



The Friends of the PNSM The Wheelhouse

Volume 3, No 3

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July 1, 2024

**Welcome to the
The Wheelhouse,**
a Newsletter
published quarterly
by **The Friends of the
Portsmouth Naval
Shipyard Museum.**

Please visit the
Museum and see our
website for additional
information.

<https://www.friendsofportsmouthnsm.org/>

In this issue we
bring you:

- **President's
Message** from Gary
Bahena,
- **Treasurer's Report**
- A **History** Column
from **Steve Milner**
- A **Review** of the latest
Speaker Series by
Keith Abernathy
- A review of a **Day at
the Museum** by
Renée M Russell

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Renée M. Russell**

**The Friends of the
Portsmouth Naval
Shipyard Museum**

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President's Message

Greeting Friends. In this issue of the Wheelhouse, we bring you Steve Milner's terrific piece on the *USS Holland* and its legacy, news on Paddle Battle IV and the all new Junior Paddle Battle. Also, stay tuned to your e-mails for info on when you will be able to sneak-preview unedited footage from the Oral History Project and our Speakers Series. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Treasurer's Report

As of June 30

The Friends have \$114,545.96 in cash and liquid investments. During this fiscal year we are funding the continuation of the Oral History Project and for projects not yet defined by the Museums.



John Holland pauses in the hatch of a submarine bearing his name. Naval History and Heritage Command

THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD MUSEUM

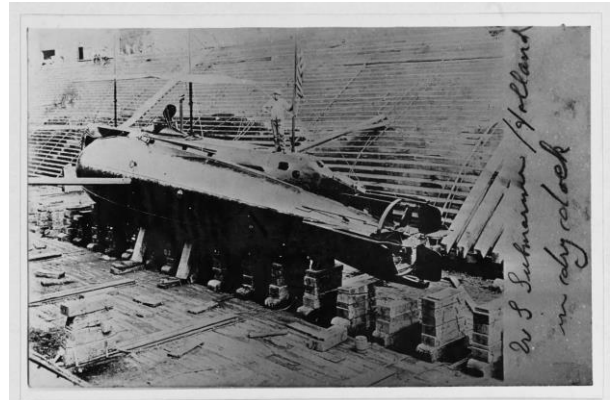
Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) History

By: Steve Milner, Former Public Affairs Officer at
Norfolk Naval Shipyard

America's first commissioned submarine operated from NNSY

Thanks to **President Theodore Roosevelt**, a visionary in his time, the United States Navy bought its **first submarine** on April 11, 1900, when he was Secretary of Navy.

It was home ported some of its time at U.S. Navy Yard, Norfolk, Virginia, the forerunner of Norfolk Naval Shipyard during its five-year operational life at the turn of the Twentieth Century. (The Navy commissioned this first submarine, ***USS Holland***, a day after purchasing it,



A Holland class submarine undergoes a dry-docking availability, possibly at the earlier Norfolk Naval Shipyard. Naval History and Heritage Command

and put it into service the following day.) Until that time the person who became known as the father of the nation's submarine program, **John Phillip Holland**, an Irishman born in 1840, had faced several rejections by the Navy for his various proposals and designs for submersibles. But Holland persevered and his ideas were proven in the Navy's first submersible. The Navy accepted his competitive submarine design and paid Holland \$150,000 for it.

USS Holland Continued, Page 2



The Friends of the PNSM The Wheelhouse

Volume 3, No 3

THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD MUSEUM

USS Holland Continued from Page 1

Some of his submarine patents were included in some form through two world wars and still continue to modern times.

The **USS Holland (SS 1)** was built at the Crescent Shipyard in Elizabeth, New Jersey. It was nearly 54 feet long, had a beam of nearly 11 feet and had a crew of one officer and six enlisted Sailors. It used a gasoline engine on the surface and electric batteries when submerged. It also had one 18-inch torpedo tube and operated at a speed of six knots.

On August 25, 1905, in Teddy Roosevelt's typical swashbuckling style, he became the first American President to stay submerged on a U.S. submarine. He did this for nearly an hour aboard *USS Holland*. And following successful rigorous tests, the Navy ordered six more of Holland's submarines.

In addition to other deployments, the *Holland* became a training vessel at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

The *Holland* further proved itself when it traveled on the surface 166 miles from Annapolis to the earlier Norfolk Naval Shipyard, while collecting useful performance data along the way.

The *Holland* was struck from the Navy Register of Ships on November 10, 1910.

It was displayed in a Patterson, New Jersey, park until 1932, when it was sold for scrap for \$100 to the Henry A. Hitner & Sons company in Philadelphia. The purchaser had to post a \$5,000 bond to assure that

the *Holland* would be broken up and never again used as a vessel. Our Navy had operated two earlier submarines that weren't commissioned—*Alligator* (1862-63) and *Intelligent Whale* (1869-73).

With Britain's Royal Navy's approval, there was an agreement in 1900 between the Electric Boat Company in the United States and the English company, Vickers Sons & Maxim Limited, to build five Holland-class submarines using Electric Boat patents. The first British vessel, *HMS Holland 1*, was launched on October 2, 1901, and arrived in Portsmouth, England, where it suffered an unexplained explosion that injured four crewmen. After a decade in service, *HMS*



A Royal Navy Submarine Museum crew pauses, topside, on a British *Holland* submarine. Royal Navy Submarine Museum

Holland 1 was decommissioned in 1913, and sold for scrap. But it was lost on the way in the sea while under tow, near the Cornish Coast. Fortunately, *HMS Holland 1* was unmanned at the time.



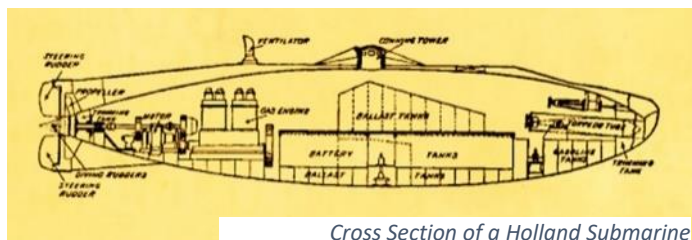
A recovered *Holland* submarine was found in 1981, nearly 70 years after it was lost, unmanned on the way to a scrap yard under tow. Royal Navy Submarine Museum

In 1981, *HMS Holland 1* was found and it is currently displayed in a climate-controlled building at the Royal Navy's Submarine Museum in Gosport, England. (When NNSY's original shipyard opened in 1767, it



This sculpture of submarine pioneer *Holland* is located in the John P. Holland Centre in County Clare, Ireland. Museum photo

was named after its English counterpart.) On April 11, 2024, NNSY observed the 124th anniversary of the original *Holland* submarine.



Cross Section of a *Holland* Submarine



The Friends of the PNSM
The Wheelhouse

Volume 3, No 3

THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD MUSEUM

Speaker Series Event Secrets of Portsmouth “Secret Ships of the Naval Shipyards”

Part 2 of the 4 Part 2024 Speakers
Series: NNSY Commander, Jip
Mosman

By Keith Abernathy

Saturday, June 1st, was the perfect day for Part 2 of the 4 Part series of the “Secrets of Portsmouth”. With

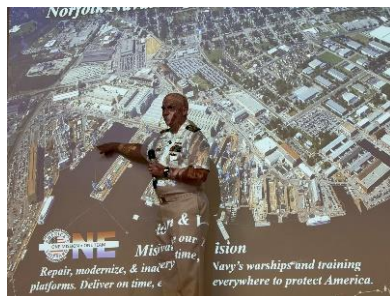


beautiful, sunny and pleasant weather, downtown Portsmouth was so appealing as plenty of folks enjoyed the First Saturday Olde Towne Portsmouth events. This contributed to a record attendance of 70 people entering the Police Administration auditorium at the Portsmouth Welcome Center to hear about the “Secrets of the Norfolk Naval Shipyards (NNSY)”.

And who better to tell the secrets than the current, and 111th, Commanding Officer of the Shipyards, Captain James P. “Jip” Mosman. Captain Mosman was well introduced by the 100th Commanding Officer of NNSY,



City Councilman, Rear Adm (Ret) Mark Hugel. Captain Mosman told about not only the extraordinary history of the shipyard, but also emphasized the present modernization projects to make



Captain Mosman indicating facilities on Station Map.

NNSY the shipyard of the future. The Shipyards takes great pride in the well trained and diversified workforce with the capabilities to work on any Navy ship, at any time, and at anywhere.

The Shipyards historian and archivist, Marcus Robbins, assisted



the shipyard Commander, by showing some of the oldest maps and photos of the Shipyards, formerly Gosport Navy Yard. Attendees even got to hold a piece of the granite from the historical



graving dock, Dry Dock #1, the oldest operational dry dock in the United States. Many other “secrets” of the Shipyards were shared including: the building of the first battleship, *USS Texas*; the conversion of the collier, *USS Jupiter*, into the first aircraft carrier, *USS Langley*; preparations for the departure of the Great White Fleet from NNSY; the building of a



German Village within the Shipyards during WW1; and the story of the oldest surviving building within NNSY, the Tar House.

What a treat!

Next Speaker Series

Now we look forward to Part 3 of our 4 Part series, “The Secrets of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyards Museum”, presented by the Museum’s curator, Dr Michael Hogan. Hear about little known artifacts in the Museum on September 28, 2024, at 2pm in the Police Administration Building Auditorium, Portsmouth Visitor Center, 206 High Street.



The Friends of the PNSM The Wheelhouse

Volume 3, No 3

THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD MUSEUM

A Trip to the Museum: The Revolutionary War and Marquis de Lafayette

By Renée M. Russell

The Friends of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum (PNSM) endeavor to support the rich exhibits of the PNSM, and help draw you into the Museum. In this

that highlights the career of the **Marquis de Lafayette**. He was a Frenchman who volunteered to fight for American Independence.

Visit the Revolutionary War Section of PNSM and you can learn more about Lafayette's involvement in the **Siege at Yorktown**, in 1781, and his distinguished military service.



Father, USN (Ret) and Son, USN Active Duty visit the exhibit.



Of Local interest is a **pyramid-shaped monument to General Lafayette in City Park, Portsmouth.**

There are other monuments to Lafayette which we will feature in



Hope Barajikian shows the scale of the General Lafayette Monument in City Park, Portsmouth.

issue we bring you on a **Trip to the Museum** to show you a new exhibit



coming issues of *The Wheelhouse*, as we begin celebrating the 200th Anniversary of Lafayette in America. See **preview of events** in the next column.



August 14th: "The Nation's Guest" Mayor Makes Official Announcement

October 1st - 19th: "A Perfect America" in Art It's Revolutionary!!! Community Center & Library Art Activities

October 5th, 12th, & 19th: Lafayette at Hill House The Hill House Connection!!! Hill House Explores Its Connection to 1824 Visit

October 19th: Lafayette Day in Portsmouth Lafayette is Almost Here!!!

5th Graders Engage in Lafayette Curriculum

October 22nd: Lafayette Arrives in Norfolk, Bonfires on the Elizabeth River!!!

Lafayette Sails Over to Greet Portsmouth



Paddle Battle IV

By Gary Bahena

The 4th Annual Portsmouth Paddle Battle will splash this year on Saturday, September 7. This is the primary fundraising activity for The Friends. This year's event features some significant changes.



First, the event, other than the racing, will all be done closer to or in Water Street to create a more village-like atmosphere.



Second, racing will start at 10AM and end by Noon so as to give the racers the shorter day they have requested. Racers are also expected to receive free pre-Race breakfast sandwiches as well as free post-Race food all thanks to our wonderful in-kind food sponsors.

More information is available about the **Paddle Battle** at <https://www.friendsofportsmouthnsm.org/paddle-battle> or just Google Portsmouth Paddle Battle.



Third, although at press time we are still awaiting a final written agreement with the City, the City has agreed to be the actual sponsor the Portsmouth Junior Paddle Battle, with The Friends and the Paddle Battle volunteers providing funding and logistical support. The Junior Paddle Battle will offer free kayak lessons, both in and out of the water, to Portsmouth youth ages 8-14. We are partnering with the Portsmouth Police Athletic League to steer underserved kids in their swimming program our way.



HELP

WANTED: We are in need of **VOLUNTEERS** with some experience in kayaking to help act as on-land or in-water kayak instructors. **Please help bring a smile to young faces.** In-water kayak instructors will need to undergo a City background check. Go to the Junior Paddle Battle website (below) for more info and to volunteer.

More information is available about the **Junior Paddle Battle** at <https://www.friendsofportsmouthnsm.org/junior-paddle-battle>

Annual Meeting Held New Board Members Elected

By Gary Bahena

The 61st Annual Meeting of the Friends was held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024. The new 2024-2025 **Officers and Directors** are: Gary Bahena, President; Keith Abernathy, 1st Vice President; [vacant], 2nd Vice President; Thomas Butt, Treasurer (Interim); Jeannie McCoy, Secretary; Lavern Harrell, Director; and Brooks Britt, Director. Thomas Butt, grandson of Marshall Butt, a founder and the first Curator of the Shipyard Museum, is acting as interim Treasurer until a permanent replacement is found. A big Meeting highlight was the celebration of Lavern Harrell's 50th Anniversary as a member of The Friends, during over half of which time Lavern served as Treasurer. THANK YOU Lavern!

MORE HELP WANTED: The Friends are actively looking for a new permanent Treasurer. Please contact Gary Bahena at garybahena@windspirits.us if you are interested and are familiar with QuickBooks.

Do you write?

Would you like to contribute a piece to *The Wheelhouse*. Drop us a line and your topic idea to info@friendsofportsmouthnsm.org.



*The Friends of the PNSM
The Wheelhouse*

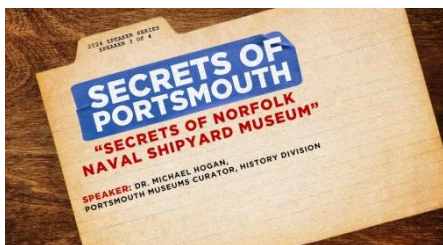
Volume 3, No 3

THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD MUSEUM

Upcoming Events

Speakers Series

All Speaker events are held on **Saturday, from 2-3 pm**, in the Police Auditorium at the Visitor's Center on the corner of Middle and High Streets.



Saturday, September 28, 2024

**The Secrets of PNSM,
Part 3 of 4, featuring Michael
Hogan, Curator Portsmouth
Museums**

Special Events



Saturday, September 7, 2024

**Paddle Battle IV, 8:30AM-Noon
Junior Paddle Battle, Noon-5PM
at High Street Basin**

Saturday, Oct 26th,

**Battle of the Capes by John V.
Quarstein, Director Emeritus
USS MONITOR Center, at the
Police Administration
Auditorium.**



2024 Speakers Series

Presents

Secrets of Portsmouth

**Location: Police Administration Building Auditorium
Portsmouth Visitors Center
206 High Street, Portsmouth, VA**



**Saturday, March 23, 2024, 2 - 3 pm
Secret Ship of Norfolk Naval Shipyard
Speaker: Capt George W. Fleck, USMM
Former Master of
R/Y GOSPORT and TSV-1 PREVAIL**



**Saturday, June 1, 2024, 2 - 3 pm
Secrets of Norfolk Naval Shipyard
Speaker: Captain James P. "Jip" Mosman,
11th Commanding Officer
Norfolk Naval Shipyard**



**Saturday, September 28, 2024, 2 - 3 pm
Secrets of The Portsmouth Naval
Shipyard Museum
Speaker: Michael Hogan, Ph.D,
Museum Curator, History Division**



**Saturday, December 14, 2024, 2 - 3 pm
Secrets of the City of Portsmouth
Speaker: Mr. Gregory Eatroff, Curator,
Portsmouth Public Library Local
History & Avid Student of History**

FREE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

FREE

**The Friends of the
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum, Inc.**

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