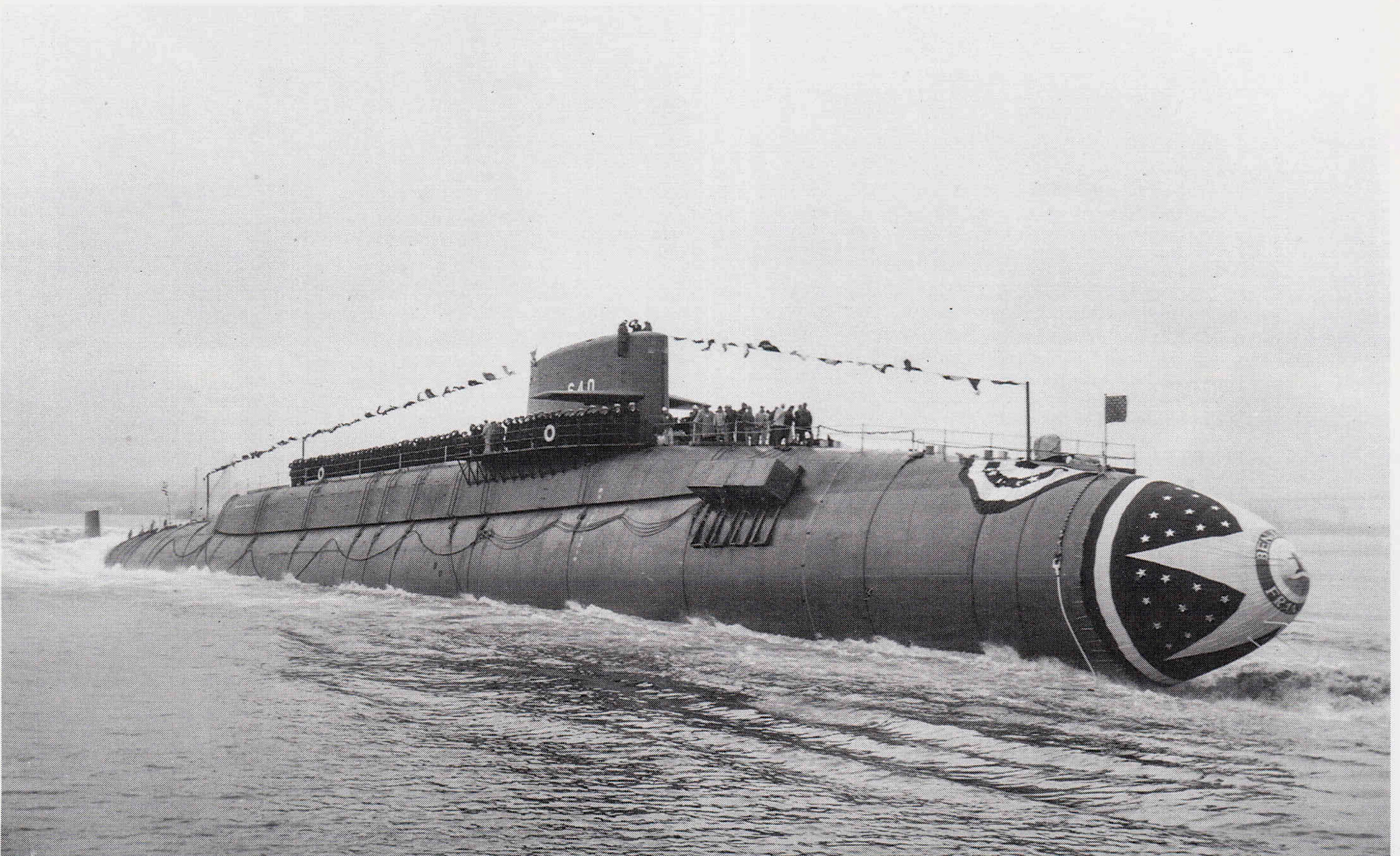
"POLARIS SUB FRANKLIN GOES DOWN WAYS AT EB"

— *The Day*, New London Ct, 12/5/64

USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN is the first of the improved LAFAYETTE class fleet ballistic missile submarines and the sixth of the line to bear the name of the famous American inventor, author and statesman. Predecessors include a small brig which fought during the Barbary Wars in 1805 and the World War II aircraft carrier that sustained more battle damage without sinking than any other ship in the Pacific Fleet.

On hand for the launching ceremonies at Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, were the ship's sponsors, Mrs. Leon V. Chaplin and Mrs. Francis L. Moseley, who christened FRANKLIN as she slid down the ways. Also present were Vice Admiral Vernon L. Lawrence, Commander Submarine Forces Atlantic, and U.S. House Representative William L. St. Onge.

As a testament to the Cold War tensions of 1964, the keel of another ballistic missile submarine, the FRANCIS SCOTT KEY, was laid only hours after BENJAMIN FRANKLIN vacated the building platform. Representative St. Onge reminded those present at the launching of Benjamin Franklin's century old statement, "Our cause is the cause of all mankind, we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own." As apparent from the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union, USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN completed her mission of nuclear deterrence well.



Benjamin Franklin "Down the Ways"



Both of USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN's sponsors were great-great-great-great-great granddaughters of the ship's namesake.



Commissioning Ceremony, 22 October 1965. Blue and Gold crews on deck.

USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was commissioned on October 22, 1965, in ceremonies at U.S. Navy Underwater Sound Laboratory, New London, Connecticut. She was the first submarine to have a "Safety Material Certification" and was the leader of an improved design incorporating extensively re-engineered safety systems resulting from the loss of the USS THRESHER. During sea trials, she became the first submarine in the Navy to dive to full test depth after that tragic accident. Although the construction crew and their families endured the stress of home port changes first to Newport News and later to Pearl Harbor, they never faltered. Both crews successfully fired A-3 Polaris missiles in December 1965, one in coordination with an orbital pass by GEMINI-7 Astronauts Borman and Lovell. In recognition for all the accomplishments of her crew, USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was the first ballistic missile submarine to earn the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION.



Underway in the Atlantic.

Following tactical load-out in Charleston, South Carolina, USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN departed for her first operational patrol in the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, she became the first "boomer" to make a port call at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, and transit the Panama Canal. The Blue crew deployed with the ship on 06 May 1966 on its first Polaris deterrent patrol and returned to Apra Harbor, Guam, on 11 July 1966.

After nineteen successful patrols, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN departed Guam on 28 August 1970 for the transit to New London, Connecticut, for Poseidon conversion at Electric Boat. The conversion was completed in May 1972 and she once again took her place in the nuclear deterrent force. After completing sixteen Poseidon Missile patrols with Submarine Squadron Sixteen in Rota, Spain, she returned to New England, this time for conversion to the Trident Missile Weapons System at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

While at Portsmouth, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was recognized as the most improved battle-ready ship in the Atlantic Fleet for 1979 and was awarded the coveted Arleigh Burke Fleet Trophy. During her assignment to Submarine Squadron Sixteen, the ship earned numerous individual awards for excellence including the Engineering Red "E," the Communications Green "C," the Supply Blue "E," the Damage Control Red "DC," and the Anti-Submarine Warfare White "A." This outstanding achievement was repeated again by both crews in 1990. Upon completion of the Trident conversion in 1981, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN once again patrolled the seas.

On 18 December 1983, the ship completed her 51st patrol, the 2200th Strategic Deterrent Patrol made by a Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine. In July 1985, she was assigned to Submarine Squadron Eight for a short time before entering Charleston Naval Shipyard for her final overhaul, this time for reactor refueling.

Following overhaul and completion of the post overhaul shakedown period, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN resumed her role as part of our strategic defense triad, making Trident missile patrols as a part of Submarine Squadron Eighteen, homeported in Charleston, South Carolina. Upon completion of Patrol 62 in October 1990, the ship was awarded Submarine Squadron Eighteen's Battle Efficiency "E" and was named Atlantic Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine of the Year in recognition of the ability of both crews to meet all challenges consistently.

The ship was transferred to Submarine Squadron 20 in Kings Bay, Georgia, at the end of patrol 66 even though crew members remained homeported in Charleston. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN was inactivated on 01 December 1992 at the end of Patrol 69 and began the long transit to Mare Island Naval Shipyard for decommissioning in February 1993.



Arleigh Burke Fleet Trophy presentation 27 August 1979. MMCM(SS) D. Gorence (left), COB, and CDR D. Goebel (right), Commanding.

INACTIVATION CREW

CDR John A. Sokolowski — Commanding Officer
LCDR Robert M. Robinson — Executive Officer
LCDR Christopher R. Cooper — Engineer Officer
LT David L. England — Weapons Officer
LT Robert J. Weber, Jr. — Navigator
LT David V. White — Supply Officer
LT Mark R. Ruh — Defueling Officer
LT Andrew C. Robertson — Damage Control Assistant
LT Noel A. Pitoniak — Communications Officer
LT Jeffrey A. Dietz — Engineering Assistant
LT Glenn W. Dikeman — Electrical Assistant
LT Robert E. Millott — Chemistry and Radiological Controls
LT Todd R. Gilliam — Reactor Controls Assistant
LT Scott C. Whalen — Main Propulsion Assistant



FTCS(SS) Warren L. Bruner — Chief of the Boat
YNCM(SS) Herman E. Edwards — Personnel Officer
EMCS(SS) Mike A. Schlitz — Engineering Dept. Executive Assistant
HMCS(SS) William N. Stelzig — Medical Dept. Representative



Mess Management Specialist Division



MSCS(SS) Rainer U. Henke
MS2(SS) Mike W. Taylor
MS2(SS) George Correa, Jr.
MS2(SS) Craig D. Hollerway
MS2(SS) Kenneth H. Lux
MS3(SS) Gerald D. Davis

Fire Control (Gun) Division



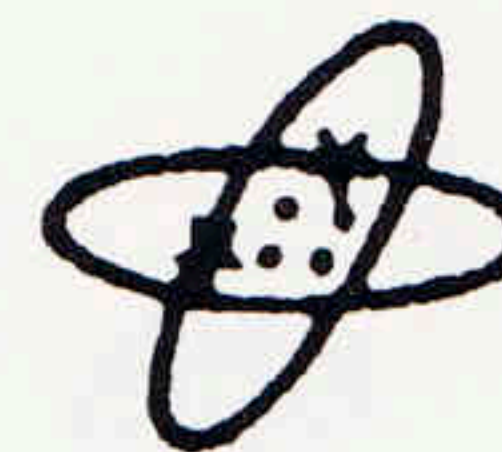
FTGC(SS) Matthew S. Evans
FTG2(SS) Glenn W. Kemmerer
FTG3(SS) Emerson E. Viles
SN(SS) Nick A. Freitas

**Interior
Communications
Division**



IC1(SS) Alfred B. Gary
IC2(SS) Michael S. Wilcox
IC3(SS) David D. Stewart
IC3(SS) Greg C. Bakoledis
IC3(SS) Jeffrey A. Starkey

**Navigation
Electronics
Division**



ETC(SS) Richard G. Pleiman
ET1(SS) John R. Crotts, Jr.
ET1(SS) Michael E. Burkland
ET2(SS) Wilbert Lewis
ET2(SS) Charles R. Brodie
ET2(SS) Avery E. Hathaway
ET2(SS) Michael V. Ostrom
ET3(SS) Sandy Geathers III

**Quartermaster
Division**



QMC(SS) Joe D. Kostelnik
QM2(SS) Sandy E. Pettus
QM2(SS) Joel Price
QM3(SS) Bishop L. Nettles
QM3(SS) Marcus D. Noble
QM3(SS) Corey E. Jacobs
QM3(SS) John F. Perkins

**Reactor
Laboratory
Division**



MM1(SS) Darren M. Boone
MM1(SS) Kenneth E. Harrawood
MM2(SS) Allen D. Cain
MM2(SS) Paul M. Palmer
MM3(SS) Joseph B. Marston

**Torpedo
Division**



TMC(SS) Wade Johnson
TM3(SS) Lewis H. Bragg
TM3(SS) Aaron A. Lacey
TM3(SS) Brent A. Cullen
SN(SS) Scottie W. Hamby

**Radio
Division**



RMC(SS) Edward F. Meskel
RM1(SS) Jerry T. Jones
RM2(SS) Roger P. Rogonia
RM2(SS) Danny J. Butcher
RM2(SS) Jeffrey A. Weaver
RM3(SS) Paul A. Wenzel

**Auxiliary
Division**



MMCS(SS) John M. Tillotson
MM1(SS) Eric D. Skunza
MM1(SS) Thomas A. Kramer
MM2(SS) Clinton W. Engledow
MM2(SS) Vincent M. Cruz
MM2(SS) Mike W. Foster
MM2(SS) Timothy E. Hughes
MM2(SS) John P. Devos
MM2(SS) Charles R. Stenger
MM3(SS) Thomas M. Fanelli
MM3(SS) Harry H. Kaneakua
MM3(SS) Thomas G. Neville
MM3(SS) David P. Metzger

**Electrical
Division**



EMC(SS) James A. Wingo
EM1(SS) Glen Davies
EM1(SS) Roger R. Somero
EM1(SS) Richard C. Carmine
EM1(SS) John L. Clark
EM1(SS) Robert L. Simmons
EM2(SS) Jason P. Corrales
EM2(SS) Jimmy W. Gourley
EM2(SS) Anthony R. Reynolds
EM2(SS) Thomas J. Scharmann
EM3(SS) James P. Gee
EM3(SS) John L. Collins

**Sonar
Division**



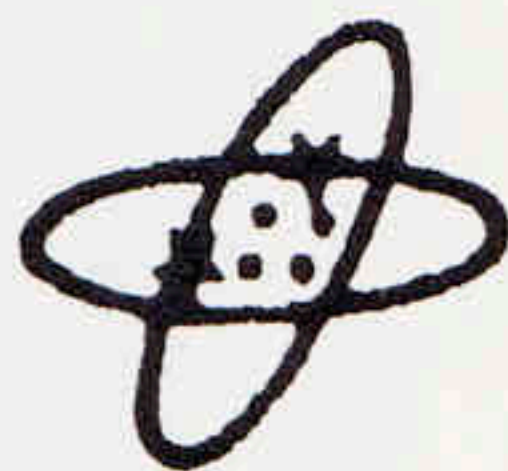
STS1(SS) Ricky S. Tidwell
STS1(SS) Dale M. Schmude
STS2(SS) Leanders Lonzo
STS2(SS) Tim A. Frost
STS2(SS) Charles K. Kelly
STS2(SS) William C. Hairston, Jr.
STS2(SS) Robert J. Towner
STS3(SS) Mark J. Toline
STS3(SS) Craig M. Carter
STS3(SS) Kirk S. Davis
STS3(SS) Aaron L. Martin

**Machinery
Division**



MMCS(SS) Robert E. Guice
MM1(SS) Timothy M. Lewis
MM1(SS) David M. Pennell
MM1(SS) Stephen K. Prophater
MM1(SS) David A. White
MM2(SS) Jonathan R. Wells
MM2(SS) Ruben Govea
MM2(SS) Mitchel A. Mathews
MM2(SS) Robert D. Mehs
MM2(SS) Lannis D. Miller
MM2(SS) John L. Wilson
MM2(SS) Patrick D. Shafer
MM3(SS) Edward D. Olmedo

**Reactor
Controls
Division**



ETC(SS) Kenneth E. Templeton II
ET1(SS) Mark A. Shepherd
ET1(SS) Doyle C. Young
ET2(SS) Edward W. Prater
ET2(SS) John C. Shoufler
ET2(SS) Michael D. Hamilton
ET2(SS) Ralph S. Hughes
ET2(SS) Larry L. Hershey

**Storekeeper
Division**



SK1(SS) Phillip M. Brown
SK3(SS) James P. Turner
SKSN(SS) Donald S. Hamlin

**Yoeman
Division**



YN3(SS) Michael J. Craffey
YN3(SS) Otha L. Livingston

**Strategic
Weapons
Division**



MTC(SS) Kevin J. Kandik
MT1(SS) Gregory J. Brasher
MT1(SS) Woodley E. Frampton
FTB3(SS) Thomas W. Oblinger
FTB3(SS) John W. Belcher
MT3(SS) Kevin L. Aldridge

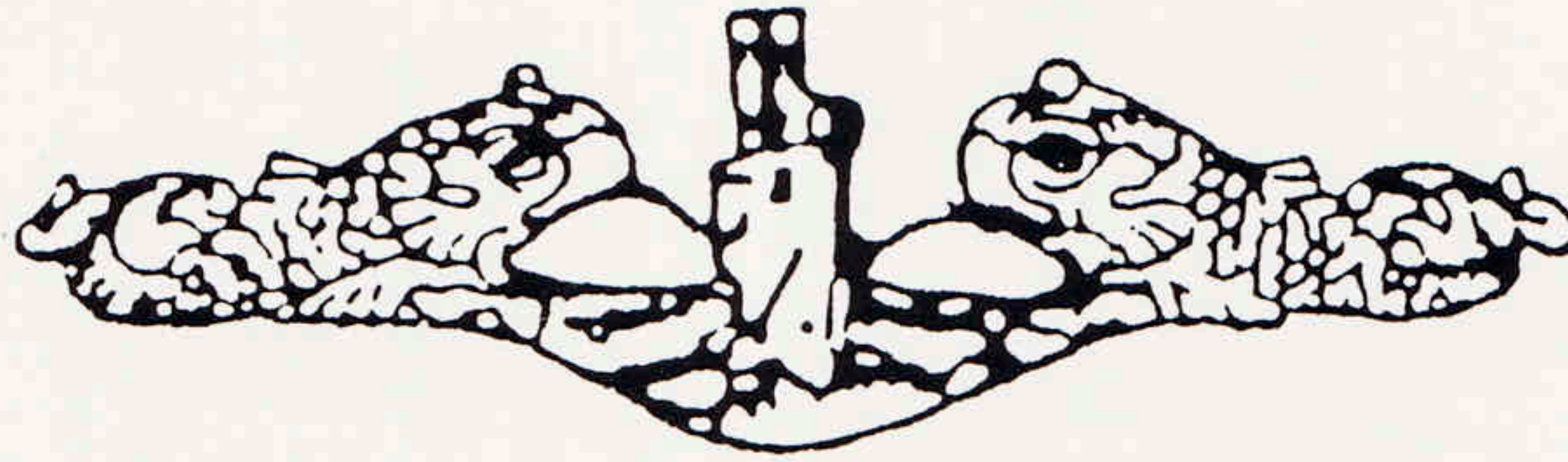
"Benjamin Franklin would be proud of the fine young men who will sail on this ship. They are our best! They work long, hard hours. They leave their families and friends for months at a time, ready to do whatever is necessary to protect their country and their countrymen — even those who are unwilling to protect themselves. For our part, we have had as our goal a simple purpose — to build a ship worthy of these dedicated men."

— J. William Jones Jr., President Electric Boat, 22 October 1965

USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN departing Pearl Harbor for her first nuclear deterrent patrol, 6 May 1966

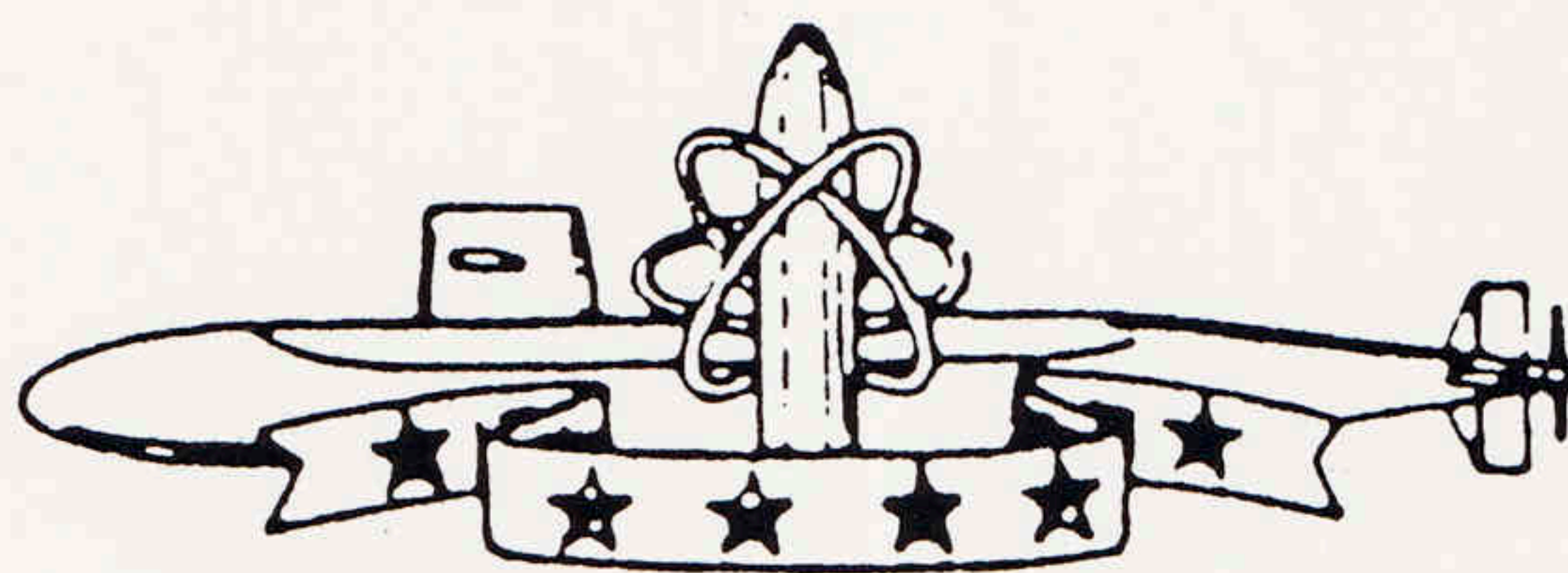


SUBMARINE DOLPHINS

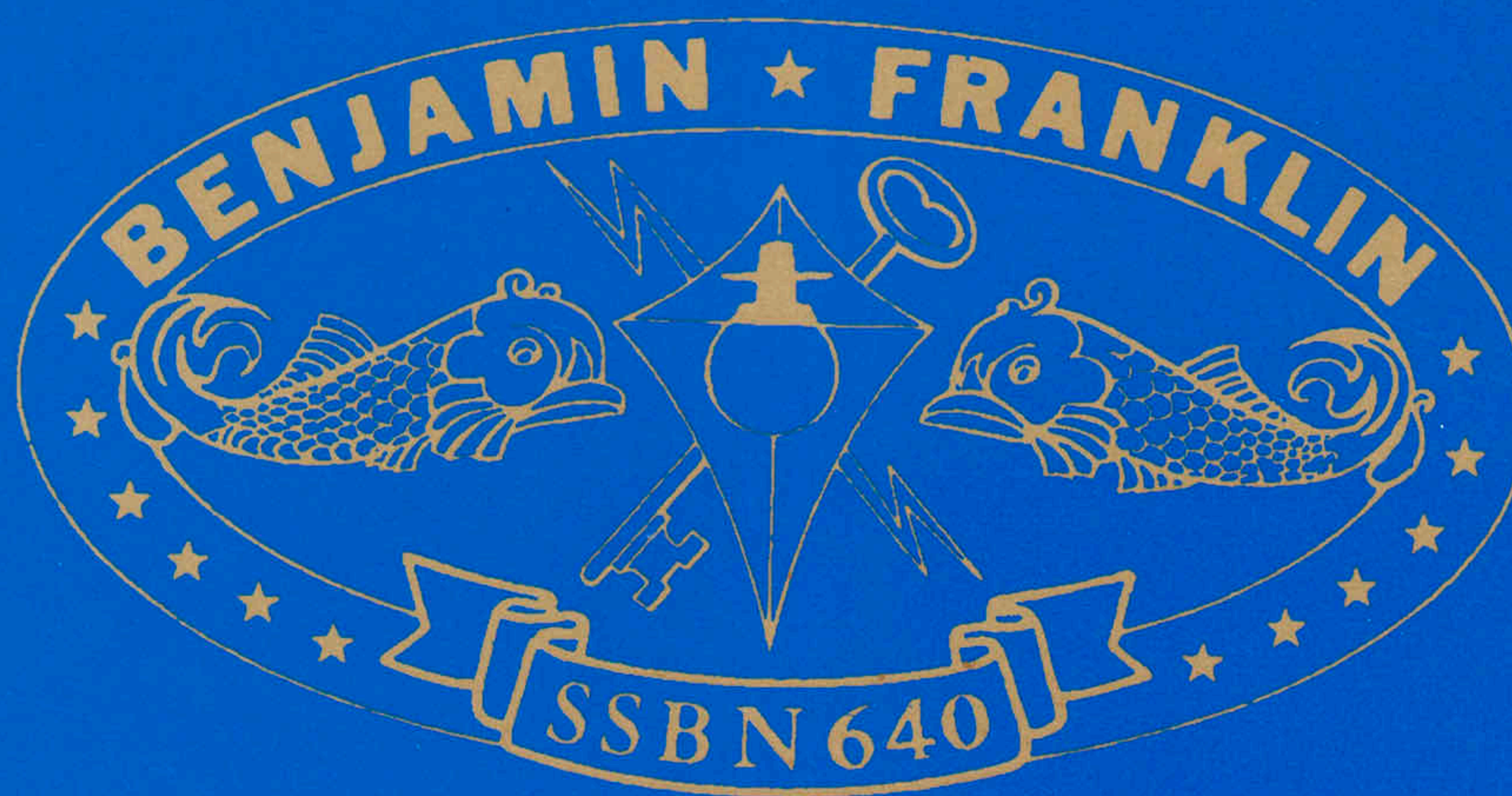


An early diesel-electric submarine framed by twin dolphins forms the insignia of the elite submarine qualified Navyman. These dolphins, as they are properly known, are silver for enlisted personnel and gold for commissioned officers. They symbolize completion of a rigorous program of qualification, normally requiring one year to complete, in which the candidate is required to become proficient in damage control, ship systems' knowledge, practical equipment operation and watchstanding. Their presence on the left chest denotes a special individual, the submariner.

DETERRENT PATROL PIN



A fleet Ballistic Missile submarine girded by a POLARIS/POSEIDON missile upon which is interwoven the orbits of nuclei to represent the power of nuclear energy with a superimposed mantelet of stars forms the insignia denoting strategic deterrent patrols. The pin itself denotes the initial patrol completed while each gold star represents another; a silver star indicates completion of five strategic deterrent patrols.



The insignia of the USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN symbolizes her role as a major deterrent weapons system while recalling a significant event in the life of her namesake. The Kite, Key, and Lightning represent both Franklin's fascination with the phenomenon of electricity, and the powerful deterrent force of Trident, which is the key to security.