



USS IOWA Commissioning Committee

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New US Navy Submarine *USS IOWA* (SSN 797) to be Christened June 17

Christie Vilsack, Sponsor of the Virginia-Class Submarine, will take part in the ceremony marking the boat's next phase before entering the fleet.

(Des Moines, Iowa) - The new Virginia-Class attack submarine *USS IOWA* (SSN-797) is set to be formally named and christened on Saturday, June 17, 2023, at the General Dynamics Electric Boat Division Shipyard in Groton, Connecticut.

At the event, former Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack, in a naval tradition dating back centuries, will break a traditional bottle over the bow of the ship signifying the launch of the new vessel.

Vilsack was named Sponsor the boat by former Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus in 2015.

"Lending our state name to a new and powerful warship that will be crewed with men and women defending our country is truly something every Iowan can take pride in," said Vilsack. "Both Tom and I have strong Navy family connections and, as a former

teacher, I am excited the *IOWA* and all her advanced technology innovation may inspire students in our state to pursue a STEM career.”

USS IOWA will be the 24th member of the Virginia-class of submarines that will eventually total 38 submarines, most of which are named for states.

“This will be a fantastic event full of tradition and ceremony,” said Capt. Doug MacCrea USN (Retired), chairman of the *USS IOWA* Commissioning Committee. “This entire event is made possible by the hard work of the ship’s crew, the volunteer members of the Commissioning Committee and the financial support of sponsors from across the state that have committed significant resources to bring the event to life.”

Christening is the third of five major events in the life a ship as she becomes a U.S. fighting vessel.

The first event was the naming of the future submarine by then Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus on the campus of Iowa State University in September 2015. The second event is the keel-laying that marks the official beginning of the construction. This event was held in North Kingstown, Rhode Island in 2019 and was highlighted as shipwrights welded Christie Vilsack’s initials onto the metal hull of the ship.

The third milestone will be the Christening event where the name *IOWA* and the submarine are officially matched together by both the shipbuilder and the Navy. Formal delivery of the submarine to the Navy by Electric Boat is the next stage with the final stage being the formal commissioning of the *IOWA* as a member of the fleet in the spring of 2024.

The Christening Ceremony will begin at 10:00am EDT on June 17. The *USS IOWA* Commissioning Committee will be hosting watch parties at various locations around the state. Please visit www.SSN797.com for more details.

This *USS IOWA* will become the fourth ship to bear the name of the Hawkeye State. The most recent was the former *USS IOWA* (BB-61), an iconic battleship that served from 1942 to 1949 and again from 1951 to 1958 and finally from 1984 to 1990 when she was officially decommissioned. That ship now serves as a museum in Los Angeles.

Media interviews can be scheduled with Mrs. Vilsack by contacting Matt Paul at mpaul@cgagroup.com or calling 515-229-0125. Additional information about the Christening or the Watch Parties can be obtained by contacting the *USS IOWA* Commissioning Committee Media Relations Rep Dan Kuester at the email above.