NOVEMBER 2026 | ISSUE 11

FROM THE QUARTERDECK

ARTIFACT RECOVERY: USS *PERMIT*'S BELL

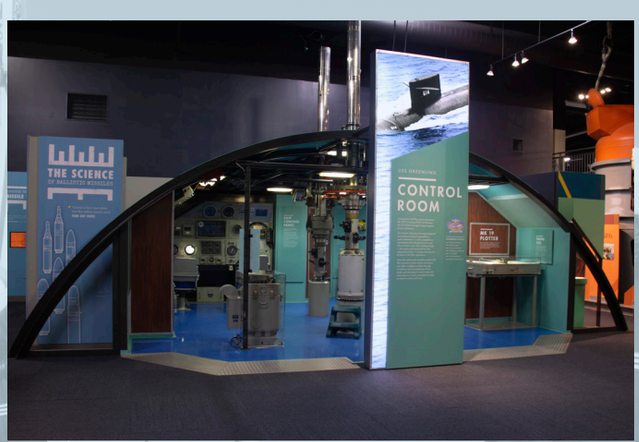


Commander Chester with Australian citizen Mike Clarke, photo by US Navy

Last month, NHHC's Curator Branch facilitated the return of the bell from the USS *Permit* (SS-178) after an Australian citizen, who possessed the bell, contacted the Command. Launched on October 5, 1936, *Permit* completed 14 wartime patrols during World War II, receiving 10 battle stars. The submarine was decommissioned after the war in 1945. For now, the bell will be loaned to the newly established Naval Support Activity Sterling in Perth, Australia, which was opened as part of AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The bell's presence in Perth highlights the US Navy and Australia's rich relationship as *Permit* was temporarily based outside of Perth during the war. The Curator Branch manages the Navy's Central Artifact Collection, which serves as the repository of artifacts from Navy ships and submarines. For more on *Permit* and other ship histories, visit our website.

EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHT: *GREENLING* CONTROL ROOM REFRESH

In October, the United States Naval Undersea Museum (USNUM) refreshed its popular *Greenling* control room exhibit with new content. Using historic equipment from the fast attack submarine USS *Greenling* (SSN-614), the exhibit brings visitors inside a Cold War–era submarine control room to learn how the crew maintained the ship's movement, course, position, and weapons. Attack submarines served as the Navy's strongest weapon against Soviet submarines during the Cold War. *Permit*-class submarines, like *Greenling*, integrated innovations developed separately in earlier classes to become the first fast, quiet, attack submarines optimized for antisubmarine warfare. The exhibit refresh introduced new interpretations, graphics, and a new interactive touchscreen, revitalizing the content while preserving the immersive, hands-on experience visitors of all ages can enjoy. Holding the world's largest collection of undersea ordnance, the museum is a vital resource for naval education and a center for preserving the history of undersea technology. For more information on the USNUM, please visit our website.



NHHC, photo by the United States Naval Undersea Museum

VISIT FROM THE VICE DIRECTOR OF NAVY STAFF:



NHHC, photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kaleb Shultz

In mid-October, NHHC hosted the Vice Director of Navy Staff, Karla Horn, for a tour of the Command's facilities and a presentation on NHHC's capabilities. Command staff showcased the firearms vault, artifact collection, and art collection to demonstrate how NHHC preserves and tells the story of the Navy through physical artifacts. The tour also included stops at the underwater archaeology lab, Navy Department Library, and the National Museum of the United States Navy. While visiting the firearms vault, Ms. Horn was able to view a gold-plated Iraqi Tabuk assault rifle with the Arabic inscription "Gift of his Highness President Saddam Hussein, President of Iraqi Republic" that was recovered during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Visits by senior leaders provide opportunities to highlight NHHC's capabilities and its mission to collect, preserve, and present an accurate history of the US Navy.

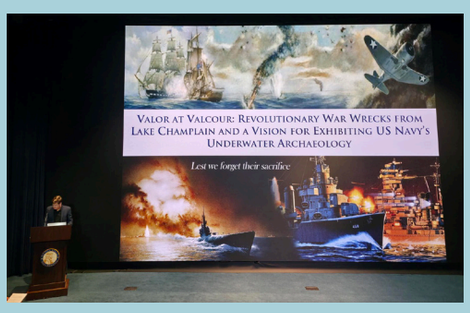
FLEET WEEK SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area is steeped in Navy history and is also home to a premier, week-long celebration of America's sea and humanitarian services, making it ideal for outreach opportunities. From October 8 to 11, an Outreach team that included volunteers from across the Command engaged more than 6,000 people at Fleet Week San Francisco, discussing both local and general US Navy history. As one of the most important Navy hubs during World War II, the San Francisco Bay Area, stretching from San Francisco to Concord, Port Chicago, Oakland, Vallejo, and beyond, was instrumental to the war effort, with the region being responsible for constructing naval vessels, operating as a staging area prior to deployment, and stockpiling naval weapons as part of the West Coast defense. The Fleet Week included a Blue Angels Air Show, ship tours, and numerous military displays.



NHHC, photo by Mimosa Gonsalves

COMMEMORATING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF VALCOUR ISLAND



US Navy, photo by NHHC

To commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Valcour Island on October 11, the US Navy Memorial, in partnership with the Archaeological Institute of America and Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, hosted NHHC to provide lectures on the history of the battle, related archaeological discoveries in Lake Champlain, and ways to preserve sunken craft. Over 1,000 people attended either in person or virtually to hear from NHHC archaeologist Dr. George Schwarz and senior curator Raj Solanki. During Dr. Schwarz's presentation, "Valor at Valcour: Revolutionary War Wrecks in Lake Champlain," he unveiled NHHC's new story map on *Royal Savage*. Ms. Solanki discussed "A Vision for Exhibiting US Navy's Underwater Archaeology," and the Command's ongoing efforts to recover and exhibit a TBD-1 Devastator in the National Museum of the United States Navy. Events like this help NHHC connect with subject matter experts and showcase preservation efforts with history enthusiasts from around the country.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER: BRAVO ZULU TO DR. REGINA AKERS



NHHC, photo by Histories Branch

NHHC congratulates recently retired historian Dr. Regina Akers on receiving the Commodore Dudley W. Knox Naval History Lifetime Achievement Award by the US Naval Institute. During nearly 40 years of service at NHHC, Dr. Akers served as the Command's first Senior Historians Advisory Committee chair and oral history team lead. A nationally recognized expert on Navy personnel, women, and African American military history, she preserved countless voices and stories for future generations. Her oral history work earned her the 2020 Forrest Pogue Award, and her publications include *The Navy's First Enlisted Women: Patriotic Pioneers*. Dr. Akers also supported major initiatives including the African American Civil War Sailors Project, the Pentagon's African American Corridor renovation, and a documentary on the attack on Pearl Harbor. We are deeply grateful to Dr. Akers for her years of service and enduring contributions to naval history.

EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHT: *H. L. HUNLEY*

With more than 400,000 artifacts in the NHHC collection, a key component of the Command's operation is to loan artifacts to accredited museums around the country to ensure widest dissemination. In early October, NHHC coordinated with staff at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center at Clemson University Restoration Institute, to execute a loan agreement with the Charleston Museum for the display of more than 275 *H. L. Hunley* artifacts as part of an exhibition entitled *Textiles from the Deep*. A Confederate vessel, *Hunley* was the first submarine to sink a ship in combat after ramming the USS *Housatonic*. Following the attack, *Hunley* was lost. Rediscovered in 1995, NHHC helped excavate the submarine in 2000. Open until April 4, 2027, the exhibit grants visitors the opportunity to see many *Hunley* artifacts on display and learn about the submarine, its crew, recovery, and the ongoing efforts to preserve this unique piece of naval history.



Image courtesy of the Charleston Museum

NAVY HISTORY MATTERS: VETERANS DAY



US Army, photo by Elizabeth Fraser

Veterans Day, November 11, is a day to pause, reflect, and thank the men and women who have served in the armed forces. Originally created to commemorate the armistice and the nearly 10 million military personnel who were killed in the First World War, President Dwight D. Eisenhower renamed the holiday Veterans Day after the Korean War and expanded its meaning to honor all veterans from every war and branch. Today, Veterans Day serves as the perfect reminder of all of those who have answered the call and defended the nation in its hour of need.

CNO ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Winners of the 2026 Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Naval History Essay Contest were recognized during a ceremony chaired by CNO Adm. Daryl Caudle at the US Naval Academy on November 4. Out of the 161 submissions, the following were awarded: Cmdr. Roy Wood Jr., USN (ret.); Capt. Karl Flynn, USMC; Cmdr. Aaron Marchant, USN; Ensign Liam Hospidales, USN; Major Dilan Swift, USMCR; Midshipman 1/C Alejandro Tilley, US Naval Academy; Midshipman 1/C Brian Di Mascio, US Naval Academy; and Ensign Swas Sharma, USN. The ceremony was organized by the US Naval Institute in collaboration with NHHC. This year, contestants were asked to focus their essays on shifting strategic environment and technological advancements that can inform naval strategy and the important role maritime power plays in maintaining global economic stability and security. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to everyone who submitted an essay.



US Navy, photo by LT Valentine Mulango

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Fleet Week San Diego,** November 6–15, San Diego, California
- **American Veterans Center Annual Conference,** November 6–7, Washington, DC
- **Navy Week Flagstaff,** November 9–15, Flagstaff, Arizona
- **Veterans Day Concert,** November 11, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, DC
- **Pearl Harbor 85th Anniversary Commemorations,** December 4–8, Honolulu, Hawaii