

USS JOHN ADAMS (SSBN 620)  
Care of Fleet Post Office  
New York, New York 09501

At Sea  
North Atlantic  
6 April 1964

Dear Admiral Benson:

We have just completed sea trials of the USS JOHN ADAMS, our twentieth Polaris type nuclear submarine. Completion of the JOHN ADAMS brings into operation a total of forty nuclear powered Polaris and attack type submarines.

This ship is named for two great Americans: John Adams, our second President, and his son, John Quincy, our sixth President. It is fitting that so powerful a guardian of our freedom be named for these American founders of that very freedom. During John Adams' administration our Navy was born. And it was John Quincy, aware of the potential of sea power, who in 1823 as Secretary of State was principal architect of the Monroe Doctrine which has provided this hemisphere with a measure of security from threats of foreign nations.

"Education," in John Adams' view, made "a greater difference between man and man than nature has made between man and brute. The virtues and powers to which men may be trained, by early education and constant discipline, are truly sublime and astonishing....It should be your care, therefore, and mine," he wrote to his wife, Abigail, "to elevate the minds of our children and exalt their courage; to accelerate and animate their industry and activity; to excite in them...an ambition to excel in every capacity, faculty and virtue. If we suffer their minds to grovel and creep in infancy, they will grovel all their lives."

John Quincy Adams taught:

"Always vote for a principle, though you vote alone, and you may cherish the sweet reflection that your vote is never lost."

A verse written in 1842 expressing his hope for the future is valid today:

"This hand, to tyrants ever sworn the foe,  
For freedom only deals the deadly blow;  
Then sheathes in calm repose the vengeful blade,  
For gentle peace in freedom's hallowed shade."

Sincerely,

  
H. G. Rickover

Rear Admiral Roy S. Benson, USN