

Sen. Susan M. Collins
DDG 1001 Michael Monsoor Christening
June 18, 2016

Thank you, Matt. Members of the Maine Delegation, distinguished leaders of our Navy and of Bath Iron Works, officers and crew of the Michael Monsoor, men and women of Bath Iron Works, guests, family, and friends, it a pleasure to share this day of celebration with you.

Mr. and Mrs. Monsoor, it is an honor to join you and your family on this day of solemn remembrance.

During my service in the United States Senate, I have had the privilege of participating in many christenings here at Bath Iron Works, each one very special. From the patriots who won America's independence to the heroes of our time, it is fitting that our ships bear the names of individuals who have displayed uncommon valor and commitment.

Today, we recognize just such an individual, United States Navy Petty Officer Michael Monsoor, SEAL Team Three, Medal of Honor recipient. As we christen DDG 1001, we are reminded of those ideals that Petty Officer Monsoor exemplified in his life. His legacy will live on as this great ship conducts its missions in defense of freedom.

We celebrate the most advanced warship in the world, built in a state-of-the-art facility by the industry's most skilled hands, manned by officers and crew with the highest level of training and expertise, all working as a team to meet the security challenges of the 21st Century. At the same time, we pay tribute to the timeless virtues of devotion to duty, courage, and sacrifice.

Petty Officer Monsoor's heroism is well-known to those here today. On September 29, 2006, during a day-long battle in Ramadi, Iraq, he threw himself on top of an insurgent's grenade, saving the lives of three fellow SEALs and eight soldiers of the Iraqi Army, while losing his own.

This story of astonishing valor is heightened by this fact: of the 12 who were within the grenade's range, only Petty Officer Monsoor was in a position to escape the blast. Instead, a man of deep faith who was named for the Archangel Michael made this ultimate sacrifice on the feast day of the Defender of Heaven. He lived these words from the Gospel of John: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Like a pebble dropped into a pond, that inspiring act sends out ripples still felt today. For nine long years, Petty Officer Monsoor's SEAL teammates kept his camouflage field cap in a place of honor; only recently did they turn that treasured keepsake over to the officers and crew of the ship that would bear their fallen teammate's name. Inside the cap, written in Petty Officer Monsoor's own hand, are these words: "You never quit."

Those simple yet powerful words inspired students at Bath Middle School to create a remarkable documentary film that is featured on the DDG 1001 Facebook page. They have

made “You never quit” the words that will guide them to success in achieving their goals in life. Thank you, Mrs. Kearns and students, for a truly wonderful film.

The memory of Petty Officer Monsoor has brought here members of the 506th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne. Your legendary “Band of Brothers” first came together during grueling training at Currahee Mountain in Georgia in World War II. More than 70 years later, you fought alongside Petty Officer Monsoor and SEAL Team 3 in Iraq. Naming the officers and crew of this ship “Honorary Currahees” proves that you have forged an enduring bond that will never be broken.

The men and women of Bath Iron Works make “Bath built is best built” not just a slogan, but a way of life. Your skill, commitment to excellence, and perhaps most important, your hearts, go into every ship built here. I am certain that the namesake of DDG 1001 inspired you as you built this magnificent ship.

Sally, George, and all of the other members of this wonderful family, you helped to create the inspiring life we celebrate today. As President Lincoln wrote to a grieving mother during the Civil War, you “have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.” It is my deepest hope that your hearts are strengthened by the prayers of a grateful nation and by the sight of this magnificent ship.

To the officers and crew of the Michael Monsoor, I know that the United States Navy takes great pride in the namesakes of its ships. You serve on a ship that represents the highest values of our nation and our armed forces. Your motto, “I Will Defend” perfectly describes Petty Officer Monsoor. Like him, I am certain you will never quit in your dedication to safeguard our nation and our freedom.

Wherever the Michael Monsoor sails, the spirit of this valiant SEAL will go with her. May she have fair winds and following seas, and may God always speed her safely home.