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## **Governor and First Lady Host Dinner Reception in Honor of USS Canberra Navy Crew**

*“We are honored to have you... We welcome you to American Samoa, and we wish you well on your commissioning ceremony and all your future deployments.”*



Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga and First Lady Ella Mauga hosted a dinner reception to honor Commander William Ashley and the crew aboard the USS Canberra on the evening of July 3rd, 2023 at the Mauga o Alii in Utulei. The USS Canberra (LCS 30) docked in American Samoa on July 1st, 2023 for an overnight stay, however some circumstances had the crew here longer than expected.

The evening began with a tour of the Governor’s Mansion by First Lady Ella and staff. Afterwards, the crew was seated for the Invocation by the Governors Chaplain Reverend Mageo

Patolo Mageo. The Master of Ceremonies Salanoa M. Salanoa welcomed the distinguished guests and commenced the reception.



“We are honored to host this reception for the crew of USS Canberra,” remarked Governor Lemanu. “The men and women of the Navy serve our country with distinction, and we are grateful for your service. We welcome you to American Samoa, and we wish you well on your commissioning ceremony and all your future deployments. Thank you once again for embracing us with your presence,” Governor Lemanu added.

USS Canberra is on its way to be ceremoniously commissioned on July 22, 2023 at the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base East in Sydney, Australia. Canberra will be the first United States Navy warship to be commissioned in an allied country. Commander Ashley thanked Governor Lemanu and the people of American Samoa for the hospitality during their time in the territory.





First Lady Ella presented each crew member with gifts, and led them into dinner. The guests reveled in an evening of delightful entertainment while immersing themselves in the captivating narrative of the Navy's profound influence in the territory's history. Commander Ashley also presented a gift to Governor Lemanu and expressed his appreciation. Governor Lemanu, First Lady Ella and members of the cabinet bade farewell to the guests by singing the famous Samoan folk song, "Tofa My Feleni."

One of the crew members, Petty Officer Third Class Deora Tuiasosopo Leomiti, is a native of American Samoa from the villages of Vatia and Pavaia'i. She is the daughter of Derrick Leomiti and Nita Tuiasosopo. Family members attending on her behalf were Maiava Joe Langkilde and Lolua Langkilde. Petty Officer Tuiasosopo Leomiti mentioned how blessed she was to be home and was happy to show her Navy friends her beautiful island and some parts of the culture.



The USS Canberra is one of 15 ships homeported in San Diego, California as a part of Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Squadron One. It departed American Samoa for Australia on July 4, 2023.

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