

# USS Virginia Commissioned as First of Class

by Ms. Mary Hogrefe, Program Integrator, DCMA Hartford



**O**n Oct. 23, 2004, the *USS Virginia* (SSN 774), the Navy's newest nuclear-powered fast attack submarine, was commissioned in Norfolk, Va. The celebration continued in Northampton, Mass., on Nov. 18, where one of the critical suppliers, Kollmorgen Corporation, acknowledged the support of the DCMA Hartford associates. Twenty-seven current and former DCMA Hartford employees were invited to attend. All had some involvement with the Photonics Mast Program (PMP). The celebration began with an historical synopsis of the development of the photonics mast and culminated with the commissioning of the *USS Virginia*.

The PMP, 25 years in the making, is the navigational system for submarines. A photonic mast consists of arrays of high-resolution cameras that capture and send visual images to flat-panel displays in the control room.<sup>1</sup> Each submarine is now equipped with two Kollmorgen AN/BVS-1 photonic masts, rather than optical

periscopes. Sensors mounted on the non-hull penetrating photonic mast are linked to color television, monochrome high-definition television, thermal imaging and eyesafe laser rangefinders. The mast is the Universal Modular Mast developed by Kollmorgen and its Italian subsidiary, Calzoni.

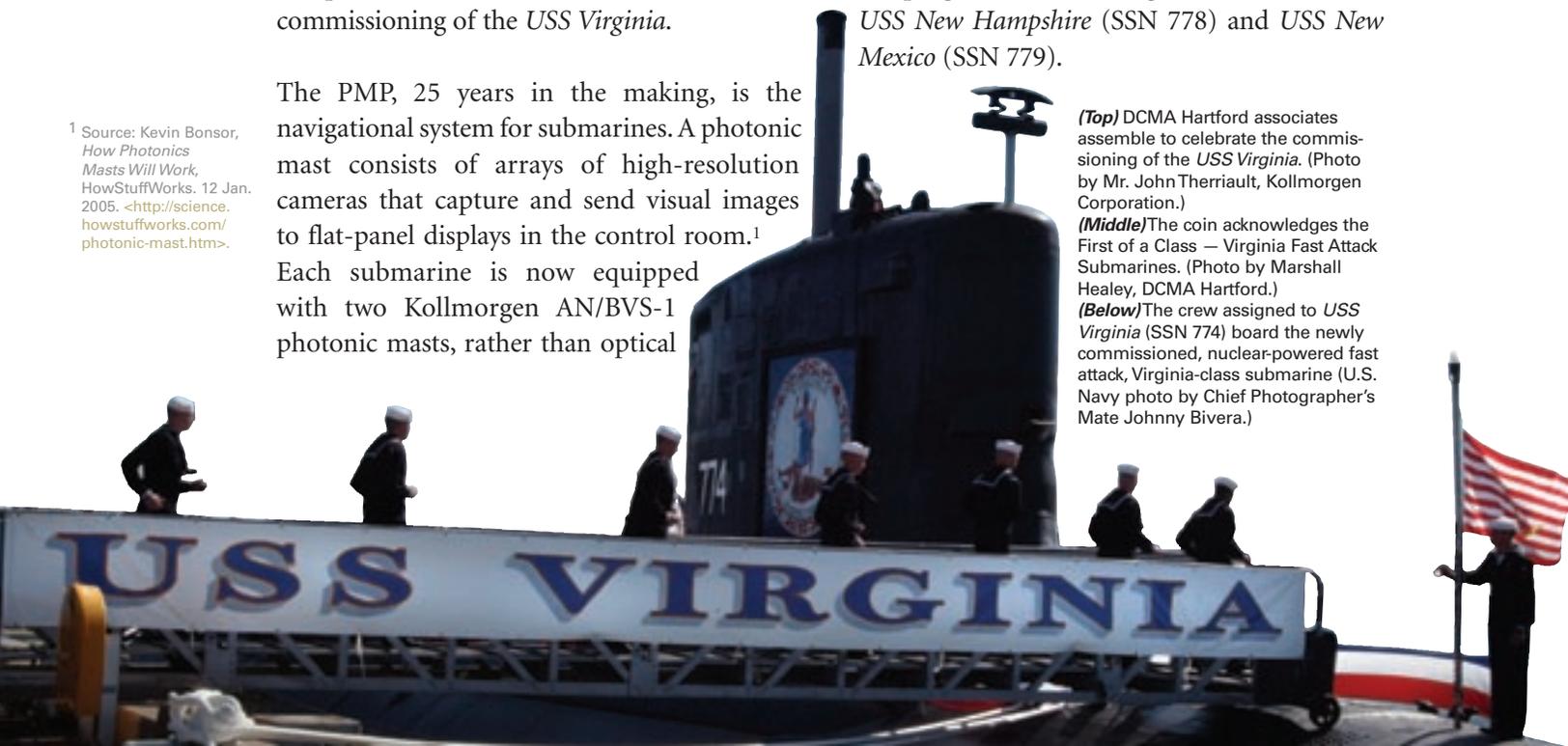
In recognition of their efforts in working with the contractor and providing their customer, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), with a state-of-the-art system, DCMA Hartford employees received Commissioning Day Coins. Work continues on this program with funding for the submarines *USS New Hampshire* (SSN 778) and *USS New Mexico* (SSN 779).



**(Top)** DCMA Hartford associates assemble to celebrate the commissioning of the *USS Virginia*. (Photo by Mr. John Therriault, Kollmorgen Corporation.)

**(Middle)** The coin acknowledges the First of a Class — Virginia Fast Attack Submarines. (Photo by Marshall Healey, DCMA Hartford.)

**(Below)** The crew assigned to *USS Virginia* (SSN 774) board the newly commissioned, nuclear-powered fast attack, Virginia-class submarine (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Johnny Bivera.)



<sup>1</sup> Source: Kevin Bonsor, *How Photonics Masts Will Work*, HowStuffWorks. 12 Jan. 2005. <<http://science.howstuffworks.com/photonic-mast.htm>>.