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Bowfin Reopens to Public



The USS Bowfin has returned to Pearl Harbor for tours following dry dock maintenance. (Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum)

Known as one of the world's best preserved *Balao*-class World War II submarines, the USS *Bowfin* underwent four weeks of dry dock maintenance work at Pacific Shipyards International at Honolulu Harbor in September. Maintenance and inspections complete, the "Pearl Harbor Avenger" returned to its mooring at the Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum at Pearl Harbor in late October and reopened to the public on Saturday, 29 October 2022.

"We are very excited for the return of the USS *Bowfin* to our campus and look forward to reopening her to the public," said Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Association Executive Director Chuck Merkel in a news release. Merkel noted that the last dry dock maintenance of the 80-year-old submarine was completed in 2004.

"We want to thank our museum visitors for their patience and understanding while the *Bowfin* was away. The inspections and repairs that were completed are

essential to ensure the submarine remains safe and suitable for public display and will allow the *Bowfin* to tell her story far into the future," Merkel said.

The \$2 million maintenance and conservation project was financed in part by the federal "Save America's Treasures" grant administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Christened on Dec. 7, 1942, and commissioned on May 1, 1943, the USS *Bowfin* conducted nine war patrols in the Pacific Ocean during World War II. The vessel was donated to the Pacific Fleet Submarine Memorial Assoc. in 1979 and opened to the public as an integral part of the submarine experience in April 1981. In 1986, the *Bowfin* was declared a National Historic Landmark.

The Pacific Fleet Submarine Museum completed a \$20 million renovation in 2021.

"We are very excited for the return of the USS *Bowfin* to our campus and look forward to reopening her to the public"

Chuck Merkel
Executive Director
Pacific Fleet Submarine
Memorial Association

News Around the Fleet



■ Presque Isle Bay Project Gains Vital Support

All 18 officers who've commanded the USS *Halyburton*, a now-decommissioned U.S. Navy frigate, have endorsed a local effort to bring the vessel to Presque Isle Bay as a floating navy museum.

One of those officers, retired Navy Rear Admiral Robert Reilly, who commanded the *Halyburton* from December 1993 to September 1995, appeared at the Hagen History Center in Erie on Saturday to meet with members of the Oliver Hazard Perry Shipyard, the Erie nonprofit applying for the ship project.

Reilly, who's been involved with the nonprofit for over a year as a technical advisor, said the 18 commanding officers were "enthusiastic" about the idea and have signed a letter of support.

The letter will be included in the Perry Shipyard's ongoing application to the Navy.

"These ships were our homes," Reilly said. "They're where we slept. Where we ate. Where we served the Navy. Now imagine if you went back to your childhood home and you had to watch it be demolished. How would that make you feel? So, if we can 'not give up on this ship,' that would be great."

Reilly said the endorsement letter may not be able to expedite the rigorous application process involved in a ship donation but it will show the Navy a strong level of support for the project, which can enhance its chances of approval.

Joe Pfadt, CEO of the Perry Shipyard, said the nonprofit has just wrapped up Phase 2 of the



(Above) USS *Halyburton* is the vessel slated for Presque Isle Bay, if the Navy approves the Oliver Hazard Perry Shipyard's application; (Left) Joe Pfadt, executive director of the Oliver Hazard Perry Shipyard organization.

Navy's three-phase application process.

Pfadt said documentation for Phase 2, which involved a slew of environmental, engineering, and economic impact studies, will be submitted to the Navy at the beginning of September.

At that point, the Navy will undertake a thorough review of the documentation before advancing to Phase 3, which involves a new round of planning for the towing and mooring of the vessel. That, in turn, will require another review by the Navy.

"Hopefully within a few months, they'll give us another thumbs up (on Phase 2) and we'll proceed to Phase 3," Pfadt said. "We'll have six months to get that documentation done and submit that and wait on a response. We're hopeful."

Pfadt said an expected arrival date for the frigate in Erie is hard to predict because it is solely dependent on the Navy's review process.

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■ 50th International Congress of Maritime Museums

For many, the ocean is life. It provides transportation, work, commerce, food, recreation—tales as old as time and shared by people across the globe. These stories are lived day to day, passed down between generations, and shared with the public through various media. Maritime museums assume responsibility to share these histories while honoring the communities shaped ocean exploration and commerce. In a decade where ocean health and climatic events have become a primary focus, museums have the added challenge of sharing the urgency of marine conservation while engaging and educating through storytelling and immersive experiences. How do they do it all at once?

The International Congress of Maritime Museums (ICMM) was recently held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to tackle this assignment. The gathering was special, achieving multiple historical markers simultaneously as the first since the pandemic, the 50th Congress since its formal inception in 1972, and coinciding with the 500th anniversary of the return of Ferdinand Magellan's fleet from circumnavigating the globe in 1522. This year's Congress also featured a full carbon offset, thanks to donations made to the Ocean Foundation's SeaGrass Grow program. Hosted by the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in downtown Halifax, the conference's proceedings were held at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. A fitting location, the facility is not only



Canada's last existing former port of immigration, but it welcomed almost one million migrants who arrived by boat from 1928 to 1971. Today, the seaport is also a common docking point for cruise ships, which were visible through the conference room's windows all week and served as an ample reminder of the role of tourism in maritime livelihoods and history.

This year's congress focused on ocean health, preservation and the wellbeing of communities, said Dr. Matthew Tanner MBE, ICMM president and chief executive of the SS Great Britain Trust, in his opening speech. There's a dominance of art museums in culture, he added, yet maritime museums often have even more to say about the current world when one considers exploration, commerce, immigration, livelihoods and that more than one third of the total population lives within 60 miles (100 km) of an oceanic coast, according to NASA.

“(Museums) influence how we engage and interact with the oceans commercially, socially and scientifically.”

Anya Waite
CEO and Scientific
Director
Ocean Frontier Institute

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(Top) Soviet submarine B-29 in Navy Pier, San Diego, 2918; (Bottom) Lembit, WWII-era Kalev-class Submarine Lembit at the Estonian Maritime Museum.

■ NHHC Hosts Focus Groups for New Museum

Naval History and Heritage Command held focus groups at the National Museum of the American Sailor, Oct. 25, 2022.

Sailors and personnel assigned to Surface Combat Systems Training Command Great Lakes (SCSTC GL); Surface Warfare Engineering School Command Great Lakes; and Recruit Training Command Great Lakes participated in the focus groups targeting senior enlisted, instructor staff and accession Sailors.

"It's important to me as a historian to capture voices from the deck plates," said Navy Capt. (retired) James C. "Chris" Rentfrow, Ph. D., a former naval flight officer and National Museum of the United States Navy (NMUSN) Director.

Rentfrow asked a panel of questions including, but not limited to: What do you think future historian would write about this current period of U.S. naval history; and What aspects of enlisted service has changed and what has stayed the same through your service.

"There has been a huge improvement when it comes to mental health a lot more direction and a lot more help," said Chief Fire Control Technician Joseph T. MacFarland, a Navy Military Training Instructor at SCSTC GL. "The opportunities for performance are definitely improving for identifying competence."

More panel questions included: Considering your roles teaching Sailors naval traditions and values, what aspects of service are important to display in a museum; Why did you join and continue to serve; and Name one naval tradition or value that has become especially important to you.

"I consider it an honor to be selected to be a part of the building blocks for the largest national navy museum," said Fire Control Technician 1st Class Brittany E. Geeck, a Navy Military Training



A focus group of Navy Military Training Instructors and Recruit Division Commanders share their insight and experiences with Navy Capt. (retired) James C. "Chris" Rentfrow, Ph. D., a former naval flight officer and National Museum (NMUSN) of the United States Navy Director, to a senior enlisted focus group at the National Museum of the American Sailor. (Photo by MC1 Cory Asato)

Instructor at SCSTC GL. "It was intriguing to see how the developers are looking to present the navy's history while also looking at today's sailors. The questions were thought provoking and I'm looking forward to see what the final plan is for the museum with the inputs of current sailors."

Rentfrow has facilitated multiple focus groups targeting various naval communities including aviation, surface, subsurface, expeditionary, and special warfare. Another focus group taking input diversity in the U.S. Navy is slated for December 2022.

"Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced the Department of the Navy's preferred location for a new (NMUSN) during an event Oct. 18 at the Washington Navy Yard, in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the service's 247th birthday," according to an NHHC press release.

■ New Leadership at USS *Kidd* Veterans Museum

A new executive director is coming to the USS *Kidd* Veterans Museum. Rosehn Gipe, who joined the museum in October 2019 and led it through the pandemic, will be replaced by Navy veteran and aerospace engineer Parks Stephenson, according to the museum.

Stephenson plans to continue the ship's restoration to its World War II appearance and install new technology to the museum's exhibits in order to make them more interactive, according to a news release.

Stephenson first encountered the USS *Kidd* when studying the vessel as he prepared to take part in deep-sea dives last April to explore the *Kidd's* sunken sister ship, the USS *Johnston*.



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■ Tropical Storm Sinks 3 PH Navy Ships

Three former Philippine Navy (PN) ships that have been retired from service were found half-submerged in a shipyard in Cavite after they became casualties of Severe Tropical Storm Paeng, the Philippine Navy (PN) disclosed Sunday night, Oct. 30.

The three vessels depicted as half-submerged at the Naval Station Pascual Ledesma in Cavite City during an aerial inspection were identified as former Philippine Navy ships BRP *Rajah Humabon* (PS11), BRP *Sultan Kudarat* (PS22), and BRP *Cebu* (PS28),

said PN spokesperson Commander Benjo Negranza.

"As depicted in the picture, they are located in the Navy's Graveyard Dock where all decommissioned vessels are temporarily berthed until final disposal," Negranza said.

"These former PN vessels have served the country well during their time and has exploits worthy of being written in the annals of the country's military history," he added.

Based on Navy records, former BRP *Humabon* (PS11) was



decommissioned on March 15, 2018; former BRP *Sultan Kudarat* on July 5, 2019; and former BRP *Cebu* on Oct. 1, 2019.

Negranza said all of the three decommissioned vessels have been stripped

of all serviceable equipment and usable materials and are currently undergoing disposal process in accordance with existing policies and procedures.

The vessels "are likely to be sold as scrap," Negranza said.

■ Museum Celebrates 225 Years of "Old Ironsides"

On Saturday, October 22, the USS *Constitution* Museum marked the 225th birthday of *Constitution* and the Museum's own 50th birthday by inviting the public to join the celebration through a Birthday Block Party in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

The free event was a community affair, with family-friendly activities and entertainment hosted by the military branches, veteran organizations, and the Museum's own hands-on educators. A portion of the Navy Yard was transformed into a USS *Constitution*-themed nine-hole miniature golf course, where everyone could test their putting and their *Constitution*-trivia knowledge. People of all ages got into the game, including a friendly challenge between

USS *Constitution* Commander BJ Farrell, the Ship's Executive Officer, and the volunteer 1812 Marine Corps. Kids took part in fun activities, too, including the chance to shoot "Alka-Seltzer cannons" as they recreated the historic War of 1812 battle with the HMS *Guerriere*. The crowd enjoyed the sounds of the U.S. Navy Band's President's Duo and were treated to two cakes, baked as a gift to the public by the crew of *Constitution* and expertly cut with swords by Museum President Anne Grimes Rand and CDR Farrell.

The public celebration was the culmination of multi-day events honoring the 225th Birthday of "Old Ironsides." It also commenced the Museum's fiftieth year serving alongside her,



sharing and engaging people of all ages and backgrounds in the storied legacy of the Ship. Rand elaborated, "When we started the Museum fifty years ago, we sought to inspire people with the stories of 'Old Ironsides.' We have opened our doors to welcome all who want to learn, reaching nearly 10 million people in five decades. Moving forward, we want to

invite people to engage in new ways that will foster curiosity, learning, and civic leadership." The Museum will continue to honor *Constitution* and this mission all year through new initiatives designed to engage people directly to actively take part in honoring service and making history.

■ Brief Tenure for USS *Little Rock*

When the U.S. House Appropriations Committee passed its version of the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act on a 32-26 vote in June, a ticking clock began.

Within the \$762 billion budget was a request from the Navy to decommission 39 warships in the 2023 fiscal year.

Among those: the ship graced with the name of Arkansas' state capital.

If and when President Joe Biden signs the final defense budget, the USS *Little Rock* (LCS-9) would be set for decommissioning on March 31.

That would end the *Little Rock's* tenure in the fleet only six years after it was commissioned in 2017.

The USS *Little Rock*, currently stationed with the Surface Division 21 in Mayport, Fla., according to a Navy spokesperson, is one of nine *Freedom*-class Littoral Combat Ships the Navy has proposed decommissioning.

The *Little Rock* and its sister ships, which can include crews of up to 110, are high-speed vessels designed for use in shallow-water operations, including being used against the drug trade and other forms of trafficking.

However, during its tenure, the LCS has been plagued by problems with a combining gear flaw in the propulsion system. According to *Defensenews.com*, two of the *Freedom*-class LCSs, including the *Little Rock*, suffered major failures while at sea in 2020. The *Little Rock's* occurred six weeks after it departed Mayport on its first deployment, forcing it to return to port with propulsion problems.

U.S. Rep. Steve Womack, who represents Arkansas' 3rd Congressional District and sits on the Appropriations Committee, voted to approve the defense budget.

Womack called the "whole" LCS tenure, which began in 2006 with the launching of the USS *Freedom* (it was decommissioned



The new USS Little Rock arrives at Buffalo harbor with a police and fireboat escort, Monday, Dec. 4, 2017, in Buffalo, N.Y. The littoral combat ship will be docked on the Lake Erie waterfront until its commissioning Dec. 16, 2017. (AP Photo/Carolyn Thompson)

in September 2021), a "sad chapter in the history of the Navy."

"It just had a lot of flaws," Womack said. "It's sad that the USS *Little Rock* is one of those out of the *Freedom* class. The *Freedom* class had more problems than the others, but the entire LCS program has suffered from a lot of setbacks."

Womack believes the *Freedom* class, in part because of the combination gear issue, is "incapable of meeting all of the demands that are going to be required of our naval forces going forward."

"In the development stages of the platform, I think it's suffered from a lack of oversight," Womack continued. "Could have been too many cooks in the kitchen. We've got flaws scattered throughout our entire acquisition system that we're trying to sort out and the LCS is probably Navy's biggest example of how we put something together, failed to meet all of the principal objectives, buy a bunch of them and then regret doing it. These are expensive and every dollar spent on a failed and flawed acquisition program is another dollar that we can't apply toward

acquisition of proven programs that serve our national defense."

According to *Defensenews.com*, Rear Adm. John Gumbleton, the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for budget, told reporters earlier this year that the nine LCS vessels cost \$4.5 billion. Individually, an LCS costs about \$362 million, according to a 2015 report.

However, there is a future for some of the LCSs.

According to USNI News in August, the Senate Armed Services Committee version of the NDAA -- introduced to the Senate floor Oct. 11 -- would have stopped the decommissioning of five of the nine littoral combat ships on the list. Meanwhile, the language in the House Appropriations Committee's version, which passed the full House on July 14, would have prevented four from being decommissioned.

However, Womack said, "that does not save the USS *Little Rock*."

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■ Job Announcement: SS Red Oak Victory ED

Position: Executive Director, SS Red Oak Victory

Job Description:

The Richmond Museum Association (RMA), which operates the SS Red Oak Victory in Richmond, California, seeks an Executive Director to provide leadership and to execute the goals and objectives of the SS Red Oak Victory and RMA.

The position is half to full-time and at present a volunteer position.

Responsibilities:

Contacts in the Maritime Industry, Ship Yards, Vendors, etc. The goal is to operate and cruise the SS Red Oak Victory in the San Francisco Bay.

Prepare an annual budget and subsidiary budgets.

Develop policies and procedures with the Department Heads for all aspects of the ship's operation.

Create and present reports to the ship's Department Heads, the RMA President & the RMA Board of Directors on a regular basis.

Minimum Qualifications:

Must have Maritime experience, Sea Going or Port Engineer experience.

Strong project management and organizational skills.

Preferred Qualifications:

Experience and interest in restoring an historic vessel or structure is a plus.

Please no phone calls.

Send resume and letter of interest to the Chief Engineer at sealandgreg@gmail.com or to the Ship Keeper at omaloneyrov@gmail.com



■ Captain Jocko's Chocos at Patriots Point

Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum's popular "Captain Jocko's Chocos" chocolate chip cookies can now be ordered online and shipped to the hero in your life in time for Veterans Day. Only a limited number will be available, and they are expected to sell out quickly. A portion of each sale supports the USS *Yorktown* Foundation.

The chocolate chip cookie recipe is original to the historic USS *Yorktown* aircraft carrier and was used during World War II to feed the thousands of sailors on board. The bakery crew produced 10,000 cookies using a recipe that included 112 pounds of chocolate chips, 500 eggs, and 165 pounds of flour in each batch. In April 2022, Patriots Point partnered with local veteran-owned bakery The Front Porch Coffeehouse & Creamery to produce these cookies for the museum's gift shop.

Museum staff shared the cookies with WWII *Yorktown* veteran John McDade who said they taste just like he remembers from 80 years ago. McDade said, "They're very good. And I should know, I've eaten a lot of these!"

Patriots Point and The Front Porch are accepting orders through October 28 and are limiting total sales to 100 half-dozen packages. All cookies will ship in time to arrive for Veterans Day on November 11. The cookies are priced at \$30 per package with a shipping rate of \$12.50 per order. Visit patriotspoint.org to place an order and learn more about the history of the cookies.



Historic Naval Ships Association

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

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