



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

June 4, 2019



Compiled by Brent Hunt, Naval History and Heritage Command's Communication and Outreach Division

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.

★ Battle of Midway 77th Anniversary

From June 3–7, 1942, the U.S. Navy was engaged in one of the most decisive naval battles of [World War II](#). The [Battle of Midway](#) was the turning point of WWII in the Pacific, when momentum shifted from our Navy's defensive posture to an insurmountable offensive posture. The Sailors who turned the tide of the war had initiative, toughness, integrity, and accountability—the epitome of the “greatest generation.” Only one Medal of Honor was awarded for the battle; however, over 200 Navy Crosses were awarded to Navy and Marine Corps personnel, most to aviators, many posthumously. To learn more about the battle, check out the [Battle of Midway infographic](#) and read the [Battle of Midway combat narrative](#) at [NHHC's website](#). On June 4, 1999, the chief of naval operations designated the Battle of Midway as one of the anniversaries for special commemoration by the Navy with the issuance of [NAVADMIN 164/99](#). Read [Why We Celebrate](#) on NHHC's [Battle of Midway commemoration page](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/history/battle-of-midway.html>

★ WWII@75: D-Day

On June 6, 1944, 75 years ago, Allied forces stormed Normandy beaches in German-occupied France for the largest amphibious landing in history, Operation Overlord. The [World War II](#) invasion surprised German commanders who had misjudged the adverse weather and landing locations. Nearly 7,000 U.S. and British ships and craft, and about 160,000 troops participated in the D-Day invasion. The Normandy landings and subsequent hard-fought Allied assault into German-occupied France set the stage for the eventual liberation of Europe. NHHC's [Operation Overlord: Invasion of Normandy](#) webpage provides extensive coverage of the event and includes an essay by Guy Nasuti, “[Operation Neptune: The U.S. Navy on D-Day](#).” Also, read [The Hidden Power behind D-Day](#) at Smithsonian.com and [Norfolk Naval Shipyard Supported D-Day with Building, Modernizing Five Different Types of Ships](#) by Michael Brayshaw at [The Sextant](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/d-day/26-G-2340.html>

★ NHHC Command Historian Earns Fulbright Fellowship

NHHC historian John Sherwood, Ph.D., has been named the recipient of the [Fulbright-Schuman European Union Affairs Fellowship](#) for the 2019–2020 academic year. As the recipient, Sherwood will embark on a scholarly exchange and an international outreach effort for NHHC with allies in the European Union. “As part of the program, I will participate in conferences attended by heads of foreign navies and have the opportunity to meet many prominent figures in academic, military, and political institutions,” he said. “It’s a fantastic opportunity, not just for me but for NHHC and the Navy as a whole.” Sherwood has been a historian with NHHC since 1997, and has written six books on military and naval history. His current project focuses on humanitarian and disaster relief operations. The Fulbright fellowship will help contribute to his work on the topic. To learn more, [read the article](#) at [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/news/2019/Naval-History-and-Heritage-Command-Historian-Earns-Fulbright-Fellowship.html>

★ **The Chesapeake–Shannon Engagement**

When HMS *Shannon* captured the U.S. Navy’s frigate *Chesapeake* on 1 June 1813, the people of Halifax, Nova Scotia, rejoiced. Four hundred miles down the coast, the Bostonians, many of whom had witnessed the battle, wept in the streets. The news of *Chesapeake*’s capture immediately became a focal point of public opinion on both sides of the Atlantic. Ultimately, the story was about much more than what happened in the waters outside of Boston in June 1813. Beyond the young U.S. Navy’s inquiries into what had gone wrong during the short engagement were people’s attempts to make meaning out of the [War of 1812](#)—an enigmatic yet decisive moment in the history of the early American republic. Read more in Adam Bisno’s essay, “[The Capture of Chesapeake, 1 June 1813, and What It Meant.](#)”



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/NH-65000/NH-65811-KN.html>

★ **First U.S. Navy Officers Appointed 225 Years Ago**

On June 5, 1794, 225 years ago, the first officers of the U.S. Navy were appointed under the new U.S. Constitution. [John Barry](#), [Samuel Nicholson](#), Silas Talbot, [Joshua Barney](#), [Richard Dale](#), and Thomas Truxtun—all veterans of the [American Revolution](#)—were also asked to supervise the construction of six new frigates: [Congress](#), [Constitution](#), [President](#), [United States](#), [Constellation](#), and [Chesapeake](#). The officers and ships were part of the [Naval Act of 1794](#), which reestablished the U.S. Navy after years of being in disuse following the American Revolution. To learn more, check out the [Origins of the Navy](#) page at [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/NH-02000/NH-2781.html>

★ **NNAM Opened Doors 56 Years Ago**

On June 8, 1963, the National Aviation Museum opened its doors in Pensacola, FL. The museum, known today as the [National Naval Aviation Museum](#), began modestly in a renovated, wood-frame building constructed during [World War II](#). Capt. James McCurtain, the museum’s first director, displayed eight aircraft that were rotated periodically with others in the 8,500 square-foot space. In March 1964, an executive committee was established by the chief of naval operations on the need to expand the facility due to growing demands placed upon it. New construction appeared to be the only real solution, but the main obstacle was funding. On Dec. 5, 1966, the Naval Aviation Museum Association received tax-exempt status, which allowed it to raise funds in support of the museum unregulated by restrictions of official Navy activities. By 1970, a proposal for a five-phase design to be built over years was accepted. To learn more [about the museum](#), go to the NNAM’s website.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/NH-79000/NH-79479-KN.html>

★ **First Torpedo Station Established 150 Years Ago**

On June 9, 1869, 150 years ago, Secretary of the Navy [Adolph E. Borie](#) ordered the construction of the first torpedo station on Goat Island, Newport, RI. Cmdr. [Edmund O. Matthews](#) was the first commanding officer. The torpedo station was created to conduct hands-on experiments with torpedoes, explosives, mines, and electrical devices to determine how they should be employed. The [Fish Torpedo](#)—built at the Naval Torpedo Station in 1871—was the Navy’s first self-propelled torpedo. During the first three decades of the Naval Torpedo Station, personnel found themselves in a race to build new physical facilities fast enough to keep up with the expanding torpedo program. To learn more about the first Naval Torpedo Station and its expansion, [go to the website of Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport.](#)

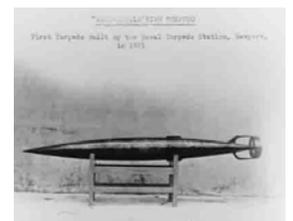


Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-82000/NH-82826.html>

★ **USS Arizona Memorial Might Reopen by October, Officials Say**

Interior Secretary David Bernhardt visited the [USS Arizona Memorial](#) in Pearl Harbor, HI, on May 29 and vowed to finish the repairs as soon as possible. Bernhardt said he would be disappointed if the repairs were not completed by October. “I’m making sure we get it done as fast as possible,” he said. “Everything looks like we’re on track.” The memorial has been closed to visitors since May 2018 when it was discovered that the dock’s anchoring system had deteriorated, making it unsafe for visitors. The repairs involve using large, heavy anchor screws—which are being custom-made—to anchor the concrete structure to the seafloor. To learn more, [read the article](#) in *Stars & Stripes*. To learn more about the [Pearl Harbor attack](#) and [Arizona](#), go to [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/wars-and-events/world-war-ii/pearl-harbor-raid/remembrance-of-a-date-which-will-live-in-infamy-/uss-arizona--bb-39--memorial-at-pearl-harbor/NH-97326-KN.html>

★ **USS Pittsburgh Arrives in Bremerton for Decommissioning**

[USS Pittsburgh](#), the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine, arrived at [Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton](#), WA, to commence the inactivation and decommissioning process, May 28. The submarine departed [Naval Submarine Base New London](#) in Groton, CT, and made its first arctic transit for the final homeport change. “We are the first second flight 688 to complete an arctic transit from Groton to Bremerton for an inactivation,” said Cmdr. Jason Deichler, a Pittsburgh, PA, native. “It was an amazing transit, one that is unique to submarines. There aren’t too many people in the history of the world, let alone the submarine force, let alone the Navy that have done that transit under the ice.” *Pittsburgh* was commissioned on Nov. 23, 1985, in Groton where she was homeported. The boat [fired Tomahawk land-attack missiles](#) against Iraqi military targets during [Desert Storm](#) and [Operation Iraqi Freedom](#). Cmdr. Jeffrey Currer, who commanded *Pittsburgh* during OIF, received the [Bronze Star](#) for his “extraordinary leadership and operational skills” during the battles. To learn more, [read the U.S. Navy release](#).



Photo Link: https://www.navy.mil/view_image.asp?id=10177&t=4

★ **Blue Angels Retire Fat Albert**

The [U.S. Navy’s Blue Angels](#) announced that after more than 30,000 flight hours and 17 years of service, Fat Albert is being retired. The current airframe, BUNO 164763, has been a part of the team since 2002, but Fat Albert has not been a consistent part of the team’s performance for the last two years. In July 2018, the Navy grounded its KC-130T after an accident that killed 15 Marines and 1 Sailor. Fat Albert had been a popular part of the show for years, known for high-speed, low-altitude maneuvers. “While this may come as a shock to many of our fans, we have known this day was coming,” according to a Blue Angels release on Facebook. “The team will be transported via Fleet-provided logistics, until a permanent replacement aircraft is identified. Fat Albert will enjoy her retirement as a ground-based training aid in Fort Worth, Texas.” To learn more, [read the article](#) in the *Pensacola News Journal*. To learn more about the [history of the Blue Angels](#), visit [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/28186/blue-angels-have-retired-their-beloved-c-130-fat-albert-transport-without-replacement>

★ **NHHC Webpage of the Week**

On June 4, 1944, 75 years ago, the hunter-killer group comprised of five destroyer escorts and [USS Guadalcanal](#) captured German submarine *U-505*. It marked the first time a U.S. Navy vessel captured an enemy vessel since the early 19th century. The feat netted invaluable intelligence and equipment, and Lt. [Albert L. David](#), who led the nine-man boarding team, received the Medal of Honor. In commemoration of the event, this week's Webpage of the Week is [Defeating the Sharks: The Capture of U-505](#). The page, new to NHHC's [World War II 1944](#) page, provides a short history, further readings, additional resources, and an image gallery of [U-505's capture and salvage](#). Check this page out today and learn more about this significant event.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-G-40000/80-G-49172.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On June 4, 1934, [USS Ranger](#), the first U.S. Navy ship designed from the keel up as a carrier, was commissioned at Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, VA. During [World War II](#), the ship participated in [Operation Torch: Invasion of North Africa](#) and [Operation Leader](#), receiving two battle stars for her service.

For more dates in naval history, including your selected span of dates, see [Year at a Glance](#) at [NHHC's website](#). Be sure to check this page regularly, as content is updated frequently.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-G-30000/80-G-30362.html>