

# SAVING OUR SHIPS

## PROGRESS REPORT JUNE 2024

This Spring has seen an incredible increase in volunteer activity at the park - something that in previous years has been desperately needed and sorely missed. It's heartening to see so many of our neighbors join us to preserve these aging vessels to ensure they'll be here for the next generation.

All three of the ships afloat in our small fleet have made significant progress since our last newsletter. So much in fact, we could create a separate newsletter for each. But for the sake

of brevity, we'll condense as much as we can into this edition.

Going forward, we're also working on new exhibits and exploring new technologies that could very much become game-changers in the quality of our guests' experience in our opinion. There are so many stories these ships have yet to tell and with 21st century audio-visual options we believe we can bring not just the ships' stories to life in a way that hasn't been possible previously, but those of the brave sailors who took them to sea.

We're excited to share more, so read on!

## PHILLY SHIP STRIP TRIP

An important attribute we look for in employment candidates here at the Naval Park is an irrepressibly strong inclination towards piratical tendencies of a non-felonious nature.

The Naval Park crew was recently afforded the opportunity to travel to the Philadelphia Navy Yard to seek, claim and remove items from recently decommissioned warships before they were to be sold off to foreign nations or broken up for scrap. They returned with a precious haul of items that will allow us to restore spaces in a way that would otherwise be impossible.

Our sincere thanks to the custodial crew at the shipyard and especially to Ryan Szimanski who generously allowed Naval Park staff to visit the battleship New Jersey while undergoing work in drydock. The Naval Park pirates ... we mean crew, had an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience.



Above, Buffalo Naval Park non-felonious pirates visiting the battleship New Jersey in drydock. Below, the U-Haul of booty they returned to Buffalo with.







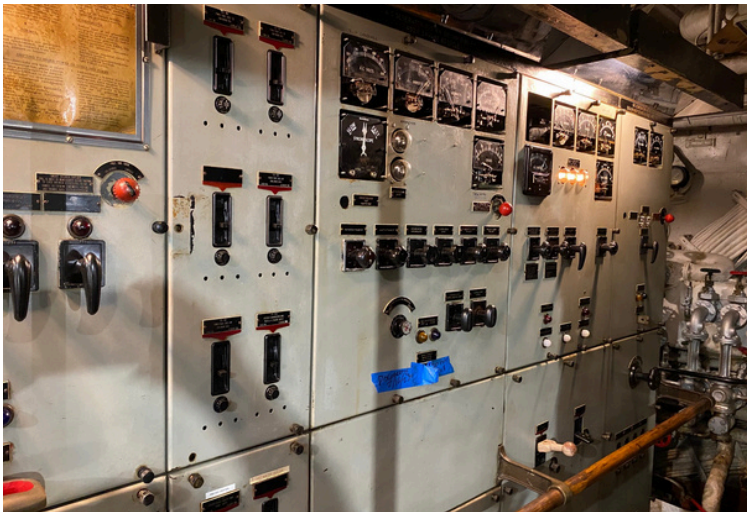
## THE SULLIVANS SURVIVABILITY

After a full winter of work aboard The Sullivans dedicated to increasing her survivability if/when another major flooding event occurs before we can get her to drydock, we're reassessing the best, most effective use of the remaining funds from the supporting grant.

The two potential projects we're researching are a fire detection system and a bilge pump system. First, a fire detection system with a means to report remotely is essential due to the ship's electrical systems having been submerged in oily water. In addition to the installation of a sensor-based, bluetooth-connected system at key points throughout the ship with a heavy emphasis on her engineering spaces, we've worked with the Buffalo Fire Department to conduct walk-throughs of our ships to problem solve the complexities of a fire aboard a museum ship - a unique challenge to be sure.

We'd mentioned it in a previous edition of the newsletter, but another top priority is the installation of a bilge pump system. With the steps we've taken thus far; reestablishing watertight integrity below the main deck, installation of a flood detection system, replacing all door, hatch and scuttle gaskets below decks followed by Navy-standard chalk testing, and more, we need to improve the immediacy of our response time to a flooding event. The installation of a bilge pump system with a check-valved overboard discharge port would create an automated, immediate dewatering response. Depending on the capacity of the system, it could keep an otherwise unrecoverable volume of water at bay until an emergency response team can arrive on station with more robust resources.

In time, both of these systems will need to be installed and become an essential part of a ship safety equipment package. In the meantime, with limited resources, we'll prioritize one of them and develop a carefully crafted installation plan.



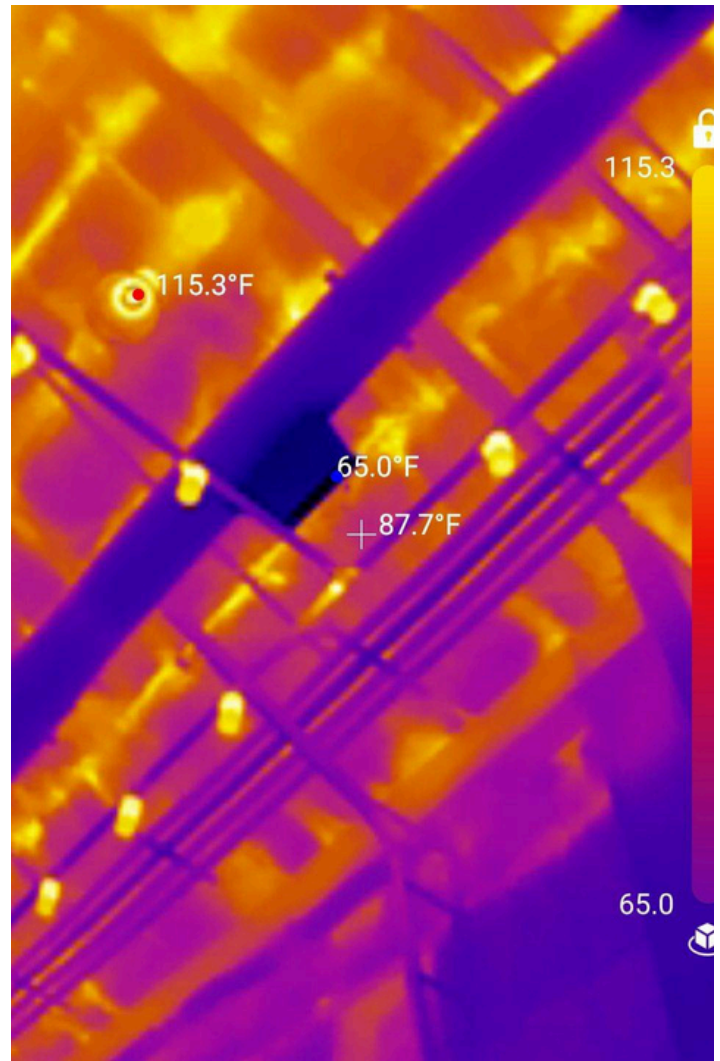


# THE SULLIVANS



Aboard The Sullivans, we've been busy restoring key systems, spaces and substructures.

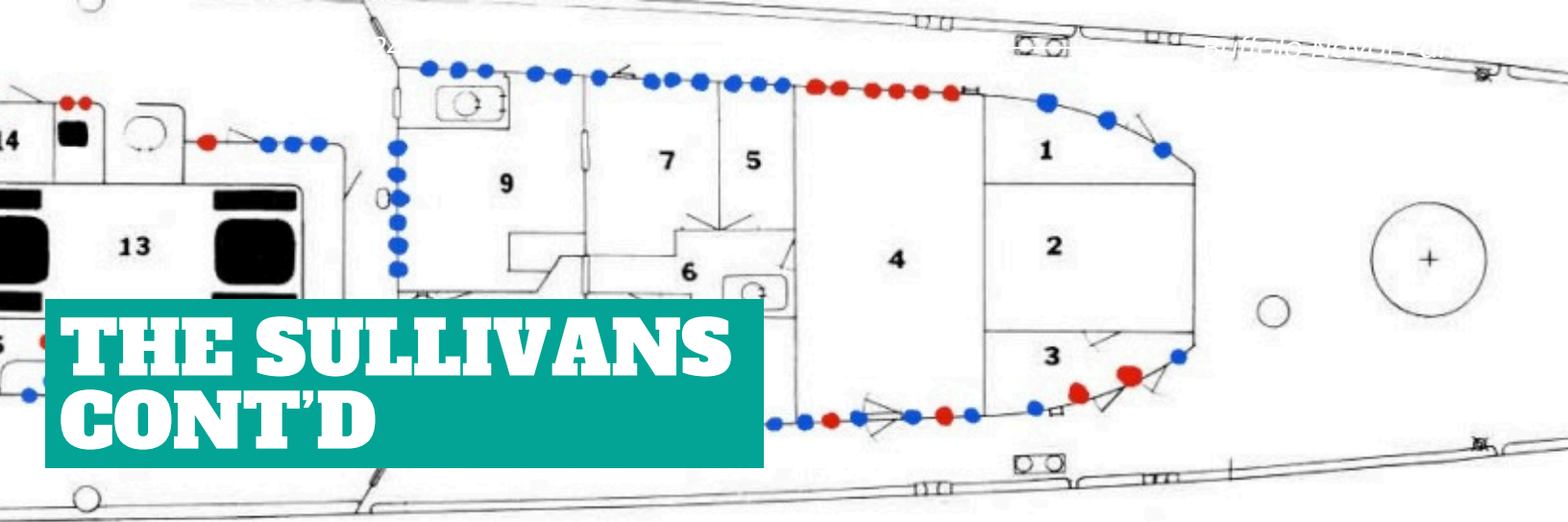
Our lead technical volunteer Mario has been working minor miracles in the restoration of the main bus tie, a cable that connects the aft electrical distribution panel to the forward panel, under the direction of our sister museum ship Slater's Barry Witte, a retired U.S. Navy nuclear-trained electrical officer. Two sections of the bus tie were badly compromised at the time of her partial sinking in April 2022. This large, heavy cable runs through the overhead of the main engineering spaces - a maze of pipes, wiring and cable bundles. Getting access to the cable requires a combination of skills found only in contortionists and acrobats. But to remove the cable with the intent of repairing it and reinstalling it is a feat bordering on science-fiction. And still, there is no question Mario will successfully complete this otherwise impossible task and not spill so much as a drop of his coffee while doing so. Preposterous.



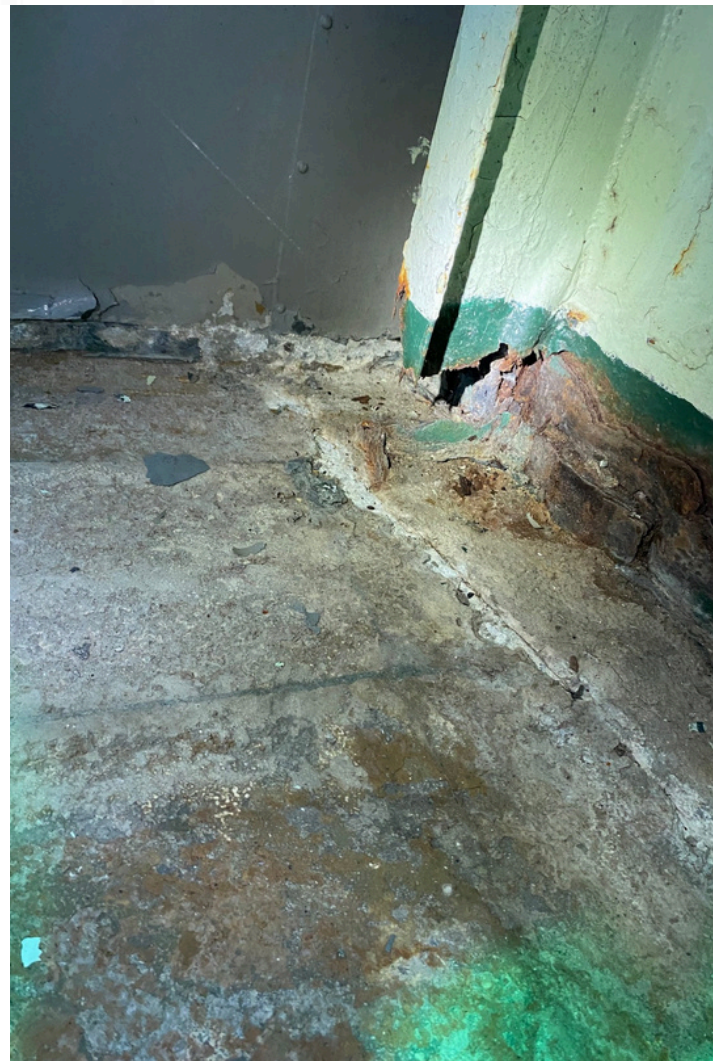
In the image to the left, a section of the main bus tie which erupted during the partial sinking that occurred April of 2022. In the picture above, a thermal image of overhead cabling as we test, monitor, retest and check every circuit during the electrical recovery process. If temperatures rise too far above ambient, we go back to the beginning and troubleshoot.



# THE SULLIVANS CONT'D



While the Survivability program focuses on The Sullivans hull, a plan for her superstructure repair must also be considered. A recent survey of the internal vertical support beams has recently been conducted, and degraded load-bearing beams have been identified for repair. Due to bimetallic corrosion, ground faults, sitting water, or a combination of factors, some of these vertical support beams have been badly eaten away, most frequently where the bottom comes in contact with the deck. In some cases, 6 inches or more are completely missing, which adds to the load on the remaining beams. Fortunately, a funding source has been identified and a pledge has been made in an amount that will allow for a large portion of the work to be completed.



Above, a vertical support beam on the starboard side of The Sullivans navigation bridge. As the image indicates, several inches are missing at the base. In the image to the left, two decks down from the bridge, the Memorial Wardroom has suffered a similar level of deterioration. These beams support a substantial amount of weight from above and are a priority for repair.



# LITTLE ROCK

Aboard Little Rock the crew has been working hard to seal areas of advanced degradation against the entry of rainwater. As it is with her sister ships here at the Naval Park, the areas most impacted tend to be at the junction of bulkhead and deck. Until a more permanent steel repair can be conducted when resources will allow, an appropriate steel epoxy has been found and tested, with the results being thus far satisfactory.

Electrical work continues to advance aboard Little Rock, with the ship having the vast majority of its functional lighting upgraded to LED, reducing the electrical load on its aging system.

Another electrical project involves an assessment of how the Little Rock's power is distributed within the ship from shore power. When the ship arrived in Buffalo there were a number of system modifications that are more consistent with land-based electric. A ship's system is significantly different in that there's no ground - in fact, grounds aboard a ship are a problem and each of the distribution panels is equipped with a ground detector.

At some point after the ship arrived in Buffalo, the original power panel cabling was cut and diverted to a modern breaker system. Unfortunately, it significantly reduced the number of available circuits and redirected power away from key parts of the ship. If, under the direction of qualified electrical experts, the ship's original distribution panel could be restored, and the disabled circuits tested and reenergized, sections of the ship that currently have to remain off limits to the public could be restored and introduced in new displays.



To the left, the breaker panels that were installed when Little Rock came to Buffalo. To the right, the ship's original distribution panel. We're examining if the original panel can be brought safely back into service.







# CROAKER

This month, we sent two of our maintenance team, the Croaker caretaker Ken and Mark to museum submarine Cod in Cleveland, Ohio. Paul Farace, the man in charge of the Cod has done an absolutely amazing job in preserving and maintaining the boat. In our opinion, the Cod represents the best of what's possible, and who better to learn from and be inspired by than the people who have set the standard.

Mark and Ken went with the mandate to learn, observe, and see what we might be able to do better in our service to the Croaker. When they returned, they were enthusiastic and immensely grateful for the hospitality shown to

them by Paul and his extraordinary staff of volunteers.

If you haven't yet visited the Cod, we can't recommend it enough. Once you enter the boat, you get the sense that the crew of young World War Two sailors had just left to go on liberty. The degree of restoration and authenticity is remarkable.

We're working our curator Shane on projects for the boat, and with this new inspiration firmly planted, we're excited about what's possible - stay tuned - we'll provide updates on new work underway.

The exceptionally well-maintained World War Two submarine Cod on permanent display along Lake Erie in Cleveland, Ohio.



A member of the Buffalo Naval Park maintenance team Mark in the conning tower aboard Cod. We're beginning to see more exchanges of information and educational visits to and from our sister ships - something we're a strong proponent of as we're confident it'll strengthen our abilities to properly care for these precious vessels.



# NAVAL INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS

Vol. No. 48, No. 8

AUGUST, 1922

Whole No. 234

## CURATOR'S CORNER

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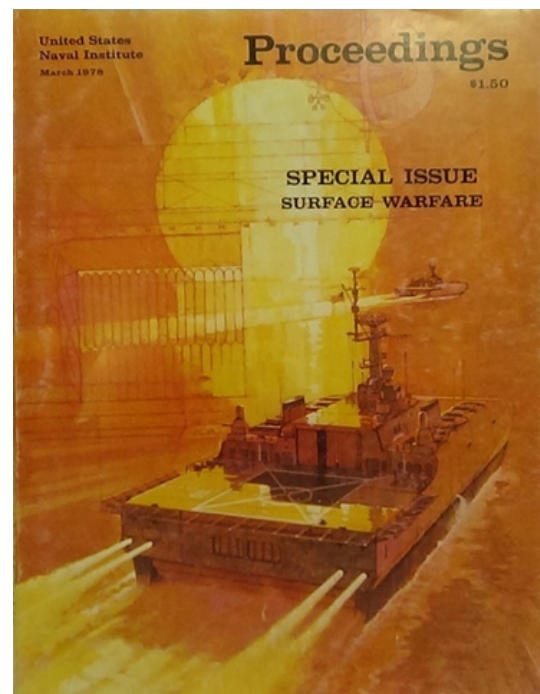
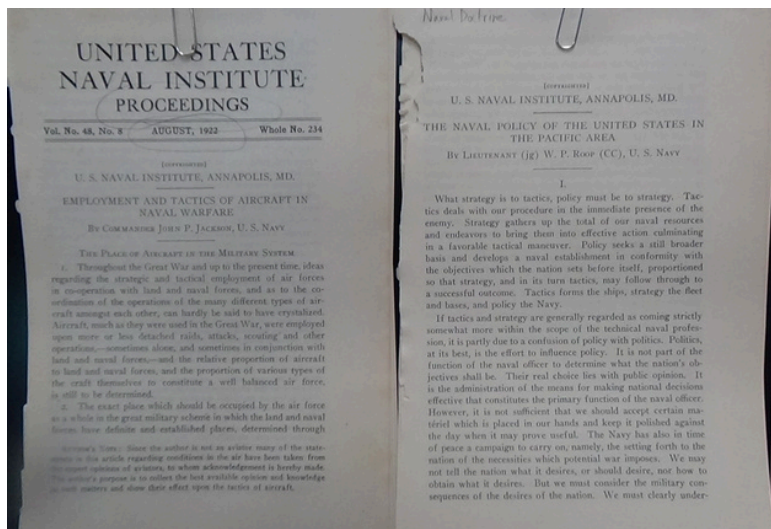
### BY SHANE STEPHENSON

With the help of some dedicated volunteers, the Ready Reference file of US Naval Institute Proceedings Magazines is coming along well. There have already been some very interesting articles from 1922 – 1927, that have been found.

They will be part of a subject heading index that will be searchable in person for visitors and researchers who are interested. Articles with titles such as: The Value of the Submarine in Naval Warfare (1926), Air Strategy and Tactics (1926), The Naval Policy of the United States in the Pacific Area (1923), Employment and Tactics of Aircraft in Naval Warfare (1922), The Origins of Watertight Compartments (1923) and The Art of Ship-Control (1923), are representative of the good works published at that time and can be invaluable to researchers today.

Our collection of Proceedings magazines goes right up to the late 1970s, so the questions posed in the early 1920s will be answered as we go through the timeline of volumes. Also invaluable in these magazines are shorter articles in the 'Professional Notes' section, which includes data about US shipbuilding, and what other countries are experiencing with their own navies are addressed.

In the collections of the Buffalo Naval Park, there are thousands of artifacts – both 2D and 3D. Processing them, organizing them, and figuring out their potential access and use to the public is one of my favorite aspects of this job. It's a job I take seriously, professionally, and always with an eye towards what memories will be kept alive for future generations.







# JOIN US

This season has seen record numbers of volunteers here at the Naval Park, both organizational and individual. Our local VRG's (Veteran Resource Groups) and corporate participants have been joining us in a way they haven't in the past, and this is a truly exciting development.

To name just a few of the companies who've given generously of their time and their labor thus far this season, we'd like to thank L3Harris, Moog, M&T Bank, Key Bank, Citi, and National Grid - and summer hasn't even started yet!

The fact is, we couldn't save these enormously important, historic ships without the support of our volunteers. In a very real way their contributions are building a legacy that future generations will come to learn from, enjoy and be inspired by. These ships are not just a local Buffalo attraction, they're deeply woven into the fabric of our nation's history. The sacrifices of the courageous sailors who served aboard them and their families back home who supported them need to be known, and our volunteers do a great deal to ensure that happens.

Whether you're an individual or part of a larger group, we'd welcome you in joining us in our mission to preserve our ships. Regardless of your skill level or area of expertise, there's always a need for committed volunteers to be a part of our team.





# HOW TO JOIN US

**AMBASSADORS:** A new and exciting addition to our volunteer team, the ambassadors engage with visitors, greets and welcomes guests, provides general information on the grounds and in the museum building. This amazing group is already having a substantial impact on the quality of our visitor experience, so if you're interested in spending some beautiful days at the Buffalo waterfront helping to guide our guests, please consider this program.



**DOCENTS/TOUR GUIDES:** Our uniformed, trained cadre of docents are the guides and storytellers aboard our ships afloat. They know the histories, battles, sailors, and personal anecdotes related to these ships. If you're interested in becoming a docent, we'd love to hear from you!

**MAINTENANCE:** If you enjoy working with your hands and have an interest in restoring rare artifacts so essential to American history, we've got an abundance of opportunities! We're especially interested in having skilled metal workers, electricians, plumbers and carpenters volunteer with us, but all, regardless of skill level are welcome.

**COLLECTIONS:** Caring for and cataloging our unique artifacts takes a great deal of time, patience, and dedication. Under the direction of our curator, you could help preserve these precious objects so they'll be available for future generations.

**GARDENS AND GROUNDS:** If you've visited the park, you've no doubt seen the immaculately maintained grounds enjoyed by so many. If you enjoy gardening and wish to be a part of this dedicated team, please let us know - we'd love to have you join us!

Online volunteer form: [www.buffalonaivalpark.org/volunteer](http://www.buffalonaivalpark.org/volunteer)

Email: [info@buffalonaivalpark.org](mailto:info@buffalonaivalpark.org)

Phone: 716-847-1773

Website: <https://www.buffalonaivalpark.org>

Buffalo Naval Park Youtube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@buffalonaivalpark>