

# USS IOWA SSN-797

Commissioning Committee, 226 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

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Commissioning Committee  
Newsletter  
# 32

*August 2022*

[www.SSN797.com](http://www.SSN797.com)

## Officers

- Sponsor: Ms. Christie Vilsack
- Chairman: Doug MacCrea, CAPT USN (Ret)
- Exec. Director: Tom Hudson
- Directors: Michelle Bell   Mat Tanner  
Caleb Schneider   Jordan Schneider

*"It is the love of country that has  
lighted and that keeps glowing the  
holy grail of patriotism"*

J. Horace McFarland

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Friends and Supporters of the USS IOWA (SSN-797) and the Commissioning Committee –

By Proclamation of Governor Reynolds, August has been designated as USS IOWA (SSN-797) Month in honor and recognition of the birthday of the boat. There are several dates or events that can be used to establish the "birthday" of the boat. Those dates/events are typically the date the keel is authenticated, the date of the christening of the vessel which formally assigns the name to the vessel or the date of commissioning. Given that the keel was authenticated on August 20, 2019, that is the date that will be used in the future for the boat's "birthday".

## **Passing of Honorary Director Commander Larry Spencer, USN (Ret)**

It is with great sadness that we must relay the news of the passing of Commander Larry Spencer, USN(Ret) in late May. Larry was a true gentleman and consummate Naval Officer - a hero in every sense. To his wife Ann we extend our deepest sympathy and condolences.

For those who are not aware, Larry spent seven years as a Prisoner of War during the Vietnam Conflict – Iowa's longest held POW of that conflict. In spite of the tremendous hardship, torture and challenges that he faced during those difficult seven years of captivity, Larry returned home with a positive and infectious outlook on life. To those who were honored to know him personally, he served as an inspiration and role model. We have lost a true patriot, friend and advocate and his passing has left a void that cannot be filled.



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## COMMISSIONING COMMITTEE UPDATE

It was with every intention that we planned on providing you with monthly Newsletters with updates on the efforts of the Commissioning Committee in support of the christening and commissioning of IOWA. Regrettably, I have focused the efforts of the Committee on other activities and we have fallen short on this well intended goal. It has become painfully obvious to all of us on the Commissioning Committee that our communication efforts among interested stakeholders needs improvement. As such, we have finished drafting a new communications plan, which we will be implementing shortly, that will focus more on regular social media updates via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as well as e-mail updates rather than on Newsletters (which we will still be preparing and sending periodically)

I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome Mr. Caleb Schneider as our new Director in the Eastern Iowa area, Mrs. Jordan Schneider as our Communications Director, Mr. Bob Kirby as Chairman of our Engagement Committee and Mr. Kyle Von Stein to our Fundraising Committee.

## CHRISTENING OF THE IOWA

Well, we had a date for christening and we were working toward that date until recently. Electric Boat has found it necessary to delay the christening due to several production related issues. They have now placed the christening date "Under Review". Based upon information made available to the Commissioning Committee, christening will not happen now until late January or early February 2023. I must emphasize that this is an anticipated timeframe at this point. There are other boats ahead of IOWA that need to be finished and delivered to the fleet that may possibly further impact any christening date.

The Committee has received many inquiries in the past few weeks asking about obtaining tickets to the christening. Again, christening is a major milestone event for the building yard- in this case Electric Boat. It is an Electric Boat event - not the Navy's or the Commissioning Committee's. ***The Commissioning Committee has absolutely no input in who gets invited to the ceremony.***

The christening ceremony will be conducted inside Electric Boat's controlled industrial facility and space is extremely limited. This in turn significantly impacts just how many people can attend the ceremony.

I understand that many of you want to attend this significant event and I'm sorry that in person attendance is extremely unlikely for most of us. Because of these limitations the Commissioning Committee is working with Iowa Public Television and several venues throughout the state to broadcast/view the Christening Ceremony live as it is live-streamed by Electric Boat.

Once we have a firm date for the boat's christening we will finalize venue locations for the "Watch Parties" and publish the date, time and locations along with information on how to watch the event from the comfort of your own home on Iowa Public Television.

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## COMMITTEE UPDATES

We are still looking for help on each of our sub-committees. Those committees are:

**Engagement Committee** - identifying events for crew interaction/fund raising; coordinate logistics for those events (i.e. RAGBRAI, State Fair, etc.)

**Fundraising Committee** - identify/approach prospective corporate/influential donors and develop other fundraising strategies

**Emblematics/Memorabilia Committee** - identify, design and source different types/items of emblematics/memorabilia for christening/commissioning and fundraising acknowledgement.

**External Communications/Media Relations Committee** – help the Communication Director coordinate/manage social media accounts & website updates; gather inputs and draft Newsletters; identify/coordinate opportunities to promote Commissioning Committee efforts and the boat/crew; draft press releases as appropriate.

**Christening/Commissioning Events Committee** - help plan/execute christening/commissioning events sponsored/supported by Commissioning Committee.

If you are interested in joining one of these committees, please give me a call at 515-450-0773 or send an e-mail to [dmaccrea@gmail.com](mailto:dmaccrea@gmail.com).

## CO's CORNER

In an effort to keep our stakeholders informed on actual happenings with the crew and production status, we are asking Commander Powell to provide periodic updates in a section we will call CO's Corner.

*"Greetings from PCU IOWA! I am excited to provide you my first update in my role as Commanding Officer. The last three months have been very busy, but as usual the sailors onboard IOWA exceeded all expectations.*

*In March we completed a key milestone in the construction process requiring around the clock work by the engineering department. The team executed flawlessly. They completed the milestone days ahead of schedule and faster than any other boat in new construction. Accolades for their hard work poured in and I could not be more proud to be a part of this team.*

*Building a new submarine can be challenging and rewarding, but it is just as important to ensure our sailors are ready to defend our nation and properly trained for combat. Working towards this goal, many of IOWA sailors this month supported the Submarine Command Course. This arduous course is designed to train the Submarine Force's prospective Commanding Officers and Executive Officers for their future roles. Our sailors worked along side these leaders in simulated combat environments to hone our skills and learn from each other. IOWA's warriors worked hard and performed superbly.*

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*IOWA also welcomed back shipmates returning from USS COLORADO who completed a seven month deployment to the US European Command area of responsibility. While on deployment COLORADO executed missions vital to national security and IOWA sailors were key in manning critical billets. In all 14 IOWA sailors, including two junior officers, supported COLORADO's deployment. They bring back a wealth of experience and knowledge the entire crew will benefit from.*

*IOWA continues to make great strides in both construction and crew development. The entire crew is excited to bring the ship to life, but we know we could not do it without the support from great patriots like you. Thank you for your dedication to the men and women onboard IOWA. I look forward to our continued success.*

**FIGHT IOWA! FEAR THE GHOST!**

### **MEET THE CREW**

To help establish a relationship between Iowans and those sailors who will man USS IOWA, we are implementing a section called "Meet The Crew". Here are four of the outstanding submariners who are serving onboard.

**TM1(SS) Joshua Baranofsky, USN  
(Torpedoman's Mate First Class (Submarine Warfare))**



Petty Officer Baranofsky is the Leading Torpedoman onboard IOWA. He is a native of Manchester, New Hampshire and joined the Navy in 2012. Prior to reporting to IOWA in March 2020, he served onboard USS PENNSYLVANIA (SSBN-735) and Naval Submarine Support Facility.

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**CSS3 Apdiel Acevedo USN**  
**(Culinary Specialist Submarines Third Class)**



Petty Officer Acevedo, a native of New York City, New York, joined the Navy in January 2021. Following graduation from Basic Training, he attended Culinary Specialist "A" School and the Basic Enlisted Submarine School. Petty Officer Acevedo reported onboard IOWA in the fall of 2021 and is assigned to the CS Division where he helps provide food service to the crew.

**Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Kody Davis USN**



LTJG Davis is the Reactor Controls Assistant on IOWA. He graduated from high school in Cadiz, Kentucky in 2008, and enlisted in the US Coast Guard. While serving as a deck seaman at sea and as an Aviation Maintenance Technician he graduated from Southern New Hampshire University with a degree in Mathematics. After acceptance into the Naval Nuclear Power Officer Commissioning Program he completed Officer Candidate School and was commissioned. Following additional nuclear power and submarine training he reported to IOWA in 2021. He recently completed a temporary assignment onboard USS COLORADO (SSN-788) as Electrical Assistant.

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**STS1(SS) Stephen Zapolsky, USN**  
**(Sonar Technician Submarines (Submarine Warfare) First Class)**



Petty Officer Zapolsky is a native of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the Navy in 2013, completed entry level training, and reported onboard USS SAN JUAN (SSN-751). Prior to reporting to the IOWA he served as an Instructor at Sonarman "A" School at Naval Submarine School in Groton.

### **WHATS ON THE HORIZON**

Our biggest challenge in the weeks and months ahead is maintaining will be to maintain the momentum that we have slowly started to gather over the past few months, especially as the dates for christening and commissioning slip to the right.

Our overarching goal is to continue various outreach endeavors with the boat and crew throughout the christening and commissioning process. Additionally, in conjunction with our corporate and business sponsors and partners, we will continue to undertake efforts, to promote the USS IOWA and her crew with through our new Communications Plan.

The Commissioning Committee is now in the middle of a focused fund-raising campaign seeking financial support of Iowa based businesses, among supportive non-profit entities. Starting later this fall we will be initiating a grass roots fundraising campaign seeking donations from community based organizations such as American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War Posts as well as interested individuals.

I would like to thank a few of our recent corporate sponsors:

Big Grove Brewery

Crossroads Shooting Sports

BAE Systems

Banacom

Green State Credit Union

Riley Creek Lumber

Scheels

Meta

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Should you have any questions or input regarding this edition of the USS IOWA (SSN-797) Commissioning Committee Newsletter, please feel free to contact me at [dmaccrea@gmail.com](mailto:dmaccrea@gmail.com).

Regards,

*Doug MacCrea*

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