

the **Outrigger**



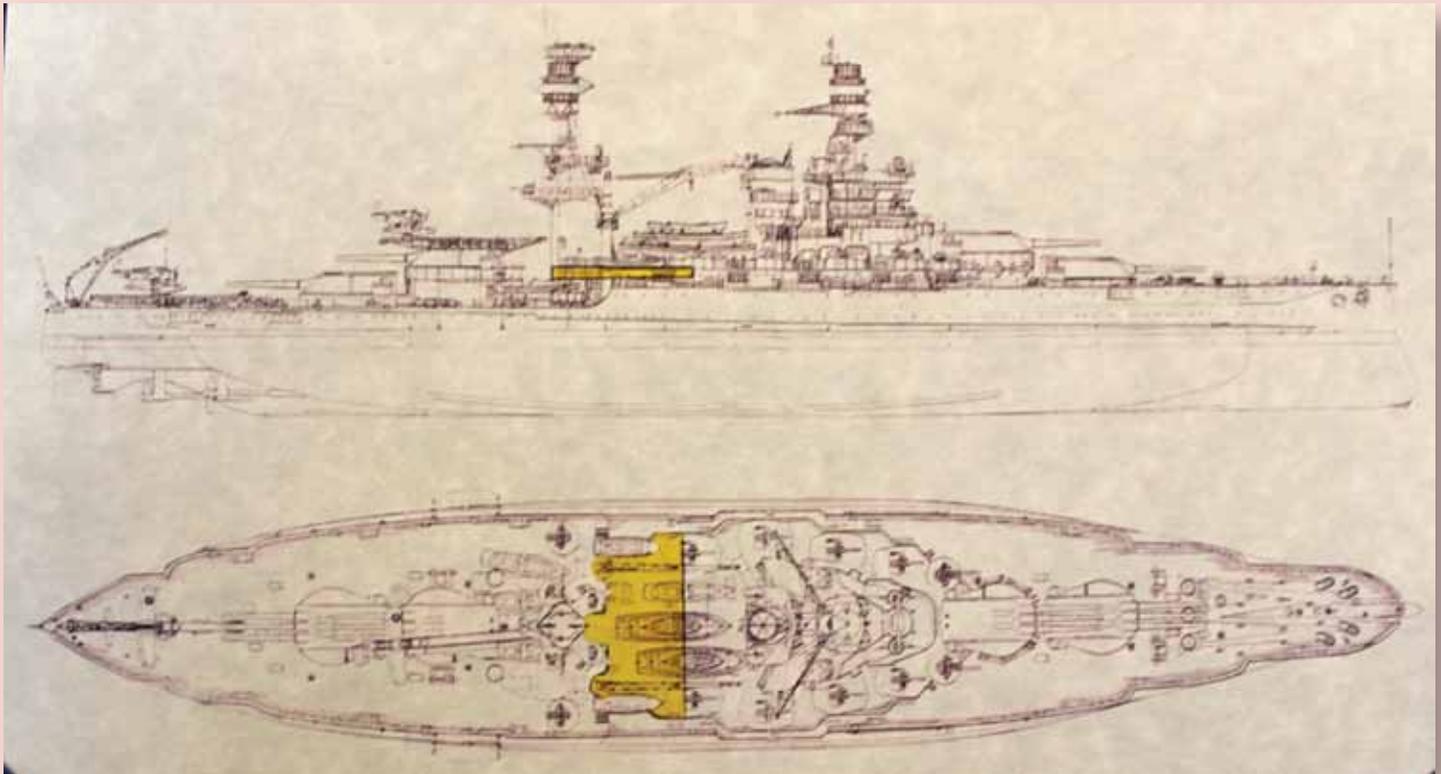
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The Walter J. Macfarlane Military Invitational Award

By Kawika Grant



This highlighted area on the *USS Arizona* drawing shows the location where the iron bar was removed from the sunken ship. The area was slightly above water level and was used as the original viewing platform for the *Arizona* after World War II. The platform was removed when the *Arizona* Memorial was built.

This 4th of July at the 73rd annual Walter J. Macfarlane Memorial Regatta, the Outrigger Canoe Club will be introducing a very special new trophy saluting our nation's service men and women in uniform: The Military Invitational Award.

This will be the 6th year Outrigger has extended an invitation to the island's five major military services, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, to compete against each other in a special canoe race celebrating our nation's birthday; a race OCC has made a permanent part of our regatta with the enthusiastic support of OHCRA and its member canoe clubs.

The history of this race is more than five years old, however, going all the way back to Outrigger Canoe Club's very first 4th of July regatta in 1910, two years after the Club's founding. Back then there was no organized canoe racing or association of clubs for OCC to invite to its canoe race,

There were three naval ships in Honolulu Harbor at the time, however, and in those days warships all had longboat crews who raced against each other in friendly competition when in port. All three ships were invited to race each other in the surf at Waikiki, and all three accepted enthusiastically.

Those three ships were the Navy cruisers *USS Cleveland*,

USS Chattanooga, and the Belgian naval training ship *L'Avenir*. Surfing waves in Hawaiian canoes proved to be too much for the longboat-trained American crews. Both swamped, but the Belgians survived to win the race and the plaudits of the crowd ashore.

As more local crews from such early clubs as Hui Nalu, Healani and others began competing, no other military crews were invited to the 4th of July regatta until WW-II, when Waikiki's hotels became military R&R centers.

Outrigger initially organized special officer and enlisted men and women races for its 4th of July race, but not as inter-service competitions. It was not until 1945 when a service versus service competition was finally held between the women's service branches, and it was the Lady Marines who emerged triumphant.

The end of the war brought an end to service competition, and it was not until 2010 - for the 100th anniversary of Outrigger's first 4th of July regatta that the suggestion was made to have a military invitational race as part of the celebration, in recognition of that first one a hundred years before.

Outrigger proposed the race as a special event to OHCRA,

and the entire association endorsed the idea wholeheartedly. Clubs participating in the regatta that year willingly agreed to host a service team of five paddlers, providing use of their canoes, a qualified steersman, paddles and even some quick orientation in Hawaiian canoe paddling.

Originally intended to be a quarter-mile 'tourist' type race, inexperienced paddlers into the beach, local clubs and their adopted military sons and daughters argued for a full-on half-mile race out and back, and that was how it was run that inaugural day, and has been ever since.

In a heated competition down to the wire, the Navy squeaked out a close, hard fought win by less than a second over the Marine Corps team from Kāne'ohe and a tradition was reborn. Annual winners since then have been the U.S. Marines, the U.S. Coast Guard, and for the past two years the U.S. Navy SEALs.

The 2014 race even included a crew of five admirals representing the various Navy branches of the U.S. Pacific Command, so it is no exaggeration in stating that the Outrigger Canoe Club's salute to our military men and women in

uniform has gained the attention of the highest level of command.

No better proof of this is the recent, magnificent gesture of respect extended to OCC by the Commander, Navy Region Hawai'i at Pearl Harbor, through the auspices of Jim Neuman, Command Historian in granting the Club custody of a hallowed piece of the *USS ARIZONA* to serve as a perpetual award to the winning service crew of the Macfarlane Military Invitational Race.

An appropriate presentation stand, designed by Tay Perry and Kawika Grant is currently being built by the Club, under the guidance of Domie Gose, from a rare and beautiful piece of koa wood generously donated by Karl Heyer IV.

This singularly unique award, to be named the 'ONIPA'A Trophy (Steadfast), is our Club's and our nation's salute to all our service men and women, past, present, and future, whose unselfish sacrifices have made possible the freedoms we all enjoy every day, and celebrate on that special day in July in the surf of Waikīkī.

ON THE COVER: The Commander of Navy Region Hawaii at Pearl Harbor, recently bestowed upon the Outrigger Canoe Club a hallowed piece of the *USS Arizona* (shown laying on the sign) to serve as the perpetual award to the winning service crew of the Macfarlane Military Invitational Race. Receiving the relic are OCC General Manager Gary Oliveira; Jim Neuman, Navy Command Historian Pearl Harbor; Marc Haine who started the military race in 2010, and Kawika Grant who petitioned the Navy for the relic. See story on pages 2-3. Photo by Marilyn Kali.

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