



## The Green Board



ALL SEAS ARE NAVIGABLE

### Complete Civil War submarine unveiled for first time



*The Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley sits in a conservation tank after a steel truss that had surrounded it was removed Jan. 12. Bruce Smith/AP*

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. — Confederate Civil War vessel H.L. Hunley, the world's first successful combat submarine, was unveiled in full and unobstructed for the first time on Thursday, capping a decade of careful preservation.

"No one alive has ever seen the Hunley complete. We're going to see it today," engineer John King said as a crane at a Charleston conservation laboratory slowly lifted a massive steel truss covering the top of the submarine.

About 20 engineers and scientists applauded as they caught the first glimpse of the intact 42-foot-long (13-meter-long) narrow iron cylinder, which was raised from the ocean floor near Charleston more than a decade ago. The public will see the same view, but in a water tank to keep it from rusting.

"It's like looking at the sub for the first time. It's like the end of a long night," said Paul Mardikian, senior conservator since 1999 of the project to raise, excavate and conserve the Hunley.

*Continued on page 4*



## Tolling of the Boats



**USS Scorpion (SS-278)** Lost with all hands (76 men) on 5 January 1944 by possible Japanese mine in the Yellow Sea off China.



**USS Argonaut (SS-166)** Lost with all hands (105 men) on 10 January 1943 in the Java Sea by Japanese surface attack.



**USS Swordfish (SS-193)** Lost with all hands (89 men) by a possible Japanese surface attack or mine on 12 January 1945 off Okinawa.



**USS S-36 (SS-141)** Lost on January 20 1942 when it was destroyed after she ran aground on the Taka Bakang Reef in Makassar Strait, Indonesia, near Makassar City. The crew was rescued.



**USS S-26 (SS-131)** Lost with 46 men on 24 January 1942 in the Gulf of Panama, 14 miles west of San Jose Light when the USS PC-460 rammed it. Two men survived.

### OUR CREED

“ To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.”

## Commander's Corner

By Jim Tolson



Happy New Year! As we start a new year, I want to thank the people that made our Christmas Dinner a success. Bob McDaniel found the facility and also helped set it up. Frank and Sharon Lloyd coordinated the silent auction. Karla planned a great dinner in a festive Christmas decorated room with live music by Debb & Daniel Mattera. The submarine cake by Jan and Dave Creekmore was excellent and the pies that Tim Barker brought provided a lot of options for yummy desserts. The toys and cash gifts collected for Toys for Tots were delivered to the Marine toy staging area at the Navy Operational Support Center near Rickenbacker. They were very appreciative.

Thanks to Dave Creekmore for coordinating the Columbus Base participation in Gahanna Parade of Lights. Columbus Base shipmates Marv Pastor, Tim Barker and Walt Fleak carried the colors while Dave O'Carroll and Cliff Dodson rode with the float. We received letters of appreciation and pictures from the parade sponsors. Next year, there are plans to modulate the lights using Christmas music.

It was good to see Ben Grimes at the Christmas Dinner. It sounds like he is going back for surgery again in January. Please remember him in your prayers.

If you missed the December *Green Board* story about the USS Ex-U-2513, you might want to go back and read it. A German submarine in the US Navy was new submarine history to me. I wondered what happened to the boat and found it was sunk 7 October 1951 in 213 feet of water about 70 miles west of Key West, FL. If you Google U-2513, you will find several videos of the sunken submarine and technical manuals for the boat.

Wade Kiger, STSCS (SS), is the newest member of Columbus Base. He has offered to give a 15 minute fleet presentation during our February or March meeting that I think will be very interesting. Also, another new member, Mike Thurston, has volunteered to be the Columbus Base USSVI Eagle Scout Award Program liaison. Thanks to these two new shipmates for actively participating in Columbus Base activities.

I received several emails in the last couple of months about ways to get your DD-214. As a reminder, Cliff Dodson put a link on the right side of our web page called "Get DD-214". If you need a copy of your DD-214, go to <http://www.columbusbase.com> and look at the "Columbus Base Links". If you don't have web access and need help getting the document, let one of the officers know. We would be glad to help.

Thank you for electing me Columbus Base Commander. Columbus Base has a great group of veterans and associates. I am glad to be a part of Columbus Base and am looking forward to a great 2012!

In the summer of 2000, an expedition led by adventurer Clive Cussler raised the Hunley and delivered it to the conservatory on Charleston's old Navy base, where it sat in a 90,000-gallon tank of fresh water to leach salt out of its iron hull.

On weekdays, scientists drain the tank and work on the sub. On weekends, tourists who before this week could only see an obstructed view of the vessel in the water tank, now will be able to see it unimpeded.

Heartbreak of the Hunley Considered the Confederacy's stealth weapon, the Hunley sank the Union warship Housatonic in the winter of 1864, and then disappeared with all eight Confederate sailors inside.

The narrow, top-secret "torpedo fish," built in Mobile, Ala., by Horace Hunley from cast iron and wrought iron with a hand-cranked propeller, arrived in Charleston in 1863 while the city was under siege by Union troops and ships.

In the ensuing few months, it sank twice after sea trial accidents, killing 13 crew members, including Horace Hunley, who was steering.

"There are historical references that the bodies of one crew had to be cut into pieces to remove them from the submarine," Mardikian told Reuters. "There was forensic evidence when they found the bones (between 1993 and 2004 in a Confederate graveyard beneath a football stadium in Charleston) that that was true."

The Confederate Navy hauled the sub up twice, recovered the bodies of the crew, and planned a winter attack.

On the night of Feb. 17, 1864, its captain and seven crew left Sullivan's Island near Charleston, and hand-powered the sub to the Union warship four miles (6.4 kilometers) offshore. From a metal spar on its bow, the Hunley planted a 135-pound (61-kilogram) torpedo in the hull of the ship, which burned and sank.

Some historians say that the submarine showed a mission-accomplished lantern signal from its hatch to troops back on shore before it disappeared.

What scientists have found Mardikian has the lantern, which archaeologists found in the submarine more than a century later, in his laboratory.

Scientists removed 10 tons of sediment from the submarine, along with the bones, skulls and even brain matter of the crew members, Mardikian told Reuters. They also found fabric and sailors' personal belongings.

Facial reconstructions were made of each member of the third and final crew. They are displayed along with other artifacts in a museum near the submarine. In a nearby vault is a bent gold coin that archaeologists also found in the submarine. It was carried by the sub's captain, Lieutenant George Dixon, for good luck after it stopped a bullet from entering his leg during the Battle of Shiloh in 1862.

"The submarine was a perfect time capsule of everything inside," said Ben Rennison, one of three maritime archaeologists on the project.

The Hunley Project is a partnership among the South Carolina Hunley Commission, Clemson University Restoration Institute, the Naval Historical Center and the nonprofit Friends of the Hunley. The nonprofit group raised and spent \$22 million on the project through 2010, a spokeswoman told Reuters.

The next phase of the project will be to remove corrosion on the iron hull and reveal the submarine's skin, preserve it with chemicals, and eventually display it in open air, Mardikian said.

Surprisingly sophisticated

Scientists have found the vessel to be a more sophisticated feat of engineering than historians had thought, said Michael Drews, director of Clemson's Warren Lasch Conservation Center.

"It has the ballast tanks fore and aft, the dive planes were counterbalanced, the propeller was shrouded," Drews said. "It's just got all of the elements that the modern submarines have, updated."

There were previous submarines, Drews said, but the Hunley, designed to sail in the open ocean and built for warfare, was cutting-edge technology at the time.

"Dixon's mission was to attack and sink an enemy ship and he did," Drews said. "At that particular time, the mindset of naval warfare was, basically, big ships sink little ships. Little ships do not sink big ships. And the Hunley turned that upside down."



## Columbus Base Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2012

Meeting was called to order by Base Commander Jim Tolson. COB Marv Pastor led the salute to the Flag. The invocation was conducted by the Chaplain, Walt Fleak. Tolling of the bell for the lost boats of January was performed by Marv Pastor and Walt Fleak. There were 21 members and guests present. The BC welcomed everyone. Sharon Lloyd conducted the swearing in ceremony for the incoming officers. They are Jim Tolson –Commander, Tim Barker – Vice Commander, Dave Creekmore –Treasurer, and Bob McDaniel – Secretary. Appointed officers are: COB – Marv Pastor, Chaplains – Sharon Lloyd and Walt Fleak, Storekeeper – Frank Lloyd, Holland Club Chairman – Marv Pastor, *Green Board* Editor – Jan Creekmore, and Web Master – Cliff Dodson. There was not a person for the Activities Chairman. The BC asked for a volunteer to be Activities Chairman. No one volunteered.

**Secretary's Report** - The December minutes were published in the *Green Board*. There were no corrections or additions. A letter and card was read from the national chaplain concerning the recent passing on Eternal Patrol of George Sanderson. They were both put in the half way box for Bruce Sanderson. Two letters thanking the base for our participation in the Festival of Lights at Gahanna. They also sent two pictures of the color guard and float. Cliff Dodson will put them on our web site.

**Treasurer's Report**--Dave reported on the state of the base treasury. He reported the year end totals.

**Webmaster Report**-Cliff reported the [columbusbase.com](http://columbusbase.com) domain fee paid for 2012. The Flicker account was paid for two years last year. He said if anyone wants an email account he can set up one for you.

**Chaplain's Report** –Sharon passed around a card for Joe and Mamie Murphy. Sharon called Gus and Helen Hoehl and said they are doing well. Bob Wells' brother just recently passed away and our condolences were given. Sharon tried to get in contact with Ben Grimes but has not been successful. We know he is due to have some surgery.

**Membership Report/Introductions** – The BC said he thought Prince Reece, MM2 (SS), Qual boat USS Groton SSN-694, may have been in attendance at this meeting. Maybe he will be at the next meeting. New members Wade Kiger and Mike Thurston were in attendance. The BC had everyone to go around the room to introduce themselves and tell something about their navy experiences.

**Committee Reports**- Activities –BC reported he dropped off Toys for Tots with the Marines at Rick-enbacker. He also said he has received an Eagle Scout patch issued by USSVI to award. Mike Thurston said he could assist in the presentation as he is involved in scouting with his sons.

**Unfinished Business**- the BC said membership renewals for non-life members: Red Downard, Chris Leonard, Dale Loney, Jim Rivelli, and Paul Vawter. –Base – James Williams - see Dave Creekmore.

**New Business** –BC lead a discussion on a base donation to USSVI for an USSVI plaque at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. Walt Fleak made a motion to donate \$100 for the plaque, Second by Bob Friar, and motion was carried by voice vote of the majority of members present. The BC had the half way box for Bruce Sanderson. There were a variety of items in the box that will be sent later this month.

**For the Good of the Order** –Open Discussion –Galín Brady discussed the possibility of a plaque at the Navy Memorial in honor of the state WW II sub Grunion. He will do some research and report at next officer's meeting. 50/50 winner was Wade Kiger -\$50.00. Bill McCorkle won a bottle of wine. Marv Pastor won a submarine DVD. Bill Anderson won a box of candy. Walt Fleak won a loaf of homemade bread. Bob McDaniel won a loaf of homemade bread. Carol Henry won a calculator. Bob Wells won an apple pie. Galín Brady won a Navy only parking sign. Sharon Lloyd won the book *Explosive Eighteen*. Dave O'Carroll won a Navy hat. Cliff Dodson won a loaf of homemade bread. Jim Tolson won a loaf of homemade bread.

**Announcement of next meeting** - Next Columbus Base meeting – February 4, 2012-1200 social hour, meeting at 1300, AMVETS Post #89,3535 Westerville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43224 614-471-0095.

Next Officer Meeting (tentative) – all are invited. January 21, 2012 – Saturday, 0900 – meeting, breakfast available starting at 0800. AMVETS Post #89, 3535 Westerville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43224.

Dave Creekmore brought up we need to set audit committee. Marv Pastor, Wade Kiger, and Jim Tolson volunteered. BC reminded us to clean up area before leaving.

Closing prayer was conducted by Walt Fleak.

Call for adjournment motion was made by Galín Brady and seconded by Dave Creekmore. Motion passed by a voice vote of the majority of the members present.

Submitted by Bob McDaniel

Base Secretary

**Nuclear-armed submarines, once a cornerstone of the Cold war deterrent, may soon find a new 21st century mission.**

**Lockheed Martin is developing an unmanned aircraft that can be released from the ballistic missile tube of a Trident Submarine --  
150 feet underwater.**

**Floating to the surface, its wings unfold, booster rockets fire, and it is airborne.**

**Called the Cormorant, this jet-powered autonomous aircraft could act as a spy plane or deliver firepower in a surgical strike.**

**When the mission is over, the Cormorant receives computer signals from the submarine that can direct it to a rendezvous point.**

**See web site for full story and video. Click on video area to play it. (lower left arrow)**

<http://www.lockheedmartin.com/how/stories/cormorant.html>

## CENTRAL REGION DISTRICT 2 COMMANDER'S CORNER. JANUARY, 5, 2012.

It has been a few months now since my last correspondence, and much has taken place. The NATIONAL Convention was held in Springfield, Missouri. There was a tolling of the Boats that was put on a local TV channel, and the boat names were read by one of the local TV personalities. Branson was entertaining with their shows and the Military museum was outstanding. There was one fine picnic held at the RV camp, and our WWII brothers held their last election of officers for their National Organization, as they will disband at Norfolk, in 2012. We owe them everything, so when you get a chance, let them know how much they have meant to you and USSVI.

I was invited to the sail dedication of the USS DRUM, SSN677, at Great Lakes Naval Training Center in July, and met several boat sailors who are stationed there and a couple even joined the Great Lakes base. The guest speaker was one of the former Captain's of the Drum. That was a terrific presentation.

In October I visited the Cincinnati Base who held a joint picnic with the Hoosier Base, and the Louisville Base. The Cincinnati base won the horseshoe contest, and the picnic was well attended and all had a good time. Any base officer that had not been previously sworn in, were lined up and swore at, I mean, sworn in. I always get that part mixed up. Sorry.

Please pass on to our members, that I wish them a warm and bright NEW YEAR'S, and keep the WWII guys in your prayers.

And lastly, I want you to know that it is a joy and an honor to work along side you all and I hope your winter is one to remember. Thank you for all you do for the USSVI.

HIGH REGARDS: VIC VANHORN D2/CDR



### Upcoming Events

Jan. 21, 2012	0900	Officer meeting at the Am Vets Post #89. All are invited,
Feb. 04, 2012	1200	Regular base meeting at the Am Vets Post #89
Mar. 03, 2012	1200	Regular base meeting at the Am Vets Post #89

## TRUE STORY OF DD 579

### A BIT OF NAVAL HISTORY -- Kit Bonner, Naval Historian

From November 1943, until her demise in June 1945, the American destroyer 'William D. Porter' was often hailed - whenever she entered port or joined other Naval ships - with the greetings: "Don't shoot, we're Republicans!"

For a half a century, the US Navy kept a lid on the details of the incident that prompted this salutation. A Miami news reporter made the first public disclosure in 1958 after he stumbled upon the truth while covering a reunion of the destroyer's crew. The Pentagon reluctantly and tersely confirmed his story, but only a smattering of newspapers took notice.

In 1943, the Willie D as the Porter was nicknamed, accidentally fired a live torpedo at the battleship Iowa during a practice exercise. As if this weren't bad enough, the Iowa was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time, along with Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and all of the country's W.W.II military brass. They were headed for the Big Three Conference in Tehran, where Roosevelt was to meet Stalin and Churchill. Had the Porter's torpedo struck the Iowa at the aiming point, the last 60 years of world history might have been quite different.

The USS William D Porter (DD-579) was one of hundreds of assembly line destroyers built during the war. They mounted several heavy and light guns, but their main armament consisted of 10 fast-running and accurate torpedoes that carried 500-pound warheads. This destroyer was placed in commission on July 1943 under the command of Wilfred Walker, a man on the Navy's fast career track.

In the months before she was detailed to accompany the Iowa across the Atlantic in November 1943, the Porter and her crew learned their trade, experiencing the normal problems that always beset a new ship and a novice crew.

The mishaps grew more serious when she became an escort for the pride of the fleet, the big new battleship Iowa.

The night before they left Norfolk, bound for North Africa, the Porter accidentally damaged a nearby sister ship when she backed down along the other ship's side and her anchor tore down the other ship's railings, life rafts, ship's boat and various other formerly valuable pieces of equipment. The Willie D merely had a scraped anchor, but her career of mayhem and mishaps had begun.

Just twenty four hours later, the four-ship convoy, consisting of Iowa and her secret passengers, the Willie D, and two other destroyers, was under strict instructions to maintain complete radio silence. Since they were going through a known U-boat feeding ground, speed and silence were the best defense.

Suddenly, a tremendous explosion rocked the convoy. All of the ships commenced anti-submarine maneuvers. This continued until the Porter sheepishly admitted that one of her depth charges had fallen off her stern and exploded. The 'safety' had not been set as instructed. Captain Walker was watching his fast track career become side-tracked.

Shortly thereafter, a freak wave inundated the ship, stripping away everything that wasn't lashed down. A man washed overboard and was never found. Next, the fire room lost power in one of its boilers.

The Captain, at this point, was making reports almost hourly to the Iowa about the Willie D's difficulties. It would have been merciful if the force commander had detached the hard luck ship and sent her back to Norfolk .But, no, she sailed on.

The morning of 14 November 1943 dawned with a moderate sea and pleasant weather. The Iowa and her escorts were just east of Bermuda, and the president and his guests wanted to see how the big ship could defend herself against an air attack. So, the Iowa launched a number of weather balloons to use as anti-aircraft targets. It was exciting to see more than 100 guns shooting at the balloons, and the President was proud of his Navy. Just as proud was Admiral Ernest J King, the Chief of Naval Operations; large in size and, by demeanor, a true monarch of the sea. Disagreeing with him meant the end of a naval career. Up to this time, no one knew what firing a torpedo at him would mean.

Over on the Willie D, Captain Walker watched the fireworks display with admiration and envy. Thinking about career redemption and breaking the hard luck spell, the Captain sent his impatient crew to battle stations.

They began to shoot down the balloons the Iowa had missed as they drifted into the Porter's vicinity.

Down on the torpedo mounts, the crew watched, waiting to take some practice shots of their own on the big battleship, which, even though 6,000 yards away, seemed to blot out the horizon. Lawton Dawson and Tony Fazio were among those responsible for the torpedoes. Part of their job involved ensuring that the primers were installed during actual combat and removed during practice. Once a primer was installed, on a command to fire, it would explode shooting the torpedo out of its tube.

Dawson, on this particular morning, unfortunately had forgotten to remove the primer from torpedo tube #3. Up on the bridge, a new torpedo officer, unaware of the danger, ordered a simulated firing. "Fire 1, Fire 2," and finally, "Fire 3." There was no Fire 4 as the sequence was interrupted by an unmistakable whooooooshhhing sound made by a successfully launched and armed torpedo. Lt H. Steward Lewis, who witnessed the entire event, later described the next few minutes as what hell would look like if it ever broke loose.

Just after he saw the torpedo hit water on its way to the Iowa and some of the most prominent figures in world history, Lewis innocently asked the Captain, 'Did you give permission to fire a torpedo?' Captain Walker's reply will not ring down through naval history... although words to the effect of Farragut's immortal 'Damn the torpedoes' figured centrally within.

Initially there was some reluctance to admit what had happened, or even to warn the Iowa. [NOTE: Probably not a bad idea, given the unreliability of U.S. torpedoes in WW II.] As the awful reality sunk in, people began racing around, shouting conflicting instructions and attempting to warn the flagship of imminent danger.

First, there was a flashing light warning about the torpedo which unfortunately indicated the torpedo was headed in another direction.

Next, the Porter signaled that the torpedo was going reverse at full speed!

Finally, they decided to break the strictly enforced radio silence.

The radio operator on the destroyer transmitted "Lion (code for the Iowa ), Lion, come right." The Iowa operator, more concerned about radio procedure, requested that the offending station identify itself first.

Finally, the message was received and the Iowa began turning to avoid the speeding torpedo.

Meanwhile, on the Iowa 's bridge, word of the torpedo firing had reached FDR, who asked that his wheelchair be moved to the railing so he could see better what was coming his way.. His loyal Secret Service guard immediately drew his pistol as if he was going to shoot the torpedo. As the Iowa began evasive maneuvers, all of her guns were trained on the William D. Porter. There was now some thought that the Porter was part of an assassination plot.

Within moments of the warning, there was a tremendous explosion just behind the battleship. The torpedo had been detonated by the wash kicked up by the battleship's increased speed.

The crisis was over and so was Captain Walker's career. His final utterance to the Iowa, in response to a question about the origin of the torpedo, was a weak, "We did it." Shortly thereafter, the brand new destroyer, her Captain and the entire crew were placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda for trial. It was the first time that a complete ship's company had been arrested in the history of the US Navy.

The ship was surrounded by Marines when it docked in Bermuda, and held there several days as the closed session inquiry attempted to determine what had happened. Torpedoman Dawson eventually confessed to having inadvertently left the primer in the torpedo tube, which caused the launching. Dawson had thrown the used primer over the side to conceal his mistake.

The whole incident was chalked up to an unfortunate set of circumstances and placed under a cloak of secrecy.

Someone had to be punished. Captain Walker and several other Porter officers and sailors eventually found themselves in obscure shore assignments. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years hard labor.

President Roosevelt intervened; however, asking that no punishment be meted out for what was clearly an accident.

The destroyer William D. Porter was banished to the upper Aleutians. It was probably thought this was as safe a place as any for the ship and anyone who came near her. She remained in the frozen north for almost a year, until late 1944, when she was re-assigned to the Western Pacific.

However, before leaving the Aleutians, she accidentally left her calling card in the form of a five-inch shell fired into the front yard of the American Base Commander, thus rearranging his flower garden rather suddenly.

In December, 1944, the Porter joined the Philippine invasion forces and acquitted herself quite well. She distinguished herself by shooting down a number of attacking Japanese aircraft. Regrettably, after the war, it was reported that she also shot down three American planes. This was a common event on ships, as many gunners, fearful of kamikazes, had nervous trigger fingers.

In April, 1945, the destroyer Porter was assigned to support the invasion of Okinawa. By this time, the greeting "Don't Shoot, We're Republicans" was commonplace and the crew of the Willie D had become used to the ribbing.

But the crew of her sister ship, the USS Luce, was not so polite in its salutations after the Porter accidentally riddled her side and superstructure with gunfire. On 10 June, 1945, the Porter's hard luck finally ran out. She was sunk by a plane which had (unintentionally) attacked it from underwater.

A Japanese bomber made almost entirely of wood and canvas slipped through the Navy's defense. Having little in the way of metal surfaces, the plane didn't register on radar. A fully loaded kamikaze, it was headed for a ship near the Porter, but just at the last moment veered away and crashed alongside the unlucky destroyer. There was a sigh of relief as the plane sunk out of sight, but then it blew up underneath the Porter, opening her hull in the worst possible place.

Three hours later, after the last man was off board, the Captain jumped to the safety of a rescue vessel and the ship that almost changed world history slipped astern into 2,400 feet of water. Not a single soul was lost in the sinking. After everything else that happened, it was almost as if the ship decided to let her crew off at the end.



## February Birthdays

Bob Holt

02-03

### New Member

Wade Kiger STSCS (SS)

Welcome Aboard!!

### Manning the Rails

This custom evolved from the centuries old practice of "manning the yards." Men aboard sailing ships stood evenly spaced on all the yards and gave three cheers to honor a distinguished person.

Now men and women are stationed along the rails of a ship when honors are rendered to the President, the heads of foreign state, or a member of a reigning royal family. Men and women so stationed do not salute. Navy ships will often man the rails when entering a port, or when returning to the ship's homeport at the end of a deployment.

### Editor's Note

If you have comments or articles, please contact the base newsletter editor.

Jan Creekmore at e-mail

[creek636@columbus.rr.com](mailto:creek636@columbus.rr.com)



### The Conn

#### Base commander

Jim Tolson

#### Vice Commander

Tim Barker

#### Treasurer

Dave Creekmore

#### Secretary

Bob McDaniel

#### Chaplain

Sharon Lloyd / Walt Fleak

#### COB

Marv Pastor

#### Membership Chairman

Jim Tolson

#### Storekeeper

Frank Lloyd

#### Web Master

Cliff Dodson

#### Editor

Jan Creekmore

#### Activates Chairmen

# The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard

The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNS), often called the Portsmouth Navy Yard, is a United States Navy shipyard for building, remodeling, and repairing the Navy's ships.

The shipyard is currently located on the other side of the Piscataqua River from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the state of Maine, occupying the whole of Seavey Island in the river. Many of the personnel working at the shipyard live in nearby Kittery, Maine.

The yard was established in June 1800, making it the oldest continuously-operating shipyard of the Navy. Its first ship was the 74-gun ship of the line *Washington*, launched in 1814.

It is also the home of "The Castle", a former military prison which derives its name from the resemblance to a medieval castle. This building was the primary prison for the Navy and Marine Corps, as well as housing many German U-Boat crews after capture, until it closed in 1974.

The Portsmouth Navy Yard hosted the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War. For his efforts arranging the treaty, President Theodore Roosevelt won the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize. Diplomats from both nations stayed the grand Victorian hotel, *Wentworth by the Sea*, across the Piscataqua River in New Castle, NH, and were ferried daily to negotiations at the base. In 2005, a summer-long series of events were held marking the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth, including a by a Navy destroyer, a parade and a re-enactment of the arrival of diplomats from the two warring nations. The treaty was signed a 3:47 pm on September 5, 1905, marked by an honor guard, the firing of a 19-gun salute and the ringing of area church bells. Those sounds were duplicated when the signing is re-enacted.

In 1994, the Shipyard was placed on the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) for environmental investigations / restorations under CERCLA (Superfund). In 2005, the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure Committee) placed the Portsmouth Navy on a list for base closures, effective by 2008. Employees have organized (Save Our Shipyard) in an effort to influence the committee to reverse its decision. As of August 24, 2005, it has been taken off the list.

Recently, there has been controversy, within the Shipyard. Both Maine and New Hampshire laid claim to the naval base until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Maine. However, residents of the area in each state still have strong opinions on the topic of ownership. If it belongs to New Hampshire, base employees from that state would no longer be required to pay Maine income tax. Most recently, on August 15, 2001, Dover, New Hampshire resident Victor Burre and seven others, in an act of rebellion against the U.S. Supreme Court's unanimous decision to dismiss New Hampshire's ascertain of ownership of Seavey Island, laid claim to the island in the name of the State of New Hampshire. A lack of further information on the rebellion would suggest that the "militia" was probably unarmed and withdrew peacefully. Meanwhile, the state line remains at the middle of the Piscataqua River.

Base Meeting  
Saturday  
January 7th



Base Officers being sworn in by Chaplain Sharon Lloyd.

Jim Tolson, Base Commander  
Dave Creekmore, Treasurer  
Tim Barker, Vice Commander  
Bob McDaniel, Secretary



Bob & Sue Wells up from Wellston for the meeting



At left is Carol Henry winning a 50/50 prize.



Pictured at right is new member Wade Kiger winning the monetary 50/50 drawing.

