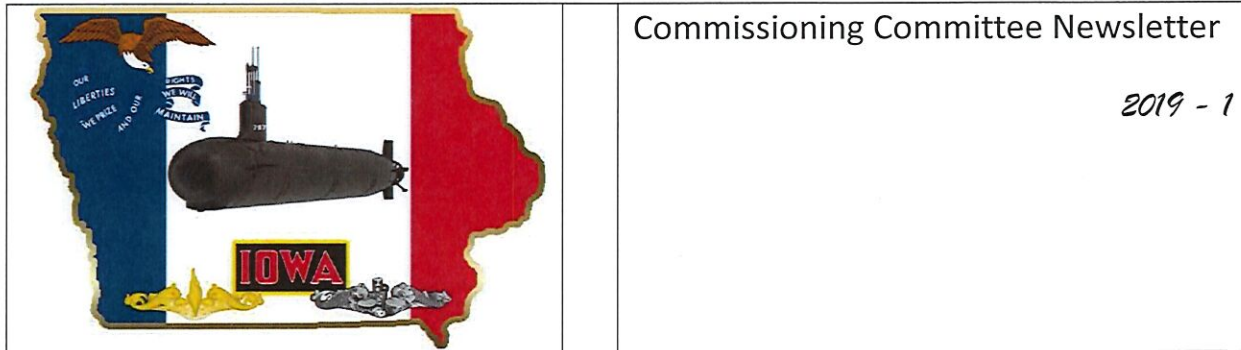


USS IOWA SSN-797

Commissioning Committee, PO Box 1968, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406



Commissioning Committee Newsletter

2019 - 1

Officers

- Sponsor: Ms. Christie Vilsack
- Chairman: Peter B. Welch, CAPT, SC, USNR (ret)
- Trustee Director: Dr. Stephen Regan

"All of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea whether it is to sail or to watch it, we are going back from whence we came."

- John F. Kennedy

Welcome Aboard!

This is the first of our Commission Committee's Newsletters. With it we hope to spread the word about the progress of the building of the new fast attack submarine being the fourth U.S. Naval warship to carry the name IOWA. We also hope to let others know about the things we need help on and ask that you channel back to us any ideas on going forward or names of people that can assist us in going forward.

At this point in time we want to establish a Committee Home Page on the World Wide Web. For that we would need a webmaster and someone experienced in that area. Hopefully, we can get a volunteer as we want to maximize our fund raising so

that it gets spent on the boat and crew and not extraneous expenses such as salaries, overhead and fund raising expenses. Our committee is looking for a manager to get us through and registered for a spot on the Charitable Go Fund Me web site. We have already been certified as a 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS and we have done this for ourselves and are not piggy-backing on another organization.

We are also looking for a social media manager to include Facebook, Twitter and other platforms.

The Committee would like to have a Ship's Plaque Program Manager. We would love to have an open contest with Iowa schools, elementary, secondary and even collegiate, submit proposed ship plaque designs to be submitted to the crew of the USS IOWA for final selection.

Nautical Newsletter Editor: We would like to have someone undertake the task of providing the research and explanation of one specific "nautical term" for each newsletter that goes out. If it is a term that is unique to submarines, then all the better. But there are plenty of others such as "Splice the mainbrace" or "Single up" that would fit the mold.

Peter B. Welch, Chairman

USS IOWA

Stephen D. Regan, Ed.D.

USS IOWA Civil War

The U.S. Navy has honored the heartland state of Iowa by naming five warships after it starting during the Civil War and continuing today. An exceptionally substantial model of one of the ships adorns the rotunda of the state capital in Des Moines.

The first **IOWA**, a reconfiguration of the former **USS AMMONOOSUC**, was an extraordinarily powerful vessel that was designed specifically for ocean offensives against foreign intervention. President Lincoln and his staff feared England's entering the war with the Confederates, and they needed appropriate ships to counter the British Navy. Great Britain never entered the war and the **USS IOWA** was never placed in service.

USS IOWA BB-4

Unique and not a sister to any specific class until refurbishing into an **INDIANA** class battleship, **IOWA (BB-4)** started life as a coastal defense ship. She was laid down on 5 August 1893, launched in March of 1896, and finally commissioned on 16 June 1897. She boasted 11,000 ihp vertical triple expansion engines, coal storage for 1600 tons, and bristled with 4-12" (305 mm.) guns in fore and aft turrets.

She carried 4 twin turrets for 8" (23 mm.) guns, and a pair of torpedo tubes. *IOWA* had a new type of steel for her armor with over 14" as a belt surrounding her. At 362' stem to stern and a beam of 72' she could attain an excellent 20 mph.

"Fighting" Robley Evans, a legend in Navy history, took command of BB-4 as the Spanish-American War commenced. Initially used for blockade duty off the Port of Santiago, *IOWA* fell under the overall command of Commodore Winfield Scott Schley's Flying Squadron. This eventually merged with Rear Admiral William Sampson's North Atlantic Squadron. The blockade duty was a dull and boring two months.

Spanish Admiral Pascual Cervera finally decided to sortie and attempt to break through the blockade. On Sunday 3-July-1898, the fleet steamed out of port. Almost immediately the U.S. Navy saw the ships, and Schley ordered his ships to commence firing. Evans' *IOWA* fired the first shot of the intense battle and pummeled two Spanish cruisers so badly that they were run aground to avoid sinking.

During the battle, *IOWA* experienced an engine room fire that threatened the entire ship. Fireman Robert Penn quickly and heroically extinguished the blaze. For his actions he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

As the battle ground down, *IOWA* started to rescue sailors from the water. For the next twelve hours Americans picked up 1612 survivors and one pig. The sailors became POWs but no one knows what happened to the pig. Captain Don Antonio Eulate of the *VIZCAYA*, thanked the *IOWA* crew for saving his sailors and presented his sword to Captain Evans who handed it back as an act of chivalry. Much later Robley's crew presented him with a ceremonial sword engraved "To our hero- too just to take fallen foe's".

In the post war period, the great battleship rounded Cape Horn to show the flag off Chile. She then steamed to Bremerton, WA for dry dock and refit. She ultimately ended up in New York and decommissioned in 1903. Hardly washed of sea salt, *IOWA* was back as flagship for the North Atlantic Squadron. On 13 May 1911 she participated in rescuing passengers from the liner *WARD* that had collided with the steamship *ADMIRAL FARRAGUT* in fog. All 139 passengers survived the sinking thanks to BB-4.

The ship served as a training vessel for the next few years, training such luminaries at Raymond Spruance. In 1914 she was again decommissioned in Philadelphia where she sat until the outbreak of World War I.

During the Great War, *IOWA* was sent to Hampton Roads as a receiving ship and used as a guard ship at the entrance of Chesapeake Bay. In 1919 she was decommissioned for the last time. The Navy, wanting to free up the name, re-named the old lady *Coastal Battleship #4*. She traversed the Panama Canal in 1923 and was sunk as a target.

USS IOWA BB-53

USS IOWA BB-53 was supposed to be a modern battleship of the *USS SOUTH DAKOTA* class, a post-World War I variety. She was laid down at the Norfolk Navy Yard on 17-May 1920. She was to be a 41,400-ton with length of 680-feet, a beam of 106-feet and a 33-foot draft. She was to be propelled

by a quadrant of General Electric steam turbines that should produce a 23-knot speed. Her planned armament was to include 12x16-inch 50 caliber guns, 16x6-inch 53 caliber guns, and 4x3-inch 50 caliber guns, and topped off with 2 torpedo tubes.

World War I was a shock to the international community. It was destructively expensive in fiscal and manpower terms to say nothing of the damage to cropland, industrial sites, and communities. The horrified world demanded a more peaceful means of settling disagreements. The United States, especially, entered into a period of intense isolationism fronted by senior Republican senators led by Idaho's William Borah.

France distrusted Germany, England was in a mutual defense treaty with Russia, Japan felt left out of the empire-building spoils of the war, and everyone feared Germany's development of massive dreadnaught battleships. President Warrant G. Harding's Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, suggested a multi-national conference in Washington, DC. From this conference in 1921 and 22, came the Four Power Treaty, the Five Power Treaty, and the Nine Power Treaty all of which were attempts to placate Western nations and Japan. One component of these treaties was the elimination of new battleships; therefore, building the USS *IOWA BB-53* was suspended on 8-February-1922, and she was totally cancelled on 17 August 1923. Although she was 31% completed, she was scrapped.

USS IOWA BB-61

To this day, the name *USS IOWA (BB-61)* is connected to World War II, the Korean, and the Viet Nam wars as the mightiest Battleship ever built by the United States. Other than Japan's *YAMATO* no battleship compared to the *IOWA* and her sister ships: *WISCONSIN*, *NEW JERSEY*, and *MISSOURI*.

The keel for this behemoth was laid down on 27 January 1940, sponsored by Mrs. Henry Wallace, wife of Iowa native Vice President Henry Wallace. Mrs. Wallace christened her in August 1942, and the ship sailed with Captain John McCrea at the helm. The skipper was a favorite of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and a former Naval Aide.

IOWA class ships were 887-feet in length with a beam of 102-feet, weighing in at 58,000 tons when loaded. She was driven by 8 Babcock and Wilcox M-type 600 PSI dual furnace, controlled superheat boilers, 4 engine sets producing 212,000shp that could push the *BIG STICK* (during Korea she bore the nickname of the *Grey Ghost*) up to 33 miles per hour (officially). She carried a crew of 151 officers and 2,637 sailors. Her motto was taken from the Iowa State Flag, "Our liberties we prize and our rights we will maintain". In order to carry facilitate President Roosevelt, *IOWA* had a bathtub installed.

For the Tehran Conference, Roosevelt needed the ship to carry him and his delegation that included General George Marshall, Army Chief of Staff; Admiral Ernest King, CNO; Admiral William Lehey, Chief of Staff; General Hap Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps; and Harry Hopkins, the president's top advisor. During the trip the Navy showed off with a series of maneuvers to impress Roosevelt. Unfortunately the destroyer *WILLIAM PORTER* accidentally fired a torpedo directly at the battleship. The bridge quickly ordered increased speed and a hard turn that sent President and staff sprawling avoided the potential disaster.

Specifically designed to squeeze through the Panama Canal, **IOWA** became the Flagship of Battleship Division 7 in the Pacific. She supported air strikes against Kwajalein and Eniwetok. Her main service was at Saipan, Guam, and Tinian in the Marianna's. The capture of these islands allowed the huge B-17s and B-29s to directly bomb Japan. She became the flagship for Halsey or Spruance alternating between the 3rd Fleet and the 5th Fleet.

IOWA entered Tokyo Bay as Halsey's Flagship. Her sister and twin, **MISSOURI**, was chosen as an honor to President Truman for the official surrender. BB-61 was sent home and decommissioned briefly.

The outbreak of the Korean Conflict brought the Big Stick back on duty. She was used for shelling industrial and manufacturing sites. With Army General Wayne Mark Clark on board she destroyed an ammunition dump. At the end of the war, **IOWA** was sent back to Philadelphia and decommissioned.

Several years later Ronald Reagan ordered the battleship re-commissioned. She was towed to Pascagoula, MS for re-fitting, modernization, and overhaul. The outdated 20mm and 40 mm anti-aircraft guns were eliminated in favor of 16 AGM 84 and 32 BGM Tomahawk missiles along with 4 Phalanx Gatling guns. In August 1988, **USS IOWA** once again was in the fleet.

Three years later **IOWA** lost steering and narrowly missed 3 U.S. ships before running aground. Sadly, this was a harbinger of her age catching up to her. On 19 August 1989 while firing her 16" guns, Turret 2 exploded killing 47 men. While NIS (now NCIS) initially decided the explosion was caused by an act of terrorism, Congress failed to accept their verdict. Under non-governmental inspection the culprit turned out to be very old black powder that was originally milled in 1930. Laboratory test showed that the powder was very unstable and was ignited by static electricity.

The **USS IOWA (BB-61)** was decommissioned in 1990 and now is a museum ship in the Port of Los Angeles. In her career, she earned 9 Battle Stars, a Naval Unit Citation, a Naval "E" ribbon with 3 stars, the American Campaign ribbon, the Korean Service Medal with 2 stars, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Navy Sea Service Deployment ribbon, the Philippine Unit Citation, the South Korean Unit Citation, the Philippine Liberation Medal, and the U.N. Korea Medal.

USS IOWA SSN 797

The newest iteration of the name is scheduled for a nuclear submarine of the **VIRGINIA** class. Being built by General Dynamics Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut, this vessel will be a silent 7800 tons with a length of 377-feet, a beam of 34-feet, and a draft of 32-feet. Her S9G reactor steam turbine engine will push her up to 25 knots. She will be armed with 12 VLS tubes and 4x21' Mark 48 torpedo tubes. The Newport News shipyard is building the reactor and power unit. With the expertise of these experienced companies, **USS IOWA** will continue to be the pride of the Navy and her namesake state.

Dr. Stephen D. Regan, Trustee Director
