

IOWA NAVY AFLOAT

The State of Iowa, with five hundred miles of navigable borders, doesn't have a navy; but if all the fighting craft in the service of the United States bearing Iowa names were lined up in battle array they would make a formidable task force or combat fleet, or whatever it is with which the admirals and the captains do business. This Iowa-named navy has been right in the front lines contributing to the great victory of 1945, and every unit has kept afloat and with flag flying high.

The long way from the sweet cornfields of Iowa to the reeking harbors of the far east was no deterrant to the ambition of Iowa folks to contribute liberally to the personnel of the new two-ocean navy; also there is a goodly number of high ranking navy officers credited to Iowa, and of course, thousands of volunteers from Iowa on the various craft. This was not a matter of chance. Some day the full story of Iowa in the navy will be told. Only the headlines can now be given.

Iowa is entitled to list some firsts in this connection. An Iowa boy (Remey)¹ was the first rear admiral born west of the Mississippi; a distinguished Iowa senator (Grimes)² might well be called the second father to the navy; the first secretary of the navy from the west (Wilbur)³ grew up on the banks of the Des Moines river;

¹George Collier Remey, born in Burlington, Iowa, Aug. 10, 1841; graduate U. S. Naval Academy, 1859; served on South Atlantic Squadron; naval commander in Civil war; instructor and Commander, 1864-1897; Commodore, 1897; Rear Admiral, 1898; died in Washington, D. C., Feb. 10, 1928.

²James Wilson Grimes, born at Deering, N. H., Oct. 20, 1816; came to Burlington, Iowa, 1836; lawyer, member of 1st and 6th Legislative Assemblies and 4th G. A.; editor of Iowa Farmer and Horticulturist; governor of Iowa, 1854-1858; U. S. senator from Iowa, 1859-1869; died at Burlington, Iowa, Feb. 7, 1872.—Natl. Cy. of Am. Biog. Chap XI, p. 430.

³Curtis Dwight Wilbur, born at Boonesboro, Iowa, May 10, 1867; graduate U. S. Naval Academy, 1888; LL.D., University of Southern California, 1923; Occidental college, 1924; Chief Justice Supreme court of California, 1922-27, resigned; Secretary U. S. Navy, 1924-29; Judge 9th U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals since 1929, senior Circuit Judge since 1931.

a great Civil war commander (Walker)⁴ was sent as a cadet from Iowa; in all there have been at least twenty either Iowa-born or Iowa-appointed to attain the rank of real admiral, and the list includes names that stand at the very top.

Readers will recall the list published in these columns a year and a half ago, giving names of thirty-two units of the new navy, with names of Iowa places or persons, including the mighty battleship Iowa IV, the cruiser Des Moines, the frigates Burlington and Davenport, the destroyers Remy and The Sullivans, the attack transport Ansel Briggs, eleven destroyer escorts and fourteen cargo vessels. Quite an imposing fleet.

As Iowa people have been keeping the score they have wondered about the cruiser that was to bear the name of the capital city of the state. Well, the navy department reports what happened. After the keel was laid it was decided to give another name to the cruiser; but immediately thereafter contract was let for another which will bear the name Des Moines, and the builders report that they have orders to go right on with completion at their yards in Quincy, Mass. The Des Moines will be finished early in 1946.

The pride of Iowa, however, the bulldog of the navy, the first of the really big fighters, is the USS Iowa IV, but the time is not yet for the full story of her effective career. An immense crowd saw the Iowa off when put into commission on the national holiday, Feb. 22, 1943. Secretary Frank Knox called her "the greatest ship that's ever been launched by the American nation." She has been joined by others in her class. But the Iowa IV blasted an open sea lane all the way from the Mediterranean to the Japan sea, and despite that Tokyo four times reported her sunk, she had her flag flying over

⁴John Grimes Walker, born in Hillsboro, N. H.; emigrated to Iowa in 1847; graduate of Annapolis Naval Academy, 1856; served with Farragut and Porter in Civil war; chief of Bureau of Navigation, 1881; promoted to Commodore, 1889; commanded White squadron, 1889-1893 and Pacific squadron, 1894 and sent to Sandwich Island to protect American interests; commissioned Rear Admiral, 1894; president Nicaragua Canal commission and Isthmian Canal commission; died at Ogonquit, Maine, Sept. 16, 1907.

the 3,000 members of her crew for navy day in an American harbor after VJ-day.

The initial task for the Iowa was nearly a joy ride in a danger zone. She slipped down to Hampton Roads, took on board the president of the United States and a large party, and boldly struck across the Atlantic, where President Roosevelt paused at Casablanca and at Mediterranean ports, met the prime minister of Great Britain, and together they hastened to the historic conferences at Cairo and Teheran with the grand marshal of Russia and the generalissimo of China. Just to play safe, she hied off to Brazil and crossed the equator, returning to Dakar to pick up the president and his party.

"I have had a wonderful cruise on the Iowa, one that I shall never forget," said the president as he stepped safely back onto American soil, "and I hope I shall have another."

His last long journey over the salty seas was made pleasurable by the officers and crew of the Iowa.

SERVICE IN THE PACIFIC

Then away to the Pacific for the Iowa! From January 1944 to September 1945 she was where the fighting was hottest, except for one short run to the shop to fix a crooked shaft. Honored names are coupled with the Iowa in the story of the navy. She was with Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Halsey, Admiral Spruance, Admiral McCain and Admiral Mitscher. She was flagship for Admiral Hustvedt, an Iowa man, and for Admiral Badger and Admiral Lee. Still more her name will be mentioned in connection with historic events. Her commander advises:

"Carriers whose planes drove the enemy from position after position in the vast chain of Pacific islands, received support from the Iowa in action against Kwajalein and Eniwetok Atolls in the Marshall Islands in January 1944; against Tinian in the Marianas in February 1944; against Hollandia and other areas in New Guinea in

April 1944; against Palau and Woleai in the Caroline Islands in March and again in July 1944 and in the Palau Island campaign in September 1944; in the first air attack on Truk in February and again in April 1944; in the Marianas campaign during the invasion of Saipan, Tinian and Guam; against the Philippine Islands in the carrier strikes that swept the Japanese from the air in those islands and which supported the landings at Leyte and Luzon; against the Ryukyus and Formosa in the first attacks on the territory in preparation for the Philippine landings; and later against Southern Kyushu and Okinawa in the battle for the latter island during the winter and spring of 1945, and finally against the enemy homeland from the first Third Fleet drive upon Kyushu in June 1945, through the sustained attacks on Honshu and Hokkaido during July and August until the day of Japanese surrender.

"The Iowa's big main-battery guns have bombarded Mille Atoll in the Marshall Islands on March 18, 1944, Ponape in the Caroline Islands on May 1, 1944, Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas Islands on June 13, 1944, and the Japanese homeland itself at Muroran in Hokkaido on July 15, 1945, and at Hitachi, Honshu, two days later.

"The Iowa's record reveals distinctive sea action in the force which on February 16 and 17, 1944, made the initial sweep around Truk, netting several Japanese ships; in the historic two-day battle that became known as 'The First Battle of the Philippine Sea' in which the Iowa accounted for one enemy torpedo plane and helped down another while pursuing the Japanese fleet; in the 'Second Battle of the Philippine Sea,' chasing the enemy through the Strait of San Bernardino on October 25, 1944; in the initial force of United States ships to enter Sagami Wan off the coast of Japan at war's end, and, two days later, in the first group to anchor in Tokyo Bay and put ashore the original force of occupation."

The record is brief but it covers a lot of ocean. "Thus," says the navy chronicler, "the Iowa played her part in

the task which the navy undertook and completed so superbly." The enemy navy was eliminated, the sources of food supply were cut off, the airfields and bases were protected, and "finally, the Japanese, blockaded and helpless to strike back effectively without her fleet, exposed to the final assault by sea, air and land forces, surrendered. That is the grand tale of victory."

The Iowa was a part, and a very important part, of the vast allied sea force which included the King George V of the British navy, and Iowa's sister ships, the Wisconsin, Missouri, and South Dakota, and in fact vessels of every kind. The newspaper stories referred to at least 133 ships engaged in pouring missiles of unbelievably great weight into the factories and industrial cities of the eastern shore of Japan. Right past the troublesome islands and through the treacherous channels the mighty fighting force moved into Tokyo bay and knocked at the door of the imperial palace.

That the Iowa will be a conspicuous unit in the peace time navy of the United States is quite obvious. She was first of her class of monster battleships. Others have joined her in this class. She pulls down 52,000 tons when fully weighted, has deck and platform area equal to nine and a half acres of Iowa land, stretches out 887 feet long and 108 feet wide, the high tower is 185 feet above the keel, and she has a main battery of nine 16" guns, supplemented by a goodly number of dual purpose 5" guns and many 20 and 40 millimeter weapons.

THE HOMECOMING MISSION

The Iowa was brought back to American waters in time to dock at Seattle before the navy day celebration 1945. It fell to the lot of Capt. Charles Wellborn jr, to have the joyful task of the homecoming, and he it was who made the final gesture of fellowship to the State of Iowa by bringing to the state capital and entrusting to the people of Iowa the beautiful flag that had flown over the Iowa. Captain Wellborn is a Californian—where

all are cousins to the Iowans—an academy graduate of 1921 and of long and honorable experience. The Iowa has had three other captains—John L. McCrea, Allan R. McCann and James L. Holloway, all of whom were advanced to higher rank. The Iowa's executive officers have been Thos. J. Casey, George A. Leahy and Thos. J. Flynn. Among the 3,000 men who handled the great battleship in her first two years there were more than sixty who hailed from the state of Iowa.

The State Department of History and Archives has been endeavoring to secure, in addition to the flag of the Iowa, the navy model of the great fighting vessel to place beside the navy model of the second Iowa and the flags that flew over that vessel at Santiago harbor. These and other historic items, including the silver service of the second Iowa loaned by the secretary of the navy to the department, are seen and admired by the thousands of Iowans who annually visit the state's historical building.

Two other names appeared in the dispatches from the far east that stirred the blood of Iowans who do not affect indifference to the significance of historic events. Among the sixty-two destroyers reported by Admiral Nimitz in the great naval battle of Japan were the Remey and the Wadleigh. To many Iowans these names mean nothing, but they carry us back to the first chief justice of Iowa and his illustrious descendants in parallel lines. It is proper to now make record that might later be lost.

The U. S. S. Remey was launched at Bath, Maine, in July, 1943, and the U. S. S. Wadleigh, in August following, both of the destroyer class. The Remey was named for Admiral George C. Remey, an Iowa officer, native of Burlington, who retired after notable service in the Civil war, the Spanish war, commander-in-chief at the time of the Boxer rebellion, and fulfilling important duties in times of peace. He married the daughter of Charles Mason, first chief justice of Iowa. Admiral

Remey's daughter, Angelica Gear Remey, sponsored the ship at the launching. Also at this ceremony was three other of the children of Admiral Remey, namely, Charles Mason Remey, of Washington, Mrs. John Winthrop Wadleigh, of Jamestown and John Terry Remey of the U. S. navy.

The U. S. S. Wadleigh has a name that also runs back into Iowa, for Mrs. Wadleigh, daughter of Admiral Remey, is of a distinguished family of navy men. Her husband was an officer in the Marine corps and she has two sons in the navy. The Remey and Wadleigh families are both unusually well known in navy circles.

Of the experience of the U. S. S. Remey, we have some information in a letter to Chas. M. Remey from her commander, R. P. Fiala, written last February, saying:

"The Remey has been very busy since she left the states over a year ago, and now since the regulations permit, I can inform you of the engagements in which she took part up to a month ago. She was in the initial invasion of Kwajchun Atoll, then the Marianas, where she was principally concerned with Saipan and Tinian. (Our bitch had four pups while our guns were firing—they were promptly named Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Guam). After the Marianas we were in the Palau Islands invasion, then Leyte, then Mindoro, then Lingayan Gulf and Luzon; so you can see we have not missed a show. She participated in the battle of Suragio strait, being the first ship to fire her fish, save for the motor torpedo boats, and together with other ships of our squadron, is credited with having had a large share in the destruction of the southern Jap force. She and her crew have been very lucky, and altho repeatedly under enemy fire, all have come thru safely."

Both the Remey and the Wadleigh, which might be designated cousin ships, participated in the taking of the Japanese mainland and there has been no report of damage to either.

There is a fine oil portrait of Justice Charles Mason in the gallery of the state's historical building; also oil portraits of Admiral George Collier Remey and his wife, Mary Josephine Mason, and in a niche in the corridor a fine bust of the distinguished man, who was the first American admiral born west of the Mississippi river. Another man appearing in the family is a reminder that Gov. John H. Gear, whose portrait, as well as that of his wife, are in the Iowa gallery, was a nephew of Mrs. Judge Mason. Charles Mason Remey, of Washington, has long been a worthy patron of Iowa historical work and a warm friend of the State Department of History and Archives. He has also placed in the council chamber at Burlington a bronze bust of the admiral.

No doubt that when the returns are all in, good reports will be had from the Davenport, Burlington, Sullivans, Briggs, Allison, Cummins, Grinnell, Kirkwood, Meredith, Wallace, Weaver, Cousins and other vessels bearing Iowa names.

TIDE OF EMIGRATION

Our readers, many of them can have very little idea of the rapid tide of emigration that is now flowing into this state (Missouri). It exceed by far that of any former period. The road from St. Louis, by way of St. Charles, to the upper counties is literally filled up with teams, carriages, slaves, and other species of valuable property, bespeaking the wealth and character of the emigration.—*St. Louis Jeffersonian*, republished in (*Davenport Iowa Sun*, February 9, 1839.

NOTICE!!! We hereby caution any person or persons, against purchasing two notes of \$400 dollars each, executed by James Fowler, and signed by us when intoxicated, and we will not acknowledge or pay them

Ke-O-Kuck, X His Mark.

Op-pe-noose, X His Mark.

Josiah Sincet Wilner

Ke-O-Kuck's Town, June, 22, 1834

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