Navy to Commission Submarine Iowa

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GROTON, Conn. – The Navy will commission the 24th Virginia-class fast-attack submarine, the future USS Iowa (SSN 797), during a 10 a.m. EST ceremony Saturday, April 5, at Naval Submarine Base New London, Conn.

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds will deliver the principal address. Additional speakers are set to include Secretary of the Navy John Phelan; Adm. Daryl Caudle, Commander, Fleet Forces Command; the Honorable Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Senator from Connecticut; the Honorable Joe Courtney, U.S. Representative from Connecticut; and Mark Rayha, president, General Dynamics Electric Boat.

The submarine's sponsor is former Iowa first lady Christie Vilsack, an educator with a 50-year career in public service. She and her husband, the Honorable Tom Vilsack, former Secretary of Agriculture, live in rural Iowa and continue to support domestic and international education and agriculture programs. In keeping with Navy tradition, she will give the crew the order to "man our ship and bring her to life." With the hoisting of the colors and commission pennant, Secretary Phelan will formally place the ship in active service.

The future Iowa is the fifth naval vessel named for the state and, once commissioned, will be the third placed in service. Battleships named for the Hawkeye State include USS Iowa (BB 4), which commissioned in 1897 and saw action in the Spanish-American War and World War I, and the highly decorated USS Iowa (BB 61), which commissioned in 1943 and served in World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Each Virginia-class submarine is 7,800-tons and 377 feet in

length, has a beam of 34 feet, and can operate at more than 25 knots submerged. It is designed with a reactor plant that will not require refueling during the planned life of the ship, reducing lifecycle costs while increasing underway time. Iowa is designed with stealth, surveillance capabilities and special warfare enhancements to meet the Navy's multi-mission requirements. Its keel was authenticated on Aug. 20, 2019, and it was christened on June 17, 2023.

The submarine was built under a unique teaming agreement between General Dynamics Electric Boat and HII-Newport News Shipbuilding; both companies build certain portions of each submarine and then alternate deliveries. SSN 797 is the 13th Virginia-class submarine delivered by GDEB.

The commissioning of USS Iowa symbolizes the Navy's 250-year commitment to innovation and maritime dominance. From seabed to space, the Navy delivers power for peace – always ready to fight and win. Iowa's cutting-edge capabilities represent the Navy's dedication to maintaining a powerful maritime force for the future. This ceremony celebrates not just the commissioning of the Navy's newest warship, but the Navy's enduring legacy and commitment to shaping the future of maritime power.

The commissioning ceremony will be streamed live at: https://www.dvidshub.net/webcast/35621.