



USS Colorado Commissioned

On March 17 USS Colorado (SSN 788) was commissioned at Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut. Over 2,000 people were in attendance on this blustery March day. Several shipyard executives, Colorado and Connecticut political figures made remarks including Governor John Hickenlooper. Senator Corey Gardner gave the principal address.



Adm. Frank Caldwell was the senior naval officer present and placed Colorado in commission. Battleship Colorado veteran, Ken Jones, participated in the ceremony as the veteran passing the traditional long glass to the oncoming watch. A highlight of the ceremony was the presence of five additional veterans from BB-45. Following the raising of the commissioning pennant, Annie Mabus gave the order "Man our ship and bring her to life", after which the crew broke formation and ran onto the ship. It was a stirring ceremony.



Afterwards, the Commissioning Committee hosted a reception at the head of the pier for all those present. The reception featured Colorado themed food and beverage, including Buffalo sliders with bison meat donated by Frontiere Natural Meats of Denver. Left Hand Brewing supplied beer including their special release IPA, Pride Runs Deep, brewed in honor of this commissioning, and Balistreri Vineyards of Denver supplied the wine. For dessert a cake made with the Vollmer family recipe was donated by the family. This cake recipe had previously been served in the White House.



Committee Holds Other Events

In addition to events on Saturday, the commissioning committee hosted a number of other events starting on Thursday. On Thursday evening they hosted a party for the crew featuring a New England clambake. About 500 of the crew, their families, former crew and Commissioning Committee attended. The Commissioning Committee took this opportunity to present plank owner plaques to the crew along with other gifts.



USS Colorado (SSN 788) Commissioning Committee usscoloradocommittee.org

On Friday a special brunch was held for the ship's sponsor Annie Mabus and was hosted by Mrs. Mary Anne Pitts, wife of Rear Admiral Pitts, at their quarters on the Submarine Base for a group of about twenty.

In the afternoon another New England clambake was held for sponsors, major donors and special guests. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) department on the Submarine Base did another fantastic job in serving this clambake. Approximately 400 people attended this event including Governor Hickenlooper, photographer John Fielder, sculptor George Lundeen, CEO of Left Hand Brewing, Eric Wallace, Annie Mabus and her dad, former Secretary of the Navy Mabus, Maj. Gen. Loh and Mrs. Loh and the veterans from battleship Colorado. During the day on Friday a number of people were given tours of the submarine.



That evening the Chairman's Reception was held at the Mystic Marriott Hotel. There were about 400 people present to enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres and beer and wine supplied by our Colorado sponsors. Several sponsors and individuals presented gifts to the ship, including Julianne Hish who presented a stained-glass replica of the ship's crest. The Commissioning Committee also presented several gifts including exercise equipment donated by TRX company and a special plaque with a challenge to the crew from battleship veterans that will be mounted in the boat. All the battleship veterans present joined onstage to present a specially engraved ship's bell created by sculptor George Lundeen on behalf of the BB-45 Association.



Overall the activities of Commissioning Week were a memorable, once in a lifetime experience. All present seemed to overwhelmingly enjoy the events.

Rewards and Merchandise

For those eligible for Honorary Plankowner Plaques and coin sets, we are in the process of creating those rewards. It will probably be a month or so before we are ready to distribute.

We have exhausted our merchandise supply and do not plan on resupplying as we wind down commissioning activities.

What's Next

With the commissioning complete, we will be reorganizing to provide long term support to the crew. We are currently talking with the support organizations for earlier Virginia Class subs to research the optimum organization to accomplish this. When we have developed our plan, we will send out information to this list and look for those interested in joining our new mission. Based upon what we have learned so far, we anticipate disestablishing the Commissioning Committee and forming an entirely new organization.



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