



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

October 13, 2020



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.

★ Happy 245th Birthday, U.S. Navy

Throughout the world, U.S. Navy Sailors, veterans, family members, civilians, and friends celebrate the [Navy's 245th birthday](#) today, Oct. 13. This year's theme, "Victory at Sea," encompasses the Navy's efforts in battle during [World War II](#) in the Pacific Theater. Armed with honor, courage, and commitment, "The Greatest Generation" achieved victory at sea. Their service inspires today's globally deployed Sailors, who ensure security and stability for our allies and ensure prosperity worldwide. In addition to those who made the ultimate sacrifice—heroes are also the Sailors who inspire their shipmates to do, and be, better. Sailors remain victorious by carrying on a two-century tradition of being ready to fight and win. Happy birthday, [U.S. Navy!](#)



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/history/levte-gulf-banner.html>

★ H-Gram 055: 70th Anniversary of the Korean War

In his latest H-Gram, NHHC Director [Sam Cox](#) focuses on the successful U.S. Navy and Marine Corps amphibious landings at the port of Wonsan on the east coast of North Korea on Oct. 26, 1950, with continuing damage and loss to U.S. ships due to extensive North Korean minelaying preceding the landing. "Soviet navy advisors provided more than 4,000 mines to the North Koreans. Most of the mines were moored contact mines based on designs from the 1905 Russo-Japanese War (which worked just fine), but also included sophisticated bottom influence 'magnetic' mines, sensitive enough to react to a wooden minesweeper's engines. The Soviet advisors assembled the mines, trained the North Koreans, planned the minefields, and supervised the minelaying operations, including providing Russian navigators to the civilian craft pressed into service as minelayers." This H-gram also covers U.S. Navy operations during [Desert Shield](#) in November 1990, particularly the Iraqi Mirage F-1 flights in the Arabian Gulf. In addition, the October 2000 terrorist attack on [USS Cole](#) is covered. For more, [read H-Gram 055](#) at the [Director's Corner](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/art/exhibits/conflicts-and-operations/remembering-the-forgotten-war-korea-1950-1953/united-states-destroyer-at-wonsan.html>

★ Secretary of the Navy Names First of New Class Constellation

Secretary of the Navy [Kenneth Braithwaite](#) announced Oct. 7 that the Navy would name the first of its new class of frigates *Constellation* in a nod to one of the original six frigates the Navy bought just after the [Revolutionary War](#). "George Washington personally selected the name *Constellation*. It refers to the constellation of stars that have adorned our flag, from the original circle of 13, to the 15 gracing the Star Spangled Banner across the harbor above Fort McHenry, to the 50 that fly from the mast of every Navy ship today," Braithwaite said in a video filmed in Baltimore's inner harbor on the deck of the wooden-hulled warship. "The number of stars on our nation's flag may have changed with every generation of *Constellation*, but her spirit and pride have endured." Braithwaite said he chose the name as part of his effort to recapture Navy pride and culture. According to plans, the first frigate of the class will deliver by 2026 and be operational by 2030. For more, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: <https://news.usni.org/2020/10/07/secnav-braithwaite-names-first-ffgx-uss-constellation>

★ **USS Stout Arrives in Rota, Spain, and in the History Books**

The guided-missile destroyer USS *Stout* (DDG-55) arrived in Rota, Spain, Oct. 3, after 215 days at sea, setting a new U.S. Navy record for consecutive days underway. The last time the crew had its feet on solid ground was in early March. The ship spent the record-setting deployment in the Fifth and Sixth Fleets' area of operations, supporting actions to maintain freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce. [Military Sealift Command](#) helped *Stout* set the record by providing food, fuel, and stores while underway. "It definitely wasn't a record that we came out here with the goal to break, but words can't describe how proud I am of this team. The fact that they kept this ship in the game for so long is a true testament to their resiliency and self-sufficiency. It's a privilege just to be a part of this crew," said Cmdr. Rich Eytel, *Stout's* commanding officer. *Stout* is named for Cmdr. Herald Stout, who received the [Navy Cross](#) and [Silver Star](#) for his heroic actions during [World War II](#). For more, [read the U.S. Navy release](#).



Photo Link: <https://media.defense.gov/2020/May/31/2002507488/-1/-1/0/200531-M-IR130-1022.jpg>

★ **Mary Sears Launched—20 Years Ago**

On Oct. 19, 2000, USNS *Mary Sears* (T-AGS-65) was launched at Halter Marine in Pascagoula, MS. *Mary Sears* is the sixth [Military Sealift Command](#) Pathfinder-class [oceanographic survey ship](#). The ship proudly bears the name of legendary oceanographer Cmdr. [Mary Sears](#). During [World War II](#), Sears left a job she loved as a research assistant at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to join the war effort. As a Navy lieutenant in the [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service](#) (WAVES), she was appointed head of the Navy Hydrographic Office's new Oceanographic Unit where her research proved critical to the survivability of [U.S. submarines](#). Her intelligence reports, "Submarine Supplements to the Sailing Directions," predicted thermoclines—areas of rapid water temperature change. Submarines could hide in thermoclines to escape enemy detection by [surface sonar](#). Her namesake ship supports worldwide oceanography programs, including performing acoustical, biological, physical, and geophysical surveys.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/browse-by-topic/people/namesakes/mary-sears.html>

★ **How Navy Aircraft Carriers Have Projected U.S. Military Might All Over the World**

Few ships have made an impact on warfare quite as much as [U.S. aircraft carriers](#). Soon after the Japanese commissioned the first purpose-built carrier in 1922, aircraft carriers rapidly became essential in naval warfare. U.S. carriers played a critical role during [World War II](#) and have been used in nearly every conflict since. The first operational class of carriers was the *Lexington*-class. Both ships of the class—[Lexington](#) and [Saratoga](#)—were intended to be battle cruisers but were converted to carriers after [World War I](#) due to limits on the number of battleships and cruisers the Navy could have in its inventory. The first purpose-built carriers were the *Yorktown*-class, consisting of [Yorktown](#), [Enterprise](#), and [Hornet](#). For more on aircraft carriers, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-63000/NH-63549.html>

★ **Meet the Navy's Most Adorable Ship—Boomin' Beaver**

From nuclear-powered [submarines](#) to hovercraft to [destroyers](#), the U.S. Navy has had a wide array of craft, but only one is known as the "most adorable." It doesn't launch aircraft or run stealth missions under the waves. It's the *Boomin' Beaver*. Coming in at only 19-feet, *Boomin' Beaver* is a mini tugboat that plays an important role in protecting her larger sister, [USS Constitution](#). Its role is to deploy, operate, and maintain underwater barriers surrounding the ship. With its crew of two to five, *Boomin' Beaver's* small size is ideal to safely maintain and operate the barriers. For more, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/10/07/meet-navys-most-adorable-boat-boomin-beaver.html>

★ Goodbye to *Narwhal*—Submarine Whose Stealth Changed the Navy

It was nearly the nation's 100th nuclear-powered submarine when it was constructed, but now [USS *Narwhal*](#) is officially no more. The boat—whose pioneering Cold War innovations inspired systems still used today among the modern fleet—has been completely dismantled by crews at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. In its prime, *Narwhal* was a trendsetter whose prowess for silence below the surface changed the Navy. “It became what a submarine is supposed to be,” said Michael King, a retired submariner who served as a machinist's mate aboard *Narwhal*. “Completely stealthy, undetectable.” *Narwhal* was equipped with innovative technologies that gave the [U.S. Submarine Force](#) the upper hand on the Soviets. Its circulation reactor plant could operate essentially noise-free. The submarine was also equipped with a “scoop” system that eliminated reduction gears, another potential source of noise. For more, [read the article](#). For more on [the nuclear Navy](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/naval-subjects-collection/l45--us-navy-ships/181-200/l45-195-01-01-uss-narwhal--ssn-671-.html>

★ Preble Hall Podcast

A recent [naval history podcast](#) from Preble Hall continues the series commemorating the 175th anniversary month of the establishment of the [U.S. Naval Academy](#). Paula Clarke, who has been with the USNA Barber Shop since 1986, talks about her experience working at the academy. The [Preble Hall podcast](#), conducted by personnel at the USNA 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. In addition, [Sharon Kennedy](#), who recently edited a monograph about the history of the Naval Academy, discusses significant eras and leaders at the academy, as well as the academy's unique relationship with the City of Annapolis. Learn more about [The U.S. Naval Academy at 175](#) at [NHHC's website](#).

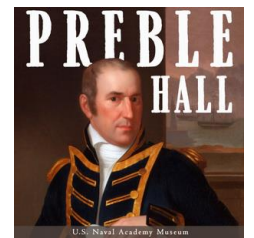


Photo Link: <https://www.usna.edu/Museum/PrebleHall/>

★ Webpage of the Week

This week's Webpage of the Week is new to NHHC's website. [The Navy's humanitarian mission](#) covers the Navy's long history of providing assistance to domestic and foreign governments. These operations include disaster relief (hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.), rescues at sea, refugee assistance, emergency medical deployments, nation building activities (food or construction), and so forth. On Sept. 1, 1923, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake, known as the [Great Kanto Earthquake](#), hit Japan, killing thousands of people and sweeping away entire cities in the subsequent tsunami. The Navy and the American Red Cross provided unprecedented support to the citizens of Japan in wake of the disaster. The tragedy also prompted countless acts of heroism. For instance, Ensign [Thomas Ryan](#) received the [Medal of Honor](#) for rescuing a woman trapped inside the Grand Hotel in Yokohama who had two broken legs and was trapped under rubble. For more, check out the page today. It provides a short history, selected reading, blogs, articles, artifacts, and selected imagery.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/art/exhibits/conflicts-and-operations/the-vietnam-experience/a-navy-corpsman-helps.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On Oct. 13, 1862, the Union yacht [America](#) seized schooner *David Crockett* attempting to run the blockade out of Charleston, SC, with a cargo of turpentine and rosin. *America*, built at a shipyard in New York City, was originally a racing schooner that won a number of yacht races in Europe. When the [Civil War](#) broke out, the ship set sail for the Confederacy, arriving in Savannah, GA, on April 25, 1861, shortly after the attack on Fort Sumter. Allegedly, Confederate President Jefferson Davis bought the ship, but there is no evidence to support that claim. Evidence has suggested though that *America* ran the blockade multiple times unscathed until early in March 1862 when she was scuttled to avoid capture by Union forces. During a March 1862 Union expedition, *America* was raised and towed to Port Royal, SC, where the ship was repaired. Originally thought to be used as a practice ship at the



[U.S. Naval Academy](#), *America* was sent to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron where she helped enforce the Union blockade.

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/NH-86000/NH-86072.html>