



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), your authoritative source for Navy history.

★ 2019 Year in Review

At [NHHC](#), [history](#) and [heritage](#) of the Navy is our business, and 2019 provided a ton of it. Around this time last year, the Navy commissioned the future littoral combat ship USS *Wichita* and, about two weeks later, commissioned the Navy's newest Zumwalt-class destroyer, the future USS *Michael Monsoor*. About a month later, the Navy released NAVADMIN 039/19, directing the display of the union jack instead of the first [Navy iack](#) aboard Navy ships and craft. In March, the late Paul G. Allen's research vessel *Petrel* discovered wreckage from [USS Wasp](#), which was sunk in 1942 by enemy forces during [World War II](#). In June, the U.S. Postal Service dedicated its Forever stamp to battleship [USS Missouri](#) on the 75th anniversary of her commissioning. On Aug. 22, Adm. [Mike Gilday](#) relieved Adm. [John Richardson](#) as the Chief of Naval Operations, and on Sept. 8, friends and families welcomed [submarine](#) USS *Olympia* from a seven-month, around-the-world deployment. For more on the historic year of 2019, [read the blog](#) at [The Sextant](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-G-10000/80-G-16331.html>

★ New Year's Deck Log

The Navy's tradition of writing the first deck log entry of the year in verse is American and thought to have started in the years after [World War I](#). The deck log is not usually a document where creativity is allowed, but on Jan. 1 during the mid-watch, from midnight to 4 a.m.—and only during this watch—the officer of the deck can create rhyming verses to convey all the required information of the ship. For this year's log, which comes from aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln*, read [Best Job I've Ever Had](#) at [Navy Live](#). For more on this topic, read the [Navy's tradition of the New Year's Day Deck Log](#), and [What is a Deck Log?](#) at [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://navylive.dodlive.mil/2019/12/31/best-job-ive-ever-had/>

★ WWII@75: Task Force 7 Landed Sixth Army at Lingayen Gulf

On Jan. 9, 1945, 75 years ago during [World War II](#), amphibious ships from Task Force 7 landed Sixth Army Soldiers on the shores of [Lingayen Gulf](#), Luzon, Philippine Islands. The successful invasions into the Japanese-held Philippines, which once again placed U.S. forces in control of [Leyte](#), [Samar](#), and Mindoro Islands, were the prelude to regaining control of Central and Southern Luzon, the greatest strategic prize in the Philippine Archipelago. Constant pounding of enemy forces in this area by land-based and [carrier-based planes](#) had been in progress for months and had resulted in almost complete demolition of Japanese supply and communication facilities. U.S. dominance of the air was unquestioned. Finally, on Jan. 9, American forces returned to Luzon in strength, landing on the shore of Lingayen Gulf in the same spot used by the Japanese in their landings slightly more than three years earlier.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/80-G-59000/80-G-59523.html>

* Schooner *Lynx* Disappears 200 Years Ago

On Jan. 11, 1820, the schooner *Lynx*, commanded by Lt. J.R. Madison, departed St. Mary's, GA, bound for Kingston, Jamaica, to continue her service suppressing pirates. *Lynx* was never seen or heard from again, and no trace of the ship or her 50-man crew was ever found. Before the ship's disappearance, *Lynx* had been very successful at conducting [pirate interdiction operations](#). On Oct. 24, 1819, *Lynx* captured two schooners and two boats in the Gulf of Mexico, filled with pirates and booty and, 11 days later, on Nov. 9, found another pirate boat in Galveston Bay and seized that one as well. *Lynx* remained off the southern coast through the end of the year before departing on her final voyage. The disappearance of *Lynx* remains one of the continuing mysteries of American sea service.

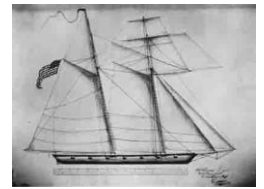


Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-57000/NH-57011.html>

* Seaman Lewis Horton

Seaman Lewis Horton enlisted in the Navy in May 1861 when he was just 19 years old. During the early days of the [Civil War](#), Horton was captured and taken to a Confederate prison in Richmond, VA. In March 1862, he was released from prison, but he reenlisted almost immediately. On Dec. 30, 1862, Horton was onboard [USS Rhode Island](#), which was towing ironclad warship [USS Monitor](#) when a terrible storm hit and caused *Monitor* to sink. Horton and six other seamen volunteered to take a rowboat out on a rescue mission to save Sailors on *Monitor*. After two successful trips, the rescuers lost sight of *Rhode Island* in the fog and rain. The men began to row northwest in hopes of finding another vessel. They had no food or water and very little to keep themselves warm. After 18 hours, they were finally rescued about 50 miles from where *Monitor* sank. Horton and six other men would be the first noncombatants to receive the [Medal of Honor](#). For more, [read the article](#) at DOD's website.



Photo Link: <https://www.defense.gov/explore/story/Article/2046797/medal-of-honor-monday-navy-seaman-lewis-horton/source/GovDelivery/>

* First Nonstop Formation Flight From San Francisco to Territory of Hawaii

On Jan. 10, 1934, a group of six P2Y-1 flying boats—Lt. Cmdr. [Knefler McGinnis](#) of VP-10F commanding—made a nonstop formation flight from San Francisco, CA, to FAB Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, into the next day, in 24 hours and 35 minutes. Their accomplishment bettered the best previous time for the crossing, exceeded the distance of previous mass flights, and broke a nine-day-old Class C seaplane world record for distance in a straight line with a new mark of 2,399 miles. For more on [naval aviation](#) milestones, go to [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-81000/NH-81663.html>

* Military Sealift Command Established

On Jan. 9, 1918, the Naval Overseas Transportation Service—now the [Military Sealift Command](#)—was established to carry [cargo during World War I](#). Upon entry into the war, it was believed the American Navy would principally furnish supplies and protect shipping against submarine attacks, but soon after entry into the war, France made an imperative case for American military reinforcements in France. The problem was getting as many men as possible to France as quickly as possible with a limited supply of seagoing merchant ships, officers, and crews. Although transporting American troops began slowly, movement grew at an astonishing pace. By war's end, the U.S. Navy succeeded in ensuring the safe passage of two million U.S. troops in Europe despite the severe U-boat threat. During [World War II](#), four separate government agencies controlled sea transportation, and in 1949, the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) became the single agency for ocean transportation needs. During the [Vietnam War](#), MSTS was renamed the Military Sealift Command.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/publications/documentary-histories/wwi/march-1918/illustrations/westchester.html>

★ Four Days in December: Nazi Germany's Path to War with the United States

On Dec. 7, 1941, the [Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor](#) and, in the [Philippines](#), simultaneously invaded the Pacific holdings of the Netherlands and England. Four days later, Japanese ally Nazi Germany declared war on the United States, and Italy soon followed. Although these moves appeared to be impulsive and just a display of Axis solidarity, the reality was quite different. Adolph Hitler had long recognized that to achieve world domination, war with the United States was a necessity. The attack on Pearl Harbor provided Hitler the opportunity to orchestrate an international conflict to suit the needs of the Third Reich. War with the United States had been on Hitler's wish list for more than two decades. On Dec. 8, 1941, Hitler ordered the Kriegsmarine to sink on sight any ship flying the U.S. flag. By Dec. 9, Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels concluded the United States could no longer aid England and the Soviet Union and, by Dec. 10, predicted the complete demise of the United States. For more, [read the article](#) in the *Navy Times*.



Photo Link: <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/12/30/four-days-in-december-germanys-path-to-war-with-the-us/>

★ NHHC Webpage of the Week

Sailors have always respected the power of the ocean—especially in heavy seas. Although Navy ships are made to withstand a certain degree of bad weather, they are not indestructible. [Weather-related incidents](#) have caused massive destruction and loss of life all throughout recorded history. On this newly refurbished page, read a short history on some of the Navy's most significant weather-related incidents, including the powerful storm on March 15–16, 1889, in Apia, Samoa, and the massive typhoon northeast of Samar on Dec. 18, 1944, that capsized three destroyers and killed approximately 790 personnel. This page also provides related readings, [World War II](#) weather reports, additional resources, and selected imagery. Check it out today.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/alphabetical---donations0/g/s-487-vadm-robert-c--giffen-photo-collection/s-487-02-heavy-weather-operations-by-task-force-99-in-the-north-.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On Jan. 7, 1995, dock-landing ship USS *Harpers Ferry* was commissioned at New Orleans, LA, with Mimi R. Dailey, wife of then Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. John R. Dailey, as the ship's sponsor. *Harpers Ferry* is the first U.S. Navy ship to bear the name of the historic site in West Virginia where in 1859—during the [Civil War](#)—John Brown led a slave rebellion that was ultimately defeated. On Sept. 10, 2002, *Harpers Ferry* arrived at U.S. Fleet Activities Sasebo to relieve USS *Germantown*. Following the hull swap and a year of successful operations and inspections, *Harpers Ferry* earned the Battle "E" Efficiency Award. In March 2011, *Harpers Ferry* participated in Operation Tomodachi, which provided [humanitarian and disaster relief assistance](#) after a massive earthquake and subsequent tsunami struck Japan.



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/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/NH-107000/NH-107720-KN.html>