



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

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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.

★ H-Gram 053: The End of the Imperial Japanese Navy and the Surrender of Japan

In his latest H-Gram, NHHC Director [Sam Cox](#) covers the final U.S. carrier strikes of [World War II](#) against the remnants of the Imperial Japanese Fleet in July 1945; the series of U.S. battleship shore bombardments of the Japanese home islands; the aerial mining campaign against Japan (Operation Starvation); and the [final surrender of Japan](#) and ceremony aboard [USS Missouri](#). H-Gram 053 also covers events of Operation Desert Shield during September 1990, for which Director Cox has firsthand experience. "I was the 'Iraq subject matter expert' on the intelligence staff of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, for the entirety of [Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm](#), serving under Vice Adm. Hank Mauz and Vice Adm. Stan Arthur." For more, [read H-Gram 053](#) at the [Director's Corner](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/USA-C/USA-C-4627.html>

★ Mercy, Comfort Steam Together for First Time

On Sept. 23, 1990, 30 years ago, hospital ships [USNS Mercy](#) and [USNS Comfort](#) steamed together for first time in the Persian Gulf in the [buildup](#) to [Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm](#). More than 6,100 active-duty Navy personnel were deployed to the [Middle East](#) to provide medical care to coalition forces. Additionally, 10,452 naval medical reservists were recalled to active duty. Many filled large staffing gaps at military medical facilities where staffing was cut to support the operation. Other reservists served on the hospital ships and fleet hospitals in theater. In addition to personnel of the [Navy medical corps](#), medical service corps, and nurse corps, more than 5,800 Navy hospital corpsmen served with Marines during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. For more on [United States naval hospital ships](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6487047>

★ Enterprise Launched—60 Years Ago

On Sept. 24, 1960, the world's first nuclear powered aircraft carrier, [USS Enterprise](#), was launched at Newport News, VA. *Enterprise* was commissioned on Nov. 25, 1961, and completed 25 deployments during 51 years of service. The ship participated in numerous major operations, including Frequent Wind during the [Vietnam War](#), [Praying Mantis](#), [Allied Force](#), [Iraqi Freedom](#), [Enduring Freedom](#), plus many more humanitarian and "show of force" operations. Over the course of *Enterprise's* career, about 400,000 arrested landings took place on her deck, and 100,000 veterans served aboard the ship. *Enterprise* returned to its homeport of Norfolk, VA, Nov. 4, 2012, following its last deployment.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nh-series/nh-series/USN-1130000/USN-1130804.html>

★ Gold Star Mother's Day

Presidential proclamation established [Gold Star Mother's Day](#) on June 23, 1936. Expanded in 2012 to include parents, spouses, and children, Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day is observed the last Sunday in September—this year, Sept. 27. The day recognizes and honors those who have lost a family member serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. The name Gold Star Mothers was derived from the custom of military families placing a service flag near their front window. The flag featured a star for each family member serving the country; blue stars represented living members, and gold stars honored family members who had lost their lives in combat. [American Gold Star Mothers](#) was incorporated in 1929, obtaining a federal charter from the U.S. Congress. The organization began with 25 mothers living in the Washington, DC, area and soon expanded to include affiliated groups throughout the nation.



Photo Link: <https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/files/2017/09/Gold-Star-Mothers-and-Familys-8.5x-11-draft-3.jpg>

★ A Crisis Leader: Vice Adm. Diego E. "Duke" Hernandez—Decorated Pilot and Hispanic Hero

On Dec. 16, 1967, during the [Vietnam War](#), Lt. Cmdr. Diego "Duke" Hernandez was ordered to destroy a heavily defended bridge, electrical transformer, and motor maintenance facility near the port city of Haiphong. As the lead [naval aviator](#) from [USS Ranger](#), he had planned a two-prong attack to knock out the facility, but instead of leading the main attack, he took on the role of flak suppression. The new role meant that he would selflessly expose himself to danger to pave the way for his squadron to deal the decisive blow on the main target. According to his [Silver Star](#) citation, Hernandez "silenced an 85-mm site near the Kien An Highway Bridge with a perfectly placed rocket salvo and then, while checking the other half of his group, sighted an active anti-aircraft site at Kien An Airfield," that was threatening his fellow squadron. Hernandez chose to make a second flak suppression run, the citation details, knocking out the site and saving the mission. For more, [read the U.S. Navy release](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/obituaries/article160313689.html>

★ Divers in SE Asia May Have Found U.S. Submarine Lost in WWII

Divers believe they have found the wreckage of [USS Grenadier](#) in the Strait of Malacca, about 92 miles south of Phuket, Thailand, that was lost more than 77 years ago during [World War II](#). The divers sent photos and other evidence from six dives they made from October 2019–March 2020 to NHHHC for verification. "A complete review, analysis, and documentation may take two months to a year to complete," said NHHHC's Dr. Robert Neyland. On April 21, 1943, the [submarine](#) was hit by Japanese aircraft bombs that ultimately damaged the ship's propulsion system beyond repair. Although the crew survived, they were captured by the Japanese and taken to prison camps where they were questioned, beaten, and starved for more than two years. Despite the brutal treatment, all but four of *Grenadier's* crew survived their time as [prisoners of war](#). For more, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: <https://apnews.com/15a7061222add012d94cbc8dadfb112b>

★ Navy Sailor Killed at Pearl Harbor Laid to Rest

A Sailor who was killed while serving onboard [USS West Virginia](#) during the Japanese [attack on Pearl Harbor](#) is finally home. The remains of Fireman 2nd Class Albert Renner, a native of Mandan, ND, were laid to rest in the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery. He was interred previously at the [National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific](#) in Honolulu, HI, but was recently identified through DNA evidence provided by his siblings. His brother, Ed Renner, 99, was in attendance. "It's hard to get my head around the respect they showed him," he said after the ceremony. "It was difficult to comprehend." The ceremony included members of the North Dakota Patriot Guard Riders motorcycle group and a flyover by two World War II-era North American AT-6 planes. For more, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: https://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/navy-sailor-from-mandan-killed-at-pearl-harbor-finally-laid-to-rest/article_8c4ba3c0-ec77-5f9f-b15b-a7ac6cb8305f.html

★ Preble Hall Podcast

In a recent [naval history podcast](#) from Preble Hall, NHHC historian Curtis Utz discusses the [Korean War](#) and the amphibious assault at Inchon on the 70th anniversary of the landings. The [Preble Hall podcast](#), conducted by personnel at the [U.S. Naval Academy Museum](#) in Annapolis, MD, interviews historians, practitioners, military personnel, and other experts on a variety of naval history topics from ancient history to more current events.

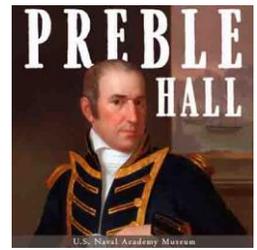


Photo Link: <https://www.usna.edu/Museum/PrebleHall/>

★ USS *Montana* Christened in Virtual Ceremony

The Navy christened USS *Montana* recently during a virtual ceremony held at the Newport News Shipbuilding facility in Virginia. There have been three ships previously named for the [state of Montana](#). The last operational *Montana* was an armored cruiser that served from 1908–1930, notably during [World War I](#). The newest nuclear-powered fast-attack [submarine](#) is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in late 2021. “To the crew, together we have the privilege and responsibility to establish *Montana*’s legacy,” said Capt. Michael Delaney, the boat’s commander. “I am honored to lead you in this endeavor and grateful to serve with each and every one of you.” For more, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/09/21/uss-montana-submarine-christened-virtual-ceremony.html>

★ Webpage of the Week

In preparation for the 245th birthday of the U.S. Navy on Oct. 13, this week’s Webpage of the Week is the [Navy Birthday](#) toolkit. On this page, you will find information and [commemoration resources](#) to help prepare for this year’s celebration. Included on this page are [Navy logos](#), [digital resources](#), [Navy history](#), [imagery](#), and [archived content](#). This year’s theme is “Victory at Sea,” which encompasses the Navy’s efforts in battle during [World War II](#) in the Pacific. Since 1775, through today, American Sailors have stood the watch with honor, courage, and commitment. On the 20th anniversary of the attack on [USS Cole](#), we remember those lost and honor the Sailors who heroically saved lives and saved their ship. *Cole*’s Sailors left a legacy of what warfighters do in the face of adversity: persevere, fight, and win. Make your event special. Use the resources NHHC has to offer, and celebrate the world’s greatest Navy!



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/commemorations-toolkits/navy-birthday/digital-content0.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On Sept. 22, 1944, [USS Yukon](#) was hit in her starboard side by a torpedo fired by German submarine *U-979*, about 43 miles west of Reykjavik, Iceland. The ship’s entire bow was blown open from the stem aft to some 60 feet, the outer shell of her double bottom was ruptured to port and starboard, and a dangerous crack appeared across the vessel amidships. *Yukon* began limping back to Reykjavik with many onboard doubting the ship’s ability to make it the short distance into the Icelandic port. At about 6 p.m., after about two hours steaming at barely three knots, *Yukon* met two tugs sent out from Reykjavik in response to her SOS. The ship was temporarily repaired and set sail for Norfolk, VA, where permanent repairs took place.



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://catalog.archives.gov/id/100310921>