The Slides

By Brad Goforth

I was sitting in my office when I got the call. “I had no idea you were this close,” said the man on the other end of the phone. “I have some old slides I took when I was aboard the Iowa in the 1950s. I was wondering if you might be interested in seeing them.”

That was the beginning of two meetings and three boxes of slides that Bob Richards and his friend James Dunn brought to my office two months ago. The slides outlined his experiences aboard our ship from 1954 through 1958 and covered not only cruises to the Mediterranean, but also a “Crossing the Line” ceremony on one cruise. Needless to say, we began swapping sea stories and the adventures we held in common aboard USS Iowa. Despite a difference of over forty years, we both immediately related about places aboard ship, duties performed and similar things that went on while we were aboard.

Bob worked in Fire Control for the 16” guns and did many of the same things crewmen did when I was aboard in 1989 - 91. He spent time as a messcook, slaved over his director, watched movies in the messdecks and spent time ashore when the ship pulled into port. All of these things left deep impressions on the young man who now wanted to share his trove of images.

There was one problem - they were slides. A photo on paper I could scan in, but a slide? Luckily, there is a machine to do it, and I bought one.

From high on one of Iowa’s 5” directors, a view of the ship at anchor. USS Coral Sea is in the background. Notice the 40mm director at bottom right.

So, thanks to Bob Richards, here is what it was like aboard Iowa in the 1950s. If you are like me, the images are very familiar to ones we took aboard ship in 1989 on our last deployment. Funny how some things never change.

If anyone has old slides or photos they would like to share, please feel free to send them to me. I’ll share them with all our shipmates.

Editor
Gibraltar

If you look in the last cruisebook (1989), Iowa was in the same spot.

Waiting for Liberty Call

Sunrise at anchor
Barcelona, Spain

Visitors come aboard.
Monument to Christopher Columbus.
More visitors.
Bullfights.
Dancers entertaining the crew.
The usual things - messcooking, unreps and sightseeing....
Windmills, The Little Mermaid and the waterfront in Amsterdam.

Errol Flynn’s yacht Zaca.
(Clockwise from top left) Refueling destroyers. Getting a tan when you can. USS Forrestal - the biggest ship we had ever seen. An evening's entertainment in Istanbul. USS Coral Sea. This is when she had a straight deck and an open bow.
The Eternal City.

Italian family.

Local children.

The Captain’s Gig.
Ever seen that many sailors at a church?

Aboard the Santa Maria.

More entertainment aboard the ship.
Various ports of call, tours, and sights.
USS New Jersey and USS Wisconsin.

Going ashore.

Yes, we had a ship’s band back then too.

Need a cab?
More fountains.

Sailors everywhere.

Fleet anchorage.

Somebody’s gotta hold them up...
Times ashore during the Med Cruise. Greece, Greek resorts, and fountains at night.

Battleship sailors are always drawn to the big guns....
The escorts always had it a little rougher.

Friends at sea.

The days before a flag was on the top of Turret One.
A ship out of water...

Iowa in her younger days.

Gunnery practice.
Nothing changes under the big guns.

Helo Ops.

She hasn’t changed much since the 50s.
Istanbul - left

Rough Seas - left

The Casino - right

These things always seemed larger in photos.
Highline transfer. How about a little dip?

Remember depth charges?

See what I mean about the size?
Morro Castle, Cuba.
We all knew the motor launches.
The Panama Canal.
Liberty Call.
Bob’s First “E”.
Royal Yacht Britannia.
The Changing of the Guard.
Westminster.
Below:
Moran Tugs in New York Harbor. Return to Norfolk. Remember blimps?

Above:
Clockwise from right:
Oops!
Quarters.
The Band.
Cleaning the fantail.
Holystoning.
The motor launches.
Mass.
Working the 40mm guns atop turret three. The Marines manned this one atop turret three.

The 40mm guns on the starboard side.

Smokers!
Above and below: Gunnery exercises.

Above and below: Maintaining the 5-inch mounts.

Main battery plot hasn't changed much. (below)
USS Iowa: Our Home.
Crossing the Line

Shall we start out with Wog Day?
Preparations to receive King Neptune.
The Royal Court arrives.
Let the fun begin....
You must earn your way into the King’s domain.
All lined up.

A final cleansing.

Shellbacks forever.
After 24 November 1941, events in U.S.-Japanese diplomatic negotiations moved very swiftly to their climax on 7 December. A number of important diplomatic messages passed between Tokyo and Washington between July and November; these are summarized below. These early messages and those exchanged after 24 November which have been selected for inclusion in this appendix are so revealing that it is easy to lose sight of the fact that U.S. officials were often reading these messages at about the same time as the Japanese diplomats. The “War Warning” messages sent by OPNAV beginning on 24 November have also been included in this appendix to insure that the reader fully appreciates their correlation with events occurring in diplomatic circles.

- Despite changes in its government, Japan remained committed to the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy.
- Japan frequently expressed determination to use force against the United States and Great Britain.
- Japan established an espionage network in the United States.
- Plans for evacuation of Japanese diplomatic, espionage, and newspaper personnel were discussed.
- Germany and Italy applied pressure on Japan to provoke war with the U.S.
- Japanese attitude toward the U.S. Open Door policy hardened after 16 October when Tojo took over the government. Japan wanted the U.S. to approve Japanese policies in the Far East -- including China and French Indochina -- and restore Japanese trade status with the U.S.
- Ambassador Nomura’s attempt to resign on 22 October was refused.
- On 4 November, Ambassador Saburo Kurusu, sent to help Nomura, was not optimistic that negotiations would be successful. He arrived in Washington on 17 November.
- On 5 November, Tokyo established a 25 November deadline for completion of negotiations.
- Nomura reported on 10 November on statements from high-ranking politicians and cabinet members (a) that the U.S. was not bluffing, (b) that it was ready for war, (c) that it had reliable reports that Japan would be on the move soon, and (d) that the president and secretary of state believed these reports.
- On 19 November 1941, two messages from 15 November were read which discussed plans to evacuate Japanese citizens from the U.S.

The messages which follow are arranged in order of transmission. Army messages are indicated with an “A” and Navy messages with an “N.” The date given is the date the message was translated.

N 25 Nov A circular message from Tokyo to Washington on 15 November with detailed instructions on how to destroy code machines.
N 28 Nov A circular message from Tokyo to Washington on 19 November with detailed instructions to listen for “Winds Execute” messages to be added to Japanese news broadcasts in case of diplomatic emergencies involving the U.S., England, or Russia. When heard, embassies were to destroy all codes, papers, etc.
N 26 Nov A circular message from Tokyo to Washington on 19 November, sent after above message but translated earlier, contained instructions to listen for an abbreviated “Winds” message in general intelligence broadcasts repeated five times at begin-
ning and end, i.e., only the word East, West, or North
would be spoken five times.
A 28 Nov Circular message from Tokyo on 20
November said U.S.-Japanese situation would not
“permit any further conciliation by us” and rejected
all feelings of optimism.
A 22 Nov Tokyo informed Washington on 22
November that, by 29 November if agreement had
not been reached, “things are automatically going to
happen.”
24 Nov OPNAV message warned of possible
Japanese “aggressive movement” toward Philippines,
Guam, or any direction.
A 26 Nov Tokyo message to Washington on 26
November contained telephone brevity code to be
used because “telegrams take too long.” The code
covered topics under negotiation, situations, and
personalities.
27 Nov OPNAV WAR WARNING message.
A 29 Nov Message on 26 November from
Nomura to Tokyo recommended that Japan break
diplomatic relations with the U.S. in a formal manner
rather than “enter on scheduled operations” without
prior announcement particularly since “our intention
is a strict military secret.” A formal break would
avoid responsibility for the “rupture.”

Japanese encryption machine Purple (USN)

N 2 Dec A circular message from To-
kyo on 27 November contained another
brevity code in which codewords were
assigned specific meanings, e.g., “Japan’s
and USA’s military forces have clashed”
equals, “HIZIKATA MINAMI.”
N 28 Nov A telephone conversation on
27 November between Washington (Ku-
rusu) and a foreign office official in Tokyo
named Yamamoto. Tokyo used telephone
code to convey a message referring to an
attack on the U.S.
29 Nov OPNAV WAR WARNING
message. Text indicated Army had also
been notified.
A 1 Dec Message from Tokyo to Berlin
on 30 November directed the Japanese
ambassador to inform Germany that U.S.
relations had ruptured and that “war may
break out quicker than anyone dreams.”
Regarding Russia, Tokyo stated that if
Russia reacted to her move southward
and joined hands with England and the U.S., Japan
was “ready to turn on her with all our might.” Tokyo
requested the Germans and Italians to maintain “ab-
solute secrecy.”
N 1 Dec Message from Tokyo to Washington
discussed means of allaying U.S. suspicions regarding
Japanese reactions to the U.S. proposal of 26 Novem-
ber. News media were to be advised that “negotia-
tions are continuing.” A plan was discussed to make
a formal presentation in Washington vice Tokyo. The
message queried president’s reaction to Tojo’s bell-
icose speech.
N 1 Dec A circular message from Tokyo on 1
December advised Washington that London, Hong
Kong, Singapore, and Manila had been instructed to
destroy code machines.
2 Dec OPNAV instructed CINCAF to estab-
lish defensive patrols.
A 4 Dec Message from Rome to Washington
on 2 December said that Tokyo believed the Hull note
of 26 November “absolutely unacceptable,” and “a
conflict(?) in the near future is considered very prob-
able.” Rome also said Tokyo believed American Navy
in Pacific was “not strong enough for decisive action.”
N 3 Dec Message from Tokyo to Washington
on 2 December instructed Washington to burn all
codes except one copy of the codes being used in conjunction with the machine (i.e., PURPLE, the O Code, and the abbreviation code. Washington was also to burn messages, other secret papers, and telegraphic codes, and possibly to destroy one machine.

3 Dec  An OPNAV message regarding Japanese instructions to burn codes.

N 6 Dec  Messages from Berlin and Rome to Tokyo on 3 December described Japanese attempts to obtain German and Italian assurances that they would follow the Japanese declaration of war on the U.S. with their own. Hitler was not available, but Mussolini agreed.

4 Dec  OPNAV ordered U.S. codes destroyed.

N 6 Dec  Washington confirmed destruction of codes on 5 December.

N 6 Dec  Tokyo message on 5 December ordered four individuals in Washington to leave immediately. The translation contained a note which identified one as head of Japanese espionage in the Western Hemisphere and the others as his assistants.

A 6 Dec  Tokyo message to Washington on 6 December alerted Nomura that a formal reply to the 26 November note had been prepared, was very long, and would be in 14 parts.


Dale McKinnon

Iowa in Drydock

Controversy abounds, what else, Iowa sailors love controversy. There is controversy which suggests that the picture below is not the Iowa. I assume the questions surrounds what appears as a short bow on the ship. However, this time I think I am right (not usually the case). History clearly says this is Iowa.

A very funny story goes with this pic. Holloway operated his battleship with characteristic flair, recalled Rear Admiral Ralph Kirk James, who had been the maintenance officer responsible for repair work on damaged ships at Manus when Iowa arrived at that base to fix shafting problems on 25 December 1944. "Jimmy Holloway was charging up the harbor with this big battleship, the biggest I'd seen, and I was...
getting more and more nervous.” Alarmed, James warned Holloway to reduce his speed before entering the drydock. “‘Oh no,’ [Holloway] said...He got the ship just about halfway into the dry dock when he ordered full speed astern. The Iowa shook like a damned destroyer and stopped just where she was supposed to be.’ Unfortunately, the backwash from the engine reversal swept away the drydock support blocks from underneath the ship, and James and his crew had to spend an extra three hours resetting the blocks before Iowa could dock. Afterward, James discovered a grey streak in his hair. “I can tell you the moment it was born: when Holloway pulled his high-speed throttle-jockey stunt on me.”

Dale McKinnon

**September 25, 1952, USS IOWA (BB-61) Detailed History Gun Strikes against railroad and thirty-car train.**

North Korea had a very limited transportation network. One of the few roads and railroads available ran right along the east coast, very handy for Iowa and other surface vessels to attack. On this day, Iowa took advantage. Since the North had no effective navy, it was very difficult for them to supply their troops. They were so accustomed to an antiquated transportation network they considered moving through rough terrain as second nature. As such, they had a nasty habit of confronting GI’s and Marines unexpectedly.

**The 24th Surgeon General of the Navy, RADM Clifford A. Swanson 1946-1951.**

(Navy Medical History) Rear Admiral Swanson, one of the outstanding specialists in the Medical Corps of the Navy in diseases of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat, and an outstanding bronchoscopist, was born in Marquette, Michigan, June 6, 1901, He attended the Marquette public schools, was graduated from Northern State Teachers College, also in Marquette, in 1920, graduated cum laude from the Medical School of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1925, and later was graduated from the Postgraduate School of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He entered the Medical Corps of the U.S. Navy, in the rank of Lieutenant (jg) in June, 1925, and subsequently advanced through the various grades to that of Captain on April 1, 1943, and Rear Admiral, December 2, 1946 for temporary service while serving as Surgeon General and Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery from 1946 to 1951.

During World War II, Dr. Swanson was senior medical officer aboard the battleship USS Iowa. As an operating surgeon at the National Naval Medical Center, Dr. Swanson performed pioneering eye surgery. He accompanied President Roosevelt to the Teheran Conference and was with the Congressional Committee that inspected the Pacific War area. He became Surgeon General in 1946. During his tenure he sponsored legislation that made the Nurse Corps a permanent staff Corps, and established the Medical Service Corps.
Letter from the Editor

Special thanks to Bob Richards who shared his slides for the newsletter. I hope you all are enjoying the stories from former shipmates and a little history thrown in as well.

Future articles include information about the ship, and more Medal of Honor recipients.

If you have anything you would like to share with our shipmates and friends, please send it in. It may take some time to get it in the newsletter, but we’ll get it in for all to see.

Send your works to:
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or email it to: bgoforth@thesamaritanhouse.org

Do you know this guy?

A couple of hints -
1. He was aboard during the 1950s.
2. He was a firecontrolman.
If you know him, send me an email and I’ll post it.

Disclaimer:

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