

# SMALLTALK

about big ideas

## Quality Always Matters

**By Jennifer Boykin**

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As president of Newport News Shipbuilding, I'm proud to represent our shipbuilders at Navy events.

They're all significant in their own right, but the *Indiana* (SSN 789) commissioning in September is one I will personally never forget.

It was not because of the location, Port Canaveral, Florida, which is somewhat unusual for a submarine commissioning, or the intense heat on top of the excitement I always feel when I get to talk to a crowd about our great shipbuilders.

I will never forget the event because of retired Navy Captain Gerald Peddicord, a 99-year-old gem of a man I had the pleasure of meeting that weekend. He served on the battleship *Indiana* (BB-58) and spent time at our shipyard during the ship's construction. In fact, he was on the ship when it sailed off from NNS in 1942—more than 76 years ago.

We swapped stories and photos, and I was truly humbled to meet this man who, after a century of life experiences, still remembered his time at our shipyard so vividly. He spoke of meeting his wife while in Newport News and talked about his role on the battleship. His passion for the importance of the ship's systems, their functions and their complexity was something we had in common.



Meeting Capt. Peddicord was such a gift because he gives life to what we do every day.

As nuclear shipbuilders, we should all be very familiar with the “Rickover Principles,” basic rules for doing your job as defined by the “father of the nuclear Navy,” Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. We live and breathe the Rickover Principles everyday—practices like taking ownership and accountability for your work, paying attention to detail, prioritization and working hard. They are principles we use to build ships today, including our newest *Indiana* – a *Virginia*-class fast attack submarine.

Yet even before these Rickover Principles were established, our predecessors who worked with Capt. Peddicord were demonstrating this work ethic and mindset, which I believe are directly attributed to our founding principle of “Always Good Ships.” We are fortunate that our founder, Collis P. Huntington, understood the importance of quality, and we are grateful to those who came before us and instilled in us this same shipbuilding work ethic and mindset.

October is National Quality Month, and I want to thank everyone for your continued commitment to quality. I also ask you to think about how you perform your work today with quality in mind, and how you are passing your lessons and experiences down to our newest workforce members.

My hope is that 76 years from now, our future shipyard president will meet a Navy sailor who served under our watch today, and that his or her memories of our shipyard are just as positive as Capt. Peddicord's.