

Monday, April 24, 1989

Families welcome survivors

Battleship Iowa returns home to solemn ceremony

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — The scarred battleship USS Iowa made a somber return Sunday to its home port, where about 3,000 family members and friends of the crew welcomed loved ones who escaped an explosion that killed 47 sailors.

Sailors in whites with black arm bands lined the rails as the huge vessel docked at the Norfolk Naval Base's Pier 5 at 5:41 p.m., just one minute later than Navy officials had estimated. Twenty minutes later, families started filing aboard the ship, exchanging tearful embraces with the returning sailors.

"They wanted to get here on schedule and were anxious to get home," Capt. Steven Karalekas said.

The explosion Wednesday flashed through the Iowa's No. 2

gun turret, which extends six decks down into the ship. There were 11 survivors inside the turret, all on the lowest deck loading powder from the ship's magazines, the Navy said.

The surviving crewmen of No. 2 turret stood on top of the fire-blackened turret as the ship pulled into the pier, with full crews on the ship's two other turrets.

The No. 2 turret was in the same position as when the explosion occurred, facing right with the left and right guns elevated. The center gun, where the blast occurred, was depressed.

Navy teams who entered the turret immediately after the blast found the No. 2 gun's breech open and undamaged, with the practice projectile that the gun was to have fired

still there. *The New York Times* reported Sunday.

This indicated the explosion occurred while the powder bags were still being loaded into the gun, the

appeared there were scattered cheers by those on the dock, but all remained silent as the ship pulled into the pier. The somber mood was heightened by the lack of bands, and

in chief of the Atlantic Fleet, was on the dock to greet the vessel. As it docked, three Marines raised a flag to half-mast at the stern of the ship.

The Navy kept the news media about 300 yards from the families, and reporters were not allowed to talk with the families or the crewmen.

The violence and power of the turret explosion was shown in an amateur videotape released by the Navy on Sunday. The tape was made by an officer on the bridge of the Iowa who wanted to record the firing of the big guns.

The detonation, which appears to blast away the gasket-like rubber "bloomers" that seal the turret's gun slits, is followed by a jet of intense fire and thick smoke from the front

and base of the gunhouse.

The videotape cut immediately to damage control firefighters spraying heavy streams of water onto the turret.

Throughout the Norfolk area, churches dedicated prayers Sunday morning to the families of Iowa crewmen.

"We have lost 47 of our number in a tragic way," said Cmdr. John L. Fitzgerald, a chaplain, in a service at the Norfolk Naval Air Station. "Our faith helps us to handle what science cannot answer, the mystery of death."

A red rose, a yellow ribbon with the number 47 on it and a book containing the names of the dead were taken to the altar.

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— John L. Fitzgerald
Navy chaplain

Times said, citing unidentified sources.

When the 887-foot vessel first appeared there were scattered cheers by those on the dock, but all remained silent as the ship pulled into the pier. The somber mood was heightened by the lack of bands, and

Soviets turn critical on space program

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviets once danced in the streets to celebrate their country's space successes, hailed by the party as proof of the superiority of socialism.

But with chronic shortages of everything from toothpaste to housing, the cheers are now drowned out by calls to spend available rubles on Earth.

The Soviet space program has become the latest target of criticism as President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's policy of "glasnost," or openness, unleashes long-suppressed public complaints.

Untold billions of rubles were spent to put the first Sputnik satellite in orbit in 1957, to make Yuri Gagarin the first man in space in 1961, and to achieve other space feats.

On April 12, the anniversary of Gagarin's flight in Vostok-1, a newspaper recalled how Soviets celebrated the news by singing and dancing through the streets.

But more than 31 years after Sputnik circled the globe, Soviet space exploration has not realized the prediction of rocket pioneer Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, who said said harnessing the cosmos would bring "mountains of bread and enormous power" to those who mastered it.

Soviets began soul-searching about space expenses after a series of problems with their country's space program.

The problems coincided with official pressure to cut a \$162 billion budget deficit and growing impatience with shortages of food, consumer goods and housing.

In part for economic reasons, the Mir space lab will be without a crew for three months starting Thursday when three cosmonauts return to Earth.

The debate on Soviet space spending is reminiscent of the American public's questioning of the billions of dollars spent on the Apollo project in the 1960s and 1970s to put men on the moon while some Americans lived in poverty.

Controversy over space spending spilled into the open early this year in the campaign for a new Parliament.

Candidates, including maverick communist Boris N. Yeltsin, received some popular support when they suggested the space program be put on hold for a few years.

The Kremlin already has reduced outlays for another institution once outside public criticism, the military. Last year, Soviet leaders announced that some defense plants will be converted to produce consumer goods, food and building supplies to parry chronic shortages.

Adding fuel to the space-spending controversy were the November launch of the \$10 billion shuttle Buran; the loss in September and March of two unmanned Mars probes, Phobos I and II, at a cost of a half-billion dollars; and embarrassing delays caused by technical problems and human error in the landings of the last two crews from Mir last year.

Opposition grew when space officials hungry for foreign currency last month chose a Japanese

for the first commercial trip to Mir. The price tag was \$11 million.

Defenders of space exploration emphasize the benefits of technology and information transfers to the Earth-bound economy.

The Tass news agency recently reported that more than \$2 billion was spent on space research in the Soviet Union last year and that economic benefits totaled \$3.2 billion.

Satellites have gathered weather information, extended television and telephone service, aided navigation of ships and located mineral and oil deposits, according to articles in state-run media.

But media reports have said industry is not adequately using the information and technology, and they have criticized the spendthrift attitude of government agencies involved in space technology.

Pravda and other newspapers say public support has declined because space officials tout successes and hide problems.

Space scientist Roald Sagdeyev said officials must work hard to save the space program and also acknowledge failures.

"We have one very serious task: to restore the people's faith, though glasnost, through truthful information that is honest to the end," he told colleagues at a recent meeting about the Phobos problems. "We must show and prove to the people that without space, mankind doesn't have a future."

Mexican government urges dissident teachers to end strike

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The government has urged dissident teachers to go back to work Monday and end the strike provoked by a bitter struggle inside one of Latin America's largest and most powerful unions.

The Presidential Palace issued the back-to-work call from the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Tribunal shortly before midnight Saturday.

The call was rebuffed by the dissident National Coordinate, which announced a mass march for Monday.

A similar demonstration last week rallied tens of thousands of people to the Zocalo, Mexico City's huge central plaza.

Coordinate leader Teodoro Palomino told the newspaper *Excelsior* the strikers would not go back to work until their demands for democratic reforms in the union were addressed.

He said strikers weren't breaking any laws. "We aren't stopping students from going to school,"

he said.

"The parents are backing us by keeping their children home,"

Dissident teachers nationwide walked off the job last Monday in what they called an indefinite strike aimed at democratic reforms in the union and higher wages.

The strike, which began Monday, shut down thousands of schools and riveted national attention on a long and bitter battle inside the National Education Workers' Union.

The union, with a membership of more than 1 million, is one of the largest and the most powerful in Latin America.

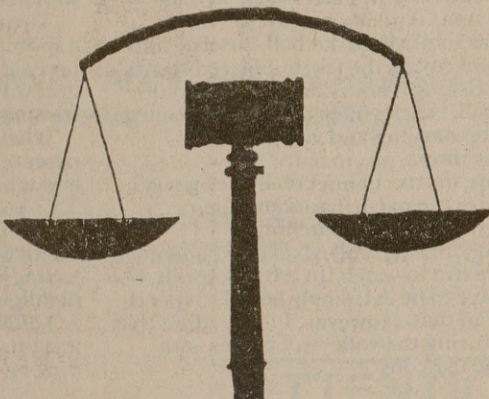
The dissident National Coordinate claims about half the union members as adherents.

The union battle centers on longtime union chief Carlos Jonguitud Barrios, probably the most important of the old-style Mexican union bosses still in power now that the head of the oil workers is in jail.

SARAH WEDDINGTON

featured speaker
on

ROE v. WADE



Where It's Been
Where It's Going

Monday, April 24
MSC 201
8:30 p.m.
Reception to follow

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