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## King Charles Sends Letter to Crew of Former Ship HMS Bronington



Prince of Wales and Lord Mountbatten on HMS Bronington in 1976 (Picture: Royal Navy)

King Charles has penned a letter to the crew of his old ship, HMS *Bronington*, on the day of his coronation.

Prince Charles captained the ship in 1976, his final year in the Royal Navy, and said on the day of his coronation, he recalled "with the greatest nostalgia" his service on board the ship.

"It was an unbelievable 47 years ago and many of our shipmates have since crossed the bar, but each person still stands out in my mind," he said.

"The many successes of our operations in the fleet were in the best traditions of the Royal Navy and widely acknowledged at the time."

The King went on to say, as the crew's "proud old captain", he "admired" the professionalism of the crew, as well as their "close-knit teamwork and unfailingly robust good humour."

"I remain deeply grateful to you all for the strong bonds we forged, and I send you my warmest good wishes on this historic day," he said.

"Splice the Mainbrace!" HMS *Bronington* is partially submerged in a dock basin on Merseyside having sunk at her moorings.

However, in 2022, a campaign was launched to raise the ship.

A dive survey carried out by marine specialists found that, with some minor remedial work on the hull to make her watertight again, the minesweeper is in a satisfactory condition to be refloated.

Ideally, the voluntary preservation trust formed to save the ship wants to see her as a working ship again.

But, if that proves too much of a challenge, the volunteers have made it known they would be happy with turning the minesweeper into a museum ship.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

On the day of my Coronation I recall with the greatest nostalgia our service together on board Her Majesty's Ship Bronington in 1976. It was an unbelievable forty-seven years ago and many of our ship mates have since crossed the bar, but each person still stands out in my mind. The many successes of our operations in the fleet were in the best traditions of the Royal Navy and widely acknowledged at the time.

As your proud old Captain, I admired your professionalism, close-knit teamwork and unfailingly robust good humour. I remain deeply grateful to you all for the strong bonds we forged, and I send you my warmest good wishes on this historic day.

Splice the Mainbrace!

[Link to Letter](#)

# News Around the Fleet

## ■ NEH Announces \$35.6 Million in Grants

The National Endowment for the Humanities announced in April the 258 beneficiaries of its newest round of grants, the first of three rounds to be awarded this year. Among the projects will be restorations to the USS *Intrepid*, a historic aircraft carrier that is the centerpiece of the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York; a documentary exploring the legacy of the fictional sleuth Nancy Drew, whose books have been in print for nearly 100 years; and a book that traces the development of modern Egypt through the historical importance of the tomato.

The grants, which total \$35.6 million, will support projects at museums, libraries, universities and historic sites in 44 states,



as well as in Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C., and the United Arab Emirates.

"These 258 newly funded projects demonstrate the vitality of the humanities across our nation," said NEH Chair Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo). "NEH is proud to support exemplary education, preservation, media, research, and infrastructure projects

that expand resources for Americans, support humanities programs and opportunities for underserved students and communities, and deepen our understanding of our history, culture, and society."

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

## ■ Where Was 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button' Filmed?

Numerous outdoor and interior sequences of 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button' were lensed in Los Angeles County, the most populous county in the US. The production team set up camp in prominent cities like Los Angeles and Burbank. While the scenes of Benjamin at war were recorded at various outdoor sites, the scenes of the cargo ship were shot on the S.S. *Lane Victory*, Pier 94, San Pedro in Los Angeles, California.

The cargo ship was utilized in World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam War and was preserved as a museum ship in



1989. The rare Victory ship is a designated US National Historic Landmark and attracts many visitors annually. Given its diverse landscape and various tax incentives for movie and TV production, Los Angeles County is a filming hotspot. Besides, it is home to some of the biggest film studios worldwide and has a vast network



of talented actors and crew. Hit TV shows and movies like 'Succession,' 'Beef,' 'The Mandalorian,' 'Avatar: The Way of Water,' and 'Everything Everywhere All at Once' feature LA County's locales.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

# Finalists for New Navy Museum Design

And it's anchors aweigh for the new national museum for the U.S. Navy in the nation's capital.

Bjarke Ingels Group, DLR Group, Frank Gehry Partners, Quinn Evans and Perkins&Will are the finalists in the Naval Heritage History and Command's (NHHC) Artistic Ideas Competition that will decide the design for the new National Museum of the U.S. Navy.

The design firms and their selected entries were revealed at a special event at the D.C. Navy Yard by MGAC, a D.C.-based consulting firm handling the project.

"We have been absolutely thrilled by the quality of submissions received from these five outstanding firms," David Ben-Israel, MGAC's vice president, said at the event. "It has been an honor to work with the NHHC team and the firms to take one more step towards a new national museum that pays tribute to the history and heritage of our nation's Navy."

Each firm used a different approach that inspired each of their concepts, which were all focused around six main building elements: the general building form and massing, the main entrance, the Atrium, the marque gallery space, the ceremonial "honor" courtyard, and the use of macro artifacts.

"The concepts unveiled today are a crucial step in exploring what is possible for the new National Museum of the U.S. Navy," Samuel Cox, NHHC's director, said. "We will tell the story of the Navy's history as it continues to unfold, and the ideas developed by our finalists herald a new way of honoring that history by inviting visitors to participate."

In October, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced the Navy's preferred location for the museum would be on land adjacent to the Washington Navy Yard that would be acquired either through a land exchange or direct purchase.

The new museum is intended to be a modern, public-facing space comprising a new building and ceremonial courtyard, as well as the potential renovation of existing historical buildings. The campus would consist of approximately



*The DLR Group's Entry for the National Museum of the U.S. Navy (Rendering; Paul Westlake)*

*Bjarke Ingels Group Entry for the National Museum of the U.S. Navy (Rendering, Negativ)*



*Frank Gehry Partners Entry for the National Museum of the U.S. Navy (Rendering, Frank Gehry Partners)*

*Quinn Evans's Entry for the National Museum of the U.S. Navy (Rendering, Quinn Evans)*



*Perkin & Will's Entry for the National Museum of the U.S. Navy (Rendering, Perkins & Will)*

270,000 square feet, including approximately 100,000 square feet of net gallery space.

# ■ One of the Last *Arizona* Survivors Dies at 102

Ken Potts, one of the last two remaining survivors of the USS *Arizona* battleship, which sank during the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, has died. He was 102.

Howard Kenton Potts died in his home in Provo, Utah, that he shared with his wife of 66 years, according to Randy Stratton, whose late father, Donald Stratton, was Potts' *Arizona* shipmate and close friend.

Stratton said Potts "had all his marbles" but lately was having a hard time getting out of bed. When Stratton spoke to Potts on his birthday, April 15, he was happy to have made it to 102.

"But he knew that his body was kind of shutting down on him, and he was just hoping that he could get better but (it) turned out not," Stratton said.

Potts was born and raised in Honey Bend, Illinois, and enlisted in the Navy in 1939.

He was working as a crane operator shuttling supplies to the *Arizona* the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, when the Pearl Harbor attack happened.

In a 2020 oral history interview with the American Veterans Center, Potts said a loudspeaker ordered sailors back to their ships so he got on a boat.

"When I got back to Pearl Harbor, the whole harbor was afire," He said in the interview. "The oil had leaked out and caught on fire and was burning."



*Former U.S. Navy coxswain Howard "Ken" Potts attends the Freedom Bell Opening Ceremony and Bell Ringing at USS Bowfin Submarine Museum & Park on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Dec. 6, 2016. Potts, one of the last two remaining survivors of the USS Arizona battleship, which sank during the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, died Friday, April 21, 2023, in Provo, Utah. (Lance Cpl. Robert Sweet/U.S. Marine Corps/AP)*

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

# ■ Submarine Found 80 Years After it Sank

A maritime mystery dating back almost 80 years has now been solved. An experimental submarine sank in Long Island Sound in 1946. Now, some local divers say they have finally found the wreck of The Defender.

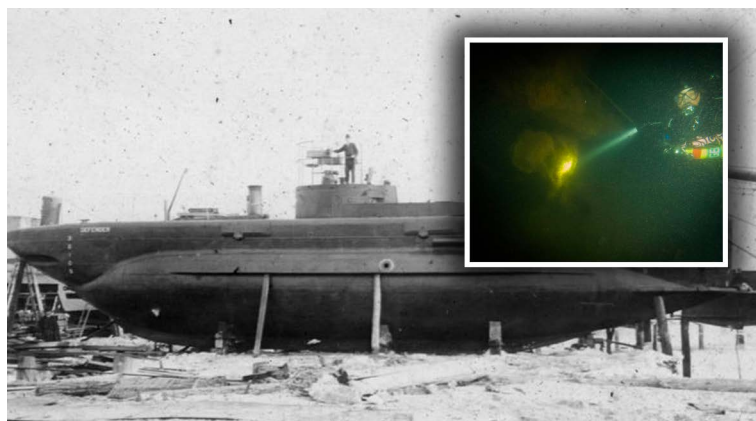
Under the calm surface of Long Island Sound, there are still mysteries, and divers like Richard Simon of Shoreline Diving love finding them.

"As a kid, I grew up diving in Long Island Sound," Simon said. "As a diver, it was one of those myths, 'Hey, there's a submarine lost in Long Island Sound.'"

Everyone knows about Electric Boat, but more than a hundred years ago, there was another submarine maker. An inventor in Milford named Simon Lake built a prototype called "The Defender."

"So, in 1907, he built the submarine Defender to sell it to the Navy," Simon said. "You know, it has wheels, it can drive on the bottom, you can launch divers from it. Pretty revolutionary for its time. And the Navy said, this is a little too new for us."

With no luck, Simon Lake tried for years to get the government interested in his submarine. So, the Defender hung around the Connecticut shoreline for decades, getting less and less seaworthy until it sank for good in 1946 somewhere off the coast of Old Saybrook. Some say it was being towed when it sank, and some say it was scuttled on purpose, but nobody knew exactly where it was until Rick and his



friends started looking.

For two years, they narrowed it down with charts and sonar until they thought they found something the right size and shape. But it was in deep water.

"It's in a spot that's tidal, so you only have about a 45-minute time window when you can actually dive the wreck," Simon said.

On Sunday, they got down at the right time and found what they were looking for. The size, shape, and age all match The Defender. It was the first of many dives he and his crew would do.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

## ■ Hope for Barnegat Lightship with Marina Purchase

The Camden County Board of Commissioners on Thursday agreed to purchase the Pyne Poynt Marina and plans to turn it into a waterfront park, a move that suddenly offers new hope that the marina's historic vessel, the Barnegat Lightship, can be restored.

The commissioners voted unanimously to buy the seven-acre parcel for \$633,000 from Anna G. Sadler. The acquisition is being funded through a mix of county funds and 50% reimbursement through the state's Green Acres program, a county spokesman said.

Sadler is the widow

of Rodney Sadler, the community activist who nearly 30 years ago towed the Barnegat from Penn's Landing in Philadelphia to Camden hoping to create a waterfront attraction.

Sadler's dream never became a reality due to lack of funding, and the Barnegat slowly sunk into the mud at the marina, located on a back channel of the Cooper River. The light atop the mast went out long ago, the familiar red and white hull that guided so many ships has faded, and rust has eaten away at the 120-year-old hull. Scavengers and treasure hunters have almost stripped the vessel



clean.

In 2020, a group of residents from Long Beach Island bought the ship's bell and brought it back to Barnegat Light and

mounted it at borough hall.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

## ■ Navy Could Soon Scrap USS *Nimitz*

"All good things must come to an end," the saying goes. This is true even of a battle-honored aircraft carrier that served honorably for 50-plus years and was named for one of the heroes of the epic Battle of Midway. The carrier in question is the USS *Nimitz*, whose name honors one of the Navy's greatest leaders, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz (1885-1966).

The *Nimitz* is only the second nuclear-powered American carrier scheduled to be scrapped, the first one being the USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65), which was commissioned in 1961 and was also the world's first nuclear-powered carrier in addition to being the longest naval vessel ever built.

There's a problem, however, as Business Insider's Michael Peck explains:

"The problem isn't that the Navy doesn't have

experience dismantling nuclear-powered ships. The US Navy launched the first atomic submarine – the USS *Nautilus* – in 1954. (The first nuclear-powered surface ship was the Soviet icebreaker *Lenin*, launched in 1957.)... Since 1990, the Navy has inactivated – which entails removing the nuclear fuel and reactor compartment – more than 130 nuclear-powered ships, according to the GAO. In addition to carriers and subs, the Navy also built nine nuclear-powered cruisers in the 1960s and 1970s. The last of them, USS *Arkansas*, left service in 1998.

"But scrapping a 100,000-ton aircraft carrier is a much more ambitious project. To say the process is complicated – both technically and bureaucratically – would be an understatement... Navy shipyards are so overworked that they can't provide required



maintenance for active warships, let alone take apart obsolete ones."

Regardless of how the process unfolds, the scrapping of *Nimitz* and *Enterprise* brings about the end of an era. The vessels are tangible symbols of America's Cold War power projection. Presumably this will leave more room in the Navy's budget for the new generation *Gerald R. Ford*-class carriers, which carry a

\$37.3 billion program cost and a \$12.998 billion unit cost. The *Fords* are being built with a larger deck space able to support a 33 percent increase in sortie rate over the *Nimitz*-class. The lead ship of the *Ford*-class finally made her maiden deployment in October 2022.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

## ■ Volunteers Keep USS Slater Afloat

Below deck on the USS Slater in Albany, cream cotton belts are strapped around green bunks sourced during the destroyer escort's extensive restoration. The straps were meant to keep navy sailors secured to their beds while they slept.

Each strap is printed with a first initial and last name, though not of the men that once served on the Slater in World War II. They are the names of the volunteers who helped restore and maintain the ship since it came to Albany just over 25 years ago and have since died. Two of the ship's sleeping quarters, totaling 48 bunks, have emblazoned memorial straps on every bed.

"Many of the volunteers are World War II vets, Korea vets, Vietnam vets, and they're passing away," said John Epps, curator for the museum, during a tour. "Angelo (a volunteer) was just making more straps the other day."

Keeping the Slater afloat takes a four-person staff; grant funding and donations; and, at its core, a team of dedicated volunteers who handle everything from tours to maintenance. As time marches forward and ailments, illness and death shrink the volunteer pool, a question looms – who will keep the Slater from sinking in the future?

The Slater is a destroyer escort, a type of ship developed during World War II to protect convoys of Allied supply ships from German U-boats and enemy air attacks. The Allies needed something that was inexpensive and quick to make and could be heavily armed, volunteer tour guide Alan Fox explained. Out of the 563 built, only five remain.

After the war, the Slater went to Greece in 1951. After 40 years serving the Greek Navy and accumulating a lot of rust, the ship was slated to be scrapped. The Destroyer Escort Sailors Association raised the funds to bring the Slater back to the United States, where it was docked at the Intrepid Sea, Air



and Space Museum in New York City in 1993 before coming to Albany in 1997. Docking was going to be temporary at the Port of Albany, said Tim Rizzuto, executive director of the Slater, but by 2010, permanent mooring was installed.

"It kind of snuck it in the back door," Rizzuto joked.

Since its return to the United States, volunteers have worked to restore the Slater to its 1945 condition, and they literally keep the Slater floating through regular maintenance. Of the approximately 60 individuals who help out at least once a month, 35 work on upkeep. They're responsible for everything from scraping off rust and resealing the three-eighths-inch thick metal hull to restoring the steering, navigation and communication rooms. Twice a year, volunteers from out-of-state spend a week living and working on the Slater to help. A room above deck has been kept in disrepair with layers of paint and rust flaking off the walls and pipes to show visitors what the whole ship looked like when it got to Albany.

"Ninety-nine percent of all the work on here has been done by volunteers," Epp said. "Without the volunteers here, I don't think the ship would be

here. It would've been scrapped decades ago."

In addition to maintenance, volunteers lead an average of six tour groups per day throughout the ship, snaking through metal corridors and up and down steep steps to explore life above and below deck on a destroyer escort. They also help with school trips and overnight stays. Between the maintenance and the educational programs, including tours, volunteers put in an average of 15,000 hours a year, said Shanna Schuster, who oversees the volunteers as the program manager.

One of the volunteers, Gary Sheedy, a Vietnam veteran, spent 16 years restoring the walk-in coolers and freezers and is now working on restoring the backup steering room. Dick Walker, a Coast Guard veteran in his 80s, began volunteering with his wife, a "cornfed cutie pie from Iowa," in 1998. After 12 years of tours, arthritis and Alzheimer's caught up with Walker and his wife respectively, and they had to stop. She has since died. Now Walker helps with mail and supply runs.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

## ■ New Details for Saving USS *The Sullivans*

The Naval Park at Canalside is gearing up for a busy tourism season just a year after the USS *The Sullivans* partially sank in the Buffalo River.

This year it is full steam ahead to return the USS *The Sullivans* to her former glory.

"Just to have people come back aboard, that's what really brings life to the ship. That's what's so critically important," Bill Abbott, retired U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer and director of operations at the Buffalo Naval Park, said.

April 14, 2022, was a dark day in the history of the the 80-year-old World War II ship. After a major hull breach, the ship began listing and taking on water. The ship has been in Buffalo's harbor since 1977. 65 percent of the artifacts were saved, but some didn't make it.

"It was tough to lose some of the artifacts that we did. The ship herself is the largest artifact in terms of USS *The Sullivans*, so we are very happy that she has been preserved herself," Shane Stephenson, director of museum collections at the Buffalo Naval Park, added.

A year later, the ship is righted and the hull repaired, but there is still more work to do. Visitors are still not allowed inside the ship because of the extensive damage.

"Now it's just a matter of working on the insides of the ship and working on a dry docking plan," Stephenson continued.

*The Sullivans* will be dry docked for several months to fully replace the hull. The new steel

should last about 50 years and will require little to no maintenance, but the dry docking process will be complicated.

"The plan as it stands right now would be to go at the end of our visitor season and go for the winter months and return in time for the opening of the next season," Abbott said. "Once its dredged, the *Little Rock* is shifted back and the *Croaker* is shifted forward, then tug boats would come in and pull *The Sullivans* out."

The Naval Park says it is prepared for this massive project because the ships are an integral part of this community.

"The roots of these ships grows deep in the community and the outpouring was really overwhelming. It was pretty amazing," Abbott concluded.

The entire park is open for the season. It is open seven days per week and will be ready for visitors from near and far. It closes for the season in November.





# Historic Naval Ships Association

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

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