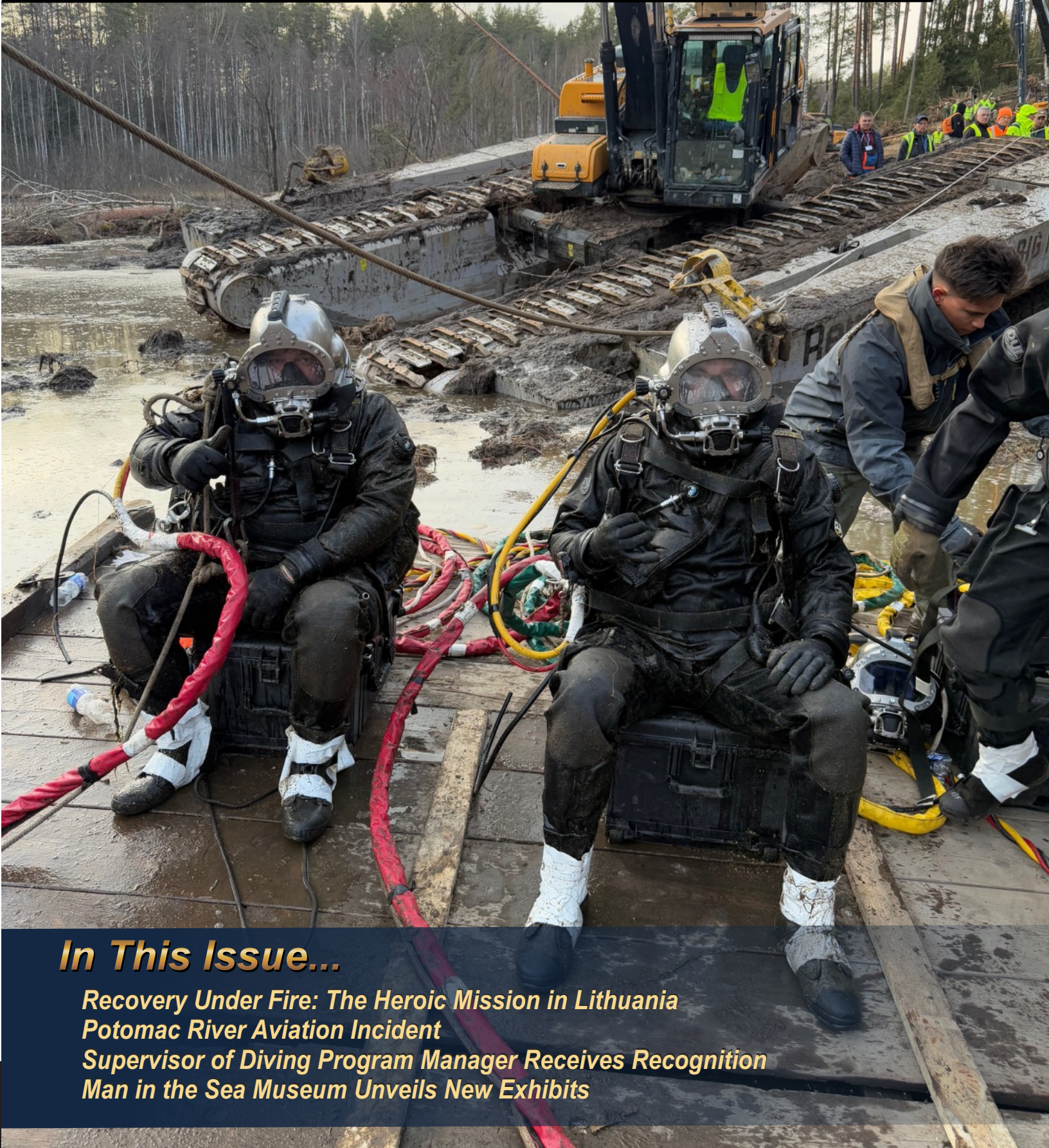




FACEPLATE

The Official Newsletter for the Divers and Salvors of the United States Navy

Volume 29, No. 1/ June 2025



In This Issue...

***Recovery Under Fire: The Heroic Mission in Lithuania
Potomac River Aviation Incident***

***Supervisor of Diving Program Manager Receives Recognition
Man in the Sea Museum Unveils New Exhibits***

FACEPLATE is published by the Supervisor of Salvage and Diving to make the latest and most informative news available to the Navy diving and salvage community. Discussions or illustrations of commercial products do not imply endorsement by the Supervisor of Salvage and Diving or the U.S. Navy.

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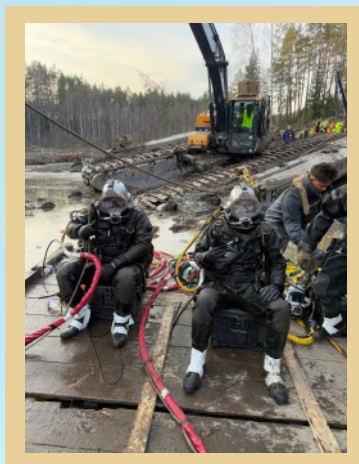
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BUC Hawthorne Red Diver and LTJG Costello Green Diver, hatted and ready to enter water for first connection point dive.





SUPSALV SENDS...CAPT Sal Suarez

Three years have passed since I assumed the role as SUPSALV, and the experience has been much more rewarding than I could have hoped for! I will detach from SUPSALV in May 2025 absolutely astonished by the outstanding work that has taken place across the Navy. This has been the most fulfilling tour so far in my Navy career. CAPT John Bauer will assume command as the 30th SUPSALV at the end of May, and I wish John the best of luck as he continues to lead this high-functioning team! As you all continue your remarkable work, I know he will be looking to leverage your knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet mission requirements as effectively as possible.

Over the last six months, the outstanding work you do continues to drive capability within the Fleet, and your focused attention on accomplishing the work is appreciated at the highest levels within the Navy. The Underwater Ship's Husbandry (UWSH) teams across the waterfronts and within this office continue to deliver, effectively plowing ahead despite the increasing workload. I had the pleasure of visiting the USS EISENHOWER (CVN-69) in-water shaft inspection down at Norfolk Naval Shipyard recently, where this seemingly straightforward operation will effectively save the Fleet months of operational time by avoiding a long and costly dry-docking evolution during the current availability! What a time and cost savings to the Fleet and it allows a capital ship to be ready for possible tasking sooner. There's also the seemingly continuous work on rudders across the fleet, including multiple LHDs – another example of avoiding costly dry-docking repairs, where able.

Salvage forces continue to work some unique and challenging problems. Some examples are the recent and upcoming work within the Western Pacific. There are some imped-



ing salvage operations near the island nation of Yap, removing some derelict vessels to help foster continued international relations and clear the way for possible future engagements within the area. This will include organic, Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) and contractor capabilities, working together to help hone skills and perform training, while simultaneously improving the local area. Additionally, SUPSALV recently recovered two SH-60s that collided off the coast of Japan last year for the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF). In addition to fostering bi-lateral work and positively influencing international relations, these aircraft were recovered from a record-breaking depth of 19,169 feet! The Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy Salvage Exercise and multi-national Salvage Conference is another opportunity to assess partner nation capabilities, train together, and plan for future operational support opportunities. I'm excited to see partner nations train together so we can have a better working relationship, when needed. And all of this from just one of the regions!

As we see with the support to the JMSDF noted above, aircraft recovery

operations are an unfortunate part of the salvage business. Recently, I was able to support another large Unified Command effort for an aviation incident in the vicinity of Reagan National Airport here in the Washington DC area involving a civilian airliner and an Army MH-60 helicopter. Similar to the Francis Scott Key bridge response, SUPSALV and our contractors responded to provide waterway clearance efforts and support the official investigation under our standing interagency service support agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers. The major difference in the response organization this time around was the large number of local, state, and federal law enforcement and first responder organizations. While this was a much different salvage response level of effort compared to the Francis Scott Key bridge collapse, our support was vital to mission success, nonetheless. Once again, it was an honor and a privilege to work alongside and support this large group of mission focused professionals.

In closing, I could not be prouder of the work you all do and the part I was able to play for these past three years. I am heading over to the NAVSEA Warfighting Readiness Division (SEA 00R), where I'll work with the NAVSEA maintenance organization at large to help plan and organize the NAVSEA response to Fleet demand signals when the time arises. I'm hoping this will allow me the opportunity to engage with the various waterfront repair organizations while we continue to build and staff the NAVSEA Maritime Support Plan for success. While I hate to be leaving the outstanding people who work here and the complex national missions this office accomplishes, I look forward to the challenge ahead and the possibility of running into some of you on the waterfront. Hooyah, Deep Sea!



NECC Flag Update

RADM Bradley Andros

Teammates,

It's been an immensely demanding year for our Navy Divers and I couldn't be more proud of the work we are doing around the globe in support of the fleet.

In February, our teammates completed salvage and recovery operations for the EA-18G Growler that crashed in San Diego Bay. This included the recovery of over 30,000 lbs. of wreckage across a 13,000 square-foot debris field. In January, Salvage Divers from MDSU-2 completed Snow Crab Ex 24-1 in a challenging winter environment to ensure we can complete dive and salvage operations in Arctic waters. Last year, we recovered an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter that crashed into the San Diego Bay in only 10 hours. Today, divers are inspecting the USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor, ensuring the preservation of the monument and war grave for future generations to visit.

Around the world, Navy Divers continue to prove the value their expertise adds across the fleet, especially in times of crisis. This is why it is imperative to better align our commands to meet our Navy's needs.

During its inception, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command was purposely built as a TYCOM to meet Joint Force demands of the Global War on Terror. During that time a deliberate decision to keep Mobile and Diving Salvage Units and EOD Mobile Units separated was made to ensure the two capabilities could force generate in the best manner possible. Today's environment and our purpose as a Navy Expeditionary Force challenges the validity of this structure and is the reason why we are executing. This stands true for our MDSUs, which is why you will see a strategic reorganization this year within our Mobile Diving and Salvage Units and Companies.

This restructuring is part of the larger need to ensure unity of command, and generate an improved, more consistent force offering to the fleet.

Throughout NECC, our people are our greatest asset. Too often, we have found ourselves pulling from across the force to ensure wholeness. This restructuring allows the Navy's Salvage and EOD teams to train through the OFRP cycle together as a unit – reducing risk and increasing warfighting effectiveness.

In January, I shared my main focus areas for 2025: Force Generation education and process improvement, Future Force Structure, and a five-year plan to achieve wholeness of every Echelon V command. This restructuring is an important part of this plan.

Navy Divers are in high demand and I recognize that the combination of their long training hours and deployments come at a cost. Our fleet relies on us and our expertise. It is my responsibility to ensure I'm setting up our people and teams for mission success.

I am extremely grateful for your skills and professionalism, and I thank you for the immense value Navy Divers add to the Navy family.

Very Respectfully,
Rear Adm. Brad Andros
Commander, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command



Potomac River Aviation Incident

By: LT Matt Coleman, USN and Mr. Bryan Blake

In the evening hours of January 29, 2025, a midair collision occurred between an American Airlines flight and a U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter over the Potomac River near Reagan National Airport (DCA). For the purposes of brevity, the American Airlines plane will be referred to as CRJ, the Army Blackhawk as Blackhawk, and the Potomac River as Potomac. After collision, the CRJ and Blackhawk quickly descended and impacted the Potomac. This impact caused two intertwined, but distinct, wreckage fields. The CRJ's wreckage field was concentrated to the north, parallel to DCA, while the Blackhawk's field was to the south; by happenstance the Blackhawk's wreckage obstructed the Potomac River Federal Navigation Channel. Initially, the response was handled

by area first responders and an incident command was established.

As wreckage from the Blackhawk obstructed a federal waterway, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) took the lead for federal response. USACE quickly liaised with U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving (SUPSALV) to integrate in the still-forming Unified Command. Once federal authorities and tasking were sorted, they supplemented the already established Unified Command at DCA. SUPSALV was embedded in the Operations Section as technical advisors – effectively leading the Salvage efforts under the cognizance of the USACE. After initial planning, asset identification, and rapid contracting, SUPSALV and its contractors were postured to begin the task of wreckage removal.

To accomplish wreckage removal, SUPSALV's East Coast Salvage Contractor identified: numerous small boats, a fly-away contracted dive team, and a crane barge as the main assets required to get the job done. Before any lifts could occur, the wreckage fields needed to be surveyed. Complicating the matter was depth. This area of the Potomac saw about two feet of depth at low tide with only a four-foot swing at high tide. While optimal for the divers, the depth consideration was a constraint when selecting assets. Also complicating matters were the vast number of floating assets on-scene at one time, sometimes numbering over 25. The D.C. Metropolitan Fire Department's River Branch remained on-scene to assist not only in recovery tasks but also

led the on-water asset coordination. Additionally, the FBI dive team took the lead in the response's diving operations recovering human remains. Close coordination was sustained throughout the response to allow for the equivalent priorities to progress. After initial surveys of both wreckage clusters were accomplished, the focus shifted to removing wreckage which required the lift capacity of the floating crane.

These crane operations were initially focused on the CRJ as the large pieces of wreckage were numerous and clustered in one distinct area. Within this distinct area, the CRJ's fuselage, engines, wings, and cockpit were recovered in about four days. Each day, representatives of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and FBI Evidence Response Team were present to lead the on-water investigative efforts. As we know, salvage is not the most delicate business. So, the assistance of investigators on the water was

critical in protecting the investigation while accomplishing wreckage removal. CRJ wreckage was transferred ashore directly to waiting trucks at DCA's south boat house. From there, the wreckage was transported to an NTSB-controlled hanger on the property. After the heavy-lift CRJ wreckage was removed, SUPSALV's focus turned to the Blackhawk.

The Blackhawk presented an interesting salvage problem in such shallow water. It presented as inverted and its aft section was mostly intact. The best course of action was determined to rig for one lift of the Blackhawk – not a simple task. Using a combination of rigging on the wheel bases, tail section, and slings forward, the Blackhawk was safely lifted to the deck of the crane barge in one lift. The helicopter experts from the NTSB, a steadfast salvage master, and the diver in the water deserve credit for this daunting accomplishment. Once the Blackhawk was transferred ashore, SUPSALV

remained on station and postured to assist in any further heavy-lifts as required. Subsequently, SUPSALV's efforts shifted to demobilizing.

Over 13 days, SUPSALV, and its contractor team directly assisted in recovering 90% of the CRJ and Blackhawk wreckage. The utmost care, expediency, and delicacy was taken during salvage operations to protect the dignities of the victims and their families. As was demonstrated with the Francis Scott Key Bridge response in the summer of 2024, the SUPSALV-USACE team remains steadfast and willing to unite under any circumstance.

LT Matt Coleman is an Assistant for Salvage at NAVSEA 00C. Bryan Blake is the Deep Ocean Search and Recovery Program Manager at NAVSEA 00C.

Article cover photo: The NTSB, in coordination with the U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage, recovering wreckage of the Bombardier CRJ700 on Feb. 3. Courtesy: National Transportation Safety Board



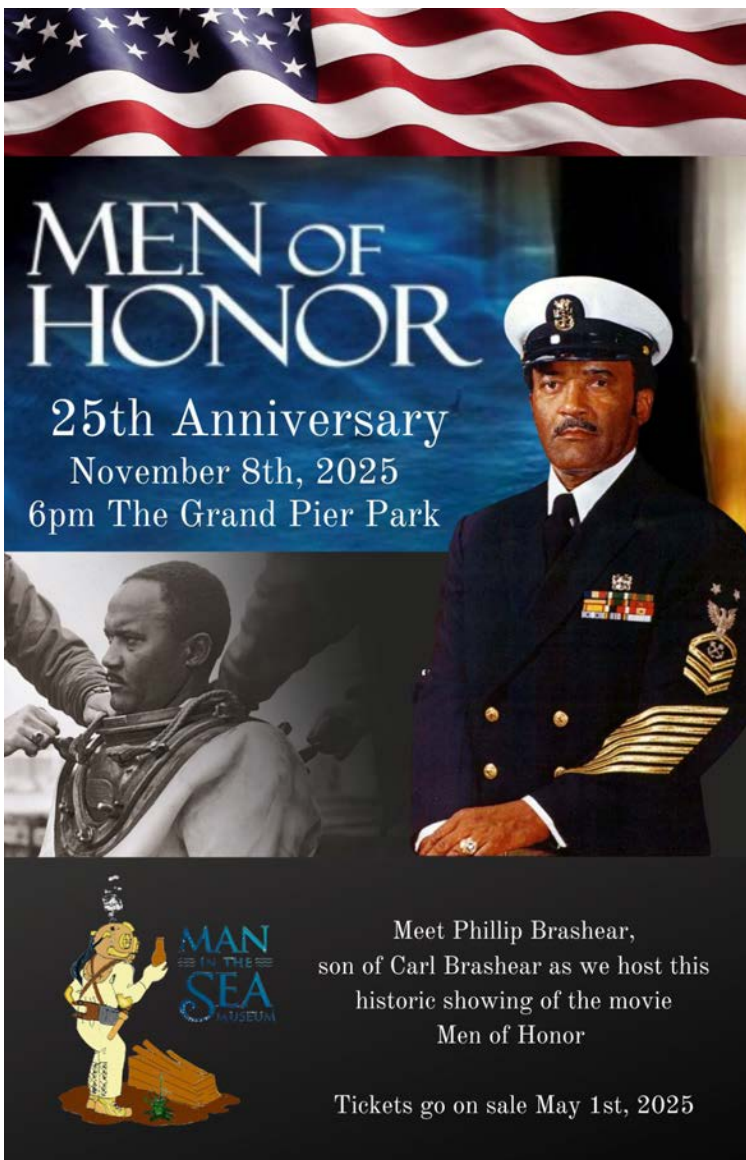
Lieutenant General William Graham, Commanding General of the USACE, meets with personnel from SUPSALV, Donjon Marine and Randive during salvage operations in response to the 29 January 2025 aviation mishap at Ronald Reagan National Airport.

25 Years of *Men of Honor*: Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Carl Brashear

By: Steve Mulholland, Executive Director, Man in the Sea Museum

This year marks the 25th anniversary of *Men of Honor*, the powerful 2000 biographical drama that brought the incredible life story of Master Chief Carl Brashear to the big screen. Starring Cuba Gooding Jr. as Brashear and Robert De Niro as his hard-nosed mentor, the film continues to inspire viewers with its message of determination, resilience, and breaking barriers. A quarter-century later, *Men of Honor* not only stands as a memorable cinematic achievement but also as a tribute to one of the most courageous figures in U.S. Navy history.

Carl Brashear was born in 1931 in Tonieville, Kentucky, into a world of poverty and segregation. Despite limited opportunities and widespread racial discrimination, Brashear joined the U.S. Navy in 1948 and set his sights on becoming a Navy diver - an elite and physically demanding role that had never been held by a Black American at the

A movie poster for the 25th anniversary of the film 'Men of Honor'. At the top is a waving American flag. Below it, the title 'MEN OF HONOR' is written in large, white, serif capital letters. Under the title, it says '25th Anniversary' in a smaller font, followed by 'November 8th, 2025' and '6pm The Grand Pier Park'. The central image shows a man in a Navy uniform (Cuba Gooding Jr.) looking forward. To his left is a smaller image of a man in a diving suit. At the bottom left is a small cartoon character holding a sign that says 'MAN IN THE SEA MUSEUM'. At the bottom right, text reads: 'Meet Phillip Brashear, son of Carl Brashear as we host this historic showing of the movie Men of Honor'. Below that, it says 'Tickets go on sale May 1st, 2025'.

defied belief, he fought to return to full active duty - and won. In 1970, he became the first amputee in U.S. Navy history to be certified as a diver once again.

Carl Brashear retired in 1979 after more than 30 years of service, achieving the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer. His legacy extends far beyond military accolades. He embodied the values of perseverance, honor, and courage. In a world that told him "no," Brashear carved his own path and opened the door for countless others.

Men of Honor immortalized Brashear's life for a new generation, highlighting the deeply personal and often painful journey he endured. The film not only brought national attention to Brashear's story, but also helped educate audiences about the toll of the Navy Diver and the harsh conditions faced underwater.

The Man in the Sea Museum invites you to celebrate its 25th anniversary with a special screening of *Men of Honor* on

the big screen, just as it debuted 25 years ago. On November 8, 2025, join us as we welcome Phillip Brashear, son of Carl Brashear, to honor the real-life hero behind the film while enjoying this cinematic tribute to Carl's legacy. Go to www.ManintheSea.org for more information.

His legacy reminds us that greatness isn't given; it's earned through grit, heart, and an unshakable belief in oneself.



Phillip Brashear Visits PC.

time. Through years of relentless training and enduring institutional racism, Brashear became the Navy's first African American deep-sea diver in 1954.

His story did not stop there. In 1966, during a mission to recover a lost hydrogen bomb off the coast of Spain, Brashear was severely injured when a steel pipe struck his leg. The injury led to the amputation of his left leg. Most would have seen that as the end of a diving career. Not Brashear. With a prosthetic leg and a determination that

Schoolhouse News

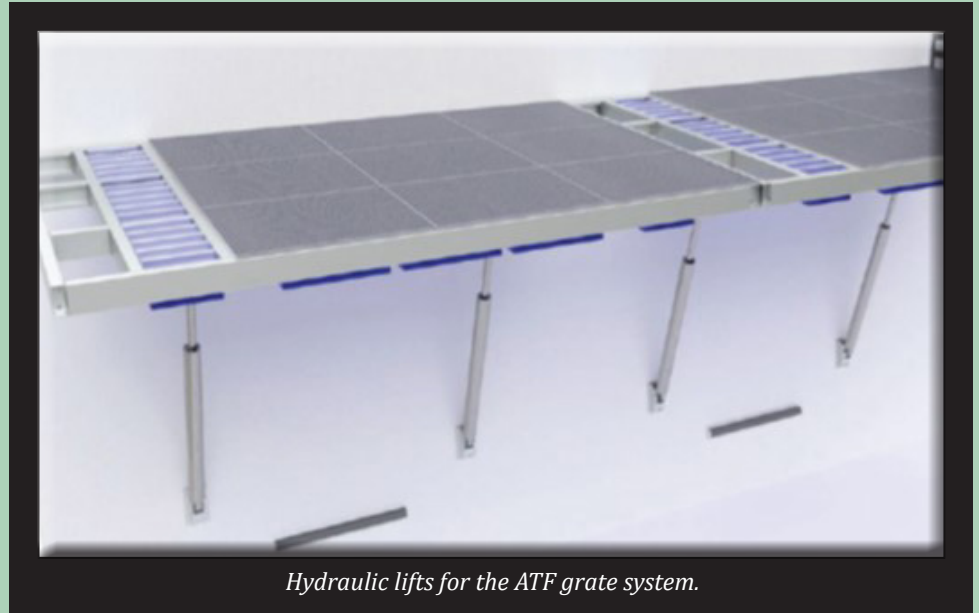
Your Navy Dive School is busy on multiple fronts with facility renovation, curriculum modernization, and Human Performance initiatives.

Construction projects || Mr. Bill Crider

NDSTC has several major renovations that will be ongoing for the next three years. Starting in April 2025, with target completion of September 2025, is the renovation of the Instructor Wing. This is the first renovation since original construction 36 years ago in 1989. The renovation consists of building new office spaces and furniture for each Training Team, upgrading the electrical system, heating and cooling systems, ventilation system, and the fire suppression system.

NDSTC's Aquatic Training Facility (ATF), built in 2009, will begin overhaul in August 2025 with target completion in March 2026. Over the years, settling has impacted the outer building

structure which will be repaired by adding additional foundation support pilings; the training tank itself is unaffected. Additionally, the Lock-out Chamber (LOC) is to be painted and renovated, pool coatings will be refurbished and the current grate system, which uses lift bags to raise and lower, will be replaced with a hydraulic system.



The wharf was built in 1980 and has not been renovated or improved over the last 45 years. The asphalt is original and there are numerous concrete patches where repairs were made to fix various subterranean infrastructure. With the help of NECC, CNIC, and OPNAV, funding was obtained in FY25, and the contracting process is close to being completed. Renovation will be divided in two sections: North and South. North will begin FY25/26 so contractors don't get in the way of the ATF renovation; south will begin in FY26 and finish in FY27. This renovation will provide a new boat ramp, hotel stations, cathodic protection, and cleats and bollards that meet category 5 hurricane conditions.

Sub SCUBA and AA modernization || CW03 Spencer Puett

In March of 2022, a Training Requirements Review (TRR) was conducted for the Submarine SCUBA Diver course. The TRR was followed by a Job Duty Task Analysis conducted in May of 2023. In April of 2024, NDSTC reorganized and updated the curriculum to improve the training delivered to SCUBA divers



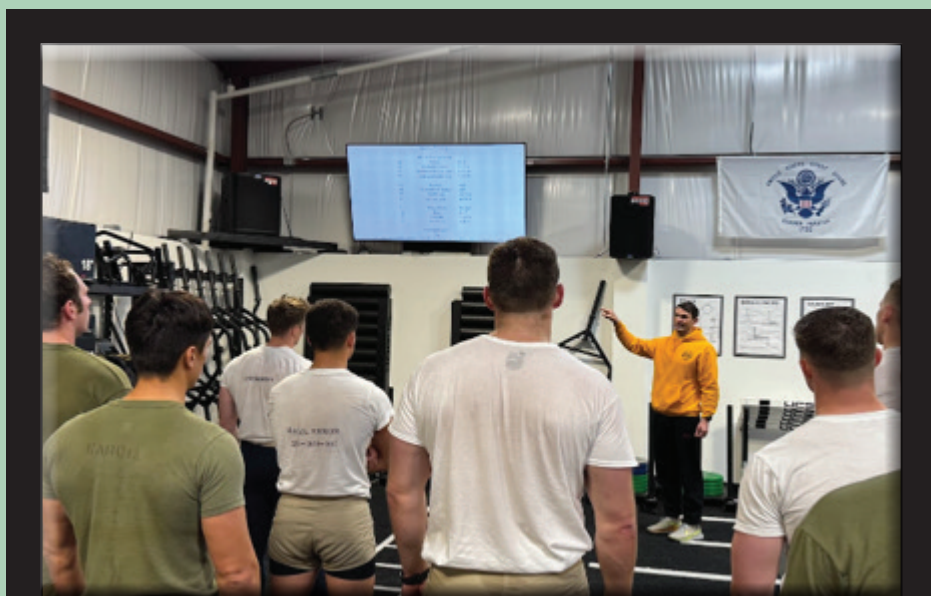
Aquatic Adaptability session in the old pool.

within the submarine community and convened the first Pilot course. Major changes included the addition of SCUBA diving administration, basic diving supervisory skills, casualty management, and MK20 FFM familiarization dives.

Another big change came with the implementation of a Sub SCUBA unique Aquatic Adaptability (AA) program to standardize training across all of NDSTC's training teams. This implementation provides a solid and consistent AA program that is challenging and relevant for the unique needs of the customer. After six Pilot convenes, Sub SCUBA attrition has decreased by nearly 40% and graduation rates have almost doubled, with 97 graduates in FY24 compared to 49 graduates in FY23. Currently, FY25 is on pace to surpass FY24.

The success of this new AA program has led to further efforts towards AA standardization for accessions student divers. The ND and EOD AA workout program will be more difficult but designed to build upon the training received at Great Lakes. The new AA program will be designed to support the unique physical needs of divers progressing in training with standardization of workout expectations. These changes, coupled with the implementation of Human Performance, discussed below, will make our community better.

Human Performance Update || LCDR Bradley Wells



LCDR Wells briefs HPT plan with students.

Human Performance has been an item of interest for many years and NDSTC continues to develop and grow the program. Most recently, in 2022 we added an Active-Duty Physical Therapist (ADPT) to lead the program. Currently the program is staffed by the ADPT and a Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) and offers Strength and Conditioning (S&C), Rehabilitation, Nutrition and Resiliency counseling, education, and performance data collection.

Human Performance designed 292 curriculum hours of physical training and led over 800 hours of S&C programming designed specifically for divers based on the physical and mental demands of dive training. This has led to a 32% reduction in musculoskeletal injuries. Students and

staff also have direct access via a walk-in clinic to a Fellowship trained and board-certified PT and ATC. This same day access provides expedited care for injuries and reduces missed training time by more than 1.5 hours per visit.

The HP program also partnered with Naval Health Research Center to conduct a nutrition research study on students in training which found that students burn 4.5 kcal per day during the first several weeks of training. This study helped to optimize mealtime education for students to ensure their energy demands are met to maximize physical performance.

In 2024 the program implemented SMARTABASE to standardize the way performance data is collected and baselined to align with Naval Expeditionary Combat Command operational units. Performance tests such as Physical Screening Test, Bay Swims, and Human Performance Assessment are recorded along with daily wellness surveys that provide insight to sleep quality, stress, and soreness levels. Tracking these metrics help to provide baselines for performance metrics that can be tracked throughout a diver's career and create a human data strategy to improve the longevity of the warfighter.

In 2024, the HP program also helped standardize training and preparatory programming with students who have rolled from training or arrived early to NDSTC. This program is referred to as Training Team NINE and has realized a 90% graduation rate for students once they re-classed, providing over 100 divers to the fleet.

Mr. Bill Crider served in the Navy on active duty for 29 years and retired as a Master Chief/Master Diver before entering the civil service in 2011; he currently is the Engineering Department Head.

CWO3 Spencer Puett enlisted in the Navy in 2005. He is currently the Fleet Diving Division Officer at NDSTC.

LCDR Wells has served in various Human Performance (HP) roles in Special Operations over his 14 years of service and is considered a subject matter expert for HP in the Navy. He is currently the Human Performance Program Manager at NDSTC.

SRF-JRMC Hosts 7th Fleet Dive Summit

U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility Japan RMC (SRF-JRMC)

By: Randall Baucom

U.S. Naval Ship Repair and Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) hosted the 2025 7th Fleet Dive Summit on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka April 22 – 26, 2025, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Underwater Ship Husbandry (UWSH) in the Indo-Pacific area of operations.

UWSH involves the underwater inspection and repair of ships while not in dry dock. It also includes installing cofferdams on the underwater openings of a ship to allow for the work on fittings inside the ship, which is critical during ship repair operations.

The three-day summit focused on developing procedures to address dive taskings, equipment logistics, and manning requirements to align priorities and procedures in a unified manner to

improve interoperability across the six dive lockers that support U.S. naval operations in the Indo-Pacific. Participants included Dive Officers and Master Divers from SRF-JRMC's Yokosuka and Sasebo Dive Lockers, Southwest Regional Maintenance Center's Dive Locker, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility's Dive Locker, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility's Dive Locker, and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility Detachment Guam's Dive Locker. Also in attendance were the Naval Sea Systems Command's Supervisor of Salvage and Diving UWSH Division (SEA00C5) and the

Commander Pacific Fleet Master Diver.

"The scale, speed, and quantity of our missions are only increasing across the AOR, along with the demand for underwater ship's husbandry," said Capt. Wendel Penetrante, Commander of SRF-JRMC, via telephone at the start of the summit. "Fly-away dive teams are now covering more ground with tighter timelines than ever. Our margin for error is shrinking, and we must move from a reactive posture to a proactive one. This summit is about sharpening our edge to meet

port framework, focused on common standards with shared tools, for unified planning and logistics to ensure interoperability across commands."

At the end of three days, this group of subject matter experts walked away with a road map to becoming a more aligned, mission-ready force.

"This Dive Summit was informative and sometimes eye-opening for all parties involved," said Navy Diver Master Chief Anthony Pierick, Master Diver for Commander Pacific Fleet (N434). "There is a turnover in leader-

ship at these commands every three years, so events like this are critical to aligning policy and personnel, creating teamwork, and making our organizations more proficient, not only for today but for years to come."

For over 75 years, SRF-JRMC has been the linchpin of U.S. naval

operations in the Indo-Pacific region, providing intermediate-level and depot-level repair for the ships of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Seventh Fleet.



today's demands and the demands we will face in the coming years."

Codifying in writing through the development of procedural instructions became a recurring theme throughout the summit.

"The dive community is small and relationship-based; almost all of the Master Divers know each other and have worked together in the past," said Navy Diver Senior Chief Alberto Alejo, Master Diver for the SRF-JRMC Yokosuka Dive Locker. "We have always found success in accomplishing the mission through these relationships, no matter the situation. But with the increasing mission set, it has become obvious that we must establish a scalable sup-

Randall Baucom is a retired U.S. Army Major, who has been a Public Affairs Officer for the Department of Defense for 21-years. Currently, Mr. Baucom is a U.S. Navy civilian serving as the Public Affairs Officer for U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility & Japan Regional Maintenance Center.

Photo caption: Participants of the 2025 7th Fleet Dive Summit pose for a group photo on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka April 23, 2025. (U.S. Navy Photo By Randall Baucom)



Recovery Under Fire: The Heroic Mission in Lithuania

By: MDV Carlos Hernandez

On March 25, 2025, four soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, based at Fort Stewart in Georgia, went missing in eastern Lithuania while on a training mission. The M88 Hercules armored vehicle carrying the soldiers was discovered the next day, buried under a thick layer of mud and water. Immediate recovery efforts were conducted by service members from the U.S., Lithuania, Poland, and Estonia without success. Underwater Construction Team 1, Detachment Alpha, received urgent orders to fly 2,000 miles to recover the rapidly sinking Hercules which entombed the four soldiers.

"We've touched base with the Lithuanian divers who have gone in already. We have a good site picture from them and the other boots

on the ground. We aren't leaving without our boys," said Senior Chief Master Diver Carlos Hernandez.

The vehicle would later be located 15 feet below the surface - 8 feet of which was peat, mud, and packed clay, which was difficult to penetrate even with rebar rod. The water surrounding the vehicle was heavily contaminated with hundreds of gallons of fuel, hydraulic oil, and other petroleum-based chemicals leaking from the M88. Water temperatures hovered near freezing, and the nature of the peat bog meant the water was pitch-black, with no ability for light to penetrate even a few inches. The top layer of the bog consisted of dense organic matter layered over top of fallen trees and compressed mud, which formed a near-impenetrable roof. The divers worked beneath

this treacherous, ever-shifting ceiling, in constant danger of its collapse.

On March 29, within hours of their arrival in country, Latvian engineers and Army personnel worked for hours to establish minimum site conditions for diver safety. This included having fresh water on site for diver decontamination, and a heated tent in case a diver's dry suit tore and flooded, risking hypothermia. UCT-1's Det Alpha was briefed on the situation, the available support assets, and the vehicle involved. Using an identical vehicle top-side, the divers closed their eyes and rehearsed hand-over-hand tactile feel of the tank to learn its contours. The dive supervisor conducted his brief, and the first dive commenced at 2045.

Working from shore, the divers attempted to leave the surface by push-

ing away the semi-cured, concrete-like substance but could not penetrate through the dense mud/peat roof. Latvian engineers were able to get two firetrucks on site, each filled with 10 cubic meters of water, with 5 cubic meters held in reserve. They employed one of the firetrucks on site for jetting operations, and after 45 minutes of bottom time, the divers had jetted down only 6 feet when the tunnel collapsed in on them. The team aborted the dive, decontaminated, and secured operations for the night. The MDV requested an excavator to clear

a portion of the bog, simply to make a hole and gain access to open water.

On March 30, excavation efforts were exhausted. Land continued to collapse inward, and large sandbags, initially placed in hopes of holding the terrain back, only worsened the situation by falling into the site themselves. Lithuanian engineers constructed a floating platform to allow dive operations to occur directly over the submerged vehicle. This platform provided both improved access and a safer means of extraction in the event a diver became stuck.

The second dive of the operation commenced March 30 at 1615. The excavated bog, combined with jetting, proved successful as the team reached the Hercules and assessed its orientation. The tank was nosed in, with the aft port/starboard lifting points buried some 15 feet in the mud. After two hours of bottom time, the divers connected the first of two heavy steel cables to the starboard lifting shackle of the vehicle. The divers had exhausted almost the entire first fire tanker and were down to less than 5 cubic meters of water remaining in the second. The



Original size of the pete bog. This is what the Dive team had to go off of to plan and depart within 16hrs of notification.



Floating excavator and land based excavator working together. Each scoop was sprayed down with water to break up and inspect, then taken away by the land based excavator.



Multiple Lithuanian Engineers and US Divers work together to place lifting slings near dive location.



Initial environmental dive the night of arrival. Red Diver on left BUC Hawthorne, Green Diver LTJG Costello, Tender SW2 Head.



Drone and Ground Penetrating Radar deployed over site.



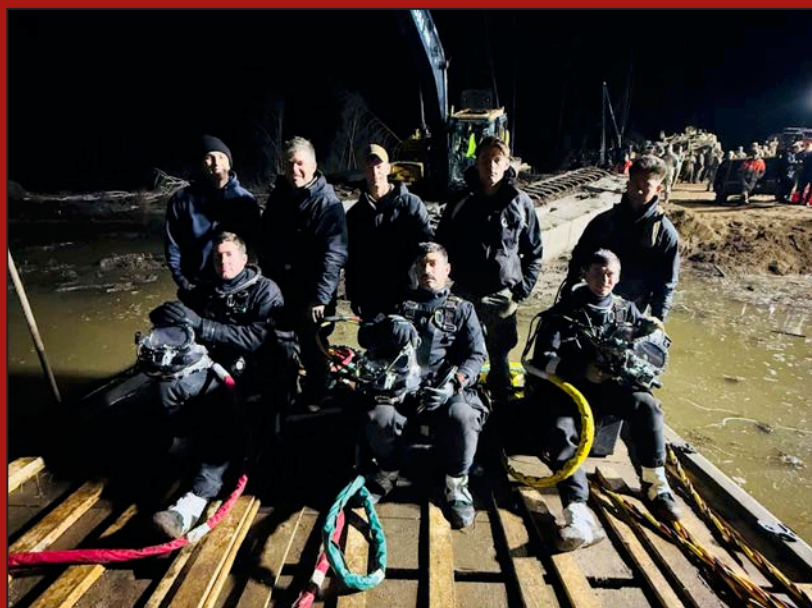
Divers decontaminated following first day initial dive.



MDV Hernandez and BUC Hawthorne marking locations of interest with buoys.



Water pumping and dredging operations. In this picture you can see how much the site has grown.



Divers pose before entering water to connect second sling. From top left- HM1 Henry, BUC Hawthorne, SW2 Head, CM2 Taylor, CM2 Stevens. Bottom row from left - Red Diver CM1 Filo, Green Diver CM2 Tausch, Standby Diver CM2 Wagner.

MDV informed the divers that water was now for emergency use only and immediately requested an additional tanker on-site. On ascent, one diver became fouled and for 30 minutes, the pair fought through thick sludge in zero visibility. Nearing muscle failure, they finally freed themselves and surfaced after 150 minutes of bottom time.

Later that evening, the team began preparations for another dive to connect the port-side cable. Using the staged M88 topside, they once again oriented themselves by touch. Due to safety precautions, three fire tankers—each with 10 cubic meters of water and 5 cubic meters of emergency reserve—were directed on site. The location was so isolated that it took a minimum of one hour for any new vehicles to arrive. Finally, at 2120, the second dive team entered the water. Shortly after reaching the bottom, one diver's demand regulator momentarily malfunctioned due to peat/mud intrusion, constricting air supply and creating a vacuum inside the helmet. Unable to ascend or move in the thick mud, he opened the steady flow and purged the helmet. Breathing normalized, the diver conducted in-water checks and returned to the task. After 90 minutes of bottom time, they located the second lift point and attached the cable. The vehicle was secured.

"Get me... out of here," CM2 Tausch said.

April 1 began like each of the days before it—at 0700, with a daily situation report involving all leadership on-site. Yet the air was different. The site was filled with a somber mix of grim determination and quiet desperation. Silent prayers were spoken, hopes whispered into the cold morning air, as the search continued for the final missing soldier. The dive site had grown significantly, its perimeter widened by collapsing land and the relentless pull of the bog.

Recognizing the urgency, the team initiated a grid-pattern search using handheld diver sonar, marking points of interest across the growing site. Latvian drone operators and cadaver dog handlers joined the effort, sweeping the area in tandem.

As the search progressed, multiple indicators began to align—the sonar, the drone imagery, and the cadaver dog all converged on the same area.

Driven by readiness and resolve, Lithuanian Special Forces donned their dry suits and SCUBA gear, prepared to make the next dive. A promising site was selected. Working together, the divers began excavating a large, body-sized mass of compacted peat and mud from the depths. The dive was high risk—at times, their demand regulators struggled under the pressure of mud intrusion, threatening to cut off their air. Still, they pressed on.

When the massive ball of muck was finally surfaced, hope surged—only to be dashed. The last soldier

was not within. The entire site had held its breath, and now that hope gave way to quiet heartbreak. But no one faltered. Determined, the team redoubled their efforts. Then, a helmet surfaced. A stark, floating reminder of the mission and its weight.

Hope returned. The grid search continued - every hand and eye focused. And then, at last, the moment came. The final fallen soldier was found and recovered.

It was a moment of gravity and grace. Adrenaline slowly drained from veins that had run hot for days. Eyes welled with tears. No words were needed. Every diver, soldier, and support crew member knew the mission was complete: all four sol-

diers were going home—together.

These were not routine military tasks. UCT-1 conducted extraordinary acts of heroism performed over multiple days in contaminated waters, with the ever-present danger of entrapment, equipment failure, and environmental poisoning. Their mission was successfully completed within 96 hours of arrival.

Article cover photo: CM1 Filop prepared to leave surface for the second sling connection dive.

Carlos Hernandez has 23 years of Naval service comprised of four commands and 12 seven-month deployments. He is currently serving as the Master Diver and Assistant Officer in Charge of Construction Dive Detachment Alpha for Underwater Construction Team ONE.



Divers Decontaminated following a 2.5-hour dive to find and connect the first lifting sling.



Commanding General, United States Army Europe and Africa General Donahue, along with Brigadier General John P. Lloyd address MDV Hernandez and the Dive team.



Executing unit of the M88 HERCULES recovery.

This Day in Diving History

By: MDV David Gove

USS MISSOURI (BB-63) Runs Aground

On 17 January 1950 USS MISSOURI (BB-63) ran hard aground at high tide near Old Point Comfort in the Virginia Sound fully loaded and steaming at 12 knots. This happened despite the fact that the XO and Navigator warned the CAPT that they were headed to shoal water and recommended that area charts be consulted. Because of his refusal, the CAPT was relieved on the spot after she ran aground. Due to her weight and forward speed, she ran almost a half a mile into mudflats before coming hard aground at nearly high tide (the worst possible time). Her total force aground was calculated to be 12,000 tons worth of ground reaction - it would take at least this much freeing force to refloat the "Mighty Mo". To put this weight in perspective, it is nearly 1 1/2 times the weight of the Eiffel Tower. She was in fact so hard aground, the Navy considered simply decommissioning and cutting her up. What saved her was the fact that this occurred only four and a half years after MISSOURI had become a major symbol of American victory. The signing of the declaration of surrender by the Japanese ending WWII in 1945 occurred on her deck. If you have never been to the MISSOURI and are in Hawaii, I would highly recommend going, it gives a new found loyalty to your nation.



Huge public outcry over this, and the fact that MISSOURI had been commissioned a mere six years earlier caused the Navy to decide she should be refloated ASAP sparing no expense. After fluids, ammo, stores and other weights were removed from the ship; an escape channel was dredged 150 feet wide, 40 feet deep and a half mile in length from her stern to the main channel. Ten salvage pontoons were set in place around her (same pontoons used in the USS SQUALUS rescue years earlier), along with a fleet of 23 fleet and salvage tugs and 9 legs of beach gear with two anchors per leg. After one failed attempt on 31 January parted 2 legs of beach gear, the second attempt was successful on 01 February 1950. She was then returned to drydock for inspection and further repair. Despite proof to the contrary,

an urban myth continues to this day that Missouri's "keel was cracked and bent" as a result of the grounding incident -- neither is true.

The work of the Divers and Salvors in freeing MISSOURI allowed her to serve until 1992 including the Korean and Persian Gulf War. She is currently berthed in Pearl Harbor as a living museum next to USS ARIZONA (BB-39) memorial. This operation was and remains the largest single peacetime stranding salvage in the history of the Navy.

Note: For further reading about the MISSOURI stranding and salvage check out the book "Strike Able-Peter" by John A. Butler.



MDV David Gove, your friendly neighborhood Master Diver. Copyright David Gove, 2021.

Man in the Sea Museum Unveils New Exhibits Celebrating Navy Experimental Diving Unit and Ocean Restoration

By: Steve Mulholland, Executive Director, Man in the Sea Museum

The Man in the Sea Museum, dedicated to the history of diving, unveil two captivating new exhibits spotlighting the ingenuity of the Naval Experimental Diving Unit (NEDU) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The grand opening, held on April 4th, 2025, drew a crowd of residents, military veterans, and ocean enthusiasts eager to explore the latest additions to this unique museum. The new exhibits, made possible through a grant from the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, expand its narrative to showcase the cutting-edge work of Navy divers and NOAA's efforts to restore deep-sea ecosystems.

The first exhibit, centered on the Navy Experimental Diving Unit, highlights the highly skilled divers stationed at the nearby Naval Support Activity Panama City, which is home to some of the world's largest diving facilities. Visitors can marvel at stunning photographs of NEDU divers in action, alongside deep-sea diving equipment used in missions beyond

the reach of recreational scuba. An interactive video display brings to life the unit's contributions to underwater restoration and military operations, offering a rare glimpse into a world few can access. "Not everyone can get on base to see what our military does here in Panama City," said Steve Mulholland, the museum's executive director. "This exhibit bridges that gap and honors their incredible work."

The second exhibit, developed in partnership with NOAA, dives into the mesophotic and deep benthic communities of the Gulf of America (formerly the Gulf of Mexico). It features vivid imagery of twilight-zone corals and invertebrates, emphasizing ongoing restoration efforts following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. An interactive kiosk allows guests to identify seafloor species and learn about the technology driving these conservation projects. The exhibit underscores the collaboration between NOAA and NEDU's Saturation Detachment, whose divers play a vital role

in repairing these fragile habitats.

The opening celebration was free to the public and featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony, educational games, and giveaways. Attendees had the chance to mingle with restoration experts, NEDU divers, and museum staff, while children enjoyed ocean-themed activities. "It was inspiring to see the community come together to celebrate our divers and the ocean they protect," Mulholland noted.

The Man in the Sea Museum's deep ties to the military's diving heritage shine through in these new exhibits. With Bay County hosting the Naval Experimental Diving Unit (NEDU), the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC), and the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC-PC), the displays carry special significance. Established in 1982 by the Institute of Diving, the museum has long documented humankind's underwater endeavors, and these latest additions strengthen its commitment to educating and inspiring visitors.



Members from the Museum, NOAA, and NEDU gather to open the new exhibits.



Kids enjoy the new interactive touch screen exhibit.



Members (past and present) from NEDU and SAT-FADS meet with guests to showcase the new exhibit.



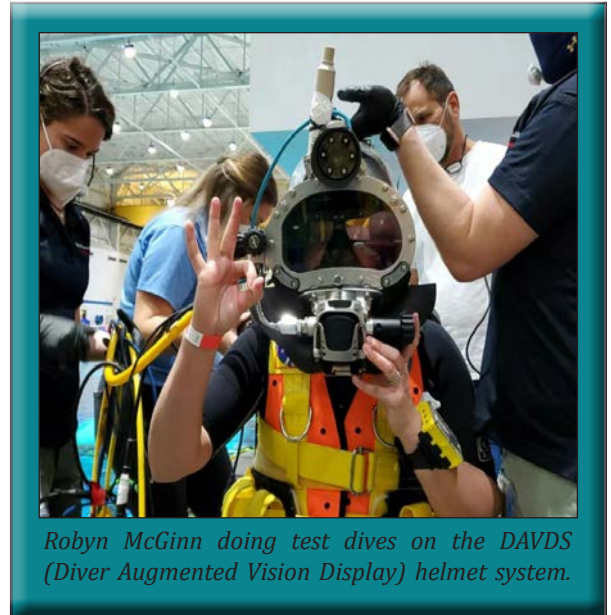
SUPERVISOR OF DIVING PROGRAM MANAGER RECEIVES RECOGNITION

BY: CAPT(RETIRE) BOBBIE SCHOLLEY

It's been many years since I was privileged enough to serve on active duty. I hung up my uniform in 2005 and miss the days of being out on dive station with a team of "Can do" Navy Divers. I also remember my days in the office and how important those days were to make sure that we were able to accomplish the missions assigned that had us out on dive station. My days as Supervisor of Diving were even longer ago than my last operational tour, but I can still remember all the long hours and dedicated work that the sailors and civilians that worked with me would put in to make sure that our divers were ready when-

ever the call came in. To most of the fleet, those people working at Naval Sea Systems Command 00C3 were simply a phone number or email somewhere in Washington, D.C., not somebody that they thought about until they needed a part or a waiver. Little did they know that those handful of people were there day, and many times at night, to make things happen.

One of the most satisfying parts of my job when I was a Commanding Officer, or boss, in the Navy was being able to recognize the excellence of those that worked for me. Now that I'm retired, I don't get to do that as often, and it's very hard to do so for one of our civilian employees. So, whenever I'm allowed to help in celebrating the accomplishments of somebody in the Navy Diving community it's extra special. That was the case on March 23, 2024, at the Beneath the Sea Expo in Secaucus, New Jersey. In that case, a member of the Supervisor of Salvage team, Engineer Robyn McGinn, was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame (WDHOF) for her extraordinary work as the Program & Technical Manager for U.S. Navy Standard Fleet Diving Systems and Portable Saturation Diving System. It was such an honor for all of us in attendance at



Robyn McGinn doing test dives on the DAVDS (Diver Augmented Vision Display) helmet system.



Robyn Receives her WDHOF Pin at the Induction Ceremony. Becky Jones (who nominated her) helps place the pin on a lanyard around her neck with WDHOF Founder Kathy Weydig and WDHOF President Patti Gross watching. WDHOF Board Chairman Mary Connelly announces Robyn's name at the podium.

the ceremony, to witness the induction of this accomplished and highly respected member of our community.

Robyn is an incredibly well qualified and very unique individual compared to any others to be nominated and selected for membership into WDHOF. First, she's a government employee working in the Department of Defense on military diving, which is very rare in this organization. She is one of a very small group of GS (government service) civilian employees to graduate from the U.S. Navy Dive School at Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC). These civilian employees must complete all the screening requirements that their active-duty military counterparts do to even be accepted into dive school. Upon arrival at NDSTC, they join right alongside all the other military students in the class that they are assigned to, go through the exact same curriculum, and are held to the same rigorous

standards that the military members must meet regardless of gender to graduate. Although there are other military divers that are WDHOF members, Robyn is the first government civilian military diver to be selected.

Second, Robyn's job is like no others! Robyn who has a Bachelor of Science, Facilities and Environmental Engineering from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, attended Marine Engineer Diving Officer course and graduated as the Honor Women in 2012. She also continued on to certify in several other U.S. Navy diving systems such as the MK 25 closed-circuit rebreather system used by the U.S. Navy SEALs and other special operations units, and MK16 closed-circuit, mixed-gas underwater breathing apparatus used by U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Divers. These qualifications make her a better fit for her primary job, the job of ensuring that our divers, EOD, SEALs, and Marines are prepared to safely accomplish their underwater missions. That's her role as NAVSEA 00C32, the Program & Technical Manager for U.S. Navy Standard Fleet Diving Systems since 2013 and U.S. Navy's Portable Saturation Diving System since 2019.

Of course, she has several other responsibilities to go along with those duties, including managing emerging technologies and interfacing with organizations such as Office of Naval Research (ONR), the NAVSEA Small Business Innovative Research Program Office (SBIR), Commercial Manufacturers, the Naval Experimental Dive Unit (NEDU) and Diving System Safety Certification Authorities (SCAs). Robyn is the Diving Systems Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) Diving Equipment, serving as Board Member for the Authorized for Navy Use (ANU) Program and the Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Cases. She is also the manager for U.S. Navy Emergency Ship Salvage Material (ESSM) Diving Depot maintenance facilities, ensuring the depot is manned, funded, and operating in the most efficient manner to support Fleet operational requirements.

Robyn has been exceeding all standards of accomplishment in that role from the very beginning. I'm no longer out in the fleet, but I still try to keep my ear to the ground as much as possible, and the feedback that I get is nothing but the very best on the level of support that Robyn provides to the fleet and the excellence that she provides to every aspect of her performance. When I was SUPDIVE all those many years ago, the single goal that we had was to support the fleet by keeping them safe, getting them the equipment that they needed, and making sure that they had the procedures that allowed them to finish the missions that they are assigned. That's exactly what Robyn has been doing and why she deserves this recognition. As I mentioned earlier, it's often difficult to show our civilian team members the appreciation of their efforts that we would like to see them receive, this was just one avenue to recognize those accomplishments that Robyn has made in her support of the navy diving community. Robyn is now one of just a small number of divers from around the world to be so recognized.



Group of US Navy WDHOF Members. Bottom Row (l to r) Rebecca Jones, NDC (DSW/EXW/SW) (ret), Robyn McGinn, Valerie Langstaff, TMCM (EOD) (ret) Top Row (l to r) Deb Bodenstedt, CAPT(ret), Bobbie Scholley, CAPT(ret), Caron Shake, CDR MSC(ret), Darlene Iskra, CDR(ret).

The Women Divers Hall of Fame™ (WDHOF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. WDHOF was founded in 1999 to recognize and honor the contributions of women pioneers, lead-



Robyn's friends attending the WDHOF Induction Ceremony on March 23, 2024. (l to r) Rebecca Jones, NDC (DSW/EXW/SW) (ret), Gene Sible, Alex Sible, Robyn, Belinda Crawford, Bobbie Scholley, CAPT(ret), and Gary Crawford.



Bobbie Scholley, CAPT(ret), Robyn McGinn, and Rebecca Jones, NDC (DSW/EXW/SW) (ret) man a U.S. Navy Diving booth at the Marine Career Day event during the Induction weekend to provide information to local high school students.

ers and innovators in the many fields of diving and to promote careers and opportunities for women in the diving community worldwide. The inaugural class was inducted in 2000 and included 72 women from an array of diving professions around the world. There are currently 264 members in WDHOF from 30 U.S. States and Territories and 22 countries worldwide. WDHOF is also very proud to have 305 men and women Associates as part of the organization. Anyone can nominate a woman to become a member of WDHOF. The criteria for who is eligible for membership and how to make a nomination is on the WDHOF website (<https://www.wdhof.org/nominations>). Nominations for 2025 are already in, but nominations for 2026 are open in January of 2026.

In addition to honoring and raising awareness of the contributions of outstanding women divers, WDHOF provides educational, financial, career and mentorship opportunities to the diving community throughout the world. Each year, WDHOF awards scholarships and training grants that provide financial and educational support to individuals of all ages, particularly those who are preparing for professional careers that involve diving. This year WDHOF had a record number of applications and awarded \$95,500 to 68 individuals who are passionate

about our water planet and looking to grow in their knowledge and skills. These awards were just made in March for 2025. Since 2002, WDHOF has awarded \$914,750 to 701 individuals in scholarships and training grants. The next round of scholarships and training grants for 2026 will be open for applications in September 2025. Descriptions of individual scholarships and training grants, and applications can be found on the WDHOF website at <https://www.wdhof.org/scholarships/scholarship-descriptions>.

I was very honored to join with several other retired U.S. Navy Divers, as well as retired NAVSEA OOC colleagues, family, and

friends to celebrate Robyn's induction into the Women Divers Hall of Fame on March 23, 2024. This was the first time that I met Robyn in person, and I was as impressed as I knew I would be. It was a whole weekend full of activities, and I was thrilled to get a chance to get to know her better and welcome her into this close-knit organization. She is now one of just a few, primarily retired, navy divers who have been inducted into what is mostly a civilian world. Out of the 264 members of WDHOF, there are 26 US Navy divers, although 2 of those are deceased. We're overjoyed to have her in our ranks and to call her "shipmate". HooYah DeepSea!

Bobbie Scholley CAPT(retired), USN was a former CO, USS BOLSTER (ARS 38), CO, MDSU TWO, and NAVSEA SUPDIVE. She resides in Annapolis, MD doing lots of non-profit work.

The Navy Members of the Women Divers Hall of Fame are:

Deb Bodenstedt, CAPT(ret)
Mary Bonnin, EMCM (SW/MDV) (ret)
Bette Bolivar, RDML(ret)
Torie Cassano, CAPT MC (ret)
Gina Harden, CAPT(ret)
Martha Herb, RADM(ret)
Linda Hubbell, LCDR(ret)
Darlene Iskra, CDR(ret)
Rebecca Jones, NDC (DSW/EXW/SW) (ret)
Marie Knafelc, CAPT MC(ret)
Karen Kohanowich, CDR(ret)
Grace Landers, CDR MC
Valerie Langstaff, TMCM (EOD) (ret)
Karin Lynn, CAPT CEC(ret)
Robyn McGinn, Program Engineer
Rose Oliveros, CW03 CEC(ret)
Sara Olsen, CAPT
Lynn Rodrigues, CEC (SCW/DV) (ret)
Erica Sahler, CAPT CEC(ret)
Bobbie Scholley, CAPT(ret)
Caron Shake, CDR MSC(ret)
Heidi Stefanyshyn-Piper, CAPT(ret)
Kathryn Sullivan, CAPT(ret)
Donna Tobias, HT3(DV) (deceased)
Sue Trukken, CDR(ret)
Lori Yost, CAPT(ret)(deceased)



The Old Master

First off, I want to thank my friends and counterparts, MDV Mike McInroy and MDV Kyle Hubbard of NAVSEA 00C for giving me an opportunity to take the side one more time and share a few thoughts before I leave dive station for good after 26 years. The idea that I would ever be asked to contribute a logbook entry to the hallowed "Old Master" series is unthinkable – just look at that picture, I'm not OLD!! Okay fine, denial is not a river in Egypt in my case. I better get to it though, I know that none of you made it this far into Faceplate expecting to have your hair blown back by my keen 'Witt,' or bad puns (that one's for you, Dad).

There really is only a single message that I want to express in writing this and that is to express my most heartfelt gratitude to ALL the incredible people of the entire Navy Diving and Salvage community – past, present, and future – service member or civilian, alike. I have said it many times before to friends and colleagues in conversation that I could never have made it as far as I did in the Navy or have stayed as long as I did were it not for the "HOO-YAH spirit,"

unique culture, colorful characters, and immense challenges that we overcome together. However, before I fully elaborate on that topic, I want to man the aft watch to look back and see what has been churned up in our wake during the last quarter century or so, and man the starboard bridge wing to peek at what may be bow down on the horizon.

Looking way back, for most of us, our personal history in Navy Diving goes back to the shared alma mater for many of us – "Ye ole" Naval Diving and Salvage Training Command (NDSTC). While I have plenty of memories, both forgettable and unforgettable from my time in Second Class Dive School in 1999, I remember my experiences during my first and second diving duty assignments onboard USS SALVOR (ARS 52) from 1999 to 2002, and Consolidated Divers Unit (CDU) from 2002 to 2005 as being the truly formative tours that made me successful throughout the remainder of my career. Qualities that have often been related by my predecessors in contributing to the "Old Master" series are the grit required of a Navy Diver, along with the aggressive pursuit of excellence through qualifications and sound leadership at the deckplates. Nowhere have these qualities been more evident to me than in grinding away during long days and long nights on the fantail of a "Junk boat," or in supervising a dive team on a high production waterfront. Of course, you don't acquire either grit or experience as a leader without mentors to guide you and peers to drive you. There are too many names to list here, but for those of you who were there, you know who you are and please know that I am still inspired by your leadership and grateful for your friendship.

All that said, I recognize that I was not alone and that my experiences in being put through the ringer during those times and the ones that followed were not unique among my cohort of peers of the late 1990s and early 2000s, nor among the subsequent generation of Navy Divers that followed. While I was working side by side with the Blue and Gold Dive Teams of MDSU ONE during the EHIME MARU salvage operation, our East Coast counterparts of MDSU TWO, SIMA Norfolk, USS GRASP, USS GRAPPLE and the "Sat Rat" superheroes of DEVRON and NEDU were doing mighty work during the USS Monitor Expeditions, along with countless other salvage and repair missions happening throughout the Navy during that time. What is truly great for me to think back and reflect on is that our shared community lineage of hard work, sacrifice, shear force, and ultimate success has carried through the daily work on the waterfront and on countless afloat or expeditionary missions, whether named or unnamed. One thing that we can all take great comfort in knowing throughout our careers is that if you've got it good, somewhere else, somebody has it better; and if you are absolutely sucking because you are cold, wet, and tired, somebody has it worse. I would argue that this is the dark humor, spirit, and camaraderie that defines our community and if nothing else, it sure as hell makes the beer taste better!

Looking off to the horizon, I am hopeful. There are a lot of good things happening in our community. Check your inbox, there are a LOT of great news stories that are happening because of great people. I can't think of a single time that I have picked up the phone with a "sky-is-falling" problem that there hasn't been a friendly voice on the other end, ready to lend a hand and fix the problem. I'm sure many, if not all of you reading this can relate. As well, the promise of future platforms, new technology, and inventive means by which to deploy our people and capabilities in the second quarter of the 21st century is truly awe-inspiring. That is not to say that there won't be monumental challenges and most likely the ever-present whipsaw of shifting priorities, but I am sure that this community of Navy Divers will absolutely answer the call as we always have. My confidence comes from having witnessed first-hand the exquisite talent, character, and professionalism of THIS generation of Navy Divers.



NDCM (DWS/EXW/SW)
Will S. Wittman

HOO-YAH to you all, keep doing amazing work! MDV Will "Just Will" Wittman, out.





SUPDIVE SENDS ...CAPT(sel) David Scherr

Hooyah Deep Sea! As we step into another season, it's essential to pause and recognize the exceptional dedication of our Navy diving community. Earlier in the newsletter, you heard from Rear Admiral Andros (Commander, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command), who serves as a key stakeholder within the Navy diving enterprise, as well as the individual directly responsible to the Fleet Commanders for the organization, equipping and training of our uniformed salvage force. As your Supervisor of Diving, I have seen first-hand throughout the past year a point RADM Andros addresses: the Fleet relies on Navy's dive teams. From the submarine force, surface fleet, special warfare, aviation community and more; your unwavering commitment to operational readiness, innovation, and safety sets the benchmark for excellence across the Fleet.

We also bid heartfelt farewells to several our diving family: MDV Will Wittman, MDV Shannon Hall, MDV Joe Davis, and MDV Jorge Guillen who are retiring after decades of distinguished service. In addition, CW05 Paul Adams, who recently stepped into retirement after a legendary career. Their leadership, expertise, and mentorship have inspired countless divers, and their legacy will endure in the community they helped shape.

Updates and Innovations

The rewrite of Navy Diving Policy, OPNAVINST 3150.27D, remains a significant focus, with the goal of streamlining the instruction to empower Commanding Officers with greater authority over waivers and Exceptions to Policy, adjusting inspection periodicity, and reducing unnecessary language in the instruction, among other changes.

While the cancellation of the Military Divers Training Continuum (MDTC) 2025 is unfortunate, NAVSEA 00C is pivoting to provide specialized, targeted equipment training for Fleet concentration areas. Please reach out to the 00C team if there is a specific request or questions.

Several cutting-edge tools have been added to the Authorized for Navy



Use (ANU) list, including the NEMO Special Operations Hammer Drill, HII Mobile O2 Hand Booster Pump, Amron's AMCOM KM-37/97 and MK 20 microphones, and the Aqualung MTX SCUBA regulator. The DSEND 1 ATA suit received significant support from OPNAV and will be demonstrated for VIPs in June. In addition, the DAVD system continues to receive updates and testing, including integration with other UBAs. These moves enhance our operational capabilities and underscore the Navy's commitment to integrating advanced technology.

Strengthening Partnerships and Preparedness

Multiple Navy and Joint headquarters are leaning forward in support of seismic response Lines of Effort, preparing for potential casualties stemming from seismic activity in the Puget Sound area.

International cooperation also remains a priority, with significant strides taken toward an ABCANZ Air Diving Interoperability Agreement. This initiative will enable U.S., Australian, British, Canadian, and New Zealand partners to utilize each other's air diving equipment without requiring a risk assessment or waiver. By addressing interoperability challenges upfront, we ensure seamless collaboration during short-notice operations.

Focus on Fleet Development and Career Path Optimization

The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) is conducting an ND Rating Study to improve career paths for the enlisted workforce. The study seeks to enhance fleet manning goals and develop senior enlisted Sailors' technical and tactical abilities. The envisioned career paths will allow Sailors to deepen their expertise on specific platforms, creating technical specialists to better support fleet missions.

Although ND manning levels currently stand at approximately 81%, the community continues to prioritize fleet billets to ensure operational readiness. Additionally, NAVSEA 00C3/4 has explored commercial saturation diving platforms, such as those on the Diving Support Vessel Kelly Ann Candies, to leverage industry experience and capability.

Modernizing Equipment and Capabilities

The phased replacement of Cochran Navy Dive Computers with Shearwater Perdix and Teric units marks a step forward in technology integration. New batteries have passed LOMU testing, further enhancing operational reliability. Modernization efforts for Fly-away Mixed Gas Systems focus on reducing footprint, extending EGS duration, and conserving helium through semi-closed circuit re-circulation technology.

Exciting progress includes the introduction of an excursion-capable UBA to replace the MK25, offering extended duration and a broader range of mission capabilities. Meanwhile, PIP remains the cornerstone of MK16 modernization.

A Community of Excellence

As we navigate these updates and challenges, the Navy Diving community remains steadfast in its pursuit of excellence. Your dedication ensures the Navy remains ready to meet the demands of tomorrow, and your innovation continues to drive us forward. Thank you for all you do, and here's to a successful 2025 and beyond!

Diving Advisories

- 24 - 13 ISSUANCE OF REVISION FOR DIVING LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM MAINTENANCE NOTES DRAWING NUMBER 8902865
- 25 - 01 LIST OF EFFECTIVE DIVING ADVISORIES
- 25 - 02 ESSM DIVE DEPOT SERVICES AND WEBSITE UPDATES
- 25 - 03 REVISED POSEIDON REGULATOR SERVICE MANUAL AND NEW U.S. DISTRIBUTOR FOR POSEIDON DIVING SYSTEMS INC
- 25 - 04 POSEIDON XSTREAM DEEP (MK3) 1ST STAGE REGULATOR CUP FILTER SAFETY
- 25 - 05 ESTABLISHMENT OF REENTRY CONTROL MAINTENANCE CONSOLIDATED TEST AND INSPECTION REPORT FORM
- 25 - 06 EXPANDED GUIDANCE ON POSEIDON XSTREAM DEEP (MK3) 1ST STAGE REGULATOR CUP FILTERS SAFETY BULLETIN
- 25 - 07 SI TECH SHELL INFLATION VALVE NOTIFICATION OF VOLUNTARY SAFETY RECALL

For more information on effective diving advisories, go to <https://secure.supsalv.org/home.asp>

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