

Member news & Notes

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: SSS Clutch Company, Inc.

» This past April was historic as the U.S. Navy commissioned the 7th vessel to bear the name of the First State. The USS Delaware, designated SSN 791, is a Virginia-class, nuclear-powered fast attack submarine that was supposed to make its way to the Port of Wilmington for a special ceremony to mark the beginning of its service to protect the U.S. interests throughout the oceans of the world. It's the first to bear the name of Delaware in more than 100 years.

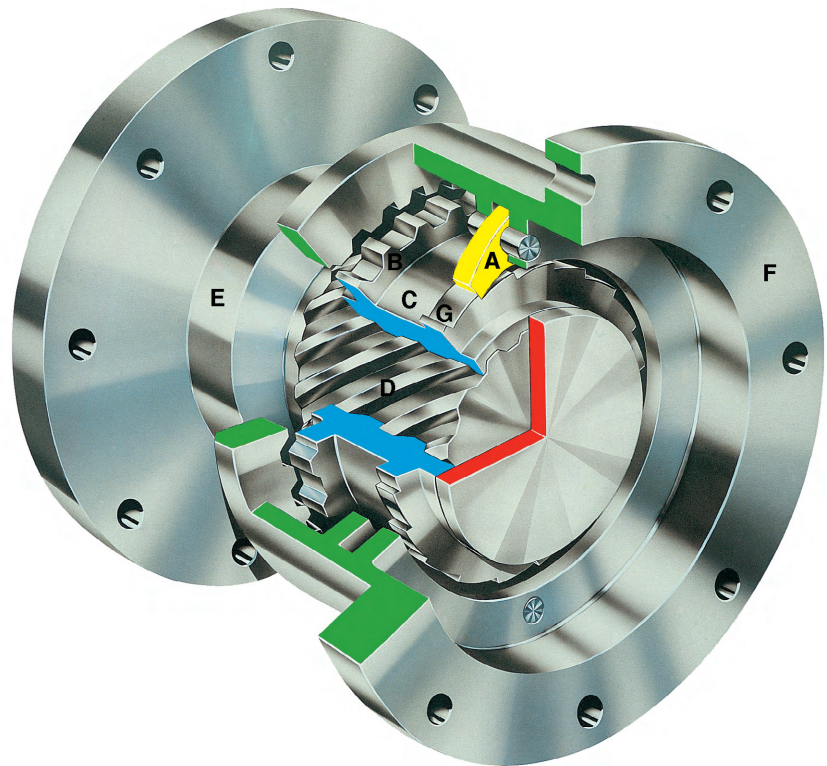
What makes this story that much more special is that Delawareans played a role in the building of this vessel.

SSS Clutch Company, Inc., a small manufacturer with a staff of ten in New Castle, installed the company's namesake, the SSS Clutch. SSS Clutch Company, Inc. is the North & South American affiliate company of SSS Gears Limited, Sunbury-on-Thames, London, England.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the USS Delaware commissioning was performed administratively on April 4. However, the U.S. Navy is looking at a "future opportunity" to celebrate the vessel.

Morgan Hendry, President of SSS Clutch Company, Inc., commented, "We look forward to a rescheduled date to commemorate this special event. Seldom do all our employees get a chance to see the final installation of our product and to meet those who will utilize and operate our SSS Clutches."

At this point, you may be asking yourself, "What is an SSS Clutch?"



An SSS (Synchronous-Self-Shifting) Clutch is analogous to a bicycle freewheel. The clutch engages automatically when the driving side accelerates to the speed of the driven side and disengages automatically when the driving side slows down relative to the driven. Like a bicycle, the freewheel in your bicycle transmits power to the back wheel through the chain and sprocket when you peddle uphill. SSS Clutches, however, transmit power or torque through concentric teeth and can be made to transmit up to 500,000 horsepower.

Worldwide applications include SSS Clutches for naval marine propulsion in ships operated by 50 navies, gas fired combined cycle power stations, combined heat & power plants, and for peak load gas fired power plants in 55 countries. SSS Clutches are also supplied for mid & down-stream oil & gas applications such as dual driven natural gas pipelines, dual driven pumps, compressors, gas recirculation fans and generators in refineries, process plants, petrochemical plants, etc.

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For instance, SSS Clutches are the key mechanism in large gas and steam turbine drives of combined cycle and peak load power stations as well as associated auxiliary drives such as gas and steam turbine slow speed turning gears, gas turbine starter drives and accelerator drives to run electrical generators for speed synchronization. It's a niche industry, but critical to the efficiency and durability of propulsion- and power-based technologies.

Since 1950, nearly 40,000 SSS Clutches have been supplied worldwide. About one quarter of these SSS Clutches are in service in North & South America, most of which were sold and are serviced by SSS Clutch Company, Inc.

"Our employees consist of mechanical and electrical engineers, technicians, contract administrators and assistants, plus we periodically employ consultants with specific industry expertise,"

explained Hendry. "SSS Clutch Company also occasionally hires engineering students as interns from universities and technical schools in our region."

SSS Clutches were first used by the US Navy in the 1960's and many classes of ships, now retired, were retrofitted with SSS Clutches to improve service reliability as well as to reduce life cycle maintenance and associated costs.

Today more than 1,400 SSS Clutches are currently in operation in twelve classes of U.S. Navy, U.S. Military Sealift Command, U.S. Coast Guard ships and three classes of US Navy submarines including the U.S. Navy Virginia Class, the latest of which is the USS Delaware, SSN791.

For new construction U.S. Navy ship programs, SSS Clutches are currently being supplied for every new DDG-51 Arleigh Burke Destroyer as well as for the Ship to Shore Connector hovercraft, USS America

Class amphibious assault ships, etc.

"In our industry, one of the measures of reliability of rotating equipment is 'mean time between failures' (MTBF), said Hendry. "SSS Clutches have demonstrated a MTBF in excess of 275,000 hours, in three classes of US Navy ships, each operating for over thirty years. This is a remarkable achievement for equipment operating in arduous naval marine applications."

In addition to the naval marine propulsion work, SSS Clutch Company continues to supply SSS Clutches for power generation and oil & gas applications, which represent nearly seventy-five percent of all new orders.

SSS Clutch Company continues to expand the type and number of applications for its product. With the periodic addition of new employees, the Company continues to grow and position itself for the future.



NEW TO THE CHAMBER

DSCC Welcomes Melissa Brayman

Melissa Brayman joined the State Chamber in March as the Office Administrator. Aside from the administrative duties of ensuring the office is running smoothly, she also assists with keeping the President's schedule and supporting accounting functions.

Melissa is originally a native of Costa Rica, but she grew up in Newark and now lives in Pike Creek with her 13-year-old daughter, Maria Soleil and her boyfriend, Curt. Melissa enjoys any challenging outdoor activity, such as running, hiking, mountain-biking, snowboarding, camping, and most of all, backpacking. She and her daughter are 'partners in crime,' and love spending time together whether it's bonding over *The Walking Dead*, Zumba class at the YMCA, exploring NYC, or backpacking on the Appalachian Trail. Her list of things to accomplish this year: plant a vegetable garden, build a compost bin, and learn to play golf.