



*The Friends of PNSM
The Wheelhouse*

Volume 1, No 3

THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTSMOUTH NAVAL SHIPYARD MUSEUM

Volume 1, No 3

July 1, 2022

**Welcome to the
Third Issue of *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.

In this issue we bring
you messages from our
President, Gary
Bahena, and a History
Column from our 1st
Vice President, Steve
Milner.

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President's Message

Greetings, Friends. In this issue of *The Wheelhouse*, we bring you updates on our Annual Meeting and Finances. **Note:** our June 22nd Lecture Series: Richard Hepburn, "NNSY Dry-docks", has been rescheduled to July 27. Please visit the Events page on the website to learn more about our amazing Oral History Project – a joint effort with The Friends, the Museums and the IC Norcom TV Production students. The Friends. We're back!

Treasurer's Report

As of June 30, 2022, excluding the Paddle Battle Account, The Friends had \$70,703.90 on hand. During the last 12 months, we have funded \$4,750 for the Oral History Project (including \$4,400 for the Oral History Workshop at IC Norcom, \$3,500 of which came from a \$3,500 grant from Rosie's Gaming), committed \$10,000 toward replacement of the Lightship's air conditioning, and paid \$1,500 toward textile conservation work for a Civil War uniform at the Shipyard Museum.

Upcoming 2022 Events

Event:

Lecture Series (RESCHEDULED): Richard Hepburn, "NNSY Drydocks", Wednesday, July 27, 6-7 PM, Portsmouth Public Library (Churchland Branch)
2nd Annual Portsmouth Paddle Battle: Saturday, September 10

NNSY History

Up-arming U.S. Army combat vehicles was a proud NNSY moment

Norfolk Naval Shipyard has recorded many amazing accomplishments related to national defense over the years, but one milestone stands out from the rest due to its timeliness and uniqueness. At the time, in 2005, U.S. Army personnel were delivering supplies using light trucks during the war in Iraq, where many of these vehicles were blown up by improvised explosive devices or IED's.

In dealing with this deadly problem, the Army called on Norfolk Naval Shipyard to assist. In answering the Army's call for help, NNSY provided 50 experienced welders and other craft personnel--working first near Houston, Texas--then at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. At Camp Arifjan, working in extreme desert heat seven days a week, they reinforced lightweight vehicles that were formerly more vulnerable to attacks. These volunteers were the same persons who had spent years repairing surface ships and submarines at NNSY.

In meeting this task head-on, NNSY personnel installed more than 550 Low Signature Armor Cab (LSAC) kits

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Up-armorings – *continued*

on Army vehicles to give Allied troops extra layers of protection against IED's and other hostile action. Their efforts enabled many American and Allied personnel to walk away, unharmed, from explosions and other deadly actions.

NNSY honored its personnel who had installed LSAC kits in a ceremony held on the shipyard waterfront in 2005. Some 3,500 NNSY employees and several City of Portsmouth council members attended this ceremony. Then Naval Sea Systems Command boss, Vice Admiral Phillip Balisle, participated in this ceremony, along with then NNSY Commander, Joseph Campbell. Also participating was former NNSY Commander, Rear Admiral Mark Hugel, who had been recently named at that time as NAVSEA's Deputy Commander for Logistics, Maintenance and Industrial Operations.

At this ceremony, VADM Balisle presented each honoree a commendation letter signed by Shipyard Commander, Captain Campbell, who gave them a medal.

In his letter to the 50 volunteers who went to Kuwait, Captain Campbell said in part, "I commend you for your willingness to leave family and home, travel to Kuwait, endure excessive heat and work long hours to achieve a swift turnaround of the armor installations." He also attributed their success to the NNSY can-do attitude.

Following this ceremony, the volunteers were honored at a reception held at Quarters A, the shipyard commanders' home since 1838, when Captain Lewis Warrington first occupied it.

According to an article in the Hampton Roads military newspaper, *Soundings*, before NNSY personnel arrived in Texas, contractors there were turning out five reinforced truck cabs a day. But with the arrival of NNSY's team, this number increased to 20 a day, or the installation of up-armorings kits about every two hours.

Additionally, some NNSY workers were sent to the U.S. Army Arsenal in Watervliet, New York, where they manufactured components used for the fabrication of the armored truck cabs that were later sent to Kuwait for assembly, this article pointed out.

As Captain Campbell said, the up-armorings volunteers "answered the call and risen to every challenge. It is an honor to lead an organization that walks the talk. Any truck, Any Time, Any Where!" (The shipyard motto had been "Any Ship, Anywhere, Anytime.")

~ Steve Milner
First Vice President

Annual Meeting Update:

Fourteen Members attended the May 11 Annual Meeting at the Children's Museum. The prior existing slate of Officers was re-elected: Gary Bahena, Steve Milner, Steve Poole, Robert Fogel, Jeannie McCoy, and Lavern Harrel and Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky. Gary gave an update on the Paddle Battle and the Oral History Project and hinted at a potential upcoming refurbishment and restoration of the Lightship. Gary also introduced two very special guests, Dr. Alexander Benitez, the new Director of Museums and Tourism, and Brad Crosby, Executive Director of NNSY and the first Commanding Officer's representative to attend a Friends' meeting in a number of years.

~ Gary Bahena

Presentation by Linda Upham-Bornstein – Drydock 4



Following the presentation, "Diane (Cripps) went out with a bang," wrote Stephen Grunnet, of Portsmouth's Black History Month, referring to Dianne's relocation.

He went on in an email, "She left us with a wonderful program to cap off what I believe is one of our most successful seasons for [Black History Month]. The lecture was attended by 66 people who were all enthusiastic about [Bornstein's] story and discussing its implications.

Once again, there were "very important people" in our community who came, including Mayor Shannon Glover who has attended most of our lectures. What this year's programming has seen in particular is a great number of participants with each event having a large and diverse audience. The enthusiasm from this community tells our departments that we need to continue this programming ... throughout the rest of the year.

Thank you all so very much."

Stephen Grunnet