COMMISSIONING CEREMONY



UNITED STATES SHIP

MACDONOUGH

Guided Missile Frigate (DLG-8)

Boston Naval Shipyard

4 November 1961

A historical summary compiled from U.S. Navy records and arranged in the style of the ship's 1974 recommissioning program.

Commissioning of a Navy Ship

The commissioning ceremony marks the acceptance of a ship into the operating forces of the United States Navy. At the appointed moment the commission pennant is broken at the masthead, the national ensign and jack are hoisted, the first watch is set, and the ship comes alive as a unit of the fleet — ready for any service required by the nation.

On 4 November 1961, United States Ship Macdonough (DLG-8) was placed in commission, taking her place in the long line of United States Navy ships that have proudly carried the name of Commodore Thomas Macdonough, hero of the Battle of Lake Champlain.

United States Ship Macdonough — Guided Missile Frigate (DLG-8)

Class Farragut

Built by Fore River Shipyard, Bethlehem Steel Company, Quincy, Massachusetts

Laid down 15 April 1958

Launched 9 July 1959

Commissioned 4 November 1961

The Ship

Displacement: 5,648 tons (full load)

Length: 512 feet 6 inches (overall)

Beam: 52 feet 4 inches

Draft: 17 feet 9 inches (maximum)

Propulsion: 85,000 shaft horsepower; geared turbines; two screws

Speed: 33 knots

Complement: approximately 360 officers and enlisted men

Armament (as built): one 5″/54 rapid-fire gun; Terrier surface-to-air missile system; ASROC anti-submarine system; six 12.75-inch MK 32 torpedo tubes

Commodore Thomas Macdonough

Thomas Macdonough (1783–1825) was born in the New Castle area of Delaware and entered the United States Navy as a midshipman in 1800. He served in the quasi-war with France and in the war against the Barbary pirates, distinguishing himself under Commodore Edward Preble in the Mediterranean.

His enduring fame rests on the Battle of Lake Champlain, 11 September 1814. Commanding an American squadron against a superior British force, Macdonough won a decisive victory that halted the British invasion from Canada and did much to bring the War of 1812 to an honorable close. Promoted to captain and honored by Congress and the nation, he is remembered as one of the great figures of the early United States Navy. He died at sea in 1825.

The ship's motto, "Spearhead of Seapower," carries his fighting spirit into the missile age.

Commanding Officer

Commander William Gerald Hurley, United States Navy, assumed command as Macdonough's first commanding officer at her commissioning on 4 November 1961.

Order of the Ceremony

The traditional order of a United States Navy commissioning ceremony:

Prelude
Arrival of the Official Party
Invocation
National Anthem
Welcome and Introductions
Remarks
Address by the Principal Speaker
Reading of the Navy Department Orders
Commissioning — Breaking of the Commission Pennant
Setting of the First Watch
Manning the Ship and Activation of Equipment
Navy Hymn
Benediction
Departure of the Official Party

— Spearhead of Seapower —

About this summary: *This booklet is a historical summary, compiled from U.S. Navy records — the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (DANFS), the Naval History and Heritage Command, and NavSource Naval History — and arranged in the style of the ship's 1974 recommissioning program. The original 1961 commissioning program, including the ceremony's participants, the principal speaker, and the commissioning crew roster, is still being sought; those details will be added when a copy is located.*