



DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC SYSTEMS PROGRAMS

1 August 1998

Dr. Gary L. Smith, Director
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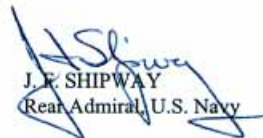
Dear Dr. Smith,

On 1 August 1998, the Laboratory celebrates the fortieth anniversary of the POLARIS Division created to support the Fleet Ballistic Missile program led by my office. During this period, the Navy and its family of contractors have produced and sustained three generations of increasingly capable weapon systems (POLARIS, POSEIDON, and TRIDENT) which have provided the premier element of the nation's strategic deterrent force. I would like to take this opportunity to thank your fine organization for its important contributions to these programs.

The technical advice and inventions provided by the Laboratory at the start of the POLARIS program were critical to establishing the viability of the sea-based ballistic missile concept. The invention of satellite navigation allowed the submarine inertial navigator to be reset anywhere in the world, thereby enabling the weapon system to covertly maintain its accuracy during extended deterrent patrols. The rotatable nozzle development provided breakthrough technology that improved the reliability and range of both POLARIS and Minuteman missiles by enabling the use of more powerful solid propellants. The technical evaluations of the early POLARIS developmental missile flight tests and associated weapon subsystems provided crucial insight that isolated significant problems and contributed to a successfully integrated weapon system.

Subsequently, the Laboratory has provided invaluable assistance in the planning, conduct, and evaluation of a comprehensive test program for the FBM fleet. The success of our programs is due, in no small part, to the sustained quality of the testing and analysis provided by the Laboratory over these forty years. I extend my sincere appreciation for the dedication and contributions of your staff. The Laboratory has been, and continues to be, a crucial part of the Navy's strategic deterrent structure.

Sincerely,


J. F. SHIPWAY
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy