H-Gram 078: "The Revolt of the Admirals"

20 March 2023

This H-gram discusses the 1949 "Revolt of the Admirals" and provides background information for the renaming decisions for USS Chancellorsville *(CG-62) to USS* Robert Smalls *and USNS* Maury *(T-AGS 66) to USNS* Marie Tharp.

80th Anniversary of World War II

*A historic "something to think about": By the end of October 1942, after 11 months of war, the U.S. Navy had lost four fleet carriers and the Japanese had lost four fleet carriers. Each side had one carrier undergoing extensive battle-damage repair, and each side had one fleet carrier operating in significantly degraded mode (*Zuikaku *due to loss of so many aircraft at the Battle of Santa Cruz and USS* Enterprise *[CV-6] from damage in the same battle). By the end of 1943, the Japanese had yet to replace any of their carrier losses, while the United States had seven* Essex*-class fleet carriers and nine* Independence*-class light carriers (built on light cruiser hulls). All of the new carriers had been authorized and funded, and all but one* Essex *and five* Independence *hulls were laid down* before *the attack on Pearl Harbor,* in anticipation *of war. (Moreover, all 10 new fast battleships plus 4 heavy cruisers and 20 light cruisers were laid down before the war started.) Had it not been for this foresight of Democrat Congressman Carl Vinson (the "father of the two-ocean Navy") and the Roosevelt administration, it would have been early 1945 before the much greater industrial capacity of the United States would have made a difference against the Japanese.*

James Forrestal is sworn in as the first Secretary of Defense by Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, 17 September 1947. Also present are (left to right): unidentified; Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall; General Dwight D. Eisenhower; Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan; Fleet Admiral C.W. Nimitz; Secretary of the Air Force Stuart Symington; and General Carl Spaatz (80-G-704442).

"The Revolt of the Admirals"

At the recent Navy Flag Officer and Senior Executive Service (NFOSES) symposium, reference was made in one presentation to the "Revolt of the Admirals." I thought I would save you some reading time (although David Halberstam's book The Coldest Winter *is worth a read).*

For the U.S. Navy, 1949 was a really bad year. On 22 May, the recently fired Secretary of Defense

(and previous Secretary of the Navy) James V. Forrestal committed suicide at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Two days later, the Secretary of the Navy, John L. Sullivan, resigned in protest over the arbitrary cancellation by the new Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, of the supercarrier USS United States *(CVA-58) after the ship had been laid down (Johnson gave no notice to the Navy or Congress). The new Secretary of the Navy was Francis P. "Rowboat" Matthews, whose "military" experience consisted of being the 8th Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus and, by his own admission, once having rowed a boat (hence the pejorative nickname). There followed a series of incredibly contentious congressional hearings on service roles and missions, in which Navy admirals publicly defied the guidance of Johnson (who was blatantly partisan in favor of the newly independent U.S. Air Force) and Matthews. The Navy lost the public relations battle to the Air Force, CNO Admiral Louis Denfeld was fired, and a number of other Navy flag officers and captains had their careers prematurely ended.*

The root of evil was, unsurprisingly, the budget, compounded by radical ideas for unification and termination of missions pushed by mostly the Air Force, but also by the U.S. Army. By 1949, the entire U.S. defense establishment, but especially the Navy, was reeling under the effects of draconian post–World War II budget cuts by the Truman administration. The Navy budget went from $24 billion in 1946 to $4.6 billion in 1947, and to $3.7 billion in 1948 and 1949 (equivalent to about $33 billion today). This resulted in all but one battleship and all but about five aircraft carriers going into mothballs. Roles-and-missions arguments being vigorously pursued by other services included complete elimination of the Marine Corps and control of all air assets by the Air Force (who saw no need for aircraft carriers or naval aviation, since strategic bombers with atomic weapons would be all that was required).

As the last Secretary of the Navy to hold cabinet rank, and the first Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal was able to keep some of the most radical proposals at bay, but fought a gradually losing battle against the budget cuts sought by President Truman. The fight eventually cost Forrestal his sanity, literally. A muckraking journalist "outed" Forrestal's discussions with the campaign of Republican candidate Thomas E. Dewey (widely expected to win the 1948 presidential election) to continue as SECDEF in a Dewey administration. After Truman unexpectedly won reelection, he asked Forrestal to resign.

Forrestal's replacement, Louis Johnson, gained the job of Secretary of Defense by virtue of being Truman's chief campaign fund-raiser. Politically ambitious, Johnson viewed even more drastic cuts to the defense budget as his own ticket to the presidency. He bought the Air Force argument that strategic bombers—by themselves—could win any future wars faster and at far less expense than the other services.

Johnson's attitude can be summed up by this quote: "The Navy is on its way out. There's no reason for having a Navy and a Marine Corps. General Bradley [then Chairman of the JCS] tells me amphibious operations are a thing of the past. We'll never have any more amphibious operations. That does away with the Marine Corps. And the Air Force can do anything the Navy can do, so that does away with the Navy." He meant it—and showed it by one of his first actions, which canceled the carrier United States *in favor of the Air Force's B-36 Peacemaker strategic bomber program.*

Viewing the coming budget battle as existential in nature, an office in OPNAV (OP-23), headed by then-Captain Arleigh Burke, was tasked with digging up as much information to oppose the B-36 program as well as further service unification efforts. Although not officially part of the OP-23 effort, a Navy officer prepared what become known as the "Anonymous Letter" that, based on rumor, accused Secretary Johnson and the Secretary of the Air Force of corrupt conflicts of interest related to the B-36 program. When it became public, the letter backfired badly on the Navy. The result was a series of hearings, led by Chairman of the House Armed Service Committee

Carl Vinson (who was sympathetic to the Navy) that devolved into arguably the most ugly spectacle of inter-service "rivalry" in U.S. history—and the Navy lost.

The American public (and their representatives) were largely swayed by the Air Force's public relations campaign for waging strategic nuclear warfare on the cheap—a strategy that the VCNO, Admiral Arthur Radford, called "morally reprehensible" in public testimony. The parade of active duty and retired admirals (including King, Nimitz, and Halsey) were viewed as recalcitrant, interested only in protecting Navy equities, while defying the concept of civilian control of the military. This was deemed by the press as the "Revolt of the Admirals."

In the end, CNO Denfeld publicly testified in support of the admirals' opposition to the Truman budget, in defiance of Secretary Matthew's direction. As a result, on 27 October 1949, Matthews fired Denfeld, an action that Vinson said was purely vindictive. Matthews replaced Denfeld with Admiral Forrest Sherman, the youngest-ever CNO at the time (who died in office of a heart attack in 1951), who immediately disbanded OP-23. Other senior admirals then retired early.

As all this was going on, China fell to the Communists and the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb. And then, in June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea, launching a war in which aircraft carriers played a key role and the B-36 absolutely none. History showed that Johnson and Matthews (and the Air Force) were wrong. Two Navy officers who somewhat amazingly survived the fallout were Arthur Radford, who became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Arleigh Burke, who became CNO, both in the Eisenhower administration.

The "Revolt of the Admirals" is an extreme case study in tension that exists to this day in civil-military relations. It is viewed by some as disloyalty to the concept of civilian control of the military, in that the admirals publicly voiced opposition to the President's budget and policies (that they truly believed were not in the best interest in the nation). At the same time, Congress (a co-equal branch of government) demanded forthright and honest testimony from the admirals. So, damned if they did, damned if they didn't, but the admirals chose honesty.

For more, please see the attached paper (H-078-1) by NHHC historian Peter Luebke, PhD.

USS Chancellorsville *to USS* Robert Smalls

Text of the "5030" directive signed 10 February by Secretary of the Navy Del Toro and announced 28 February 2023:

> *USS* ROBERT SMALLS *"honors Robert Smalls (1839–1915), a skilled Sailor and statesman born into slavery in South Carolina. An expert navigator of southern coasts, Smalls was conscripted in 1862 to serve as a pilot of the Confederate steamer PLANTER at Charleston. On 13 May 1862, he executed a daring escape out of the heavily fortified Charleston harbor with his family, other enslaved people, and valuable military cargo aboard, and successfully surrendered PLANTER to the U.S. Navy. Smalls continued as pilot of the ship, but also piloted ironclad KEOKUK and other vessels. He ultimately became captain of PLANTER. An ardent advocate for African Americans, Smalls led one of the first boycotts of segregated transportation in 1864. This movement led to the city of Philadelphia integrating street cars in 1867. After the Civil War, Smalls was appointed a brigadier general in the South Carolina militia, and from 1868–1874 he served in the South Carolina legislature. In 1874, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served for five terms, advocating for greater integration. After his time in Congress, Smalls was twice appointed collector of the Port of Beaufort, South Carolina. He died at Beaufort in 1915.*

For more detail and the rationale on the renaming of USS Chancellorsville*, please see attachment H-078-2.*

USNS Maury *to USNS* Marie Tharp

Text of the "5030" directive signed 10 February by Secretary Del Toro and announced 8 March 2023:

> *Marie Tharp (1920–2006) was a pioneering geologist and oceanographic cartographer who created the first scientific maps of the Atlantic Ocean floor and shaped our understanding of plate tectonics and continental drift. Between 1946 and 1952, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute's research vessel ATLANTIS used sonar to obtain depth measurements of the North Atlantic Ocean, which Tharp, in collaboration with her colleague, Bruce C. Heezen (namesake of T-AGS 64) used to create highly detailed seafloor profiles and maps. While examining these profiles, Tharp noticed a cleft in the ocean floor that she deduced to be a rift valley that ran along the ridge crest and continued along the length of its axis, evidence of continental drift. At the time, the consensus of the U.S. scientific community held continental drift to be impossible, but later examination bore out Tharp's hypothesis. Her work thus proved instrumental to the development of Plate Tectonic Theory, a revolutionary idea in the field of geology at the time. Owing to this and other innovative mapping efforts (some of which the Navy funded), the National Geographic Society awarded Tharp and Heezen (posthumously) its highest honor, the Hubbard Medal, placing them among the ranks of other pioneering researchers and explorers such as Sir Ernest Shackleton, Charles Lindbergh, and Rear Admiral Richard E Byrd.*

For more background and the rationale for renaming USNS Maury, *please see attachment H-078-2.*

As always, you are welcome to share H-grams as desired. Previous H-grams may be found here: https://www.history.navy.mil/about-us/leadership/director/directors-corner/h-grams.html.

Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson (center) attends a briefing with several naval officers in the hangar of an aircraft carrier, 1949 (NH 96303).

H-078-1: The Revolt of the Admirals"

H-Gram 078, Attachment 1
Peter C. Luebke, PhD, NHHC History Advisory Group
March 2023

Introduction

In 1949, a series of congressional hearings that were intended to investigate alleged irregularities in the procurement of the Air Force's B-36 Peacemaker strategic bomber became a referendum on the roles and missions of the Navy. Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Louis Denfeld delivered testimony that diverged from the views of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Omar Bradley, Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews, and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, particularly on matters of naval aviation and the Navy's role in executing national strategy. Following Denfeld's testimony, Truman removed Denfeld as CNO. The public airing of Navy grievances in the hearings—and ouster of Denfeld—led the press to dub the affair the "Revolt of the Admirals." Although the B-36 served as the proximate cause of the "revolt," the entire matter reflected the contentious and unsettled configuration of national security and defense establishment following World War II.

The "Revolt"

Contextualizing the "Revolt of the Admirals" demonstrates the affair to have been a particularly public coda to arguments that had occurred largely out of sight among the services, the President, and the new Department of Defense. Disagreements about the roles and missions of the armed services in an era of austerity following World War II—predicated upon perceived lessons learned about how the U.S. had fought that war—created tension among the armed services.

The United States won a clear victory in World War II. Lessons other than that all the services had played a critical role in securing that victory remained less clear. The role and use of aviation in particular created friction between the services, as the Navy and Army Air Forces (AAF) drew diverging lessons from World War II.

During the interwar years, U.S. Navy leadership grasped that aviation would play a large role in the coming war. Navy leadership explored concepts of how precisely naval air power could be used with fleet problems and at the Naval War College prior to World War II. The campaigns in the Pacific validated the central role of naval aviation to the Navy. Aircraft carriers demonstrated themselves as key platforms for force projection and naval air power that could operate effectively against shore-based opposition and targets. Historian Jeffrey Barlow observed that, by the end of World War II, the Navy believed "its carrier would have to be capable of launching limited offensive strikes against selected land targets in the initial stages of a war."[1] World War II had also shown the Navy the value of controlling its own air assets, so that they could be used with maximum efficiency to support operations.

The AAF, as well, thought that World War II had validated its concept of operations. AAF leadership assessed the strategic bombing campaign against the Axis powers as a great success that proved beyond a doubt the efficacy of strategic airpower. While some studies, such as that of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, found that the strategic air campaign had not been as effective as claimed, AAF leadership tended to write any shortfalls off to divided efforts. In other words, they thought diversion of AAF resources to provide tactical air support and other support for the Army and the Navy had hurt the strategic bombing campaign, which would have been more successful had it been conducted independently and free from other requirements.[2] The fact that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki led to Japanese surrender only strengthened AAF conviction that strategic bombardment had proven the centrality of strategic bombardment.

Thus, the Navy and the AAF held different views on lessons learned from World War II. Navy leadership, for its part, saw that the war had shown the importance of aviation for projecting naval power. Reflecting its experience in the Pacific, the Navy also saw the importance of tactical air power for success. The AAF examined the evidence and thought its strategic bombardment campaigns had been the real reason America won the war. These deeply held beliefs, drawn from the experience of World War II, would shape postwar debates over national security policy and defense unification. The Army Air Force believed World War II demonstrated it needed sole control over the air, while the Navy argued that the Pacific campaigns substantiated the need for its own air component.

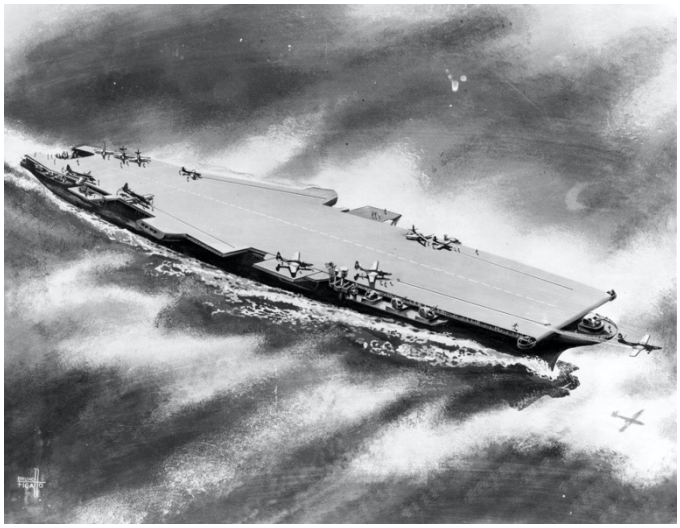
World War II also made clear the need for some kind of unification of the armed forces. The scope, scale, and complexity of operations suggested that some unifying head—other than the chief executive—would need to synchronize joint efforts. The Navy feared that unification would undermine its independence and result in the lion's share of postwar funding going to the Army or the AAF. The Marine Corps also feared for its existence under a unified structure, in which the Army might make it redundant. Eventually, President Harry S. Truman made clear that he supported unification efforts. Accordingly, in 1946 Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal and Secretary of War Robert

Patterson, with input from their service heads, agreed upon the form of a unified defense establishment. Among other changes, the Army and Navy would be placed under a secretary of defense, as would the newly created Air Force.[3]

The passage of the National Security Act of 1947 formally established the JCS as well as created the National Military Establishment (NME) and the position of Secretary of Defense. While unification had occurred on paper, it remained for the new Secretary of Defense and the services to thrash out the division of roles and responsibilities within the new structure. The National Security Act and Executive Order 9877, in which President Truman directed its implementation, assigned broad responsibilities to the services based on domain. Room remained for the services to debate their own primacy and roles, especially as concerned aviation. The Navy's requests for large aircraft carriers—ones that might embark aircraft that could deliver atomic weapons—emerged as a topic of especial sensitivity, as it seemed to overlap with the newly created Air Force's strategic mission. Questions also arose around the apparent overlap of the roles and missions of the Army and the Marine Corps.[4]

Secretary of Defense James Forrestal convened two separate conferences with the JCS to address the issue of air power and atomic weapons. The first of these took place at Key West in March 1948. There, the services agreed that the Navy would maintain its own air assets but the Air Force would bear sole responsibility for the strategic strike mission. Despite the apparent harmony, Air Force Chief of Staff Carl Spaatz indicated he still believed that the Air Force should control all air assets. A meeting at Newport, Rhode Island in July 1948 addressed questions regarding the control and use of nuclear weapons, with the Navy arguing that it required access and use to accomplish its mission. The Air Force, however, saw this position as encroachment upon its strategic role.[5] These debates prompted CNO Denfeld to establish the Organizational Research and Policy Division (OP-23) under the leadership of Captain Arleigh Burke. Scholars have assessed the role of OP-23 as "countering arguments favoring service unification."[6]

Addressing questions of roles, missions, unification, and national defense strategy would have resulted in tension among the services regardless, but a desire to cut overall government spending intensified the sharpness of the debate. In an era of diminishing budgets and looming austerity, debates over roles and missions and the limits of armed services integration could appear as existential crises for leadership. Increasing tensions with the Soviet Union created concerns regarding national security policy, most acutely, whether foreign aid would provide the most prudent way of ensuring the national interest or whether military expenditures would give the best outcome. Priorities far outweighed the means available to address them. And Truman kept cutting the budget. As Melvyn P. Leffler, an eminent scholar of the Cold War, has written, Truman thought that "domestic priorities must not be compromised; that economic reconstruction abroad was more important than rearmament at home; that coopting and reconstructing former enemies abroad were more important than engaging the new adversary."[7] Within the climate of constriction and budgetary pressure,



Artist's conception of USS *United States* (CVA-58) from October 1948 showing the ship's approximate planned configuration as of that time. Many details, among them the location of smoke stacks, elevators, and the retractable bridge, were then still not finally decided. This carrier was laid down at Newport News, Virginia, on 18 April 1949 and cancelled by Secretary of Defense Johnson a few days later (80-G-706108).

interservice rivalry over big-ticket defense expenditures could quickly intensify, especially given the Navy's resistance to unification and lingering distrust over whether the Air Force intended to abide by the Key West and Newport agreements.

A flashpoint proved to be a dispute over whether or not the JCS had agreed to the Navy's acquisition of *United States* (CV-58) dated from 1948, following the conference at Key West. In May of 1948, CNO Denfeld told Congress that the JCS had agreed to the carrier. Two weeks later, Carl Spaatz disputed Denfeld's statements and claimed that the Air Force had not agreed to the carrier. Such public divergences of opinion and ongoing argument between the services led the JCS to consider the issue again at 26 May meeting, where the JCS—except the Air Force—agreed to approve construction of the carrier. Congress provided funding and the Navy laid the keel for *United States* in February 1949.[9]

There matters stood, apparently resolved, until the appointment of Louis Johnson as Secretary of Defense on 28 March 1949. Forrestal had also brokered the agreements at Key West and Newport that apparently settled questions of the Navy's role. Sadly, the stress of the unification fights following his years of earlier service in the Navy Department had taken a toll on Forrestal, who had become increasingly unable to execute the responsibilities of his office.[10] Navy leadership felt no fondness at all for Johnson, who they perceived as an Air Force partisan. Events seemed to prove those fears right, as Johnson soon reopened discussion on whether or not the Navy truly needed *United States*. The JCS again discussed the carrier in April 1949, but this time the Army joined with the Air Force in opposing its construction. Aware of JCS draft memos, Johnson had already determined his response, so that when he received the final memos from JCS on 23 April, he immediately cancelled the carrier with the tacit approval of President Truman. A press release announced the decision.[11] Johnson's decision and his announcement of it came without consultation with either the Secretary of the Navy or the CNO. "Absolutely infuriated," Secretary of the Navy John Sullivan resigned.[12] Sullivan would be replaced by Francis P. Matthews, "a lawyer-businessman with no previous administrative experience in the federal government or military service."[13] The actions of Johnson also telegraphed to the Navy that under the new configuration, the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense could act arbitrarily, without due consideration of the uniformed service's opinions.

The ascendancy of the Air Force, exemplified by Johnson's cancellation of *United States* and a particularly active Air Force public affairs campaign, led to drastic, and unofficial, action by Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of the Navy Cedric R. Worth. Assisted by Commander Thomas D. Davies, a naval aviator who served as an assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air and also wore a hat as a staff officer in OP-23, Worth penned what became known as the "Anonymous document" that attacked the Air Force's B-36 strategic bomber program. One historian has assessed that document as "cobbled together from aeronautical industry gossip and wild suppositions;" that lobbed "highly negative aspersions on the reputations of senior officials in the National Military Establishment." Among other things, it alleged that the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Air Force had pushed for the B-36 because of undue influence and corruption.[14] The B-36 had become linked to *United States* because the two programs competed for the same limited resources and the apparent duplication of the strategic strike role with the large-scale bomber and the carrier capable of embarking aircraft that could carry strategic weapons. In mid-late April, Worth passed copies to Glenn Martin, an aerospace magnate and competitor of B-36 manufacturer Boeing. Martin made several copies and gave them to some influential contacts. Worth passed additional copies to others, including members of Congress. Little happened at first.[15]

Initially, chairman of the House Armed Service Committee Carl A. Vinson (D-GA) attempted to sidestep the issue of the Anonymous document, given its self-evident questionable nature. But, as copies of it circulated and discussion spread, it became impossible to avoid a formal response. Congressman James E. Van Zandt (R-PA) forced the issue. An opponent of the B-36, Van Zandt introduced a resolution calling for an investigation into the B-36 program and delivered a speech on the floor of Congress based on the Anonymous document. Vinson could not ignore the resolution and submitted his own resolution to Congress. Vinson's resolution passed, setting hearings on the B-36 program to start in August. Beyond the B-36, the committee would also consider questions on the roles and responsibilities of the services. Signs of trouble between OPNAV and the civilian leadership of the Navy Department appeared as the service prepared draft position papers; the uniformed officers' position papers evidenced a strong anti-Air Force agenda, which ran afoul of the wishes of Under Secretary of the Navy Dan Kimball.[16]

The first round of hearings on the B-36, which began on 9 August 1949, demonstrated the scurrilous nature of Worth's document. No witnesses nor evidence emerged that could show that either Secretary of Defense Johnson nor Secretary of the Air Force Stuart Symington had received kickbacks for the B-36. Vinson invited Navy representatives to sit in on the testimony of Air Force officials before the HASC so that they understood the gravity of the situation. Captain Arleigh Burke, for one, observed that "this thing is no longer an investigation of the B-36. It may turn, at any time, into an investigation of the Navy."[17] Most damagingly for the Navy, at the end of August, Worth claimed authorship of the Anonymous document. As historian Jeffrey Barlow has noted, "the Worth revelation was a major blow to the Navy's credibility, since many in the press looked upon Worth's action as part of an orchestrated effort by the Navy hierarchy."[18]

After the first rounds of testimony concluded, the Navy began preparation for the next round of questioning October. Uniformed leadership understood how Worth's unmasking had hurt their cause. Secretary of the Navy Matthews also took a deeper interest in the Navy's position and instructed Navy leadership that it should moderate its public criticisms of the Air Force and the B-36. During the interim period, Captain John Crommelin, a prominent naval aviator and an officer with personal association to Burke (and thus privy to the material that OP-23 had developed against the Air Force) gave an unofficial press conference where he spoke out against unification. Other naval officers announced their support of the position, which in turn led Matthews to direct that views would have to be expressed through "official channels." Reverberations of these events continued throughout the summer, as Navy leadership and OP-23 prepared for the hearings. Admiral John Dale Price, for instance, leaked to the *Washington Post* that Secretary of the Navy Matthews had ordered Navy leadership not to testify against the B-36 and also unduly limited the number of Navy witnesses. This story in the press—an incorrect one, in fact—provoked an investigation into the leak and an inspector general raid on the offices of OP-23. By the end of the summer, Secretary Matthews held the opinion that the Navy should wrap up the hearings as quickly as possible, while uniformed leadership wanted to make its case to Congress. Captain Crommelin once again convened an unauthorized press conference where he criticized defense unification. The hearings would go on, while the Secretary of the Navy ordered Crommelin suspended from duty.[19] As with Worth, the public perceived a coordinated Navy effort to undermine civilian leadership so that it could present its own views to Congress.

HASC hearings resumed on 6 October 1949. Secretary of the Navy Matthews opened with his testimony, sometimes to the outright laughter of Navy officers in the room. Testimony after that came from a number of serving and former officers who spoke against the overall merits of the B-36 and in favor of the Navy's viewpoint that

carriers and aviation were essential for sea control. The general tenor of the testimony was such that *Time* magazine labeled it "the revolt of the admirals." On 13 October, CNO Denfeld testified as the last witness for the Navy, providing a full-throated defense of the Navy's role in national defense. He decried budgetary austerity and the cancellation of *United States*. His testimony flew in the face of what Secretary of the Navy Matthews and Secretary of Defense Johnson had wanted. Rebuttal witnesses from the Army and the Air Force spoke out against the Navy as did Chairman of the JCS Omar Bradley, who delivered harshly critical testimony that accused Navy leadership of subverting civilian control of the military. Testimony concluded on 21 October 1949. Secretary of the Navy Matthews and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson obtained from Truman on 27 October the transfer of CNO Denfeld, who went on leave. Admiral Forrest Sherman received appointment as CNO, and he disestablished OP-23 as one of his first actions.[20]

Conclusion

The revolt had occurred because Navy leadership saw in unification the threat of concentrating decision making in the hands of a few leaders, leaving the services unable to present their own arguments without drawing the ire of the Secretary of Defense. Other than Denfeld's exit as CNO, the outcome of the Revolt of the Admirals remains uncertain. Historians differ on the importance and meaning of the revolt. Some point to the affair as defending the principle of civilian control of the military. Others see the revolt as an affirmation of Air Force's preference for a strategy reliant upon strategic bombing, even though Navy leadership had neither denied that role nor sought it for themselves. Historian Jeffrey Barlow pointed out that even though the Navy lost the revolt, it retained naval aviation, despite the fact that the place of naval aviation had been secured at the Key West Agreement and the Newport Agreement.

Events of 1950 rendered the revolt moot. Approved in April 1950, NSC 68 laid out a strategy of containment and provided broad policy guidance. In June 1950, the outbreak of the Korean War demonstrated the importance of a robust defense establishment. The war itself showed the validity of the Navy's arguments for aircraft carriers, as in the early days of the war, naval aviation provided most of the ground support. Later in the war, the mobility of aircraft carrier proved its value. Finally, and perhaps not the least, both of these developments led to increasing budgets. The size of the armed forces doubled while their budgets tripled, thereby easing somewhat the underservice competition over scarce funds. There was both room and money for the Air Force and the Navy.[21]

Notes

1 Quotation from Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945–1950* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, 1994), 21. See more generally Barlow, Revolt of the Admirals, 4–8.

2 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 13–21. See also Walton S. Moody, *Building a Strategic Air Force* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1996), 13–26.

3 Jeffrey G. Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945–1955* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 57–95.

4 Kenneth W. Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy: Volume II: 1947–1949* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 1996), 87–95.

5 Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, 87–98; see also Thomas C. Hone and Curtis A. Utz, *History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations* (Washington, DC: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2020), 200–201.

6 Hone and Utz, *History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations*, 201.

7 Melvyn P. Leffler, "Austerity and U.S. Strategy: Lessons of the Past," in Melvyn P. Leffler, *Safeguarding Democratic Capitalism: U.S. Foreign Policy and National Security, 1920–2015* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 310. More broadly, see Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

8 Hone and Utz, *History of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations*, 193–96. See also Steven L. Rearden, *The Formative Years 1947–1950*, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Washington, DC: Historical Office of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1974), 393–422.

9 Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, 173.

10 Historian Melvyn P. Leffler writes that Forrestal's eventual suicide stemmed from the defense unification controversies: "Forrestal's depression emanated from his inability to control the raging controversies among the military services over missions, roles, and budgets; his sense of failure stemmed from his belief that he had designed recipes for military unification and for the defense establishment that were failing." Melvyn P. Leffler, "Austerity and U.S. Strategy," 306. For more on Forrestal's career, service as Undersecretary of the Navy, and then Secretary of the Navy, see Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Robert Howe Connery, *Forrestal and the Navy* (New York: Columbia University Press), 1962.

11 Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, 173–75.

12 Admiral Dennison, cited in Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 189.

13 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 205–6.

14 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 208.

15 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 209. See also Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*, 176–77.

16 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 216–20.

17 Burke to Rear Admiral Briscoe, 15 August 1949, quoted in Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 231.

18 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 232.

19 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 233–43

20 Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 238–39, 247–78.

21 Leffler, "Austerity and U.S. Strategy," 311. See also Paul H. Nitze and S. Nelson Drew, eds., *NSC–68: Forging the Strategy of Containment* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1994).

H-078-2: Renaming of USS *Chancellorsville* and USNS *Maury*

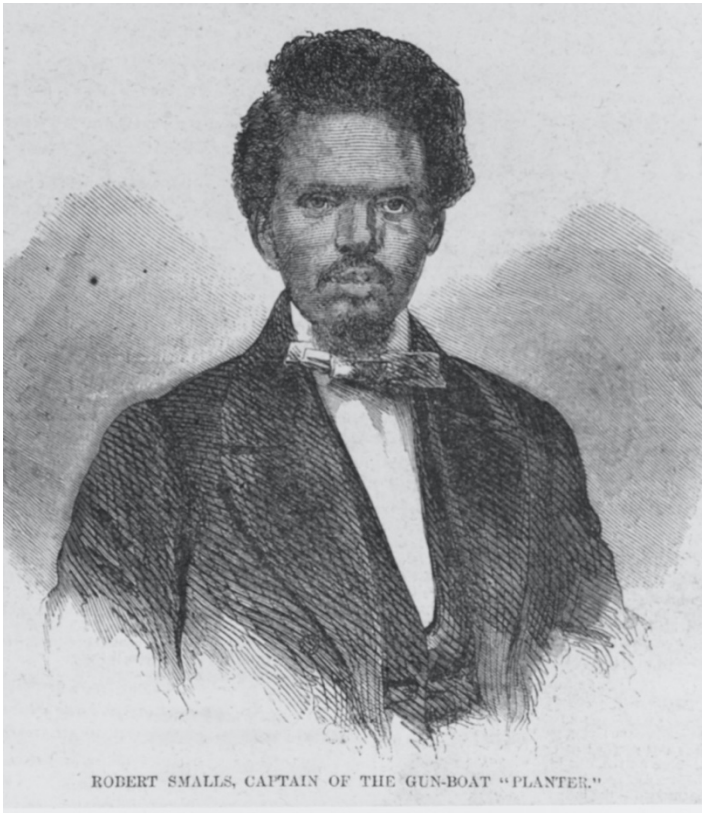
H-Gram 078, Attachment 2
Samuel J. Cox, Director NHHC
March 2023

Background

The "Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorate the Confederate States of America or any Person who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America" ("Naming Commission" for short) was created by U.S. Congressional legislation and passed into law over veto by President Donald Trump, enacted in January 2021. The Naming Commission was chaired by Admiral Michelle Howard, U.S. Navy (Ret.). The Naming Commission recommended that two U.S. Navy ships be renamed, USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62) and USNS *Maury* (T-AGS 66). On 6 October 2022, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin issued a memo concurring with the Naming Commission recommendations. On 5 January 2023, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD [A&S]) directed the Department of Defense to implement all Naming Commission recommendations.

The Naming Commission recommended which ships (and buildings and streets) should be renamed for all Services, but in the case of the Navy left the decision of what the new name should be to the Secretary of the Navy. On 28 February, Secretary Carlos Del Toro announced that *Chancellorsville* would be renamed USS *Robert Smalls*.

On 8 March, Secretary Del Toro announced that USNS *Maury* would be renamed USNS *Marie Tharp*. (On 17 February, Secretary Del Toro previously announced the renaming of "Building 105" [formerly Maury Hall] at the U.S. Naval Academy, in accordance with the Naming Commission recommendation. Maury Hall was renamed after former President Jimmy Carter, the only U.S. president to graduate from the Naval Academy. Additional name changes for buildings and streets will be forthcoming.)



Robert Smalls, pilot of the Confederate Army armed transport *Planter*, who ran his ship out of Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, in the early morning of 13 May 1862 and delivered her to the Union forces (NH 58870).

Of note, the Naming Commission hewed strictly to its remit (i.e., the Confederate States of America during the Civil War) and did not address ships named in honor of Southern slave-owning plantations (several of which were the homes of U.S. presidents) that are still in commission, nor did it address ships named in honor of persons with overtly segregationist views, that are also still in commission.

There is ample precedent for renaming U.S. Navy ships, although it has rarely been done since World War II. During the war, numerous ships were renamed while they were under construction

in order to recycle names of ships lost in battle. Examples include *Bon Homme Richard* (CV-10) renamed *Yorktown* (CV-10) after the loss of *Yorktown* (CV-5) at the Battle of Midway. USS *Cabot* (CV-16) was renamed *Lexington* (CV-16) after the loss of *Lexington* (CV-2) at the Battle of the Coral Sea. The names *Bon Homme Richard* and *Cabot* were given to later carriers (*Bon Homme Richard* [CV-31], actually officially misspelled, and *Cabot* [CVL-28], which had originally been laid down as light cruiser *Wilmington* [CL-79] before being converted to a light carrier).

Although much more rare, there is precedent for renaming ships while the ship is in commission. By nautical lore, this is generally considered to be bad luck. The escort carrier *Midway* (CVE-63) was renamed *St. Lo* in October 1944 so that the name *Midway* could be used for the new large aircraft carrier *Midway* (CVB-41/CV-41). Two weeks later, *St. Lo* was sunk by a kamikaze during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. *Anzio* (CVE-57), formerly *Coral Sea*, fared much better than *St. Lo*.

The most recent example of renaming a U.S. Navy ship while in commission was *Biddle* (DDG-5), commissioned in 1962 and renamed *Claude V. Ricketts* in 1964 after the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Claude V. Ricketts, died in office in 1964. The name *Biddle* was subsequently given to *Biddle* (DLG-34, later CG-34), commissioned in 1967.

The aircraft carrier CVN-75 was originally authorized in 1988 as *United States*, but the name was changed to *Harry S. Truman* by Secretary of the Navy John Dalton in 1995, while under construction, prior to the carrier being commissioned in 1998. (Wags would say this was the second time a carrier named *United States* was killed by President Truman [see "Revolt of the Admirals"].)

Ships Named in Honor of Confederates

As a general rule, the U.S. Navy did not name ships after people until the 1890s with the construction of a significant number of torpedo boats and then destroyers that needed many names. Most of these ships were named after Navy heroes of the American Revolution and the War of 1812, but a fair number would be named after Civil War heroes of the Union Navy, and a lesser number were named after officers who served in the Confederate States Navy (CSN), in a supposed "spirit of reconciliation." Other factors included a segregationist administration: President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of the Navy (Josephus Daniels), as well as very powerful Southern senators and congressmen (such as Carl Vinson, John C. Stennis, Sam Rayburn, among others).

A number of Union and Confederate officers would have multiple ships named in their honor. An example on the Union side is *Farragut*, with five ships: Torpedo Boat No. 11, (1899-1919), Destroyer No. 300 (1920-1930), DD-348 (1934-1946), DLG-6/DDG-37 (1960-1992), and DDG-99 (2006-present). Another example is *Porter*: Torpedo Boat No. 6 (1897-1912), Destroyer No. 59 (1916-1934), DD-356 (1935—sunk in 1942), DD-800 (1944-1953), and DDG-78 (1999–present).

In 1861, Admiral Franklin Buchanan, after a distinguished 46-year career in the U.S. Navy, chose to side with the Confederacy, becoming the senior officer in the Confederate Navy. Three U.S. Navy ships were later named in his honor: Destroyer No. 131 (1919-1941), DD-484 (1942-1948), and DDG-14 (1962-1991). Rear Admiral Raphael Semmes, commanding officer of CSS *Alabama* (the most successful commerce raider of all-time) had two ships named in his honor: Destroyer No. 189 (1918-1922), and DDG-18 (1962-1991). Commander James Waddell, the commanding officer of the Confederate raider CSS *Shenandoah*, had one ship named in his honor: DDG-24 (1964-1995). There are other examples of U.S. Navy ships named in honor of Confederates,

including Commander Matthew Fontaine Maury—in his case, multiple ships. No ships named after Confederates are in commission today.

Naming Ships After Civil War Battles

The naming convention for aircraft carriers was initially battles (*Lexington*, *Saratoga*, and *Yorktown*) and famous U.S. Navy ships with distinguished battle records (*Ranger*, *Enterprise*, *Wasp*, and *Hornet*). Although a number of ships in the 1900s were named after people who served the Confederacy, naming aircraft carriers after Civil War battles or famous Civil War ships was considered too potentially controversial and divisive. One anomaly, in more ways than one, was Battleship No. 5, *Kearsarge,* named in honor of the Union warship that sank CSS *Alabama* during the Civil War. *Kearsarge* was also to only battleship not named after a state, and was in service 1900-1909 and 1915-1920. Congress, under considerable Southern influence, passed a law so that would never happen again, and Battleship No. 8 was named USS *Alabama*. (This law, that mandates all battleships must be named after states, is the only legal restriction on what the Secretary of the Navy can name ships—all other naming conventions are merely "traditions." And, in the case of battleships, the law is moot.)

It was not until late in World War II that the name *Kearsarge* was recycled for Essex-class carrier CV-33 (1946-1970). Also, in a first, the Essex-class carrier *Antietam* (CV-36, 1945-1973) was named in honor of a costly Union victory in 1862. This did not go over well with Southern politicians, and no ship was named after a Civil War battle for another forty years.

The unwritten prohibition against naming U.S. Navy ships after Civil War battles came to an end during the President Ronald Reagan administration. The first six *Ticonderoga*-class (CG-47) Aegis guided-missile cruisers parted from the tradition of naming cruisers after cities. Five of the first six recycled names of aircraft carriers, with the exception being *Thomas S. Gates* (CG-51), named in honor of the Secretary of Defense serving at the end of the Eisenhower administration (Why him? There is no record of the decision).

Of 27 Aegis cruisers, seven were named after Civil War Battles: *Mobile Bay* (CG-53) *Antietam* (CG-54), *Chancellorsville* (CG-62), *Gettysburg* (CG-64), *Shiloh* (CG-67), *Vicksburg* (CG-69), and *Port Royal* (CG-73). Six of the seven were Union victories, although Shiloh is the Confederate name for the battle the Union called Pittsburg Landing (The national military park is "Shiloh") and *Port Royal* is named in honor of both a Civil War battle and a battle during the American Revolution (inconclusive, except the British suffered higher casualties). (Besides the seven Aegis cruisers, the amphibious assault ship *Kearsarge* [LHD-3], in commission since 1993, is the only other ship that has been named after a Civil War action.)

The exception above was the 1862 Battle of Chancellorsville in Virginia, a decisive Confederate victory, albeit at the cost of General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson killed by "friendly fire." It is generally regarded as General Robert E. Lee's most brilliant victory. *Chancellorsville* is the only U.S. Navy ship ever named for a battle the Confederates won. Technically, however, it is not named "in honor of" the Confederate victory. Rather, like other ships named after battles that the U.S. lost, it was named in honor of the Americans who died in the battle.

For example, *Bunker Hill* and *Lexington* were not named in honor of the British victories, nor were *Bataan*, *Savo Island*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Kula Gulf,* and others named in honor of the Japanese. They were named in honor of the Americans who gave their lives in those battles. In fact, the crest of *Chancellorsville* included a thin red line around the shield to symbolize "the blood of those who died to preserve the Union."

However, references to General Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson were prevalent in the commissioning ceremony, and in a prominent

painting aboard the ship honoring the two Confederate generals who renounced their oath of office and fought for the "right" of States to enslave their own people (and to which the crew was subjected). The motto, "Press On" was associated with Stonewall Jackson, and the crest included symbolism related to the Confederacy (a slight predominance of gray over blue, although the rest would require an understanding of heraldry to discern—such as the upturned wreath symbolized the death of Jackson). It may also be useful to note that of at least nine colonels from Virginia in the Federal army when the Civil War began, only Robert E. Lee sided with the Confederacy.

Chancellorsville is a unique case, as all other battles so honored involved a foreign adversary. This case juxtaposes honoring the fallen (on both sides) with perpetuating honoring those who took up arms against the United States. The Secretary of the Navy had to make a decision. My advice during this process included the recommendation to never again name ships after battles involving Americans killing other Americans.

From a range of options, the Secretary of the Navy chose to rename *Chancellorsville* after Robert Smalls.

USS *Chancellorsville* (CG-62) underway, circa 1990 (NH 106532-KN).

Who Was Robert Smalls?

Robert Smalls was born into slavery in Beaufort, South Carolina, on 5 April 1839. As a youth, he worked as a longshoreman, rigger, and sailmaker, eventually becoming a "helmsman," although slaves were not permitted that title. He developed considerable expertise in navigating the waters around Charleston, South Carolina. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Smalls was assigned (not that he had any choice) to steer the armed Confederate military transport, CSS *Planter*. Armed with a 32-pounder long gun and a 24-pounder howitzer, *Planter*'s mission included laying mines, surveying waterways, and transporting troops, dispatches, and supplies. Smalls acted loyal to the owners of the boat and three assigned Confederate officers, but he began planning an escape to reach the visible line of Union warships blockading Charleston.

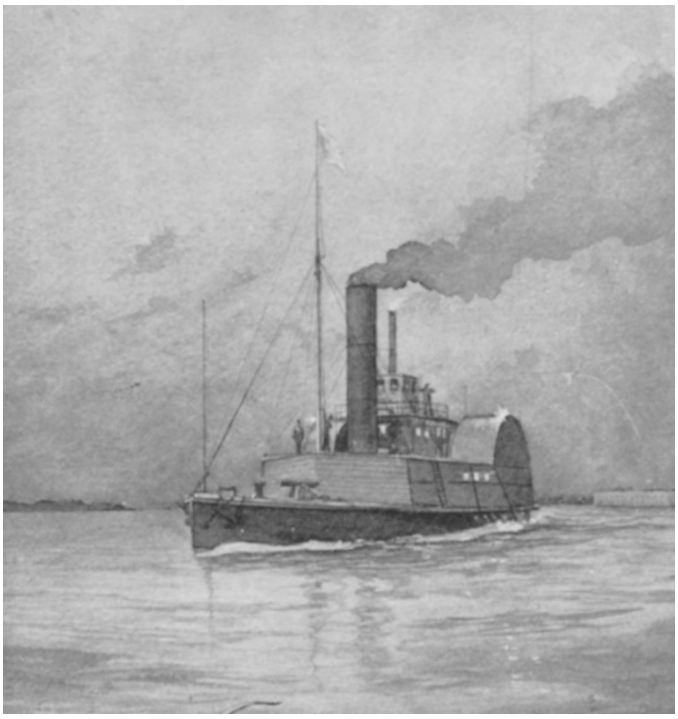
On 12 May 1862, *Planter* embarked a cargo of four large guns, 200-pounds of ammunition and some firewood, before docking at the usual wharf below the headquarters of the Confederate commandant of the Charleston district. Lulled into complacency, the three officers spent the night ashore as they had become accustomed to doing (and for which they would later be court-martialed). Smalls asked the senior officer if families of the enslaved crew could visit, which had been done before. When the families arrived, Smalls revealed the plan (all but one of the enslaved crew had been "read in"). Despite substantial fear amongst the families, Smalls then executed the plan.

Three of the crewmen escorted the families back to their camp prior to curfew so as not to arouse suspicion (and for them to gather belongings). Smalls then put on the Confederate captain's uniform and distinctive straw hat, and got the vessel underway with seven of the eight crewman (not clear what happened to the one who was not trusted). *Planter* then stopped at a wharf to pick up families.

Smalls then steamed past five Confederate harbor forts and then directly under the guns of Fort Sumter (in Confederate hands) making every effort to appear normal (i.e., a "wide berth" would have been unusual and suspicious). Fort Sumter flashed a challenge signal, and Smalls gave the correct ship's whistle and hand-signal response. By the time the Confederates in the fort realized *Planter* was heading for the Union ships instead of turning east toward Morris Island, it was too late, although the guns on Morris Island did open fire. As part of the plan, Smalls' wife had brought a white bedsheet, which was hauled up in place of the Confederate flag. (Other accounts state the bedsheet belonged to the Confederate captain of *Planter*.)

Planter was sighted by the armed clipper USS *Onward*, which prepared to open fire on the unknown approaching vessel. At almost the last moment, there was enough light from the approaching dawn that a crewman spotted the white sheet, and *Onward* held fire. *Onward*'s captain boarded the *Planter* and accepted the "surrender" of the vessel. In addition to the cargo of guns and ammunition, Smalls also turned over Confederate code books, and charts with the location of mines and "torpedoes" (command-detonated mines) laid around Charleston harbor. Smalls also provide very detailed information regarding Confederate fortifications and troop dispositions around Charleston, which enabled Union forces to capture a string of fortifications on Cole's Island a week later, without a fight.

Union officers, who probably had stereotypical low expectations, were highly impressed by Smalls' innate intelligence. Smalls' exploit was lauded in the Northern press and he quickly became a famous hero. Congress passed a law giving Smalls and his crewmen the prize money for *Planter*, unheard of at the time for an enslaved person. Over the next months, Smalls would work as a civilian pilot for the U.S. Navy, but also would be taken to Washington, DC, by a group attempting to persuade President Lincoln to allow Blacks to serve in the Federal army; his example was instrumental in Lincoln's eventual decision to allow Blacks to serve under arms in the U.S. Army. (It should be noted that the U.S. Navy was fully integrated at the enlisted ranks all the way back to the American Revolution, and despite the occasional efforts of the secretaries of the Navy to ban Blacks from serving aboard ship.)



"Formerly CSS *Planter* (1861-62)," R. G. Skerrett, wash drawing, c. 1901 (NH 57521).

At times, Smalls continued to pilot USS *Planter* as well as the screw steamer USS *Crusader*, engaging in multiple battles. On 7 April 1863, Smalls was the pilot of the experimental ironclad screw steamer USS *Keokuk* during an attack on Fort Sumter, involving nine Union ironclads, including seven monitors. Confederate obstructions, accurate gunfire, and a strong flood tide caused the attack to go badly from the beginning. *Keokuk* was hit 96 times before withdrawing, sinking the next morning as the weather deteriorated.

As a result of a change of the Union command structure around Charleston in June 1863, Smalls was placed under the U.S. Army quartermaster department, although he continued to pilot

Planter as well as screw-steamer USS *Isaac Smith*. On 1 December, while piloting *Planter* under the command of a U.S. army officer, the vessel came under heavy Confederate fire. The officer directed the ship to surrender, but Smalls refused, believing (almost certainly rightly) that if he and the other formerly enslaved crewmen were taken prisoner they would be summarily executed. The officer took refuge in the "coal bunker" according to some accounts (although *Planter* burned wood). Regardless, Smalls took command of the ship and got it to safety. He was reportedly promoted to captain (U.S. Army), but unclear if he ever received a commission. He was designated "acting captain" of *Planter*.

In 1864, Smalls served as an unofficial delegate to the Republican National Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. He then took *Planter* to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for overhaul. While in Philadelphia, he was once ordered to give up his seat on a streetcar to a white passenger, choosing instead to get off (which then apparently led to a boycott). The humiliation of a heroic veteran was cited during debates after the war that led to integration of Pennsylvania's public transportation in 1867.

In December 1864, Smalls brought *Planter* to Savannah, Georgia, to assist with General William Sherman's "March to the Sea." He piloted several other Union vessels including steam gunboats USS *Huron* and USS *Paul Jones*. He was in Charleston Harbor on *Planter* in April 1865 to witness the ceremony raising the U.S. flag over Fort Sumter at the end of the war.

The story of whether Smalls was ever formally commissioned or not, or whether he ever received fair compensation for the surrender of *Planter* (he almost certainly did not receive fair value) is subject to contradictory accounts, and is a fairly ugly tale, typical of the treatment of Black people at the time. In 1897, a special act of Congress finally granted him a pension equivalent to a Navy captain.

After the Civil War, Smalls returned to Beaufort, where he founded the Republican Party of South Carolina and won election as a Republican to the South Carolina House of Representatives in November 1868, and then to the South Carolina Senate in November 1870. Beginning in March 1875, he served five terms in the U.S. House of Representatives until March 1887, with a gap between 1879 and 1882 due to "redistricting." He also served in the South Carolina State Militia, reaching the rank of major general just as the Democrats took control of State government in 1877, and barred Blacks from senior State positions.

Smalls' actions during Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction are worth their own book, but are beyond the scope of this article, but he advocated strongly against the imposition of discriminatory "Jim Crow" laws in the South. On 23 February 1915, Smalls died of malaria and diabetes in Beaufort.

During World War II, Camp Robert Smalls was established at Great Lakes Naval Training Center in June 1942 as a segregated training facility for Black sailors. In January 1944, Camp Robert Smalls was the location for the first 16 Black U.S. Navy officer candidates (all 16 passed, despite the course being rigged for them to fail, but only 13 were commissioned).

Renaming USNS Maury *(T-AGS 66)*

A strong case can be made that the USNS *Maury* (and four previous ships) were named in spite of Mathew Fontaine Maury's service in the Confederate navy, not because of it. Rather, these ships were named in honor of his world-renowned (at the time) scientific contributions before the Civil War, such that he known as the "Father of Modern Oceanography" and his nickname at the time as "Pathfinder of the Seas." However, the bronze plaque affixed to Maury Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy identified him as "Superintendent of the Naval Observatory" and "Commander,

CSA," i.e., Confederate States of America, which kind of shot a hole in that argument.

Born in 1806 in Virginia, Maury entered the U.S. Navy in 1825 as a midshipman on USS *Brandywine* as the ship took the French hero of the American Revolution, the Marquis de Lafayette back to France, following his visit. In 1826, Maury was aboard USS *Vincennes* for that ship's four-year circumnavigation of the globe, the first for a U.S. Navy ship. His leg was badly injured in a stagecoach accident in 1839, which made him unfit for sea duty (He was riding on the outside of the coach after giving up his inside seat to an elderly Black woman).

Before the accident, Maury had already demonstrated substantial interest, and accomplishment, in the fields of navigation, meteorology, and the study of ocean, winds and currents. Following the accident, he devoted his life to this work, publishing numerous scholarly works, achieving wide acclaim throughout the United States and Europe, earning numerous honors and awards. (It is now fashionable to denigrate his work, but it was "ground-breaking" at the time.)

In 1842, Secretary of the Navy Upshur designated Lieutenant Maury to be the officer-in-charge of the Depot of Charts and Instruments of the Navy Department. With great zeal, Maury quickly turned what had been an unorganized attic of old logbooks into a "center of excellence" (to use a modern term). In that job, Maury focused on the four important fields related to the problems of navigation: astronomy, hydrography, magnetism, and meteorology. When new buildings for the Depot were completed in 1844, one of them included an observatory, and Maury was designated the first superintendent of the Naval Observatory, a position he would hold until the Civil War. His fame continued to grow as a world-renowned scientist.

During the 1850s, Maury concluded that the issue of slavery would eventually tear the United States apart. He did not own slaves and deplored slavery as a curse. His proposed solution (which would be considered unsavory today, but had plenty of company at the time) was to slowly shift Southern slave plantation culture to the Amazon, where slavery in Brazil already existed (and would be legal until 1888) in order to end slavery in the United States proper. (Brazil did not think this was such a keen idea.)

Maury was an outspoken opponent of secession and wrote to the governors of many states arguing against it. However, following the attack on Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861, Lieutenant Maury resigned his commission in the U.S. Navy on 20 April, the same day Colonel Robert E. Lee resigned from the U.S. Army.

On 23 April 1861, the governor of Virginia commissioned Maury as a commander in the Virginia navy. When the Virginia navy was subsequently rolled into the Confederate States navy, Maury retained his commander rank in the Confederate navy. He was then assigned as the chief of the Naval Bureau of Coast, Harbor, and River Defense.

Maury did not invent the electrically detonated sea mine (known at the time as "torpedoes") but he developed enhancements that made it far more reliable and effective. Such mines are what Admiral Farragut's famous quote, "Damn the torpedoes, Full speed ahead!" are referring to at the Battle of Mobile Bay in 1864 (actually, no one knows for sure what Farragut really said—this was the press version). Secretary of the (U.S.) Navy Gideon Welles claimed in 1865 that such mines cost the Union more vessels than all other causes combined. This is probably somewhat of an exaggeration, but the mines did account for many lost ships and lost Union lives.

Maury's fame was such that there was a clamor for him to be named Secretary of the (Confederate) Navy, to the annoyance of the actual Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Stephen Mallory (who as a Senator from Florida before secession, had been Chairman of the U.S. Congressional Committee on Naval Affairs). To solve this problem, Maury was sent on a mission to Europe. Maury visited England, Ireland and France, and elsewhere in Europe, making friends with Emperor Napoleon III of France and Archduke Maximilian of Austria. He was engaged in the purchase and fitting out of vessels used for raiding U.S. commerce, as well as encouraging European nations to assist in bringing about a quick end to the war (which would have been favorable to the South).

Maury was on the way back to the Confederate States when the war ended, and he chose to go into voluntary exile in Mexico. There he served as imperial commissioner for colonization in the administration of Maximilian, who had been proclaimed Emperor of Mexico in 1864 (until he was overthrown and executed by the Mexicans in 1867). Maury's mission in Mexico was to encourage Virginians to migrate to Mexico and establish a new Virginia. It was a bust, especially after Robert E. Lee declined to have anything to do with the idea.

Maury left Mexico for England in 1866. He returned to Virginia in 1868 as a result of a general amnesty offered by President Andrew Johnson including "full pardon and amnesty for the offense of treason against the United States, or of adhering to their enemies during the late civil war, with restoration of all rights, privileges and immunities . . . ." Actually, there were exceptions to this general amnesty, but Maury qualified. Maury then took a teaching position at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and held the chair of the physics department. He continued to write and lecture. After one particularly strenuous lecture circuit, he took ill and died at home in Lexington, Virginia, on 1 February 1873.

In addition to the major academic hall at the U.S. Naval Academy named for Maury after it was built in 1907, the Navy saw fit to name five ships after him: Destroyer No. 100 (1918-1930), DD-401 (1938-1945), AGS-16 (1945-1969), T-AGS 39 (1989-1994), and T-AGS 66 (2016-present). In addition the steamer *Commodore Maury* (a rank he never held) served in non-commissioned status with the Fifth Naval District in World War I.

In 2022, the Naming Commission recommended that USNS *Maury* be renamed. The naming convention for oceanographic survey ships is famous oceanographers or other terms related to exploration of the seas. T-AGS 66 is a *Pathfinder*-class vessel. (The original *Pathfinder* (AGS-1) was a U.S. Coast Guard vessel commissioned into the U.S. Navy during World War II.) The *Pathfinder*-class ships are *Pathfinder* (T-AGS 60), *Sumner* (T-AGS 61), *Bowditch* (T-AGS 62), *Henson* (T-AGS 63), *Bruce C. Heezen* (T-AGS 64), *Mary Sears* (T-AGS 65), *Maury* (T-AGS 66), and the recently named *Robert Ballard* (T-AGS 67), which is not yet in service.

Marie Tharp conversing with Marty Weiss and Al Ballard onboard USNS *Kane (T-AGS-27)* in the summer of 1968. (American Institute of Physics, Emilio Segrè Visual Archives, Gift of Bill Woodward, USNS Kane Collection, Kane F9)

The name *Marie Tharp* has been on the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) list of recommended names for oceanographic survey ships for a number of years. NHHC recommends ship names to the Secretary in accordance with Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5030 (hence the use of the term "5030" for the formal naming document).

Who was Marie Tharp?

Marie Tharp was born 30 July 1920 in Ypsilanti, Michigan, moving many times during her youth. After graduating from high school, she worked on the family farm for several years before entering Ohio University in 1939. She graduated in 1943 with bachelor's degrees in English and music. With so many men off to war, colleges were increasingly desperate to fill seats (and make money), and a number of colleges opened advanced degree programs to women for the first time. Tharp graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor with a master's degree in petroleum geology.

Tharp worked for four years as a geologist for Standard Oil, before ending up at the Lamont Geological Observatory at Columbia University in New York. While there, she worked with Bruce Heezen, and an early project was using aerial photography to locate and map aircraft downed during World War II. She would subsequently work for Heezen for over 18 years. Heezen collected bathymetric data aboard research ships, while Tharp drew maps based on the data since women were not allowed to work on ships at the time. (Tharp would get her first chance to "go to sea" in 1969, on the first deployment of USNS *Kane* [T-AGS 27].)

Although the presence of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge had been known since the mid-1800s, Tharp's analysis of detailed sounding profiles in 1952 convinced her that a rift valley ran along the crest of the ridge, indicative of the ocean bottom being pulled apart. Heezen, however, was unconvinced, as was virtually the entire scientific community at the time, which held "continental drift" to be impossible. Tharp's analysis was dismissed even by Heezen as "girl talk." Subsequent data on earthquake epicenters along the ridge further convinced Tharp, and subsequently convinced Heezen, of what became known as "plate tectonics" and continental drift theory. In 1956, Heezen would get credit for the theory.

Despite her extensive work, Tharp's name appeared in none of the major papers that Heezen and others published on plate tectonics between 1959 and 1963. Tharp's analysis subsequently showed that the rift valley extended into the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea, indicating a global oceanic rift zone.

Marie Tharp posing with the Heezen-Tharp map, mid-1970s. (Reproduced with permission from Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and the estate of Marie Tharp)

In 1977, Heezen and Tharp jointly published their first map of the entire ocean floor with National Geographic. That same year, Heezen actually died of a heart attack while aboard the U.S. Navy's

deep-submergence, nuclear-powered submarine NR-1. Tharp finally got credit for her work with the award of the National Geographic Hubbard Medal in 1978, shared with Heezen (posthumously). In 1997, the Library of Congress would recognize Tharp as one of the four greatest cartographers of the 20th century.

In her later years, Tharp served on the faculty of Columbia University. After retiring from academia, she ran a map distribution business, and was belatedly recognized with more prestigious awards. She died from cancer on 23 August 2006 at age 86.

Secretary of the Navy Del Toro announced the renaming of USS *Maury* to USS *Marie Tharp* on International Women's Day, 8 March 2023.

USNS *Maury* (T-AGS-66) (NHHC, Military Sealift Command Collection, 2015.36.01).

Sources include: Captain Miles P. DuVal, Jr., USN (Ret.), Matthew Fontaine Maury, Benefactor of Mankind (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Foundation, 1971); Erin Blakemore, "Seeing is Believing: How Marie Tharp Changed Geology Forever," *Smithsonian Magazine*, 30 August 2016; NHHC *Dictionary of American Fighting Ships* (DANFS); Benjamin Armstrong, "Life and Times of Robert Smalls," *Proceedings* Podcast (episode 208), U.S. Naval Institute, 18 February 2021; Benjamin Armstrong, "A Hero," *Naval History* 35, No. 1 (February 2021).