National Museum of the American Sailor

March 2021 Newsletter

CELEBRATING WOMEN OF CHARACTER, COURAGE, AND COMMITMENT

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN SAILOR

While women historically played a role in the United States Navy since its founding in 1775, it was not until 1908 with the establishment of the Navy Nurses Corps that they served in an official capacity. In World War I, the Navy expanded women's roles through service as Yeoman. During World War II, women's roles grew even further with the 1942 creation of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Service). Today, women serve in every Navy rank from seaman to admiral and in every job from naval aviator to deep-sea diver. This month, the National Museum of the American Sailor honors the legacies of the outstanding, trailblazing women to wear the Navy uniform.

"*Great Lakes, Great Women*" Lecture: Available March 25 on YouTube

In honor of Women's History Month, join the NMAS education staff for "Great Lakes, Great Women," a virtual presentation that explores the significant contributions of women to Naval Station Great Lakes from its opening in 1911 through the present. This presentation highlights several women who broke legal and civic barriers in the fight for inclusion, equality, and recognition within the United States Navy.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS & EVENTS

CMC McBride embodies the Navy's values of honor, courage, and commitment though her strong leadership and pushing herself and fellow sailors to be the best they can be. Bravo Zulu CMC Samira McBride!

My Sailor Story

In July 2020, the United States Navy awarded its first female recipient, Command Master Chief Samira McBride of USS *Gonzalez* (DDG-66) the 2019-2020 Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Delbert D. Black Leadership Award . In Black's thirty-year naval career, she demonstrated deck plate leadership and championed for all numerous sailor causes, including family advocacy. Deckplate leadership is a Navy term for exemplary leaders that act with intuition, know their mission and team, and go beyond expectations. Instituted in 2008, to one exceptional Command Master Chief, Command Senior Chief, or Chief of the Boat receives the award to recognize their performance in leading Sailors and upholding the highest standards of professionalism and integrity. CMC McBride's commanding officer on the USS *Gonzalez* (DDG-66), Commander Ray Glenn shared these words about her:

"FROM DAY ONE, CMC MCBRIDE HAS PROMOTED A 'WARFIGHTER' MENTALITY TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN THE COMMAND. SHE HAS BEEN CRITICAL TO EVERY SUCCESS OF USS GONZALEZ. HER ABILITY TO GENERATE CREATIVE PATHS FOR COMMUNICATION, FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT OF 'LEADERSHIP MATTERS,' AND CHALLENGE GONZALEZ SAILORS TO EXCEED EVEN THEIR OWN EXPECTATIONS IS APPARENT ON A DAILY BASIS."

DIVING INTO HISTORY

Marked by the Sea: Tattoos and the U.S. Navy

The Museum's upcoming exhibit, *Marked by the Sea: Tattoos and the U.S. Navy* focuses on the history of nautical tattoos and the meaning behind the iconic ink. As part of the exhibit, NMAS solicited current and former sailors to submit images of their tattoos and explain why the decided to go under the needle. Given that only twenty percent of current active duty sailors are women, many of the submissions received were from men. One submission from HM2 Tracy Blackmond-Mills, shown below, demonstrates her commitment to the Navy and the inspiration behind her design:

Briefly describe your tattoo:
My tattoo is an anchor submerging into water. It represents the attachment I have to the Navy and the unwillingness to let go.

What does this tattoo mean to you?
This tattoo keeps me grounded. It reminds me of the obligation I have taken on to this country. It reminds me to be steady and ready, it lets me know that we can do this.

How does this tattoo remind you of your time in the United States Navy?
It reminds me of a time where I had to be ready. I could be living in a state of pure relaxation and be called to serve overseas at any moment. It reminds me that as an anchor to the Navy I could be brought up and sent on to anchor down somewhere else when need be.

Sailor's Attic: Stories of the Enlisted Sailor

This March we celebrate Women's History Month, which commemorates the indispensable roles women played throughout American naval history. As part of this commemoration, NMAS's blog, "Navy Nurse Ann Bernatitus: Out of the Pan and into the Fire" explores the naval career of on the actions of Captain Ann Bernatitus, a Navy nurse who served during the Battle of the Philippines during World War II and her escape from the South Pacific.

Left: USS *Spearfish* (SS-190) ca. 1944.
Right: LTJG Ann Bernatitus ca. 1943.

ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

Soap Dish, ca. 1860s

To prevent the spread of disease, the Navy issued shaving and soap kits such as this one to sailors for bathing during the Civil War. The small containers are made of gutta-percha, a latex material that was heat and flame resistant. Although seemingly sturdy, soap dishes and other personal artifacts such as these are rare since sailors frequently used them under rough conditions at sea. The inside of the dish's lid also featured a small mirror so sailors could also shave with a shaving brush. The top of the soap dish's lid features Navy Captain John Lawrence's famous order to sailors, "Don't Give up the Ship."

NMAS would like to thank the Chicago Chapter of the Colonial Dames of America XIV for their generous donation of this artifact. To learn more about this women's group, whose mission is to honor American history through preservation and education. Learn more about the Chicago chapter on their website.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

While women have supported the United States Navy since its founding, historical evidence that helps illuminate their contributions is often sparse. You can help fully tell the story of all Navy sailors, regardless of gender, through NMAS' #MySailorStory initiative. These stories can be collected from Navy family members, spouses, the sailors themselves, or through historical research conducted by NMAS staff or volunteers. While all stories are crucial and welcomed, we especially encourage female #MySailorStory submissions this month in honor of Women's History month.

To submit your story, or one of a friend or family member, visit our #MySailorStory webpage to download the submission form.