

# The Anchor

Nebraska Admirals Association

www.nebraskaadmirals.org

*The Commissioning of the USS Omaha, Scholarship winners, and more! Sail onward for highlights and memories of the Nebraska Admirals.*

**T**he Admirals have gone high tech! The January 2018 Board Meeting took place with admirals in port and at sea. Members attending the York meeting included Chief of Staff Gloria LeDroit, Chief Yeoman Janice Wiebusch, Quarter Master Eddie Biwer, Former Fleet Admiral Jack McSweeney, Public Affairs Officer Sue Dimmitt, and Scholarship Officer Dan LeDroit. Finance Officer Don Sluti, Historian Elaine Sluti, and Operations Officer Tony Martinez all



January 2018 Board Meeting in York

joined us on Skype. It

was reported that our Facebook page now has 387 followers. It is recommended that

every member also follow the Big Red Sub Club's Facebook page.

**Thoughts on Membership—Give out Admiralships! “Each one Reach one” is our goal. If we all do our part to grow our organization, it will continue to thrive.**

**T**he USS Omaha is the United States Navy's newest independence-class littoral combat ship. Omaha hosted a grand celebration to honor the commissioning of the city's namesake ship



Taking place exactly three years after construction began, the evening began with entertainment.



Papillion/LaVista South ROTC. Jeff Nichols, the Naval Science Instructor, pointed out that this group is the only naval ROTC in Nebraska. They were invited to take part in the official commissioning that took place in San Diego.



LTJG Ryan Smith, Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps located at Camp Ashland Army Training Center, brought two current high school members to the commissioning. Made up of students from various area high schools, this program helps students



Master of Ceremonies, Captain Rick Holdcroft, USN, Ret. opened the event with the Presentation of the Colors by the



develop the skills they need for a career in the military.



Members of the USS Omaha crew were in attendance. Selina Yang of Fresno, California, has been in the navy for two



years. She enjoyed visiting Omaha and

commented that this is the first time she has seen snow!

A video of the USS Omaha produced by NET within the *Nebraska Stories* series was shown. Copy and paste the following link to view the video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcobpuVITIQ>

Remarks were made by Mr. Michael B. Yanney, Omaha City Council President Ben Gray, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, Alan Kaplan of the Navy League of the United States National President, General John E. Hyten, Commander of the United States Strategic Command, Susie Buffett, sponsor of the USS Omaha, and finally,



Commander John Barrientos. In September of 2018, Commander John Barrientos will become Captain of the USS Omaha. A native of Brentwood, New York, Commander Barrientos was

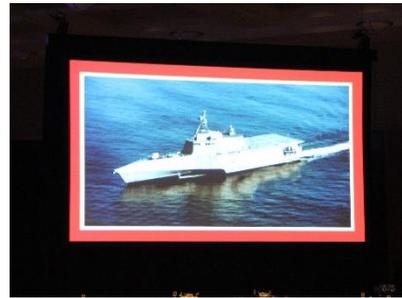


commissioned upon graduation from the University of Michigan in 2000 and has served in a variety of sea and shore commands.



After dinner and a dessert tartlet in the shape of the USS Omaha, musical entertainment was provided by Omaha Central High School's A Cappella Choir under the direction of Mrs. Lyn Bouma,

and then a vocal and symphonic wind ensemble from the University of Nebraska at Omaha under the direction of Dr. Washington Garcia.



### *USS Omaha statistics:*

- Builder**—Austal USA, Mobile, Alabama
- Launched**—November 2015
- Length**—418 feet
- Draft**—14 feet
- Speed**—40+ knots
- Range**—4,300 nautical miles
- Crew**—69
- Home Port**—San Diego, California

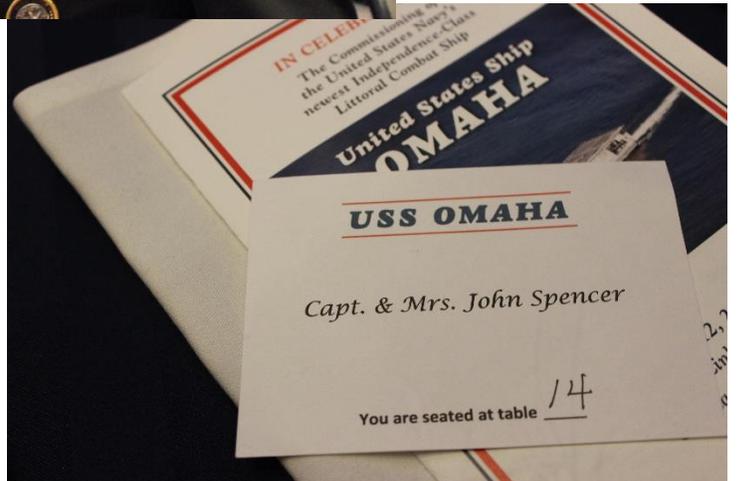




The USS Omaha will operate through 100 million square miles of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. It could be described as a military jet ski with a cannon on front and a flight deck on the back.

Captain John Spencer and his wife Brenda are based at Offutt Air Force Base. They have spent their married life in the navy. It was surprising to learn that he has nine naval uniforms.

Every ship has a sponsor. Susie Buffett joins Jackie Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt as ship sponsors. A sponsor is named by the Secretary of the Navy. This is a great honor, and she is now an official member of the navy.



The 32nd Annual Conference of the Nebraska Admirals Association was held on Saturday, April 7, at Merrick's Ranch House in North Platte with 12 Admiral members in attendance. The following is a summary of the officer reports:

According to Tony Martinez, the Operation Ornament program added Sutherland Public Schools 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders this year. It was noted that Elkhorn St. Patrick kept the entire school

in the chapel while their teacher, Mr. Kelly, walked the plank. In all, ornaments were sent to 360 USS Nebraska members, 100+ USS Omaha members, all four veteran's homes, and all military personnel overseas.

Dave Olson has agreed to replace Eddie Biber as Quarter Master. It was decided that Eddie and Jack McSweeney would both be given Voting Board Member Emeritus status.

Mayor Dwight Livingston welcomed the crew to the city. Although he grew up in Lincoln, he moved to North Platte in 1972 to become a police officer. He ran for mayor after retirement and is now serving in his second term. The mayor spoke about the positive aspects of the city including work being done downtown, The Spike, Buffalo Bill Ranch, and NebraskaLand Days.

Lisa Burke of the Lincoln County Visitors Bureau (LCVB) gave an overview of the success story and marketing strategy on Buffalo Bill Cody. The city experiences \$100 million in tourism spending each year, so no tax dollars are used to support the LCVB. They in turn give over \$250,000 back to the community in grants. North Platte has the world's largest railyard. In fact, 10,000 railcars pass through town each day. Buffalo Bill has a home here.

Marketing has changed a lot. The VB used to do a lot of print advertising, but they now utilize social media such as Facebook and YouTube.

A major goal is "Heads and Beds" with four focus markets—leisure travelers, convention events, bus markets, and sports. An activity that sounds fun is a



competitive Tank Race down the Platte River. The bureau's efforts are also aimed at developing attractions for local tourism and helping area businesses grow.

Gloria mentioned that the sailors loved North Platte. The Canteen put the city on the map. The Canteen was the only one during all of WWII. All servicemen who passed through the city were greeted and welcomed by the community.

Amanda Connick became a new Admiral by taking the pledge of the Good Life of Nebraska. Aaron Wyatt mentioned that he first learned about the Admirals from his Grandma who was selected to be an

Admiral after retiring from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Thanks to the generous contributions from members, our organization was able to fund two scholarships for UNL students majoring in Hospitality and Restaurant Management. Scholarship Officer for the last 25 years, Dan LeDroit recognized our scholarship winners. Daylinn Feik won the Gerald D. Decker Memorial Scholarship. It was created to recognize Gerald, a former Treasurer. She brought her dad, Larry, and sister, Crystal. Jessica Reed, the other \$1,000 scholarship winner

“Wicked”, attended the Jimmy Fallon Show and took part in the Hospitality Conference. Jessica currently works at Blooms and Bouquets creating floral centerpieces. She will be studying abroad in the fall.



brought her parents, Cheryl and Doyle.

Jessica Reed is a busy junior at UNL. In addition to her major, Jessie is completing minors in both business and Leadership and Communications. Jessica grew up on a farm in Holdrege. Not surprisingly, she was active in FFA in high school. On a study tour to New York City, she experienced that Broadway production of

Daylinn Feik from Spalding was the second scholarship winner. In addition to her major, Daylinn is pursuing an emphasis in Event Planning. Her goal is to one day own and operate her own event venue. Daylinn traveled to Oman for a hospitality study tour to gain a broader perspective within the tourism market. Some highlights of her trip included visiting the Burj al Arab hotel in the United Arab Emirates. Considered the most luxurious hotel in the world, she got to tour the \$45,000 a night Royal Suite! She also rode a camel, had an adventure ride on the desert sand dunes, took a sundowner cruise, swam in the Gulf of Oman, and visited a mosque (where she was required to wear a hijab.) Both girls

were very appreciative of the financial support of the Admirals.

Clear the Decks! New deckhands, Jessica and Daylinn, were presented with Admiral's certificates and fulfilled their "obligations" by walking the plank and taking the "pledge" to forever speak only of the "Good Life" in Nebraska...So help me Davy Jones."

To help fund next year's scholarships, the students solicited and assembled gift packages for the auction. Jessica collected Flippin' Sweet gifts cards and a coffee and



tea gift box from the The Mill while Daylinn contributed a summer basket and a movie basket for kids. A Nebraska license plate poster donated by the artist also garnered a great deal of interest. To all members who support this program, there is a growing list of Nebraska-educated young people who appreciate your altruism.

At the close of the meeting, members left for tours of Buffalo Bill Cody's, The

Golden Spike, and a view of the Union Pacific railyard.

In June, the Admirals and the Big Red Sub Club welcomed the USS Nebraska SSBN 739 Gold Crew and



the USS Omaha LCS 12 Gold Crew to the state. Visiting members of the USS Nebraska included Kevin David Heister, Rex Martin, Johnny Christensen, Reeno Farney, Cole Huber, and Christopher Brady. Visiting from the newly commissioned USS Omaha were Gold Crew members David Cooper, Julianne Abrigo, Joe Hanley, Jessica Nedzweckas, Jonathan Davis, and Colin Pieters.

Petty Officer Cole Huber has been a nuclear mechanic on the USS Nebraska for two years. Hailing from North Carolina, he stated that part of his job is to

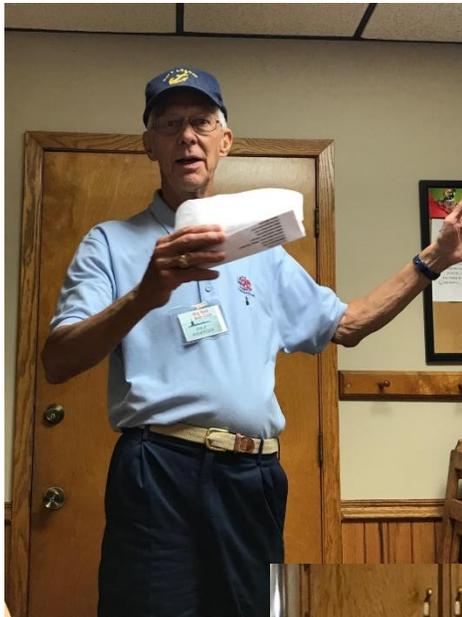


make water and regulate the air conditioning on the ship. Cole is married with one child.

Reeno Farney is an auxiliary mechanic from California. He is responsible for making oxygen and disposing of boat waste.



Both crews were honored by the Lake Manawa Sailing Association at a barbecue



at the Council Bluffs Country Club on June 18. Dale Andersen, Big Red Sub Club rep, headed

the event. He invited each sailor to share a bit about themselves.

Highlights of their visit include



interviews with NTV and KGFW radio in Kearney, tours of the Minden Opera House, Durham Museum, Woodmen Tower, SAC, and Joslyn Art Museum, as well as tickets to a College World Series game at TD Ameritrade Park.

Butch Kirland spoke on behalf of the US Navy League. He shared that the league was chartered in 2013. They give scholarships to JROTC students and also support the Ashland Sea Cadets. Butch himself served on seven naval ships.



Strat Com Rear Admiral Bill Houston spoke about both ships. As the submarine's Admiral, his team does the nuclear war plan for the country. The Pentagon is the main command post for the country with Strat Com as their backup. He stated that the Navy looks at other countries as





competitors. Russia is our main competitor, but China is also a concern because they want to be a super power. The knowledge Bill has gained from 28 years of military service was evident. In all, the evening was fun and educational!

Shown with the sailors above is DeAnna Anderbery's granddaughter. DeAnna is affectionately known as the "Cookie Lady" and her granddaughter has served as her "trainee" for two years. She sure looks cute all decked out in her red, white, and blue.



### **Important Notes:**

The Admirals will once again take part in the Opening Day Parade of the Nebraska State Fair in Grand Island. All members are invited to participate. The event will be Friday, August 24 at 1:30 p.m. with line up at 1:00 p.m. Arrive before noon to get in free. Look for us to be near the front; close to the ferris wheel.

In September, members of the Blue Crew will arrive in Nebraska for a tour of our "eastern shores" including Beatrice, Lincoln, Omaha, and Nebraska City. It is possible that crew members from the USS Omaha will join them.

***In the Navy there are no windows, walls or bathrooms.***

*The Navy has rich diction, but don't get it mixed up. Ships don't have walls; they have bulkheads. They don't have windows; they have portholes. Your left side is your port side and the right side is starboard. The mess deck is where you eat and the deck is where you walk. Above your head is an overhead, not a ceiling or roof. If you need a toilet, you will find that in the head, and the rack is where you sleep.*