

THE DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONY

The ceremony held today is a time-honored tribute to the end of a ship's active service life. The colors and commissioning pennant are hauled down and the watch secured. The ceremony is a dedication to the total operational success of the ship and the men who sailed her.

navysite.de



THE COMMISSIONING PENNANT

The Commissioning pennant has for centuries been the symbol of a man-o-war. Today it is a distinctive mark of a ship of the Navy in Commission and is flown from the masthead, except when displaced by the personal flag of an admiral or commodore aboard a flagship.

It is said the commissioning pennant dates back to a seventeenth-century war between Holland and England. A Dutch Admiral hoisted the traditional broom at his masthead, indicating the intention to sweep the English from the seas. This gesture was answered by the English Admiral, who hoisted a coach whip, a gesture not traditional but quite definite in implication. The English were the victors, and since that time a long pennant resembling a coach whip has been adopted as a distinctive mark of a warship.

The modern United States Commissioning Pennant is blue at the hoist with a union of seven white stars and has two horizontal stripes, one red and one white at the fly.