

About the Submarine

California, the eighth ship of the *Virginia* class, is named after the “Golden State.” It will be christened next year, and upon delivery to the Navy in 2011, will be the most modern and sophisticated attack submarine in the world, providing undersea supremacy well into the 21st century. Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding is teamed with General Dynamics Electric Boat to build *Virginia*-class submarines.



Virginia-class submarines:

- Are the most advanced submarines in the world
- Will maintain the nation’s undersea supremacy well into the 21st century
- Require seven years to design and five years to build
- Are 377 feet long, 34 feet in diameter, and displace 7,800 tons submerged
- Are capable of submerged speeds in excess of 25 knots
- Have a crew complement of 100 sailors and officers
- Can stay submerged for periods of up to three months at a time



Keel Laying Ceremony of the Submarine

California
SSN 781

May 1, 2009

Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding
Newport News, VA

NORTHROP GRUMMAN

The Ceremony

Welcome and Announcement of the Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem and Invocation

Mr. Matt Mulherin

Vice President and General Manager

Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding-Newport News

Pledge of Allegiance

Chief Petty Officer David Macon

Fire Control Technician, PCU *California* (SSN 781)

National Anthem

Mr. Ron Harper

Insulator, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding

Invocation

Ms. Patti Richardson

Insulator, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding

Remarks

Mr. Matt Mulherin

Mr. John Casey

President, General Dynamics Electric Boat

The Honorable Bobby Scott

United States Representative

Third Congressional District, Virginia

Remarks and Introduction of the Sponsor

Admiral Kirkland H. Donald

Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion

Remarks

Mrs. Donna Willard

Ship's Sponsor

Keel Authentication

Mrs. Donna Willard

Mr. Matt Mulherin

Admiral Kirkland Donald

Congressman Bobby Scott

Mr. John Casey

Commander Kevin Kinslow

Prospective Commanding Officer, *California*

Mr. Scott Hallinger

Welder, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding

Ship's Sponsor & Keel Authenticator



Donna Joy Willard

Donna was born at Bethesda Naval Hospital and grew up in a Navy family throughout her father's 20-year Navy career.

In 1973 she met her husband, Admiral Bob Willard, following his graduation from the Naval Academy.

They were married in November

1974 and moved to San Diego, California, so Bob could attend flight training. Bob and Donna spent many years in California and consider it home. They are the parents of three grown children, Jennifer and identical twins Bryan and Mark. They also have two beautiful granddaughters, Alexis and Carly, and a grandson, Noah.

While their children were growing up, Donna worked at various jobs within the Solana Beach, California, School District, eventually becoming the executive secretary to the Superintendent of Schools. In recent years, she has worked intermittently for a D.C.-based defense contractor.

Donna has always been deeply supportive of her husband's career and with Navy families in particular. She has held numerous positions in spouse groups and served as Ombudsman when Bob was a member of Navy Fighter Weapons School (Topgun). As a flag spouse, Donna was the co-chair of the 2000 Navy-Marine Corps Ball and served as the New Flag Officer Spouse Committee Secretary in 1999 and 2000. Donna has volunteered in many positions, including Naval Services Familyline, where she is currently serving as a board member. From 2006-present Donna has served as the Senior Flag Spouse Advisor for the Command Spouse Leadership Course in Newport, Rhode Island. As the spouse of the Commander, Pacific Fleet, Donna serves on various boards, including the Armed Forces YMCA, Girl Scouts of Hawaii, and various spouse organizations.

They have relocated many times since Bob became a flag officer, including assignments on both the East and West coasts: three tours at the Pentagon, two tours in Japan, and two in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Additionally, Donna has traveled extensively with her husband to foreign countries throughout the Pacific. She considers these Navy experiences as once-in-a-lifetime adventures and cherishes the memories and friendships she has made along the way.

In her spare time, Donna enjoys playing golf, SCUBA diving, biking, walking and reading.



New Mexico (SSN 779)