



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

December 15, 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.

★ The Loss of *Saginaw*—150 Years Ago

This month marks the 150th anniversary of the loss of [USS *Saginaw*](#) and the [tremendous voyage](#) of five of her crew to seek help for their stranded shipmates. *USS Saginaw*, the first ship built at the [Mare Island Naval Shipyard](#), was a side-wheel steamer. Commissioned on Jan. 5, 1860, she spent the majority of her career in the Pacific. Built as a 4th rate steamer, she also utilized sails, as did all steam-powered ships of the era, sailing for longer duration cruises and using steam power for shorter cruises or when necessity dictated its use. *Saginaw* had a full and interesting history throughout her career, but it is her final cruise and the subsequent events surrounding the crew's rescue that are among the most compelling. For more, visit the [*Saginaw* \(Side-wheel Steamer\)](#) Notable Ships page and the National Museum of the U.S. Navy's [photography exhibit](#).

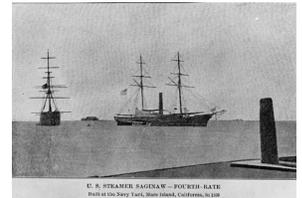


Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-02000/NH-2012.html>

★ H-Gram 056 Published

In his latest H-Gram, NHHC Director [Sam Cox](#) covers the 70th anniversary of the Korean War, the 30th anniversary of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and the 75th anniversary of the loss of Flight 19. In Korea, the Communist Chinese intervention and offensive in November–December 1950 resulted in a debacle for UN forces, although the U.S. Marines made an epic fighting withdrawal at [Chosin Reservoir](#). Also during this period, naval aviator Lt. j.g. [Thomas Hudner](#) was awarded the Medal of Honor for his attempt to rescue Ensign [Jesse Brown](#), the first African-American carrier aviator. Also covered is the last month of [Desert Shield](#) before the transition to Desert Storm combat, and the 75th anniversary of the loss of all five Avengers of [Flight 19](#) and the [PBM Mariner](#) sent to search for them. For more, read [H-Gram 056](#) at the [Director's Corner](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-G-420000/80-G-423495.html>

★ Navy Accepts Delivery of Future *USS Mobile* (LCS 26)

The Navy accepted delivery of the future [USS *Mobile* \(LCS 26\)](#) during a ceremony at Austal USA on Dec. 9. *Mobile* is the 23rd [littoral combat ship \(LCS\)](#) and the 13th of the *Independence* variant to join the fleet. Delivery marks the official transfer of the ship from the shipbuilder, Austal USA, to the Navy. It is the final milestone prior to commissioning, which is planned for spring 2021. "This is a day of celebration for both the Navy and our country with the delivery of the future *USS Mobile*," said LCS program manager Capt. Mike Taylor. "This ship, and her crew, are foundational to our nation's security." The future *USS Mobile* is the fifth ship named in honor of the port city on Alabama's Gulf Coast. For a full history of previous ships named *Mobile*, see the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships entries for [*Mobile I* \(Sidewheel Gunboat\)](#), [*Mobile II* \(Id.No. 4030\)](#), [*Mobile III* \(CL-63\)](#), [*Mobile IV* \(AKA-115\)](#), and [*Mobile V* \(LCS-26\)](#).



Photo Link: https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/m/mobile-v--lcs-26-/jcr_content/body/image.img.jpg/1518784009009.jpg

★ Blue Angels Release 2022 Air Show Schedule

The [U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron](#), the Blue Angels, released its 2022 [air show schedule](#) at the virtual International Council of Air Shows convention Dec. 8. During the 76th air show season, the Blue Angels are scheduled to perform 63 demonstrations at 32 locations in 2022. The United States Navy Flight Exhibition Team's first demonstration took place on Jun. 15, 1946, at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, FL, which was also the squadron's first homebase. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Chester W. Nimitz ordered the formation of the team after WWII with the goal of increasing public awareness and appreciation of naval aviation. For more history, visit the [Blue Angels](#) page on [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/alphabetical---donations0/s/ua-474-08-harry-shulman-collection.html>

★ Preble Hall Podcast

In a recent [naval history podcast](#) from Preble Hall, the first African-American female Naval Academy Brigade Commander, Midshipman First Class [Sydney Barber](#), talks with 1st Lt. Millie Bailey, one of the first African-American women in [World War II](#) to serve in the Women's Army Corps. She was born in 1918, during [another pandemic](#). The guest host is Capt. [Timika Lindsay](#), USN, and Naval Academy Class of 1992. 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.

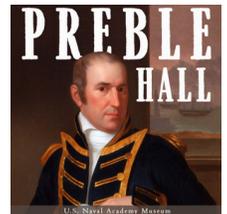


Photo Link: <https://www.usna.edu/Museum/PrebleHall/>

★ Webpage of the Week

In commemoration of the sinking of Japanese transport *Oryoku Maru* by [Task Force 38](#), this week's webpage of the week is [The Japanese "Hell Ships" of World War II page](#). Allied prisoners of war called them "hell ships," the requisitioned merchant vessels that the Japanese navy overloaded with POWs being relocated to internment on the Japanese Home Islands or elsewhere in the empire. Perhaps the best documented sinking, from the perspective of the American victims, is that of *Oryoku Maru*, which set off from Manila, in the Japanese-occupied Philippines, on Dec. 13, 1944. The sinking of *Oryoku Maru* is exceptional, therefore, not because the experience of its prisoners was unique per se, but because their experience is so well documented in testimony collected after the war.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-95000/NH-95603.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On Dec. 15, 1965, Gemini 6 is launched, making 16 orbits in 25 hours and 51 minutes. Capt. [Walter M. Schirra](#) is command pilot and Thomas P. Stafford is pilot. Even before NASA was established in 1958, the U.S. Navy had been involved in atmospheric and high-altitude research through the [Naval Research Laboratory](#) and [Office of Naval Research](#). U.S. Navy contributions to space exploration continued with NASA's manned space flight programs, starting in the early 1960s. Just as Orion and the International Space Station are helping NASA learn how to go to Mars, the [Gemini](#) program defined and tested the skills NASA would need to go to the moon in the 1960s and 1970s.



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/research/histories/biographies-list/bios-s/Schirra-Walter/_jcr_content/body/image.img.jpg/1457016647064.jpg