



USS Montana Committee

*Supporting commissioning of SSN 794
and all those who sail aboard her in defense of our nation*

Hold for Release after 8:00 PM, Friday, May 12, 2017

Contact: Bill Whitsitt
406.309.0890

Kalispell, MT (Friday, May 12, 2017)

***USS Montana* Nuclear Attack Sub and Crew Get Statewide Support Committee**

A state-of-the-technology nuclear fast attack submarine to be named the *USS Montana* now has a statewide committee to support its crew and its eventual commissioning into the U.S. Navy fleet.

The announcement of the formation and operation of the *USS Montana* Committee was made in Kalispell at a semi-annual meeting of Montana U.S. Navy veterans who have served on submarines.

The new warship to be named after the state of Montana is a Virginia Class submarine. Under construction at Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia, she is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

In announcing the Committee to the submarine veterans, Chairman Bill Whitsitt said that the *USS Montana* will be among the most advanced subs in the world. Said Whitsitt, "She'll be extremely stealthy, able to conduct critical surveillance and intelligence gathering operations. She'll be lethal, able to protect carrier and expeditionary strike groups as well as hunt and destroy enemy attack and missile submarines and surface ships. She'll be multi-mission, able to deploy and detect mines, launch Tomahawk cruise missiles against land targets, and insert entire platoon-size Navy SEAL special operations teams into dangerous areas, all while submerged."

Primary roles of the *USS Montana* Committee include providing support for the expected 2020 commissioning, with a number of ceremonial and related events for the crew, Montanans and dignitaries. Leading to the commissioning will be a series of events in Montana, including visits by the yet-to-be-named commanding officer and others, including senior enlisted personnel, to inform and educate Montanans about the new ship and its roles, and to begin building relationships between Montanans and the ship's crew.

The Committee may also help provide Montana-themed crew living space enhancements aboard the new ship, and displays of Montana history and culture. During the three-plus decades of expected *USS Montana* service, the Committee may help the ship and crew meet a range of specific educational and/or operational needs.

Carl Bartman, Commander of the Montana Base of the U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc., that hosted today's meeting, said that his members are extremely pleased to be part of the *USS Montana* support efforts.

Said Bartman, "Some of our members served on diesel submarines that helped win World War II. Others have served on our modern attack and ballistic missile subs. They all know what it means to have a strong undersea Navy that can protect our country -- and they know that this leading-edge warship will make Montana proud."

The new ship will build on the legacy of the first *USS Montana*, an armored cruiser commissioned in 1908 that served with distinction through and beyond the First World War. (Two battleships were planned at different times to carry the Montana name, but neither was completed, leaving Montana as the only state that did not have a battleship named after it.)

The new support committee is a Montana non-profit corporation, officially named the USS Montana Committee, Inc. Committee membership will be open to anyone at no charge, although donations will be gratefully accepted. Application has been made for federal tax exempt [501(c)(3)] status.

More information, including lists of Founding Sponsors and Founding Members may be found at www.ussmontanacommittee.us .