



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

September 29, 2020



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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.

★ H-Gram 054: 70th Anniversary of Inchon Landing, 30th Anniversary of Desert Shield/Desert Storm

In his latest H-Gram, NHHC Director [Sam Cox](#) covers the daring and decisive U.S. Navy/Marine Corps amphibious assault on the port of [Inchon](#), South Korea, as well as events leading up to it, including the U.S. Navy shoot-down of a Soviet torpedo bomber. It covers the increasing toll on U.S. ships inflicted by North Korean mines—provided by the Soviets—in the last week of September 1950. This H-gram also highlights the continued buildup and operations by U.S. Navy forces during [Operation Desert Shield](#). “In October 1990, as the world’s media focused on the continuing build-up of U.S. Air Force and Army forces in Saudi Arabia (which were nowhere near ready for outbreak of war), U.S. and Coalition naval forces continued vigorous enforcement of United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq, often under very arduous and tense circumstances.” For more, read [H-Gram 054](#) at the [Director’s Corner](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/art/exhibits/conflicts-and-operations/remembering-the-forgotten-war-korea-1950-1953/inchon.html>

★ USS *Thresher*—What We Learned

The loss of [USS *Thresher*](#) in 1963 remains a crucial moment in [U.S. submarine](#) operations, safety, and culture. *Thresher* was underway for her post-availability sea trials from Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, ME, with *USS Skylark*. Fifteen minutes after reaching her assigned test depth, the submarine communicated with *Skylark* by underwater telephone, apprising the submarine rescue ship of difficulties. Listeners in *Skylark* heard a noise “like air rushing into an air tank”—then, silence. Efforts to reestablish contact with *Thresher* failed, and a search group formed to locate the submarine, but the effort failed. Later, photographs taken by [Bathyscaphe Trieste](#) proved that the submarine had broken up, taking all hands onboard. Following the tragedy, a formal Court of Inquiry formed to determine the cause of the accident. On Sept. 23, the Navy began [releasing recently declassified documents](#) concerning the loss of *USS Thresher*. The Navy remains transparent with the families of the crewmembers and the public on the findings of the Court of Inquiry and the likely scenarios that caused the loss of *Thresher*. The findings document multiple problems, but one positive outcome of the inquiry was the creation of the Submarine Safety (SUBSAFE) program. For more, [read the blog](#) by Rear Adm. William Houston at [The Sextant](#).



Photo Link: <https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2020/09/23/uss-thresher-what-we-learned-from-loss/>

★ Navy Commissions *Delbert D. Black*

The Navy commissioned its newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-destroyer *USS Delbert D. Black* at Port Canaveral, FL, Sept. 26. The ship is named to honor Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy [Delbert D. Black](#), the first MCPON. Black enlisted in the Navy on March 13, 1941, and after training was assigned to [USS *Maryland*](#). He was aboard the ship during the [attack on Pearl Harbor](#) Dec. 7, 1941. On Jan. 13, 1967, the [Secretary of the Navy](#) announced that Black was selected as the first Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Navy. The title was changed three months later to [Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy](#). “Master Chief Black fought for increased sea-pay, family support programs, expanded uniform guidance and a host of other issues that improved the quality of life of not only junior enlisted, but all Sailors and officers,” Secretary of the Navy [Kenneth J. Braithwaite](#) said. “By making life better for Sailors, he made our Navy stronger for us all.” For more on the ceremony, [read the article](#) in *Stars & Stripes*. For more on [Black and the ship](#), check out the infographic at [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/heritage/The_History_of_Delbert_Black.html

★ National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Established in 1945 by Congress, [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) is celebrated annually in October. The theme for 2020 is “Don’t set limits on unlimited potential.” The awareness month is observed so Americans may reaffirm their commitment to ensuring equal opportunity for all citizens and pay tribute to the accomplishments of men and women with disabilities who contributed, continue to contribute, and wish to contribute to making the nation’s economy strong. National Disability Employment Awareness Month dates back to 1945 when servicemembers with disabilities returned from [World War II](#) looking for employment.



Photo Link: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Special-Observances/>

★ WWII@75: Nimitz Given Parade

On Oct. 5, 1945, Fleet Adm. [Chester W. Nimitz](#), a Fredericksburg, TX, native, was given a parade in his honor through downtown Washington, DC. After leading American forces in the Pacific to victory during [World War II](#), Nimitz relieved Fleet Adm. [Ernest J. King](#) as [Chief of Naval Operations](#). When Nimitz took over as CNO, he was faced with the perplexing problem of maintaining an effective fleet to carry out extensive operational commitments throughout the world. In the Pacific, naval vessels were engaged in “Operation Magic Carpet,” which brought home more than two million American servicemembers. Nimitz, who was also a [World War I](#) veteran and a 1905 U.S. Naval Academy graduate, served as CNO for two years. He was extremely active in educational, cultural, and community affairs after he retired from the Navy. He died at his quarters at Yerba Buena Island, San Francisco, CA, on Feb. 20, 1966. Nimitz is buried in the Golden Gate National Cemetery.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-62000/NH-62323.html>

★ Medal of Honor Recipient William M. Corry

Oct. 2, 1920, 100 years ago, Lt. Cmdr. [William M. Corry Jr.](#), while on a flight from Long Island, NY, with another pilot, crashed near Hartford, CT. Though thrown clear of the wreckage, the injured Corry ran back to pull the other officer free of the flaming aircraft. Badly burned during the rescue, Corry died five days later. He posthumously received the [Medal of Honor](#) for heroism. Corry served in France during [World War I](#), where he commanded naval air stations at La Croisic and Brest. Airfields at Pensacola, FL, and three destroyers have been named in his honor.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/us-people/c/corry-william-m-jr/24-p-73.html>

★ Carter Hall@25

Sept. 30, 1995, [USS Carter Hall](#) was commissioned at Julia Street Wharf in New Orleans, LA. [Carter Hall](#) is the second amphibious ship to bear the name of the historic Virginia estates that took two years to build, 1790–1792, by Col. Nathan Burwell. The [first Carter Hall](#) earned six battle stars for heroics in [World War II](#) and five battle stars for her service during the [Vietnam War](#). [Carter Hall](#) made her maiden deployment to the Mediterranean Sea in 1997. In 2003, as part of the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group, she deployed to the Arabian Sea in support of [Operation Iraqi Freedom](#). During the deployment, [Carter Hall](#) and the other ships in the ready group deployed Marines into Iraq. In 2010, when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, [Carter Hall](#) deployed in support of Operation Unified Response, the joint military relief effort.



Photo Link: <https://www.public.navy.mil/surflant/lstd50/Pages/default.aspx>

★ Curator of Ship Models Established

On Oct. 5, 1945, the position of curator of ship models was established by the Bureau of Ships, along with a “Models and Special Training Devices Section” headed by the curator. Cmdr. Joseph Appleton, USNR, was the first curator. Since 1883, the U.S. Navy’s Bureau of Construction and Repair had a policy of constructing and retaining exhibition-type models for most new classes of warships. Rear Adm. [David W. Taylor](#), known as the founder, is credited with constructing the first experimental towing tank ever built in the United States. Since 1942, the program has operated out of the David Taylor Basin in West Bethesda, MD. [NHHC](#) and the [Curator of Ship Models](#) cooperate closely, sharing the ship model collection with the fleet and the American public. The [National Museum of the U.S. Navy](#) displays the largest numbers of the curator’s models.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-CF/80-CF-395b.html>

★ VCNO Directs End of Diving on *Houston*

On Oct. 5, 1973, Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. [James L. Holloway III](#) directed the end of diving on the wreck [USS *Houston*](#), which was lost with nearly 650 of her crew in 1942 during the [Battles of Java Sea and Sunda Strait](#). Holloway directed an end to diving out of respect for the wreck’s status as a war grave. In 2014, after receiving reports of unauthorized disturbance, NHHC and other organizations collaborated with the Indonesian navy to assess the wreck’s state of preservation. Dives revealed evidence of illicit disturbance. NHHC implemented strategies to actively preserve the site and raise awareness, ensuring the service and sacrifice of the “Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast” is not forgotten. For more, check out the [USS *Houston*, Then and Now](#) story map at [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/ships/modern-ships/uss-houston.html>

★ U.S., France Sign Agreement on *CSS Alabama*

On Oct. 3, 1989, 31 years ago, the United States and France signed an agreement recognizing [CSS *Alabama*](#) as an important heritage resource for both nations and established a joint French-American Scientific Committee to oversee archaeological investigation of the wreck. Ratification of the agreement established a precedent for international cooperation as it applies to archaeological research, as well as to the protection of unique historic shipwrecks. [USS *Kearsarge*](#) sank *CSS Alabama* during a [Civil War](#) battle off the coast of Cherbourg, France, on June 19, 1864. French navy mine hunter *Circe* discovered a wreck, 125 years later, off Cherbourg, and French navy Cmdr. Max Guerout later confirmed the wreck was *Alabama*. Through 1995, yearly archaeological investigations at the *Alabama* wreck site were conducted under the direction of Guerout.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/us-people/k/kell-john-mcintosh/nh-57256.html>

★ Preble Hall Podcast

In a recent [naval history podcast](#) from Preble Hall, Steven Ujifusa discusses his second book, *Barons of the Sea: And Their Race to Build the World’s Fastest Clipper Ship*. In this episode, Ujifusa ties in the Canton trade of the 1830s, the merchants who became the wealthiest families, the design of the ships, and their impact on Pacific trade and the [Civil War](#). 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. Also, loaded recently is [Navy helicopters, the Gulf War, and writing historical fiction](#), where retired Navy Capt. Marc Liebeman discusses his historical novels, how they’re formed, and what we can learn from fiction.

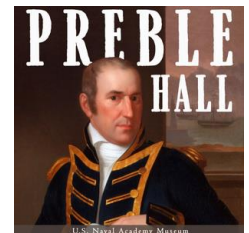


Photo Link: <https://www.usna.edu/Museum/PrebleHall/>

★ **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. Every Sailor serves today with a Navy hero: the shipmate who is ready to protect and defend America and its allies. In addition to those who made the ultimate sacrifice—heroes are also the Sailors who inspire their shipmates to do, and be, better. 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. 29, 1946, Cmdrs. Thomas D. Davies, Eugene P. Rankin, Walter S. Reid, and Lt. Cmdr. Roy H. Tabeing manned [The Truculent Turtle](#), a P2V-1 Neptune, during a 55-hour, 17-minute flight from Perth, Australia, to Columbus, OH. The plane arrived on Oct. 1 after a journey of 11,235 miles, breaking the world distance record for unrefueled flight. The record flight stood until 1962. The aircraft is currently on display at the [National Naval Aviation Museum](#) on Naval Air Station Pensacola, FL. For more on [naval aviation](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



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/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/80-G-703000/80-G-703094.html>