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Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum Showcases "Silent Service" Story



Chuck Merkel, Executive Director, with a submarine torpedo. (Craig T. Kojima/ Star Advertiser)

"I don't know that (visitation) is going to reach what it was pre-COVID, but I think it's going to trend in the right direction."

Chuck Merkel
Executive Director
Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum

A \$20 million, 12,000-square-foot USS *Bowfin* submarine museum opened Monday with a new name and striking look that charts the course of Navy undersea duty, from the loss of the USS *F-4's* 21 hands off Honolulu in 1915 up through the newest \$6.5 billion *Columbia*-class ballistic missile submarines.

The first thing museumgoers see – and walk through – is a mammoth 43-foot-diameter ring that replicates the hull dimension of the new *Columbia* class, the largest submarines ever built by the United States.

Also visible is the new name – Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum – reflecting the goal of telling the wider story of Navy submarining beyond the resident *Bowfin*, nicknamed the "Pearl Harbor Avenger."

Retired sub skipper Chuck Merkel, the museum's executive

director, is relieved that the rebuilt museum is open, and optimistic about its future. A formal ceremony will be held next week.

With COVID-19 vaccinations ramping up, this summer – one of the peak travel times – will be telling.

"I don't know that (visitation) is going to reach what it was pre-COVID, but I think it's going to trend in the right direction," Merkel said.

Longer term, "I think we're going to be OK," he said. The museum was prudent in the use of savings, and "we've got money that we've set aside for a rainy day and we're going to be all right," he said. That's with "a lot of belt-tightening" and all salaried employees taking pay cuts, he said. See more on page 5 below.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

News Around the Fleet

■ Battleship Texas Updates

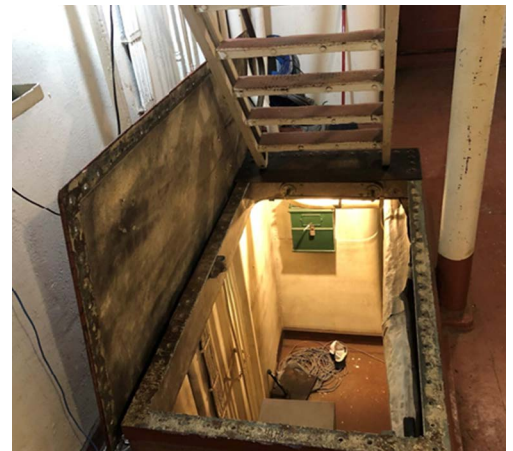
We received an update on Battleship Texas in 2021, complete with several pictures to show their restoration process:

With the start of the new year, they have worked on several projects to help prepare the ship for the move for full restoration. They are also giving attention to the restoration work of the secondary battery and anti-aircraft guns.

All the exterior on-deck hatches have been closed and secured shut. With this done, the ship has been made more secure from overnight trespassers, specifically the wildlife which have tended to wander aboard in the past. To still access the inside of the ship, they had a new ladder manufactured by Certified Pipe Fitters Houston and fitted to a hatch located inside the superstructure next to our offices. This greatly secures the ship and allows us to regulate whatever comes onboard.

With the hatches closed, their crews turned their attention to the 5" secondary guns which are still on the ship. While these are not coming off the ship until the dry dock, crews have worked towards getting the breeches reopened. Of the six 5"/51 secondary guns onboard, five have been seized shut since at least the late 60s. As of the January 25, 2021, all the breeches have been reopened, which means the barrels will now be easily cleaned out and better attention can be given to their preservation.

Speaking of guns, Battleship Texas volunteers have been continuing their hard work on restoring the 3"/50 anti-aircraft guns. Two mounts have been completely stripped of the many layers of old



paint which had caked the outside and a fresh coat has been applied. This has led to finer details that had once been obstructed to be made legible. Things such as smaller proof marks to even the forge markings on the barrels of the guns. Both of these guns now in the process of being diligently reassembled. One mount is in the process of being disassembled so that it may be repainted, and another is away in the process of being repainted by CPS Houston. With the disassembly of these guns old parts that have been worn out, or have failed completely, are being fixed or replaced. They have also started working on one of the 20mm Oerlikon AA guns which have proven to be a complete challenge in and of itself. The Oerlikons have been on board ship when the navy placed them on Texas' deck in 1948 but they have seen minimal amounts of attention paid to them aside from fresh coats of paint. With them at our off-site facility, it makes them easier to work on and preserve them for the future.

To read the full update, go to the Battleship Texas website updates [HERE](#).

■ *Hornet* Honors Involvement with Apollo 11

CNN aired a special documentary on March 6, 2021, about the recovery and quarantine of Apollo 11 in 1969. The recovery ship USS *Hornet* is the center-piece of this short film. USS *Hornet* is the largest surviving artifact from the Apollo 11 mission and houses the world's finest "space recovery exhibit." As such we educate and inspire young adults to be the STEM heroes of their generation. The *Hornet* Museum in Alameda, CA, has created a "credits webpage" to educate the national audience about the roles and responsibilities of the people who participated. The website includes several informative biographical sketches to *Hornet* crew members involved in the recovery efforts of Apollo 11.



(Hornet Museum)

View the [WEBSITE](#) and [TRAILER](#).

■ New Jersey Receives \$500k Grant for Teak Deck

Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver joined the Battleship *New Jersey* executive staff and state and local officials today to present a Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund Grant administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust (Trust), an affiliate of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The \$500,000 Capital Preservation Level II Grant was awarded to the Home Port Alliance for the USS *New Jersey*, Inc. and will be used to continue to replace and restore the battleship's historic teakwood deck.

"This is a very exciting day for the Trust and Battleship *New Jersey* who are once again teaming up to preserve one of the most treasured and widely visited historic places in New Jersey," said Lt. Governor Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner. "This grant round is going to breath new life into the Battleship *New Jersey*'s ongoing preservation work as well as other heritage tourism sites throughout the state."

Last month, Governor Murphy signed a \$11.7 million appropriations bill approving 50 Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund Grant recommendations that were made by the New Jersey Historic Trust in the fall. The 2021 fund is providing preservation planning, heritage tourism and capital projects to



save and promote historic sites throughout the state. There are multiple categories and levels of grants awarded by the fund. The Battleship *New Jersey* received a Capital Preservation Level II Grant, which may be used for construction expenses related to the preservation, restoration, repair, and rehabilitation of historic property and professional fees necessary to prepare and complete the construction project. A full list of the projects and their descriptions can be found [here](#).

"The Battleship *New Jersey* fully understands how to create and enhance the visitor's experience - the number of visitors received and types of experiences they offer not only attracts new visitors but also keeps them coming back. Their success serves as a model for everyone else and we're thrilled

this grant will continue to preserve this important historic site," said New Jersey Historic Trust Executive Director Dorothy Guzzo.

"We are pleased the USS *New Jersey* is receiving the funding it needs to replace and refurbish its teak deck," said Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez, Assemblyman William Spearman, and Assemblyman Bill Moen (all D-Camden, Gloucester). "Restoring this battleship ensures its continued role as a museum and memorial that not only benefits the people of Camden, as well as residents throughout New Jersey, but also teaches members of the public about the Navy and our state's role in defending this nation. We must preserve our history so that future generations can learn from it and remember all those who played a part."

The scope of work for this grant calls for the replacement of the teakwood deck. Teak is an extremely expensive wood so the staff and carpenters have developed and implemented a creative and innovative method to cut down on the use of teak while retaining the historic integrity of the deck. A five-year capital initiative to replace the remaining deteriorated teak deck started in 2019 with the project cost totaling \$2.8 million.

[READ THE FULL STORY HERE](#)

■ The National Museum of the Surface Navy Plans New Park in the Port of Los Angeles



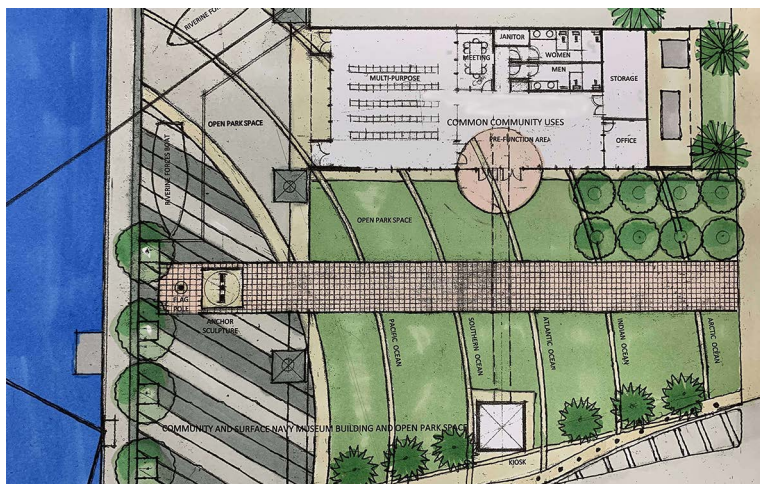
Ever hear us refer to "Lot 61?" That's the nickname for the area on the pier near the bow of the ship. We want to transform it by turning it into a public park!

The proposed park next to Battleship *Iowa* consists of a 2/3 acre site which will be renovated into a public park with an integral community center. Located on Port of Los Angeles property, the site at Berth 87 is uniquely situated to provide shore side access in one of the busiest harbors in the world.

Key features of the project include the construction of an approximately 5,000 square foot multi-purpose community center, educational exhibits, Veterans Memorial, maritime displays, public art, the renovation of an existing block wall structure into an information kiosk, and approximately 35,000 square feet of landscape and artful hardscape.

The park would be entirely funded by a grant from the State of California Statewide Park Program. It's a competitive grant opportunity and we're pulling out all the stops to build the park and community center for our community - one of our three core pillars!

State grant funding has been requested for a proposed Freedom of the Seas Park Pavilion next to the Battleship *Iowa* in San Pedro. Funding would come from Proposition 68, the Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018 and plans include a community community center and open park space. Grant awards are expected to be announced by late summer 2021.



Read the full story at *The Breeze* [HERE](#).



■ Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum & Park Reopening

On Tuesday February 23, 2021, the Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association held a formal ceremony to celebrate the completion of the renovation of our museum and campus. The site was formerly known as the USS *Bowfin* Submarine Museum. Due to restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance at this ceremony was by invitation only. The following images were taken on February 23, 2021, at the reopening ceremony of the 3,000-foot expansion in Honolulu, HI.

A 35-minute clip of the reopening ceremony is available on the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum Facebook page [HERE](#).



Top: Various photos from the Reopening Ceremony of the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum, February 23, 2021; Right: Maneuvering room panels that General Dynamics-Electric Boat have declassified for permanent public display at the museum (All Photos by Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum)

2021 HNSA Hall of Fame Additions



James W.

CHEEVERS

Jim Cheevers attended The College of William and Mary, graduating in 1963 with a history degree. Serving in the Army, he became Curator of the U.S. Army Infantry Museum, Fort Benning, GA, and after leaving the Army, he was hired as the first civilian Curator of the Infantry Museum. In 1967, Jim came to the U.S. Naval Academy Museum as Curator of Collections, becoming Senior Curator in 1971 and Associate Director in 1982. Over his fifty-year career at Annapolis, Jim added thousands of items to the collection and developed numerous exhibitions until his retirement in 2017 - over fifty years of service in Annapolis.

Jim first appeared on the HNSA (then "HINAS") scene when he presented a paper, "Use of Historic Naval Ships as Museum Settings" at the Naval Academy's Sixth Naval History Symposium in 1983 and it was featured in the first issue of HNSA's *Anchor Watch* in December of that year. The volunteer position of HNSA's executive secretary was then held by CDR Bob Brewer, executive director of the U.S. Naval Institute. When Bob resigned in 1985, he recommended Jim as his relief, saying, "I am confident that the professional expertise and enthusiasm of Jim Cheevers will provide precisely what is needed for the active support of the Association and that his wide range of awareness and associations will be the basis of significant contributions in the years to come" How prophetic he was! The position was offered to Jim who accepted it. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

No one would know that Jim became the continuity that held the Association together. He produced *Anchor Watch* for six years. He performed the treasurer duties and provided



superb assistance to the HNSA presidents and their boards on nearly a daily basis. He played a key role in the planning and conduct of the annual meetings, and acted as recorder at each of them. He managed submission of the HNSA organizing documents: the articles of incorporation, the bylaws, the 501(c)(3) application, and served as the registered agent for HNSA, a Maryland corporation. Jim hosted the annual mid-winter board of director meetings in Annapolis each March for 31 years, serving as recorder at them for years, as well as the host of elaborate continental breakfasts. Jim chaired the HNSA Awards Committee for many years and prepared all the citations which were awarded (and read by Jim!) at the annual conference banquets. He also compiled and continuously updated a comprehensive HNSA mailing list.

Only when the executive director position was established in 1992, was Jim able to take an occasional breather. But he continued to provide invaluable support, first to Chan Zucker, then to Jeff Nilsson, and finally to Bill Cogar. His superb accomplishments were

recognized when the Casper J. Knight Jr. Award was bestowed on him in 1993, and he received the President's Award in 2000. Jim relinquished his executive secretary position in 2015, but remains a generous Life Member of the Association. No organization could have had a better organizer than Jim Cheevers who deserves full recognition in the Hall of Fame and the sincere thanks and appreciation of the Association.

In addition to his work with HNSA, Jim belonged to many professional organizations and among his many well-earned awards are the Robert G. Albion and James Monroe Award for maritime historiography from the National Maritime Historical Society (2010), the Annapolis Living Legend Award (2012), and a Life Time Achievement Award in supporting the arts from the Anne Arundel County Arts Council (2013).

He is a very active volunteer in the Annapolis community, serving on many boards and advisory committees, including the American Legion, the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Anne Arundel Bird Club, the Maryland Ornithological Society, the International Club of Annapolis, the Caritas Society of St. John's College, Historic Annapolis, the Maryland Commission on Afro-American History and Culture, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Forum, the Anne Arundel County Museums Consortium, the Hammond-Harwood House, the Mitchell Gallery of Art of St. John's College, and the Anne Arundel Trust for Historic Preservation.

2021 HNSA Hall of Fame Additions



Joseph H.

FEITELBERG

A career insurance businessman, Joseph Feitelberg graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, in 1956 and subsequently completed the Harvard Business School's Advanced Management program. In 1968, he became Chief Executive of The Feitelberg Company, Inc. of Fall River, MA. In 2003, the firm was sold to Citizens Bank, a subsidiary of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Joe working for Citizens in Boston until retiring in 2006.

He has been a significant force in Massachusetts's SouthCoast community for over 30 years, providing particular support and leadership in the areas of education and economic development. For his community service and commitment, Joe received many notable awards, including the Outstanding Citizen Award from the Fall River Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Annual Distinguished Citizen Award from the Bristol Community College; and Entrepreneur of the Year from the College of Business and Industry, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

Following a three-year active-duty stint as a naval destroyer officer, Joe became involved in the 1965 founding of what would become Battleship Cove in Fall River, MA, leading its development for the next ten years. It would eventually become the home to five National Historic Landmarks and Official Veteran Memorials on both state and national levels, providing for the preservation of both the military heritage of the New England region and that of the United States.

It was Joe's connection and leadership at Battleship Cove that had a direct bearing on the actual founding of the Historic



Naval Ships Association (HNSA). As president in 1966 of the USS *Massachusetts* Memorial Committee, Joe arranged for a meeting of the leaders of the five museum ships then enshrined as memorials: USS *Alabama*, *Massachusetts*, *North Carolina*, *Texas*, and *Olympia*. Convening informally on 2 December 1966, in the wardroom of the most centrally located ship, the *North Carolina*, in Wilmington, NC, the delegates met in order to see how the five organizations might work together for their mutual benefit.

After each museum's representatives spoke on the formation of their organization, various operational issues were identified and compared, it becoming very apparent that the concept of working together in a formal way had real merit. Joe proposed that a "Historic Naval Ships Study Group" be created, and he offered to host it in Fall River.

Immersing himself in arranging a meeting in September 1967, Joe designed a strategy for accomplishing buy-in from the other ship leaders whereby ten study areas were discussed; namely, education

and exhibits, administration and finance, food service, hospitality, material conditions, personnel, promotions, store operations, development plans and U.S. Navy support.

Despite Joe being the youngest of all the delegates - only 32 and considerably younger than the others - the meeting proved a huge success, the attendees were so effusive in their praise about the meeting and the context and benefits of the discussions, Joe was "rewarded" by being drafted into office as secretary when the first officers of the association were elected at the next meeting, hosted by the USS *Texas* in August 1968.

Through Joe's vision, commitment, and hard work, he caused the Historic Naval Ships Association to become a reality. Now decades later and with far more historic ships - both in the U.S. and overseas as Fleet Members - as well as many hundreds of Associate and Individual members, HNSA takes great pride to add you to the Hall of Fame in recognition for your accomplishment in bringing into existence the Association.

2021 HNSA Hall of Fame Additions



Channing M.

ZUCKER

Growing up in New England, Chan graduated from Bowdoin College in 1959 and entered Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI. He completed a 32-year Navy career in 1991, serving primarily in operations and navigation billets on the USS *Saint Paul* (CA 73), the USS *Fechter* (DD 870), USS *Dahlgren* (DLG 12), and USS *Richard E. Byrd* (DDG 23).

Following graduate work in geodetic science at The Ohio State University and marine affairs management at the University of Rhode Island, Chan became an oceanography specialist, serving in oceanography, meteorology and mapping assignments, consisting of hydrographic surveying in the North Atlantic in USNS *Dutton* (T-AGS 22) and shore duty in Washington, D.C. and Norfolk, VA. Some 14 years were spent with the Defense Mapping Agency, including two command assignments. Although he retired in 1991, to those who knew him, Chan was already one who lived and breathed historic naval ships.

Chan began his connection with HNSA as an inquisitive, ingenious, and enthusiastic volunteer as evidenced by a letter he wrote suggesting a plan to revise HNSA's "blue book," which described and advertised the Fleet members for the public. As a result of strategic planning by the Board of Directors in 1990-91, a job description was written to create an Executive Director position, and Chan was hired.

The changes in the internal structure of the Association that Chan initiated and implemented have truly made the organization what it is today. He established an efficient centralized administrative structure in a functioning, well



equipped office fully capable of supporting the Board of Directors, members' needs, and responding to requests from outside activities and individuals. He was instrumental in producing numerous publications by the Association, including the *Curator's Handbook*, an individual member brochure, and periodic economic impact surveys. He created the "Executive Director's Memorandum" series which provided the means to communicate critical information to Fleet Members and which today is the electronic newsletter, "Fleet News." Chan oversaw the transition of *Anchor Watch* from a simple xeroxed document into an aesthetically pleasing, professionally printed quarterly newsletter. He was also in charge when the Association created its first Website.

When Chan became HNSA's Executive Director in 1992, the Association consisted of about 25 ship museums and memorials. It was owing to his leadership and tireless work that increasing membership - not only for Fleet members but adding associate and individual members, that the Association grew exponentially. Thanks to Chan in many ways,

membership of historic ships stands today at more than 170 vessels at some 100 museums and memorials in twelve nations of the world, as well as over 600 Individual members. He received the Casper J. Knight Jr. Award in 2003 and the President's Award in 2018. In addition, Chan wrote a very useful and valuable "History of the Historic Naval Ships Association, formally presenting it to the Board of Directors on 11 March 2019.

Chan has always led by example and through reasoned, polite, and civil discourse. He very kindly served as a mentor to any and all in HNSA, not least his two successor Executive Directors, following his retirement in 2003. When HNSA's long-time Treasurer became ill and resigned, Chan - retired and involved in many activities and projects - stepped into the breach enthusiastically and efficiently, and served until a permanent Treasurer could be found. Few organizations have been blessed by having such a successful and committed leader.



HAIL AND FAREWELL

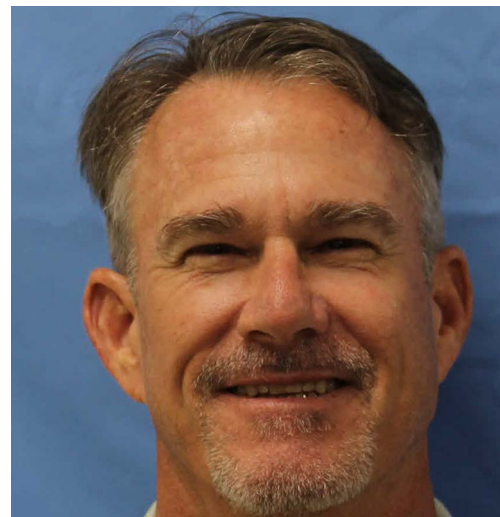
■ New Director of the Association's Board of Directors at USS *Missouri* Memorial Association

The USS *Missouri* Memorial Association announces Matt Guard as Director of the Association's Board of Directors. With continued challenges brought about by the decline of visitor arrivals, the Association's Board of Directors looks to Matt as a newly appointed member for guidance into this year and next.

Matt is the son of the late Tim Guard - one of Hawai'i's first business leaders to step forward and support the momentous effort of bringing the retired USS *Missouri* to Pearl Harbor more than 20 years ago. That was the start of Guard's commitment to the Association. As a founding board member, Guard served on the Board of Directors since 1995, and in 2014 was appointed to chairman.

Matt is the Association's newest director bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience in finance, sales, budgeting and management skills. Currently, he is the president and general manager of McCabe Hamilton & Renny Co. overseeing more than 400 employees servicing maritime customers throughout Hawai'i. In his current role, Matt also serves as a trustee for the

Hawaii Longshore Pension Plan and the Health and Welfare Benefit Trust. He also serves as a board member on the American Longshore Mutual Association. Since 2013, Matt has been a co-trustee of Eric A. Knudsen Trust where he's responsible for building community relationships as well as co-managing of trust and trust assets of more than \$250 million.



BATTLESHIP
MISSOURI
MEMORIAL
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

■ New HNSA Associate Member: MuseumShips.US



MuseumShips.US was begun in late 2014 by a former Royal Netherlands Navy sailor, Pim van Wijngaarden, who has a keen interest in museum ships and website building. He started [their website](#) with the intent to provide a dedicated page for every museum ship he can locate worldwide, and by doing so, creating awareness for these museums, the volunteers and employees that run it, and the veterans that served on them.

To create more interactivity for our followers, we now also have a Facebook group as well with nearly 9,000 members, and growing fast, and several friends have been recruited to help moderate and administer. Together we hope to grow and help sustain the efforts of many dedicated people to keep our magnificent museum ship fleet afloat and expand. Pim writes that it is a privilege to get to know the ship's many volunteers, curators, superintendents and other staff-members, and an honor to call many of them friends. "As HNSA and MuseumShips share a common goal I would love to see some form of collaboration and cooperation in the future in support of a shared vision. MuseumShips is here to help museum ships!"

■ Phoenix International Joins as Associate Member

Phoenix International's Underwater Ship Repair & Maintenance Division, headquartered in Largo, MD, offers a full range of capabilities and equipment with the experience to provide quality repairs to military and commercial ships, oil and gas platforms, and marine infrastructure. Whether a planned inspection or repair or an unexpected emergency, our teams of highly qualified and experienced personnel provide services 24/7 to aid our clients in avoiding critical downtime.

Phoenix is approved by all appropriate classing agencies (e.g., ABS, Lloyds, DNV) and is well versed in planning, coordinating, and successfully carrying out waterborne inspections as well as maintenance and repairs worldwide. All work is performed with adherence to strict Phoenix safety protocols, resulting in safe and timely inspection, maintenance and/or repairs.

Specific to historic naval ships, Phoenix successfully developed and implemented waterborne repair techniques that help extend hull life and monitor hull conditions on various vessels to include: USS *Missouri* Memorial, USS *Midway* Museum, and USS *Bowfin* Submarine Museum & Park.

Through their network of eight offices from Honolulu, HI to Norfolk, VA, Phoenix supports operations seamlessly and efficiently across the country and the globe.



For information visit their website [HERE](#).

■ Welcome Triangle Media to HNSA!



A great opportunity has come to HNSA Fleet Members that might be a great way to add to your ships' programs. Triangle Media assists authors marketing their books and this includes several authors of books on the Navy and naval history topics - perfect for part of your overall educational and development programs through talks and book-signing events. This, in turn, can provide another way to reach out to your respective membership and bring them back onboard your museum as the pandemic begins to wane and you work to revitalize your operations.

In addition to helping the authors market their books, Triangle Media can create awareness of the museum ships themselves through radio ads, strong social media campaign, press releases for each event, and professional posters - all factors that not only promote a particular author(s) but lower your cost to promote and advertise them.

We would like to introduce Suzanne Lynn Cheesman from Triangle Media who will be contacting many of you over the next few weeks and ask that you hear her ideas of promoting these authors and thus your ship museums. Suzanne has included a link of an interview with W. Craig Reed, who has written "Spiss of the Deep," that might be of great interest to your members [HERE](#).

If instead of waiting for her to contact you, I would encourage you to contact Suzanne at suzanne.lynn@trianglemedia.biz or (352) 508-5442 [(605) 941-4719 (cell)]. See also their website [HERE](#).



Historic Naval Ships Association

To Support the Preservation of Historic Naval Vessels &
To Honor Those Who Serve at Sea

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