



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

April 9, 2019



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Welcome to *Navy History Matters*—our weekly compilation of articles, commentaries, and blogs related to history and heritage. Every week we'll gather the top-interest items from a variety of media and social media sources and then link you to related content at NHHC's website (history.navy.mil), your authoritative source for Navy history.

★ Walk on the Moon with New Apollo 11 VR Experience at NNAM

The [National Naval Aviation Museum](http://www.navalaviationmuseum.org), at Naval Air Station Pensacola, FL, opened its new [Apollo 11 Virtual Reality Experience](#) exhibit April 5, in commemoration of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the [Apollo 11 moon landing](#) on July 24, 1969, and to recognize the important connection between [naval aviation](#) and the space program. The exhibit is located on the second floor of the museum and is part of the existing space exhibit, which includes an Apollo command module from a Skylab mission. The exhibit's creators wanted it to be both a traditional museum exhibit and a virtual experience. "We came up with this concept of an open-air VR attraction where people can actually watch other people enjoying the experience," said Philip Crabtree, the museum's general manager. "We wanted to theme it out to bring back those key images from the '60s and the Apollo era with the red trusses from the Saturn Five launch tower and then kind of a recreation of the mission control in Houston." To learn more, [read the article](#) in the *Pensacola News Journal*. To learn more about the [Navy's role in space exploration](#), visit [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.navalaviationmuseum.org/attractions/apollo-11-virtual-reality/>

★ The Naval History of Puerto Rico

With a proud heritage, the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico has a distinguished history with the U.S. Navy. Seven naval vessels have been named for Puerto Rico's people, places, and cities—most recently, the Los Angeles-class attack submarine [USS San Juan](#). Notable Sailors include Vice Adm. Diego Hernandez, former commander of [USS John F. Kennedy](#), and Capt. Haydee Javier Kimmich, who became the Chief of Orthopedics at the Navy Medical Center in Bethesda, MD. To learn more, [read the blog](#) at [The Sextant](#). To see more [infographics](#), visit [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/state-infographics/puertorico-s-naval-history.html>

★ North Korean Aircraft Shot Down EC-121—50 Years Ago

On April 14, 1969, 50 years ago, a North Korean aircraft shot down an unarmed [EC-121M Constellation](#) that was on a routine reconnaissance patrol over international waters in the Sea of Japan, killing all 31 crewmembers. As tensions rose between Pyongyang and Washington, on April 16 the U.S. 7th Fleet responded to the crisis by dispatching Task Force 71, which included the nuclear aircraft carrier [Enterprise](#), to the vicinity. That same day, while en route to Korean waters, planes from [Enterprise](#) intercepted two [Soviet TU-95 Bear bombers](#) in the "vicinity of the task force." The ships of the task force entered the Sea of Japan on April 21 where they were again threatened by a pair of *Bears*. Although [Enterprise](#) launched no combat sorties during the "arduous" 47 consecutive days at sea, the crew carried out valuable training operations.

✦ Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention: Everyone's Duty

Throughout this month, military and civilian communities recognize April as [Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#). This year's theme for the Department of Defense is "Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission." "It's the responsibility of each and every one of us, to combat and eliminate sexual assault," said Capt. Matthew Case, Naval Hospital Jacksonville commander and Navy Medicine Readiness & Training Command Jacksonville commanding officer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in five women and one in 38 men experience attempted rape or actual rape during their lifetime. To learn how you can help prevent sexual assault, [read the U.S. Navy release](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.deomi.org/human-relations/special-observances.cfm?tab=5>

✦ Remembering *The Sullivans*

Originally to be named *Putnam*, [USS *The Sullivans*](#) was launched on April 4, 1943, and was commissioned Sept. 30 of that year. The Fletcher-class destroyer was renamed by direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to honor the five Sullivan brothers who were killed in action while serving aboard [USS *Juneau*](#) off Guadalcanal in 1942. [The Sullivan brothers](#) from Waterloo, IA, requested to serve together. Their request was granted, and their ship saw action during the [Battle of Santa Cruz Islands](#) and the [Battle of Guadalcanal](#). On Nov. 13, 1942, their ship was hit by multiple torpedoes and, after a massive explosion, *Juneau* sank in 42 seconds. *The Sullivans* saw plenty of action during the war, fighting in the Battles of Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Philippine Sea, [Iwo Jima](#), and [Okinawa](#). To learn more, [read the post](#) by HRNM Educator Zachary Smyers at the [Hampton Roads Naval Museum blog](#).



Photo Link: <http://hamptonroadsnavalmuseum.blogspot.com/2019/04/remembering-sullivans.html>

✦ National Library Workers Day

[National Library Workers Day](#), a day to recognize the contributions of all library workers, is today, April 9. Included in this group is the staff of NHHC's own [Navy Department Library](#), which helps preserve the Navy's history and traditions and protect this repository of institutional knowledge. The Navy Department Library traces its roots to a letter dated March 31, 1800, from President John Adams to Secretary of the Navy [Benjamin Stoddert](#) directing him to [establish a naval library](#). Today, the Navy Department Library staff continues to serve the public by acquiring, organizing, preserving, and providing access to naval and maritime history, customs, and traditions through reference services and internet outreach.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-48000/nh-48460-captain-dudley-w--knox--usn.html>

✦ The First Airplane to Cross an Ocean

While cleaning out his mother's house last year, 67-year-old Todd Ryan came upon a treasure that his grandfather had left behind—an envelope containing a few small, black-and-white photographs. In one photograph was his grandfather sitting in front of a large crew of Sailors, some holding a propeller with "Carpenter Gang" painted on it. Another was a large flying boat with a number "1" on its hull. "I knew immediately what it was," said Ryan "When I saw that, I thought, 'Wow!'" The photos revealed that his grandfather was part of aviation history: the first flight across the Atlantic Ocean. Ryan never knew that about his grandfather. On May 8, 1919, three U.S. Navy flying boats—[NC-1](#), [NC-3](#), and [NC-4](#)—took off from the water at the former Rockaway Naval Air Station outside New York City. Their goal was to be the first aircraft to fly across the Atlantic, but only [NC-4](#), commanded by [Albert C. Read](#), would be successful. To learn more, [read the article](#) in *Air & Space magazine*. To learn more about [naval aviation](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.airspacemag.com/history-of-flight/a-hand-in-aviation-history-nc-4-180971747/>

★ Back When Fireships and Hellburners Terrorized Fleets

When filled with combustibles or explosives, fireships could be floated into enemy ships to destroy or disable them during the [age of sail](#). In Europe during their peak usage, between the late 16th and early 19th centuries, they could force an enemy fleet to split its formation, break anchor, or cause terror. They continued to become increasingly sophisticated in their design and deployment. Usually, a skeleton crew would sail the ship right up to the enemy, ignite it, then escape through the sally ports. To learn more, [read the article](#) at *Navy Times*.



Photo Link: <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/04/07/back-when-fireships-and-hellburners-terrorized-fleets/>

★ This 73-Year-Old Navy Veteran Has Run 200 Marathons

In 1981, sonar technician Sid Busch was about to be medically boarded from the [Submarine Force](#) for a ruptured disk in his back. He had 16 years in the Navy and needed to convince the orthopedic review board that he was still physically fit enough to continue to serve. He proposed to the board members that if he could complete a marathon, that would prove he was fit to continue with his submarine duty. Needless to say, “the rest is history.” He completed that race, and he served in what would become a 26-year Navy career. Except that wasn’t the end of it. Today, the 73-year-old has completed more than 200 marathons. In 2006, Busch started carrying an American flag during the races to “honor the men and women who were killed overseas.” To learn more, [read the article](#) in *Runner’s World*.



Photo Link: <https://www.runnersworld.com/runners-stories/a26937405/this-73-year-old-navy-veteran-has-run-200-marathons-in-memory-of-the-fallen/>

★ NHHC Webpage of the Week

On April 11, 1900, 119 years ago, the U.S. Navy officially joined the undersea world when it purchased [USS Holland](#) from the boat’s designer, John P. Holland. In honor of the U.S. Navy’s historic dive into submarines, this week’s Webpage of the Week is [Submarine Force](#). This webpage, new to NHHC’s [communities’](#) pages, provides a short history plus a plethora of resources, including notable submariners, notable submarines, H-Grams, “[A View from the Periscope](#)” art exhibit, selected blogs, and a whole lot more. Check out this page today and learn about the men and women who make the underwater world their home. Happy birthday, U.S. Submarine Force!



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/art/exhibits/communities/a-view-from-the-periscope/daso-off-cape-kennedy-florida.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On April 9, 1944, 75 years ago, TBM bombers and FM-2s aircraft (VC-58) from [USS Guadalcanal](#), together with [USS Pillsbury](#), [USS Pope](#), [USS Flaherty](#), and [USS Chatelain](#), sank German submarine *U-515* off French Morocco. The group was headed to the United States from Casablanca when the enemy submarine was detected when her radio transmissions were picked up. *Chatelain* forced the Nazi submarine to the surface with two depth charge attacks, then joined in the general firing, sending *U-515* to the bottom of the ocean. To learn about other significant events that happened on this day, visit [today in naval history April 9](#) at [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-g-227000/80-g-227192-u-515.html>