

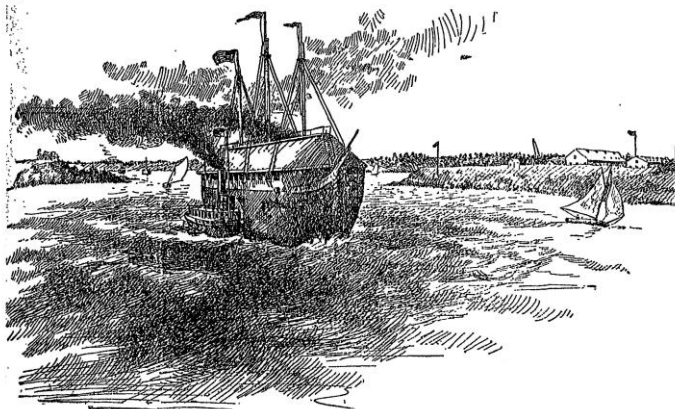


1

## The Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston

The origins of the Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston can be traced to September 21, 1897, when USS *Constitution* arrived at the Boston (Charlestown) Navy Yard, one month before the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its launch on October 21, 1797. Although no one in September 1897 could have predicted *Constitution's* future, the responsibility for the long-term care of the aged warship had been permanently transferred to the Boston Navy Yard staff.

### OLD IRONSIDES IN TOW FOR BOSTON.



TOWING THE CONSTITUTION OUT OF PORTSMOUTH HARBOR.

PORTSMOUTH, N. H., Sept. 20.—The three masted frigate *Constitution*, which has been at this navy yard for the past 100 years, and has been one of the objects of interest to the many summer visitors to the coast, was towed out of the yard at 1.30 in tow of the government tug *Lepson* for Boston on board of the *Constitution* were Master from the U. S. S. *Wabash*, and other officers of the yard, together with other attaches who watched the former great "Old Ironsides" as she moved out into mid-stream and passed down through the narrows. It was scarcely 10 minutes from the time the call of "all clear" sounded that the famous old craft rounded the narrows and was on her way to the lower harbor. Her departure was not marked by any salute, no roll of drum or notes of bugle, but quietly, silently, like a phantom of the past, under the guidance of her two sturdy pilots, who swept down the river from the anchorage where she had laid at rest so many years. Many an old resident looked with longing eyes after her as she passed beyond the point and out of sight. More than one expressed the thought that it was not right to move her, and many feared she would never reach her destination, but as she is well piloted and guarded by the vessel under way, was dropped and the *Lepson* proceeded along with her tow. The sea was smooth and good progress was made, the time of the tow being passed at 2.30. Commander Very stated before he started that if everything was favorable he should not stop at Gloucester but would keep on to Boston. If no stop is made, therefore, the *Constitution* should arrive off Boston light some time before 10 o'clock to-night.

"OLD IRONSIDES IN TOW FOR BOSTON."

Page one article, *The Boston Daily Globe*, September 21, 1897 (ProQuest)

*Constitution's* 1897 return to Boston was a notable moment in the career of a remarkable U.S. Navy warship. Of the original six frigates launched between 1797 and 1800, which began the new United States Navy, at nearly 100 years old, *Constitution*, with many re-building and repair periods, had more than outlasted the five other frigates.<sup>2</sup> The city of Boston enthusiastically welcomed home "Old Ironsides" - children enjoyed a school holiday, ships in the harbor were dressed with their signal flags, and torch-light parades marked the

<sup>1</sup> Three logos that reflect the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston, c.1991 (left), the Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston, 2010 (middle), and the current Naval History & Heritage Command logo that includes USS *Constitution*, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> USS *United States* was broken up in 1865; the frigate USS *Constellation* was broken up in 1853; USS *Chesapeake* was captured by the Royal Navy June 1, 1813, used, sold by the Royal Navy in 1819 and broken up the same year (see *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, April 17, 1819) in England; USS *Congress* was broken up in 1834; USS *President* was captured January 15, 1815, taken into the Royal Navy and broken up in England in 1817.

actual launch anniversary on October 21, 1897.<sup>3</sup> Within a few short years of its return, *Constitution* required significant preservation and repair work. While not always willing to allocate and spend the necessary funds to maintain the historic warship, the U.S. Congress and the Navy began, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, to acknowledge the responsibility for maintaining a significant symbol of the early American republic and the War of 1812.

The first true “restoration” of the warship was the 1906-1907, \$100,000 floating project.<sup>4</sup> The 1927 restoration, which very likely saved the ship from certain death by rot and neglect, was partly paid for by the sale of *Constitution*-material souvenirs, fund-raising amongst school children, and the donation of wood and material for the mammoth project.



*Constitution* in Dry Dock 1, c. 1929



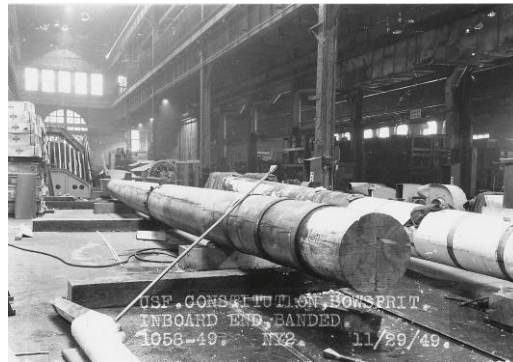
LT John A. Lord and Yard workers, April 20, 1929

Photos U.S. Navy

After *Constitution*'s return from the 1931-1934 National Cruise along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts of the U.S., the ship was dry docked several times, each time briefly, for minor hull repairs, including: September 30-October 2, 1936; July 28-August 2, 1945; March 4-28, 1957; and December 3, 1963-March 25, 1964.



First dry docking after the end of WWII, July 28, 1945



New *Constitution* bowsprit, November, 1949

Photos U.S. Navy

In 1954, Congress passed Public Law 523, “AN ACT To provide for the restoration and maintenance of the United States Ship *Constitution*.... the Secretary of the Navy is authorized to repair, equip, and restore the United States Ship *Constitution*, as far as

<sup>3</sup> Margherita M. Desy, “USS Constitution – Homeward Bound,” USS Constitution Museum, <https://ussconstitutionmuseum.org/2017/10/02/uss-constitution-homeward-bound/>, (accessed September 27, 2021) and Carl Herzog, “A Homecoming to Remember,” USS Constitution Museum, <https://ussconstitutionmuseum.org/2019/10/10/a-homecoming-to-remember/>, (accessed September 27, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Carl Herzog, “Sell me ‘Old Ironsides’!,” USS Constitution Museum, <https://ussconstitutionmuseum.org/2019/12/05/sell-me-old-ironsides/>, (accessed September 27, 2021).

may be practicable, to her original condition, but not for active service, and thereafter to maintain the United States Ship *Constitution* at Boston, Massachusetts.”<sup>5</sup> With the 1954 Act undergirding *Constitution’s* preservation, the carpenters, riggers, painters, and caulkers of the Charlestown Navy Yard continued their on-going maintenance and restoration program to preserve “Old Ironsides” for future generations. Just a few years later, in 1960, *Constitution* became the first historic ship to be designated a National Historic Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service.<sup>6</sup>



New mast bands for *Constitution* lower mast, January, 1964



*Constitution* bowsprit with Portal Crane 65, September, 1974

Photos U.S. Navy

From the 1906-07 restoration of the ship after its arrival home to Boston, through to the closure of the Charlestown Navy Yard in 1974, hundreds of shipyard workers helped to maintain, re-build, restore, and research USS *Constitution*.



USS *Constitution* Maintenance & Repair Staff, Charlestown Navy Yard, c.1973

Don Turner, long-time supervisor and director of *Constitution* restorations in the back row (left arrow); John Kuntz (right arrow)  
Photo courtesy John Kuntz

<sup>5</sup> An Act for the restoration and maintenance of the United States Ship Constitution..., Public Law 523, 83rd Cong., 2d sess. (July 23, 1954), 527.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives & Records Administration, “Massachusetts NHL *Constitution*, USS (Frigate),” [www.catalog.archives.gov/OpaAPI/media/63793893/content/electronic-records/rg-079/NPS\\_MA/66000789\\_NHL.pdf](http://www.catalog.archives.gov/OpaAPI/media/63793893/content/electronic-records/rg-079/NPS_MA/66000789_NHL.pdf)




The closure of the Charlestown Navy Yard did not interrupt the care of *Constitution*. From 1974 to 1991 SUPSHIP Boston was the supervisory department over the USS *Constitution* Maintenance & Repair Division in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

In August, 1991, Dr. Dean Allard, Director of the Naval Historical Center, made the following case in his argument for removing the USS *Constitution* Maintenance and Repair Division from SUPSHIP Boston to the Chief of Naval Operations:

“Reason for Action: The maintenance and repair functions are unique to the preservation of USS *Constitution* as a historic ship and are performed as directed by NAVHISTCEN. This action improves lines of authority for the maintenance and repair function and enhances its capability to preserve USS *Constitution* as a historic ship.”<sup>7</sup>

On October 25, 1991, a memorandum, “ESTABLISHMENT OF NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER DETACHMENT BOSTON, MA” was issued by RADM R.M. Walsh, Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations (see below).



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-8000

IN REPLY REFER TO  
Ser 09B22/LUS10397  
25 OCT 1991

From: Chief of Naval Operations  
To: Director, Naval Historical Center  
Subj: ESTABLISHMENT OF NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER DETACHMENT,  
BOSTON, MA  
Ref: (a) Your ltr 5450 Ser FO/13079 of 13 Aug 91  
(b) SNDL, Part 2

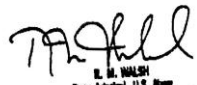
1. In response to reference (a), the following detachment is established effective immediately:

Director  
Naval Historical Center Detachment, Boston  
USS CONSTITUTION Maintenance and Repair Facility  
Bldg. 24, B.N.H.P.  
Charlestown Navy Yard  
Charlestown, MA 02129-4543

(SNDL: C25P) (PLA: NAVHISTCEN DET BOSTON MA)  
(UIC: 68938)

2. Reference (b) will be changed accordingly.

Copy to:  
CNO (OP-09BF)  
SUPERS (Pers 51)  
CINCLANTFLT  
COMUSCGRU TWO  
SUPSHIP Boston  
USS CONSTITUTION  
NAVCOMSU (NAVTLEYSIC (ICIS)), Washington, DC  
NAVACCTGFINCEN (Code OPCU), Washington, DC

  
R. M. WALSH  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations

Under the Naval Historical Center (today, the Naval History & Heritage Command) in 1991, the daily work of the Detachment Boston has embodied the preservation and educational mission of NHC/NHHC. The current vision statement of the Naval History & Heritage Command is: ‘Be the recognized authority on U.S. naval history and instill pride in America’s naval heritage’.<sup>8</sup> The Detachment Boston, too, strives to be the recognized authority on USS *Constitution*’s history and through its on-going preservation and maintenance on “Old Ironsides” instill pride in America’s early naval heritage. Preserving *Constitution*, the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world and helping to tell the story of the early U.S. Navy through

<sup>7</sup> Dean C. Allard to Chief of Naval Operations memorandum, “REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER DETACHMENT BOSTON, MA (USS CONSTITUTION MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR FACILITY), August 13, 1991. Enclosure (1) “Fact and Justification Sheet,” page 1.

<sup>8</sup> Naval History & Heritage Command Vision Statement, 2011. [www.history.navy.mil/about/index/html](http://www.history.navy.mil/about/index/html)

restoration work, media opportunities, public events, and publications are the everyday work of the Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston. Approximately every 10 to 20 years the ship undergoes some element of significant re-building, bringing to the public's attention the unique skills of the shipwrights of the past that are now embodied by the Detachment's ship restorers. The Detachment also responds to hundreds of inquiries ever year that range from high school projects on the early Navy, to media requests, to assisting with research for new publications on the early U.S. Navy or the War of 1812. Over 500,000 international visitors walk the decks of *Constitution* annually and marvel at its physical structure and they are thrilled with the story of how the ship earned its nickname in the battle with HMS *Guerriere* – 'Huzza! Her sides are made of iron!' Since 1897 and especially since the establishment of the NHHC Detachment Boston in 1991, the care, preservation, and history of *Constitution* have been in the capable hands of the Detachment Boston's staff of ship restorers and historians.



Building 24, Charlestown Navy Yard, headquarters for *Constitution*'s restoration staff/Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>  
Rigging loft, third floor (right) for NHHC Detachment Boston riggers  
Photos Margherita M. Desy/NHHC Detachment Boston

A chronology of USS *Constitution*'s restoration history with the Boston Navy Yard, from the ship's arrival in 1897 to the creation of the Naval Historical Center Detachment in 1991, can be found in Appendix A of this report. Appendix B lists the directors of the Naval Historical Center/Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston from its establishment in 1991 to the present day. Immediately below is a chronology of the 30 years of the NHC/NHHC Detachment Boston, reflecting both the physical rehabilitation of *Constitution* and the intellectual/educational mission of the Detachment Boston:

## 1991

**Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston Established** - In recognition of the ongoing preservation work and historical documentation of USS *Constitution*, the oversight of the USS *Constitution* Maintenance & Repair Division of SUPSHIP Boston was transferred to the Naval Historical Center (now the Naval History & Heritage Command) on October 25<sup>th</sup>, by RADM Raymond M. Walsh, Office of Chief of Naval Operations, thereby becoming the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston. The formal mission of the Detachment is codified as:

*The mission of Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston includes but is not limited to: plan and perform all maintenance, repair, and restoration of USS Constitution; perform annual inspections of*

<sup>9</sup> Margherita M. Desy, "Building 24: USS *Constitution*'s Workshop," USS Constitution Museum, <https://ussconstitutionmuseum.org/2017/02/17/building-24/>, (accessed October 4, 2021).

*Constitution*, reporting all work necessary to maintain the ship in satisfactory material condition to perform its mission; to provide a plan of action and milestones for any corrective action; and, as far as practicable, ensure material compliance and documentation with the historic requirements of the ship, as close to its 1812 configuration as possible.<sup>10</sup>

1992-96

**September, 1992** – USS *Constitution* entered Dry Dock #1, Charlestown Navy Yard to begin a 4-year, \$12 million restoration – the most structurally significant restoration in the ship’s modern history. For the restoration, the ship’s keel, stemson, and stern post were X-rayed and Ultra-sonically tested to determine the strength and viability of these elements, some which date from the ship’s building period of 1794-1797. The “hog”/curvature of the original keel was straightened and strengthened with recreations of structural members originally installed when the warship was built. For the first time, USS *Constitution* was open to the public while in dry dock so that visitors could see the work of the Detachment Boston. Copies of hundreds of historic documents relating to *Constitution*’s history – both structural history and battle record – were gathered by the Detachment’s historian, making the Detachment Boston one of the most important repositories of documentation on the physical history of *Constitution*.



*Constitution*’s 1795 keel with a 14” hog at the beginning of the 1992-1996 restoration, in Dry Dock 1



New lower fore, main, and mizzen masts were made by the Detachment



1992 restoration diagonal rider made from laminated white oak, before installation, 1994

Photos Patrick Otton/NHC Detachment Boston



1992 restoration laminated diagonal riders installed in *Constitution*’s hold, 1994

1994

Conference: ‘**Technical Aspects of Maintaining, Repairing & Preserving Historically**

<sup>10</sup> Mission of the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston, October 25, 1991 [hereafter referenced as the Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston – NHC DET Boston].

**Significant Ships'** – first conference on the topic, initiated by the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston with participants representing 82 international organizations that maintain historic vessels or provide specialized preservation services.

1996

**Sail Training for NHHC Detachment Boston staff and USS *Constitution* crew** – with the announcement that USS *Constitution* would sail for the first time in 116 years as part of the celebrations of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its launch in 1797, the Detachment Boston staff and crew of *Constitution* began sail training aboard U.S. Coast Guard *Eagle*, replica *Bounty*, and replica Brig *Niagara*



Detachment Boston staff and *Constitution* crew training on *Constitution*  
Photo Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston

USS CONSTITUTION  
**SAIL MANUAL**

21, JULY 1997



Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston  
Constitution M&R, P.N.H.P.  
Charlestown Navy Yard  
Boston, MA 02129  
617.242.0752  
617.241.5232, fax  
e-mail: potton-nhcdetbos@worldnet.att.net

The first modern sailing manual for USS *Constitution* was written by the NHC Detachment Boston staff in preparation for the ship's historic sail on 21 July 1997

1997

**July 21, 1997 – USS *Constitution* Sails for the First Time in 116 Years.** At 12 noon USS *Constitution* set 6 sails and cast off its tow line to sail, untethered, for one hour in



celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its launch; NHC Detachment Boston staff were mast captains for the sail: Richard Wallace, fore mast; Robert Burbank, main mast; and Dwight Demilt, mizzen mast.



USS *Constitution* under sail with USS *Hayburton* (left) and USS *Ramage* (right) as escorts; the U.S. Navy Blue Angels flew in salute overhead – July 21, 1997  
Photo U.S. Navy

**1998**                    **Bicentennial International Salute to the United States Navy - USS *Constitution* at the head of the Tall Ships Parade, Boston Harbor**

**2000-09**                    **Memorandum of Understanding** – between the USS Constitution Museum and the United States Navy to partner in “*Old Ironsides*” Across the Nation (OIAN), a national education outreach program. Twenty-two trips were made to different US cities, with the Detachment participating in the weekend activities, meeting and educating nearly 30,000 people.

*‘During family-friendly weekend events, Museum staff, USS Constitution crew, and artisans from the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston welcome the public to explore ‘Old Ironsides’ by handling replica objects from the Ship, learning knot-tying, engraving their names into copper sheathing to be installed aboard the Ship, discussing Navy life past and present, and witnessing the teamwork, stamina, and discipline required to handle a 6000-pound long gun during battle.’<sup>11</sup>*



Richard Collier (right), William Phelan (center rear), NHHC Detachment Boston, with maritime tools, Bozeman, Montana OIAN trip, October 13, 2004; CDR Lewin Wright, *Constitution*, looks on (right rear)



Elizabeth Frost, NHHC Detachment Boston sail maker explains furling *Constitution*’s sails, Bozeman, Montana OIAN trip, October 13, 2004

Photos USS *Constitution* Public Affairs Office

**2007-10**                    **Restoration** – in preparation for commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War of

<sup>11</sup> Rebecca Crawford. “*Old Ironsides*” Across the Nation summary report, USS Constitution Museum, Boston, [2009].



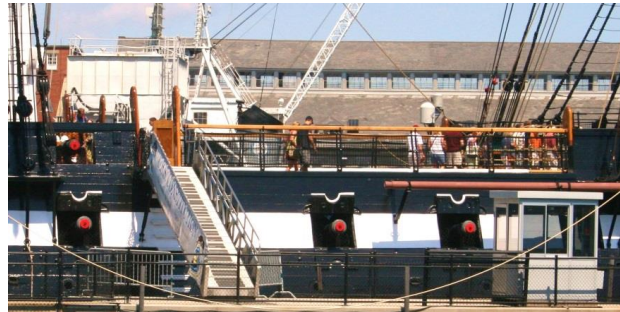
1812, the 2007 restoration re-created part of the ‘1812 look’ to *Constitution’s* hull with the lowering of the upper bulwarks and opening the waist of the ship; with this work, ~20 tons of excess weight was removed from the ship and its 215-year-old keel. The 2007-10 restoration was finished on time and under budget.



Removal of upper bulwarks at spar deck cap rail



Antwine Burdett removes portion of starboard solid waist bulwarks; Eric Boyer looks on (left)



Re-created open waist and hammock netting, 2010

2007 restoration photos Margherita M. Desy/NHHC Detachment Boston

**2008-Present** **Annual History & Interpretation Training for USS *Constitution* Crew** – the historian of the NHHC Detachment Boston, working with the curatorial and educational staff of the USS Constitution Museum, annually conducts *Constitution* history and visitor interpretation training for the 75+ ship’s force; throughout the year, as new *Constitution* crew arrive, the Detachment’s historian assists with their “InDoc” history training to prepare the new crew for ship interpretation and ship tours.



NHHC Detachment Boston historian Margherita M. Desy leading USS *Constitution* crew in history training, c. 2018  
USS *Constitution* Public Affairs Office Photo

**2008-2012**      **Salem Maritime Festival** – the Detachment hosted a display area at the National Park Service’s Annual Maritime Festival at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, interacting with ~9,000 visitors during each festival. Detachment staff shared the history of USS *Constitution*, including the ship’s restorations, and afforded visitors the opportunity to sign their names on copper sheets that were attached to the ship’s lower hull in the 2015 restoration.

**2009**      **USS *Constitution* Designated ‘America’s Ship of State’** – H.R. 2647, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Sect. 1022, ‘Designation of U.S.S. *Constitution* as America’s Ship of State’, signed by President Barack Obama October 28, 2009.<sup>12</sup>



President Barack Obama, signing H.R. 2647  
Photo: Doug Mills/*The New York Times*

**2011-12**      **War of 1812 Stamp featuring USS *Constitution*** – based upon research by the Detachment Boston historian and others, the Navy Art Collection c.1803 watercolor painting of USS *Constitution* attributed to Michele Felice Corné was chosen as the image for the War of 1812 commemoration stamp; the first-day issue of the stamp was held August 18, 2012 in the Charlestown Navy Yard; the Detachment Boston historian was one of the event’s speakers.



Mock-up of the USS *Constitution* War of 1812 anniversary stamp  
Courtesy U.S. Postal Service

**2012**      **Commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War of 1812 and 200 years of peace between the United States and Great Britain and the United States and Canada and *Guerriere* Battle Commemoration Sail** – August 19, to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of War of 1812 and the first frigate-to-frigate battle, USS *Constitution* vs. HMS *Guerriere*. *Constitution* set three topsails and sailed under its own power for ~45 minutes, the first time since the ship’s historic sail in 1997.

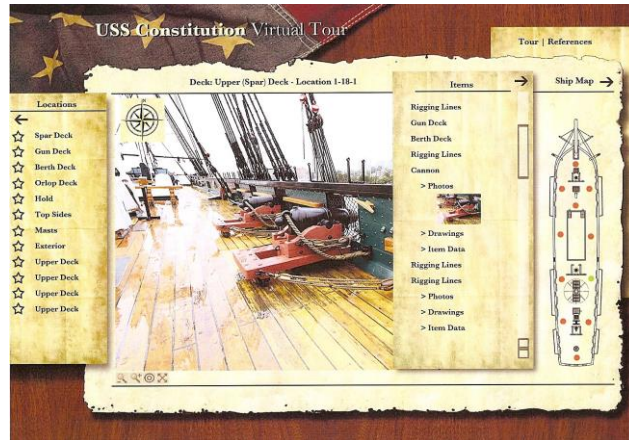
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<sup>12</sup> “...The U.S.S. *Constitution*’s primary mission will remain education and public outreach, and any Ship of State functions will be an adjunct to the ship’s primary mission...It is the sense of Congress that the President, Vice President, executive branch officials, and members of Congress should use the U.S.S. *Constitution* for the conducting of pertinent matters of state, such as hosting visiting heads of state, signing legislation relating to the Armed Forces, and signing maritime related treaties.” H.R. 2647, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Subtitle C – Naval Vessels and Shipyards, Sec. 1022., ‘Designation of U.S.S. *Constitution* as America’s Ship of State. <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c111:6:/temp/~c111z0Mlo1:e816694>

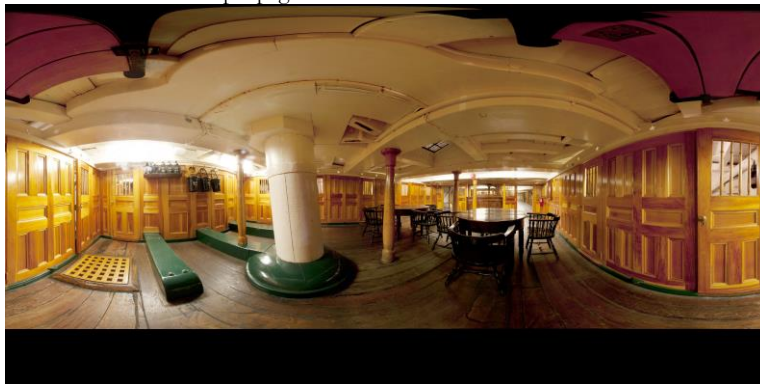


USS *Constitution* under sail, August 19, 2012  
Photo MC2 Kathryn MacDonald, USS *Constitution* PAO

**NHHC Detachment Boston website with first Virtual Tour of USS *Constitution* launched** – the new website provided the physical history of “Old Ironsides” and the virtual tour enabled website visitors to explore areas of the ship that are usually off limits; the virtual tour also included reports and detail photographs to enhance the tour experience.



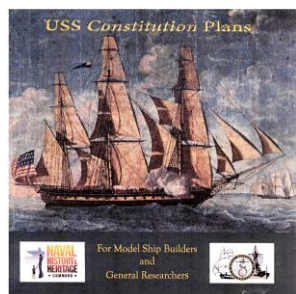
Sample page – USS *Constitution* Virtual Tour



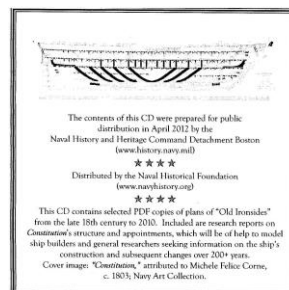
360° photograph of USS *Constitution*'s ward room for the Virtual Tour



**“USS *Constitution* Plans” CD, created by NHHC Detachment Boston** – intended for ship modelers and historians of all levels, the CD included both historic and 20<sup>th</sup> plans of *Constitution*, providing detail on the ship’s construction and restoration over the centuries.

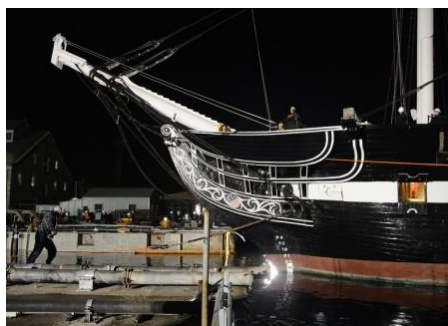


“USS *Constitution* Plans” CD cover  
 Courtesy Naval History & Heritage Command and the Naval Historical Foundation, 2012



“USS *Constitution* Plans” table of contents  
 Courtesy Naval History & Heritage Command and the Naval Historical Foundation, 2012

**2015 – 2018 Restoration** – *Constitution*’s first 21<sup>st</sup> century dry docking began on May 18, 2015.



USS *Constitution* crossing the sill of Dry Dock 1, May 18, 2015  
 Photo MCSN Matthew Fairchild, USS *Constitution* PAO

The following work projects were addressed in the 2015 dry docking and restoration:

- |                    |  |                  |
|--------------------|--|------------------|
| Gun deck waterways | Below-the-waterline re-caulking              | Copper sheathing |
| Quarter galleries  | Above and below-the-waterline hull planks    |                  |
| Cutwater on bow    | Hawse pipes                                  | New trailboards  |
| Bow cap rail       | Above-the-waterline stern framing & planking |                  |
| Boat davits        | Refurbished cambouse (galley stove)          | New fore top     |



Ian Robertson (foreground), Alex Briere (middle) & John Pelikan installs port gun deck waterway, August 2015



New framing for port quarter gallery, June 2016<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Margherita M. Desy, “The Quarter Galleries,” USS Constitution Museum, <https://ussconstitutionmuseum.org/2017/02/03/the-quarter-galleries/>, (accessed October 4, 2021).



Joshua Ratty using GEMINI Universal Carving Duplicator replicating *Constitution's* 1930 trailboards, April 2017<sup>14</sup>



Copper sheathing installation by David Cavanaugh (left,) Joseph Halter (center) and Bruce Caporal (right) just forward of *Constitution's* rudder, starboard side, February 2017<sup>15</sup>



Riggers Ryan Whitehead and Steven Ridlon set starboard fore topmast lanyards, July 2017

2015 restoration photos Margherita M. Desy/Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston

**2015 - 2018**     **USS *Constitution* Restoration Blog** – in collaboration with the USS Constitution Museum, the Detachment Boston historian wrote a restoration blog to chronicle the 2015-2018 dry docking and restoration work on *Constitution*. Twice-monthly postings kept the public informed of the 2015-2018 work and past re-builds/restorations of the ship; the blog posts are archived on the USS Constitution Museum's website.

<sup>14</sup> Margherita M. Desy, "Happy Trails," USS Constitution Museum, <https://ussconstitutionmuseum.org/2017/05/05/happy-trails/>, (accessed October 4, 2021).

<sup>15</sup> Margherita M. Desy, Phaedra Scott and Kate Monea, "New Copper Sheathing," USS Constitution Museum, <https://ussconstitutionmuseum.org/2016/11/18/new-copper-sheathing-2/>, (accessed October 4, 2021).



May 4, 2015  
Caption: Restoration, Blue  
By: Markowski, Dave



May 11, 2015  
Caption: Restoration, Blue  
By: Markowski, Dave



"The Wooden Walls" blog, May 11, 2015

Where Are They Now? Constitution's 1906 Guns



March 17, 2016  
Caption: Restoration, Blue, L. Ammann, Blue  
By: Markowski, Dave, Kim, Maria

Although USS Constitution underwent several periods of repair and rebuilding in her time, she has first time restoration work done in 1906 when a very modern gun of 400,000 was utilized by the USS Constitution in the war vessel experiment. The Naval Constructor Blue chose to use the work, which began in the summer of 1906 and was completed by August 1910 in that one year of work. Constitution was transferred from her dock in a massive ship to the appearance of a single 1906 gun caliber warship. The restoration, which was possible, included the removal of the structure from the structure, the installation of a valve, and the opening of the water below. Added to the list of work accomplished was the casting of 24 guns for the year and gun deck. Another installation of an engine, about 1000 lbs for the first time in 1906.

It was quite clear to us that the Naval Constructor Team determined the gun pattern for the gun and gun deck. However, we prepared research that had to believe that there was no documentation left regarding Constitution's 1906 gun. Based on the gun deck the original gun on the Constitution's deck, built in 1906, we had to instead select an information from Louis, David's, and Kim's 1906 gun restoration. (Amann, L. Ammann's) Comparison and use of French system.



"Where Are They Now?" blog, March 17, 2016

AWARDS

1991

**The Don Turner Award** – was established by the USS Constitution Museum and ‘...honors Don Turner, former head of USS Constitution Maintenance and Repair Facility, for his singular contribution toward the preservation of “Old Ironsides” and the skills that built her, as well as his knowledge of and dedication to the ancient art of shipbuilding, and to recognize others who are similarly dedicated to maritime preservation and advances in ship construction and design.’<sup>16</sup>

Donald A. Turner, former director of the Constitution Maintenance & Repair Facility was the first recipient of the award.



Don Turner (left) on USS Constitution's spar deck, April 19, 1974.  
Photo U.S. Navy

<sup>16</sup> Citation of the Don Turner Award, USS Constitution Museum, Boston, MA.



- 1994 National Maritime Alliance Award for Excellence** – presented to the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston for restoration work on USS *Constitution*.
- 1995 The 5<sup>th</sup> Don Turner Award** – presented by the USS Constitution Museum to Charles Deans, Director, Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston
- 1996 Citation from the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, ADM H.W. Gehman, Jr.**– to the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston:  
*For exceptional performance of duty from 17 July 1992 to 27 March 1996. During this period personnel of the Naval Historical Center Detachment [Boston] excelled in performing one of the most extensive rehabilitation and restoration efforts for USS CONSTITUTION in her 200 year history... the NHC [DET Boston] conducted meticulous research into CONSTITUTION's early configuration disclosing evidence of a hull stiffening system which had been installed during her original construction, but had been removed later in her life... Through their exemplary efforts and dedication to duty as they prepared CONSTITUTION... for her third century of service to her country, the men and women of the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston, reflected great credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.*<sup>17</sup>
- The 6<sup>th</sup> Don Turner Award** – presented by the USS Constitution Museum to Patrick Otton, Historian, Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston
- 1997 Meritorious Unit Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy, John H. Dalton:**  
*'...to USS CONSTITUTION and NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER DETACHMENT, BOSTON... CITATION: For meritorious service from 1 July 1995 to 26 July 1997. The personnel of the USS CONSTITUTION and the Naval Historical Center Detachment, Boston have consistently proven themselves dedicated to their mission of presenting the ship to millions of visitors. The vision of the ship leading the Navy and the Nation into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by returning to the basic premise upon which she was built – to sail – was the motivation for every crew member to excel... With masterful coordination and meticulous planning, the ship and detachment assembled a superb team of Navy experts and collaborated with a dedicated group of non-profit and civic organizations to make sailing the CONSTITUTION, during her 1997 Bicentennial Yard, a reality. By their bold and innovative accomplishments, extensive enthusiasm, and steadfast devotion to duty, the officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian employees of USS CONSTITUTION and Naval Historical Center Detachment, Boston reflected credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.'*<sup>18</sup>
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Don Turner Award** – presented by the USS Constitution Museum to Robert J. Burbank & the Riggers of USS *Constitution*, Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Preservation Award** – to the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston/USS *Constitution*: “For rehabilitation and... restoration of the USS *Constitution*...”<sup>19</sup>
- The Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1997 Preservation Award** – “...for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to preservation in the Commonwealth

<sup>17</sup> Commendation from the Vice Chief of Naval Operation, ADM H.W. Gehman, Jr., 1996. Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston archives.

<sup>18</sup> Meritorious Unit Commendation from the Secretary of Navy, John H. Dalton, 1997. Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston archives.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Moe, President. Citation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation National Preservation Award, 1997.

of Massachusetts.”<sup>20</sup>

**2010**      **The 16<sup>th</sup> Don Turner Award** – presented by the USS Constitution Museum to Richard T. Whelan, Director, Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston.

**2017**      Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston shared in the **Meritorious Unit Commendation** presented to USS *Constitution* by ADM J.M. Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations; the extension of the MUC to the Detachment Boston was through the auspices of CDR Robert Gerosa, USS *Constitution*’s commanding officer during the 2015 dry docking and restoration.

**2017**      **The 23<sup>rd</sup> Don Turner Award** – presented by the USS Constitution Museum to the Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston in recognition of the 2015-2018 dry docking and restoration of USS *Constitution*



Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston staff with Don Turner Award, September 14, 2017  
Photo Gunners Mate 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Erin Bullock, USS *Constitution* PAO

The recognition of the Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston staff by the USS Constitution Museum’s Don Turner Award, over the years, attests to the unique nature of the talents gathered together at the Detachment to fulfill its mission as a leading preservation organization in the U.S. Navy which preserves USS *Constitution*, ‘America’s Ship of State’.

**Media**                      (Select media since 1997 – all contributions by NHC/NHHC Detachment Boston staff)

- Television:**      History Channel:  
                         ‘Old Ironsides Returns to the Sea’  
                         Public Television:  
                         ‘This Old House’  
                         Bob Vila’s ‘Restore America’  
                         ‘History Detectives’  
                         ‘Rough Cut-Woodworking with Tommy Mac’  
                         Discovery Channel (including Smithsonian Channel & BBC World Wide):

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<sup>20</sup> William Francis Galvin, Chairman, Secretary of the Commonwealth and Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director, State Historic Preservation Officer. Citation of The Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1997 Preservation Award.

United Kingdom – ‘The True Story-Master & Commander’ Documentary  
Canada – ‘Daily Planet’

National & Local Affiliate Television:

Fox News

WBZ-TV, Boston – “In Their Shoes”;

WCVB, Boston – “Chronicle”

**Print:** *All Hands; Arte Navale (Italy); Boston Globe & Boston Globe Magazine;  
Constitution Chronicle; FF Journal; Marlinspike Magazine; National Geographic (US  
& Japan); Naval History Magazine; PCE International; Sea History Magazine;  
Wooden Boat Magazine*

**Radio:** *All Things Considered – New Hampshire Public Radio  
Radio Boston – WBUR  
Up All Night – BBC, UK*





## APPENDIX A

### USS *Constitution* Boston Navy Yard Chronology 1897-1991

- 1897      **Arrival of USS *Constitution*** to the Boston Navy Yard from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine
- 1906-07      **First “restoration”:** Removal of receiving ship barn; re-creation of sailing rig; and replica guns cast to restore *Constitution*’s look of its sailing warship days
- 1927-31      Four-year, **nearly \$1 million restoration of USS *Constitution***; ~85 per cent of the ship was “renewed”, thereby guaranteeing the longevity of the ship for the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- 1931-34      Three-coast **National Cruise** of *Constitution* after having been re-commissioned and fully outfitted at the Charlestown Navy Yard including a suit of canvas sails, newly made replica long guns and carronades (cast in Charlestown Navy Yard’s foundry), furnishings, etc. Over 4.6 million men, women & children visited the ship when it made 90 stops at 76 different ports on the Atlantic, Gulf, & Pacific coasts.
- 1940-45      **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** ordered USS *Constitution* & USS *Constellation* (1854) to be placed in commission to serve as symbolic flagships of the US Navy fleet; *Constitution* was re-commissioned on August 24, 1940. During WWII, *Constitution* was used as barracks for officers awaiting court martial.<sup>21</sup>
- 1947      **USS *Constitution* U.S. Postal Stamp** in honor of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Constitution*’s launch
- 1954      **Public Law 523:** ‘An Act To provide for the restoration and maintenance of the United States Ship Constitution... *Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the Secretary of the Navy is authorized to repair, equip, and restore the United States ship *Constitution*, as far as may be practicable, to her original condition..., and thereafter to maintain the United States ship *Constitution* at Boston, Massachusetts.’”
- 1960      USS *Constitution* was the first historic ship to be designated a **National Historic Landmark** by the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service.
- 1973-76      Dry docking (1973-1974) and restoration of *Constitution* (1973-1976), in preparation for the American Bicentennial; formal disestablishment of the Boston (Charlestown) Navy Yard on

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<sup>21</sup> Tyrone G. Martin, *A Most Fortunate Ship: A Narrative History of ‘Old Ironsides’* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997 reprint ed.), 359.

July 1, 1974 and creation of the National Park Service **Boston National Historical Park**, which included 30 acres of the original Charlestown Navy Yard.

1976

**Visit of Queen Elizabeth II** to USS *Constitution* on July 11, 1976 as part of the American Bicentennial celebrations; this visit is the first and only time (so far) that a reigning monarch of Great Britain has set foot on the deck of *Constitution*.



Queen Elizabeth II greeted by CDR Tyrone G. Martin; Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf II (center) and Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh (center left)  
Photo U.S. Navy

1977

**USS *Constitution* placed on the National Register of Historic Places** by the United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service.<sup>22</sup>

1981

**USS *Constitution* Maintenance Manual** was written to document the maintenance and preservation of the ship. The acknowledgements state: “*This maintenance manual could not have been assembled without the continued support of Donald A. Turner, Director of the Constitution Maintenance & Repair Facility. His personal knowledge, gained from many years of experience on the Constitution constitutes the greatest single reference source used in this manual’s development.*”<sup>23</sup>

## U.S.S. CONSTITUTION



### MAINTENANCE MANUAL

OCTOBER 1981

Cover, USS CONSTITUTION Maintenance Manual

<sup>22</sup> National Archives & Records Administration, Records of the National Park Service National Register of Historic Places, [www.catalog.archives.gov/id/63793893](http://www.catalog.archives.gov/id/63793893).

<sup>23</sup> P.W. Witherell, *U.S.S. Constitution Maintenance Manual*. Boston, MA: Department of the Navy, Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversation and Repair, USN, 1981.

1987

**Maritime Heritage Award** of The World Ship Trust was presented to CDR David Cashman, commanding officer, USS *Constitution*, by President Ronald Reagan at the White House on December 17<sup>th</sup>. President Reagan noted, “As a nation we can take special pride in the fact that our citizens’ efforts to preserve ‘Old Ironsides’ have received this singular international recognition.”<sup>24</sup> USS *Constitution* was only the fifth historic ship to receive this award, since the award’s founding in 1980; to date, 25 more ships have joined the ranks with ‘Old Ironsides’. CDR Cashman accepted the award on behalf of all those who have contributed to the preservation of *Constitution*.<sup>25</sup>



President Ronald Reagan presenting the World Ship Trust Maritime Heritage Award to CDR David Cashman, December 17, 1987.  
White House photograph.

1991

**Establishment of the Naval Historical Center Detachment Boston** on October 25, 1991.



<sup>24</sup> President Ronald Reagan, remarks delivered December 17, 1987 at the White House ceremony for the Maritime Heritage Medal on behalf of the World Ship Trust and the National Maritime Historical Society; Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston accession file 2016.11.

<sup>25</sup> “The World Ship Trust is dedicated to the recognition of, and support for, historic vessels. It bestows its prestigious Maritime Heritage Award upon those ships considered of transcendent importance in the context of maritime history and heritage...” World Ship Trust, home page: [www.worldshiptrust.org/home.htm](http://www.worldshiptrust.org/home.htm), (accessed October 5, 2011).





## APPENDIX B

### Directors

#### Naval Historical Center/Naval History & Heritage Command Detachment Boston Since Its Establishment to the Present

Donald A. Turner	Pre-1974 closure of the Charlestown Navy Yard – 1991
Charles M. Deans	1991 – 2003
Richard T. Whelan	2003 – December 31, 2010
Milton G. Ryan	January 30, 2011 – January 10, 2015
Naval History & Heritage Command	January 11 – 24, 2015 (temporary direct oversight)
Richard C. Moore	Acting Director, January 25 – March 21, 2015 Director – March 22, 2015 – to the present