

Captains of New Battleships Born to Traditions of Sea

Capt. Benson Son
Of First Chief
Of Operations

Uncle Sam is placing his two newest superbattleships, built to defy the world, in the hands of two Navy captains who have inherited the stormy traditions of the sea.

One, Capt. Howard H. J. Benson, is the son of a former admiral. The second, Capt. Olaf M. Hustvedt, comes from Viking stock. He is the son of Norwegian parents who came to America during the last century.

Capt. Hustvedt officially took over the new U. S. S. North Carolina in the New York Navy Yard on Wednesday, but the giant craft—believed by the Navy to be the world's finest and most formidable fighting craft—won't actually join the fleet until midsummer. The captain is originally from Iowa.

Capt. Benson is the son of the late Admiral William S. Benson, the first chief of naval operations, and he'll take command of the U. S. S. Washington in May.

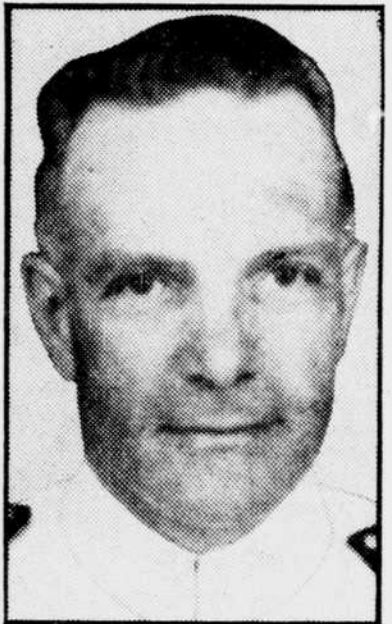
First Commissioned Since 1923. The Navy hadn't commissioned a battleship since 1923 when it gave command of the North Carolina to Capt. Hustvedt this week. It chose the man who had commanded the color guard at the Naval Academy in 1909 and who had played on the "B" football squad. The North Carolina, 35,000 tons, is the largest battleship ever built by this Nation and almost the largest afloat—to the knowledge of the Navy.

This is the first battleship command for Capt. Hustvedt, but he is no stranger to battleships. His record shows a special letter of commendation for service with the Battleship Division 6 when he was aide to the commander. In 1919 he joined Battleship Division 9 and operated with the British grand fleet.

His career includes a term as aide and operations officer on the staff of the commander of the United States fleet and routine command of vessels. There was a term at Naval Gun Factory here and one in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. In this period



CAPT. HOWARD H. J. BENSON.



CAPT. OLAF M. HUSTVEDT.

he worked with island government, the naval governmental operation of Guam, Samoa and other islands. He went from the Naval War College at Newport, R. I., to the new command. He wears the Mexican

Service Medal and the Victory Medal, Atlantic fleet clasp. Capt. Benson "grew up with the Navy," and in the words of his mother, Mrs. Mary A. Benson, who lives at 2420 Tracy place N.W., "He never wanted to be anything else but an officer."

Capt. Benson is one person who didn't stop when he had taken the Naval War College correspondence course in strategy and tactics; he went on and took the Army War College course, too.

Born in Baltimore, he entered the Naval Academy from Georgia in 1905. His career includes service of types of ships from converted yachts to battleships. He holds the Navy Cross for patrol work with the U. S. S. Coronado and the U. S. S. Roe. He also holds the Victory and Second Nicaraguan Campaign medals.

Commanded Reina Mercedes.

His jump to the new 35,000-ton Washington will be almost literally across international lines—for during the last few years he has commanded the U. S. S. Reina Mercedes, the station ship at the United

States Naval Academy in Annapolis, a former Spanish vessel. It is one of the few posts in the Navy where the captain of a ship is allowed to have his family living aboard with him. Capt. Benson has a wife and a son and daughter.

The Reina Mercedes was captured during the Spanish-American War after the Spaniards had attempted to sink it to block the channel at Santiago, Cuba. American gunfire sank the ship at the edge of the channel but not blocking it.

During his tour of duty at the academy Capt. Benson was accredited with reviving an interest among midshipmen and officers alike in yacht racing. He "skippered" the academy yawl Vamarie to numerous victories on Chesapeake Bay and the East Coast and also found time to race his own 20-foot sailboat in bay regattas during the summer.

He was an active member of the Annapolis Yacht Club and on leaving the academy was honored with a reception attended by nearly 200 yachtmen and friends in this area.

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