

SAVING OUR SHIPS

PROGRESS REPORT

September proved to be an exceedingly productive time aboard our ships. We've reinitiated projects that had lost momentum and identified new areas we can make substantial improvements. We're taking aggressive steps in advancing maintenance processes as well as working to improve overall visitor experience.

We're very excited to see the revitalization of our volunteer program, with new members joining and past members reengaging with our ships. Each of the three ships afloat in our fleet have

gotten much-needed attention in September with chipping, painting, and weatherproofing. We've begun shifting our attention and energies to being best prepared to face the winter months.

Please give us your feedback - let us know if we're including the information you'd like to see, or if there's areas we can expand on.

Bill Abbott, Director of Operations,
bill@buffalonaivalpark.org

TOM ISULA

It is with deep sadness we learned of the sudden passing in September of one of our long-standing maintenance team shipmates, Tom Isula. Tom has had an incalculably positive influence on the park. It extended from the simplest of repairs to updating complex electrical systems aboard all our ships, and tackling all the other jobs, large and small, that were too complicated for the rest of us to figure out. In addition, it was a joy to watch Tom's interaction with the scouts in our Encampment program, leading them through one fun event after another with a genuine love for what he was doing, creating memories for these young people and their families that will last a lifetime. Tom was an educator, family man, and volunteer. We will miss you, Tom.



Tom, standing to the right, with The Sullivans caretaker Andrew Biondo on the quarterdeck of the ship he did so much to improve.

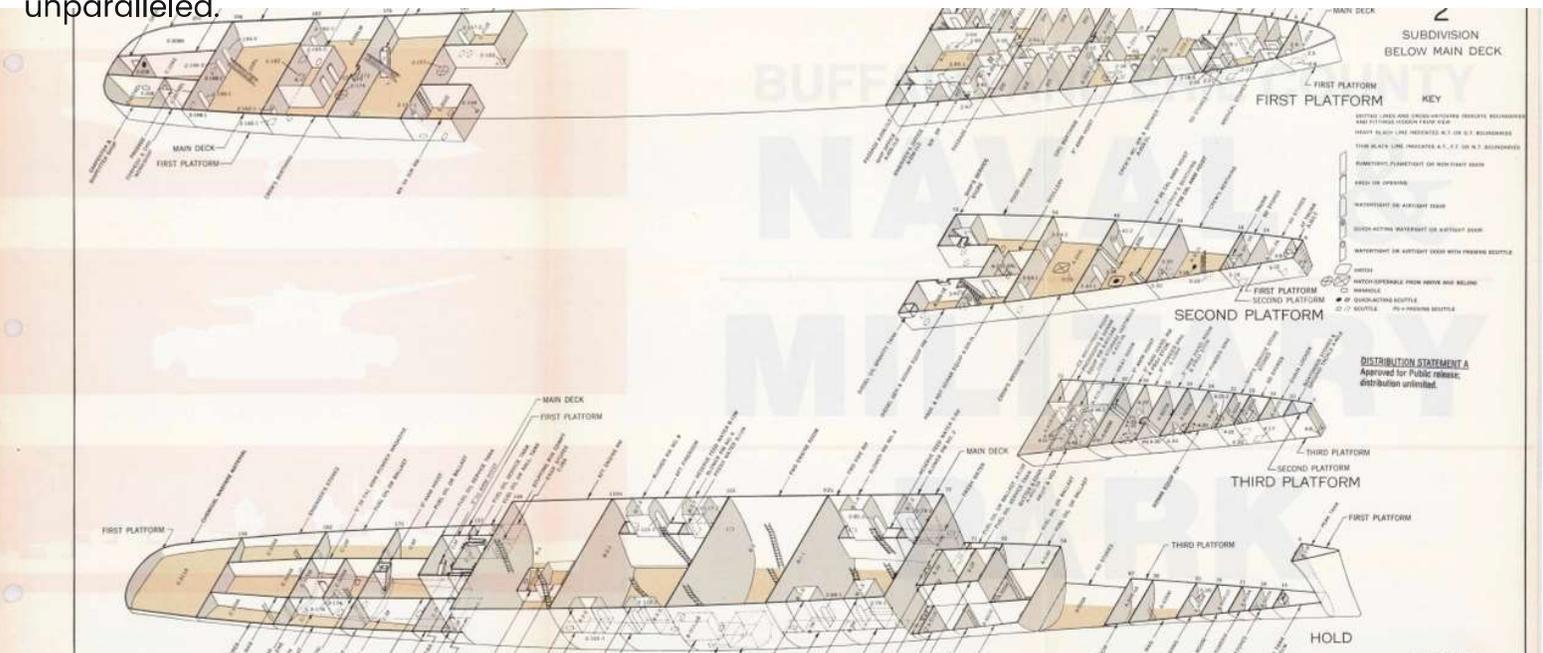


MARINE SURVEY

Following the Buffalo Common Council meeting of September 6th, Ocean Technical Service (OTS) has been named as the marine surveying company chosen to assess the material conditions of the vessels afloat at the Buffalo Naval Park. OTS is the company led by Joe Lombardi, a retired Naval architect from Naval Sea Systems Command, or Navsea, the Navy's largest and over-arching command, responsible for all aspects of the material needs of the service, from ship design, building, maintenance, combat systems, etc. Mr. Lombardi brings decades of experience to the museum ship community and has worked in the past with the repair and movement of our three ships in Buffalo. His reputation in the museum ship community as an expert in all aspects of their assessment, maintenance and repair is unparalleled.

We're confident we've chosen the best marine surveyor for the job and look forward to working with him on this major project. The tasks in this extensive survey include complete hull assessments: sonic thickness measurement reviews, shell plating inspections, interior frames and stringers, superstructure assessments including masts, radars, etc. tanks and their contents, hazardous materials, and much more.

With the collected data from this work, we'll have the definitive information needed, along with OTS recommendations for the best path forward for long-term repair and ongoing maintenance of our ships.





THE SULLIVANS

It's a little difficult to see in the above photo of The Sullivans, taken in August of 1945 near San Francisco, but her forward 5" guns were painted all in haze gray, while the aft mounts were haze gray with Sea Blue across their tops as part of the Measure 22 paint scheme. Our goal moving forward is to present the ship, in as much as our limitations will allow, in this configuration. We believe the most powerful and compelling part of her story is in her name and her service in the Second World War. As the warmer season runs down, we anticipate having the majority of her topside repainted and will wait till the marine survey concludes, and a new season opens next year before we paint the hull.

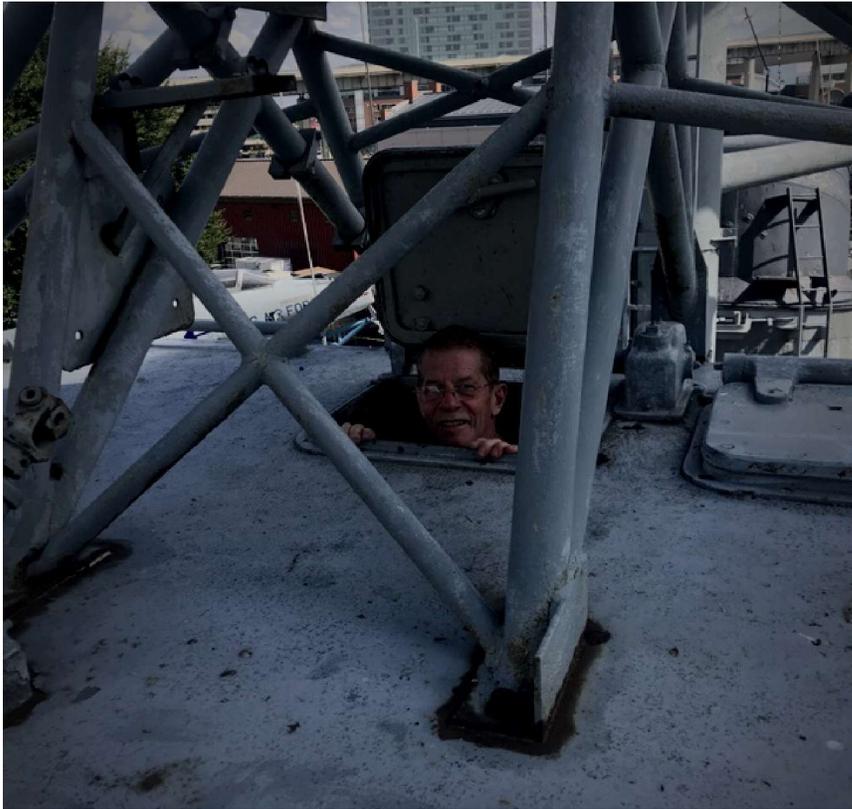
As our own staff inspections of The Sullivans continue, we've identified areas where weather penetrated into the interior superstructure of the ship. While this represents a concern, it's also an opportunity. One such case is the forward gun director which sits atop the bridge. We'll first seal the open director cupola from the elements, but after extensive research, we've found information on what the original cover looked like, and the plan is to recreate a sturdy, weather-proof version to install atop the director, bringing its appearance closer to what it was while in service.

We mentioned in the last edition of the newsletter the work proceeding on The Sullivans original electric distribution panel located in the aft engine room. We've completed the cleaning and reassembly of all components and will begin

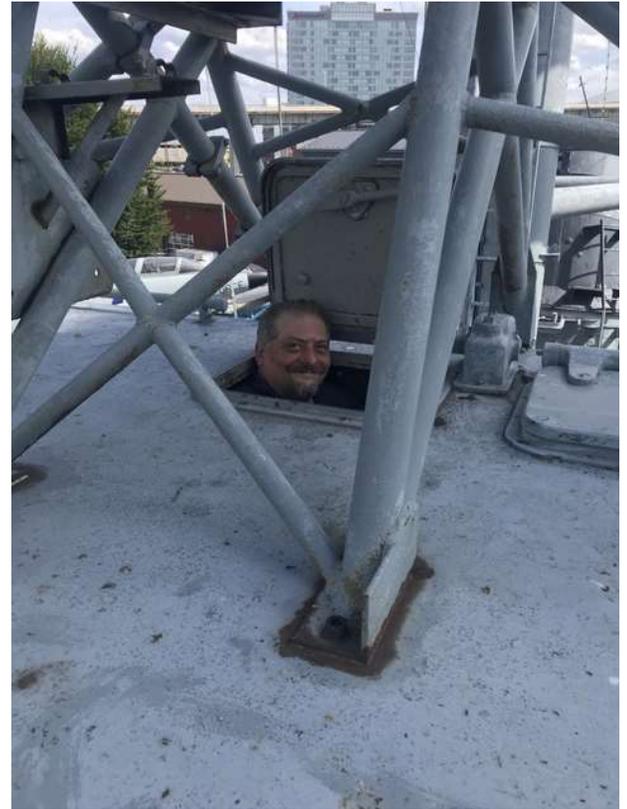
the process of assessing all the electrical lines running from that panel to points throughout the ship under the guidance and direction of a qualified electrical engineer.

This is a major milestone in her recovery, and one many thought impossible. With a fully functioning inherent electrical distribution system, we'll increase her current capacity to accommodate the measures we intend to take to safeguard the ship against the impending and fast-approaching winter conditions. This month we purchased six industrial dehumidifiers to remove as much moisture in the below-decks spaces as possible, and will be introducing appropriate heaters below decks to prevent damaging ice build-up. In addition, we'll be positioning fans and high-capacity air movers to keep warm air circulating throughout the below-decks areas, particularly in the large engineering spaces, coupled with an exterior array of bubblers to surround the hull exterior to prevent ice forming around the ship.





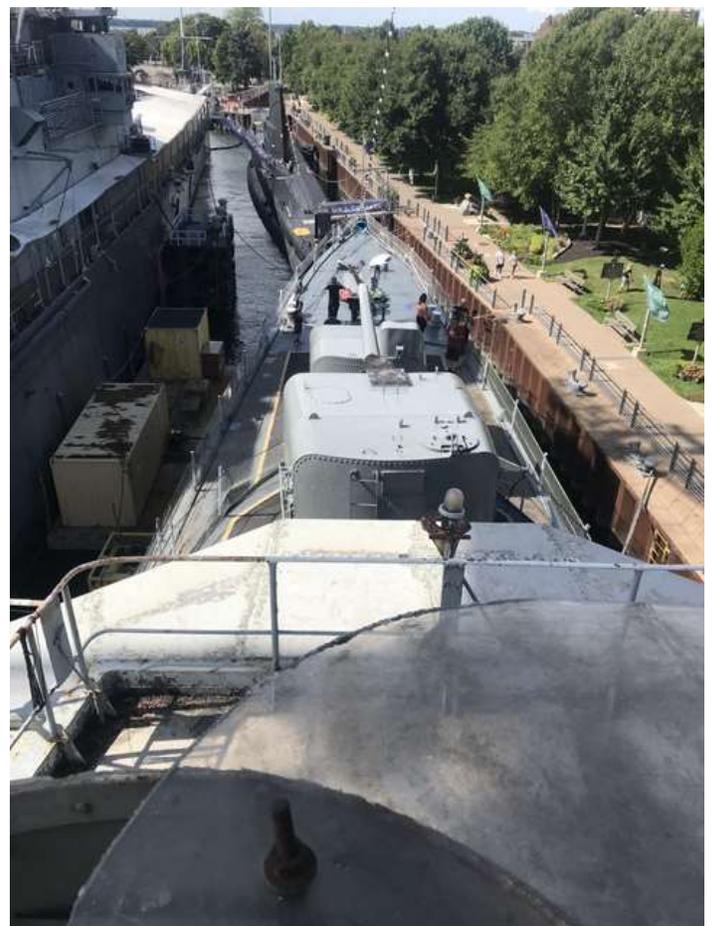
Ship caretaker Joe peering out from the top of the forward gun director, possibly checking early and entirely prematurely for signs of Spring.



The Sullivans caretaker Andrew verifying if Joe's weather prognostications have any validity.



Joe removing the leaking plexiglass cover from inside the cupola of the forward gun director, facing aft.



The view from inside The Sullivans forward gun director, looking toward the bow.



LITTLE ROCK

From our very knowledgeable and dedicated volunteer, Brian Wroblewski:

Back in 1977, the Little Rock suffered a flooding event due to a frozen and cracked overboard discharge pipe. At the time of the incident, the only thing that saved her from rolling over was the Buffalo firetug Cotter and her high capacity pumps that dewatered the ship enough so that repairs could be made. When that happened, dirty river water made it all the way up to what's called the "Second Platform" and it was almost completely flooded. After she was pumped out, the spaces were dried up, but since these rooms were below the levels of the ship that have power and off the public tour route, there was no clean up done.

Last year, I took a "Curator Tour" and personally asked to see the CIC and Gun Plot Rooms. After looking around down there, I realized that they weren't really all that bad and that I thought I could help out by offering to clean, straighten, and stabilize them. I asked Shane Stephenson if it would be Ok and he said it was worth a shot. My goal was to ask a few people for help on my Facebook group about local history and work at making these 3 rooms safe, clean, and at least presentable to the limited tour groups or Navy veterans that might want to see them. We started by hand scrubbing all the equipment with little more than orange spray cleaner, Scotch Brite pads, and wipes. Then we secured all the cut cable runs and loose wires, vacuumed the decks, and secured any equipment

that wasn't bolted down. I got donors to give me steel and aluminum plate that I painted in my shop at home to cover the holes in the deck from missing equipment that the Navy took for other ships. I worked on getting a lot of the lights back on and also brought in donated LED fixtures for temporary means until we can get someone to help us do a professional power installation down there. Our last project was taking apart the old mechanical computers used to control the guns and cleaning all the internal displays to make them visible again after years of corrosion had taken their toll.

The results so far are stunning to say the least. The Gun Plot rooms were the WORST. They were dark, covered in a red silt from the flood, and badly corroded everywhere. There were large gaps in the decking, and dangerous conditions all around. Now they're cleaned up the best we could do without a power washer, safe from trip hazards, and lit up so you can see without a flash light. I have a few more things I'd like to do down there next as it's still a work in progress. My main helper crew so far has been: John Mark, Paul Mullen, and Carl Mottern. Without them, none of this would have been possible.



Before and after work from the extensive clean-up by Brian and his crew.

Another before and after image showing just how much was accomplished in restoring this equipment.



Volunteer John Mark hard at work in the Little Rock's CIC.



Brian and crew in the space they've done much to restore.



CROAKER

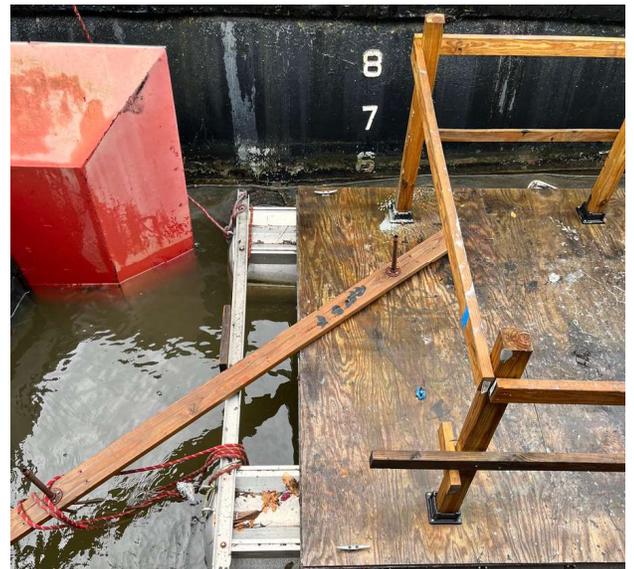
Jim Marzullo, caretaker for the submarine Croaker, continues to make progress with both the interior and exterior of the boat.

One of the engine's heavy pistons was removed from where it hung on display in the engine room and was cleaned, shined, and rehung with help of additional staff. Jim has also been improving lighting conditions aboard ship, replacing bulbs and recruiting for help from a qualified electrician to assist in making a variety of improvements.

On the exterior of the ship, Jim has painted midway up the sail, and has completed all areas of the wooden deck. Paint-related work will continue until seasonal conditions bring the temperature too low for paint to cure.

Speaking of painting, maintenance staff had been using our paint barge, nicknamed, "Aircraft Carrier Andrew" in honor of The Sullivans caretaker - tongue-in-cheek, of course, in full Navy tradition, until we found she'd developed a list. "Aircraft Carrier Andrew" is actually a modified pontoon boat that has provided faithful service as a paint barge until a few days ago when she developed a leak in her port side pontoon.

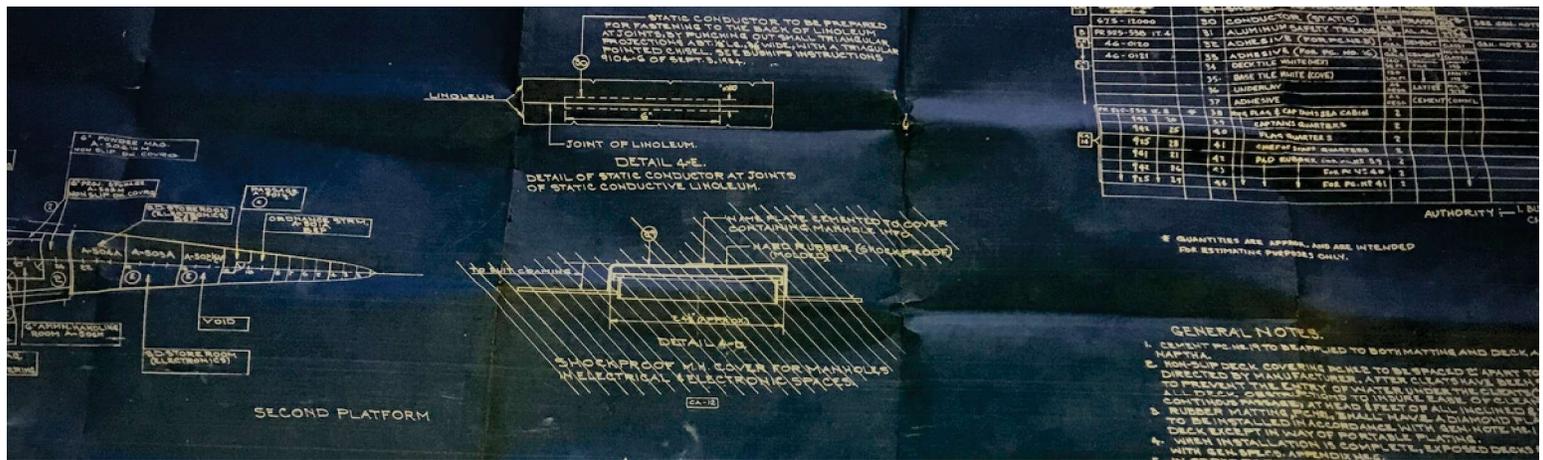
Repairs to "Aircraft Carrier Andrew" are upcoming.



Paint barge, "Aircraft Carrier Andrew" underway and deployed.



"Aircraft Carrier Andrew" being towed for repair.



CURATOR'S CORNER

BY SHANE STEPHENSON

After months of organizing, triaging, and preserving the artifacts pulled from USS The Sullivans, I am happy to report that most of the work has been completed. Gabriel Dunn and her assistant, Kat, along with our passionate volunteers worked diligently through the summer to thoroughly complete this multi-faceted project.

What remains is to begin working on the benches and seats from The Sullivans Mess Deck. These items were water and oil logged. Patterns need to be cut and new seating needs to be fabricated. Also remaining is addressing the 160 mattresses and associated canvases that populated the berthing areas on the destroyer. Working to preserve and fabricate these areas are the first step towards envisioning USS The Sullivans moving forward.

I can't thank the volunteers enough for their passion and interest. I know that they are proud of the work they completed while helping to preserve the story for the future.

If you'd like to volunteer here at the Naval Park, please reach out to Brendan Lindahl: brendan@buffalonaivalpark.org.

If you have information on companies that can fabricate benches, or that make canvas' or mattresses, please reach out to me: shane@buffalonaivalpark.org.





JOIN US

Our ships afloat and the artifacts displayed at the Buffalo Naval Park have important stories to tell, and we invite you to help us share them.

DOCENTS

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.

EVENTS

The Buffalo Naval Park is the premier location in all of Western New York to celebrate, participate and elevate. Making these events happen in a seamless, organized and timely way requires a committed staff of volunteers to help in setting up, promoting, staffing, organizing, and putting everything away after it's all done so it's ready for the next event.

CONNECT WITH US

Online volunteer form: [Click here!](#)

Email: info@buffalonaivalpark.org

Phone: 716-847-1773

Website: [Click here!](#)

Buffalo Naval Park Youtube Channel: [Click here!](#)