

# THE ATOMIC PROJECT

A Newsletter produced by the Commissioning Committee of the  
USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER (SSN-795)



Summer

Issue 1

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## UPDATE FROM THE BOAT

### STATUS OF OUR PERSONNEL:

The Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) HYMAN G RICKOVER (SSN 795) was established in April of 2018, with an initial manning of 8 personnel. Cmdr. T. J. Niebel assumed command on 13 July 2018, coinciding with the arrival of 48 additional nuclear-trained crew members. In October of 2019, our second manning increment (Bravo manning) arrived, the majority of this crew increment consisted of non-nuclear trained personnel assigned to navigation, combat systems, and supply departments, as well as Auxiliary Division within Engineering Department. Our current manning is 92 personnel (9 officers, 17 chiefs, senior chiefs, and master chiefs, and 66 enlisted personnel).

Eleven of our crew members are temporarily assigned to other submarines supporting at sea operations. These personnel are supporting forward deployed

operations onboard USS MINNESOTA and USS COLORADO, as well as local operations on several other Groton based submarines.

We recently awarded our first Sailor of the Year and Junior Sailor of the Year Awards. Normally we would have a "Bluejacket of the Year" as well, but the majority of our Sailors are Second Class Petty Officers, and the personnel that qualified for Bluejacket of the Year have been onboard less than a month.

- Sailor of the Year: Electronics Technician-Nuclear First Class Kamron Hubbard. ETN1 Hubbard was born in Modesto, California and graduated from Tunkhannock High School in Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the Navy in December 2013, and has served as a junior staff instructor at Nuclear Power Training Unit, Ballston Spa. Onboard RICKOVER, he serves as the Reactor Control Division Leading Petty Officer, responsible for supervising a division of 12 Sailors in the operation and maintenance of the reactor's

instrumentation and control suite, as well as major electric plant distribution equipment. He earned his submarine warfare device in 4 months while temporarily assigned to the USS MARYLAND.

- Junior Sailor of the Year: Electronics Technician-Nuclear Second Class Nikola Breznikar. A native of San Pedro, California, ETN2 Breznikar has been in the Navy for 3.5 years. He is serving as the Engineering Department Logroom Yeoman, responsible for ensuring all required technical manuals are updated in support of new construction key events. He was the first among his peers—first-tour Sailors—to qualify for his senior in-rate watchstation of Shutdown Reactor Operator.

### MATERIAL AND CONSTRUCTION STATUS:

PCU HYMAN G. RICKOVER is in the 49th month of a scheduled 67 month new construction period.

Three of the four major hull sections are at Electric Boat. The final section is scheduled to arrive during the first quarter of 2020.

Scheduled delivery of the boat is April 2021. (Better estimate is Late Summer 2021).

*The USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER Commissioning Committee is conducting its activities as part of the Armed Forces Council of Chicago, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation formed by the Union League Club of Chicago to honor and support America's Armed Forces.*

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

Dear Friends of the United States Navy:

By way of an introduction, I'm the Chairman of the Commissioning Committee for the USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER (SSN-795). Our Committee has the privilege of providing civilian support to the RICKOVER and her crew. The Committee's mission is to give the crew of the RICKOVER a proper send-off as they prepare for commissioning, to enhance the morale and welfare of her crew as she begins service in defense of our nation, and to honor the legacy and impact of Admiral Hyman G. Rickover.

Admiral Rickover's story is a great American story that extends over 63 years of active duty and beyond, as it continues to inspire each new generation of the Navy. As a young boy, he and his family

immigrated to the United States and settled in Chicago from present-day Poland to escape anti-Jewish pogroms in what was then the Russian Empire. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1922, he was the driving force behind the development of the first nuclear submarine—the USS NAUTILUS (SSN-571) in 1955, and he became the “Father of the Nuclear Navy.” He revolutionized Navy ship propulsion, quality control, personnel selection, and training and education to build the nation's nuclear fleet.

Many years ago, I raised my right hand and took the oath of a commissioned naval officer to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. I am sure that either you or someone you know has taken the oath of enlistment or to become an officer

in the Navy or another branch of our Armed Forces. I now ask that you consider stepping up in support of our mission.

I invite you to visit our website at <https://ussrickover.org/> to learn more about the RICKOVER and our Committee's work. I look forward to keeping you informed as our Committee proceeds with its work.

Sincerely,



William Nissen  
Chairman  
USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER  
Commissioning Committee

## ADM. HYMAN G. RICKOVER NAMESAKES CELEBRATE CLASS OF 2019

By Lt. Cmdr. Jeffrey S. Gray  
Navy Public Affairs



Cmdr. Thomas J. Niebel, Commanding Officer, Pre-Commissioning Unit USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER (SSN 795), congratulates Hyman G. Rickover Naval Academy cadets for garnering more than \$10 million in college scholarships and 100 percent acceptance into at least one college. *Photo by Lt. Cmdr. Jeffrey S. Gray.*

CHICAGO — The Hyman G. Rickover Naval Academy held its 11th annual commencement ceremony on June 8 and this year's commencement speaker traveled from Groton, Connecticut, where he oversees the training of the crew and construction of the newest Virginia-class attack submarine that bears the name of the legendary Adm. Hyman G. Rickover.

Cmdr. Thomas J. Niebel, Commanding Officer, Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) Hyman G. Rickover (SSN 795), provided this year's commencement address in front of an audience of more than 800 well-wishers.

“It was a special honor to host Cmdr. Niebel as this year's speaker,” said Cmdr. Mike Tooker, Commandant of the Academy. “Connecting the two namesakes of Adm. Rickover provided the cadets and audience a unique

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perspective on why Adm. Rickover was so important to the modern Navy, and why it was important for his hometown to recognize his accomplishments by naming a high school after him.”

“Additionally, the fact that Adm. Rickover was himself an immigrant who grew up on the Westside of Chicago, definitely resonated with the population of cadets and their respective families here at the Academy,” said Tooker.

Niebel’s remarks focused on a brief biographical sketch of Adm. Rickover and went on to focus on Adm. Rickover’s personal traits and how those traits have been transmitted to both the Sailors onboard the PCU Rickover and the cadets at Rickover Naval Academy.

“An interesting thing about being a namesake, be it a school or submarine,” said Niebel. “A namesake is supposed to embody and demonstrate the characteristics, values, and beliefs of the person for whom they are named.”

Niebel continued, “Here at Rickover Naval Academy, and the same holds true with the men who will sail aboard the USS RICKOVER, it is expected that you personify the values and beliefs of Adm. Rickover.”

Highlighting the achievements of the Class of 2019, Niebel related their accomplishments to the breakthroughs Adm. Rickover achieved, except the cadets made breakthroughs in their everyday life.

This year’s graduating class consisted of 112 graduates. Collectively, the graduating class garnered more than \$10 million dollars in scholarships and all graduates were accepted into at least one college or university.

Class Valedictorian Muhammad Navaid, who transferred to Rickover as a sophomore from a high school in Pakistan, received special recognition.

“His family had moved him and his three younger brothers to the U.S. for a chance at a better education and life,” said Tooker.” Cadet Navaid seemed



Cmdr. Thomas J. Niebel, Commanding Officer, Pre-Commissioning Unit USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER (SSN 795) congratulates a cadet as she walks across the stage.. *Photo by Lt. Cmdr. Jeffrey S. Gray.*

timid and a bit out of his comfort zone, which was completely understandable. We were worried that he might not be able to adapt to our culture quickly enough and it would impact his academics, but boy were we wrong.”

“He not only adapted to our coursework and rigor, he far surpassed the classes offered at the Academy,” Tooker continued.

“Due to his advanced Math and Science aptitude and self-starter attitude, he sought opportunities to take courses at the local community college, where he completed Calculus II and III, and also took AP Physics 1, 2, and C exams,” said Tooker.

Muhammad will be attending Illinois Institute of Technology in the fall and aspires to one day work for NASA as an aerospace engineer.

Another cadet who demonstrated and exemplified the values of Adm. Rickover is Cadet Angel Rubi.

“Since his freshman year, after inquiring about college opportunities for undocumented students, he has been an active member of the Rickover Dreamers Club,” said Niebel. “During his junior year, he began advocating for other undocumented students to come out of the shadows and inquire about possibilities of going to college, including going all the way Washington, D.C. to meet

with U.S. Senators and Congressional Representatives.”

For his work and advocacy, Rubi was awarded the inaugural “Red Dog Smith” scholarship, in honor of the late Navy Lt. Cmdr. Ronald C. Smith, and received the 1st place Friends of Rickover Empowerment Scholarship. Continuing his studies this fall, Rubi will be attending Arrupe College of Loyola University, Chicago.

“Our school has been truly fortunate,” said Michael J. Biela, superintendent of the Academy. “Since we opened our doors in 2005, we’ve consistently had Navy leaders, both active-duty and reserve, stream through our entryway ready to engage and connect with our cadets, faculty, and staff.”

Biela continued, “Cmdr. Niebel’s engagement was special because he is the commanding officer of our Navy namesake and his inspirational remarks perfectly linked the legacy of Adm. Rickover with the newest USS RICKOVER and our naval academy. It’s my expectation that both namesake organizations continue to find opportunities to engage with each other and create a mutually beneficial relationship for the benefit of their respective Sailors and cadets.”

## WHO WAS ADMIRAL HYMAN G. RICKOVER?



Admiral Hyman G. Rickover (1900-1986), was raised in Chicago's Lawndale neighborhood and graduated from John Marshall High School in 1918. He is known as the "Father of the Nuclear Navy" and served an unprecedented 63 years on active duty. Admiral Rickover was one of the most successful—and controversial public servants of the 20th century. His accomplishments are legendary. For example, in August 1951 Admiral Rickover handpicked and supervised a team of talented engineers in the design and construction of the first nuclear powered submarine—the Nautilus. They accomplished the task in three short years. This was an amazing achievement of engineering given that it involved the development and the first use of a controlled nuclear reactor. The Nautilus not only transformed submarine warfare, but also laid the groundwork for a whole fleet of nuclear aircraft carriers and cruisers, which were also built by Admiral Rickover and his team. Admiral Rickover's enduring contribution to the U.S. Navy revolutionized ship propulsion, quality control, safety standards, personnel selection, training and education, and has had wide-ranging effects on the defense establishment and the civilian nuclear energy field.

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## USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER (SSN-795)

The USS Hyman G. Rickover is the second nuclear-powered fast attack submarine to be named in recognition of Admiral Rickover. The new version of the Rickover is part of the Virginia Class of submarines which are multi-mission submarines that perform a variety of peacetime and wartime tasks, including the following:

- Clandestine intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
- Clandestine insertion and recovery of Special Operations Forces
- Clandestine strikes against land targets with Tomahawk cruise missiles
- Clandestine offensive and defensive mine warfare
- Anti-submarine warfare
- Anti-surface ship warfare

During the Cold War, anti-submarine warfare against Soviet submarines was the primary mission of our nuclear attack submarines. In the post-Cold War era, our nuclear attack submarines focused more on performing intelligence gathering. With a change in the global strategic environment, and a renewed emphasis on great power competition, preparation for anti-submarine warfare against Russian and Chinese submarines has become a major mission for our nuclear attack submarines.



## ABOUT THE COMMISSIONING COMMITTEE:

The USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER (SSN-795) commissioning committee has been established by the Union League Club of Chicago to procure financial and supplementary resources to host a week-long celebration sometime in late summer 2021, working in partnership with the United States Navy. The committee is comprised of civic-minded individuals from the Union League Club of Chicago, Pritzker Military Museum & Library, local Navy League Councils, Chicago Navy Memorial Foundation, along with prominent civic and business leaders.

## OUR MISSION:

The committee will generate national interest and enthusiasm for the construction and support of the nuclear attack submarine—USS HYMAN G. RICKOVER (SSN-795). Our activities: obtain financial resources to fund various events and activities associated with the time-honored naval "commissioning ceremony"; plan, organize, and collaborate with the United States Navy to host various events and activities associated with the boat's commissioning; and, develop and maintain long-term relations been Admiral Hyman G. Rickover's hometown and the boat's crew throughout the life of the boat.

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