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Jacksonville Naval Museum Moves Closer to Reality



The Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association at the future home of the Jacksonville Naval Museum (News4Jax)

"The Orleck is a historic bold ship for the Bold City."

Justin Weakland
Vice President
Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association

Justin Weakland is ecstatic because the one-of-a-kind Jacksonville Naval Museum could be off the St. Johns River before the end of the year.

Weakland, the current vice president of the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association, said the centerpiece of the museum will be the USS *Orleck*.

"The ordinances were already approved, so now the next big step is getting her to dry dock in Texas and inspecting her, make sure she's good to go for the next 10 years as a museum ship," said Weakland. "The *Orleck* is a historic bold ship for the Bold City."

The *Orleck* museum ship will be dry-docked at Port Arthur, Texas, where its hull will be inspected to make sure it can make the trip to Florida and continue to serve as a museum ship. According to a news

release, the drydocking of the ship is planned for Nov. 1.

Inspection of the ship is expected to be completed by Nov. 3 or 4. If found fit for use as a museum ship, it will then embark on a 10-day tow from Texas to Florida.

When the ship arrives in Jacksonville, it will be moored stern in, starboard side to "Pier 1," which is adjacent to the Berkman Marina along East Bay Street in the old Shipyards area in Downtown Jacksonville. The exact date of arrival still remains unclear.

Preparation work of the museum once it's docked at the pier is expected to take two to four weeks, but it could be extended.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

[ADDITIONAL ARTICLE](#)

News Around the Fleet

■ *Edson* in Bay City Includes Ghosts, 9/11, Museums

Since 2012, the USS *Edson* (DD 946) has been docked along the Saginaw River as the Saginaw Valley Naval Ship Museum.

Before arriving in Bay City, the ship had a remarkable history and service record dating back to the 1950s. Over its 30-year U.S. Navy career, it had seen numerous awards and commendations for its service, was part of another museum at one time, and may even be haunted.

The ship is named for Major General Merritt Austin Edson of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1897-1955. It is one of the few destroyers named for a Marine Corp. veteran and is a Forrest-Sherman class destroyer.

On Jan. 27, 1956, the ship was ordered, and the keel was laid on Dec. 3 of that year at Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine. On Jan. 4, 1958, it was launched by Edson's widow, Ethel Robins Edson, and commissioned on Nov. 7, 1958. It would go on to serve 12 tours of duty in Vietnam, says Board President and Air Force Veteran Michael Buda.

Between 1977 and 1988, it served as a training ship in Newport, NJ, for commanders, gunners, and boiler engineers before being decommissioned in the Philadelphia Naval Yard in 1988.

On the Fourth of July 1989, the *Edson* became part of the *Intrepid* Sea, Air, and Space Museum Complex in New York City where it was designated a National Historic Landmark. It would spend 14 years there, and after Sept. 11, 2001, it was briefly used as a command center for the City of New York.

"They used the ship's mast as a radio tower because when the Trade Center went down, all



communication ceased. No cell phones, nothing worked," says Bill Randall, volunteer and six-year veteran who served on the *Edson*. "They had a command cell set up here. There's dust on here from the World Trade Center."

In the early 2000s, the *Intrepid* Museum needed to make way for a barge carrying an SST Concorde, which is still there, and parted ways with the *Edson* by giving it back to the Navy as part of the ship donor program.

"Then we found out about it," adds Buda. Originally, The Saginaw Valley Naval Ship Museum had its sights on the USS *Charles F. Adams*, a guided missile destroyer." The *Adams*-Class destroyers were built in Bay City, and we wanted to keep the history of destroyer construction of Defoe, the former shipbuilding active in Bay City," says Buda.

After sitting in a mothball fleet for years the repairs proved to be too costly. "It would take millions and millions of dollars to get that thing even to this condition," says Randall. "This one became available in that timeframe."

On Aug. 7, 2012, a tugboat towed it from Philadelphia to Bay City – an almost 2,500-mile journey. All of the museum displays are on the ship, because the museum is the ship, says Randall. "A lot of people don't realize that. They go down to the office and think that's the museum."

Today, almost 95% of the ship is open to the public. Self-guided and guided tours are available March through December.

"All the artifacts that we have donated to us are on display. It's a hands-on display where the people can actually feel the stuff," says Buda. "They can get up to the bridge, you can blow the whistle, you can actually get down into the engine room and you can turn the valves."

The ship is set up to look as it would have while on duty. "We try to keep it as original as possible," says Randall.

The ship's primary tribute, Buda says, is to the Navy and the sailors that served during the Vietnam War with artifacts from the era.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

■ "Save Our Souls" at American Victory Ship

Something haunted is coming to the American Victory Ship at Sparkman Wharf in downtown Tampa. Beginning on Oct. 1, "UNDead in the Water" will return to the historic ship at its home berth 12 nights throughout the month.

This year's theme, "Save Our Souls," pulls guests into the story of a ship that has returned from a "violent hurricane" in the Bermuda Triangle where the crew was haunted by a "mysterious female apparition."

The haunted attraction is recommended for those ages 11 and up and requires advanced ticket purchases for specific time slots.

[Click here to purchased Advanced Tickets](#)



(American Victory Ship and Museum)

■ Brig *Niagara* Undergoes Repairs, USGC Inspection



The U.S. Brig *Niagara* will undergo repairs and a U.S. Coast Guard inspection next month in Cleveland, Ohio, allowing the vessel to resume its regular touring and sailing season next spring.

The historic tall ship, which had its cover removed last week, will depart for the Great Lakes Shipyard in Cleveland between Oct. 6-8, and is scheduled to be hauled out of the water on Oct. 11, according to the Erie Maritime Museum and the Flagship *Niagara* League.

Repairs will last roughly five weeks and involve regular maintenance of the ship's hull and a refit of the stern, said James Hall, site administrator for the Erie Maritime Museum.

The U.S. Coast Guard will also inspect the vessel.

"The Brig needs a certificate of

inspection from the Coast Guard to allow people on board, even if it's just on the top deck while it's tied up," Hall said.

The vessel's current certificate expired two years ago and has been granted two extensions. The Coast Guard was unable to inspect the ship last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hall said he anticipates the ship back in Erie by the end of November.

William Sabatini, executive director and fleet captain at the Flagship *Niagara* League, said the ship, which is powered by two diesel engines, will travel to Cleveland under its own power. Since the ship did not sail this season, it has not been rigged with sails.

The refit of the ship will be completed using roughly \$400,000

in Pennsylvania Keystone Funding through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Hall said the money is separate from another \$4.8 million in state funds – now \$7 million – announced by former Gov. Tom Corbett in 2014 to completely rebuild the ship.

"We've tried to award contracts for the project two times now but failed due to the estimates far exceeding budget," Hall said. "So, in the interim, we are scheduling this series of Keystone repairs to *Niagara* while we study how best to maximize the capital funding to repair and rebuild *Niagara* most efficiently and effectively."

He added, "We're chipping away with smaller slugs of money on a project-by-project basis rather than being able to commit to a complete re-fit and rebuild in one fell swoop."

The Flagship *Niagara* League will lead the October repairs and will hire carpenters and crew to assist.

League officials said the organization had lost \$428,000 in revenue because the Brig *Niagara* was not able to provide its Great Lakes sail-training programs in the spring and summer of 2020.

For more information on the U.S. Brig *Niagara*, visit sailfnl.org.

■ USS Kidd Veterans Museum Receives Louisiana Culture Care Fund Grant



USS Kidd Veterans Museum has received a Louisiana Culture Care Fund grant of \$15,000 from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH). The funds will be used for operational expenses, including staffing, insurance, and utilities.

Rosehn Gipe, Executive Director, commented, "NEH and LEH have recognized the needs of museums with humanities collections both during the pandemic and now as part of the recovery process. We are grateful for their continued support."

Funding for Louisiana Culture Care Fund grants is provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative.

■ WWII Floating Museum a Bittersweet Experience

In 1943, 1,051 Landing Ship Tanks (LST) were built to transport personnel and equipment during World War II. Only one, the LST 325, remains fully operable. The ship took part in the invasion of Normandy.

It made a stop in Meade County and about 7,000 people took a step onboard the historic ship over the Labor Day holiday.

Many words can be used to describe the feeling of stepping onto a ship that was actually used in war. For Debbie Howell, it only takes one bittersweet.

"I cried coming up to the ship. I really did," says Howell. This ship was familiar to her father who was a World War II veteran. He passed away in June.

"I was so proud of him," says Howell. "He saw a lot of stuff and I didn't even know till I was 40 that my dad was a medic because it was so difficult for him to talk about it," says Howell.

Owen Chapman, LST 325's chief chef, knows the story of every inch of the ship but he also enjoys learning stories like Howell's.

"There are so many things, but talking to the people is I think it's the most important hearing their stories sharing our stories," says Chapman.

One of his favorite memories was him showing a woman the ship's galley.

Before she was able to meet her father, he was working as a chef on a similar ship that was torpedoed in the South Pacific.

"What were the chances of this lady ever seeing a ship similar to that of her dad, obviously, not knowing him at all and she could at least see what conditions he worked in and lived in," says Chapman. "She started to break up. I started to



More than 3,000 visitors looked at the LST 325, a landing ship tank from World War II, that made a stop in Brandenburg over the Labor Day weekend. (Spectrum News 1/Ashley Brown)

break up."

Another time, a World War II vet asked Chapman to show him the ship's sleeping quarters.

"This 92-year-old man lay down on that rack. He could not have bought that experience for a million dollars. It's not available, but we were able to provide it," says Chapman.

Chapman and 49 other volunteers travel up and down the Mississippi, Ohio and Cumberland rivers to share the piece of history.

"Kids like the guns and I think most of the parents enjoy the wheelhouse, but there's so much more to see. Remember, these ships were designed to carry troops and mechanized equipment, this whole top top thing would have been filled with wheeled vehicles, all the track vehicles will be down below," says Chapman.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

■ Exhibits Return to *Lilac* With Work By Melissa Godoy Nieto

Waters Change, Colors Fade is an exhibition by Mexican-born multi-media artist Melissa Godoy Nieto drawing on her personal experience observing both the vibrancy of healthy coral reefs and the coral degradation caused by climate change, Godoy Nieto shares an underwater wilderness through drawings, textile collages and installation.



The artworks in the exhibition are the expression of Godoy Nieto's exploration of the Great Mayan Reef and, in turn, coastal communities and her connection to her country of origin. With coral as both immediate subject

and metaphor, the works evoke questions around resilience, adaptation, systemic change, mutualism and visibility. They serve as documentation of a world that is vanishing and the process by which the

artist understands loss. Godoy Nieto also hopes that the works create more awareness of the climate crisis and inspire individuals from all walks of life to take action now.

The artworks will be featured within *Lilac*'s

unique spaces, including several site-specific installations and a sound piece by Amedeo Pace. In addition to the exhibition, which runs from August 19th to October 17th, *Lilac* will host related educational events. The **exhibition and events** are free and open to the public and are presented by MW Projects. Works have been hung to facilitate social distancing while viewing. Capacity at the opening reception on Thursday, August 19 and other events is limited and reservations are requested. Masks are required and can be provided.

■ The Frigate Proposal Raises Many Questions



When it was announced earlier this summer that a group of people want to park the deactivated U.S. Navy frigate USS *Oliver Hazard Perry* on West Dobbins Landing, many questions arose.

What does the Navy require when it lets a community take a ship? (The Navy is very strict on this count). What are the demographics of the region? What will the

visitation be when it's not summer? Who wants to visit a bland looking ship with a bland record of service from a relatively bland era? Will there be enough volunteers? What will it cost? Where will the funding come from? What happens when a major refit is needed to prevent routine decay, not to mention a catastrophe? How will any local organization maintain a 450-foot ship that has no

crew? Routine maintenance and the long-term upkeep of a ship of any size requires can be daunting. It takes lots of money and lots of dedicated volunteers.

Dr. Norman Cary, Jr., former head of the Curator Branch of the U.S. Naval Historical Center, said this in answer to the question, "How hard can it be to operate a historic ship?"

Extremely difficult, he said. It may eventually be "successful, well-attended, spiritual and even fun, but first it will be horrific, expensive, dreary, complicated and about as far from a feel-good experience as you can imagine."

A historic ship must be run as a business, he said. The organization must

have a solid business plan, one that includes doing thorough market research, not to mention research on the cost and practicality of maintaining the ship. **He has lots more to say and it is well worth reading.**

Will the Perry and the Flagship Niagara end up eating each other's local fund-raising lunch? Cary warned against putting one historic ship in the same community as another. He said: "Starting a new historic ship too close to a viable historic ship is generally a fatal mistake. If you do it, you had better confirm that the local demographics will support it."

FULL STORY



HAIL AND FAREWELL

■ Jamers D. Hornfischer, 1965-2021

We are saddened to hear of the passing of James D. Hornfischer. Jim was the 2018 Samuel Eliot Morison Award recipient and member of our Awards Committee. He is best known as the award-winning author of *Last of the Tin Can Sailors*, *Ship of Ghosts*, *Neptune's Inferno*, and *The Fleet at Flood Tide*. The Department of the Navy recently presented Jim with the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award during a virtual ceremony.

We are sorry to lose a talented historian and friend at the peak



(Jim accepting the Morison Award onboard Constitution in August 2018. Anne Grimes Rand)

of his powers, and we extend our condolences to Jim's family.

[READ HIS OBITUARY](#)

■ Past HNSA Executive Director CDR Richard Beck

Commander Richard Beck passed away on February 3, 2021. He was known by everyone as Dick. He never met a stranger. A friend to everyone. Dick was born in Buffalo, N.Y. in 1934. Dick's flying in the navy was in antisubmarine aircraft. He piloted P2V7's on the west coast, Japan and Alaska. He piloted the S2D off the Carrier Randolph on the east coast. His college was completed at the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, Calif. He majored in political science and International

Relations. The last tours of duty brought them back to Buffalo, in the first year of No draft as the C.O. of Naval Recruiting Buffalo.

His final assignment was as C.O. of the Naval Reserve Center. After 2 years as a business owner, he became Director of The Naval and Serviceman's Park. While in this position, He was a member and President of the Historical Naval Ships Association of North America.



[READ HIS OBITUARY](#)

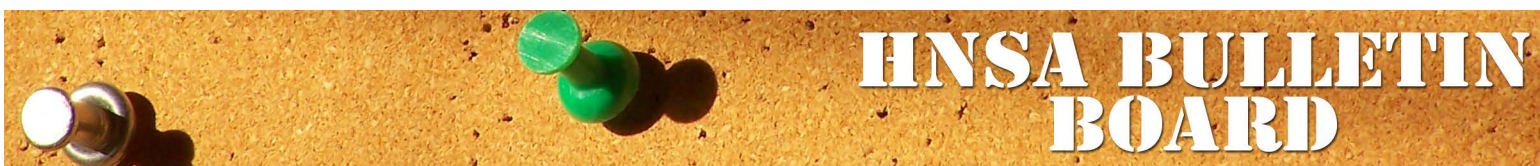
■ James J. "Ringo" Rivers



Jim passed away on August 29, 2021.

The sixth of seven children, he was born Feb. 21, 1937 to Michael "Frank" Rivers and Beatrice Leona (Pray) Rivers of Bangor, Maine. His enduring passion for sports was cultivated at Broadway park with his childhood friends. At the age of 12, Jimmy became known as "Ringo" for his uncanny impersonation of Gregory Peck's quick-draw character Jimmy Ringo in "The Gunfighter." He graduated from John Bapst High School in 1955, with varsity letters in baseball, basketball and track.

After graduation, he joined the U.S. Navy as a Signalman, Third Class on the USS *Laffey*, a destroyer known as "The Ship That Would Not Die." During his three years of service, he travelled the world; experiences which he often spoke of fondly, and which inspired a persistent yearn to travel. He was a member of the Tin Can Sailors and the USS *Laffey* Association for the remainder of his life, contributing to the preservation of the USS *Laffey* (DD 724) Museum Ship in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. [READ THE FULL OBITUARY](#)



■ Submarine Battery Cells from Navy Inactive Ships

The Navy has 9 submarine battery cells available for donation, please see attached photos. These are technically SSN-688 class battery cells, but look similar to the classic WW2 fleet boat cells.

Specifics:

ASB-49

Height: 55.25"

Width: 14.22"

Length: 14.22"

Weight: approx. 1225lbs

Location: Portsmouth Naval Ship Yard, Kittery

ME

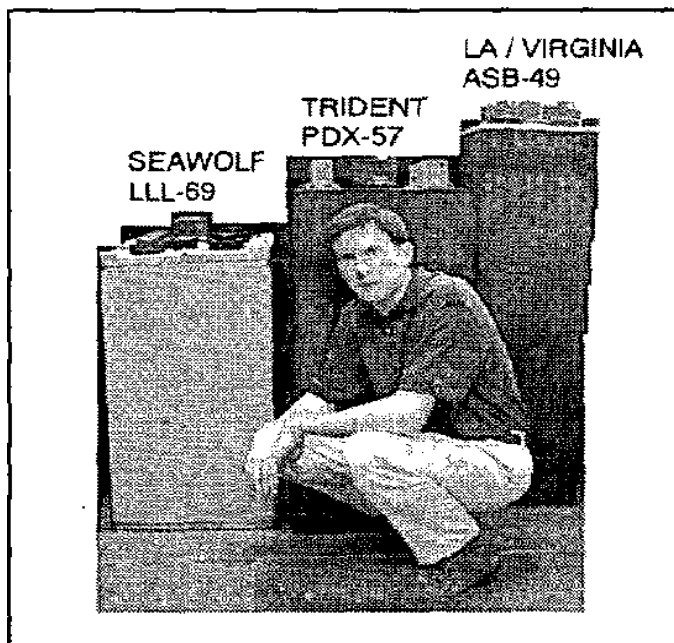
If you have questions specific to the batteries please contact LCDR John Luhn at:

Phone: 202-781-5427

john.luhn@navy.mil

A material donation agreement is required to be executed with Mr. Gary Kitchen. Application materials and requirements are located online [HERE](#).

For material donation questions, please contact Gary Kitchen at Gary.kitchen@navy.mil.



■ 3-D Printed Rubber Eyecups

Paul Farace, President of USS Cod Submarine Memorial is working with the folks at Parker Hanifin to 3D print the rubber eyecups that fit on WWII submarine periscopes. They're interested in helping out other museum subs and science centers with periscope displays that might need these hard to find parts.

He needs a list of who's interested in obtaining replacement eyecups. For more info, email him [HERE](#).



Historic Naval Ships Association

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

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