

**Historic Preservation Consultation Meeting
Nuclear Ship *SAVANNAH* National Historic Landmark
March 18, 2025, 2:30-4pm EST
(Hybrid on-board NS *Savannah* and MS Teams)**

Participants:

- Erhard W. Koehler, Manager, N.S. *Savannah* Programs, MARAD
- Jed Porter, Architect, NPS Region 1, North Atlantic - Appalachian
- Bob Adams, President, NSSA
- Anne Jennings, Cultural Resource Specialist, Tidewater, Inc.
- Ed Tupin, Health Physics Society
- Paul Johnston, Curator of Maritime History, SI
- Anna Holloway, Supervisory Historian, MARAD
- Tanya Hood, Project Manager, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, NRC
- Betsy Merritt, Deputy General Counsel, National Trust
- Jean Trefethen, Environmental Program Manager, NMSS, NRC
- Wendy Coble, Historian and Acting FPO, MARAD
- James Stemm, Curator, National Museum of Nuclear Science and History
- Barbara Voulgaris, SDC
- Cathy Green, President & Executive Director, National Maritime Historical Society
- Chris Daniel, Program Analyst, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Matt Schulte, Executive Director, Steamship Historical Society of America
- Liz Casso, Preservation Officer, Project Review and Compliance, Maryland Historical Trust

See Acronym List at the end of the document

Agenda:

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes Review (January 21, 2025)
- III. Program Update
- IV. Status of PA Stipulations
- V. Other Business / Adjourn
- VI. Next Meeting: May 20, 2025

Welcome and Introductions

Erhard opened the meeting and dispensed with introductions as there were no new members joining the call.

Minutes Review

The January 21st minutes were shared via e-mail; Ricardo Schiappasse, who joined the last meeting for the first time, provided some clarification on the board he mentioned last meeting, and the minutes will be revised to reflect that he was referring to the board of the International Propeller Club. We delayed circulating the corrected minutes in the event that we received additional comments. No comments were received during the meeting, and the minutes will be distributed.

Program Update

Erhard noted that inclined ladders and platforms are being installed in the CV. Although this is being done for occupational safety, this will also open up the CV to tours and interpretation. The NSSA has also graciously agreed to print a full-size banner depicting the reactor which will be mounted in the neutron shield tank where it formerly stood. The work will be finished before NMD is celebrated on the ship, and this space will be open for tours. Bob noted that he has seen the progress in the CV and was open-mouthed and agog upon seeing it for the first time; it is very impressive.

The final status surveys were completed around the time of the last PRG meeting in January, and by this summer, most work will be completed. At that point we will go into maintenance mode, completing the last of the larger projects.

Anne noted that there was a site visit on the ship February 22nd, and according to the sign-in sheets, there were 362 visitors. Erhard followed up by saying that this was part of the quarterly site visits, and the attendance was very good. We were able to accommodate everyone, including guided tours of the engine room and CV. He also planned for three Q&A sessions; the first two were well-attended, while the last at 3pm was not. In the future, he'll plan for just two sessions. The next site visit is on Maritime Day (May 18), with two more in August and November. The purpose of the site visits is to make the general public and interested parties aware that the ship is available, and that preservation is the desired outcome.

As we have discussed at previous meetings, we are also looking to present at conferences as another form of outreach. Erhard noted that he is presenting at Preserving the Recent Past 4 in Boston on Friday, noting that he is presenting on his personal time, and will not be on official travel. He will also remotely present at CAMM in April. Our proposal was approved for SIA in May in Buffalo, and we will also be at the NJ Preservation Conference in June. Anne noted that we submitted for The National Trust Conference which will be held in Milwaukee in September but have not received a response. Erhard indicated that we also plan to present at the Maritime Heritage Conference in Buffalo, also in September. Anne said that Ed Tupin has also submitted a proposal for an oral presentation at HPS in Madison in July.

In addition to conferences, Erhard noted that we have a number of articles published or in the works. We just had an article appear in the Eisenhower Society's email newsletter and submitted an article to *Marine Log* last week. We also anticipate writing an article for *Marine News* and *Sea History*. Chris noted

that perhaps MARAD could collaborate with the ACHP in an effort to magnify the message, which would be consistent with the existing agreement. Erhard indicated that we would investigate ways to do this. Liz also noted that she is working at MHT to get guidance on including a mention of the ship in their newsletter and will get back to us about that soon.

Erhard noted that we continue to support outreach to locations that may be interested in the ship, including Savannah and New Jersey. He attended the city of Savannah working group meeting in January and it was very positive. There is also a concept in place for potentially keeping the ship in Baltimore; and preliminary discussions with relevant entities have been held. Erhard also noted that Curt Junker, who attended the last meeting, also has interest in the ship, along with an SL-7 (Fast Sealift Ship), as was discussed at the last meeting, and he plans to talk to HQ in a few weeks about his concept.

Erhard stated that we had hoped to have the Disposition Study in the PRG's hands today, but it remains in internal MARAD review. There are some concerns about publicizing a draft document, and this is being worked out. The photo survey, which is now about 300 pages, is almost complete and expected to be provided to the PRG by the next meeting. In terms of the mitigation stipulations, Anna noted that the collections management plan will have similar issues in terms of reviewing a draft document, so like the study, that review process will need to be worked out. The plan will include the architectural salvage as an addendum. Erhard noted that the Thematic Context is being reviewed in terms of the HAER documentation, to ensure they are consistent and complementary.

Erhard noted that the NMD is being celebrated on the ship with a public open house on Sunday May 18th, and the NSSA is also co-hosting an invitational event with the Eisenhower Foundation on May 17th. This will include a panel discussion commemorating the 70th anniversary of the *Savannah* program, which Ike first announced in a speech in April 1955. The panel will be roughly an hour and half and will feature a speaker provided by the Eisenhower Foundation to discuss Atoms for Peace, Erhard will discuss the ship, and he is working on a third speaker to discuss the future of nuclear propulsion for commercial shipping. The CV will be dedicated after the programming, and we will be sending an invite to all for this event. Erhard also noted that since the license is expected to terminate in early 2026, followed by a 3–6-month demobilization, he does expect the ship to remain in Baltimore for the 2026 NMD, and possibly Fleet Week, so there may be additional opportunities for events later that year. He also noted that there is growing interest in visiting *Savannah*, as evidenced by an increase in tour requests.

Paul mentioned that they have been looking for the “atomic wand” which was first used at Shippingport, and later for the *Savannah*'s keel laying, but have been unable to locate it. Erhard noted that he was hoping to use it for the CV dedication. Chris shared a photo of Ike with the wand. Paul suggested the possibility of replicating the wand .

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30PM EST.

Action Items:

- Anne to send meeting minutes
- Everyone: please continue to think of ideas for outreach (conferences, publications, etc.)

Acronyms:

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADAMS	Agencywide Documents Access and Management System
ANL	Argonne National Lab (DOE)
ANS	American Nuclear Society
ASTC	Association of Science and Technology Centers
CAMM	Council of American Maritime Museums
CV	Containment Vessel
DOE	(US) Department of Energy
DOI	(US) Department of Interior
DOT	(US) Department of Transportation
ESC	Executive Steering Committee
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FPO	Federal Preservation Officer
FRN	Federal Register Notice
HNSA	Historic Naval Ships Association
HPS	Health Physics Society
LTP	License Termination Plan
MARAD	Maritime Administration (DOT)
MHT	Maryland Historical Trust
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NARA	National Archives and Record Administration
NMD	National Maritime Day
NMHS	National Maritime Historical Society
NMSS	Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NRC)
NPS	National Park Service (DOI)
NRC	(US) Nuclear Regulatory Commission
PA	Programmatic Agreement
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyls
PRG	Peer Review Group
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SI	Smithsonian Institution
SIA	Society for Industrial Archaeology
SOI	Secretary of the Interior
SSHA	Steamship Historical Society of America
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act