



# Anchor Watch

To support the preservation of historic naval vessels  
and to honor those who served at sea

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THE JOURNAL OF THE HISTORIC NAVAL SHIPS ASSOCIATION



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# President's Message

Janet Cobb, MG, USA (Ret.), USS Alabama



## *Education + Mutual Aid = HNSA Relevance*

My opening message as president spoke to building the HNSA brand, of flourishing and thriving as an organization and as individual fleet members. This spring, the travails of USS *The Sullivans* was a wake-up call for all fleet members. It pulled my focus back to our true mission, not only for USS *Alabama* and USS *Drum*, but for the entire HNSA fleet.

What do we truly know about the condition of our hulls? How do we react if the worse day ever greets us, as it did for Paul Marzello and his team at Buffalo Naval Park? What would our first call be? Who in the HNSA fleet can answer our questions and would be willing and able to assist?

Past president Jonathan Williams of USS *Iowa* was the first board member to speak up, and since then, the HNSA board has made substantial progress toward a new mission of fleet education on maintenance and preservation. Our 2022 conference in Honolulu will place great emphasis on these topics. We owe it to the boards, commissions, and entities that fund staff travel to the HNSA conference each year. With rising travel costs, it is imperative that our bosses consider our program agenda worthy of investing in our attendance.

Mike Getscher of USS *Iowa* volunteered to chair our rejuvenated standing committee dedicated to preservation. He has heroes volunteering to join him. There is much work to be done. What can you contribute in this regard?

See you in Honolulu,

Janet Cobb

## **Anchor Watch Needs You!**

*Anchor Watch* is actively seeking new contributors and content. **The next deadline for submissions is October 31, 2022.** We are seeking all the latest news from the Fleet, including everything from outreach initiatives to conservation and curation projects to volunteer spotlights. However, our usual regular columns will also need new and exciting content. Send your content to the editor at the following email: [editor@hnsa.org](mailto:editor@hnsa.org). Articles should be approximately 500–750 words (though longer may occasionally be possible) and should include a selection of appropriate, high-resolution JPG images. Dr. Holland will happily send you a copy of the *HNSA Style Guide* and will work with you on your submission ideas. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

**Cover Photo:** USS *Missouri* sits bow-to-bow with the sunken USS *Arizona*, creating the bookends of WWII.  
**Cover Credit:** Battleship Missouri Memorial

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# Executive Director's Message

Ryan Szimanski, Director of Curatorial and Educational Affairs, Battleship New Jersey Museum & Memorial



Shipmates,

The first half of this year has featured the usual mixed bag of triumphs and failures. Many of our fleet members who close over winter are fully reopened, most overnight programs have resumed, and I am hearing about a generally upward trend in visitation,

with many museum ships even reporting above-average attendance numbers. Planning for this year's conference in Hawaii is almost complete and we have developed a great program for your education and enjoyment. But, we have all also been following the news of maintenance issues on our fellow museum ships.

Just this year we have seen multiple museum ships devastated by flooding. On 30 April 2022, the icebreaker tugboat *James Whalen* sank at her moorings. A week before that, on 23 April 2022, the Brazilian Corvette Imperial *Marinheiro* went down at her museum. Shortly before that, I'm sure you were all watching the news as USS *The Sullivans* settled into the mud on 13 April 2022. In March, the tugboat *Lake Superior* began listing before the stern was eventually submerged and the vessel began leaking oil. In February, the *Foxtrot*-class museum ship, *B-39*, a former Russian submarine, was towed to Mexico for scrap because her hull was so deteriorated and, around the same time, the submarine USS *Clamagore* was permanently closed to the public, awaiting final disposition because of a major leak.

The simple truth is the next major hull breach could happen on any one of our vessels. From the smallest destroyer, with 3/8" thick shell plating, to United States "fast battleships," with 12-inch thick belts but only 7/16" thick bows, our ships have weak points that will corrode and cause water intrusion. The majority of our ships were built at the same time, during World War II, out of similar materials. Many were decommissioned around the same time and subsequently opened as museums. We have all suffered from deferred maintenance because of the pandemic and it is no coincidence that our ships are having these hull issues now. What happened

in Buffalo and elsewhere are not isolated incidents; they are indicators of a major challenge facing our field.

What do we need to do now? This will be a major theme at this year's conference, but you can start by creating or updating your organization's disaster preparedness/emergency response plan and make sure it's a part of your museum's core documents. Next, you need to start planning for your next major hull-maintenance cycle. For many of us, this may mean dry docking. The public maintenance issues happening at present provide a great opportunity to start the conversations with your Board of Directors, local politicians, and funding sources. If you start planning to go to the yard today, it will likely be two years before you get there, so start planning now. We have a number of dry-dock reports up on HNSA's website that provide guidance on the process (<https://archive.hnsa.org/handbook/index.htm>). Finally, build community support. It is our challenge to make our institutions so valuable to our communities that they will not be able to stand losing us and will pay any price to keep us viable and functioning. The folks in Buffalo have done a great job building community support to fund the restoration efforts on USS *The Sullivans*. Would your community rally behind you in a similar manner?

The good news is you are not in this alone. Your HNSA community is here to help. We are focusing the entire conference this year on preservation and advocacy. Plan on coming to our annual conference in Honolulu from 13 to 16 September 2022. In light of current events, presentations will focus on creating relevance and hull maintenance (including an update on the recovery efforts on USS *The Sullivans*), how to write a disaster preparedness/emergency response plan, and a masterclass by our new partners at the Association for Materials Protection and Performance.

I hope to see you in Hawaii this September as we continue learning as a group how best to preserve our vessels into the future. Expect to hear more from me about this in the near future and reach out with any questions. My email address is [executivedirector@hnsa.org](mailto:executivedirector@hnsa.org).

Please reach out whenever you need! ~Ryan

# AROUND OUR FLEET AND BEYOND

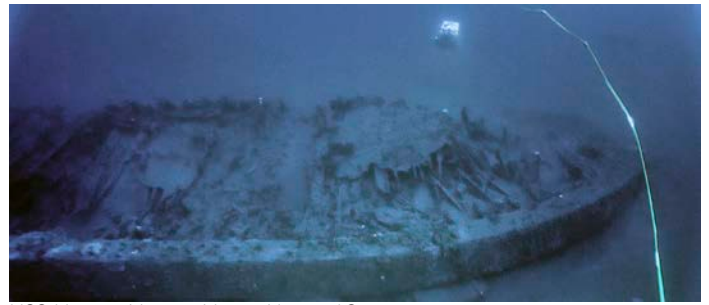
South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster has issued an executive order to commission an updated cost-study analysis of environmental threats posed by the USS *Yorktown* (CV-10), a National Historic Landmark (NHL) currently based at Patriots Point in Charleston Harbour, South Carolina, which still has approximately 160,000 gallons of petroleum and more than a million gallons of polluted water onboard. The hull of the vessel is corroding and the chances of a leak as a result of the presence of these toxic fluids is increasing. Commissioned in 1943, and decommissioned in 1970, the ship has been a museum ship since 1975 when the NHL designation came into effect. This will be the second such study conducted by the State of South Carolina and will assess the requirements for the complete remediation of the site to avert a potential environmental disaster and the potential loss of this important ship.



USS *Yorktown* from Charleston Harbor.

Credit: <https://bit.ly/3vpfOSs>

In May 2022, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) visited the namesake shipwreck located in the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, 16-miles off the North Carolina coast. It was the first return to the wreck of the USS *Monitor* since 2002 when United States Navy divers made significant intrusions into the ship and recovered the revolutionary rotating turret, among other artifacts. The investigation used a remotely operated camera and was part of a wider survey of multiple ships that sank during the Civil War and World War II, of which the *Monitor* was the oldest and most important. The Civil War ironclad sank on New Year's Eve 1862, with a loss of 16 sailors. Researchers were delighted to find that the ship remains remarkably intact, despite resting in 230 feet of water upside down on the seabed for 160 years. They believe that the same iron hull that could withstand the rigors of war has now enabled the site to become a stable environment for a vast amount of marine life, making it difficult to see the actual ship. The amazing state of preservation means the wreck will remain for generations to come.



USS *Monitor*, Monitor Marine National Sanctuary.

Credit: Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

In April 2022, the decommissioned United States Navy *Fletcher*-class destroyer, USS *The Sullivans* (DD-537), suffered a major hull breach causing the ship to take on water and list heavily to its starboard side. Emergency crews, including an underwater diving team, assessed the breach within the ship and beneath the water line, while another crew was on deck pumping out water. A crack in the hull was first observed in 2018 and fundraising campaigns were underway to repair the ship. On 30 July 2022, Senator Charles Schumer announced \$7.5 million in federal funding had been secured for the repair of the USS *The Sullivans* at the Buffalo and Erie Naval and Military Park. The money was part of a wider appropriations bill and will be used “to complete repairs and fully restore the ship, ensuring the beloved landmark will remain canal side for generations” (<https://bit.ly/3JfAfqM>). The ship was commissioned in 1943 and operated in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. It was named after five brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, who lost their lives when their ship, USS *Juneau*, was sunk by a Japanese submarine during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 13 November 1942.



USS *The Sullivans*, 14 April 2022.

Credit: United States Coast Guard

Jonathan Williams, president and CEO of the Pacific Battleship Center, and president of the Los Angeles Fleet Week Foundation has been awarded the Distinguished Public Service Award by the Department of the Navy. The Navy's highest award for non-military civilians was presented to Williams last month by Secretary of the Navy, Carlos Del Toro, during the Surface Navy Association's 34<sup>th</sup> National Symposium in Arlington, Va. Williams was recognized for his significant contributions to the Navy throughout 13 years as the visionary leader for the Battleship *Iowa* Museum, Los Angeles Fleet Week, and the National Museum of the Surface Navy. Among Williams' accomplishments was the establishment of USS *Iowa* (BB-61) as a Navy-licensed national museum that provides direct and indirect support to the Navy, veterans, and the local community. In addition to bringing Fleet Week to Los Angeles in 2016, it is through his vision and leadership that Williams established the National Museum of the Surface Navy, the first and only national museum dedicated to the Surface Navy, aboard Battleship USS *Iowa*. The museum will formally open on 13 October 2025 on the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of America's Surface Navy. According to the award citation, it is due to Williams' extraordinary vision and leadership that "the Battleship *Iowa* Museum and LA Fleet Week have become the example for ship museums and fleet weeks in recognizing the U.S. Navy and its critical role in serving our country and the world."



Secretary of the Navy, Carlos Del Toro, presents the Department of the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award to Jonathan Williams, president and CEO of Battleship *Iowa* Museum and the National Museum of the Surface Navy  
Credit: Pacific Battleship Center

In May 2022, 10 veterans of the World War II United States Merchant Marine received the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor that is bestowed by

the United States Congress. They received the medal at the United States Capitol on behalf of roughly 1,500 surviving World War II merchant marines. Though originally authorized in 2020, the ceremony was unable to move forward until this year due to ongoing pandemic-related restrictions. Of the roughly 243,000 merchant mariners that served during World War II, 9,521 perished, approximately four percent of their total numbers, a higher fatality rate than that of any United States armed services branch during the war. "The bravery demonstrated by the U.S. merchant mariners to keep Allied forces supplied during World War II is second to none," said Dru DiMattia, President of the American Merchant Marine Veterans. "In the face of targeted attacks by German submarines and U-boats, the unarmed merchant mariners met the moment with resilience and courage, and serve as an inspiration for all of American maritime" (<https://bit.ly/3oMAIqM>).



10 veterans of the WWII Merchant Marine accept the Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of their shipmates, United States Capitol, May 18 (American Merchant Marine Veterans)  
Credit: American Merchant Marine Veterans, <https://bit.ly/3oMAIqM>



Many of you may not recognize the HNSA member pictured here, but this is Robert (Bob) Wasalaski, a retired Captain of the United States Naval Reserve. He is also a retired government employee of the Naval Sea Systems Command. Between 1995 and 2002, he was the technical authority for historic and donated ships. HNSA files may include a highlighted copy of NSTM 050 indicating areas of the manual to help you maintain such ships. You may also find an ABS manual for inspecting paint. Bob also developed the ship inspection guide and arranged for the Naval Reserve Engineering Officer Units to help inspect the ships. He visited most of the HNSA ships

during this period. Bob is once again on the road and visiting HNSA ships. He is travelling with his grandson and may come through your ship at some point in their travels. We're really looking forward to a travel article from Bob once he's back home recounting the ships he was able to visit and his experience during his tour. Look for him on one of your ships soon and we're sure you will give him and his grandson a warm welcome!

As noted in the June 2022 issue of *Fleet News*, a new education center has recently opened in Baltimore, as the *Historic Ships in Baltimore USS Constellation Education Center and Inner Harbor Water Taxi Terminal*. This construction project is the latest in a series of projects that are rejuvenating the Inner Harbor. The one-story building has now opened to the public, meaning the *Constellation* has returned to its regular berth on the west side of Pier 1 and is now directly connected to the education center. The grand opening, 22 years in the making, means the ship, built in 1854, is once more open to visitors and the facility is well placed to be the first major undertaking as part of an overall rejuvenation of Baltimore's downtown waterfront.



The Historic Ships in Baltimore USS *Constellation* Education Center and Inner Harbor Water Taxi Terminal

Credit: Ed Gunts, <https://bit.ly/3PQtEp5/>

Two brothers, both recreational divers, have recently revealed they have discovered a famous Royal Navy shipwreck off the coast of Norfolk, England. The HMS *Gloucester*, commissioned in 1692, served in many wars of the period and sank in 1682. One of the survivors of the wreck was the future King James II of England and James VII of Scotland, then the Duke of York. A new research project by the University of East Anglia is investigating the site and documenting

this important ship for future generations. The famous naval administrator and diarist of the period, Samuel Pepys, witnessed the event from another ship in the fleet and later described the harrowing scenes as survivors were rescued from the water. The identity of the shipwreck, first discovered in 2007 by the Barnwell brothers has only recently been conclusively confirmed. Maritime archaeologists and historians have described the discovery as the most important British maritime find since that of the *Mary Rose* in 1971. HMS *Gloucester* is the only surviving third-rate warship of the Cromwellian era and will remain a focus of research and documentation by experts for many years.



"The Wreck of the 'Gloucester' off Yarmouth, 6 May 1682" This painting represents the wrecking of the *Gloucester* while carrying the Duke of York to Leith. Through the negligence of the pilot, the ship foundered on the Lemon and Oar shoal off Yarmouth. Credit: Johan Danckerts, artist, <https://bit.ly/3zLyyv7>

A Royal Navy warship has recently been located on the Scottish seabed in the Inner Hebrides almost 105 years to the day after it sank. The location of torpedo-boat destroyer, HMS *Jason* was unknown, having struck a mine and sunk during a mine-sweeping operation in company with HMS *Circe*. Historians from the **Lost in Waters Deep** organization researched contemporary records and the personal history of the crew. This research eventually led to a sonar scan earlier this year, which suggested they had located the wreck. At 93-meters deep, divers would only have roughly 20 minutes per dive to inspect the wreck to determine identity. The dive team included Royal Navy officer Lieutenant Jen Smith, who works at the Fleet's headquarters in Portsmouth, England. Smith noted, "It's incredibly moving to think that no one has seen the ship since her stern disappeared 105 years ago. Families knew the fate of the ship, but now they will know where she is and that can bring closure." You can learn more about the *Jason* and her crew at the following link:

<https://lostinwatersdeep.co.uk/hms-jason.html>

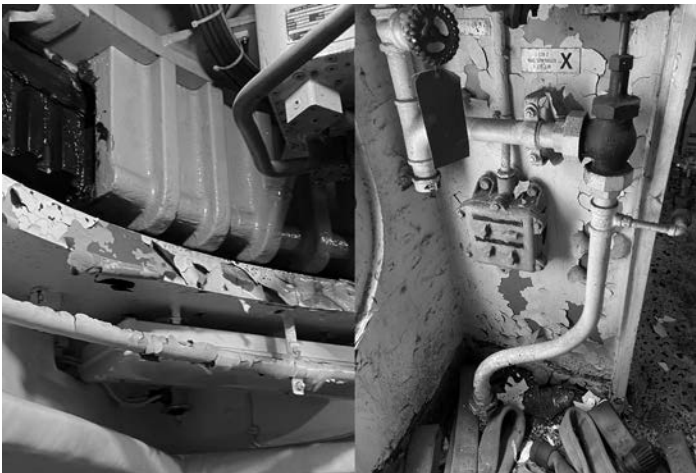
# FLEET FEATURES

## Ohio Boy Scout Earns His Eagle Scout Badge on USS Wisconsin

Keith Nitka, Battleship Operations Manager, USS Wisconsin

After being contacted by David Brown, a Boy Scout from Cincinnati, Ohio, USS *Wisconsin* and Nauticus saw a major improvement on one of its 5"/38's. "I was contacted by a young man in Cincinnati, Ohio, about doing preservation work on the ship for his Eagle Scout project. He chose USS *Wisconsin* because he and his family have visited the ship on numerous occasions, and he wanted to be a part of the USS *Wisconsin* and support her mission. David mailed his proposal to me and after my endorsements, he then sent it up his chain-of-command for approval," explains the author.

to other workers. With the help of some volunteer electricians on staff, as well as a volunteer maintenance group from USS *Oak Hill* (LSD-52), David was able to meet this requirement. According to David, he couldn't have chosen a better project. "I had a blast working on this project. Even though it was a substantial undertaking, it was completely doable and was completed in a timely manner. The volunteer force (consisting of my dad, his friend Tim, and for a day, ten United States Navy personnel volunteers) were instrumental in the completion of the restoration and it was amazing getting to work beside them. It was a privilege to be able to give back to the Nauticus and I can't wait to see it [the newly restored area] opened to



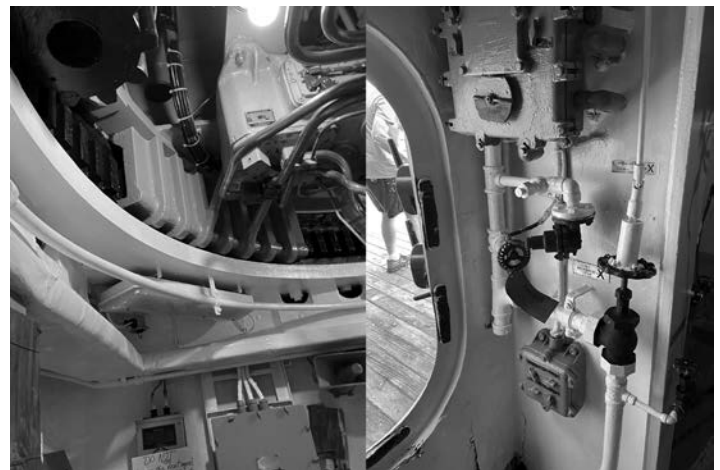
Before restoration work.

Credit: Kenneth Brown

Brown's project entailed cleaning and painting one of the ships 5"/38's for public viewing and future interpretation. In July 2021, Brown, his father Ken, and family friend, Tim Hudson, made the trek to Norfolk, Virginia, to begin the tedious work. For an entire week, the three spent their days embarked on USS *Wisconsin* in an orderly and well-managed fashion.

"They met me every morning promptly at 0830 on the pier and worked each day, from Monday to Friday until 1700. Combined, the three spent a total of 120 hours of work in cleaning, chipping, and painting the upper handling room, as well as the gunhouse of Mount 5-6, the aft gun mount on the Port side," Nitka said.

As part of the requirements for becoming an Eagle Scout, the scout needs to supervise and give direction



After restoration work.

Credit: Kenneth Brown/



Keith Nitka and Boy Scout David Brown in the gunhouse of Mt 5-6. David was understandably proud of the "brightwork" he did in there and in the upper handling room.

Credit: Kenneth Brown

the public in the future.”

David’s father, Ken, was also grateful for the opportunity to help open more spaces on USS *Wisconsin*. “It was a true blessing to get to work on the USS *Wisconsin* and in some small way honor all those brave individuals who have served on the *Wisconsin*. As a Dad, I couldn’t be prouder of David, and I know this opportunity is something that he will cherish the rest of his life. We owe a huge debt and thank you to Keith Nitka at the Nauticus for making this happen, and to the United States Navy volunteers from the USS *Oak Hill* (LSD-51) and our family friend, Tim Hudson, for their time spent volunteering.”



Left to right, Tim Hudson (family friend), David Brown, and Ken Brown (David’s father) in the upper handling room after completion of their work.

Credit:Keith Nitka/

## The USS South Dakota Battleship Memorial

Chris Tucker- Collections Manager/Archivist, USS South Dakota Battleship Memorial

According to Robert N. Rose in *My Ship O’Dreams*, the legacy of every sailor is the voyage. When a ship departs the safety of the harbor, their legacy is entrusted to the stewardship of friends and family should they never return. Expert skill and adept experience are humbled at the awesome power of the ocean. Our forefathers may have made their homes on land, but their hearts were jealously stolen by the hum of a song found within the soul of their ships. Poet Robert N. Rose wrote, “ships are the nearest things to dreams that hands have ever made. For somewhere deep in their oaken hearts the soul of a song is laid.”



Exterior view of the superstructure-inspired architecture, giving patrons an idea of the scale of the 680-foot battlewagon.

Credit:<https://southdakotabattleship.org/>

On 20 March 1942, the song began for USS *South Dakota*. One of just 59 seagoing battleships in United States history, she was the namesake and flagship of her class (Naval History and Heritage Command, [www.history.navy.mil](http://www.history.navy.mil)).

Different in design from the other four ships of the class, the addition of the flagship level replaced two 5”/38 caliber turrets. With her highest point at 192 feet, BB57 could not fit under the Brooklyn Bridge. Known as Battleship X and Old Nameless, she was the most decorated battleship of World War II, earning thirteen battle stars, the Navy Unit Commendation, and several other awards. (The USS *Enterprise* [CV-6] was the most decorated ship of World War II).

In the Third Battle of the Solomon Sea (25–27 October 1942) and Operation Watchtower (7–9 August 1942), she supported the Marine landings in the Guadalcanal-Tulagi area, the Battle of Savo Island, and Midway. During the Second Battle of Savo Island, BB57 duelled with the Japanese battleship *Kirishima* and aided USS *Washington* in sinking her on 5 November 1942, one of only two battleship versus battleship engagements of World War II. From supporting the invasion of Iwo Jima, Okinawa, to shelling mainland Japan, USS *South Dakota* and her crew served with honor and distinction.

Of the 6,787 crew that rotated on and off the ship during the war, many were heroes. One of these is Calvin Graham (1930–1992), a twelve-year-old who hid his age and caused a bit of an issue with the United States Navy. He was the youngest American combat veteran of record in World War II. His chain-of-command struggled with his fraudulent enlistment considering he had already been in two battles, been injured, and received a Purple Heart. Another former crew member of note was Lieutenant Commander Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr. (1915–2011). He was the future



brother-in-law of President John F. Kennedy. A third crewman of interest was SF3/C Leo Joseph Nolan, Jr. (1925–1982), who became a Hoyane (Chief) of his people, the Onondaga Nation of New York and Canada.



Men of the USS *South Dakota* celebrating their current combat record (at the time of the photo) with 31 Japanese planes downed and enemy three ships sun. Credit: <https://bit.ly/3Pd4kJ2>

After the war ended, the USS *South Dakota* led the Third Fleet into San Francisco Bay on 15 October 1945. Admiral Halsey stated in his speech about these returning war ships, “Some will continue in active service. Some will be held in reserve. Some of the older ones will be decommissioned. But I hope to God we don’t sink or scrap them this time.” (Richard V. Hayer, *Thrilling Victory Review Staged by Armada*, San Francisco Examiner October 1945). He was referring to the post-World War I scrapping of the Naval Fleet. Fleet Admiral William Frederick Halsey, Jr., passed away in 1959 and was not there to read the notification from the 1962 United States Congress that older and obsolete ships were to be sold for scrap.

Former crew, concerned citizens, and South Dakota politicians, rushed to USS *South Dakota*’s aid to preserve as much as they could of this legendary battleship. Sioux Falls, South Dakota, was chosen as the location for the Battleship *South Dakota* memorial, dedicated in 1969. In succeeding years, crew members gathered for reunions and

to commemorate the ship. The collections and donations came in year after year and, as mortality showed its signs on her crew, the reunions got smaller and smaller. Following is a brief timeline of the development of the memorial as it stands today, a permanent legacy to her crew.

- 1964: Two railroad cars of artifacts from BB57 arrives in Sioux Falls. (mast, anchor, 40-feet of chain, seven muzzles from 16”/45 caliber barrels).
- 1965: Stanchions (from USS *Indiana*) installed in the ground forming the 680-foot-long outline of the ship.
- 1969: 50-foot main exhibit hall constructed, forming a likeness of the superstructure.
- 1972: Two concrete gun turrets constructed, one forward and one aft.
- 1975: Groundbreaking for the concrete outline conducted at the July reunion.
- 1995: 94-ton 16” 45 caliber gun barrel installed on the aft deck.
- 1999: Two ,5’ 38 cal. gun barrel displays. 2,700 pound 16” projectile displays created.
- 2001: *South Dakota*-class ship’s propeller installed aft. Battleship X Historical Marker. Mark IV radar director installed. East exhibition hall constructed.
- 2002: 16-inch thick, 8,000-pound armored conning tower door installed aft. Anchor and aft mast installed.
- 2009: Bothwell annex was added to the west side of main exhibition hall.

Exhibits on display in the main hall include a 1:8 scale 40,000 hp boiler and engine model; a 1938 1/4 scale wooden engineer’s model (roughly 20’ in length); a 900-pound ship’s bell; a 30-inch aft steering wheel and mechanism; a captured German Navy flag; a captured Japanese Nagato Flag; a piece of the USS *Arizona* hull; and numerous photographs and smaller artifacts. The Battleship USS *South Dakota* Memorial is located at 2705 West 12th Street, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57104. It is open seasonally from Memorial Day to Labor Day, seven days a week from May to September, between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (<https://southdakotabattleship.org/>)



Panoramic view of the USS *South Dakota* Memorial interior, highlighting the architecture of a 1-1 scale likeness model Battleship X. Credit: <https://bit.ly/3BGOrHA>

# 2021 Executive Director's Travel Log

Ryan Szimanski, Executive Director, Historic Naval Ships Association

One of the perks of my job is I am “required” to go out and visit a certain number of HNSA member museums each year. Let me tell you this is quite the hardship on me and I definitely haven't been doing this since I was four years old. I recently counted how many ships I have visited since assuming the role of Executive Director this past year and I visited about 30 individual museum ships in that brief period. All told, I am pretty sure I achieved a new personal record for ships visited in one year. Visiting ships is great, but the HNSA members I was able to spend time with along the way were amazing.

Visiting other museum ships is probably the single biggest piece of professional development a museum ship staff member or volunteer can pursue. It would be an understatement for me to say that I have benefitted from the connections I have made visiting other ships and I cannot count the number of lessons I have learned from other organizations. I strongly encourage each of you to use your HNSA membership to get out and visit as many other museum ships as possible. Make sure to explore all the local ships so you can start working together a cohesive whole.

I made two trips to Massachusetts this year and spent some time at Battleship Cove with its board president, Justin Bond; long-time HNSA members, Rich Angelini and Chris Nardi; and new Battleship Cove Executive Director,

Meghan Rathbun. It was great to see their projects progress during the several months between my visits like the recreated DASH drone control station on USS *Joseph P. Kennedy*.

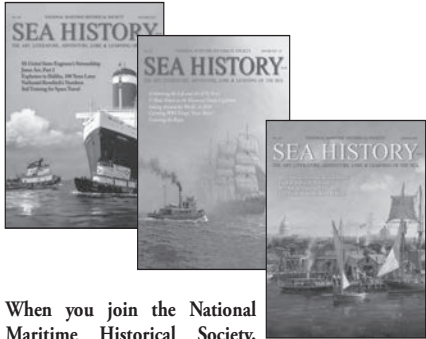
I also got to visit other area museum ships, like the cruiser USS *Salem*, which is one of my favorite museum experiences. I do not know how you prefer to experience museums, but I'm an explorer. I would rather wander around than follow railroad tracks. My own ship has lines to direct guests, but USS *Salem* is the upper size limit of what guests can safely explore and I love having that freedom.



Margaret LaForest, Ryan Szimanski, and Meghan Rathbun at USS *Salem*.  
Credit: Libby Jones

## SEA HISTORY

the quarterly publication of the  
*National Maritime Historical Society*



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On the same trip, I was able to spend time on USS *Cassin Young* and USS *Constitution* in Boston. They are interesting because they are run by government entities, the National Park Service and the United States Navy, respectively, which gives them a different set of challenges and opportunities. The USS *Constitution* Museum located on the same property, but run by a non-profit organization, was one of my favorite museums when I was a kid and continues to be to this day. On the way home, I was able to stop on USS *Intrepid* and USS *Growler* for the first time, continuing my exploration of previously unseen museum ships.



An impromptu HNSA regional meetup at *Cassin Young*. Credit: Libby Jones

While in New England, we organized a regional meetup when Margaret LaForest and Dan Sibbald from USS *Salem* and Meaghan Rathbun from Battleship Cove and I were able to tour the Boston and Quincy area ships together.

It goes without saying that I have spent a little bit of time on USS *New Jersey* this past year, but I have also made it across the river to USS *Olympia* and USS *Becuna* to spend time with Greg Williams and the other staff. It was exciting being on board USS *Olympia* during the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her carrying the Unknown Soldier from France to Arlington, Virginia. If you have not visited her recently, they have some interesting new onboard exhibits to commemorate the occasion and a nice display where the casket was secured.

It feels like it was years ago, but my coworkers assure me it was earlier this year that I got to revisit Battleship *North Carolina* for the first time since I was younger. Mary Ames Booker and Kim Sincox showed me around their collection and some of their education programs. Then we stopped in Norfolk, Virginia, on the way home and Keith Nitka showed us some of his recent and upcoming projects on USS *Wisconsin*. It's amazing how much of that ship has been opened since I was last on board a couple years ago. Also in Virginia, but on a different trip, I got to see the USS *Monitor* turret at the Mariner's Museum.

Of course, we held the 2021 HNSA conference on USS *Alabama* and USS *Drum*. USS *Alabama* was my eighth and final American battleship to visit and she lived up to the hype. I am excited to see the work they are doing on the new deck, which has already begun.

As I am writing this, I have recently returned from a trip to Louisiana and Texas where among other ships I got to visit USS *Baton Rouge* and USS *Kidd* for the first time. I was even able to stand where Tom Hanks was in the movie *Greyhound*. USS *Kidd* might have been my favorite destroyer tour route. It even takes you through a head to really hammer home to guests what daily life was like on one of these ships. I was disappointed I didn't get to meet any of Tim NesSmith's volunteers while I was on board, but he and Rosehn Gipe showed me the whole campus, a great experience.

On that same trip, I stopped in Galveston and saw the destroyer escort USS *Stewart*, and the submarine, USS *Cavalla*. It had been well over a decade since I last saw them and I was impressed with how much work had been done since I was last on board. On the afternoon I visited, the museum was quite busy, with a staff member chipping paint on the hull and volunteers giving tours to guests. Brian Abugal and Master Chief Deuel again gave me free run of the ships on short notice, for which I'm grateful.



Ryan Szimanski, Alaina Noland, Gabe Sheffield, Aric Deuel, and Brian Abugal on USS *Stewart*. Credit: Libby Jones

While in the area, I also spent time on USS *Texas* and saw the work that is planned for her in the future. In addition to seeing the ship, I got to see the Gulf Copper shipyard where her dry-dock will be located and the warehouse where the USS *Texas* staff have been working. Travis Davis took me anywhere on the ship I could think of and Kandace Trujillo showed me around the warehouse where the team was hard at work.

I included a stop at USS *Lexington* and saw their new escape rooms (see the article about that below). She is

another ship I hadn't been to in years and I was impressed by her material condition and the ways they are diversifying their offerings. Steve Banta and Cassi Champion were gracious hosts, even though the trip was very much planned last minute. You'd be surprised how much of a red carpet they can roll out on just eight hours' notice.



Gabe Sheffield, Kyle Brillantes, Kandace Trujillo, Ryan Szimanski, and Alaina Noland inspect the guns removed from USS *Texas* and under restoration. Credit: Libby Jones

Finally, I stopped in Lake Charles, Louisiana, to get the behind-the-scenes tour of USS *Orleck*. The ship is already in dry-dock in Port Arthur, Texas. By the time you read this, she will already be out of the yard and in her new homeport of Jacksonville, Florida, where she will reopen for tours. I will be watching the news with great anticipation to follow her progress.

Unfortunately, a planned regional meetup along the Gulf Coast fell through because of scheduling difficulties, but if I have learned one thing from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that the various regions have been affected very differently

## WinterFest on the USS *Wisconsin*, A Holiday Light Spectacular

Keith Nitka, Battleship Operations Manager, USS *Wisconsin*

This year marked the second annual WinterFest on the USS *Wisconsin*, and it was a smashing success! Over 65,000 people experienced WinterFest during its 39-night run. Thanks to WinterFest's presenting sponsor, GEICO Military, over 1,000 active-duty and veteran service members attended WinterFest at no cost on opening weekend.

Prior to 2020, Nauticus held Dickens Christmas Towne inside the Half Moone Cruise Terminal to generate revenue for the lag in attendance during the winter months. When Nauticus was able to reopen after COVID-19 protocols eased, Norfolk, Virginia, would not allow them to hold indoor grouped events. So, Nauticus decided to have an

and we need to start working more with other local HNSA members to leverage our various assets and help each other move forward.



Visiting the *Orleck* volunteers as they prepared the ship for dry-docking in December 2021. Credit: Libby Jones

As 2022 marches on, I am planning to make more trips. I cannot believe I went a whole year without going home to Historic Ships in Baltimore and it has been too long since I visited USS *John W. Brown*. I would love to get up to Buffalo since those are probably the closest ships to me geographically. I also need to get back out to the West Coast, which has a huge concentration of museum ships. Of course, I will be seeing USS *Missouri* and USS *Bowfin* in September for the 2022 HNSA conference, and I hope to see you all there so you can tell me about the ships you have visited since we last met.



outdoor winter event using some of the charm of Dickens Christmas Towne, but with inspiration from more modern holiday films like *Elf* and *The Grinch* and have it on the USS *Wisconsin*! It did so well in 2020 that in 2021 Nauticus did it again, doubling the lights, doubling the nights, and not only did Santa and his elves return, but the Grinch joined the festivities, as well!

Nauticus worked with Blue Steel Lighting Design to design and decorate the USS *Wisconsin* with over 650,000 lights. From her bow to her fantail, guests could walk through six uniquely themed light zones. This year, WinterFest added a 32-foot Christmas tree to the fantail and the Griswold's Café in the wardroom.

Heading below deck, visitors could enjoy holiday adventures. Chief Warrant Officers country was transformed into Elf Adventure Alley by an animatronics company. Santa's elves had taken over the area to use as berthing and workspaces, like the ships JAG office turning into the "Naughty or Nice" room and a Santa tracking station in the PAO office. Oliver, the talking Christmas tree, and Jingles, the talking gingerbread man, were a huge hit with children because they could interact with the live actor behind the scenes.

Some guests and volunteers disagreed with the use of the museum ship USS *Wisconsin* as a platform for the decorations and the event, stating it was disrespectful and degrading. However, the author, Keith Nitka, a former crewmember of the USS *Wisconsin* and now Battleship Operations Manager at Nauticus, had this to say, "It was no different, albeit over the top, than any holiday season myself or the ship had spent in port at Norfolk Naval Base taking part in 'Operation Decorama'. WinterFest has helped us to keep the lights on in the museum over the winter months and keep showcasing the battleship's long and proud history!"

The funds from 2020's WinterFest opened new spaces to visitors, including the CPO mess. The proceeds from 2021's WinterFest will allow Nauticus to open new sections of the battleship and more fully interpret key areas prior to the ship's birthday celebration, which was held on April 16, 2022.




View of the USS *Wisconsin* during the 2021 Winterfest.

Credit:USS *Wisconsin*

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# An Escape Room Adventure Aboard the USS Lexington Museum

Cassandra Champian, Director of Marketing, USS Lexington Museum

In early 2019, the USS *Lexington* Museum opened *Lockdown on the LEX—Ultimate Escape Rooms* aboard our aircraft carrier museum located in Corpus Christi, Texas. In conjunction with our technology partner, Magnigadgets, LLC, we opened with one escape room experience, or mission, at that time and have since expanded our selection to include a total of three missions—*Beat the Blast*, *Face Your Fears*, and *Save Our Ship*. Each of our *Lockdown on the LEX* escape-room missions has been expertly designed using state-of-the-art technology programmed into vintage naval equipment. Through our recent addition of this attraction to our museum, we strive to intrigue and entice even the most experienced escape-room enthusiasts, while bringing a new demographic of guests to visit a historic United States Navy ship. The price of \$38.00 per person includes admission to the USS *Lexington* Museum.

On a historic aircraft carrier with over 4,000 compartments in total, and approximately 30 percent of those open to the public, our *Lockdown on the LEX* attraction takes up only a miniscule amount of space—eleven compartments including control room and storage—while steadily bringing in approximately 3 percent of our attendance since its opening. Each mission comprises three compartments for game play, and all operate from a shared “mission control” room where the gamemasters are situated to monitor teams of up to 10 people per game.

## ***Beat the Blast***

Our first escape room experience is called *Beat the Blast* and this game offers visitors adventure and excitement as teams have one hour to complete their assigned mission...or face the threat of nuclear annihilation. Based loosely on the fact that the last operational mission of USS *Lexington* was during the Cuban Missile Crisis, *Beat the Blast* transports thrill seekers to the heart of the Cold War, challenging them to seek clues and solve perplexing puzzles to find and defuse a nuclear bomb hidden aboard this historic ship.

## ***Face Your Fears***

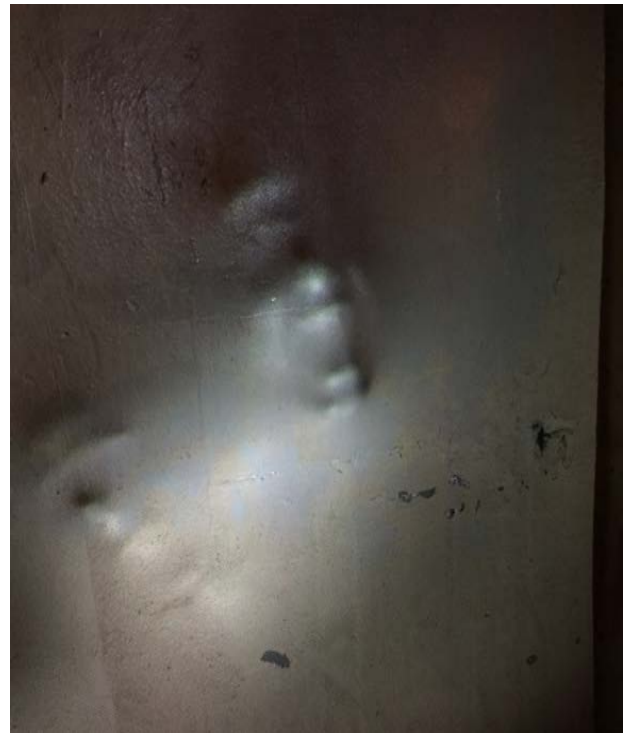
Later in 2019, following the successful launch and operation of our first mission, we opened our second escape room mission called *Face Your Fears* to coincide with Halloween. We also wanted to make use of the October time frame to capture the attention—and attendance—of some of our guests who visit our annual haunted house feature called *The Haunting on the Blue Ghost*. *Face Your Fears* is a mission designed for fans of scary movies and fright-filled experiences. From our marketing materials: “USS

*Lexington* has long been rumored to be haunted...but when rumor becomes reality, things really start to get scary. *Face Your Fears* takes you on a terrifying path into an abandoned area of the ship, leaving clues to help you find a missing group of ghost hunters aboard this World War II aircraft carrier. Hopefully, you can escape within the allotted time or your team may face the same fate. Throughout 2019, the USS *Lexington* Museum welcomed nearly 6,000 visitors to our *Lockdown on the LEX—Ultimate Escape Rooms*.”



*Beat the Blast*, bomb countdown.

Credit: [USS Lexington Museum](#)



*Face Your Fears*, wall faces.

Credit: [USS Lexington Museum](#)

### ***Impact of a Pandemic***

In August 2019, 2,350 escape-room facilities were operating in the United States. Then in 2020, due to the economic downturn spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, many escape-room facilities closed and subsequently failed to reopen. The USS *Lexington* Museum temporarily closed in late March and reopened at the end of May 2020.

As closures lifted across Texas, and the USS *Lexington* Museum was able to implement safety protocols, we reopened for Memorial Day Weekend and returned to increased attendance at the museum and, simultaneously, our two escape-room missions. We were able to close out the year with just under 5,000 escape-room guests, even though we were shuttered for nearly two months of the calendar year.

Over the course of the rest of 2020, the escape-room industry in the United States experienced a 4.3 percent decrease, leaving 2,250 escape-room facilities remaining operational in August 2020. Further closures into 2021 resulted in a 7.5 percent decrease, with only 2,080 United States escape-room facilities remaining in February 2021, according to Room Escape Artist's *U.S. Escape Room Industry Report – 2020 Year End Update*.

Throughout 2021, we experienced a great recovery to our museum audience, as well as visitors to our *Lockdown on the LEX—Ultimate Escape Rooms*. While we worked with our partner to develop additional unused space on the ship and create a third mission, we closed out the year with more than 9,100 total escape-room guests.

### ***Save Our Ship***

To capitalize on spring break traffic to the Coastal Bend area of South Texas, we opened our third mission in early March 2022. *Save Our Ship* welcomes guests to the game as a team of damage-control officers who come aboard for training when emergencies quickly arise. Escape-room gamers must work under pressure to put out fires and dodge major disasters to save our ship—and all those aboard—from total peril.

From our recent press release announcing the launch of our newest mission: “The USS *Lexington* Museum is proud to offer yet another interactive experience for our visitors,” states Executive Director Steve Banta. “This exciting new mission is reflective of actual damage-control events, intertwined with state-of-the-art puzzles and challenges that will keep even the most seasoned escape room fans on their toes.”

While many escape-room operators have faltered or failed

over the years, we believe that the success of *Lockdown on the LEX* can be attributed to three major factors:

- *An excellent technology partner—Magnigadgets, LLC*
- *Expertly designed escape-room missions and state-of-the-art puzzles incorporated into actual Navy equipment*
- *A competitive price point that includes museum admission*

In total, the USS *Lexington* Museum has welcomed more than 26,500 guests to try their hand at our escape rooms since January 2019. We continue to receive rave reviews of our *Lockdown on the LEX—Ultimate Escape Rooms*. We have not yet seen diminished interest in either of the first two themed missions, so we plan to continue to operate the existing three experiences for the time being. We are very proud of the work we have done to create an added interactive experience for our guests—one that utilizes our particular venue to entertain them in new and innovative ways while educating them on our storied, record-breaking past as a historic United States Navy ship.



*Save Our Ship*, ballast control.

Credit: USS *Lexington* Museum.



# 2022 HNSA CONFERENCE

Ryan Szimanski, Executive Director, Historic Naval Ships Association



I hope you are all getting excited for the upcoming annual conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, hosted by USS *Missouri*. It is set to run from Tuesday, September 13 to Friday, September 16. Registration is live on the HNSA website and the early-bird admission rate ends in August. If you have not been getting monthly email updates from me recently and want to be included on the conference email list, please reach out to me at [ExecutiveDirector@HNSA.org](mailto:ExecutiveDirector@HNSA.org). In the meantime, the following some information to pique your interest.

For the second year in a row, HNSA will have a scholarship program to make it possible for guests to attend, especially for first-time attendees. This is thanks to generous sponsorships from USS *Midway* and USS *Bowfin*. If you are interested in applying and have not previously heard about this, please reach out to me directly at the email above. The number of recipients will be determined by how much money we are able to raise in advance of the conference. If you are interested in sponsoring someone, either individually or on behalf of your organization, please also reach out to me. I look forward to hearing from you with any applications, questions, or scholarship sponsorships.

Our program is just about finished and may well be done by the time you read this so be sure to check the HNSA website for more information on this year's presentations. In addition to project reports on some of the major work happening in the field this year, presentations will focus on relevance and preservation topics.

This year, like last year, we will be offering the presentations online and a small virtual registration fee will be required to get access to the online components. When registering for the conference, you can select virtual instead of live to participate from anywhere in the world. I definitely recommend this if you cannot make it to Hawaii for some reason other than financial. Remember, we have a scholarship if that is your reason! Just be sure to correct for your time zone, times provided will be in local Hawaiian time.

HNSA awards are returning! This year will see the return of the HNSA award program, as well as the second year of the Naval History and Heritage Comment (NHHC) awards program. NHHC has already closed applications but HNSA is still accepting them. Send me an email to nominate someone deserving in the field. Awards will be handed out during the banquet dinner on the last night of the conference.

Additional information on the awards and past recipients is available at the following link: <https://www.hnsa.org/about-us/awards/>.

- *Casper J. Knight, Jr. Award for lifetime achievement*
- *William J. Diffley Award for departing directors*
- *Russell Booth Award for single year achievement*
- *Henry A. Vadnais, Jr. Award for curatorial excellence*
- *HNSA Educator Award*
- *Bos'n Marvin Curry Award for volunteer excellence*
- *Historic Naval Ship Maintenance/Preservation/Exhibition Award*
- *Dr. John C. Fakan Communications Award*
- *President's Special Award*
- *International Leadership Award*

An outline of each day's events is provided below.

- *Tuesday September 13: This is the main travel day. Registration will be open at the Hilton Waikiki Beach and the Executive Director's Meeting will be in the conference room from 1515 to 1645. The opening reception will be*



held at the hotel from 1700 to 1800.

- *Wednesday September 14: The conference will in the Hilton Waikiki Ballroom starting at 0800, including a continental breakfast, welcome comments, and presentation sessions from 0915 to 1430. Each session will be comprised of thematically similar, roughly 45-minutes long, presentations, with time for Q&A after each. A brief break between each presentation will be accommodated, and a catered lunch will be provided. From 1500 to 1700, a boat tour of Pearl Harbor will be on offer and afterwards a reception will be held at the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum, home of USS Bowfin.*
- *Thursday, September 15: The schedule on this day will be roughly the same, with breakfast, sessions, and lunch. The theme of Thursday's sessions will be the preservation and maintenance of your macro artifacts, the vessels. The program for the day has been set up by HNSA's reconstituted Preservation & Maintenance Committee. The entire morning session will be a class on rust prevention by The Association for Materials Protection and Performance, AMPP.*
- *Friday September 16: Similar to Wednesday/Thursday,*

*a continental breakfast will be offered followed by presentations and lunch. In the afternoon, the HNSA Board will adjourn to another room for the closed meeting and following that, a general meeting that is open to all members will occur. When that meeting concludes, the shuttle will begin transporting attendees to Ford Island for a self-guided tour of USS Missouri, their new ERC building, and finally, the closing banquet and awards ceremony.*

A diverse series of topics, all relevant to the current state of affairs within the historic ships fleet, will be covered during our sessions, and we will be hearing from some first-time presenters. A few of the presentations to look forward to are *Using the Community Value of Museum Ships to Connect with Donors*, *Making Your Museum Relevant and Accessible*, and *Moving Your Collection off the Ship*.

Be sure to join us in Honolulu from 13 to 16 September 2022. It will be a great way to rejoin your peers after way too long apart!



Bird's eye view of the lagoon, beach, and Rainbow Tower, Hilton Waikiki Beach.  
Credit: Hilton Waikiki Beach, <https://bit.ly/3Q5sCFS>



The sun may always set, but glory never fades.  
Credit: Dwight Okamoto

# Sponsors of the HNSA 2022 Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii



## Nautical Challenge Answers

1. It was the USS *Houston*. President Roosevelt sailed on this heavy cruiser three times before World War II, with trips along the East Coast, the Caribbean (1934) and along the West Coast, including attending the Fleet Review in San Francisco in 1938.
2. This *Fletcher*-class destroyer is the USS *The Sullivans* (DD-537).
3. The first cruiser to receive a Regulus I cruise missile was the USS *Los Angeles* (CA-135).
4. It is the USS *Osmond Ingram* (DD-255). Ingram was the first enlisted man killed when the USS *Cassin* (DD-43) was torpedoed during October 1917.
5. It was the USS *Gyatt* (DD-712). She was recommissioned as DDG-1 on 3 December 1954.
6. The USS *James Madison* (SSBN-627) was the first submerged submarine to fire this class of missile.
7. Only one. Bonus answer: The USS *Missouri* (BB-63).
8. It was the USS *Maddox* (DD-731).
9. It was the USS *Block Island* (CVE-21) that was sunk by a German U-boat on 29 May 1944.
10. It was the USS *Tang* (SS-306). She sank 33 ships and, ironically, was sunk by her own circular-running torpedo on 24 October 1944.

# INTERVIEW WITH FRED KLINK, CHAIRMAN OF RED OAK VICTORY



**Q: Please provide an introduction about your museum/ship and your association with the organization.**

*Red Oak Victory* is a *Boulder Victory*-class cargo vessel built in Richmond, California, by Permanente Metals Corporation in 1944. She served as a United States Navy-fleet ammunition carrier (AK-235) in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Returned to the Maritime Commission in 1946, she served with various shipping companies, including Korean War and Vietnam War service, until 1968. In 1998, the ship was recognized as the last remaining vessel built in the Richmond-Kaiser Shipyards in World War II. She was rescued from the Ready Reserve ("Mothball") Fleet and was conveyed to the Richmond Museum Association as a museum ship where she serves today. *Red Oak Victory* is part of a larger historic preservation for the San Francisco Bay Area because she is berthed in the original Richmond-Kaiser Shipyard No. 3, of which few buildings remain. As such, she adds context to the important story of shipbuilding in the area in World War II.

I joined the *Red Oak Victory* in 2016 and was assigned to the marketing department based on my professional marketing management experience. In 2017, I became the Director of Marketing. We reorganized the management team on the ship in 2019 and, currently, in addition to being Director of Marketing, I serve as the Chairman of the Executive Committee that manages all ship operations. By the way, the entire crew of the *Red Oak Victory*, from the top down, are volunteers.

**Q: How would you describe your main duties and**

**responsibilities?**

As Director of Marketing, I manage a team of four who are collectively responsible for all public perceptions of the ship. We manage public events, advertising, the website, our social media presence, the Ship's Store, and rental of the ship's spaces for private events. We're particularly proud of our public fundraising events of which we generally hold eight per year featuring live music and food service.

The marketing team also manages our interface with other organizations, particularly the Rosie the Riveter World War II Homefront National Historic Park (yes, it's the longest park name in the National Park Service system!), which is located just about a mile from us. We cosponsor classic movie nights on board the ship and we work cooperatively to create full-day field trip experiences for local students. In fact, school programs from elementary to college post-graduate levels are a major part of our mission. We host more than 600 students in a typical year, from local school field trips to high school honors programs. We work closely with California State University Maritime to provide both community service and educational opportunities for their cadets. And, in the last couple of years, we've had teachers in continuing education programs come to *Red Oak Victory* to enhance their knowledge of World War II history.

I am also chairman of the Executive Committee of the *Red Oak Victory*, which consists of all of the Department Heads on the ship: Engineering, Deck, Purser, Docents, Compliance, and Marketing. As Chairman of that committee, it is my responsibility to call the meetings, and distribute agendas and minutes. I've also found that the committee approach encourages departments to work together and focus on higher level strategic goals. It has been rewarding to see how simply getting departments to talk to one another can open up a whole new path to solving problems.

The San Francisco Bay Area has a wealth of World War II-related maritime historical organizations: In addition to the Rosie the Riveter Park, we have USS *Hornet*, SS *Jermiah O'Brien*, USS *Potomac*, USS *Lucid*, USS *Pampanito*, the Rosie the Riveter Trust, Spirit of '45 Bay Area, and many others. We have just this year started to assemble a Bay Area World War II Alliance to merge the programs and goals of all of these organizations and create a unified

educational/historical resource for the area. Keep an eye on us over the next couple years because I think we're going to be doing some innovative new things for the world of historic ships and how they relate to other historic resources and sites.

***Q: What are your goals for the museum/ship in the next five to ten years?***

Our goal for the ship is to continue to serve as a museum ship and a community educational resource for individuals, groups, and schools. Pre-COVID, we hosted plus or minus 6,000 visitors annually (including the 600 students mentioned above), for tours of the ship or for special events. We're working to get those numbers back up again as we (hopefully) are emerging from the COVID crisis. Also COVID related, we have now a major deficit of volunteers. We lost several key volunteers who, for various reasons, have not come back to the ship. Our crew put in just under 9,000 volunteer hours in 2021, which was up slightly from 2020, but still nowhere near our historic numbers of nearly 16,000 annual volunteer hours. New volunteers are coming in all the time and they are a terrific group of energetic, hard-working people but, still, a major goal for 2022 is bringing more volunteers on board and generating more volunteer hours to help both the maintenance/restoration work and opening more days to the public.

Longer term, our goal is to have the ship underway taking passengers out on San Francisco Bay. Our engineering staff has been working diligently toward this goal for many years. In 2018, we fired up the steam plant for the first time in 50 years. Everything worked well; in fact, our Chief Engineer was amazed at what good shape the engine was in at the conclusion of the test. The main goal now is raising the money needed to get the ship into dry dock and to complete some other required repairs and upgrades to gain Coast Guard approval as a passenger vessel. Our estimated need is 1 to 1.5 million dollars to accomplish that goal.

***Q: How did you get your start in naval history?***

I had always had an interest in military history, even as a kid, and was active in organizations concerned with both preservation and living history (sometimes called "reenactment", a term I dislike). In the early 1990s, I started volunteering with organizations commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World War II. Our focus was on all branches of the service, but since starting with *Red Oak Victory* in 2016, my focus has been largely on the Naval services. The most rewarding thing is getting to know the veterans, hearing their stories, and helping them to relive some of their memories by preserving this ship as a nationally important artifact.

***Q: What advice to you have for a young professional getting started in naval history?***

Successful organizations thrive by bringing the diverse skills of many different people together. A naval history organization or museum is not just a bunch of naval historians. It requires fundraisers, marketers, artists, webmasters, and writers, in addition to naval professionals. Even if you don't have a background in history or naval experience, bring the skills you have. Almost inevitably, the organization you want to work for needs what you know how to do. And don't be afraid to speak up. Be respectful of the senior people in the organization but don't be intimidated. We have young people on the staff who have no naval history experience, but they have brought some terrific new ideas to the ship, along with impressive energy and commitment. I wouldn't want to run this organization without them.

***Q: What books are you currently reading? Are you reading anything specific to museums, maritime/naval history, etc.? Anything completely unrelated to your current position?***

*The Indispensables* by Patrick K. O'Donnell is about the soldier-mariners of the Revolution. *Black Flags Blue Waters* by Eric Jay Dolin about pirates in American waters in the late 1600s to early 1700s. Over the last year I've read several books about the so-called "Golden Age of Piracy".

***Q: If you could invite three people from naval history to dinner at your home, who would they be and why?***

First would have to be Bill Halsey. Ever since I saw the movie *The Gallant Hours* when I was a kid, I thought he was a man I'd like to meet and someone I would like to emulate as a leader. I could see long hours discussing his tactical decision-making process in the Pacific War.

Second, due to my association with the Kaiser-Richmond Shipyards, would have to be Henry J. Kaiser. The man had two things going for him—one, a genius for getting things done in ways that literally no one had ever thought of before. Not only were his mass-production practices revolutionary, but he also provided workers with health care, child day care, on-site recreational activities, and housing assistance when these things were unheard of in industry, especially in the heavy industries like ship building. (The employee health care, by the way, is still with us as Kaiser-Permanente, a non-profit health care plan with over 12 million members.) Second—he didn't take "no" for an answer. Just one example: he invented the concept of a small aircraft carrier that could be built quickly, known as an escort carrier (or "jeep" carrier). In 1942, he took the idea to the Navy who rejected it primarily because it didn't come from one of their own. So, Kaiser simply got on the phone to President Roosevelt, sold him on the concept

and Roosevelt, in turn, told the Navy to start building these ships. Jeep carriers turned out to be one of the most numerous and successful United States Navy combat vessels of World War II.

The third one may strike some people as a weird choice, but I'd like to spend time with one of the famous captains from the Golden Age of Piracy. Recent scholarship on pirates has shed new light on them as not barbaric low-life criminals (well, some of them were!), but as harbingers of the rejection of monarchy and early proponents of concepts of freedom, democracy, economic justice, and equal rights that would power the revolutions of the late 18th Century. It would be interesting to hear if Edward Teach (aka Blackbeard) or Henry Avery think of themselves as political trendsetters.

***Q; How do you spend your spare time?***

My wife and I own horses and they take up a lot of our time. I have formerly competed in 3-day eventing but nowadays I'm content with more leisurely activities with the horses. Dori and I also enjoy vintage events focusing on the

1930s and 1940s. We love the music, clothing, and history of those times which, of course, connects directly with our involvement with the *Red Oak Victory*. It is no coincidence that most of the music events on the ship are focused on swing and classical jazz!

***Q: What value have you received from your association with HNSA?***

I consider myself a rookie as far as HNSA is concerned. I attended my first conference in 2021 in Mobile, Alabama, and I'm still learning about how to get the most out of the organization. The conference was terrific—not just the formal presentations but all the hours talking with other people who manage historic vessels. I came away with a whole list of ideas that we'll be acting on throughout 2022, for example, doing a series of short, entertaining videos about the ship and the Kaiser Shipyards. I made a number of friends at the conference and we've all connected now on Facebook, so I feel like I have a whole new set of resources that I can tap for any problems that we encounter. Whatever it is, I feel confident that I will find some HNSA member out there who has already dealt with it.



Fleet Week 2021 celebration on the decks of *Red Oak Victory* featured the Rossmoor Big Band and a Pancake Breakfast.

Credit: [Dori Luzbetak](#)

# TWO MORE QUEENS RESEARCH PROJECT

Submitted by Richard Halton, Medway Queen Preservation Society – Please distribute widely.

Besides PS *Medway Queen*, the New Medway Steam Packet Company ran other ships on a variety of routes. These included two very similar twin-funnel paddlers named *Queen of Kent* and *Queen of Thanet*.

Richard Halton, who has written a number of books detailing the history of PS *Medway Queen* and, recently, PS *Ryde*, is now researching the history of these two vessels, with a view to possible publication. The decision to publish will depend on the amount of historical material discovered and successful negotiations with a publisher, of course. If the project gets that far, proceeds from publication and sales will be passed to the *Medway Queen* Preservation Society (Registered Charity 296236). Any material gathered will be shared with the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society Collection to ensure its long-term survival. This is fitting since the two ships were operated by New Medway Steam Packet Company, although not on the same routes as *Medway Queen*.

Both ships started life in 1916 as purpose-built paddle minesweepers: HMS *Atherstone* and HMS *Melton*. After the war, in the 1920s, they were purchased by the New Medway company and converted for civilian use as PS *Queen of Kent* and PS *Queen of Thanet*. They operated under that flag until 1939 when they were requisitioned and became minesweepers again—under their new names as the original names were being used for existing naval ships. They returned to civilian use afterwards and were hastily converted back as stop-gap vessels, while new-build motor vessels were on order. In the late 1940s, they were sold to Red Funnel in Southampton for use as ferries. They were renamed *Lorna Doone* and *Solent Queen*, respectively,

but this proved to be a short-term reprieve and they were scrapped in 1951 and 1952.

Material, especially personal recollections, is expected to be harder to find than for Richard's previous projects as these ships disappeared before cameras were in widespread use and so long ago that few people will now have first-hand memories of the ships. If you can help with any information or images, please contact Richard Halton by email on richardhalton1502@gmail.com or by post at 2 Drury Close, Hook, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 8EL.



# VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Our *Volunteer in the Spotlight* for this issue is Jonathan Li-Chung Leung. Jonathan has been a docent and historian for two HNSA-member submarine museums, USS *Blueback* for over 20 years, and USS *Bowfin* since 2019. Most recently, Jonathan has been using his vast experience to help develop a volunteer docent program on USS *Bowfin*. In addition to working as an air-traffic controller for his day job, he is also the author of *Standing Watch: American Submarine Veterans Remember the Cold War Era* (University of Alabama Press, 2019). The book features interviews with seventeen *Blueback* volunteers, including two past HNSA award winners. Thank you for important contributions, Jonathan!!



# NAUTICAL CHALLENGE

*Captain Rich Abele, USNR (Ret.)*

1. Franklin D. Roosevelt cruised aboard this cruiser more times than any other warship. Name the cruiser.



Question 1: This ship carried FDR on numerous cruises.  
Credit: Naval History and Heritage Command

2. What is the name of the World War II destroyer that sank at its berth in Lake Erie on 13 April 2022?

3. In 1955, a nuclear-capable cruise missile was installed aboard what United States Navy cruiser?

4. What was the first United States Navy ship named for an enlisted man?

5. Can you name the first United States Navy combatant equipped with anti-aircraft missiles?

6. What was the name of the nuclear-powered ballistic

missile submarine which fired the first Poseidon missile while submerged?

7. How many battleships were in commission at the start of the Korean War in 1950? Bonus question: Can you name them?

8. What United States combatant was attacked in the first Gulf of Tonkin Incident in August 1964?



Question 8: This ship was attacked in the first Gulf of Tonkin incident.  
Credit: Naval History and Heritage Command

9. Can you name the only United States aircraft carrier lost in the Atlantic during World War II?

10. What was name of the United States Navy submarine that sank more enemy ships than any other sub during World War II?



Question 9: Only aircraft carrier sunk during World War II in the Atlantic Ocean.  
Credit: Naval History and Heritage Command

*(Answers on page 16)*



# Historic Naval Ships Association

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