



# NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

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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](http://history.navy.mil)), your authoritative source for Navy history.

## ★ Navy Lab Conserves Artifacts for Museum Exhibit

NHHC conservators have been hard at work with artifacts for the upcoming exhibit at [Hampton Roads Naval Museum](#): "The Ten-Thousand Day War at Sea: The U.S. Navy in Vietnam." The centerpiece of the show will be a 25-foot sampan, the Vietnamese watercraft that U.S. river patrol forces captured in 1968. For an insider view of the behind-the-scenes conservation process for this massive, fragile, and unique artifact, read the latest [news story](#) by MC2 Mutis Capizzi of NHHC's Communication and Outreach Division. For more about the [Vietnam War](#), see NHHC's website.



Photo Link: <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/5707390/navy-lab-conserves-artifacts-museum-exhibit>

## ★ "Don't Give Up the Ship" and the Battle of Lake Erie, Sept. 10, 1813

During the [War of 1812](#), [Commodore Oliver H. Perry](#) led his fleet into history at the [Battle of Lake Erie](#). In combat with the Royal Navy, Perry's brig, [Lawrence](#), went down flying the flag, "[Don't give up the ship!](#)" One of the [best-known Navy quotes](#), the phrase originated with the stricken ship's namesake, [Captain James Lawrence](#), whose dying order was that the crew of his ship [Chesapeake](#) (one of the Navy's first [six frigates](#)) do whatever they could to save the ship from [capture](#) by the Royal Navy's HMS [Shannon](#). Although [Chesapeake](#) was forced to surrender, Lawrence's words lived on as a rallying cry.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/research-guides/z-files/zb-files/zb-files-p/perry-oliver-h.html>

## ★ Digital Editions Now Available for *Needs and Opportunities in the Modern History of the U.S. Navy*

[Needs and Opportunities in the Modern History of the U.S. Navy](#), edited by now retired NHHC senior historian Dr. Michael J. Crawford, has been published online and can be downloaded for use on an iPad, Kindle, or other e-reader device. Essays in this book examine what has been written, what has not been written, what should be written, and the challenges to writing on the modern history of the U.S. Navy in the subject areas of forward presence, operations, personnel policy, programming and acquisition management, science, social history, strategy, and technology. Now in electronic form and available for free, *Needs and Opportunities* will reach the widest possible audience. Download the format of your choice at [NHHC's website](#).

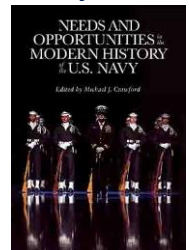


Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/publications/publications-by-subject/needs-and-opportunities-in-the-modern-history-of-the-u-s--navy0.html>

## ★ America's First Naval Uniforms, Sept. 5, 1776

The Naval Committee of the Continental Congress issued America's first naval uniform instruction, which specified the colors, cuts, and adornments to be worn by officers and midshipmen. Red, white, and blue emerged as the theme, and the tailoring reflected the styles of the day—stand-up collars, wide lapels, fitted waistcoats, and breeches. Buttons, braid, and slash cuffs completed the styles. In 1777, however, a group of captains, including [John Paul Jones](#), changed the uniform provisions considerably. For details, and to see both versions, visit the "[Uniforms of the U.S. Navy, 1776–83](#)" page at NHHC's website.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/uniforms-and-personal-equipment/uniforms-1776-1783.html>

## ★ U.S. Navy's Railway Gun Used for the First Time

The [first use of a U.S. Navy railway gun](#) occurred on September 6, 1918, when a U.S. naval railway battery of five 14-inch guns began long-range bombardment of German forces near Soissons, France. While these guns “operated well behind the front lines and were not subject to the constant bombardment received by more forward positions,” they “were hardly invulnerable to long-range enemy fire,” NHHC historian Greg Bereiter explains. Nevertheless, U.S. naval railway batteries were firing “right up to the end of hostilities” on the morning of Nov. 11, 1918, when the armistice took effect at the end of [World War I](#). For more on these massive weapons and the servicemen trained to use them, read Dr. Bereiter’s [historical summary](#) at NHHC’s website.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/research/publications/documentary-histories/wwi/january-1918/illustrations/railway-gun-firing.html>

## ★ Navy-designed Spacesuit Flight Test

On Sept. 8, 1958, naval flight surgeon Lt. Richard H. Tabor, wearing a Navy-developed pressure suit, completed a 72-hour simulated flight in a hypobaric chamber at NAS Norfolk, VA, and endured simulated altitude conditions up to 139,000 feet. The event was a major step in the evolution of the Navy spacesuit, which NASA would adopt in 1959 for use by Mercury astronauts. For more on the close working relationship between the Navy and NASA, including the search and recovery of spacecraft and astronauts, visit NHHC’s page, “[The Navy’s Role in Space Exploration](#)” and explore the links to the Gemini and Apollo programs.



**Photo Link:** [https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/thumbnails/image/project\\_mercury.jpg](https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/thumbnails/image/project_mercury.jpg)

## ★ Eighty Years Since the Escalation of World War II, Sept. 3, 1939

World War II began 80 years ago this week when German forces invaded Poland. This act of aggression prompted Britain and France, with their empires, to declare war on Germany, thereby pulling more than a quarter of the world’s population into the conflict. From then on, the oceans became less safe even for neutrals like the United States, whose leaders began to [prepare for the eventuality of naval conflict](#) with the Axis powers. Japan, having attacked China in 1931 and 1937, would drag the United States into the global conflict on Dec. 7, 1941, with the [attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/NH-77000/NH-77207.html>

## ★ Navy Chiefs Celebrate in 19th Annual Chief Petty Officers Heritage Days

More than 200 Chief Petty Officers (CPOs) and CPO selectees attended a celebration of [CPO heritage](#) aboard the decommissioned, *Iowa*-class battleship [Wisconsin](#) last month. Cadences and chants—“I wanna be a chief!” was among the most pronounced—lent a festive atmosphere to the days and evenings of August 20–22. This year’s cohort of new CPOs will receive anchors on Sept. 13 at pinning and advancement ceremonies all across the fleet, and these new chiefs will be party to a history that goes back 126 years. For details on this year’s festivities and the recent event at Hampton Roads, read “[Keeping the Heritage Alive](#)” at [navy.mil](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/heritage/chief-petty-officer.html>

### ★ NHHC Webpage of the Week

NHHC has added the [Mexican-American War](#) to its website’s “Wars, Conflicts, and Operations” section. The new page features a historical summary, images, and links to additional resources, including a [bibliography](#) and [a study](#) by Capt. Patrick H. Roth of Sailors operating ashore as artillerymen. Most Navy men served onboard ships, however, along the Pacific Coast and in the Gulf of Mexico. The Pacific Squadron, under the command of Commodore John Stoaat and [Commodore Robert Stockton](#), ensured success in the California campaign, whereupon the Navy claimed Monterey, San Francisco, and San Diego for the United States. From the Gulf of Mexico, [Commodore Matthew Perry](#) and his Sailors plied the small rivers and waterways of Mexico to capture enemy strongholds and block supply routes.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-01000/NH-1893.html>

### ★ Today in Naval History

The [war between Britain and her former colonies](#)—the future United States—came to its formal end in Paris, September 3, 1783, when the two sides concluded peace negotiations and signed a treaty. The war itself had occasioned [America’s first naval defense force](#), the [Continental Navy](#). One of its champions, John Adams, participated in the peace negotiations in Paris, which ultimately produced the treaty’s famous first article: “His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the United States...to be free sovereign independent States; that he treats them as such, and...relinquishes all claims to the Government, Propriety, and Territorial Rights of the same and every Part thereof.”



*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/content/history/nhhc/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/american-revolution.html>