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## New Jersey On the Move



*The Battleship New Jersey is headed for a homecoming of sorts as it prepares to leave its berth on the Camden Waterfront for a short hop across the Delaware to Philadelphia, where it was launched in 1942.*

**"It's a very historic ship, and this is a very important dry-docking. The said. The biggest challenge will be the weather."**

Capt. Joseph E. Benton III  
VP and General Manager  
McAllister Towing of  
Philadelphia

The Battleship *New Jersey*, the Navy's biggest, fastest, and most decorated battleship, will be on the move next spring for the first time since 2001.

Plans call for detaching the battleship from its Camden Waterfront moorings and propelling it south by tugboat to North Atlantic Ship Repair at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The 45,000-ton vessel is to be dry-docked in the same berth where it was built beginning in 1940 and launched on Dec. 7, 1942.

"It's going back to Berth 3 because Berth 3 is big enough to hold it," said Marshall Spevak, the interim chief executive officer of the Homeport Alliance. The nonprofit corporation owns and operates the battleship as a museum and memorial.

The bottom of "Big J" – a vessel the length of two football fields and then some – will undergo routine maintenance, repairs, and repainting for the first time in 32 years. Navy maintenance guidelines for inactive

ships call for dry-docking every 20 years.

"We're way overdue and are moving forward now because it will be more expensive every year we wait," said Spevak, who took a leave of absence as a partner at the Advocacy & Management Group, a Trenton lobbying firm, to take the interim CEO post.

"I'm honored to take the helm and oversee this project," the 35-year-old Cherry Hill resident said. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to answer a higher calling of service."

Also feeling honored to take on the task: Capt. Joseph E. Benton III, vice president and general manager of McAllister Towing of Philadelphia. He will be in charge of the towing operation, which will involve four tractor tugs to propel and maneuver the ship to Philly and back.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

# News Around the Fleet

## ■ Icebreaker *Alexander Henry* in Thunder Bay

Before the CCGS *Samuel Risley* started making regular visits to Midland harbour to break up the winter's ice, the icebreaker CCGS *Alexander Henry* helped ensure marine traffic could get back to normal.

In the accompanying photo from 1960, one can notice the ship's "bow etched with the silvery lines of ice and water she plowed through to get here," Huronia Museum and Huron Ouendat Village notes.

The ship found new life after being decommissioned and is now the centrepiece of the Transportation Museum of Thunder Bay.

According to the Thunder Bay museum, the ship was named in honour of the fur trader, who from about 1803 led summer expeditions to the Thunder Bay area. Originally



the ship was to be named *Griffon*, but was changed to *Alexander Henry* just prior to launching.

*Alexander Henry* was built by the Port Arthur Ship Building Company in 1959 for the Federal

Department of Transport at a cost of \$2,259,750.001959 CA as a replacement for the CGS *St. Heliers*.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

## ■ Boy Scouts Overnight Aboard USS *Yorktown*

The cornerstone of the Charleston trip for a South Carolina scout group was the visit to, and overnight stay, on the aircraft carrier USS *Yorktown*.

After spending the night at a hotel in Mount Pleasant, SC, and a Saturday, Dec. 9 visit to Fort Moultrie, members of Boy Scout Troops 3, 21, and 270 boarded USS *Yorktown* and went through a safety briefing, before stowing their gear in their berthing area.

A guided tour of the carrier and the nearby Destroyer USS *Laffey* took up a good portion of Saturday afternoon. The group was allowed to roam throughout the ship for the rest of the afternoon and evening. Following a nighttime tour of the



flight deck, the group was treated to a presentation of the Tom Hanks movie *Greyhound*.

The *Yorktown* became a museum ship in 1975.

Scouts from Troop 270 on the trip were Landon Atkins, Dalton Baker, Simon Baker, and Cody

Ngo. They were joined by Assistant Scoutmasters Britt Brinson and David Wade, Troop Committee Members Brady Atkins, Gene and Nicole Baker, Webelos Scout Jake Atkins and Doni Rae Baker.

# ■ Rhyming in the New Year: Best Deck Logs

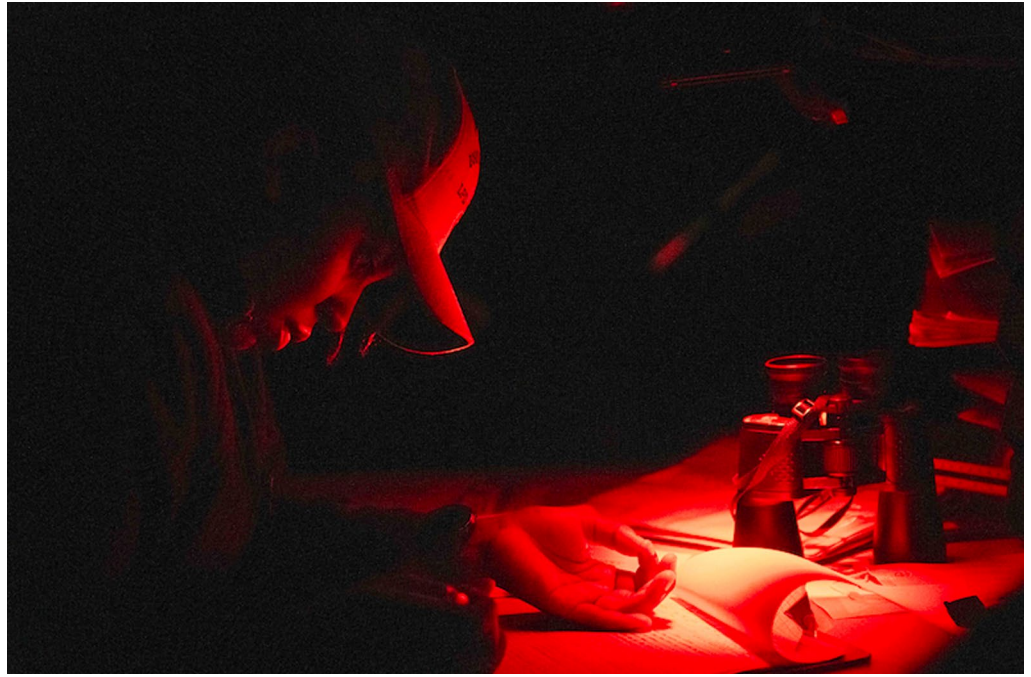
*"As New Year's bells ring out tonight, we celebrate our warship's might. In poetic form, we must recall, Bunker Hill's life before her 2023 mothball."*

That's what Lt. Artem Sherbinin - who served as the now-decommissioned USS *Bunker Hill's* final navigator before the ship left the service last year - wrote as 2022 crossed into 2023. Sherbinin's New Year's deck log entry won first place in the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command's competition, a tradition the command restarted in 2021.

First deck logs, which are written between midnight and 4 a.m. during the midwatch on New Year's Day, are written in verse but must contain all the requirements of a deck log. Details required include, but are not limited to, sources of electric power, the position of the ship, the state of sea, the weather, any changes in the status of personnel and courses and speed of the ship.

Sherbinin's prose captures the life of *Bunker Hill* as the ship was set for decommissioning in 2023. However, others have snuck in deck log requirements, such as the first log of 2021, which captured both the effects of COVID-19 on USS *Ralph Johnson* (DDG 114) and a drug seizure made by the ship. Toward the end of the poem, written by Electronics Technician 2nd Class Hailey Coop, are details about the ship's electronic plant status and readiness.

It is unclear when the tradition started. A Navy press release announcing the 2024 deck log competition says it dates back to 1929. However, a blog post in *The Sextant*, run by the Naval History and Heritage Command, suggests they go back as 1926. But a note from the commanding officer of USS *Idaho* (BB 42) on the 1926 first deck entry suggests that the tradition was already old, USNI News previously reported.



*Quartermaster 1st Class Chateya Reed, a native of Mansfield, Ohio, records deck log entries aboard San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Somerset (LPD 25) while underway in the Pacific Ocean, Dec. 10, 2023. (US Navy Photo)*

"The Captain is glad to see that the old Navy custom of writing up the first watch of the year in rhyme is known to the younger members of the Service. The watch stands as written," according to the note.

Authors David Johnson and Gary Guinn attempted to find first deck logs in verse before 1920 while writing "Midwatch in Verse," which focuses on deck logs from the 1940s. While the two found references to New Year's Eve or the new year in the deck logs from 1880, they could not find a poem before 1926. The tradition may stem back to USS *Jeanette* because the authors found a reference to the ship meteorologist reading poems about the crew.

Navy History and Heritage Command elected to turn the first log into a competition, rather than publishing them on Jan. 1, as had been done up to 2021, taking the idea from *Navy Times*, which announced a competition in 1968. The publication offered \$100 for the winning sailor and \$50 for the winning ship's welfare and recreation fund, according to *The Sextant* post.

Navy History and Heritage Command awards the winner of the Navy competition copper sheathing from USS *Constitution*, according to its press release.

The command will announce the winners for the 2024 first deck log in April.

# ■ Finding a Civil War-Era Seacoast Mortar

Originally published on KIMA TV - This is a follow up to a 2021 ABC News 7 Story.

Can a rare artifact weighing 10-tons simply vanish? It literally happened.

"In your wildest dreams, did you think that somebody would find that?" asked correspondent Mark Hyman.

"No. No," was the immediate response from retired admiral Sam Cox. He is the Director of Navy History. We met with him more than two years ago when we were trying to locate a 10-ton naval mortar identical to one used during the Civil War. The mere existence of this rare artifact was a shock to him.

Admiral Cox was surprised when we first spoke with him because he didn't know this mortar still existed, let alone it had disappeared.

"It had never come to my attention until you brought it to my attention, so I thank you for that," Cox told us.

We first learned of this artillery piece, known as a seacoast mortar, from several caretakers who volunteer at Dayton, Ohio's Old Greencastle Cemetery, a resting place for approximately 300 veterans dating all the way back to the American Revolution. The mortar sat in the cemetery for nearly a century.

Air Force veteran Fred Lynch was passionate about the mortar's disappearance. Lynch observed, "The



Seacoast Mortar was a grave marker honoring all of the veterans here. ... And, it was meant to stay here."

The Navy loaned the mortar to the Dayton community more than a century ago. In 1998, cemetery officials sold it to a private collector from Allentown, Pennsylvania. Years later, it was sold again. And no one wanted to spill the beans on where it went.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

# ■ Yorktown on the "Move"

After being decommissioned in 1970, USS *Yorktown* was placed in the reserve fleet. In 1975, the historic warship was towed from Bayonne, New Jersey, to Charleston, South Carolina, and became the centerpiece of Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum.

Today, the *Essex*-class aircraft carrier is preserved as a museum ship and was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1986.

Moving a retired warship is no easy feat, but the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum announced that it was forced to temporarily close after December's record-setting Nor'easter storm did shift the vessel!

The museum says since the former USS *Yorktown* arrived in Mount Pleasant in 1975, the ship has only moved one other time, during Hurricane Hugo in 1989, when the ship lifted an estimated six feet before resettling. However, during December's storm, the ship moved approximately just six inches. As the *Essex*-class carrier is buried in 25 feet of mud, it doesn't rise and fall with the tides.

The same isn't true of the former USS *Laffey* (DD 724), an *Allen M. Sumner*-class destroyer that was also constructed during World War II. The vessel has also been preserved as a museum ship, and companion of *Yorktown*, yet, is secured with mooring lines and thus very much moves with the



tides.

According to local news outlets, Charleston Harbor's high tide peaked at 9.86 feet on Sunday, making it the fourth-highest tide on record in the harbor and the highest on record for a non-tropical event.

## ■ Exploring the Legacy of USS *Cairo*

USS *Cairo* stands as a historic ironclad gunboat that saw action during the Civil War. Launched in 1862, it met its demise in the same year when it fell victim to a manually detonated mine.

Submerged in the Yazoo River until its recovery in the 1960s, *Cairo* now holds the distinction of being “the only remaining ironclad of its type in existence.”

Currently preserved and showcased at the Vicksburg National Military Park, USS *Cairo* provides visitors with a distinctive window into the naval history of the Civil War era.

Over the years, the vessel faded from collective memory, gradually obscured by layers of silt and mud deposited by the river’s currents.

This inadvertent shrouding, acted like a natural cocoon, and inadvertently safeguarded USS *Cairo*. Consequently, it metamorphosed into a maritime time capsule, its interior artifacts remarkably well-preserved within an oxygen-deprived environment.

Determining the precise location of the ship became a



speculative puzzle over time.

As crew members passed away and local knowledge waned, the whereabouts of *Cairo* remained elusive,

obsured by the passage of years and the mysteries of the river.

[FULL ARTICLE](#)

## ■ Midway Museum Launches Season 4 of Docuseries

For nearly 20 years, the **USS Midway Museum** has shared stories of service and sacrifice of the men and women who have worn the uniform of the nation. This commitment was further enhanced with the launch of the annual docuseries “United Stories of America” in 2020.

*Midway* is proud to announce the release of Season 4 of the series, with six new episodes that tell incredible stories of where the USS *Midway* and its crew intersected with critical moments in U.S. military history. The six-part series was conceived of and developed as a means of sharing and chronicling historical stories that speak to the important role played by the U.S. Navy.

“Our freedoms and the sacrifice necessary to preserve them are

built on the backs of the young men and women who serve in uniform,” said David Koontz, *Midway*’s marketing director. “Their experiences are enormously relevant and inspirational. We’re excited to be sharing their experiences with a worldwide audience.”

World of Warships, the popular naval multiplayer game, has joined *Midway*’s family of marketing partners as the exclusive presenting sponsor of Seasons 4 and 5. The goal of the series is to extend and expand the onboard experiences of *Midway* visitors.

“Our partnership with *Midway* has been vital to our mission of preserving naval history,” said Ross Falk, marketing lead for World of Warships, Americas. “Vessels like *Midway*



stand as a significant tangible reminder of profound events in human history. It is our responsibility to convey these crucial stories to future generations, paying tribute to naval heritage traditions, honoring veterans, and

promoting the values of remembrance.”

This season tells compelling and inspiring stories of courage and sacrifice and is voiced by those who experienced them.

# ■ 17th-Century Warship *Vasa* Needs Help Saving

One of the most famous warships in Europe requires financial assistance. The vessel in need of repairs, *Vasa*, is among the most well-known in Sweden, having been salvaged centuries after sinking just minutes into her maiden voyage. According to curators of the *Vasa* Museum in Stockholm, the ship requires a new support structure.

*Vasa* was one of many ships constructed during the 1600s and, similar to other vessels of the era, was spectacularly decorated and equipped with a formidable armament, consisting of 64 guns across two gundecks. She departed for her maiden voyage on August 10, 1628, and that's when the ship met her untimely end.

As she was leaving port, a strong gust of wind caught *Vasa's* sails, heeling her to port. While she was able to right herself, another gust pushed the vessel, which soon began to fill with water via her open gun ports. Hundreds of thousands witnessed the sinking, which resulted in the deaths of 30 crewmen.

It was later determined *Vasa* had sunk due to little stability, the result of a high center of gravity that, when compared to her center of buoyance, made it easy to turn the warship on her side.

In the late 1950s, the wreck was rediscovered and raised. The effort took two years and was followed by *Vasa* being transported to a temporary facility known as Wasavarvet ("The *Vasa* Shipyard"), where the ship underwent restoration and was put on display.

Following a government decision that a permanent facility be built to house *Vasa*, the ship was moved to the *Vasa* Museum, which opened to the public in 1990. Over the decades, it's become Sweden's most popular tourist spots, attracting 1.5 million visitors annually.

After decades of display, *Vasa* is now in need of costly repairs, with the museum revealing that



the warship is at risk of collapse if she doesn't receive a new internal support skeleton and a replacement support "cradle," which will cost an estimated 150 million kroner – equivalent to just under \$15.1 million USD.

Speaking with *The Guardian*, Project Director Magnus Olofsson explained that the damage is being caused by the cradle *Vasa* has been held in since 1964. The support structure is putting too much pressure on the hull, creating cracks and other damage.

"We have a lot of cracks already and we don't want to have more. In the end, the ship would collapse," he told the publication.

Olofsson added that pollution is another factor in *Vasa's* deterioration, saying the warship absorbed pollutants while submerged, which have slowly eaten away at the wood. It's reported that the vessel's timbers are at only 40 percent of the normal level of oak. That's why there's a need for an internal skeleton, which would help protect the ship's integrity.

"It's a big job," the museum's project director told *The Guardian*. "We have already been researching for four years to see how we are going to do it, and then we've been working on construction drawings for four years and now we are beginning to build, which will also take about four years."

*Those interested in donating to help fund the repairs can do so via the Vasa Museum's official website.*

**" When *Vasa* was salvaged, the whole of Swedish society came together and made it possible to salvage the ship [...] So that's why we're coming out again and saying we need help again."**

Jenny Lind  
Vasa Museum Director

## ■ Importance of Naval History in Seminar



*“What is the winning formula for future warfighters?” In a lively discussion, an all-star panel including (l. to r.) Dr. Mark Hagerott, Major General William F. Mullen III, Lieutenant General Michael Plehn, Vice Admiral Ann Rondeau, and Paul Scharre addressed that crucial question. (USNI Photo)*

The importance of history was evident in the seminar on critical thinking held by the U.S. Naval Institute and U.S. Naval Academy at the Jack C. Taylor Conference Center in Annapolis on 25 October.

Leading off the discussion was a panel consisting of Dr. Andrew Ledford, Chair of the Naval Academy’s Leadership, Ethics and Law Department; Dr. Mark Hagerott, Chair of the Secretary of the Navy’s Education Task Force, and award-winning historian Trent Hone.

To answer the question, “What is the winning formula for future warfighters?” the panelists reviewed some of the history of critical thinking in the Navy’s officer corps both before and after World War II.

Hone recalled that on the eve of World War II, naval officers “had become habituated to think critically and to problem solve both as individuals and as a team.” He cited as examples the development of the combat information center (CIC) in surface ships and the creation of the “Thach Weave” to overcome the advantage held early in the war by Japanese fighter aircraft. He emphasized that crucial to this process was the Americans’ ability to stay inside the Japanese decision-making cycle, a factor that likely allowed the war to be won more quickly.

This idea was later expanded by Marine Major General William F. Mullen III, who began his remarks in the second panel of the day by telling the audience that the key to winning in today’s environment is to seize the initiative and stay ahead of the enemy by outthinking them, referring to the “OODA Loop” developed by Air Force Colonel John Boyd that prescribes the recurring sequence of “observe, orient, decide, act.”

Hagerott delved into the postwar struggle over technical vs. liberal education, citing the roles of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Ernest J. King

in emphasizing the need for officers who were holistically educated rather than focused on specialization. He explained that, despite the concurrence of several important reports that emerged in the postwar years, the sinking of the submarine USS *Thresher* (SSN 593) changed the direction of naval education, particularly at the Naval Academy.

Recognizing the need for technical education to produce officers prepared to safely harness nuclear propulsion, Admiral Hyman Rickover was able to change the emphasis of naval education from the holistic approach to a highly technical one that continues to dominate the curriculum at the Naval Academy today. By 1973, Rickover was able to achieve his goal of making virtually every Naval Academy graduate—regardless of major—potentially able to attend nuclear power training.

Other participants in the day’s events included Naval Academy Provost Samara Firebaugh, former Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, former Secretary of Defense General James Mattis, President of the Defense University Lieutenant General Michael Plehn, President of the Naval Postgraduate School Vice Admiral Ann Rondeau, Chairman of the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence Dr. Eric Schmidt, Strategist and Senior Fellow at News America Dr. Peter Warren Singer, and Paul Scharre, author of *Four Battlegrounds: Power in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. Also included were Naval Academy midshipmen who actively participated on both sides of the podium.

## ■ TEMPER TEMPER, *Wisconsin*

At the outset of the Korean War, *USS Wisconsin* was recommissioned. After undergoing a shake-down and conducting two midshipmen training cruises, she embarked on her journey to the Pacific, departing from Norfolk on October 25, 1951.

Once again transiting through the Panama Canal, *Wisconsin* reached Japan on November 21 and assumed the role of Vice Adm. H.M. Martin's flagship for the Seventh Fleet, relieving the *USS New Jersey*. Just five days later, she set sail for Korea, joining Task Force 77 (TF-77) and receiving the mission of shore bombardment.

On March 15, 1952, while engaging in a shelling operation against enemy positions in Songjin, *Wisconsin* faced a moment of provocation. Approaching perilously close to the shore, North Korean forces returned fire, their 155 mm shells striking the vessel, but causing no substantial damage, with only three sailors sustaining injuries.

In response, *Wisconsin* directed her formidable firepower toward the enemy and executed a devastating broadside, obliterating the North Korean artillery. In a lighthearted exchange, the *USS Buck* (DD-761), her escort, signaled, "TEMPER TEMPER." Though this incident lacks extensive corroborative evidence, it remains a captivating anecdote from *Wisconsin's* wartime service.



## Historic Naval Ships Association

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

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