



# **Navy League of the United States**

## **Navy Ship Commissioning Guide**

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## Introduction

The Navy League of the United States (NLUS) has long been recognized for its role as a supporter of U.S. sea service units and their families world-wide. One of the most important objectives is to enhance the morale of sea service personnel and their families. One means a NLUS Council accomplishes this objective is by supporting the various celebratory activities surrounding commissionings of ships and leading the Commissioning Committee ("The Committee").

It is traditional for a commissioning community to form and host activities incident to a commissioning ceremony, including a pre-ceremony reception in honor of the commanding officer, a post-ceremony reception, and other crew-related events/gifts. While the full commissioning community involves many stakeholders as described below, the Commissioning Committee fulfills the pivotal role in ensuring the traditional commissioning events receive the proper attention, and stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to participate in a successful commissioning weekend.

Although NLUS Headquarters supports commissionings, they are not directly involved in the activities of a Commissioning Committee and therefore, not responsible fiscally or otherwise for the activities of the Commissioning Committee or community.

This guide supersedes the NLUS "Ship Commissioning" Guide dated September 2015, which is hereby canceled. This guide was developed and is maintained by the NLUS Ship Commissioning and Adoption Committee.

Ship commissionings within sea services other than the U.S. Navy (U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Maritime Service, etc.) and non-ship "commissionings" (aviation squadron activations, shore command building dedications, etc.) are not directly supported by this guide, although similar principles and concepts apply. In the future, as the NLUS Ship Commissioning and Adoption Committee gains more experience with commissionings other than U.S. Navy ships, this guide may be expanded, or additional guides created.

To the extent possible, activities suggested in this Guide are in consonance with federal and service-specific ethics/gift-giving laws and regulations including, but not limited to:

- DoD Directive 5500.07-R, Joint Ethics Regulation (JER);
- DoD Directive 5500\_07, Standards of Conduct;

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- SECNAV Instruction 4001.2J, Acceptance of Gifts; and
- OPNAV Instruction 4001.1F, Acceptance of Gifts

However, the acceptability of ad hoc activities not discussed in this guide will certainly require a case-by-case assessment to verify the acceptability of the activity, or how to modify its support to comply with federal ethics/gift giving regulations.

\* NLUS does not endorse or promote commercial vendors named in this guide. They are listed merely for informational purposes only.

### Overview

The commissioning ceremony is one of the most important “traditional ceremonial milestones in the life of a ship for it represents the formal acceptance of the ship by the United States Navy and her entry into the active fleet.”<sup>1,2</sup> However, by long established custom and regulation, the Navy has neither the authorization nor funding to conduct traditional and celebratory events surrounding the commissioning ceremony.

A commissioning community recognized and supported by the Navy is formed to coordinate the complexities associated with the commissioning and fund items deemed desirable but not funded by the government. The community works with the ship's Prospective Commanding Officer (PCO)<sup>3</sup> and, Program Executive Officer (PEO)<sup>4</sup> and other appointed organizations responsible for the commissioning to help bring about meaningful and memorable commissioning events.

An NLUS Council may determine their desire to lead the commissioning community and establish a Commissioning Committee. The Commissioning Committee is fiscally responsible and will drive the events surrounding the commissioning. As determined appropriate by the committee, they will host receptions and social events associated with the commissioning but outside the Navy's authorized responsibility. The Commissioning Committee, typically established as a non-profit organization, or associated with an existing non-profit, normally provides funds to cover events/receptions/gifts, organize

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<sup>1</sup> SECNAV (SECNAVINST 5031.1 (series)), Ship Naming, Keel Layings, Christenings, Commissionings, and Decommissionings

<sup>2</sup> See [Appendix A](#) for the complete list of major ship ceremonial milestones.

<sup>3</sup> Commissioned ships are led by the Commanding Officer. Prior to the ship's commissioning, the term Prospective Commanding Officer is used, and the ship is referred to as a "Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU)".

<sup>4</sup> A Program Executive Office (PEO) is responsible for all aspects of life-cycle management of their assigned programs.

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and execute receptions deemed appropriate, and coordinates and communicates with the key organizations within the Navy.

Each commissioning is unique because of the ship class, location of the ceremony, commissioning date, namesake type (if any) and the organizations/activities involved.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this *Navy Ship Commissioning Guide* is to provide insights and information to a new Commissioning Committee. It addresses many topics that have been identified as being common with Navy commissionings regardless of the ship class, and location of the ceremony.

### **Key Players/Organizations**

The complexities associated with the commissioning require constant communication and coordination between the PCO, the PEO and the commissioning community through all phases of planning and execution. Key to the success of the commissioning ceremony is a strong, productive, and collaborative relationship between the PCO, PEO representatives, and the commissioning community. About a year prior to the commissioning, the Navy will form their team for the ceremony's execution. The Commissioning Committee should already be formed so as to be an active member during key planning phases. Also because of fundraising lead-time, the Commissioning Committee should usually form earlier than the government's team.

### **Program Executive Office (PEO)**

The cognizant PEO has financial and oversight responsibility for the execution of the commissioning ceremony but not the surrounding celebrations receptions etc.

Navy PEOs report to the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) for planning and execution of in-service support, and to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) for acquisition-related matters. There are four Navy PEOs associated with commissionings: Carriers, Ships, Submarines, and Unmanned and Small Combatants.

### **Commissioning Support Team (CST)**

Historically, NAVSEA has contracted for commissioning support<sup>5</sup>. The contract acquires the services of subject matter experts (SMEs) in planning and executing commissioning ceremonies. Often, these SMEs provide guidance to all organizations associated with the commissioning to include the Commissioning Committee. Each member of the CST has their specialty and focuses on specific aspects of the commissioning such as site logistics (e.g., seating, audio/visual needs, security, and transportation), ceremony invitations or RSVPs. Commissioning Committee subcommittee members should ultimately have a good working relationship with the CST SME in the subcommittee's focus area(s).

### **Ship**

The PCO serves as the traditional host of the commissioning ceremony and is responsible for planning and day-to-day execution. The PCO serves as the primary liaison with the designated commissioning community throughout all planning and preparation activities.

### **Commissioning Committee**

The Commissioning Committee, as a whole or as represented by a member or members, acts as a liaison between the committee, the ship, and other parts of the commissioning community for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a "link" for the continued fostering and growing of the relationship with the ship.

### **Ship's Sponsor**

The ship's sponsor plays an important role in the life of each ship and therefore is an official participant in the ship's ceremonial milestones, including the commissioning. The Sponsor, named by the Secretary of the Navy, is said to impart her spirit into the ship and crew.

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<sup>5</sup> McKean Defense is the current commissioning support contract awardee.

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## Ship Builder

Under contract and reporting to the PEO, the ship builder is a major stakeholder in the commissioning community. Additionally, the ship builder is responsible for the Christening Ceremony.

## Other Navy Organizations/Functions

The Navy will assign and invite other functional organizations to their commissioning meetings as the ceremony approaches, to include:

- Protocol. The assigned Protocol Office may be responsible with the PCO for planning and executing the Commissioning Ceremony. They may be charged with providing the official program, creating crew's book including biographies and pictures (if provided), and assisting with VIPs and platform speakers. They may provide advice to the Commissioning Committee regarding who will be attending the ceremony and aid in recommending who should attend the Chairman's Reception.
- Public Affairs. The assigned Public Affairs Office is responsible for promoting all aspects of the ceremony. They may provide advice to the Commissioning Committee on area news stations and assist in press releases.
- Judge Advocate General (JAG). The Navy JAG ensures Standard of Conduct and ethics requirements are met. They may provide advice to the PCO and Commissioning Committee regarding gifts to the ship and her crew.
- Navy Security. The assigned Security Office is responsible for planning and providing security for the ceremony. They may provide advice to the Commissioning Committee on base access, area access, transportation restrictions, and parking.

## Other Organizations

Other groups and individuals, such as public officials or organizations (e.g., Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce) and veterans' groups (e.g., National NLUS, local or namesake NLUS Council(s), American Legion, Submarine League, Veterans of Foreign Wars) may want to join the commissioning community.

### **Traditional Commissioning Events**

During "Commissioning Week" many activities, receptions or social events are held in preparation for the ceremony. Many are hosted by the Commissioning Committee and are in no way the responsibility of the Navy.

#### **Commissioning Committee Reception**

To further the relationship between the ship and members of The Committee, a small reception is held with crew and committee members. It is one way to kick-off all festivities during Commissioning Week and allow time to finish coordinating all the details of the ceremony and key guests. It provides the PCO and crew an opportunity to thank the committee members for their efforts.

Typically, the reception is held onboard the ship and funded by the committee. For smaller ships, the reception may be held off the ship, or on the ship in a ship's mess venue. If a ship's mess is providing refreshments or meals, the committee should ensure that the mess is reimbursed for their expenses associated with non-crew members.

#### **Dress Rehearsal/Media Day**

Led by the Navy, the ceremony's Dress Rehearsal is the final rehearsal of the ceremony. It may provide an opportunity for selected guests to preview the official ceremony and meet key VIPs. Typically, Media Day, led by the Navy is held in conjunction with the Dress Rehearsal. Attendees are those who are involved in the ceremony. Members of The Committee and their guests must have permission to attend.

#### **Sponsor's Lunch**

The Sponsor's Lunch honors the Ship's Sponsor and introduces her to the crew and her ship. As the tradition states, her spirit and presence will guide the ship throughout its service. Special gifts are presented to her from the ship and The Committee. The event is hosted by the Commanding Officer and held onboard the ship (due to size, however, submarines and smaller ships may select another venue). A tour of the ship may be given to attendees. The Committee usually funds the event. Attendees include the Sponsor's guests, Wardroom Members and perhaps the Committee Chairman. If a ship's mess is

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providing refreshments or meals, the committee should ensure that the mess is reimbursed for their expenses associated with non-crew members.

### **VIP Ship Tour**

Committees may be afforded a special VIP tour of the ship. Arrangements must be made with the PCO on date/time and how many may attend. Attendees for the VIP Ship Tour include members of The Committee, donors and other special guests. The ship may provide tours to attendees of the ceremony immediately following its conclusion; however, the post-ceremony tour may be shorter and require a wait time.

### **Optional Crew, Crew Family and Namesake Events**

Activities for the crew, their families, or those associated with the ship's namesake may be hosted by the Commissioning Committee. Such events will reinforce The Committee's relationship with the crew, enhance the experience of the Plankowner crew, and promote the significance of the commissioning, the ship, and the Navy. Events could include picnics, banquets, dinners for watch standers who are unable to attend other formal events, etc. These events may occur at times other than commissioning week and in locations other than the commissioning.

The acceptability of these non-traditional, ad hoc activities may require a case-by-case assessment to verify the acceptability of the activity, or how to modify its support to comply with federal ethics/gift giving regulations.

### **Chairman's Reception**

This event, hosted and funded by The Committee, is a tradition that offers guests from the military, business/industry, significant donors, and political communities, along with family and friends, the opportunity to toast the impending commissioning. The Commissioning Committee Chairman and the PCO are provided an opportunity to recognize and thank the organizations and individuals who have supported the commissioning events. Attendees have an opportunity to present gifts to the ship. Most consider this The Committee's keystone event.

### **VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast**

The VIP Breakfast or Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast, hosted and funded by The Committee, provides customary refreshments for those having a role in the official commissioning ceremony and other guests. During the VIP Breakfast, the CST member will conduct a final briefing to platform guests and other VIPs on what to expect during the commissioning ceremony and post-commissioning events relative to the ceremony. Upon completion, they are transported to the commissioning venue for seating.

### **Commissioning Ceremony**

The commissioning ceremony is an official, tradition-rich ceremony funded and executed by the Navy. As it is an official ceremony, all attendees are managed by the Navy. The ceremony will include several speakers. The guest speaker will typically be a high ranking civilian or military official. Other speakers may include namesake location-specific elected officials, namesake family, elected officials, or associates, or those associated with the ship's construction such as the president of the shipbuilder and PEO.

After all speakers have concluded, a commissioning pennant is hoisted, and the Commanding Officer orders the first watch to be set. A looking glass will usually be presented to the first Officer of the Deck. The Ship's Sponsor will speak to the crew and give the order to "Man our ship and bring her to life." Upon that call, the crew will run up the brow and line the ship facing the audience, while radars start turning, lights flash, alarms, and horns sound.

### **Post-Commissioning Reception**

Following the official commissioning ceremony, the Commissioning Committee hosts and funds refreshments for all guests. Attendees include all that attended the ceremony. Off-Site Ceremony Viewing and Reception Committees, especially those with a distant namesake locality, may host an event in the namesake locality to remotely view the ceremony and celebrate her acceptance to the Fleet. The Navy typically broadcasts/streams the ceremony via various media.

### Commissioning Committee

The Commissioning Committee is established at the request of the Navy. It may be a committee based on an affinity with the ship (e.g., namesake city/state, hometown hero for whom the ship is named) or located in the commissioning city. Approximately 90% of Commissioning Committees are formed under the leadership of a NLUS Council. As The Committee is formed it must recognize that the commissioning is a process of activities and not a single event. The Committee must have a plan that lists roles and responsibilities, as well as a process for resolving problems. The Committee must be determined to provide a “seamless” approach to the commissioning. It should have a clear understanding of the commissioning, its objectives, and activities and establish the requirements necessary to complete its objectives.

### Overview

A Commissioning Committee forms to plan and execute activities surrounding the commissioning ceremony and ends when all commitments to donors are made, bills are paid (including residual funds dispositioned), and the relationship with the ship transitioned. For decades, NLUS members have been a part of various commissioning communities and their experience is available to new committees. Points of Contact and Lessons Learned are reflected in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#), respectively. During the operation of The Committee (i.e.; throughout the process and before disbanding), it is requested that lessons learned be gathered and submitted in the format provided in [Appendix D](#) to the NLUS as an aide to future Commissioning Committees.

Committees have formed anywhere from years in advance of the planned ceremony to at the last minute. Finding dedicated volunteers, raising funds, and building a relationship with the ship takes time. However, if formed too early, the volunteers may lose interest or have little to accomplish; those formed at the last minute may result in a small budget and curtailed activities.

*Typically, a committee is formed about the time of the ship’s Keel Laying. This allows committee members to attend formal ceremonies and meet the crew as they are beginning to be assigned. Fundraising should start about two years in advance of the ceremony and become more successful once the date and location of the ceremony is approved.*

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A committee may endeavor to build a relationship with the ship as crew members are assigned with “Namesake Visits” (see [Appendix E](#)), visits to the ship, etc. Typically, Navy relationships expand when the date and location of the ceremony is approved<sup>6</sup>, momentum of the commissioning ceremony picks up, and the Navy begins its careful planning for the ceremony. Although The Committee is not an organization within the Navy, The Committee is able to influence some decisions and provide valuable information to the Navy about the area selected for the commissioning (e.g., major events, facilities, logistical or security challenges). As The Committee funds many activities and items to make the commissioning ceremony a memorable event, the Navy often considers The Committee’s desires, but may have other considerations.

Execution of The Committee’s plans begins as decisions are made by the Navy on where and when the commissioning will take place. Sometimes, these decisions are made less than a year before the commissioning and may change. Committees must be flexible and have venues for events on standby.

Ultimately The Committee will disband and pass the relationship with the ship to another committee/organization (an adopting NLUS Council is most common). Commissioning Committees should help identify NLUS Council(s) that could potentially adopt the ship. The Committee should work with the adopting Council to ensure a seamless transfer of support from the NLUS, as detailed in the section “[Transition to Adoption](#)” below.

[Appendix W](#) provides a guide to forming a commissioning committee.

### Fundraising Responsibilities

Typically fundraising is one of the major functions of the Commissioning Committee; without funds, the celebratory events and gifts do not occur. Like a wedding, the events and gifts in celebration of a commissioning, may be extravagant or simple and may be managed in terms of number of attendees, cost per person/item, and number of events/gifts. The final arrangements should be based on the dollars raised, because The Committee is responsible for all costs.

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<sup>6</sup> Sole authority to approve the site and date of the commissioning is SECNAV (SECNAVINST 5031.1 (series)), Ship Naming, Keel layings, Christenings, Commissionings, and Decommissionings.

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A target budget should be established to help determine the fundraising goal (see [Appendix F](#) for an example). Most expenses are items within The Committee's control and come late in the process. Therefore, if fundraising goals are not met, adjustments may need to be made. For instance, the Commissioning Ceremony Reception's price per person could be decreased from \$12/person to \$2/person avoiding over \$20,000 of expense.

Fundraising plans should actively target donations-in-kind to support the various events, and even some gifts to the crew or ship. Donations-in-kind are an excellent way to avoid The Committee having to pay for every expense with funds raised. For example, if the namesake state, city, or region is infamous for a popular beverage, the producer of that beverage may be approached to provide their beverages (maybe exclusively) at various events. Same would be true for iconic confectioners, garment producers, growers (apples, potatoes, peaches, etc.), meat producers, bakers, and so on.

### Responsibilities as a Non-Profit

To assist in fundraising, The Committee may choose to become a standalone non-profit organization<sup>7</sup> or if a NLUS Council associate with an established non-profit (e.g., Naval League Council).<sup>8</sup> The National NLUS Group Exemption can be used to provide tax exemption for eligible councils.<sup>9</sup> Classification as a public charity under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) provides some benefits such as: decreased cost of bulk mailing, tax-deductible donations or contributions for donors, sales tax exemption in some States, access to public/government grant monies, and personal liability limitations. The IRS Determination Letter, provided by IRS if The Committee applies directly or from the NLUS Council or National, may be requested by donors. [Appendix X](#) provides a guide to forming a 501(C)(3) Non-profit Corporation in support of a U.S. Navy Ship Commissioning.

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<sup>7</sup> IRS Publication 4221pc "Compliance Guide for 501 (c)(3) Public Charities" and the NLUS Workshop "Council Tax Exempt Status" provides guidance for application for exemption.

<sup>8</sup> For example, The Committee could be designated as a committee within the Council, via a Council Board Resolution that states The Committee can take action without first obtaining approval of the full Council Board of Directors. In any case, the parent NLUS Council Board should establish appropriate governance controls over their Commissioning [Sub-]Committee to help ensure propriety. For example, the Council Board may assign a member to the Commissioning Committee solely for oversight or include them in their internal audit process at some increased frequency.

<sup>9</sup> Application procedures are in the NLUS Operations Manual, Past III, Section IV-G.

### **Fiscal Responsibilities**

The Committee, when formed, is responsible for maintaining the public trust, keeping transparency with donors, using funds appropriately and, basically, protecting the Navy and donors. Careful attention to the applicable laws and regulations of the state where The Committee is formed are necessary to meet this responsibility. Committees with independent tax exemption must file annual tax returns (IRS Form 990), as well as meet all state and local requirements for non-profits. Committees should also make clear in their fundraising efforts that any funds left over from the commissioning may go to continued support for the ship after it enters the fleet or to an adopting Council for their on-going support to the ship.

The NLUS Council Compliance Guide, may be found at on the NLUS web site under Council Resources. It is an excellent starting point for verifying that The Committee's activities meet federal, state, and local laws and regulations, but more current, authoritative, and juristic-specific directives should also be consulted.

### **Standards of Conduct/Ethics Responsibilities**

A standard of conduct provides The Committee and their volunteers with an understanding of what is required of them, enabling them to be transparent, open and accountable. Committees have people with different approaches and styles, and who meet infrequently; but are still expected to know what to do and how to react to situations that will allow The Committee to run well. Committee members should be guided in their resolve to avoid conflicts of interest, not accept benefits from third parties, and promote the success of The Committee to attain its purpose. If The Committee is considering non-profit status, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is now requiring conflict of interest policies for organizations applying for status as a non-profit. NLUS policies are available for use directly or as templates (Standards of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, and Disclosure). The three crucial areas that each member should strive to maintain are accountability, honesty, and openness.

The ship and her crew must follow the Navy's Standards of Conduct, which limits their ability to receive gifts<sup>10</sup>. Exceptions, however, are made for traditional and customary events such as ship commissionings; and typically the provider of the gift must request

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<sup>10</sup> DoD Directive 5500.07 (series), Standards of Conduct.

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permission for the gift to be accepted by the ship or crewmembers. [Appendix G](#) provides a template for a gift acceptance letter.

### Organization and Functions

The organizational structure of the Commissioning Committee will vary depending on the experience, dedication, available time and expertise of its volunteers. The width and breath of the organization is also dependent on its ability to attract enthusiastic volunteers. There are four key positions/functions: Chair, Chief of Staff, Treasurer and Fundraising Subcommittee Chair (see separate section below for the Fundraising Chair). As with the subcommittees, these positions may lie in one person or in multiple people.

The Chair provides overall leadership and organizes The Committee.

The Chief of Staff stands-in for the Chair when unavailable and should be a member of all subcommittees. The Chief of Staff also oversees the day-to-day operations of The Committee and keeps thing "on-pace."

A Secretary should be appointed. In smaller committees, it is often the same person as the Chief of Staff. The Secretary records the actions of The Committee. Depending on the size and governance structure of The Committee, the Secretary may be involved to varying extents with all formal external communications by subcommittees.

The Treasurer maintains accurate records of the financial activities of The Committee. Depending on the size of the budget, a Finance Subcommittee may be established with the Treasurer as its Chair. Duties include establishing controls for the funds, managing a non-profit bank account, collecting money, balancing accounts, writing checks as authorized, reporting balances to The Committee (e.g., Budget to Actuals), and providing tax information to donors (see [Appendix V](#)). The Finance Subcommittee/Treasurer, along with other key members of The Committee, should build and regularly refine the budget and be especially attune to the financial achievability of original commissioning event/gift plans over time.

It is recommended to use the same spreadsheet format for recording donation information as the CST uses for ceremony invitations to reduce "rework." Additionally, having an email address and phone number for donors is helpful.

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The Committee should establish its mission, goals and objectives (see [Appendix H](#) for an example) to help bind their actions and influence donors. They should consider the ship's name and the needed involvement with the namesake, the ship class and associated shipbuilding companies, location of the ceremony and the state/local government, namesake [person] families, families of crew members, and their morale.

The Committee may consider including Honorary Members of The Committee. While they may not be expected to participate in the day-to-day management of The Committee, their inclusion may assist in fundraising or other goals. For instance, if a ship's namesake is a State, designating the Governor of the State as an Honorary Chair may provide closer relations between the namesake State and the ship.

Typical subcommittees include:

### **Fundraising Subcommittee**

The Fundraising Subcommittee is responsible for obtaining funds for The Committee's activities. Developing the "case for support" provides The Committee with the basis for donor communications (e.g., letters, brochures) and "asks." [Appendix I](#) lists many points that could be of value. Typically, Committees establish a range of "donor levels" (see [Appendix J](#) for examples) which underlies requests for support.

Whatever form the "ask" takes (e.g., email, letter, "Go Fund Me," Amazon Smiles), finding potential donors is a key challenge. The shipbuilding and defense community usually can be counted on for donating (see [Appendix K](#)). A written request is normally needed for defense contractors (see [Appendix L](#) for an example). Many Committees, in addition to direct requests, will hold events to raise funds ([Appendix M](#)) and/or ask for donations in-kind to support the various events (e.g., wine, beer, soft drinks, apples, pizza, candy).

\*For additional fundraising assistance you may use services such as: <https://www.classy.org>

### **Gifts Subcommittee**

The Gifts Subcommittee plans, and arranges for presentation, appropriate gifts for the ship and her crew, the Ship's Sponsor, donors, and invited guests. [Appendix N](#) provides a list of traditional gifts.

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Most ships designate a “Plankowner” gift (e.g., plaque, belt buckle, fleece jacket) to be given to every member of the ship’s commissioning crew. [Appendix O](#) explains the concept of a Plankowner. Plankowner gifts are designed by The Committee and could reflect the ship’s namesake and/or crest, ship’s mission, or other uniqueness deemed appropriate. Given the typical dollar value of the gift, it usually needs to be included in the Gift Letter.<sup>11</sup>

One tradition is the commissioning coin. It memorializes the date the ship is officially placed in commission and accepted as an in-service unit of the Armed Forces. The coin salutes all who supported or serve on the vessel the day it is commissioned. The commissioning coin is separate and distinct from either the christening coin or the Ship’s own challenge coin. It is unique in that it is struck for the date of the commissioning and not to be replicated. The population or numbers of coins minted for the commissioning is usually limited to a finite number determined by the ship and Commissioning Committee working together. After the commissioning date, the coins are usually not reordered.

To continue to shape the future, supporters (at an appropriate minimum level of support) should be recognized with a commissioning coin for their contributions and support. Individuals chosen to receive the coins are being recognized for their contributions of time and resources to the commissioning. The coins should be given out individually. These coins provide tangible evidence that the holder supported or attended the event. Ownership of the coin represents the identification, receipt, and measurement of social and financial support for the commissioning.

For the ship and her crew to be able to accept a gift, it must be approved for acceptance in accordance with the Standards of Conduct<sup>12</sup>. This includes gifts from The Committee, donors and guests, and crew members who attend the receptions. The request is addressed to the PCO who will forward it internal to the Navy as appropriate to receive authorization to accept the gift. [Appendix G](#) provides an example.

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<sup>11</sup> See SECDEF Memo, Waiver of Application of the Standards of Conduct Prohibition on Acceptance of Gifts from Outside Sources for Enlisted Personnel, E-6 and Below, for the Limited Purpose of Gift Acceptance from Charitable and Veterans Service Tax-Exempt Organizations, May 16, 2013.

[http://ogc.osd.mil/defense\\_ethics/resource\\_library/gift\\_exception\\_waiver\\_for\\_enlisted\\_members.pdf](http://ogc.osd.mil/defense_ethics/resource_library/gift_exception_waiver_for_enlisted_members.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> DoD Directive 5500.07 (series), Standards of Conduct.

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The Committee may elect to provide their donors with recognition items to help encourage their donations such as hats, honorary Plankowner certificates, tickets to receptions, etc.

Committees have used a variety of suppliers for plaques, coins, etc. (see [Appendix P](#)).

\* NLUS does not endorse or promote commercial vendors named in this guide. They are listed merely for informational purposes only.

### **Social/Receptions Subcommittee**

The Social/Receptions Subcommittee plans the Committee-hosted receptions such as the Chairman's Reception, VIP/Platform Briefing Breakfast, Crew Banquet, and Post-Commissioning Reception. This subcommittee initiates, plans, and carries out activities during the receptions. Because the commissioning date and location could be decided less than a year before the commissioning and may change, Committees must be flexible and have venues for events on standby. The NLUS "Event Planning Guide," found on the NLUS web site, may be a valuable resource for this subcommittee.

Reception expenses are normally based on the number of attendees and the per-person cost. While the names for invitations for Navy VIPs are controlled by the assigned Protocol Officer and/or the CST, the number of attendees the Navy may provide is controlled by The Committee. Similarly, the numbers for the ship's crew and their families should be agreed with the ship. For events between the ship and The Committee (i.e., Crew Banquet, Commissioning Committee Reception), The Committee should work directly with the ship.

- Sponsor's Luncheon. Although The Committee may fund the Sponsor's Luncheon, all other arrangements are provided by the ship. The Committee may set a dollar amount for the ship.
- Chairman's Reception. The Chairman's Reception, hosted and funded by The Committee, varies in size from 300 to 1,000 guests, with an average size of 400. Typically, the reception is a cocktail party (coat and tie) with heavy appetizers and an open bar lasting about three hours. About midway through the reception, there should be a short program (45 minutes) emceed by The Committee's Chairman. The purpose of the program is to allow the Commanding Officer and Committee Chairman to thank major donors and recognize the importance of the Commissioning Ceremony. Gifts from donors and others (e.g., namesake city/state/family) may be presented during the program. Tables for display of these gifts should be provided. Attendance at this reception is by invitation only.

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- VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast. The VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast, hosted and funded by The Committee, ranges in size from 100 to 400 guests. However, the Navy uses this event to assemble all platform guests and participants to ensure all are present and ready. Other attendees may include members of The Committee, military and government officials, major contributors, and their guests. During the event, typically after all guests depart for the commissioning ceremony, platform participants are briefed on the ceremony and their role. The Navy will provide transportation to the commissioning site for all attendees.
- Post Commissioning Reception. This reception is typically the largest cost due to the number of attendees. It also is the least structured and provides an opportunity to have the lowest cost per person. It can range from a Popsicle to a full lunch, and typically is themed to the namesake.<sup>13</sup> The CST will be able to provide an estimate of attendees at the ceremony within 30 days of the event. Many do not partake in the provided refreshments as they queue for ship tours. [Appendix Q](#) provides additional insights.

### Invitations Subcommittee

This subcommittee coordinates names/addresses of invitees for various commissioning events with the responsible host of the event. Close coordination with the CST is required for the ceremony invitations, and necessary for the Chairman's Reception and VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast invitations. Consideration must be given to what was offered for the Donor Levels, availability of seating at the official ceremony, and other desires of The Committee.

- Sponsor's Luncheon. The ship is responsible for the guest list, mailing invitations and receiving RSVPs.
- Chairman's Reception. Invitations to the Chairman's Reception are The Committee's responsibility. The invitation could be a formal invitation sent in the mail or by email. Many email recipients, including all DoD, *cannot* receive HTML or PDF formats in email, so The Committee must consider having all information in email body text format. Invitations should be extended to members of The Committee and their guests,

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<sup>13</sup> Past examples of Post Commissioning Reception: USS Milwaukee served Wisconsin bratwurst with local beer and root beer while a polka band played lively music. USS Illinois served state-raised pulled pork with locally crafted beer and wine, well-known locally made cheesecake and ice cream. USS Washington's reception was hosted by Starbucks with ice coffee and pastries. USS Abraham Lincoln's reception had an Abe Lincoln portrayer mingling among the attendees.

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commissioning City/State Government Officials and Community Leaders, the Ship and their guests, the ship's operational chain of command, and Donors.

Additionally, the CST/Navy will normally request 125 people attend which includes: Sponsor and her guests (25), Ship (15+), Platform Participants and guest (50), Distinguished Guests such as Congressional representatives, Senior Department of Defense and Government officials, Flag Officers, Senior Executive Service, PEO and Program Officer (50). Because the CST cannot provide addresses to The Committee for their requested attendees, if coordinated, the CST will mail an invitation in the ticket package to those guests when they have RSVP'd to the Commissioning Ceremony.

For *only* these invitees, their ceremony ticket package will include the Chairman's Reception invitation (and VIP Breakfast if appropriate) in addition to the other standard materials. The printing of the Chairman's Reception invitation and postage for the ticket packages is funded by The Committee.<sup>14</sup> An RSVP card may be included with RSVPs going to The Committee. [Appendix R](#) provides an example.

- VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast. Invitations the VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast are The Committee's responsibility and are normally a subset of those that attend the Chairman's Reception. It is customary for members of The Committee and select donors to be invited, however, the intent is for the official Navy personnel and their distinguished guests to gather prior to the commissioning ceremony. The invitation could be a formal invitation sent in the mail or by email. Many email recipients, including all DoD, *cannot* receive HTML or PDF formats in email; The Committee must consider having all information in email body text format.

The CST/Navy will normally request 125 people attend, normally identical to the Chairman's Reception, which includes: Sponsor and her guests (25), Ship (15+), Platform Participants and guest (50), Distinguished Guests such as Congressional representatives, Senior Department of Defense and Government officials, Flag Officers, Senior Executive Service, PEO and Program Officer (50). Because the CST cannot provide addresses to The Committee for their requested attendees, if coordinated, the CST will mail an invitation to those guests when they have RSVP'd to the Commissioning Ceremony.

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<sup>14</sup> The Navy cannot pay for postage if it contains invitations to events not open to the general population. Keeping the tickets to the ceremony and the special invitations is traditional and a convenience for the recipient. Only one "ticket package" is sent and will contain both the Chairman's Reception and VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast invitation as appropriate. Additionally, an RSVP card(s) may be included.

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For *only* these invitees, their ceremony ticket package will include the VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast invitation (and Chairman's Reception if appropriate) in addition to the other standard materials. The printing of the invitation and postage for the package is funded by The Committee<sup>15</sup>. An RSVP card may be included with RSVPs going to The Committee. Additionally, the CST may be able to assist.

- Navy Commissioning Ceremony. The Commissioning Ceremony itself is an official Navy event and therefore the Navy controls and manages the invitations to the ceremony. When the location of the commissioning is determined, The Committee must first coordinate with the CST to determine the number of tickets that are available. The location of the ceremony dictates many considerations such as security, access, availability of seating, and other restrictions.

The Invitations Subcommittee provides the CST their list of invitees which should include: members of The Committee and their guests; key NLUS Members (national and local); Shipbuilding Community principals; state and local government officials in the shipbuilding location, commissioning location, and/or namesake location; donors; retired Flag Officers; business and community leaders; area and operational military and their guest; and the general public (many Commissioning Committees set up a website allowing the general public to request an invitation via The Committee).

Early in the process The Committee should determine how they will classify their guests. For instance, will all retired Flag Officers be invited to all events, or Captains and above, or all retirees? These pre-planned groups could be used for further clarification on the invitation list.

The Committee should submit the majority of the names at least 100 days before the ceremony. If/when additional names need to be included, they should be submitted weekly until about two weeks before the ceremony or as specified by the CST. Names after that time will need to be handled via the CST's "Will Call".

The Navy coordinates the "Washington Guests" (e.g., Navy Flag Officers, Marine Corps General Officers, Presidential Appointees, Department of Defense VIPs, Program Executive Office, Embassy, Congressional (National Level), Ship's Sponsors, Namesake Family as required, Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Ship).

The Navy's Commissioning Coordinator will provide the desired format for the invitation list submission. It will include, prefix, last name, first name, middle initial, suffix, government branch, classcode, title, company, street address, city, state, zip

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<sup>15</sup> IBID.

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code, organization. Most categories are self-explanatory except classcode, which indicates the applicable events and seating ticket color. [Appendix S](#) provides details on classcode, seating ticket colors and the Navy's two step mailing process. The assigned classcode, which the Invitation Subcommittee assigns when submitting The Committee's guests, has a monetary effect to The Committee as it allows people to attend the Chairman's Reception, VIP Breakfast. Care must be taken by the subcommittee to ensure proper assignment of classcode (typically L3A or L3B for donors, and white for people requesting tickets via the website).

It is recommended to use the same spreadsheet format for recording donation information as the CST uses for ceremony invitations to reduce "rework." Additionally, having an email address and phone number for donors is helpful.

- Post Commissioning Ceremony Reception. Invitation to participate in the post-ceremony reception is implied with the invitation to the ceremony; no additional invitation is needed.

### Public Affairs Subcommittee

This subcommittee disseminates information relevant to the activities of The Committee. They manage relations with the media (public and Navy), develop needed collateral materials (e.g., business cards, briefings, brochures), and develop/manage The Committee's website, Facebook page and/or other social media. [Appendix I](#) and [Appendix U](#) provide insights. For the Commissioning Ceremony, this subcommittee will coordinate with the official media coverage, video/streaming of the ceremony, webcast (if available) and local TV coverage. In addition to the ship's designated Public Affairs Officer/Organization, The Committee can coordinate with other organizations like the Navy Community Outreach Group. The NLUS Public Relations Guide, found on the NLUS web site, can guide the subcommittee.

### Security Subcommittee

The Security Subcommittee will work with the Navy security forces and provide information to The Committee's guests on road network and parking on commissioning day, emergency medical treatment and evacuation, and water and comfort facilities at site.

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### **Ship Liaison Subcommittee**

The designated Ship Liaison will provide the ship a single point of contact to The Committee for routine matters. The PCO should be consulted regarding high priority or sensitive matters that he/she want brought to his/her attention.

### **Transportation/Parking Subcommittee**

The Transportation Subcommittee coordinates transportation of guests to the commissioning site and coordinates with the Security Subcommittee on parking areas. Use of bus transportation may be extended to active-duty personnel and their families. Transportation to the VIP/Platform Breakfast should be considered. Transportation between the VIP/Platform Breakfast and the Commissioning Ceremony should be discussed/coordinated with Navy (as they may provide transportation to the ceremony). The CST has an expert on parking, permits, liability, etc. If the committee elects to fund busses to take people to/from the ceremony, arrangements must be arranged for the VIP Breakfast who must have approved (generally Red) tickets.

## **Miscellaneous/Considerations**

### **Non-Profit Mailing**

The U.S. Postal Service has a procedure that grants bulk-mailing non-profit permits (indicia) from local post offices. The basic requirements are: (1) the non-profit must be tax-exempt (hold a Determination Letter from the IRS); (2) each mailing must have 200 or more pieces or must exceed 50 pounds; (3) political statements are prohibited; and (4) advertising is prohibited.<sup>16</sup> More information may be found at: <https://pe.usps.com>

### **Naval Covers**

Over the years, many Commissioning Committees have produced commemorative envelopes for the commissionings to be used for various ends. Some are sold to attendees and sold by mail to collectors. Some Committees also made them available to VIP's and crew members. The Universal Ship Cancellation Society or USCS ([www.uscs.org](http://www.uscs.org)) is a non-profit philatelic organization whose members are among those who collect envelopes

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<sup>16</sup> Therefore, resist the temptation to advertise for large donors in any material mailed in this manner, or to include promises of such in donation request letter.

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that represent naval ships. Pictorial postmarks designed by the USCS are produced through the U.S. Postal Service. The USCS makes the postmarks available for both hand-back service on the date of the event and via the mail for thirty days after an event. Most covers include an envelope design specific to the event. A collection of past Naval Covers can be found at the virtual Naval Cover Museum ([www.navalcovermuseum.org/](http://www.navalcovermuseum.org/)).

Steps involved include creating a design for the envelope and the cancellation, as well as having them printed, stamped, and then cancelled by a USPS facility. Note that the cover must have enough space for the postmark and that it does not stamp over the artwork. For ships with postal facilities, the commemorative stamp cancellation is done onboard. For others, it can be done at a local servicing post office and, sometimes, at a second geographically significant USPS facility such as namesake state or city.

### **Ship and Base Access for VIP Tour**

Many committees arrange a tour of the ship prior to the commissioning ceremony. As security varies at locations, The Committee must ensure that all invitees meet security requirements. For most class ships, attendees may need to be U.S. citizens. Additionally, invitees must meet medical and physical constraints which the ship will provide.

### **Sale of Memorabilia Items/Emblematics**

Commissioning Committees often offer branded merchandise for sale. While this will not raise substantial revenue, it provides name recognition for The Committee and is useful as mementos to persons contributing to events and fundraising. Merchandise can be sold on The Committee's web site or in-person at events. If selling on the web, a method for processing credit cards, as well as arranging for shipping, will be needed. PayPal and Square are services that are widely used. Card readers for cell phones and iPads are available that allow processing transactions in-person at events. The key events of Keel Laying, Christening, and Commissioning can produce significant sales.

The ship's crew may also be selling merchandise; The Committee should coordinate efforts or use their inventory.

*The Navy owns the trademark to many symbols and emblems commonly associated with the Navy and its ships. Examples include the emblems of all Armed Services, the ship's emblem/crest, certain Armed Services marketing taglines, warfare insignia, etc. Private organizations can resell items containing trademarked property only if they have been*

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*purchased from a licensed property user (such as the Ship's Store). Larger ships with a formal Ship's Store that is part of the Supply Department are usually aware of this requirement and are already licensed to sell protected emblematics. However, smaller ships, such as submarines may not be aware of this requirement. Care should be taken to obtain merchandise for resale only from licensed manufacturers/resellers.*

There is a wide variety of companies that sell marketing materials (See [Appendix P](#)).

### **Committee Program at Commissioning**

The Navy will produce a program booklet for the commissioning. The Committee may be asked to provide a short article and/or history about the namesake or previous namesake ships, ship's crest (if applicable), as well as coordinate a congratulatory letter. The Committee may also be asked to provide input about the ship's crest.

Some Committees have produced their own booklets either in addition to or in place of the Navy's program booklet. Faircount Media Group ([www.faircount.com](http://www.faircount.com)), has produced these booklets for several previous ships. Typically, a contract is made between The Committee and Faircount Media Group detailing responsibilities and the booklet is produced and delivered to the commissioning site at no cost to The Committee (Faircount receives payment from the advertisements sold). *This booklet is subject to Navy intellectual property restrictions.*

Other Committees have published their booklets through other means that may result in a more customized booklet tailored to the experiences of that ship.

### **Youth Groups**

Some Committees have involved a variety of youth groups to participate in events surrounding the commissioning or "hometown visits." They may be able to provide the Color Guard, escort attendees and handout programs. Such groups include: Sea Cadets, NJROTC units, Young Marines, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc.

### **Transfer of Key Ship Personnel Prior to Commissioning**

Shipbuilding is a long and involved process. If there are significant delays, key ship personnel may transfer prior to the commission. While unfortunate, The Committee must

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build new relationships and help the new Commanding Officer, Executive Officer and Command Master Chief/Chief of the Boat understand current issues and past decisions.

### Transition to Adoption

Prior to the commissioning, The Committee should consider how support to the ship and crew will continue through the ship's lifetime. The preferred means is for a NLUS Council or team of Councils to adopt the ship. Information regarding ship adoptions is provided in the NLUS Sea Service Unit Adoption Guide available from the NLUS web site. The guide also contains a section on joint adoptions by multiple Councils emphasizing well delineated responsibilities, preferably spelled-out in writing. The NLUS Guide for Council Partnerships may also be useful.

There may be a logical namesake relationship to a NLUS Council; and if not, The Committee could look to Councils at or near the ship's future homeport to adopt the ship. Ideally, a decision is made regarding adoption prior to commissioning so the adopting Council may be introduced to the Commanding Officer and invited to the commissioning celebrations. In some cases, the Council that took the lead on the The Committee adopts the ship prior to commissioning to provide optimal continuity. In the case of a ship named after a State, or a large city with multiple Councils, the Region President will usually assist in the selection of a lead adopting Council for the unit and if assistance from other Councils is required/desired.

The transition should be methodical and cover past history and any future promises/intentions that may have been expressed by The Committee. The transition planning should include:

- Who will serve as the Adopted Unit Liaison (AUL). Ideally, it would be someone from The Committee who has already established a good working relationship with the crew;
- A full list of points of contact for the unit to include the command leadership team, the designated ship points of [first] contact, and the Family Readiness Group (FRG)<sup>17</sup> President;
- Recurring awards that have been regularly given (SOY, JSOY, BJOY, etc.), and the plan for continuing them;

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<sup>17</sup> See OPNAV Instruction 1754.5C, Family Readiness Groups.

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- What gifts or ad hoc purchases have already been presented to the ship to help avoid future duplication;
- Planned namesake trips/visits, including which Navy entity will fund and organize them (usually Navy Office of Community Outreach (NAVCO) or Commander, Naval Education and Training Command (CNETC) if a visit to NROTC or NJROTC units is planned) and what role in them the NLUS can play;
- A rough, unclassified timeline for the ship's future post-commissioning operations, post-shakedown availability, change of homeport (if applicable), and first deployment to help better plan support;
- If the ship has any special requests or ad hoc needs for future support; and
- If the Commanding Officer would like to provide the adopting Council a periodic "Captain's Log" for publishing in Council media.

And most importantly, the transition of funding to support on-going adoption activities in the out-years after The Committee is disbanded should be carefully planned. Usually, some funds go into a scholarship trust and some funds go into an account earmarked for general support to that specific ship. It is a best practice for the scholarship funds to be provided to another associated non-profit that already administers scholarships for a named scholarship for the crew and/or their families. Examples would include the Navy League Foundation (\$50,000 endowment minimum), the Anchor Scholarship Foundation for Navy Surface Ships, and the Dolphin Scholarship Foundation for Navy Submarines. *In all cases, it is strongly recommended that the financial transition be fully-documented in a signed agreement delineating the intended uses of the funding, and by whom, especially if another non-profit or stand-alone foundation is involved.*

Notify the NLUS Ship Commissioning and Adoption Committee ([fieldservices@navyleague.org](mailto:fieldservices@navyleague.org)) when the adoption is complete so the list of Adopted Ships and Units on the NLUS website can be updated.

### Commissioning Beer/Wine

Some Committees have found brewers or vintners willing to make special products to commemorate commissionings. The label designed by the producer must not refer to a ship. Beer labels require approval by the federal government's Alcohol Tax and Trade Bureau ([www.ttb.gov](http://www.ttb.gov)), who will in turn seek approval from the Navy if it refers to a specific ship; and the Navy will not approve such a label. However, wine labels are not subject to

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the same restriction and vintners have relabeled wines specifically to commemorate commissionings and christenings.

### **Volunteers and Tax Deductions**

Members of The Committee may be able to deduct various personal expenses or expenditures on their personal income tax.

### **Nametags**

Consider providing nametags for The Committee. They can range from a paper tag to more involved collectors' items such as a lapel pin made as a miniature replica of the commissioning coin with the words "Committee Member" embossed at the bottom. Nametags are an engagement tool that not only announce the bearer's name, but also are an invitation for friendliness and provide an additional sense of accountability.

### **Host Hotel**

Some Committees have provided hotel information to their donors and invitees to events. It may be possible to receive a "courtesy block" of rooms and special pricing.

### **Event Insurance**

Committees have arranged event insurance (one-day insurance) or were required to obtain event insurance based on the venue. Event cancellation insurance is also available.

### Appendix A: Navy Ship Milestone Events

The Department of the Navy recognizes five ceremonial milestones in the life of each ship of the United States Navy.<sup>18</sup> They are:

Ship Naming. Once a ship's name is approved, a small, informal naming ceremony may be conducted to commemorate the naming of a new ship class or ships of special significance. The ceremony is often conducted at a place and time that is related to the ship's namesake.

Keel Laying. The keel laying is a major milestone in the life of the ship. It symbolizes the point at which the ship begins to transition from concept to reality. The first pieces of steel are ceremonially welded together and authenticated with the initials of the sponsor (if available) or a designated dignitary.

Christening. The christening ceremony marks the traditional transition of the ship from the new construction phase to its comprehensive tests and trials phase--moving from a mere hull number to a ship with a name and spirit. The ceremony and its supporting activities are largely focused on the Ship's Sponsor and a celebration of the namesake's heritage. Normally, the christening ceremony is held concurrently with the ship first entering the water.

Commissioning. The commissioning ceremony is one of the most important traditional ceremonial milestones in the life of the ship, for it represents the acceptance of the ship by the Navy and her entry into the active fleet.

Decommissioning. The decommissioning ceremony is the last of the major ceremonial milestones, for it marks the end of the ship's active service life. Conducted for every United States Ship (USS), decommissioning ceremonies are typically modest, but can be significant for ships with noteworthy combat records or special national significance. Some decommissionings, especially for nuclear powered warships, are preceded by an Inactivation Ceremony marking removal from the list of active ships, but remaining a commissioned vessel while critical deactivation work, such as nuclear fuel removal, is completed.

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<sup>18</sup> SECNAVINST 5031.1C, Ship Naming, Keel Layings, Christenings, Commissionings, and Decommissionings dated 29 September 2009.

### Appendix B: Experts and Points of Contact (POCs)

Fortunately, many Navy Leaguers have participated in multiple commissionings and are willing to provide assistance to those who ask. In the future, a current and more up-to-date list of people may be found on the NLUS website.

At publishing of this guide, several experienced Navy Leaguers have offered to help:

**Maryellen Baldwin**, 757-486-7654, [meb.NL@earthlink.net](mailto:meb.NL@earthlink.net). Maryellen, Executive Director of the Hampton Roads Council, has personally worked-on more than 25 commissionings and assisted perhaps twice that many Commissioning Committees. She's been involved in numerous classes of ships commissioned in the Hampton Roads area.

**Linda Ermen**, 757-486-7654, [navyleague@earthlink.net](mailto:navyleague@earthlink.net), is also at the Hampton Roads Council.

**Bobby Ferguson**, 847-217-5717, [bvferguson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bvferguson@sbcglobal.net). Bobby was Chairman of the NLUS Ship Commissioning and Adoption Committee and has personally supported various LCS commissionings in the Marinette, WI area.

**Hal Pierce**, 251-604-0613, [capthal@bellsouth.net](mailto:capthal@bellsouth.net).

**Carrie Barnecut**, 510-351-8107, [cbarnecut@sonic.net](mailto:cbarnecut@sonic.net).

**Richard Hoffner**, [pauscg@gmail.com](mailto:pauscg@gmail.com), is a member of the Universal Ship Cancellation Society ([www.uscs.org](http://www.uscs.org)), a non-profit philatelic organization which designs the pictorial postmarks and produced through the U S Postal Service is available to discuss the process.

**Ernie Connor**, USN (ret.), [ernieandmo@connorfam.org](mailto:ernieandmo@connorfam.org), was involved with 10 commissionings, both USN and USCG, serving in all positions from basic member through chairman.

### Appendix C: Lessons Learned

In the future, a current, more detailed and up-to-date list of “Lessons Learned” may be found on the NLUS website.

| Subject            | Recommendation  | Commissioning |
|--------------------|---|---------------|
| Commissioning Site | <p>The site is decided upon by the Navy with primary input from the PCO. While the Navy may hear what a Commissioning Committee has to say, the committee should focus its effort on informing and educating the PCO about the various alternatives before he/she makes their recommendation to the PEO.</p> <p>Of note, Nuclear Powered Warships (NPWs) are invariably commissioned on the East or Gulf Coast so that they can return shortly thereafter to the building yard for a post-construction availability. NPWs are also constrained to a relatively-small number of berths authorized by Naval Reactors, none of which are very far inland or within major population centers.</p> | Various       |
| Fundraising        | The charitable giving points of contact for corporate sponsors change frequently. Appendix K should be supplemented with the most recent contact list provided by the most recent Commissioning Committee of the same ship class.   | Various       |
| Fundraising        | Corporate sponsors still provide 60 to 80% of the funds raised for a commissioning. Unless the ship has a well-known and popular namesake, do not spend too much effort or seed cash trying to attract a broad range of individual donors.  | Various       |

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| Subject                          | Recommendation  | Commissioning  |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Honorary Chairpersons            | Don't pursue lots of big names as Honorary Chairpersons just for their name recognition. There is a balance to be struck between an overzealous Honorary Chairperson who tries to hijack the entire committee for their political agenda, and a long list of Honorary Chairpersons who do nothing to support The Committee. Ideally, seek-out a select few Honorary Chairpersons who will appropriately use their connections to open doors and actually help sell the committee's mission, but leave the nuts and bolts to The Committee itself. | Various        |
| Invitations                      | For Corporate Sponsors who are receiving multiple "gratis" invitations to the official ceremony, care needs to be taken to understand to whom the invitations will actually be given. For example, the sponsor may use them as incentives for employees of all levels, possibly resulting in a junior welder attending a reception with the CNO if not carefully screened.  | Various        |
| Invitations                      | Committee members, when requesting their number of tickets, should ask for two additional tickets. This allows the committee to easily help those that forgot tickets.  | USS Washington |
| Local NLUS Council Participation | When a ship with a namesake, and with a namesake-derived Commissioning Committee, is commissioned in a major Fleet concentration area with a local NLUS Council, The Committee should coordinate with the local council to leverage their existing relationships, domain knowledge, and possibly even their facilities. Also ensure their principals are invited to appropriate commissioning events.   | [Withheld]     |

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| Subject                | Recommendation  | Commissioning    |
|------------------------|---|------------------|
| Media                  | If The Committee wants the Navy to make DVD copies of the commissioning ceremony for further distribution, they must be ordered in advance from Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS).  | USS NORTH DAKOTA |
| Media                  | If The Committee wants the Navy to hire someone to make their own videos of all commissioning-related events, be careful to have a clear understanding of the number of cameras, microphones, and staff who will make the recordings. The "lowest bidder" may only intend to place an unattended camera pointed at the podium such that sound quality is poor and other spots of interest (the chorus, band, ship, audience, etc.) during the ceremony are not shown. | USS NORTH DAKOTA |
| Namesake Person Family | The ship's namesake's family is typically invited to most major events. In some cases, they may feel uncomfortable attending these social events, or there could be a language barrier. Care needs to be taken to best accommodate their desires without embarrassing them. If the language barrier is significant, the U.S. Navy has in the past provided translators.   | [Withheld]       |
| Ship's Sponsor         | It is not uncommon for the designated Ship's Sponsor to be somewhat of a "political" appointment such that, due to their age (either very young or very advanced), or general disinterest with the military, they require early engagement and extra attention. The committee chairperson, or possibly a well-situated Honorary Chairperson, may need to devise a strategy to help energize a challenging Ship's Sponsor.   | [Withheld]       |
| Tickets for Ceremony   | CST will host a "Will Call" for last minute issues. It could be in a host hotel and only for day of the ceremony. It could also be hosted on the base.  | USS Washington   |



### Appendix E: Namesake Visits

Principal members of the ship's prospective crew are likely to attend one or more "namesake visits" to give the crew a greater appreciation for the person, geographic location, etc., for which their ship is named. The visits also give committee members more opportunities to interact with and get to know crewmembers.

Namesake city or state visits by crew members are a desirable and legitimate activity. OPNAVINST 5726.8B (Outreach: America's Navy) states in Section 6.b.(5):

*"Namesake Visits. [COMUSFLTFORCOM and COMPACFLT shall] Ensure commanding officers of ships with geographical namesakes maintain active engagement with namesake cities to include: (a) Relationship with elected leadership (mayors, governors, Members of Congress, etc.) and other influencers; (b) At least four crewmembers from each ship make a namesake crew visit each year as respective budgets support; and (c) Local media outreach in coordination with NAVCO."*

Often, the Fleet will fund the trips, in which case the agenda will be driven primarily by the Navy Office of Community Outreach (NAVCO). The Committee should still play a vital role in suggesting venues and activities and acting as a liaison between the Navy and local civic and business leaders.

Commander, Naval Education and Training Command (CNETC) also has some funds available to let operational units visit NROTC units to give presentations and meet midshipmen. Such visits can also be co-opted to target an NROTC unit in the namesake location, and include other namesake visit activities.

Another travel mechanism that may be pursued to bring crew members *originally from* the namesake location back home for a visit is one of the hometowns recruiting programs. BUPERSINST 1150.1C, Policies and Administrative Procedures for the Hometown Area Recruiting Program (HARP), Officer Hometown Area Recruiting Program (OHARP), Bluejacket Hometown Area Recruiting Program (BJHARP) and Senior Minority Assistance to Recruiting Program (SEMINAR), details the different programs and criteria for usage.

Namesake visits may be funded by The Committee, which would require a gift request letter. Getting crewmembers introduced to the community is important to grow support for the ship and the commissioning. Suggested activities for namesake visits are discussed

## **Navy Ship Commissioning Guide**

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in the Sea Service Adoption Guide. While it contains a small section entitled "Namesake Visits," many of the other activities listed in the section entitled "Suggested Council Services to the Unit" may also be of interest to the crew or Committee.

## Appendix F: Budget Example

| USS Washington Commissioning Committee Budget (August 2017) |             |      |          |          |           |           |          |            |               |             |
|---|-------------|------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Item  | 2015        |      |          | 2016     |           |           | 2017     |            |               | Grand Total |
|   | # Uni       | 2015 | Cost/U   | # Uni    | 2016 Tot  | Cost/U    | # Uni    | 2017 Tot   |               |             |
| <b>PROGRM</b>   |             |      |          |          |           |           |          |            |               |             |
| 1 Commissioning Committee Reception: Food/Drink             |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 75     | 108      | \$ 8,100   | \$ 8,100.00   |             |
| 2 Chairman's Reception (Friday): Food/Drink                 |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 80     | 488      | \$ 39,040  | \$ 39,040.00  |             |
| 3 Valet Parking   |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1,000  | 1        | \$ 1,000   | \$ 1,000.00   |             |
| 4 VIP Breakfast: Food/Drink                                 |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 26     | 178      | \$ 4,628   | \$ 4,628.00   |             |
| 5 Commissioning Reception: Food/Drink                       |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ -      | 2500     | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 6 Guest Transportation to Chairman's Reception              |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 500      | \$ 500     | \$ 500.00     |             |
| 7 Wandering Strings Donation                                |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 600      | \$ 600     | \$ 600.00     |             |
| 8 Ice Sculpture   |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 1000     | \$ 1,000   | \$ 1,000.00   |             |
| 9 Sea Cadets Donation                                       |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 1000     | \$ 1,000   | \$ 1,000.00   |             |
| 10 Table Toppers  |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 400      | \$ 400     | \$ 400.00     |             |
| 11 Small Ensemble   |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 900      | \$ 900     | \$ 900.00     |             |
| 12 Chairman's Reception Room Set Up                         |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 3800     | \$ 3,800   | \$ 3,800.00   |             |
| 13 Shipping wine  |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 25     | 10       | \$ 250     | \$ 250.00     |             |
| 14 Guest Transportation to VIP Ship Tour                    |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 1,300  | 1        | \$ 1,300   | \$ 1,300.00   |             |
| 15 Guest Transportation to Commissioning                    |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 10,800 | 1        | \$ 10,800  | \$ 10,800.00  |             |
| 16 Plankowner Plaque (Crew)                                 |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 40     | 150      | \$ 6,000   | \$ 6,000.00   |             |
| 17 Commissioning Coin (Crew)                                |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 5      | 150      | \$ 713     | \$ 712.50     |             |
| Plankowner Beltbuckle                                       |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 20     | 150      | \$ 3,000   |               |             |
| 18 Sponsor's Luncheon                                       |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 30     | 0        | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 19 Sponsor's Gift   |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 500    | 1        | \$ 500     | \$ 500.00     |             |
| 20 Crew / State Relationship Travel                         | \$ 1,200.00 | 2    | \$ 2,400 | \$ 2,000 | 0         | \$ -      | \$ 2,000 | 2          | \$ 4,000      | \$ 6,400.00 |
| 21 BOPNL / Crew / State Relationship Travel                 | \$ 2,000.00 | 0    | \$ -     | \$ 2,000 | 0         | \$ -      | \$ 2,000 | 3          | \$ 6,000      | \$ 6,000.00 |
| 22 Commissioning Program Shipping                           |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 500    | 1        | \$ 500     | \$ 500.00     |             |
| 23 Crew Book  |             | \$ - |          |          |           |           |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 24 USS Washington Gift                                      |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 5,800  | 1        | \$ 5,800   | \$ 5,800.00   |             |
| 25 Washington State Reception                               |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 75     | 300      | \$ 22,500  | \$ 22,500.00  |             |
| 26 Dolphin Scholarship Endowment                            |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 84,000 | 1        | \$ 84,000  | \$ 84,000.00  |             |
| 27 WA State Funded Gift to Individuals                      |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 41,000 | 1        | \$ 41,000  | \$ 41,000.00  |             |
| 28 Ship Business Cards                                      | \$ 1.00     | \$ - |          |          |           |           |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| <b>FUNDRAISING</b>  |             |      |          |          |           |           |          |            | \$ -          |             |
| 30 Corporate Request Letter                                 | \$ 1.00     | 0    | \$ -     | \$ 1     | 0         | \$ -      |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 31 Individual Request Letter                                |             | \$ - |          | \$ 1     | 0         | \$ -      |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 32 Postage - Corporate Letter                               | \$ 0.49     | 0    | \$ -     | \$ 0     | 0         | \$ -      |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 33 Postage - Individual Letter                              |             | \$ - |          | \$ 0     | 0         | \$ -      |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 34 Commissioning Coin                                       |             | \$ - |          | \$ 5     | 300       | \$ 1,425  |          | \$ -       | \$ 1,425.00   |             |
| 35 Lapel Pin  |             |      |          | \$ 3     | 500       | \$ 1,500  |          | \$ -       | \$ 1,500.00   |             |
| 36 Honorary Plankowner Certificate                          |             | \$ - |          | \$ 8     | 163       | \$ 1,304  |          | \$ -       | \$ 1,304.00   |             |
| 37 Honorary Plankowner Plaque                               |             | \$ - |          | \$ 40    | 158       | \$ 6,320  |          | \$ -       | \$ 6,320.00   |             |
| 38 Highest Level Donor Gift                                 |             |      |          | \$ 100   | 3         | \$ 300    |          | \$ -       | \$ 300.00     |             |
| 39 Commemorative Program                                    |             | \$ - |          | \$ -     | 0         | \$ -      |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 40 Ball Caps  |             | \$ - |          | \$ 20    | 150       | \$ 3,000  |          | \$ -       | \$ 3,000.00   |             |
| 41 Flag   |             |      |          |          |           | \$ 4      | 50       | \$ 200     | \$ 200.00     |             |
| 42 Tax Letter & Thank you letter                            |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 700      | \$ 700     | \$ 700.00     |             |
| 43 Postage - Thank you                                      |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 0      | 700      | \$ 343     | \$ 343.00     |             |
| 44 Post Commissioning letter/picture                        |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 1      | 300      | \$ 300     | \$ 300.00     |             |
| 45 Postage - Post Commissioning                             |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 0      | 300      | \$ 147     | \$ 147.00     |             |
| 46 Donation Request Materials - Corp                        | \$ 3.00     | \$ - |          | \$ 3     | 0         | \$ -      |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 47 Donation Request Materials - Ind                         |             | \$ - |          | \$ 3     | 0         | \$ -      |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| <b>MANAGEMENT and GENERAL</b>                               |             |      |          |          |           |           |          |            | \$ -          |             |
| 49 Website  | \$ 200.00   | \$ - |          | \$ -     | 1         | \$ -      | \$ 200   | 1          | \$ 200        | \$ 200.00   |
| 50 Paypal Fees & Stripe Fees                                |             | \$ - |          | \$ 500   | 1         | \$ 500    |          | \$ -       | \$ 500.00     |             |
| 51 Volunteers Thank yous (Commissioning Committee)          |             | \$ - |          |          |           | \$ 40     | 30       | \$ 1,200   | \$ 1,200.00   |             |
| 52 Volunteer Travel (Local)                                 | 1           | \$ - |          | 1        | \$ -      |           |          | \$ -       | \$ -          |             |
| 53 Committee Stationary and Business Cards                  | 1           | \$ - | \$ 500   | 1        | \$ 500    |           |          | \$ -       | \$ 500.00     |             |
| <b>54 TOTAL</b>   |             |      | \$ 2,400 |          | \$ 14,849 |           |          | \$ 250,421 | \$ 264,669.50 |             |

## Appendix G: Gift Acceptance Request Example

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Company/Organization Letter Head   |   |
|  | Company/Organization<br>Address<br>Date |
| Commanding Officer<br>PCU WASHINGTON<br>UNIT 100351 BOX 1<br>FPO AE 09583  |   |
| Dear Commander Cavazos,  |   |
| (Company/Organization name) would like to present a gift to the USS Washington (SSN 787) in recognition of her commissioning. If approved, the proposed gift will be presented by our representative at the USS Washington Chairman's Reception in October 2017.   |   |
| The proposed gift is (describe the gift, including the quantity, condition, material and approximate size and weight, value and intended use(s). Explain the significance of the gift to the Navy. Provide a picture of the gift or website it can viewed and receipts in this letter.) The fair market value of the gift has been estimated at \$XXX. |   |
| The proposed gift item has not been solicited by the Navy or Department of Defense personnel. There are no conditions or implicit assumptions under which the gift is being made, and there are not expected to be any unusual or large expenses incurred by accepting the gift.   |   |
| (Company/Organization name) (does/does not) conduct business with the US Navy. (Provide all pertinent facts concerning the donor's present and prospective business relationships with the Department of the Navy and any documentation relevant.)   |   |
| My POC is (name). (He/she) may be reached at (email address) or (telephone number).  |   |
| Please approve (Company /Organization name) to give this gift to USS Washington (SSN 787).   |   |
| Sincerely,   |   |
| ..   |   |

### Appendix H: Mission, Goals, Objectives Examples

The Committee should establish its mission, goals and objectives to help bind their actions and influence donors. The first example is an example for a Committee whose ship is named for a state.

#### State Namesake

##### Mission

- Provide a memorable Commissioning Ceremony for the ship's officers and crew, the U.S. Navy, the ship's namesake, the State of \_\_\_\_\_, and the men and women who created the ship.
- Objectives
- Provide a memorable Commissioning Ceremony for USS \_\_\_\_\_
- Raise awareness within the State about the construction of \_\_\_\_\_ and her commissioning.
- Promote lasting relationships between the State of \_\_\_\_\_ and the crew of USS \_\_\_\_\_.
- Finance traditional commemorative events and activities associated with these objectives by

The second example illustrates objectives for working with a state's legislature.

#### USS Hawaii (SSN 776) Commissioning Committee Application to the Legislature

Mission – A Commemoration Task Force will operate in collaboration with the State of Hawaii, local Chambers of Commerce and Visitors Bureaus in Hawaii, federal officials, Hawaii DOD, Commander Pacific Fleet, USS Bowfin Memorial, Pearl Harbor Historic Partnership members, community groups, business entities and interested individuals to provide educational opportunities before and after the Commissioning Ceremony.

Goal #1 – Commission and commemorate the USS Hawaii

- Support the sea services and the USS Hawaii ohana
- Contribute to the understanding of the State of Hawaii as a national and global leader in high technology, defense and the maritime industry
- Develop symposium, implement activities and evaluate

Goal #2 – Coordinate and establish public and school partnerships

- Improve science and technology knowledge
- Encourage high technology development

Goal #3 - Provide Educational Programs and activities

- Increase knowledge of sciences, technology and history
- Improve communication and information about high technology and the role of the maritime industry in Hawaii
- Increase and improve public support for our maritime heritage

### Appendix I: Case for Support

The basis of fundraising is an effective argument for supporting your cause. In other words, why would an individual or company support the celebration of a commissioning, especially when viewed in the context of their public image or mission? If it comes across as "a bunch of military people having some parties," the case is not compelling enough. Potential donors may be interested in knowing a variety of information that may include how their donation will be used, whether the Commissioning Committee is legitimate, the committee's leadership, or Committee internal governance policies.

Items that may be useful include:

- Legal Documents: EIN, IRS Letter of Determination, W9, Letter of Incorporation, By-Laws, Past Years' 990
- Mission & Vision
- Value Statement (How does this organization help people?)
- Leadership (biographical, expertise, qualifications)
- Committee Organizational Chart
- Overview of Commissioning and traditional celebratory activities
- Committee Goals & Objectives
- Compelling quick facts: crew, ship characteristics, etc.
- Governance: Committee's Policies/Procedures
- What vital service is offered (e.g., tradition, acknowledgement of exceptional military service)? What need is fulfilled (e.g., patriotism)?
- How will goals and objectives be measured? How is success defined? What is the impact on people served?
- Evidence of your impact on the community, including audience numbers, awards, letters, testimonials, etc.
- Volunteers: Role, Key Positions, Expectations of Volunteers
- Financial (How will the money be used)
- Audited Financial Statements of the 501(c)(3) (Operating Budget, Balance Sheet)

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- Descriptions and photos of past successful commissionings, especially if they contain positive quotes from ship's company or high-ranking civilian/government officials

### Appendix J: Donor Level Examples

**ADMIRAL (\$25,000 and above)**

Memorabilia at the donor's request

**CAPTAIN (\$10,000)**

US Flag Flown onboard USS Washington  
Chairman's Reception (10)  
VIP Breakfast Reception (4)  
Washington State Reception (8)  
Personalized Honorary Plankowner Plaque  
Personalized USS Washington Ball Cap (4)  
Commissioning Committee Reception (2)  
Lapel Pin (20)  
Honorary Plankowner Certificate (5)  
Recognition in Commemorative Program  
Commemorative Commissioning Coin (10)

**COMMANDER (\$5,000)**

Chairman's Reception (4)  
VIP Breakfast Reception (2)  
Washington State Reception (6)  
Personalized Honorary Plankowner Plaque  
Personalized USS Washington Ball Cap (2)  
Lapel Pin (10)  
Honorary Plankowner Certificate (4)  
Recognition in Commemorative Program  
Commemorative Commissioning Coin (6)

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER (\$2,500)**

Chairman's Reception (2)  
Washington State Reception (4)  
Lapel Pin (8)  
Honorary Plankowner Certificate (2)  
Personalized Honorary Plankowner Plaque  
Personalized USS Washington Ball Cap (2)  
Recognition in Commemorative Program  
Commemorative Commissioning Coin (4)

**LIEUTENANT (\$1,000)**

Washington State Reception (2)  
Lapel Pin (6)  
Honorary Plankowner Certificate  
Personalized Honorary Plankowner Plaque  
Personalized USS Washington Ball Cap (2)  
Recognition in Commemorative Program  
Commemorative Commissioning Coin (2)

**LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE (\$500)**

Lapel Pin (4)  
Honorary Plankowner Certificate  
Personalized Honorary Plankowner Plaque  
Recognition in Commemorative Program  
Commemorative Commissioning Coin (2)

**ENSIGN (\$100)**

Lapel Pin  
Honorary Plankowner Certificate

### Appendix K: Defense Contractor POCs for Sponsorships

The following list of defense contractors was generated from contributors to submarine commissionings. There may be other points of contacts for other vessels. \*Information is accurate as on date of publication. Individuals listed were contacted early and volunteered personal information.

#### BAE Systems

Mr. Charlie McCullough  
Director, Maritime Business Development  
2000 N 15th Street, Suite 1000  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Cell: 703-851-0799  
O- 703-907-8310  
Email: [Charlie.McCullough@baesystems.com](mailto:Charlie.McCullough@baesystems.com)

#### Copy:

Ms. Tonya L. Cupp, Marketing Specialist  
1300 N 17th Street, Suite 1400  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Office: 703-907-8485  
Cell: 703-402-6518  
Email: [tonya.cupp@baesystems.com](mailto:tonya.cupp@baesystems.com)

#### BWXT: Babcock & Wilcox Nuclear Operations Group, Inc. (Reactor Manufacturer)

Mr. Peyton S. (Sandy) Baker  
President & CEO  
2016 Mt. Athos Road  
Lynchburg, VA 24504  
[psbaker@bwxt.com](mailto:psbaker@bwxt.com)  
434-522-6000 (switchboard)

#### Copy to Executive Assistant:

Ms. Darlene C. Hunt  
[dchunt@bwxt.com](mailto:dchunt@bwxt.com)  
434-522-5440

#### Electronical copy:

Mr. Jud Simmons  
Director, Communications  
Email: [hjsimmons@bwxt.com](mailto:hjsimmons@bwxt.com)  
W: 434-522-642

#### The Boeing Company

Point of contact to receive request letter: The previous point of contact Mr. Louis Lalli has retired. We are not sure who the new point of contact is.

#### General Dynamics Electric Boat Division

Ms. Lisa L. Trolan  
Public Affairs Sr. Specialist  
General Dynamics Electric Boat Division  
75 Eastern Point Road, J88-10  
Groton, CT 06340-4989  
Office: 860-433-6913  
Cell Phone: 860-303-0692  
Email: [ltrolan@gdeb.com](mailto:ltrolan@gdeb.com)

#### Approval Authority:

Mr. Jeffrey S. Geiger, President  
General Dynamics Electric Boat Division  
75 Eastern Point Road, J88-10  
Groton, CT 06340-4989

#### Huntington Ingalls Industries, Newport News Shipbuilding

Ms. Jennifer Dunn  
Director, Communications  
Newport News Shipbuilding  
4101 Washington Ave. Building 520/1  
Newport News, VA 23607  
Office Phone: 757-380-3558  
Cell: 757-880-8405  
Email: [Jennifer.Dunn@hii-nns.com](mailto:Jennifer.Dunn@hii-nns.com)

[Kimberly.Zayakosky@jhii-nns.com](mailto:Kimberly.Zayakosky@jhii-nns.com)  
W: 757-380-4460

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### L-3 Communication Systems East

Captain Richard Kitchens, USN (Ret.)  
Program Manager  
L-3 Communication Systems – East  
201 12th Street South, Ste. 800  
Arlington, VA 22202  
Cell: (856) 580-1082  
Email: Richard.Kitchens@L-3com.com

Mr. John Cottrell  
Vice President, Maritime Programs  
201 12th Street South, Ste. 800  
Arlington, VA 22202  
(W): 703-236-7416  
(C): 703-928-0066  
Email: John.Cottrell@L-3com.com

Captain Joseph H. Findley, USN (Ret.)  
Director, Washington DC Operations  
13062 Farthingale Drive  
Herndon, VA 20171  
Cell: 703-819-0763  
W: 703-481-1312  
Email: Joe.Findley@L-3.com.com  
Website: www.L-3.com.comkeo

### Lockheed Martin Mission Systems & Sensors

Ms. Linda Marciano  
Protocol/Events Representative  
Lockheed Martin MST  
Mail Stop 102-103  
199 Borton Landing Road  
Moorestown, NJ 08057  
Phone: 856-722-4754  
Fax: 856-273-5232  
Cell: 609-744-7088  
Email: linda.l.marciano@lmco.com

Mr. Dale Bennett, Executive Vice President  
Lockheed Martin MST  
300 M Street SE, 7th Floor  
Washington, DC 20003  
Executive Assistant: Melinda Kong

### Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems

Captain Glenn Flanagan, USN (Ret.)  
Director, Government Sales  
Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems  
2980 Fairview Park Drive  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Phone: 703-280-4535  
Email: [glenn.flanagan@ngc.com](mailto:glenn.flanagan@ngc.com)

### Northrop Grumman Marine Systems

CAPT James G. Stevens, USN, (Ret.)  
Northrop Grumman Undersea Systems  
Strategy and Business Development  
Oceanic Drive, Annapolis MD 21409-6107  
Office: (410) 260-5431  
Cell: (703) 867-6698  
Email: james.g.stevens@ngc.com

### Northrop Grumman Maritime Systems

Mr. Sam Haas  
Manager, Business Development  
Northrop Grumman Maritime Systems  
1070 Seminole Trail  
Charlottesville, VA 22901-2827  
Email: sam.haas@ngc.com  
Cell: 434-989-8698  
Office (Charlottesville): 434-974-2698

### Raytheon Company – Integrated Defense Systems

Mr. Randy Brandenburg  
Senior Director, Business Development  
[Randy J Brandenburg@raytheon.com](mailto:Randy.J.Brandenburg@raytheon.com)  
Office: 401-835-4818

Navy League of the United States

### **Appendix L: Solicitation Letter Example**

#### **USS Washington (SSN 787) Commissioning Committee**

Navy League of the United States Bremerton/Olympic Peninsula Council

P.O. BOX 5598, Bremerton, WA 98312

[www.usswashingtoncommissioning.org](http://www.usswashingtoncommissioning.org)

26 August 2017

Cisco Systems  
13600 Dulles Technology Drive  
Herndon, VA 20171

Dear Ms. Swallow,

The U.S. Navy will commission the USS Washington (SSN 787), the fourteenth submarine of the Virginia-Class, and the third United States Ship named after the State of Washington. We, the members of the USS Washington Commissioning Committee, seek your support in honoring the crew and celebrating our ship's entry into the Fleet, delivering advanced capabilities for undersea supremacy.

The U.S. Navy conducts a formal commissioning ceremony, but cannot fund all the traditional celebrations and customs that welcome a new ship to the Fleet. These activities, which the Navy is prohibited from funding, help connect the ship with its namesake. Therefore, our committee accepted responsibility to fund and host these memorable events for the ship, her crew, our State, and its citizens. Our goal is to raise \$300,000 to fully support events and bring this great ship into the Fleet. Additionally, we are seeking funds to support recurring academic scholarships for the crew and/or their family members.

We ask that you provide a tax-deductible contribution toward creating an unforgettable experience for those who serve aboard USS Washington, as well as their families and our citizens. We request your participation in these events to honor the ship, her Commanding Officer and crew. Help us establish a lifetime relationship with USS Washington Sailors. Join us in holding superior commissioning events that celebrate the ship, perpetuate the memory of her illustrious predecessors, and honor the State of Washington.

Navy League of the United States

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Please select the most appropriate contribution level and send your contribution to "USS Washington Commissioning" at P.O. BOX 5598, Bremerton, WA 98312. Please identify your point(s) of contact so we may acknowledge your contribution and keep you informed about the progress of commissioning events. My point of contact is CAPT Kathy DiMaggio, USN (ret.), (xxx) xxx-xxxx, [info@usswashingtoncommissioning.org](mailto:info@usswashingtoncommissioning.org).

Sincerely,

Michael A. Sharp, Rear Admiral, USN (ret.)  
Chairman, USS Washington Commissioning Committee

### Appendix M: Fundraising Events

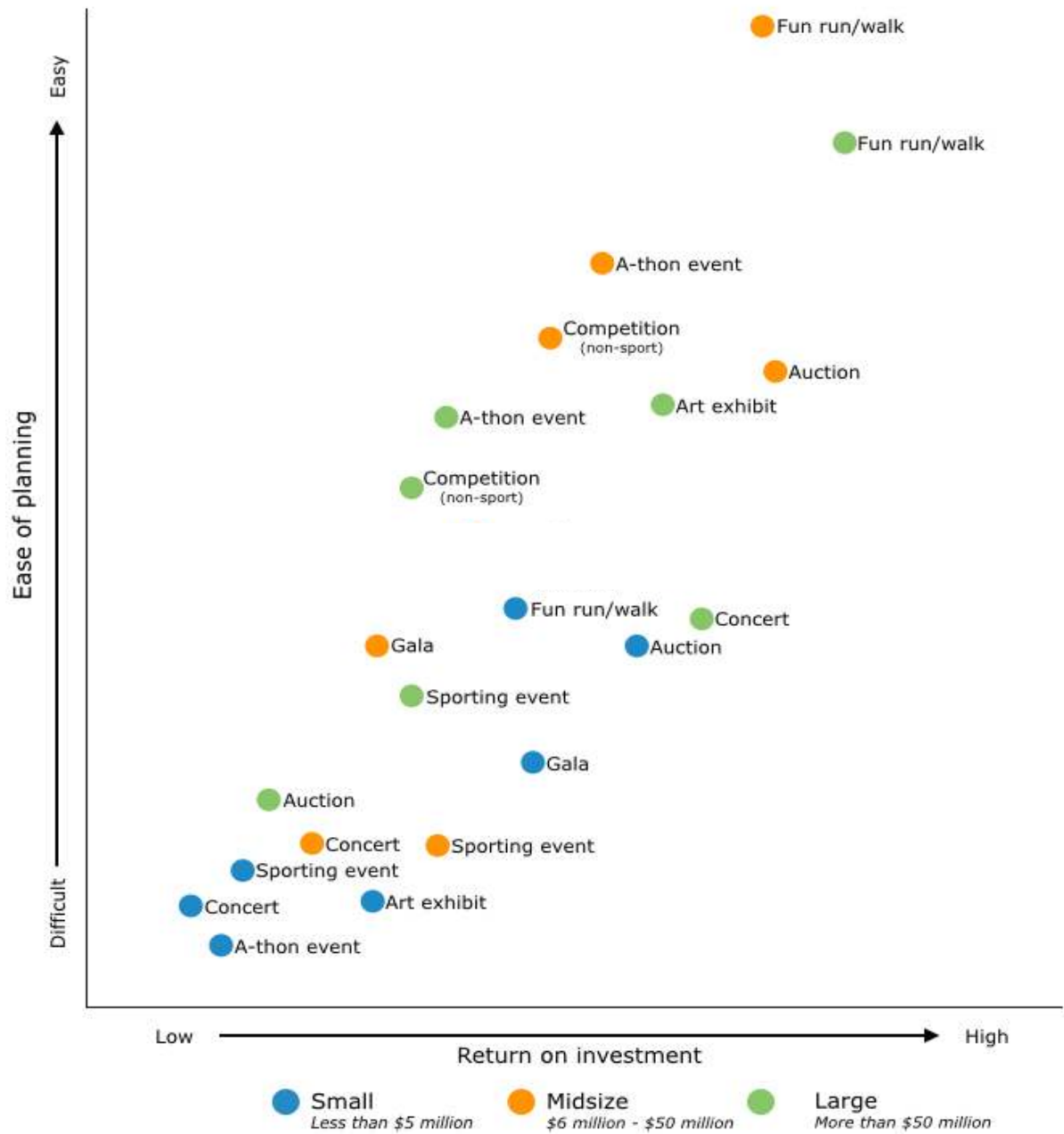
There are a host of activities The Committee may choose to consider for their fundraising. Fundraising generally has four target sources: corporate, individual, grants and merchandise sales.

1. Corporate. Defense contractors, local business sponsors and interested civic and veteran organizations may contribute funds to support ship commissioning. The first step is to ask, so fundraising teams are established to prepare the sales presentation (business case) and contact key individuals in the targeted organization to schedule the presentation.
2. Individual. Veterans, NLUS members and the public at large can be asked to support the commissioning. The Fundraising Subcommittee will organize the effort and assign responsibility for action to subcommittee volunteers. Online fundraising can be an effective process for raising funds from the public.
3. Grants. State namesake ships are often successful in convincing the state legislature to budget funds to support the commissioning (examples are Hawaii and New Mexico). A search of available grants (government grants at [www.grants.com](http://www.grants.com) and private grants in the Foundation Center database <https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/>) can be completed by subcommittee members. Grant makers generally place their projects into specific categories, such as Arts & Culture, Environmental, Community/Economic Development, Education, Youth support services, Leadership, Health & Human Services and Human & Race Relations. The Grant Process is detailed in "Grant Writing for NLUS Councils" and supported by "Grant Writing for Non-Profits – a Navy League Guide", available on the NLUS web site.
4. Merchandise Sales. Sales of ship related items such as ball caps, t-shirts, jackets, challenge coins, may generate some money.

Historically, Corporate Sponsorships (see Appendix K) have been the most fruitful followed by individual donors. Events, however, can be fun and beneficial. Events may include: auctions, raffles, charity balls and galas, phone-a-thons, and sport events, like 5K runs/walks or golf benefits.

The following graph, illustrates a comparison of "ease of planning" to "benefit" adapted from <https://pe.usps.com> or [www.classy.org](http://www.classy.org)

# Navy Ship Commissioning Guide



### Appendix N: Traditional Gifts

In celebration of the commissioning, The Committee, their donors, or those affiliated with shipbuilding may will to present a gift to the ship or her crew. For acceptance of gifts greater than the value allowed by Standards of Conduct, the ship must receive permission. [Appendix G](#) provides an example of a letter the gift donor must send to the Prospective Commanding Officer. Some of the following are traditional gifts presented to a ship:

- Model of Vessel
- Commissioning Commemorative Painting
- China and/or Silver services for VIP dining room or wardroom (historic silver and china may be available from previous namesake ships)
- Ceremonial Brass Telescope
- Brass Bull Horn
- Electronic Entertainment Equipment for crews' recreation
- City and State Flags
- Special Significance U.S. Flag for Commissioning
- Board Games
- Athletic Equipment
- Books for the ship/s library
- Ceremonial Bibles
- Guest Book
- Memorabilia from Namesake or Namesake State
- "Museum Display" honoring the ship's namesake (pictures, artifacts, memorabilia)
- Perpetual Annual Scholarship for crew members and/or their families

Some of the following are traditional gifts presented to each crewmember:

- Lithographs of Commemorative Painting
- Specially minted Commemorative Medallions
- Specially Printed Commemorative Booklets about Namesake and namesake city/state
- Framed Pictures of ship
- Plankowner Plaque
- Commissioning Coin

### **Appendix O: Plankowners**

When a ship is “brought alive” and enters active service in the Fleet, her history begins. The official U.S. Navy Commissioning Ceremony marks this milestone.

A ship’s commissioning crew rightly possesses a strong sense of ownership. This crew breathes first life into vessel destined for 30 or more years of service protecting United States interests and projecting the country’s maritime power. Each crewmember is proud to participate in the ship’s construction, take the ship to sea for the first time, and bring her to life at commissioning. They are Plankowners.

Plankowners are the first crew. Over the ship’s operational lifetime thousands of crew members will live and serve aboard. But there’s only one set of Plankowners.

The term, Plankowner dates from the days of sailing ships when Sailors slept on deck. Because some planks of the deck were softer than others, the crew would select those to sleep upon, and in time would regard them as their own. In many cases, when the ship was dismantled, crew members would, in fact, lay claim to these planks as mementos of their seagoing days.

The term “Honorary Plankowner” may be extended to those who did not serve on the ship but had a significant role in her construction or commissioning.

### Appendix P: Suppliers

| Item                                      | Company   | Comments   |
|---|---|--|
| Coins<br>(Commemorative,<br>Challenge)    | Kidder Corp<br>270 East Hill Road<br>Canton, CT 06019<br>Phone: 832-543-3377<br><a href="http://www.kiddercorp.com">www.kiddercorp.com</a>  | About \$5 - \$6.00 per coin depending on order quantity. Minimum order is 100. The company can help refine the design. This company is a veteran owned coin company and their quality and price is superb. |
| Lapel Pins                                | LapelPinsPlus<br>5840 Red Bug Lake Road, Suite 35<br>Winter Springs, FL 32708<br>Phone: 1-800-252-0904<br>Fax: 1-866-226-7303<br><a href="mailto:admin@lapelpinsplus.com">admin@lapelpinsplus.com</a><br><a href="http://www.LapelpinsPLUS.com">www.LapelpinsPLUS.com</a>   |  |
| Ball Caps                                 | Dolphin International, Inc.<br>2509 Encounter Ct,<br>Virginia Beach, VA 23453<br>Phone: 757-431-9260<br><a href="http://www.dolphinintlinc.com">www.dolphinintlinc.com</a><br><br>The Corps (thecorps.com)<br>Email: <a href="mailto:thecorps@thecorps.com">thecorps@thecorps.com</a><br>Phone: 805-563-8839<br>Fax: 805-689-3227 | Very good quality caps. Minimum order is 24. They have other merchandise available such as coffee cups and apparel.  |
| Honorary<br>Commissioning<br>Certificates | Tiffany, Inc.<br><a href="mailto:certificates@tiffanypublishing.com">certificates@tiffanypublishing.com</a><br>Phone: 757-622-2915  |  |
| Covers (envelopes)                        | Mr. Karl Zurn, <a href="mailto:karlzurn@gmail.com">karlzurn@gmail.com</a>   |  |
| Pens                                      | <a href="http://www.pens.com">www.pens.com</a>  | Wide variety of pens as well as other types of marketing materials. Minimum order for pens is usually a lot of 100.  |
| Printing Services                         | Vistaprint<br><a href="http://www.vistaprint.com">www.vistaprint.com</a>  | Good prices and quick turnaround for printing of all types of material; also have wide variety of marketing material available.  |

### Appendix Q: Commissioning Ceremony Attendance

The number of attendees at a commissioning is difficult to predict, but is a combination of crew size, location of the ceremony, sequence in the ship class, and number of defense companies providing systems.

The larger the crew size, the larger the number of family members that will attend (blue tickets). If the commissioning is in a city that has not previously hosted a commissioning, local attendance may increase. For instance, the USS Buffalo and USS Milwaukee, commissioned in their namesake cities, had 10,000-13,000 attendees. Historically, the first in a class of ships attendance is larger than others in the same class; the USS Arleigh Burke had 30,000 attendees and the first LCS had 10,000.

Some locations are limited in seating. Once the commissioning location is determined, it is recommended to establish a seating limit (at least four months in advance). Recent commissionings have recorded the following attendance:

| SHIP                            | COMMISSIONING SITE | DATE     | Attendance based on RSVPs |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| USS FREEDOM (LCS 1)             | Milwaukee, WI      | 11/08/08 | 10,000                    |
| USS SOMERSET (LPD 25)           | Philadelphia, PA   | 03/01/14 | 6,682                     |
| USS AMERICA (LHA 6)             | San Francisco, CA  | 10/11/14 | 10,000                    |
| USS JOHN P. MURTHA (LPD 26)     | Philadelphia, PA   | 10/08/16 | 4,641                     |
| USS DETROIT (LCS 7)             | Detroit, MI        | 10/22/16 | 3,055                     |
| USS ILLINOIS (SSN 786)          | Groton, CT         | 10/29/16 | 2,726                     |
| USS GABRIELLE GIFFORDS (LCS 10) | Galveston, TX      | 06/10/17 | 2,491                     |
| USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78)     | Norfolk, VA        | 07/22/17 | 9,447                     |
| USS RAFAEL PERALTA (DDG 115)    | Coronado, CA       | 07/29/17 | 2,826                     |
| USS LITTLE ROCK (LCS 9)         | Buffalo, NY        | 12/16/17 | 10,777                    |
| USS OMAHA (LCS 12)              | San Diego, CA      | 02/03/18 | 1,219                     |
| USS PORTLAND (LPD 27)           | Portland, OR       | 04/21/18 | 7,089                     |
| USS SIOUX CITY (LCS 11)         | Annapolis, MD      | 11/17/18 | 6,053                     |
| USS THOMAS HUDNER (DDG 116)     | Boston, MA         | 12/01/18 | 6,308                     |
| USS MICHAEL MONSOOR (DDG 1001)  | Coronado, CA       | 01/26/19 | 4,534                     |
| USS SOUTH DAKOTA (SSN 790)      | Groton, CT         | 02/02/19 | 2,068                     |
| USS CHARLESTON (LCS 18)         | Charleston, SC     | 03/02/19 | 6,000                     |

**Appendix R: Chairman's Reception Invitation Example**

*Rear Admiral Michael A. Sharp, USN (ret)  
Commissioning Committee Chairman*

*cordially invites you to the*

*Chairman's Reception*

*In honor of*

*United States Ship WASHINGTON (SSN 787),  
her Commanding Officer, Officers and Crew*

*Friday, October 6, 2017, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.*

*Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Center*

*One Waterside Drive*

*Norfolk, Virginia 23510*

*R.S.V.P.*

*Email: [RSVP@usswashingtoncommissioning.org](mailto:RSVP@usswashingtoncommissioning.org)*

*Military guests: Summer White*

*Civilian guests: Business Dress (Suit or coat and tie)*

### Appendix S: Navy Invitation Process

About five months prior to the commissioning, the Navy's Commissioning Support Team (CST) will begin working with The Committee to set needed dates for The Committee's submission of their invitation list. The CST will provide their desired format for the guest list and dates when submissions are needed. Typically, CST requests most of The Committee's guests be submitted 100 days prior to the commissioning. Additions to the list should be submitted about weekly thereafter. The last update should be provided 60 days prior to the commissioning and the CST will work with The Committee to ensure duplicate invites are kept to a minimum.

Guests to the Official Ceremony are grouped into categories to allow for proper seating and additional invitations to events. The Committee should determine how they will group their guests and what to consider for seating. For instance, only top donors may be invited to all events, and special consideration may be given to people with military or government affiliation, NLUS affiliation, or veteran status. This information is conveyed on the invitation list.

Navy's standard ticket colors are:

- Blue: Commissioning Crewmembers' guests
- White: General seating
- Gold: VIP guests (political, government officials, donors, etc.)
- Red: Distinguished guests and invited to VIP/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast
- Purple: Ship's sponsor's guests
- Other Color: Special grouping as necessary (e.g., Veterans)

While the specific format for the invitation list may change, the following construct has been used (less email and phone number).

| Prefix     | Last Name  | First Name | MI | Suff<br>ix | Gov't<br>Branch | Classcode | Title     | Company   | Street Address      | City     | State | Zip   | Organization            | VIP | Email             | Phone        |
|------------|------------|------------|----|------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------------------------|-----|-------------------|--------------|
| Mr. & Mrs. | Washington | George     | C  |            |                 | L3C       |           |           | 787 Submarine Ln    | GoNavy   | WA    | 12345 | Navy League             |     | GW@gmail.com      | 555.123.1234 |
| Mr. & Mrs. | Submarine  | Sam        | Y  |            |                 | L3B       | President | Periscope | 23 Destroyer Ave    | Portland | HI    | 23456 |                         |     | ss@hotmail.com    | 555.123.1235 |
| CAPT       | League     | Nancy      | K  |            | USN (ret)       | L3A       |           |           | 98 LPD Way          | BeatArmy | VA    | 34567 | Commissioning Committee |     | NL@comcast.net    | 555.123.1236 |
| Ms.        | Patriot    | Ima        |    |            |                 | White     |           |           | 1234 American Blvd. | Midtown  | WI    | 45678 |                         |     | Patriot@gmail.com | 555.123.1237 |

Most items are self-explanatory. Classcode is a means to indicate which events, in addition to the ceremony, key people should be invited and allows for the proper ticket color to be provided. Typically, The Committee will use these five classcodes:

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- L3A - Guests are invited to the Chairman's Reception, VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast and receive RED seating tickets.
- L3B - Guests are invited to the Chairman's Reception and receive GOLD seating tickets.
- L3C - Guests are invited to only VIP Breakfast/Platform Briefing Assembly Breakfast and receive RED seating tickets.
- Gold – Guests who are special but not included in The Committee's events receive GOLD seating tickets.
- White – Guest receive WHITE seating tickets which is general seating.

The other classcodes reflect the seating tickets: blue and purple. If needed, other colors will be assigned to a special group.

The column "Organization" allows The Committee to indicate any special group or indication. For instance, "veteran" may be used to augment the choice of using "gold" in classcode. Optional use columns include: middle initial, suffix, government branch, title, company, organization, VIP status, email, phone, and so on. The completed invitation list may be of help to The Committee (e.g., verifying names/titles, assigning "escorts", etc.).

Some of the corporate donors may not know who will be able to attend the ceremony and will be hesitant to provide names and addresses. A simple alternative is to provide one name/address (e.g., the corporations main POC) and ensure that person requests the proper number of tickets for the company.

The Navy pays for the commissioning ceremony invitations and postage; however, they cannot pay if the contents include invitations to receptions that are not open to the general public. The Navy's two step invitation process allows for minimum costs to The Committee. The first step is the invitation package, the second step is the tickets which are required for all attendees at the Ceremony. To receive the tickets, invitees must RSVP to the invitation. The RSVP includes the number of tickets needed, and therefore guests residing at the same house and/or guests that are a group of people do not each need to receive an invitation.

The CST develops and coordinates the traditional commissioning ceremony invitation "print package" with most all organizations involved with the commissioning to include the Commissioning Committee. They will first mail the package to the guest lists provided, about 60 days prior to the Commissioning Ceremony an invitation package; it includes: Commissioning ceremony invitation, Prospective Commanding Officer card with ship's

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mailing address, RSVP notice information, RSVP card, Commissioning site area general information card, Photo of ship and ship's crest. Invitees **must** RSVP by mail or email.

Once RSVPs are received, step two starts. CST will begin mailing ticket packages beginning 30 days prior to the commissioning and will continue mailings until the commissioning. Ticket packages include: commissioning ceremony tickets, general information/parking information card, security information.

### Appendix T: Social Media

Because many people today get their information only through social media, a strong online presence is a key to success. Websites, social media, and other electronic methods of communications play an ever-increasing importance. By using multiple channels, you will reach the maximum audience, as persons tend to gravitate to the specific channels that fit their lifestyle.

Having someone on the committee familiar with web technologies, it is easiest and most cost effective to set up your own site. Otherwise, having a developer create a site can cost up to several thousand dollars.

Website. The Commissioning Committee website is a primary vehicle for people to discover your committee and is a way to keep information of a continuing nature that people can easily access at any time. It is suggested you refer to other commissioning committee sites for typical information displayed. US Navy web sites also contain information about ship specifications and pictures that can be incorporated into your site.

There are several options for a self-maintained site. The WordPress content management system is a free, easy to use and very popular system that powers about thirty percent of the sites on the web. It does not require coding skills to set up or maintain. Originally developed as a blogging platform, a multitude of plug-ins now provides any functionality that you will need. In addition to basic information about the committee and ship progress, your site can be used to enable people to sign up for email lists, donate to The Committee, sell merchandise and as a place for supporters to request commissioning tickets. Other alternatives are more prepackaged solutions such as Squarespace. By selecting from an array of pre-made templates, it is easy to get a web site up and running quickly.

It is important to keep the content fresh on the web. This can include information about construction progress, crew visits, Committee events, and news from the crew. A running blog is often the best way to keep viewers current.

After commissioning, you will need to decide the direction of your site. From a historical perspective, it is useful to have the history of your committee's efforts available on the web. Many NLUS Councils adopt the newly commissioned unit, and one alternative is to fold the commissioning committee's information into the respective Council's site.

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Email/Newsletters. Services such as MailChimp and Constant Contact allow you to set up mailing lists to maintain contact with your supporters. A regular, periodic email newsletter is effective in keeping your followers informed about your activities, construction progress, and, as you get closer to commissioning, activities, and information about Commissioning Week.

Facebook. Facebook is probably the most popular social media site and it is important to have a presence there. The Facebook platform is ideal for quick posts of interest but less useful keeping a long-term history of The Committee. It is also more suited to interactivity with your supporters, which can be a blessing or a curse. Your Facebook administrator should be savvy in use of site options to control and manage user shares and comments.

It is best if you can provide linkage between your web site and Facebook. Keeping up a consistent frequent flow of information is more important for Facebook to maintain interest. For NLUS members, additional information about utilization of Facebook pages or groups may be found on the NLUS web site.

Twitter. Twitter is another social media site that you might consider. It has a shorter-term focus than Facebook and can generate considerable activity and followers if you have someone dedicated to consistent, frequent updating. Other social media sites that may be of interest are Instagram and Pinterest.

### Appendix U: PAO/Website Articles

The goal of your public relations efforts should be to raise awareness and enthusiasm within your commissioning community. Certainly, the closer to commissioning, the more interest the media will show. If possible, you should find and cultivate contacts within traditional media such as radio, TV, newspapers, and other periodicals. There may be media professionals in your market who are known supporters of the military, or reporters with a military “beat”.

The Committee should create newsworthy events and publicize them through press releases. Crew visits are a great way to generate interest and publicity. Having crew members visit local schools, sporting events or social events are all items that can generate interest. Many sports teams have military appreciation events and having crew members participate in those help widen your network.

Major ceremonial milestones such as Keel Laying and Christening should receive media attention. The publicity for those events is handled by the building shipyard. You will need to coordinate the shipyard’s public affairs department to see what type of publicity or press release they will generate and how to get it into your market. Navy Public Affairs does not usually get involved with the publicity of the construction events, unless there are problems with ship delivery.

Most media outlets have a way to submit news items of interest. If you have a newsletter you should put them on your distribution as well as any press releases that you generate.

Once the ship has been delivered and you get closer to commissioning, Navy Public Affairs will get into action, generally through the Type Commander’s Public Affairs Office. They will arrange for media coverage of the commissioning as well as interviews with Sailors for hometown news releases. It is important that you coordinate your efforts with them at this stage to avoid working at cross purposes.

**Appendix V: Donor Thank you & Tax Letter Example**

DATE

(Name)

(Address)

Dear (Name)

On behalf of the USS XXXX Commissioning Committee and the Navy League of the United States XXXXXX Council, I would like to personally thank you for your generous gift of (\$ amount). Your donation will help in honoring the crew and celebrating our ship's entry into the fleet, delivering advanced capabilities for maritime supremacy.

To claim deductions from income tax for a gift valued at \$250 or more, donors must substantiate the gift with a receipt from the tax-exempt organization. For tax purposes, please note that the federal tax number for the USS XXX Commissioning Committee is XX-XXXXXXX. Tangible benefits received must be deducted from the amount of your donation. Please retain this letter for your records.

Respectfully,

XXXX

Chairman, USS XXXX Commissioning Committee

### Appendix W: Forming a Ship's Commissioning Committee

This Navy Ship Commissioning Guide describes the process for establishing an effective organization with the needed volunteers to plan, coordinate, and manage commissioning activities that support the Sailors who crew our nation's newest warships, in a fashion that leaves a positive legacy for our Sailors and our Citizens and conforms with the laws and regulations of the United States and the Department of the Navy.

The tradition of commissioning a ship is one of the oldest ceremonies in the Navy, a memorable experience for those involved, and the officers and crew as they "bring their ship to life" and for the local community.

The Commissioning Committee is established at the request of the Navy. When a NLUS Council or other organization steps-up to lead in supporting a U.S. Navy ship commissioning, they must realize that this is a complex, often difficult, and important task. They must be prepared to follow this through to completion! Normally this is accomplished through the creation of a Commissioning Committee either as a subset of a particular NLUS Council or a separate entity. *The primary function of the Commissioning Committee is to contribute to the support of the Sailors who are a part of the commissioning crew and facilitate the success of the commissioning event.*

#### Where Does the Committee Begin?

To ensure a successful commissioning it is important to start the Commissioning Committee formation process as early as possible during ship construction. Depending on the size or class of the ship, this may be as early as the keel laying or as late as the launching of the ship. As John Paul Jones once said, "Men mean more than guns in the rating of a ship," and the gathering and selection of The Committee members is the key first task. The Committee, made up of volunteers who represent the community, will serve as an affirmation that the ship and her crew have reached a significant milestone, and will enjoy the full support of The Committee on their behalf.

The time spent in selecting and preparing the committee is time well invested. These are the individuals who will help resolve the tasks and issues throughout the entire commissioning process. They should be knowledgeable in their responsibilities, roles, and skills. Additionally, an inclusive and diverse group with different perspectives is important

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as it provides a great opportunity to increase the overall ability to achieve The Committee's goals and objectives.

### **Committee Composition**

If you are already further along in the process and have a committee that is familiar and interested in the commissioning, that is a great starting point! However, you should always look to garner the broadest possible support, and bringing in fresh experiences can be of huge value.

Several areas to consider for possible solicitation of volunteers include: Chamber of Commerce, veterans' groups, retired military, local city government officials, community volunteers, philanthropists, and those in the local hotel and tourism industry. The NLUS and other affiliated groups such as the Association of Naval Aviators, the Naval Academy Alumni Association, local ROTC or NJROTC units, Marine Corps League, Naval Submarine League, Surface Navy Association (SNA), or Blue and Gold Clubs should also be included. One approach might be to form a nominating committee from each of these respective groups with the local NLUS Council forming its core.

The size and composition of the committee will vary depending on several outside influences such as the ship's physical location, commissioning site, and population of community to draw volunteers from.

### **Committee Member Selection**

The best piece of advice is to enlist a group of volunteers who will not only ensure that the commissioning is successful, but that it will be a rewarding experience for our Sailors and all participants.

An Executive Committee comprised of an Executive Director, Secretary, Treasurer, Legal Counsel, and any chairs of subcommittees should be formed to make the core of The Committee. These leaders should understand the commitment and be willing to assist under the direction and leadership of your Executive Director and Chairman.

If you choose to form subcommittees, suggested subcommittees are listed in the main body of this guide under Commissioning Committee Organization and Functions. This will separate The Committee as a whole and give each member of the committee a certain level of responsibility, while providing an organized formula for accountability and

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decision making effectiveness. There should be a written description of what is expected of each subcommittee.

### **Committee Membership General Considerations**

The goal is to simulate high output by the committee and its subcommittees without a lot of direct intervention by the chairman or chief of staff. Desired traits, skills and attributes include:

- Technical skills in specific areas, such as fund raising, finance, marketing, and computers;
- Analytical ability to compare different situations and craft solutions;
- Implementation Expertise;
- Networking, interpersonal skills, logistics expertise, and experience navigating the political environment;
- Experience in the applicable functional area(s) outlined in the Commissioning Guide under Organization and Functions;
- Consider including outside individuals who bring a special expertise, but who may, due to time constraints be unable to participate full time; and
- Willingness to devote sufficient time to The Committee.

### **Committee Membership Recruitment Considerations**

- How do you determine who is eligible?
- Eligibility to be on the committee as determined/verified by whom (prospective member or committee)?
- Procedures needed to appoint members to the committee.
- Procedures for the application process.

### **Final Steps in the Section Process**

- Clarify each member's role on the committee; and
- Establish a work plan with clearly defined work products and milestone dates.

### **Committee Code of Conduct:**

- Committee members must obligate themselves to a commitment of support and time.
- Must be focused as to the needs and interests of the committee, its objectives, and goals.
- Divulge at the onset any conflict of interests that may affect the commissioning, and absence of any personal or financial interest in the commissioning.

### **Appendix X: Guide to Forming a 501(C)(3) Non-profit Corporation in Support of a US Navy Ship Commissioning**

Perhaps the most important aspect in setting up a Commissioning Committee, is deciding what kind of entity will be used for the support. There are several options:

- Formation of a Committee, under the Board of Directors for a NLUS Chapter and conducting business as a subset of the chapter.
- Using another existing organization or not for profit to serve as the principal organization around the activities, particularly fund raising. These might include other existing civic organizations.
- Forming a new 501(c)3 Not-For-Profit corporation for the specific purpose of preparing for and executing the activities surrounding a commissioning.

It is our recommendation that for the purposes of raising funds to support the commissioning effort, that a standalone non-profit be established if you are looking to raise more than \$50,000. This is the threshold established by the IRS for enhanced tax reporting and oversight. If you are raising funds for a small commissioning effort, and you believe that amount will be less than \$50,000, then a Doing-Business-As (dba) could be established, or the activities could be included under the existing activities of the principal NLUS Council.

For this guide we will assume that The Committee is considering a standalone non-profit. Running a non-profit is much like running a business and requires a lot of getting used to. The main difference is that your activities the benefit the ship's crew and the public. Starting the non-profit will be much harder due to the scrutiny you will be under by the IRS. It is important that before making an application for exemption make sure you thoroughly understand the IRS chapter on non-profits. We would also recommend working with an accountant to assist you in the process.

#### **A Two-Phase Process**

The formation of a Not-for-Profit (NFP) is a two-step process that starts with your State, not the Federal government. Initially you must file with your State Secretary of State for the formation of a not-for-profit corporation. Please read up on and follow your state laws in this regard. Most States currently have very helpful websites on the process, and this is not particularly challenging, although it does take some amount of time. After your

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State entity is official, you then file with the IRS to receive your tax exempt, 501(c)3 status. You may also want to check with your local municipalities as to any local filing as well.

### **Phase 1: Set-up in your State**

For the purposes of this guide, we picked a single state as the guideline for establishing the entity, Ohio. Although this process does vary state to state, it does not vary greatly. Please be sure to check with your local Secretary of State website for specifics.

Name Your Organization. Your organization's name establishes its brand and is also important for incorporating with the state. The legal name of your non-profit corporation may not conflict with any other organization registered in the state. Make sure the name is available and meets state requirements. Conduct a name search with your Secretary of State to determine that your chosen name is available.

Recruit Incorporators and Initial Directors. The incorporator is the person who signs the Articles of Incorporation for your non-profit. You will need at least one but can have more than one. Directors make up the governing body of your non-profit corporation and are stakeholders in your organization's purpose and success. You will want to identify at least three, unrelated individuals to meet IRS requirements. You will also want to be aware of any age or residency requirements.

Appoint a Registered Agent. A registered agent is responsible for receiving legal notices on behalf of your organization. The appointed registered agent must be physically located in the state and maintain an office that is open during regular business hours. You may choose to engage a commercial service for this or have a member of The Committee, normally a lawyer, serve as your registered agent.

Prepare and File Articles of Incorporation. Your non-profit's articles of incorporation officially mark the creation of your organization. They document where and when the organization was formed, and capture other information necessary to verify its existence. While requirements for language vary from state-to-state, there are some basic provisions that the IRS will look for when you apply for 501(c)3 exemption. It is important to customize the articles for your organization and make sure you meet the state and IRS requirements. Meeting these requirements from the start will help avoid having to make amendments later or risk getting your 501(c)3 application rejected. Some states will also require you to publish your articles of incorporation, so be mindful of any deadlines and publishing instructions.

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Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN). This unique, nine-digit number is assigned by the IRS to identify your non-profit. All types of non-profits will apply for an EIN, not only those that hire employees. You will use your EIN to open a bank account, apply for 501(c)(3) status, and submit 990 returns to the IRS.

Store Non-profit Records. As you launch your non-profit, you will receive several official documents. Organizing these documents in one place will save you headaches down the road. You will soon have numerous items to keep in your records including your EIN letter, bylaws, meeting minutes, 501(c)(3) determination letter, and more. Designate a location and a person to be responsible for maintaining your records. Often the Treasurer serves this function.

Establish Initial Governing Documents and Policies. Your bylaws are the governing document for your non-profit, and you will need these to file with the IRS for you NFP status. They serve as your organization's operating manual and should be consistent with your articles of incorporation and the law. When your Board of Directors meets for the first time, you will review and ratify the bylaws and they will be a roadmap for governance from there.

At the same time, you will also want to create and adopt a conflict-of-interest policy. A conflict of interest is when someone in a key position in your non-profit has competing interests and is making choices that could benefit themselves to the harm of the organization. Personal interests should be set aside, and organizational interests prioritized. If a conflict of interest does arise, it should be disclosed immediately.

Your application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) exemption will require that both the bylaws and the conflict-of-interest policy are approved and adopted.

Hold Organizational Meeting of the Board of Directors. The initial organizational meeting of your Board of Directors will be incredibly productive. At this meeting you will approve the bylaws, adopt the conflict-of-interest policy, elect directors, appoint officers, and approve resolutions such as opening the organization's bank account. Important decisions are being made so be sure to record them in the meeting minutes.

Register with Other State Agencies. The State of Ohio is an example of where registering with the Secretary of State is insufficient. You must separately register with the Ohio

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Department of Taxation, and unfortunately these two agencies do not coordinate. *Be sure to understand and follow the requirements in your State.*

### Phase 2 – Apply with the IRS

Applying for 501(c) tax exemption can feel like the most daunting step in bringing your non-profit into reality but obtaining tax exemption comes with many benefits. You will be able to apply for grants and grow your fundraising success in addition to being exempt from IRS income tax. The chapter of the Internal Revenue Code that regulates non-profit organizations is "501(c)," hence the name. Like others, you may be most familiar with 501(c)(3) non-profits, including charities and foundations. 501(c)(3) non-profits apply using Form 1023 or Form 1023-EZ. Review the criteria for each application and make sure you meet the eligibility requirements set out by the IRS.

Charity or Foundation? The first step is to understand and select whether your NFP is a Charity or a Foundation. To be tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, an organization must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3), and none of its earnings may inure to any private shareholder or individual. In addition, it may not be an action organization, i.e., it may not attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities, and it may not participate in any campaign activity for or against political candidates.

Organizations described in section 501(c)(3) are commonly referred to as charitable organizations. Organizations described in section 501(c)(3), other than testing for public safety organizations, are eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions in accordance with Code section 170.

The organization must not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests, and no part of a section 501(c)(3) organization's net earnings may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual. If the organization engages in an excess benefit transaction with a person having substantial influence over the organization, an excise tax may be imposed on the person and any organization managers agreeing to the transaction.

Whenever an organization exists exclusively for charitable purposes for the public, it is a *charity*. The charity is not profit-making so any surplus funds must be used to further the purpose of the charity. There are various tax benefits described by the IRS that can be beneficial to the purpose of the charity.

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Conversely, establishing a *foundation* in the ship's name can encourage present and future crew members, families, and friends to participate in a common and often bonding cause. When organized as a 501(c)(3), private foundations are tax exempt.

Apply for 501(c). Completing the federal application for tax exemption is significantly easier with the assistance and support of a professional. Find someone with the expertise to ensure the correct application is being used and is completed accurately. A well-prepared application takes time, over 100 hours by IRS estimates, so put yourself on the path to success by finding a specialist to walk alongside you in the journey - from start to tax-exempt finish!

NFP Status. With your IRS Determination Letter in hand, make sure you familiarize yourself with your state's requirements for recognizing your non-profit's tax-exempt status, and any other filing requirements as discussed above. This is an area where requirements vary state-by-state. Many states issue their own tax-exempt certificate that can be used for sales and use tax purposes, but it may require application and periodic renewal.

Register for Charitable Solicitation (Fundraising). This is another area where laws differ from state to state, but most states require any non-profit soliciting donations to register to do so on an annual basis. This means registering in the state prior to soliciting any resident of that state. Registering in your home state is essential, but you may also need to register other states depending on the scope of your organization.

Obtaining Other Business Licenses and Permits. Running your non-profit corporation legally also means securing all applicable licenses and permits. The range of local, state, and federal requirements is wide. Access resources like the Small Business Administration Business License & Permit look-up tool and search by your business type and locality.

Maintaining Compliance. Once you have registered your non-profit per the steps listed above, you will need to maintain compliance with all the government agencies. Staying current with the IRS and state requirements is an ongoing responsibility. Continue reading our Ohio non-profit compliance guide to learn more!

Exit Strategy. Finally, you should have an exit strategy. Commissionings are relatively short-term events and your activities will normally last 1-3 years depending on when you get started and how long it takes you to wrap up post-commissioning activities. In some cases, your organization may decide to continue to operate the NFP in support of the

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Sailors longer term. But in general, you will want to close-down your NFP once the commissioning activities are complete. Momentum and enthusiasm trail-off post commissioning, so be prepared to do more "work" after the finish line! Have a plan in hand on how you will close-out your activities and close-down your organization in keeping with Federal and State law.