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USS IDAHO

COMMISSIONING COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER



Creating a Strong Bond between our Great State and a Great Ship
Esto Perpetua

Issue 18

2024 Spring-Christening

May 14, 2024

Reflections on the USS IDAHO Christening

by Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley



What an exciting weekend we had for the christening of the USS IDAHO! I am honored and privileged to be the sponsor for this beautiful boat and the namesake of the great state of Idaho. The christening was a long time in coming, having had the keel laying ceremony in August of 2020 (at the height of the Covid pandemic). So there was much anticipation for the event. I was privileged to have my whole family with me, arriving from around the globe (Washington, DC, Boston, MA, Los Angeles, CA and England), all converging in



Ship's sponsor Terry Stackley christens the USS IDAHO as Electric Boat President Kevin Graney looks on. Photo by Electric Boat.

Groton, CT by Thursday evening.

Official events began on Friday with the much anticipated tribal blessing ceremony conducted jointly by the Nez Perce and the Shoshone-Bannock tribe elders. Leading the ceremony were Elder Wilfred (Scotty) Scott (accompanied by his granddaughter Kiri Onee Brown), Elder

Mary Jane Miles, Brooklyn Baptiste and Samuel Penny of the Nez Perce tribe and Lee Juan Tyler, chairman of the Shoshone-Bannock tribes. (see Page 2) My husband, Sean, and my daughter Tess joined me along with Cdr. Leslie, members of the crew, and shipyard workers. It was an incredibly moving ceremony.

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WATCH THE USS IDAHO CHRISTENING AGAIN!

Idaho Public Television (IDPTV) producer Aaron Kuntz has edited a new version of the USS IDAHO christening ceremony with footage he and IDPTV videographer Tammy Scardino shot on-site. Exclusive footage from General Dynamics Electric Boat is included as well. This is a significantly better-quality video. Watch the christening again on IDPTV's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhKV4YzJaSA>



Reflections on the USS IDAHO Christening

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Following that, I met with the president of Electric Boat, Kevin Graney, who walked me through the logistics of the christening ceremony. After a “meet and greet” with the crew, my family was given a tour of the USS IDAHO. The boat is looking great and I am looking forward to seeing her in the water at my next visit.

Later in the afternoon, I headed over to the Submarine Force Museum for a reception hosted by the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee. I was excited to see so many Idahoans there, particularly those I have met on my visits to the state. From there I headed to the ship sponsor’s dinner, hosted by Electric Boat. This was a small gathering of family, friends, select crew



Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley waves to christening guests following the christening of the USS IDAHO. Photo by Electric Boat.

members of the USS IDAHO and General Dynamics Electric Boat. I must admit, by the time the dinner was over, I was ready to call it a day.

Saturday morning started early, with a breakfast reception at the shipyard. It was a beautiful day, with the sun shining and little wind. Perfect for a christening! The ceremony itself was grand. There were many distinguished guests on the platform, including Kevin Graney, Senator Blumenthal (CT), Congressmen Courtney (CT) and Fulcher (ID), Governor Little (ID), Lt Governor Bysiewicz (CT), Secretary Guertin (Asst Sec Navy—for Research Development & Acquisition), and Admiral Houston (Director of the Nuclear Navy). And what a crowd in the audience — I was told there were 4,000 present for the ceremony.

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Breaking the bottle on the first swing was my top priority! Filled with water from Lake Pend Oreille, Payette Lake, Redfish Lake, and Henrys Lake—the splash was perfect! I couldn't be more proud than I was at that moment, for the Navy, for the shipyard, and for the state of Idaho.

At the reception after the christening, I was given the broken bottle along with a painting of the USS IDAHO traversing the Thames river. The final reception of the day was hosted by the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee where I received a bottle of 44 North Huckleberry Vodka with the USS IDAHO on the bottle.

I am tremendously grateful for all of the people responsible for putting together such a moving ceremony and enjoyable weekend, for myself and my family. In particular, I would like to mention Greg Rose and Angela Spada from the Electric Boat Public Affairs Office, Al Morales and Jason Lovell from the Naval Base Protocol Office, and Governor Dirk Kempthorne and Richard Colburn from the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee.

Now, let's get this boat in the water and get it ready for its commissioning!



The USS IDAHO Commissioning Foundation Inc. is an Idaho non-profit corporation with Federal IRC Sec. 501 (c)3 tax exempt status EIN 84-5147328



Sponsor Terry Stackley listens to Nez Perce Elder Wilfred Scott at the submarine's blessing ceremony. Photo by Electric Boat.



Sponsor Terry Stackley passes the Native American peace pipe during the blessing ceremony. Photo by Electric Boat.



Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley's Christening Speech



Photo by Joshua Karsten/
Submarine Readiness Squadron 32

Senator Blumenthal, Governor Little, Lt Governor Bysiewicz, Congressmen Courtney and Fulcher, Secretary Guertin, Admiral Houston, Alison Stiller, President of the Society of Ship Sponsors — and so many other distinguished guests, many of whom have traveled many miles to be here today, — thank you for sharing this momentous occasion.

I'd also like to give a warm shout out to Governor Dirk Kempthorne and Richard Colburn, the Commissioning Committee of the USS IDAHO , and all of you patriots from the great state of Idaho who have traveled many YEARS to be here.

I've been warmed by how sincerely you have welcomed and embraced me in every city, every town, and every park I've visited in your great state — and I look forward to my next visit.

Some half century ago or so, when I was much younger, my father worked here, at Electric Boat, as a Naval Engineer. He was equipped with a slide rule and blue prints...and the floating drydock he helped design has long been retired, and the many submarines that floated on and off that drydock — boats with names like the BATFISH and the PARCHE... — they've since been decommissioned.

And we've long since stopped naming submarines after fish. Rumor has it, as Admiral Rickover explained, we stopped naming submarines after fish because fish don't vote.

When I think about the great attachment between the citizens of Idaho and the crew of the USS IDAHO, I think Admiral Rickover had the right idea.

Much has changed since the days when my Dad walked the deckplates here. To Kevin Graine and the men and women of General Dynamics Electric Boat; let me offer, however, that much remains the same.



Sponsor Terry Stackley addresses approximately 4,000 Christening guests.
Photo by Joshua Karsten/Submarine Readiness Squadron 32.

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Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley's Christening Speech (continued from the previous page)

Electric Boat is today — as it has been throughout its 125 year history — unparalleled in expert craftsmanship and dedication.

And through your gates continue to pass generation upon generation of the finest ship builders in the world. Building great submarines — none greater than this boat before us all — it's not just your job, it's your passion.

Americans everywhere owe you thanks for your remarkable dedication, skills and patriotism.

Commander Leslie, and COB, Master Chief Skipper, and the wonderful crew of the USS IDAHO: My hat's off and my heart goes out to you for all of your hard work leading up to today. But more importantly, to the days, weeks, and months that follow, to ensure that your boat, IDAHO, ...is the Gem of the Fleet.

I'm honored to be your sponsor, and I'm humbled when I think about the sacrifices that each of you will make in service to our country.

Of course, you don't sail alone. As a Navy wife, I have a great appreciation for the teamwork that goes on behind the scenes — that is, your spouses and families who support you at home, and who are enabling you, and inspiring you, to give “your all” in defense of our freedom.

To the many families of the USS IDAHO, you have my eternal gratitude...and my admiration. And with that, I need to thank my own family.

On this day we celebrate all that is great in America, and what is greater than family. You are my inspiration. Thank you to all family members for being here today.

In closing, it has been over a century since the Battleship USS Idaho (BB-42) — a ship made famous by her service in World War II — was christened. I think that I speak for all of us here today when I say that it's high time we give special honor to the state of Idaho — so rich in its Naval history — and christen again another USS IDAHO.



The future USS IDAHO. Photo by Electric Boat.

Thank You — Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley





Native American Blessing of the Future USS IDAHO, Friday, March 15, 2024

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Affairs Chair

In a truly Idaho-unique ceremony, the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee worked closely with Electric Boat, Naval Reactors, the Navy, Ship’s Sponsor Terry Stackley, former Governor Dirk Kempthorne, and leaders of Idaho’s Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and the Nez Perce Tribe to hold the first ever, Native American Blessing of a ship in conjunction with the events leading up to the Christening.

Sponsor Terry Stackley and her family, Governor Dirk Kempthorne, several members of the PCU IDAHO Crew, leaders from Idaho’s Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and the Nez Perce Tribe, several Electric Boat employees, and members of the Commissioning Committee gathered in a ceremonial circle near the bow of the submarine, to bless her future service, the Electric Boat craftsmen and women that built her and bless the crew that will serve on her. Governor Dirk Kempthorne began with introductions and insight into Idaho’s treasured relationship with the Native American Tribes of Idaho and the importance of incorporating their participation into a ship to be named Idaho.

Nez Perce Tribal Vice Elder Brooklyn Baptiste opened by talking about the Nez Perce (Nimíipuu) traditions of the creator and the relationship of warriors to each other and the tribe. He shared his thoughts on how the submarine will be an integral part of protecting the crew and will take them on their missions and bring them home safely. He went on to articulate the code of warriors never wanting to take life but should they have to, that they respect the lives of their enemies and honor the lives they do take.

Nez Perce Tribal Elder Wilfred "Scotty" Scott talked about the Native American tradition of service in the military and the lineage of warriors going back centuries. He shared his insight of how the crew of the submarine will go out to protect us, like warrior bands would go out protect the tribe from afar. Scotty shared his impression of how the submarine crew lives and fights “like a family” which is very similar to the history of the Nez Perce tribe. Note: Scotty is a retired Viet Nam era, Navy Yeoman Chief Petty Officer.



The blessing was conducted in a small circle near the bow of the submarine. Photo by Electric Boat.

Sacred tribal artifacts were laid on a deerskin in the center of the circle. Photo by Electric Boat.



Nez Perce Tribal Elder and retired Navy



Chief Petty Officer, Wilfred "Scotty" Scott, shares from his heart his thoughts on the spirit of warriors. Photo by Electric Boat.



Nez Perce Tribal Elder Samuel Penny talked about the Native American symbolism of the USS IDAHO crest and specifically about the Appaloosa horse’s endurance, sure-footedness and intelligence. Photo by Electric Boat.

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Native American Blessing of the Future USS IDAHO, Friday, March 15, 2024 (continued from the previous page)

Nez Perce Tribal Elder Samuel Penny talked about the Native American symbology of the USS IDAHO crest and specifically about the Appaloosa horse’s endurance, sure-footedness, intelligence and how this equates to the qualities of the submarine. He shared the Nez Perce history of breeding the Appaloosa since the time when horses were introduced to North America.

Nez Perce Tribal Elder Mary Jane Miles shared her thoughts on the similarity of role of the Sponsor to that of the mother in the Nez Perce (Nimípuu) culture and she offered a prayer to the Sponsor and to the crew. She shared her insight into the structure of the crew and their families and how it reminded her of the family unit of the Nez Perce.

Nez Perce Vice Elder Brooklyn Baptiste, PCU IDAHO Commanding Officer, Commander Randall Leslie and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Chairman Lee Juan Tyler. Photo by Electric Boat.



Nez Perce Tribal Elder Mary Jane Miles speaks to the Nez Perce (Nimípuu) traditions of the mother and how the Sponsor of the ship is akin to the mother of the tribe. Photo by Electric Boat.



Nez Perce member Kiri Onee Brown embraces Sponsor Terry Stackley. Photo by Electric Boat.



Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Chairman Lee Juan Tyler sings a song of prayer. Photo by Electric Boat.

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Native American Blessing of the Future USS IDAHO, Friday, March 15, 2024 (continued from the previous page)

Then Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Chairman, Lee Juan Tyler, talked at length about the magnificent sight of the submarine and how honored he felt to be a part of a ceremony with the crew and to share his blessings to this group of warriors. Chairman Tyler wore his traditional headdress to honor the crew and share the legacy of the Shoshone-Bannock people’s traditions. He then offered a song of prayer and blessing for the crew and the submarine.

Tribal Elder Scott directed the crew members to come to the center of the circle. He blew his battle whistle, made from the bone of an eagle wing, to the four cardinal directions, while the crew turned to each direction to symbolize how warriors must never lose their way and their sense of direction. Chairman Tyler then blessed each crew member.

At the ceremony's conclusion, the group passed a prayer pipe packed with bitterroot mountain herb from the highest point in Idaho. Individuals reflected or shared a piece of wisdom when the pipe was passed to them. Vice Elder Baptiste then blessed and purified each person in the circle with the smoke of burning smudge from the Bitterroot Mountains. The ceremony concluded with a final blessing upon Sponsor Terry Stackley, the future USS IDAHO, and all who will sail upon her.



LEFT—Nez Perce Vice Elder Brooklyn Baptiste blesses and purifies crewmembers with the smoke of burning smudge from the Bitterroot Mountains. Photo by Electric Boat.



Sponsor Terry Stackley holds the prayer pipe and reflects. Photo by Electric Boat.



ABOVE—Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Chairman Lee Juan Tyler describes his impressions of the submarine as he invokes his blessing. Photo by Electric Boat.





Submarine Veterans Lunch with the PCU IDAHO Crew

Idaho Submarine Veterans and Submarine Veterans from the Requin Base in Pittsburgh, PA. and Vice Admiral Ron Eytchison toured the submarine base in Groton, CT the Friday morning before the USS IDAHO Christening. Then many Idaho and Requin Base Submarine Veterans had a delicious taco bar lunch with the PCU IDAHO Crew at the U.S. Submarine Veterans (USSVI) Groton Base—Dominic "Joe" Negri Memorial Club.



Touring the Groton Submarine Base. Photo by Russell Johnson.



USSVI Groton Base building overlooking the Thames River. Photo by Laura Barton.



The "Still on Patrol" plaque for WWII lost submarines. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.

RIGHT—Event room at the USSVI Groton Subbase club. Photo by Russell Johnson.



LEFT—Memorial pool room. Photo by Russell Johnson



Bar and card room with plaques from every known submarine. Photo by Russell Johnson.



Telling sea stories with the crew, looking to the east up the hill. Photo by Russell Johnson.



Submarine Veterans of Requin Base in Pittsburgh, PA with Chuck VanDerhoff and Joe Deacon of the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee. Photo by Laura Barton.



LEFT—the crew with our USSVI members from Idaho, Groton, and Pittsburg. Photo by Laura Barton.



RIGHT—the crew with Don Hulse and other veterans from Idaho. Photo by Laura Barton.

This event was absolutely fabulous because of the opportunity to interact with the PCU IDAHO Crew and to see the new USSVI National Headquarters offices in the Groton Base building, which was sold to the Groton Subvets by the Elks. Looking west down the hill to the Thames River was "beyond thrilling"—it was like yelling Dive, Dive.





Dignitaries, Committee Members, Friends and Crew Celebrate at the Subforce Museum Reception the Evening Before the Christening

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Relations Chair

Idaho Governor Brad Little, members of the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee and its advisory board, subvets, tremendous donors and Idahoans gathered with the crew to celebrate the christening of the future USS IDAHO at the Subforce Museum in Groton, Connecticut on Friday, March 15.

Guests sampled Idaho beverages, such as 44 North's huckleberry vodka and lemonade cocktail, and SPUD Juice. SPUD Juice stands for "Special Purpose Underwater Drink," a beer developed by Idaho's Sockeye Brewing and Groton's Outer Light Brewing Company to commemorate the christening of the USS IDAHO. Guests also tasted delicious New England clam chowder and other regional treats.



Commissioning Committee members Bob Brady, Tom Dale, Barry Oglesbee, Marv Hagedorn, and Mat Tanner had coins, caps, and sweatshirts for sale. Photo by Laura Barton.

ABOVE—Outer Light Brewing Co and Sockeye Brewing collaborated to make SPUD Juice to commemorate the christening. (l. to r.) Sockeye's Ben Sopchak and Outerlight's Kurt Delaney and Tom Drejer. Photo by Laura Barton.

To kickoff the event, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Chair Richard Colburn gave introductory remarks and was followed by former Idaho Governor and Advisory Board Chair Dirk Kempthorne. USS IDAHO Commander Randall Leslie assured the assembled guests: "The ship looks amazing."

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Dignitaries, Committee Members, Friends and Crew Celebrate at the Subforce Museum Reception the Evening Before the Christening (continued from the previous page)

Commander Leslie continued to commended his crew of young sailors, who are responsible for the \$2.7B submarine and its nuclear reactor. "It takes a team to take a submarine out to sea. It takes a team to have a warship with the spirit that Idaho has," said Commander Leslie. "I've been touched on each of the two trips I've made to the State of Idaho. I've met phenomenal people who have treated me and my crew, in many cases, like family. I welcome you all to Groton. I welcome you as part of the USS IDAHO family. Thank you for the support. Thank you for the attendance. Thank you for everything that you've done and will continue to do for the ship."



Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley mingles with crew and guests. Photo by Laura Barton.

Idaho Governor Brad Little followed Commander Leslie and said, "For those that have served, those that are serving, and those that will serve, we are in a continual quest to make a more perfect union. And we can't make a more perfect union if we can't defend it -- if we can't project the strength which that ship is going to project all over the world. That's what's made this country great in the past, and that's what's going to make it greater in the future."

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(l. to r.) Luke Barton, Matthew Barton, Patricia and VADM Ron Eytchison, US Navy Retired and LCDR Robert Earle, US Navy Veteran and Finance Chairman USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee. Photo by Laura Barton.



Guests enjoy the Subforce Museum and the suspended model of a WWII submarine. Photo by Laura Barton.



Dignitaries, Committee Members, Friends and Crew Celebrate at the Subforce Museum Reception the Evening Before the Christening (continued from the previous page)

Ship's sponsor Terry Stackley thanked the Idahoans who traveled to the christening for "the support and dedication and patriotism you all have shown me while I visited Idaho" and added, "You all are like family to me now and I'm proud to say that I am an adopted Idahoan."

USS IDAHO sponsor Terry Stackley and Governor Kempthorne closed the evening by leading the guests in singing "God Bless America." Then Commander Leslie led the guests in the USS IDAHO battle cry: "Let it be! Forever! Let it be! Forever! Let it be! Forever! Sink Boats. Cutthroats!"

Nez Perce Elder Brooklyn Baptiste and LTJG Alex Boxmeyer enjoy the reception. Photo by Laura Barton.



Group of U.S. Navy Veteran Submariners, lovingly referred to as "Old Salts," enjoying a storytelling session. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.



Governor Brad Little chats with advisory board member Tom and Mary Glynn Wilford. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.

The PCU IDAHO Crewmembers celebrate at the Subforce Museum. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.



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Celebration at the Subforce Museum Reception

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LEFT—
USS IDAHO
Commander
Randall Leslie
leads the
submarine's
battle cry.
Photo by
Laura Barton.



ABOVE—Simplot Mountain West Regional Manager, U.S. Naval Academy graduate, and former submariner Hank McDonald (left) and his fiancée Nina Carruesco, with Governor Brad Little and Simplot family member April Gwin. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.



Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley speaks about the spirit and hospitality of Idahoans as Committee Chair Richard Colburn looks on. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.



ABOVE—Former Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne, alongside Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley, addresses USS Idaho Christening Committee reception attendees. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.

BELOW—Patricia Kempthorne, Idaho Power CEO Lisa Grow, Sharon Delong and Advisory Board Member Don Mitchell enjoy the reception. Photo by Richard Colburn.

BELOW—(l. to r.) Ada County Fourth District Judge Peter Barton with JD Simplot and Simplot Director of Government & Public Affairs Ken Dey enjoy the reception at the Submarine Force Museum. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.





USS IDAHO Christening, Electric Boat Shipyard, Saturday, March 16, 2024

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Relations Chair

A patriotic crowd of approximately 4,000 national, state, and Navy leadership, Idahoans, crew members, submarine veterans, Electric Boat employees, and members of the public gathered at the Electric Boat shipyard in New London, Connecticut to christen the future USS IDAHO.



USS IDAHO Christening, at the General Dynamics Electric Boat Shipyard, on Saturday, March 16, 2024. Photo by Richard Colburn.



PCU IDAHO Executive Officer LCDR Justin Devillar smiles in front of his boat. Photo by Laura Barton.



Andy Krivy, Marv Hagedorn, and Barry Oglesbee greet people entering the Electric Boat ceremony area and offer to sell them hats and commemorative coins. Photo by Tammie Colburn.

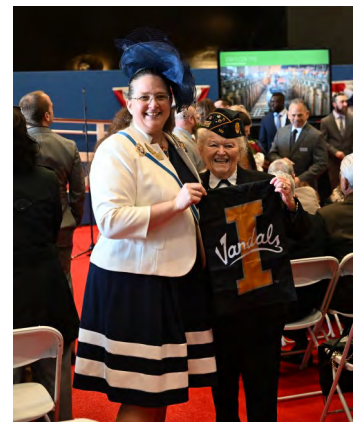


Idaho Public Television's Aaron Kuntz and Tammy Scardino shoot footage of the christening for an upcoming documentary. Photo by Laura Barton.



Daughters of the American Revolution members Laura Barton, Janice Beller, Catherine McClintick and Susan Snodderly celebrate. Photo by Laura Barton.

Idaho Vandals unite! Daughters of the American Revolution Idaho State Regent Janice Beller and Retired Army Lt Col Linda Fleetwood enjoy the christening. Photo by Laura Barton.



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USS IDAHO Christening, Electric Boat Shipyard, Saturday, March 16, 2024

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Relations Chair

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U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (CT), U.S. Representative Russ Fulcher (ID), U.S. Representative Joe Courtney (CT) and Rear Admiral Jonathan Rucker. Photo by Electric Boat.



(l. to r.) Nez Perce Vice Elder Brooklyn Baptiste, Tribal Elder Samuel Penny, Tribal Elder Mary Jane Miles, member Kiri Onee Brown, and Tribal Elder "Scotty" Scott in front, with USS IDAHO Committee Planning Chair Don Curry and Governor Brad Little. Photo by Electric Boat.



Captain Ed Whitehead, US Navy Retired and Richard Colburn. Photo by Electric Boat.



Don Hulse (2nd from right) with brother Jon Hulse on the far right and brother Robert Hulse to the left of him plus nephew Kaven Hulse (Robert's son) on the far left. Photo by Electric Boat.



Commander Randall Leslie and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Chairman Lee Juan Tyler. Photo by Electric Boat.



Nez Perce Tribal Elder Wilfred "Scotty" Scott greets Navy friends. Photo by Electric Boat.

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USSVI Requin Base Lou Hamill and eight of his fellow subvets stand in front of Idaho's first submarine. Photo by Electric Boat.



PCU Commanding Officer, Randall Leslie and Chief of the Boat, Master Chief Travis Skipper stand next to the future USS IDAHO. Photo by Electric Boat.



The USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee giveaways were popular. Photo by Electric Boat.

Former PCU IDAHO Commander Nick Meyers and his wife Sarah celebrate the christening of the boat. Photo by Electric Boat.



Electric Boat shipbuilders celebrates the christening. Photo by Electric Boat.



Committee Chair Richard Colburn and former Navy Secretary Sean Stackley share stories before the christening ceremony. Photo by Electric Boat.

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Electric Boat Sub-Tones sing the National Anthem. Photo by Electric Boat.



Idaho Governor Brad Little describes the submarine's role in defending American freedom. Photo by Electric Boat.

Electric Boat CEO Kevin Graney escorts Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley to the dias. Photo by Electric Boat.

Idaho Rep. Russ Fulcher delivers remarks. Photo by Electric Boat.



The future USS IDAHO. Photo by Electric Boat.



Sponsor Terry Stackley and her daughters Tess, Erin and Maura. Photo by Electric Boat.



Sponsor Terry Stackley and her husband, Sean Stackley, former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Navy. Photo by Electric Boat.



SSN 799



Post-Christening Reception at Electric Boat Provides Warmth and Comfort.

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Relations Chair

Following the christening of the future USS IDAHO, guests were bussed from the christening site (the Virginia-class hanger near the water), to the Columbia-class submarine hanger. The hanger is massive and is built to hold two Columbia class 560-foot-long submarines.

Electric Boat CEO welcomed the guests, who mingled and enjoyed prime rib, lobster rolls, shrimp cocktail, sliders and the Idaho baked potato bar. Sponsor Terry Stackley was presented with a lifetime membership in the Society of Sponsors of the U.S. Navy from Electric Boat.

On behalf of the future USS IDAHO, Commander Randall Leslie received a plaque from Naval Reactors. The plaque states that it was "created with the hull steel from the S1W prototype located at the Naval Reactors facility in Idaho. S1W contained the first nuclear reactor in the Naval Reactors Program."



Electric Boat's Columbia-class hanger where the post-christening reception was held. Photo by Electric Boat.



Sponsor Terry Stackley holds her lifetime membership in the Society of Sponsors of the U.S. Navy. Photo by Electric Boat.



Director Naval Reactors ADM William Houston presents Commanding Officer CDR Randall with a special Nuclear Reactors plaque for the future USS IDAHO. Photo by Electric Boat.



Simplot Director of Government & Public Affairs Ken Dey and Idaho Rep. Rus Fulcher. Photo by Electric Boat.



USS Idaho Commissioning Committee Advisory Board members Dennis Johnson and Tom Wilford (right) chat with Mary Glynn Wilford.



Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley (wearing corsage) and a guest joins JD Simplot and Simplot Family member April Gwin to celebrate the christening of the USS IDAHO. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.



USS IDAHO flower girl. Photo by Electric Boat.



J.R. Simplot Company Simplot Military Alliance Ambassadors Bobby Jo Wheeler (left) and Travis Dryden (right) present Idaho Governor Brad Little with SMA challenge coin in recognition of his support of our military. Photo by Simplot Co.





Guests Enjoy SPUD Juice at Outer Light Brewing Post-Christening Celebration

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Relations Chair

Outer Light Brewing Company continued the christening celebration Saturday afternoon, March 16. Visiting Idahoans and locals stopped by to sample SPUD Juice, the commemorative brew created by Outer Light Brewing Company in Groton, Connecticut and Sockeye Brewing in Boise, Idaho. The brew was named by the crew and is called SPUD Juice: Special Purpose Underwater Drink.

Since August 2023, Outer Light's Kurt Delaney and Tom Drejer; Sockeye Brewing's Ben Sopchak, and Commissioning Committee member Mike Allen have worked together to produce a beer to commemorate the future USS IDAHO. The breweries created a joint recipe. Then Sockeye shipped ingredients grown in Idaho to Connecticut to create an authentic Idaho taste.

SPUD Juice was widely enjoyed during christening weekend. Cheers!

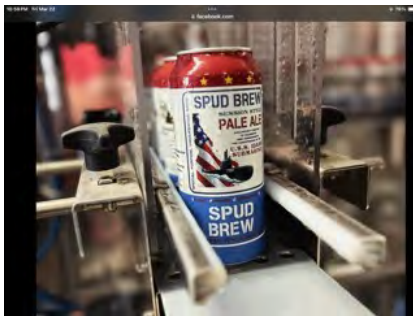


(l. to r.) Outer Light's Kurt Delaney and Tom Drejer, Sockeye's Ben Sopchak, Marv Hagedorn, Mathew Tanner, Mike Allen, Andy Krivy, Barry Olgesbee, Bob Brady and others enjoy a can of SPUD juice.

Submarine veterans from Idaho and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania cheer for more SPUD Juice as they stand with Outer Light's Kurt Delaney and Tom Drejer in front of the fermentation vessels. Photo by Ben Sopchak/ Sockeye Brewing.



A unique logo was created with input from Outer Light, Sockeye, and the Commissioning Committee. Photo by Ben Sopchak/ Sockeye Brewing.



ABOVE—Special Purpose Underwater Drink makes its debut in view of the USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear-powered submarine. Photo by Ben Sopchak / Sockeye Brewing.





Crew, Committee, and Guests Celebrate Christening with Idaho Style

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Relations Chair

Saturday Evening Reception

The USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee concluded a weekend of christening festivities by hosting an Idaho-themed reception for the crew and guests at the Mystic Marriott ballroom in Mystic, Connecticut on Saturday evening, March 16.

Guests sampled a buffet of special Idaho fare: smoked salmon, finger steaks, and Simplot French fries, a baked potato bar, huckleberry cheesecake, and Idaho Spud Bars.

Advisory Board Chair Governor Dirk Kempthorne welcomed the guests and congratulated Sponsor Terry Stackley on breaking the bottle of christening water with one wack. He then presented her with a bottle of 44 North's USS IDAHO Huckleberry Flavored Vodka. "Batch 799" commemorates the commissioning of the USS IDAHO and features a submerged submarine.

Richard Colburn introduced 44 North's Master Distiller Scott Probert and thanked him for the many hours he spent developing and scoring a glass christening bottle filled with carbonated water from Idaho's lakes that would break and fizz perfectly for the christening ceremony.

Planning Committee Chair Don Curry acknowledged the hard work of committee members and crew in planning and executing christening events.

Then American Legion member Matt Wrobel presented a ceremonial ship's bell made of brass from grommets taken from more than 25,000 retired U.S. flags from the State of Idaho to USS IDAHO Commander Randall Leslie and Master Chief Travis Skipper. Matt explained that he began collecting retired flags in 2015 and worked with the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery to secure a place to deposit the ashes from the burned fabric. Matt used the flags' brass grommets to cast a bell for the future USS IDAHO and will be casting one for the USS BOISE too.

Matt told reception guests, "This was four years of labor and love. Every veterans' group, mom and pop, DAV, DAR, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, businesses - everyone wanted to participate in this." Then Matt read the bell's inscription: "Ringing this bell rings the spirit of all Idaho veterans. Esto perpetua."

Governor Kempthorne concluded the evening's presentation by introducing five crew members who have visited Idaho. They shared some of their memories and impressions of Idaho. Governor Kempthorne then read a touching poem he composed about USS IDAHO-799. Commander Leslie led the crowd in the ship's battle cry. Then Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Member Sam Petty explained how the USS IDAHO crest incorporates special Native American symbols such as eagle feathers representing the five tribes of Idaho and the Appaloosa horse, which has been bred by the Nez Perce for centuries and is the state animal of Idaho. Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Chairman Lee Juan Tyler closed the evening with a song and prayer of blessing for the veterans, crew, committee members, guests, and their families.



Planning Committee Chair Don Curry welcomes christening guests. Photo by Laura Barton.



Representatives of the Nez Perce Tribe enjoy dinner. Photos by Laura Barton.

(l. to r.) Committee members Robert Earl, Blythe Fortin, and Ray Fortin.



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Committee board member Andy Krivy and guests. Photo by Laura Barton.



Committee chair Richard Colburn displays souvenir bottles of Idaho christening waters developed by 44 North's Scott Probert and team. Photo by Laura Barton.



Advisory board member Ray Stark and other guests enjoy the presentation. Photo by Laura Barton.



Crew members of PCU IDAHO share their experiences and impressions on past crew visits to Idaho. Photo by Laura Barton.



Governor Kempthorne presents a bottle of 44 North's USS IDAHO Huckleberry Flavored Vodka Batch 799 commemorating the christening of the USS IDAHO. Photo by Tammie Colburn.



ABOVE—Matt Wrobel displays U.S. flag grommets and presents the ship's bell made from brass grommets to Commander Randall Leslie and Chief of the Boat Travis Skipper. Photo by Laura Barton.



Mitzi Cheldelin and Idaho Power CEO Lisa Grow enjoy the reception with family and friends. Photo by Tammie Colburn.



Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Chairman Lee Juan Tyler closed the evening with a song and prayer of blessing. Photo by Travis Dryden/Simplot Co.





44 North’s Master Distiller Creates Bubbly Christening Water and Custom Christening Bottle

By Laura Barton, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee Marketing & Public Relations Chair

The USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee has found a delightful and generous partner in 44 North Vodka Co-Founder Ken Wyatt and his team. Under the guidance of Master Distiller Scott Probert, the Idaho company produces six varieties of vodka and four vodka cocktails and seltzers in its distillery in Shelley, Idaho. When he began distilling spirits 20 years ago, Scott could not have anticipated that he would become a distiller of christening water from Idaho's lakes.

The future USS IDAHO submarine is unique because it was not christened in the traditional way with champagne. Commissioning Committee Advisory Board Chair Governor Kempthorne envisioned that the first water that touched USS IDAHO SSN 799 should be waters from the lakes of Idaho. To that end, Governor Kempthorne and Sponsor Terry Stackley collected water from Henrys Lake, Payette Lake, Lake Pend Oreille, and Red Fish Lake during the past two years.



Scott Probert tests bottle scoring to develop the ideal USS IDAHO christening bottle at 44 North Vodka's distillery in Shelley, Idaho. Photo courtesy of Scott Probert/44 North Vodka.

Scott and the 44 North Vodka team have been essential partners to move Idaho's lake water into an elegant and functional christening bottle. In November 2023, Scott began scoring and testing a variety of glass bottles. His goal was for the christening bottle to break on the first strike, yet remain safe for Sponsor Terry Stackley and the people who would be standing near her during the christening ceremony.

Next Scott turned his attention to the lake water. He wanted the christening waters to bubble and fizz like champagne when the bottle was broken. Anyone who has watched the christening can attest that Master Distiller Scott found the perfect amount of carbonization to do the trick! In addition to creating a great bottle and fizzy christening water, 44 North Vodka employed their crackerjack marketing team firm, Drake Cooper, to design a beautiful label for the bottles that would hold the "Waters of Idaho." One bottle was broken during the christening ceremony, another will be given to Sponsor Terry Stackley as a souvenir, and an additional commemorative bottle will be displayed on the future USS IDAHO SSN 799. 44 North produced 50ml mini bottles as a souvenir for christening guests.



Scott Probert and Sponsor Terry Stackley hold the USS IDAHO commemorative christening bottle. Photo courtesy of Scott Probert/44 North Vodka.

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44 North's Master Distiller Creates Bubbly Christening Water and Custom Christening Bottle (continued from the previous page)

Scott was on hand during the christening weekend with a spare bottle of the "Waters of Idaho" in case it was needed. Scott said that he enjoyed meeting "so many high caliber people" and was fascinated to hear the "incredible stories of life at sea from different sailors."

"The scale of the USS IDAHO was incredible," Scott added. "How many people get to see a submarine that close?!"

The USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee's partnership with 44 North doesn't end with the christening bottle. Committee members have long enjoyed 44 North's Mountain Huckleberry Vodka, with its uniquely Idaho ingredients of potatoes and huckleberries. It seems fitting that 44 North Vodka has created a commemorative "USS IDAHO Huckleberry Flavored Vodka Batch 799" which is currently in Idaho liquor stores. The bottle and packaging, also produced by Drake Cooper, is exquisite and features a submarine, the tagline, "Gem of the Fleet, and five stars to signify that SSN 799 is the fifth "USS IDAHO."

44 North Vodka is donating one dollar from each bottle sold to fund the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee's Dolphin Scholarship Fund, habitability improvements to the submarine, and commissioning expenses.

Spread the word! To check availability in your town, visit ... <https://MixBlendEnjoy.com> an Idaho State Liquor Division website.



Commissioning Committee Treasurer Ray Fortin hands christening waters that were collected from four Idaho lakes to 44 North Vodka Co-Founder Ken Wyatt for bottling. Photo by Blythe Fortin.





Idahoans Gathered Around the State to Watch the Future USS IDAHO SSN 799 Christening

By Laura Barton and Henry Netzer, USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee members

Idahoans gathered in eight towns and cities around the state to watch the christening of the future USS IDAHO SSN 799. Veterans and friends gathered at the American Legion Post 113 in Meridian with fresh coffee and baked goods to watch the christening live at 8 am MDT. Others watched the christening later in the day or even later in the week when it was convenient to gather.

Sockeye Brewing in Boise created a beer in collaboration with Outer Light Brewing Company in Groton, Connecticut to commemorate the christening of the future USS IDAHO. The crew named it SPUD Juice, which stands for "Special Purpose Underwater Drink." Sockeye distributed the beer to watch parties in Cascade, Bayview, Hayden, and Lewiston.

Sockeye Brewing hosted a watch party at their brewery in Boise where approximately 50 people gathered to watch. In Idaho Falls, fans gathered at the Museum of Idaho and sampled Idaho Brewing Company's own SPUD Juice.

Additionally, Idahoans gathered at the American Legion Post 60 in Cascade, the Bayview Community Center, the Idaho County Veterans Outreach Community Center in Grangeville, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Sourdough Post 10043 in Lewiston.

In Coeur d'Alene, approximately 50 people gathered at a watch party hosted by USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee volunteer Brad Little and the US Naval Academy Alumni Chapter. The event and lunch were held at Seasons Restaurant in downtown Coeur d'Alene. The event also included brief remarks by Marc Kilmer (State Policy/



Coeur d'Alene watch party. Photo by Brad Little.

Regional Director for Senator Jim Risch) and Jake Garringer (North Idaho Field Representative for Governor Brad Little). The crowd enjoyed a glass of commemorative SPUD Juice brewed by Sockeye Brewing, as well as a special lunch menu provided by Seasons. After some brief welcoming remarks by Brad and Henry Netzer (USSICF's North

Region Chair), those gathered watched Idaho Public Television's 90-minute streaming of the christening. There was an enthusiastic response to the USS IDAHO March, "Silver and Gold Beneath the Waves" which was written by University of Idaho Professor Buckvich and for the Electric Boat's Sub Tones' singing of the National Anthem.



Boise watch party at Sockeye Brewing. Photos above by Bill Slupe.



Friends gather at the American Legion Post 60 in Cascade, Idaho to watch the christening and drink SPUD Juice. Photo by Kelly Rutherford-Felton





School of the Boat

The senior enlisted person on a submarine is known as the Chief of the Boat (COB). One of the COB's jobs is to provide training for new personnel. That training is referred to as the "School of the Boat."

This column is intended for newsletter subscribers who may have no military background and those unfamiliar with submarines and Idaho's extensive Naval history.

Life, Liberty and the Unknown

By: Rick Gilchrist, Captain, USN (ret)

As humans, we go through a series of events, some more complex than others. Kendra Shaw, one of the characters in Universal Studios television series, Battlestar Galactica: Razor put it in the simplest of terms when she said, "You're born, you live, and you die". We all know it's more complicated than that, especially the "living" part.

U.S. Navy ships, like humans also have a life and like humans, their lives are more complex than Kendra Shaw's observation indicates.

First - The Birthing:

Construction of a modern Virginia class submarine takes about five years. The "birth" of a U.S. Navy ship begins with the "laying of the keel" an occasion usually marked with ceremonies. The keel in the days of wooden ships was the central timber that ran along the bottom centerline of the ship from the bow (front) of the ship to the stern (rear). It was the ship's backbone. In modern steel ships this timber was replaced by a central steel beam. In the days of sail, coins were placed between the keel and the base of the mast as a good luck gesture. That custom dates to the Ancient Greeks who intended the coins as insurance in case their ship sank. The coins would be used to pay Charon, the ferryman who carried the souls of the dead across the river Styx from the land of the living to the land of the dead. Today, commemorative coins are often distributed as part of the keel laying ceremonies.

But submarines don't have keels. Modern submarines, like the USS Idaho (SSN-799) aren't built "from the keel up" in one spot. Rather, they are constructed as modules and "assembled" at a selected shipyard. In the USS Idaho's case, that's the General Dynamics Electric Boat Division in Groton Connecticut. In lieu of a keel laying ceremony, the initials of the submarine's sponsor are welded into the steel hull. The USS Idaho's sponsor, Ms. Terry Stackley, wife of former Assistant Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) for Research, Development and Acquisition, wrote her initials with chalk on a steel plate, which a shipyard welder traced over. That plate with her surface welded initials on it was then welded into the steel hull on August 24, 2020.



Welder puts Ship's Sponsor Terry Stackley's initials on a plate.

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The next major event in bringing a naval vessel to life is its christening. At this event the warship is “officially” named. Again, this is a time-honored event that is filled with pomp and ceremony that sees flags, banners, speeches, and the breaking of a bottle of christening fluid over the bow. The earliest description of a christening of an American warship was the 44-gun frigate, USS Constitution (Old Ironsides) in Boston in 1797. Incidentally, the Constitution is the oldest commissioned US Navy vessel afloat. Constitution’s sponsor, a Navy captain, broke a bottle of Madeira wine over her bow. The first known woman to sponsor a Navy ship was Lavinia Fanning Watson, the daughter of a prominent gentleman from Philadelphia who christened an 18-gun sloop-of-war with a bottle containing a mixture of wine and water in 1846. Other liquids used for christenings have included, Scotch whisky, brandy, waters from a variety of rivers, California wine, cider, sea water, spring water and of course, champagne.

On March 16, 2024, at a dry dock in Groton, several dignitaries including Idaho Representative Russ Fulcher and Governor Little spoke about Idaho’s many connections to the Navy. Ms. Stackley gave a few remarks about her connections with the Navy and the honor of being the USS Idaho’s sponsor. She then ascended the platform and as she spoke the words, “I christen you the United States Ship Idaho”, she broke a bottle of water that she had gathered from Idaho’s Lake Pende Oreille, Redfish Lake, Payette Lake, and Henry’s Lake across the bow of America’s newest nuclear-powered submarine. This was a “dry christening”, meaning the boat did not slide into the water following the breaking of the bottle, so the only water involved was the Idaho water that splashed across her bow.



Governor Brad Little and U.S. Rep. Russ Fulcher watched as Terry Stackley Christened USS Idaho
(Photos by Rick Gilchrist)

Next will come the completion of her assembly and sea trials. Sea trials involve getting underway for a prolonged period during which her crew will check her out from “stem to stern”. They will ensure that every pump, compressor, generator, valve, gage, display monitor, alarm, and listening device is working. They will ensure that the reactor plant, steering and navigational mechanisms, communications equipment, weapons systems, stoves, refrigerators, freezers, and safety gear are all operational. In short, they will make sure that USS Idaho is ready to go to work.

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Next Comes - The Living:

After all discrepancies found during her sea trials are corrected, another ceremony will be held. This is called the Commissioning Ceremony and again will feature dignitary speeches and flags. Following the national anthem, pledge of allegiance, invocation and various speeches, the Commanding Officer, who will have already signed the documents transferring the boat from the shipyard to the Navy, will read his orders. Unlike the “dry christening”, the USS Idaho will be in the water and the crew will be standing in formation. Ms. Stackley, as the ship’s sponsor, will call out the sub’s name and order the crew to “Man our ship and bring her to life”. At that command, several things will occur: the crew will race aboard the USS Idaho, a bugle will sound “Attention”, the American flag and the Commissioning Pennant will be hoisted, the ship’s bell will ring, and the band will play the National Anthem or “Anchors Aweigh” as the Commanding Officer orders the Executive Officer to “Set the watch”.



U.S. Navy Commissioning Pennant

At the point when the Commissioning Pennant is hoisted, the USS Idaho (SSN-799) will become an “official” Navy command in her own right. That pennant is a long streamer, blue with seven white stars at the end that attaches to the flagpole and a single red and white stripe along the remainder of the pennant. It is flown from the time a U.S. Navy ship is commissioned until she’s decommissioned (for obvious reasons, this pennant, the American flag, and others are not flown when the submarine is submerged).

During the next 30+ years of the USS Idaho’s life as an attack submarine, she will travel thousands of miles under the world’s oceans, conduct rescue missions, deploy with carrier groups, launch missiles and torpedoes, survey ocean bottoms and coastlines, do surveillance along enemy coastlines, be involved in special operations with SEAL teams and conduct other yet unforeseen types of missions. As the admiral noted at her christening, she will be an “apex predator”, the most advanced submarine in the nation’s inventory.

Lastly – the Unknown Ending:

At the end of a successful career, the USS Idaho can look forward to decommissioning. This ceremony marks the end of the submarine’s active duty and honors her service. Like the other ceremonies listed above, there will be flags and speeches, notably a recounting of her non-classified accomplishments and awards, followed by a reading of orders as to her disposition. The Commanding Officer will order the crew to “Secure the watch”. The American flag and the Commissioning Pennant will be retired (taken down), and the crew will prepare to head to their next assignments.

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Disposition may take one of several paths. If USS Idaho is outdated technologically but still in good condition, she may be renovated like is being done for the USS Boise (SSN 764). If she's worn out and obsolete, the reactor compartment is cut out of the submarine and shipped to Hanford Washington for burial. The reactor fuel is ship to the Expanded Core Facility at the Naval Reactors Facility at the Idaho National Lab for research and reprocessing. The Nuclear waste is stabilized and temporarily stored awaiting the opening of the National Permanent repository. The remaining front and stern sections of the submarine are sold for scrap.

Or, she may become a museum piece. Some submarines like the USS Bowfin (SS-287) in Pearl Harbor and the USS Nautilus (SSN-571) in Groton are intact and open to the public, while others like the USS Hawkbill (SSN-666) in Arco, Idaho have only their sails on display.



Sail of USS Hawkbill (SSN-666) in Arco, Idaho (Photo: Wikimedia Commons)

Others like the USS Sturgeon (SSN-637) has its sail on display in Keyport, Washington and its control center in the Submarine Force Library and Museum in Groton.

As the USS Idaho moves into the next phase of its existence, our wish is that she has a long successful career, many productive patrols, and a safe record. As the old nautical toast goes, we wish her fair winds, and a following sea.



Editor's note: If you've missed School of the Boat articles in previous issues, look no further than the School of the Boat library on the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee website: <https://ussidahocommittee.org/school-of-the-boat>



44 North Vodka

44 NORTH'S COMMEMORATIVE USS IDAHO HUCKLEBERRY VODKA BATCH 799 IS AVAILABLE IN IDAHO STATE LIQUOR STORES

Committee members have long enjoyed 44 North's Mountain Huckleberry Vodka, with its uniquely Idaho ingredients of potatoes and huckleberries. 44 North Vodka Co -Founder Ken Wyatt, General Manager Dave McClaren, and Master Distiller Scott Probert have created a limited-edition, commemorative "USS IDAHO Huckleberry Flavored Vodka Batch 799." It is available in Idaho liquor stores.

The bottle and packaging, produced by Idaho design firm, Drake Cooper, is exquisite and features a submarine, the tagline, "Gem of the Fleet, and five stars to signify that SSN 799 is the fifth "USS IDAHO." 44 North Vodka is generously donating one dollar from each bottle sold to fund the USS IDAHO Commissioning Foundation's Dolphin Scholarship Fund, habitability improvements to the submarine, and commissioning expenses. To check availability in your town, visit .. <https://MixBlendEnjoy.com> ... an Idaho State Liquor Division website.

The USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee thanks 44 North Vodka Co-Founder Ken Wyatt and the 44 North team for creating such a beautiful commemorative "Batch 799." for us to enjoy.

Spread the word and pick up this limited-edition USS IDAHO Huckleberry Flavored Vodka while it is available in stores.



When Empty
This
Bottle Will
Be a
Treasure.



USS IDAHO Challenge Coin

Below is the current challenge coin designed by members of the crew. It is for sale on the committee website for \$30. We encourage every committee member to purchase and display one of these attractive coins. Visit— <https://ussidahocommittee.org/products> to browse and purchase these commemorative coins.



Hecla Silver Commemorative Coins

This commemorative 1 oz pure silver coin was minted by Hecla Mining Company using Idaho silver, and offered to the USS IDAHO Commissioning Committee as their donation to help raise money for the USS IDAHO Dolphin Scholarship Endowment. Coins are available on the website for \$125. Proceeds provide college scholarships to children of the USS IDAHO crew.





SHIP STORE SPECIALS

Spring sunshine means that — Everyone needs a hat!

BELOW is the “camo” hat we get from the ship’s store. It includes dolphins.



\$40.00 on the website
www.ssn799.org

USS IDAHO Camo Ball Caps

- Normally \$40. Now on sale for \$30



BELOW is the “common man’s” hat that all of us can wear—even friends and neighbors. When you are in the grocery store, you will be noticed! Please visit —

<https://ussidahocommittee.org/products> to see all of the USS IDAHO items we offer.

Show your USS IDAHO pride!

USS IDAHO Simplified Ball Caps

- \$20

