

RECEIVED  
06062005  
DCN: 2254

Paul and Debra Companion  
87 Old Johnson Road  
East Hampstead, NH 03826

May 31, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam:

Quote: Portsmouth Naval Shipyard has superbly performed their mission while establishing a phenomenal record of cost, schedule, quality and safety performance. Their business results are the benchmark among public and private sector shipyards. Portsmouth Naval Shipyard's extraordinary performance is translating in to increased U.S. Submarine Fleet readiness. By their unrelenting determination, perseverance and steadfast devotion to duty, the officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees of Naval Shipyard Portsmouth reflected credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service (05/12/05)

Does anyone remember this? Our nation only has four public shipyards. With threats and the needs of the military changing rapidly, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNS) is a core asset of our national defense. For 205 years the men and women of the PNS have been at the forefront of delivering the best for the government. The years of knowledge and training, and two centuries of tradition, is also a national defense asset. One we cannot afford to lose. We cannot let that tradition, and record of proven (and often rewarded) results go down without a fight. Some bases are antiquated and not needed but not so the Navy's oldest base, PNS. It is important to the defense and economy of our country. Closing an effective and exceptional facility like PNS is a grave mistake. America cannot defend itself properly without the work of the men and women of PNS. PNS plays a vital role in our nation's defense. Other shipyards cannot perform the work as well as PNS, as cited by the Chief of Naval Operations.

These are troubled times we live in with all the wars going all over the world. Have the leaders in Washington forgotten about our vulnerability to attack? We cannot afford to decrease one of our greatest defense systems. China is building an armada of submarines – should we not be concerned? Japan did the same thing prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Can we chance history repeating itself? I think not. Creating joblessness and hardships for many towns and cities in America is just another example of the shortsighted decisions being made by politicians only interested in their next election. This is not the way to get my vote or thousands of others. Considering the size of our defense budget and our national debt (trillions of dollars) is saving 48 billion dollars over the course of 20 years, in this way, really the right decision? This decision may seem unimportant to Mr. Rumsfeld and his committee but to those effected (4500 directly, 4600 indirectly, plus their families) it is their future. This will be a devastating blow to both Maine and New Hampshire residents.

In closing, please help me to understand this decision. The day before the closures were announced the shipyard and its employees were recognized with the prestigious Meritorious Unit Commendation. How can any business, government or otherwise, with a long history of strong performance, be presented with a commendation for excellence one day and slated for closure the next?

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