

**The Honorable Joe Courtney**

**Introduction of a resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the crossing of the North Pole by the USS NAUTILUS (SSN 571) and its significance in the history of both our Nation and the world.**

**April 1, 2008**

**HONORING THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
USS NAUTILUS REACHING 90 NORTH**

Madam Speaker: I rise today to introduce a resolution to honor an important anniversary not only to my district, but to our Navy and our nation.

In June 1958, the USS NAUTILUS (SSN 571), the world's first nuclear powered submarine, departed Seattle as part of a top secret operation called "Operation Sunshine." Unknown to many at the time, the NAUTILUS was embarking on a historic mission that took them on a course north to the Arctic Ice cap. At 11:15pm (EDST) on August 3, 1958, the boat became the first vessel to cross the geographic north pole when Commander William Anderson, NAUTILUS' commanding officer, announced to his crew: "For the world, our country, and the Navy - the North Pole."

This historic crossing of "90 North" took place at a critical time in our nation's history: the Cold War was heating up, the Soviet Union had seemingly laid claim to space with the launch of Sputnik, and many Americans – and many around the world – were looking for something to rally around, a sign that we were not ceding big ideas and notable achievements to others. Having reached the North Pole, the NAUTILUS clearly demonstrated our undersea superiority and opened the region to decades of scientific research and exploration.

The crossing of the North Pole was praised by numerous world leaders of the time, being described by President Eisenhower as a "magnificent achievement" from which "the entire free world would benefit." A ticker tape parade was held in honor of the crew in New York City, the NAUTILUS became the first naval vessel in peacetime to receive the Presidential Unit Citation for its meritorious efforts in crossing the North Pole and Commander William R. Anderson was awarded the Legion of Merit.

In the fifty years since, the United States Navy and Coast Guard have repeatedly followed in the footsteps of this historic voyage. Dozens of U.S. submarines, in addition to specially fitted vessels and general aircraft of the United States Coast Guard, have journeyed to the top of the world in service of their country and to reinforce our Arctic presence. These submarines and their intrepid crews have broken through to the surface, charted new courses and expanded our knowledge of the Arctic.

Built and launched at Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut, on January 21, 1954, the NAUTILUS was the first vessel in the world to be powered by nuclear power. After claiming their historic milestone at 90 North and returning home to Naval Submarine

Base New London, the NAUTILUS continued to establish a series of naval records in her distinguished 25 year career, including being the first submarine to journey “20,000 leagues under the sea.”

The history and the legacy of the NAUTILUS is not only meaningful to my Congressional district, but to the entire submarine force and our nation. Today, the NAUTILUS proudly serves as a museum where visitors from around the world come to learn about both her history-making service to our nation and the role of the submarine force in securing our nation. The NAUTILUS truly helped set the tone as the standard bearer for the submarine force, and achievements like the crossing of 90 North both proved the capabilities of our nation at a critical time in our history and raised the bar for all those who came after her.

Too often the critical achievements of our submarine force, our “Silent Service,” go unnoticed. I am proud to introduce this resolution today to honor the NAUTILUS, her crew and the countless individuals who provided support for her journey across 90 North, and urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing this important milestone in our Nation’s history.