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## West Virginia Artifact on Display



*The life preserver from the battleship USS West Virginia, one of the Navy ships sunk or damaged during the surprise attack that brought the United States into World War II, is now on loan at the Those Who Served War Museum at the Memorial Building in Princeton. (Greg Jordan/Bluefield Daily Telegraph)*

Almost 82 years ago, Charles House Morgan Sr., U.S. commander of harbor defense at Pearl Harbor, was walking to his headquarters at Diamond Head with his son Charles when some fighters and bombers appeared suddenly over the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The day was Dec. 7, 1941, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was underway. The Morgans were only 200 feet away from the Japanese aircraft as they commenced their bomb and torpedo runs. Morgan ran to his headquarters while his son, Charles House Morgan Jr., who was 16 and enrolled in the U.S. Navy flight training school, ran to a nearby air station to help.

A few days later, Morgan Jr. found a life preserver floating in

the oily, bloodstained waters of Pearl Harbor and retrieved it.

It is a life preserver made of foam covered with treated canvas and ringed with attached ropes. Painted across it are the words "U.S.S. *West Virginia*. 1st Fire and Rescue Div."

The life preserver was from the battleship USS *West Virginia*, one of the Navy ships sunk or damaged during the surprise attack that brought the United States into World War II.

This tangible link to one of the pivotal moments in the history of the United States and the state of West Virginia is now on loan at the **Those Who Served War Museum** at the Memorial Building in Princeton.

It will be on display until the end of June, said Tony Whitlow,

the museum's founder and director. The relic then goes to Morgantown where it will be displayed at West Virginia University.

The Kendrick family, which owns the life preserver, agreed to let the local museum display it. Whitlow said he hopes school groups can come and see it along with the general public. Part of the display outlines the *West Virginia's* history and her contributions to the war effort in the Pacific Ocean.

The Those Who Served War Museum is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

# News Around the Fleet



## ■ NPS and MARAD Announce \$2 Million in Grants

The National Park Service (NPS) announced \$2 million in maritime heritage grants today to assist funding 12 preservation projects in nine states. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Maritime Administration (MARAD), the NPS is awarding grants for education programs and projects that will preserve sites and objects related to the nation’s maritime history.

“These grants are made possible by cross-agency, collaborative efforts dedicated to conserving our nation’s shared maritime treasures,”

said NPS Director Chuck Sams. “Preservation and education programs allow us to celebrate our nation’s vast maritime history and teach maritime skills so future generations can create new experiences and stories for years to come.”

The partnership between the NPS and MARAD, two federal agencies which both share a commitment to maritime heritage preservation and education, makes the National Maritime Heritage Program grants possible. The program does not use federal tax dollars and instead is funded by recycling

vessels from the MARAD’s National Defense Reserve Fleet. The grant program supports a broad range of maritime education and preservation projects applicants. The recipients of the National Maritime Heritage grants are below.

Visit the [NPS Maritime Heritage Program](#) website to learn more about maritime grants and how the program works to foster awareness and appreciation of the many roles that waterways and their adjacent lands have played in America's history.

State	Grantee	Project	Amount
Alaska	State of Alaska: Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation	Alaska Maritime Heritage Preservation Program	\$100,000
Alaska	State of Alaska: Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation	Alaska Maritime Heritage Preservation Program: Education Project	\$242,500
California	California Office of Historic Preservation	California Maritime Heritage Preservation Project Grant Program	\$100,000
California	California Office of Historic Preservation	California Maritime Heritage Education Project Grant Program	\$242,500
Illinois	Illinois State Historic Preservation Office	Submerged Chicago	\$100,000
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Historical Commission	Massachusetts Historical Commission Maritime Education Sub Grant Program	\$242,500
New York	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation	New York State Maritime Heritage Preservation Projects: In-house (Barcelona Lighthouse) and Subgrants	\$150,000
New York	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation	New York State Maritime Heritage Education Projects: In-house and Subgrants	\$242,500
Texas	Texas Historical Commission	Texas Maritime Heritage Preservation Program (Subgrant Program) and Aury Archaeological Investigations Project (In-House Project)	\$150,000
Vermont	Vermont Division for Historic Preservation	Maritime Heritage Educational Grant to Document and Record the Canal Boat History of Lake Champlain	\$30,000
Virginia	Virginia Department of Historic Resources	Virginia Maritime Trade Heritage Preservation Subgrant Program	\$200,000
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Historical Society	Documentation and Conservation of Recovered Underwater Artifacts from Lake Michigan Archaeological Resources	\$200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$2,000,000</b>

# ■ Midway's Iconic Museum President to Retire

The ship wasn't even here yet when John "Mac" McLaughlin became the founding president and CEO of the USS *Midway* Museum in December 2003.

It was a dream, really, the plans so tenuous that organizers had to have \$500,000 set aside to cover the cost of towing the mothballed, nearly 60-year-old aircraft carrier away from San Diego if the museum flopped.

It didn't flop. It flourished into one of the city's most popular tourist attractions – more than 18 million visitors and counting – and an icon on the downtown waterfront. Now, almost 20 years later, McLaughlin has decided it's time to walk away. He retired on Wednesday April 29th.

"Mac came to San Diego on a wing and prayer that this carrier thing might be a success, and somehow he mustered the courage to do it," said John Hawkins, a member of the museum's organizing committee. It spent

12 years navigating federal, state and local regulations while the decommissioned vessel sat in a Navy shipyard in Bremerton, Wash.

McLaughlin had just retired from the Navy and moved to San Diego with his wife, a Chula Vista native, when he was approached about running the *Midway*.

A former helicopter pilot who had landed a time or two on the 1,000-foot-long carrier, he had a fondness for the ship, and for the idea. The first U.S. aircraft carriers were home-ported here.

But the prospects were daunting. "We had no money, a lot of debt, and no revenue," he recalled in an interview Friday. "No electricity, no water, and no exhibits. We didn't have anything."

Except volunteers. And that made all the difference, he said. Volunteers found four airplanes to put on display. Volunteers helped scrape away years of rust and mounds of bird droppings. They painted and polished. And volunteers came aboard as docents, to tell the kind of personal stories that turned the museum into a piece of living history.

Somewhat it all came together in six months, and the *Midway* opened to the public on June 7, 2004.

"We've got to earn our place on the waterfront," McLaughlin told the *Union-Tribune* that day. "You earn it by providing value and service to the community."

Within the first hour, 500 people had bought tickets. That was a sign of things to come.

Museum organizers hoped to

draw 440,000 people the first year. They got almost double that, and never dropped below 800,000 until COVID hit. In 2012, annual attendance hit 1 million for the first time.

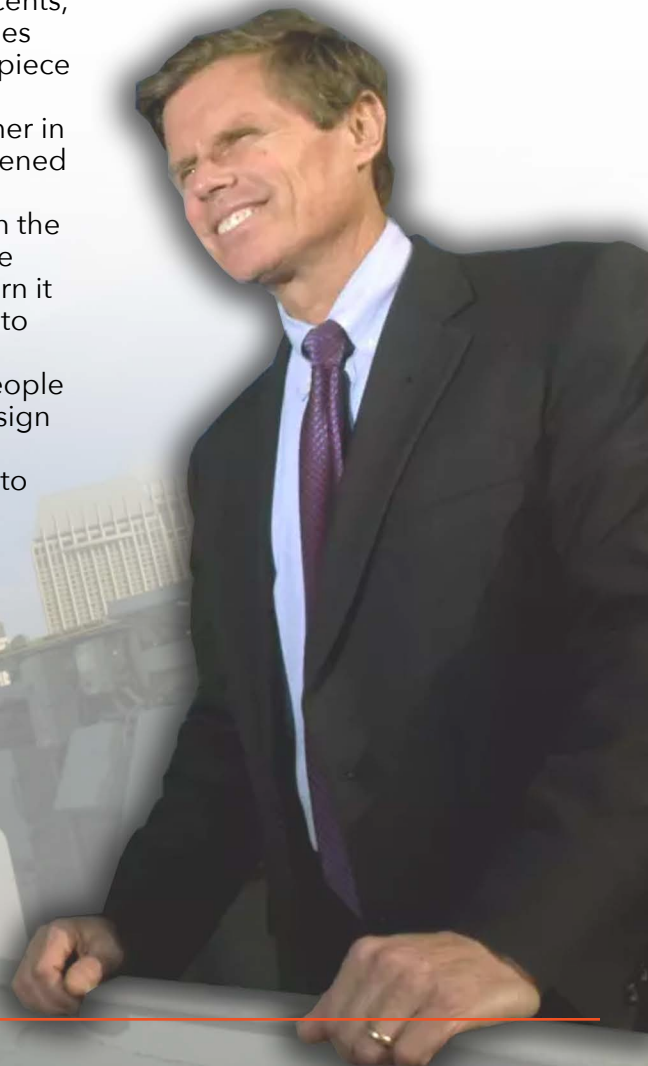
That success has allowed the museum to add a variety of attractions, including almost 30 restored planes and 60 exhibits, and to be open every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The ship also hosts thousands of schoolkids annually for educational programs and sleepovers. It's been the site of hundreds of private events yearly – fund-raising galas, military ceremonies, memorial services – and scores of public gatherings, including an annual showing of the movie "Top Gun." A college basketball game between San Diego State and Syracuse was played on the flight deck. "American Idol" has filmed episodes there.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

"Mac came to San Diego on a wing and prayer that this carrier thing might be a success, and somehow he mustered the courage to do it."

John Hawkins  
Midway Museum Organizing  
Committee



## ■ Search Underway for Former *Intrepid* Crew

The Intrepid Museum located in New York City, will celebrate the 80th anniversary of the commissioning of USS Intrepid (CVS 11), the World War II-era aircraft carrier that is now the centerpiece of the museum.

To honor the occasion, on August 16th, 2023, the museum is putting out a coast-to-coast rollcall for Intrepid former crew members, to be reunited in a special 80th Commissioning Anniversary Celebration on board their ship.

The Museum is also seeking and accepting donations of personal artifacts and memorabilia from former crew members and their families. Each item added to the collection helps the Museum honor, express and interpret Intrepid's stories of service, and to fulfill its mission to honor, educate and inspire millions of people each year.

The homecoming will feature a special ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of Intrepid's commissioning on Wednesday, August 16, honoring former crew members from all eras of the carrier's service, who will reunite and share stories of their tours of duty. The Museum will host a special former crew member dinner event that evening and guided tours of the ship. For some former crew members, this will be the first time they have been aboard their beloved ship since



the completion of their service. While the Museum recognizes the ship's commissioning anniversary every year, the 80th celebration promises to be the largest gathering of former crew members since the 75th anniversary in 2018.

To learn more about this commemoration and for registration information, former crew members and their family members can visit [intrepidmuseum.org/80](https://intrepidmuseum.org/80) or email [fcm@intrepidmuseum.org](mailto:fcm@intrepidmuseum.org).

## ■ HMS *Caroline* Reopens to the Public

First World War-era ship HMS *Caroline* is now fully reopened to the public, beginning on the 1st April 2023.

Berthed in Belfast for almost 100 years and restored in 2016, it is the last surviving ship from the Battle of Jutland 1916.

The warship was closed in March 2020 during the pandemic lockdown, and was set to reopen in the Summer of 2022 but pushed back the date to April.

Onboard, a refurbished exhibition will tell the story of HMS *Caroline's* service. Included is a cinematic experience recreating the Battle of Jutland and a 'Virtual Access Suite', giving visitors the experience of cracking codes, sending signals, firing torpedoes and steering the ship

The quarters of the captain, officers and crew have also been restored, as has the museum's Mess Deck Café.

HMS *Caroline* is moored in Belfast's Alexandra Dock beside the Science Park in Titanic Quarter and is also part of the Maritime Mile, which stretches from Corporation Street to Donegall Quay and on to HMS *Caroline*.

HMS *Caroline* was fully restored and opened to the public on May 31 2016, has received £14,240,000 support from National Heritage Lottery Fund and £4,518,000 from Tourism NI.



# ■ USS Orleck Moving to Pier 1 in Early April

Jacksonville Naval Museum announced that USS *Orleck* will be closed until further notice as officials prepare for its **move to Pier 1**.

The ship's movement comes after several delays due to agreement disputes. The original 10-year agreement for the *Orleck* was approved in August 2021. It was set to expire in October 2022, but Jacksonville Naval Station extended the deadline six months due to Pier 1 not being ready to support the ship upon arrival in Downtown Jacksonville in March 2022.

However, in

extending the agreement, Jacksonville Naval Museum had exhausted its authority to grant extensions, and the city was requiring the ship to move from in front of the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront hotel by March 31. Since the Pier still wasn't ready, the city needed to provide utilities for the ship until development is complete, which was outlined in the new agreement.

Jacksonville City Council voted 16-0 on March 21 to approve measures that would support the ship until



Pier 1 is fully developed. This includes an added \$50,000 to the 2022-23 budget to help pay for temporary electricity and utilities connections.

The USS *Orleck* is scheduled to move on Monday, April 3rd at 9:45 a.m., and it's expected to take an hour.

# ■ Progress on Submarine Annex to SA Naval Museum

The latest addition to Simon's Town's naval infrastructure - a dedicated submarine annex to the SA Naval Museum - is moving slow ahead with a site prepared as the final home of what was SAS *Assegaai* (S99).

The last of three Daphne underwater craft acquired by the SA Navy (SAN) and operated during the seventies, eighties and early nineties, *Assegaai* (commissioned as SAS *Johanna van der Merwe*) has since being decommissioning served as an alongside museum and now awaits her final transit to a specially built cradle alongside the NSRI (National Sea Rescue Institute) base at Cole Point.

*Assegaai* remains SAN property as part of the naval museum with the Naval Heritage

Trust (NHT) delegated to renovate, move and install her at Cole Point. Once there, with entrance/exit doors fitted in her hull, the NHT will manage and operate the submarine in similar fashion to when she was in the water alongside the outer wall of Simon's Town harbour.

Retired admiral Hanno Teuteberg, chair of the *Assegaai* submarine museum sub-committee, reports progress with the submarine's final docking point cleared and foundations laid. "These foundations will match the chocks to be welded onto the pressure hull. We look forward to taking ownership of buildings on site to prepare for the shore exhibitions - periscope, sonar consoles and associated operations room



equipment," he said.

Elsewhere in the dockyard "much action" to prepare S99 for her final move has seen the submarine cradle serviceable and now able to move on greased bearings. "Damen Shipyard Cape Town (headed by an ex-submarine captain) was extremely helpful with their support in terms of manufacture and delivery of the

chock frame required for the move. Apprentices spent days welding frames and vertical support struts together in the dockyard welding shop" - Teuteberg notes wryly "the shop has probably not been that busy since the SAS *Tafelberg* conversion!"

**READ THE FULL ARTICLE**

## ■ US Navy Decommissions Last Patrol Craft in Bahrain

The U.S. Navy decommissioned the last two *Cyclone*-class patrol coastal ships stationed at Naval Support Activity Bahrain, March 28, during a pierside ceremony attended by U.S. 5th Fleet officials.

Leaders and crewmembers of USS *Monsoon* (PC 4) and USS *Chinook* (PC 9) marked the end of nearly three decades of U.S. naval service.

"I'm honored to be a part of the legacy on this waterfront," said Lt. Cmdr. Dre Johnson, during the ceremony. "PC Sailors are a unique bunch, and only they can understand the amount of work they've done and the pride they have in what they've accomplished."

Johnson is *Monsoon's* last commanding officer. The U.S. Navy initially commissioned the ship in 1994 and then recommissioned it in 2008 after *Monsoon* served four years in the U.S. Coast Guard. *Chinook* was commissioned in 1995.

"With 28 years of crew covering multiple generations,



each one was dedicated to the mission, adapting to rapidly changing mission sets, and working together as a team to accomplish whatever obstacle that came their way," said Lt. Cmdr. David Hartmann, *Chinook's* commanding officer.

*Monsoon* and *Chinook* are

the last of a group of 10 ships designed for shallow-water operations that were stationed in Bahrain. The Middle East region includes 5,000 miles of coastline from the northern Arabian Gulf, around the Arabian Peninsula, through the Red Sea and Suez Canal.

## ■ The Carrier the Navy Tried and Failed to Sink

The intentional scuttling of USS *America* proved that sinking a carrier is easier said than done. On May 14, 2005, the *Kitty Hawk*-class supercarrier sank 17,000 feet below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean after weeks of controlled explosions.

Before this incident, World War II had been the last time any military permanently sank a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier. Shortly following the carrier's scuttling, the Naval Sea Systems Command released a statement clarifying that "the data collected during the 25 days at sea from [the USS *America's*] test events will be of great value to Navy engineers and designers to improve the design and survivability of the nation's future aircraft carrier fleet."

In other words, USS *America's* exit was honorable and morbid simultaneously.



Since USS *America* had such an honorable track record at sea, the Navy decided to make one last use of the carrier. After being towed hundreds of miles to a location off the Virginia coast, the former carrier prepared to be scuttled for data purposes.

As explained by then-Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Natham, "*America* will make one final and vital contribution to our

national defense, this time as a live-fire test and evaluation platform.

*America's* legacy will serve as a footprint in the design of future carriers – ships that will protect the sons, daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of *America* veterans." The results of the SINKEX drills remain classified, as do detailed imagery or videos of the operation.

# ■ The Sailing Ships of San Diego's Film History

Walking in the Embarcadero area of downtown, it's hard to miss the towering ships of the Maritime Museum lining the edge of the bay's waters.

The museum has been a focal point of the San Diego neighborhood since its founding, collecting one of the largest collections of historical sea vessels in the country.

Most locals are quite familiar with the ships' presence and history in the bay, but the vessels carry with them a lesser known history intertwined with San Diego's background as an extension of Hollywood.

From the days of silent films to the first colored pictures, the bay has been at the heart of San Diego's appeal to Hollywood, given the ease at which film and TV productions could access waterside filming.

Established in 1948, the Maritime Museum has been around almost as long as the film industry has existed in San Diego, current Museum president and CEO, Ray Ashely, told FOX5SanDiego.com.

Since the first ship in the fleet was bought,



*HMS Rose, used in the filming of Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World, seen during the film's San Diego premier on November 9, 2003 in San Diego, CA (Getty Images)*

the *Star of India*, the museum's fleet has grown to include numerous vessels, from a Spanish galleon to an industrial steamboats, that have graced the



*HMS Surprise, Then and Now, Featured in Master and Commander (San Diego Maritime Museum/YouTube)*

silver screen – both before the organization owned them and after.

Among the ships that the Maritime Museum now houses, the most well-known for its use in the feature films is the HMS *Surprise*. Previously known as the HMS *Rose*, the vessel was heavily featured in the Academy Award-winning movie, *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*.

At the time, it was one of the only operable replicas of an 18th century ship, Ashley said. The HMS *Rose* was specifically modeled after the English vessel from 1757 that met its demise during the American Revolutionary War.

As Ashely recounted it, the director of the film, Peter Weir, first saw the replica while in the West Indies. The vessel was on one of the many attraction tours it took, prior to finding its home at the Maritime Museum.

Weir decided to make the film *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* right then, according to Ashely, based on the book series by Patrick O'Brian. He convinced 20th Century Fox to buy the ship, allowing them to convert it into a replica of the 24-gun frigate based off the historical 18th-century ship at the center of the books, the HMS *Surprise*.

"The ship was an actor in the film, just like the Starship Enterprise in all the *Star Trek* movies... it's a character," Ashley said.

After the film was done, 20th Century Fox leased the ship to the Maritime Museum, later selling it to the organization.

It quickly became a fixture of the Museum's vessels, known for its authenticity in historical reconstruction and attention to detail.

That accuracy is what has brought other productions looking to recreate historical seafaring, notably *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* and the company behind the Super Bowl XLIX TurboTax commercial, down to San Diego.



## Historic Naval Ships Association

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