



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

January 5, 2021

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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.

★ Female CO Scheduled to Command Aircraft Carrier for First Time

The U.S. Navy announced recently that Capt. Amy Bauernschmidt is scheduled this summer to be the first female to command a U.S. aircraft carrier—[USS Abraham Lincoln](#). Bauernschmidt, a native of Milwaukee, WI, was also the first female to serve as an executive officer onboard an [aircraft carrier](#). She held that position from September 2016 to January 2019, also on *Abraham Lincoln*. “I am incredibly honored and humbled to be selected,” she said. “I love leading Sailors, and I take that responsibility extremely seriously.” She must first complete [nuclear power](#), [aviation](#), and [leadership](#) training, which is required of all aircraft carrier commanding officers. Bauernschmidt is a 1994 graduate of the [U.S. Naval Academy](#), the first graduating class from which women were allowed to serve aboard combatant ships and aircraft. For more, [read the article](#). For more on [women in the U.S. Navy](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/130788>

★ Steaming into the New Year

U.S. Navy ships maintain a deck log where all-important day-to-day activities are recorded. They are considered legal documents and, although they contain important information, they can be quite dry. That is except for the New Year's Day entry. The long-term tradition in the Navy is that the first entry of the New Year can be rendered in verse. The [New Year's Day deck log](#) must still contain all the requirements of a standard deck log, but it can also include the reflections of the Sailor penning the entry. This year, aboard the guided-missile destroyer [USS Ralph Johnson](#), the officer of the deck recorded the first entry of 2021. To read this year's entry, [check out the blog](#) by MC3 Anthony Collier at [The Sextant](#). [NHHC](#) is reviving the tradition of the New Year's Day deck log contest. For specifics on the contest with a deadline of Friday, April 2, 2021, visit the [Voices Forged by the Sea: New Year's Day Deck Log Contest](#) page.



Photo Link: <https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2020/12/31/steaming-into-the-new-year/>

★ Endeavor Launched—25 Years Ago

On Jan. 11, 1996, space shuttle [Endeavor](#) on mission STS-72 launched from the John F. Kennedy Space Center, FL. The crew included [naval aviators](#) Cmdr. Winston E. Scott and Lt. Cmdr. Brent W. Jett Jr. The primary objective of the mission was the recovery of the Space Flyer Unit, which was a Japanese microgravity research spacecraft. *Endeavor* flew a multitude of missions over the course of her long career. The space shuttle was built as a replacement for the orbiter [Challenger](#) that exploded shortly after launch on Jan. 28, 1986, killing all seven astronauts onboard. *Endeavor* was named after a ship that was charted to traverse the South Pacific in the 18th century by British explorer James Cook. Cook's achievements on *Endeavor* were numerous and included the charting of New Zealand and Australia. Space shuttle *Endeavor* is currently on display at the [California Science Center](#) in Los Angeles. For more on the [Navy's role in space exploration](#), go to [NHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/history/this-week-in-nasa-history-sts-72-launches-to-recover-japanese-research-spacecraft.html>

★ Annual Navy History and Heritage Awards Program

In recognition of the work many private, nongovernment museums provide in telling the story of the history and heritage of the U.S. Navy to the American public, NHHHC is pleased to announce the formation of an awards program. The Navy has established three awards covering calendar year 2020 with a submission deadline of June 1, 2021. First, the [Navy History and Heritage Excellence Pennant](#) recognizes overall excellence in telling compelling and accurate stories. The second award, known as the [Maintenance Excellence Pennant](#), focuses on historical ships and artifacts. Last, the [Curatorial Excellence Pennant](#) recognizes those who go the extra mile to interpret and curate historical Navy artifacts. For more on the program, [read the article](#) at [NHHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/art/exhibits/conflicts-and-operations/navy-recruiting-posters-of-the-atomic-age/heritage-sailor-holding-boy-s-hand.html>

★ First Squadron to Land on Russian Aircraft Carrier—25 Years Ago

On Jan. 7, 1996, an [HH-60 Seahawk](#) helicopter embarked onboard USS *America*—piloted by HS-11 commanding officer Cmdr. Robert L. Wilde and copiloted by Lt. Craig M. Davis—transported the commander of Sixth Fleet, Vice Adm. Donald L. Pilling, to the Russian aircraft carrier *Admiral Kuznetsov*. HS-11 thus became the Navy's first [naval aviation](#) squadron to land onboard a Russian aircraft carrier. While onboard *Admiral Kuznetsov*, the Americans and Russians discussed potential professional contacts between the two navies, toured the ship and embarked aircraft, and enjoyed a traditional Russian meal. The Russian carrier was in the Mediterranean to show the flag and to celebrate the Russian navy's 300th birthday.



Photo Link: <https://www.defense.gov/observe/photo-gallery/igphoto/2002015833/>

★ Military Sealift Command Established

On Jan. 9, 1918, the Naval Overseas Transportation Service—now the [Military Sealift Command](#)—was established to transport 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 Military Sealift Command.



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

★ New in 2021: The Vessels the Navy Plans to Commission, Christen

According to Naval Sea Systems Command, the Navy plans to commission seven vessels and christen another eight in the upcoming year. Expected to join the littoral combat ship community are *Oakland*, *Minneapolis-St. Paul*, and *Mobile*; the guided-missile destroyer fleet will welcome [Daniel Inouye](#). The new destroyer is named for the late U.S. Senator who received the [Medal of Honor](#) for heroism during [World War II](#). The expeditionary mobile base *Miguel Keith* is also slated for commissioning. *Miguel Keith* honors the late Marine Corps lance corporal who received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions during the [Vietnam War](#). The [submarine force](#) plans to add two to its fleet—*Oregon* and *Montana*. For more, [read the article](#) in the *Navy Times*. For more on the Navy's tradition of [ship launching and commissioning](#), go to [NHHHC's website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2020/12/30/new-in-2021-here-are-all-the-ships-the-navy-will-commission-and-christen-in-the-coming-year/>

★ Series Highlights Desert Storm Veterans for 30th Anniversary

In January 1991, servicemembers from all U.S. military branches commenced combat operations as part of a multination coalition to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait after brutal dictator Saddam Hussein repeatedly refused to leave the country after he ordered an invasion in August 1990. An estimated 694,550 U.S. servicemembers deployed to the Gulf for [Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm](#). According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, more than 2.2 million servicemembers served during the era, and 1.68 million veterans are still alive. In commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the commencement of combat operations, the VA will publish print and video stories throughout the month of January that will feature the veterans' wide range of perspectives. Included are stories from Navy, Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, and the Coast Guard. For more, [read the article](#) at Vantage Point.



Photo Link: https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/75651/series-highlights-desert-storm-veterans-30th-anniversary/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=%23DesertStorm30%2CHonoring%20Vets&utm_term=&utm_content=&fbclid=IwAR1aHuuLhppTnZg0c23OisJuHX7zPTeaA6mhvuaL1LMLqjvhZ_Bc75z4hJw

★ Webpage of the Week

In commemoration of the launching of USS *Hopper* 25 years ago on Jan. 6, 1996, this week's webpage of the week is the [Rear Adm. Grace Hopper](#) page under [namesakes](#) on [NHHC's website](#). Guided-missile destroyer *Hopper* proudly bears the name of the pioneer in the field of computer science. Over the course of her storied career, she was the first to learn to program the first large-scale digital computer, Mark I. In 1946, she joined the Harvard faculty as a research fellow where work continued on the Mark I and Mark II for the Navy. Hopper published more than 50 papers and articles on software and programming languages. Her interest in applications programming sent her to the first meeting of CODASYL (committee on data systems languages) with a strong interest in the development of COBOL (common business oriented language). She also served on the American National Standard Institute's Xe.4 committee on the standardization of computer languages. Check the page out today for additional reading, information on her namesake ship, and much more.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/people/namesakes/grace-hopper.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On Jan. 5, 1943, during the [Guadalcanal campaign](#), [USS Helena](#) became the first U.S. Navy ship to use the Mk.32 [proximity-fuzed projectile](#) in combat, downing a Japanese Aichi Type 99 carrier bomber. The proximity fuze was one of the most important technological innovations and highly guarded secrets of the war. The development of the proximity fuze increased effectiveness by triggering the explosion of the shell by its proximity to the intended target. This development was accomplished by including a [radar](#)-like sender-receiver in the fuze. Early in the war, it became evident that the speed, maneuverability, and heights attainable by modern military aircraft made anti-aircraft operations relatively ineffective using detonation devices induced by direct contact or a timer at launch. With a proximity fuze, the shell or missile need only pass close by the target, thus vastly improving American anti-aircraft firepower. For more on [radio proximity \(VT\) fuses](#), 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.si.edu/object/fuze-proximity-cutaway%3Anasm_A19940233000