

Remarks by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus
Naming of USS PAUL IGNATIUS, DDG 117
Pentagon
11 June 2013

There is a lot of accumulated wisdom here from our former Secretaries and from our current serving military and serving civilians. We are here to honor today the accumulated wisdom and experience of someone who preceded us all in this office and who, in many ways, set the standard for what the Secretary of the Navy should be and the way this job should be approached.

Paul Ignatius, the son of Armenian immigrants, who began his autobiography by saying that his service as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy was transformative and he came out with far more confidence than when he had gone in. I think that's true for so many of us who served. He went to Harvard Business School following the war. During the war he was on the USS MANILA BAY, in Northern Japan, in Hokkaido, with Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher when he received the surrender from the northern Japanese forces. He then went to Harvard Business School, founded a very successful consulting company, came into government and was the Assistant Secretary of Defense before he was Secretary of the Navy.

While he was Secretary, some of the things he had to deal with: The Tet Offensive, capture of the PUEBLO by the North Koreans, the F-111 fighter program, and budget issues. So, just to recap, a counter-insurgency war, problems with the North Koreans, a joint fighter for all the services, and budget issues. We've come a long way since then [*laughter*], since your day.

The DDG-117, the PCU or Pre-Commissioning Unit, PAUL IGNATIUS is going to be one of the backbones of the fleet. The DDG-51 program, built in Pascagoula, Mississippi and Bath, Maine, are some of the most capable and versatile ships that the United States Navy has ever sent to sea. Capable of simultaneously pursuing undersea warfare, surface warfare, air warfare, and missile defense, it is truly the workhorse of the Fleet. It is what people think of when they think of the United States Navy and United States naval ships.

The IGNATIUS will be in our fleet for three or four decades. It will sail virtually every ocean of the world and many times the Sailors on the IGNATIUS will be the only Americans that people from other countries will ever meet. It will be a reminder of the experience and the wisdom of Paul Ignatius. You have to look at this, in Navy terms, for the long haul. There are Sailors who will sail on the PAUL IGNATIUS who have not yet been born.

Thank you all for being here. Thank you, Secretary Ignatius, for your service. In the immortal Navy words, God bless the USS PAUL IGNATIUS and all those who sail in her.