

DETROIT'S NAVY



A brief history of the U.S. Naval Reserve and the Michigan Naval Militia in southeast Michigan.



By Dan Heaton

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The history of the U.S. Naval Reserve in Michigan pre-dates the actual founding of the service branch by more than two full decades. In 1893, following in the footsteps of several other states, the Michigan Legislature created the Michigan Naval Militia. The Naval Militia, often derided in the early years and scorned as a “millionaire’s navy,” was essentially the nautical version of the early militias that eventually morphed into the Michigan National Guard.

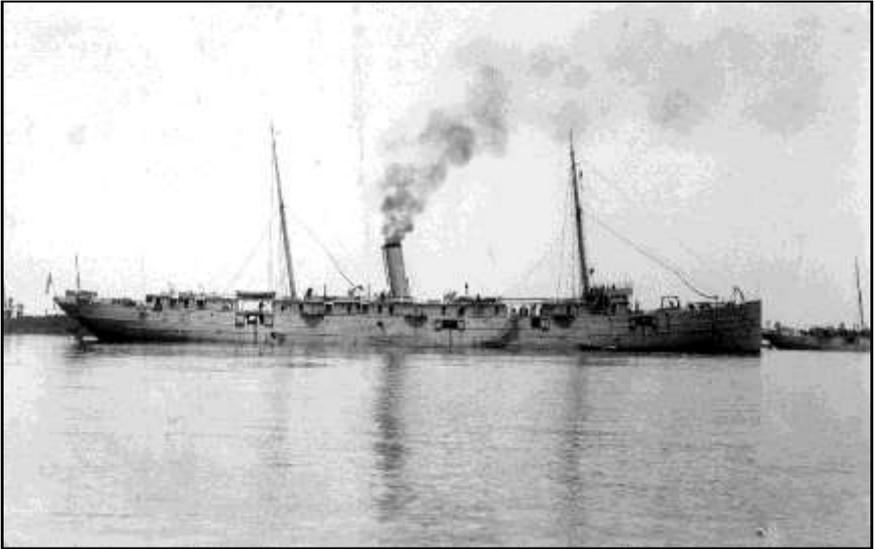
While the military standards of the early Michigan Naval Mi-

Photos on the cover

TOP: The crew of the USS Yosemite, made up primarily of members of the Michigan Naval Militia, on duty during the Spanish-American War, 1898.

BOTTOM: The main gate at Naval Air Station Grosse Ile. Note the sign referring to the “Weekend Warriors” of the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve. Date uncertain, probably in 1960s.

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The USS Yosemite in 1898

litia may have been somewhat lax in peacetime, there is no dispute that when called upon, that early militia answered the nation's call. And the local Naval Militia laid a foundation of sea service in the Detroit area that continues to this day.

Five years after the creation of the Michigan Naval Militia, the U.S. became engaged in its first war that would see any significant number of troops engage in combat – or at least in potential combat – “overseas.”

VICTORY ON THE YOSEMITE

In April 1898, the U.S. declared war against Spain. The declaration prompted significant action amongst the various militia units in Michigan and others states. Essentially the entirety of the Michigan National Guard was mustered into federal service. Likewise, scores of members of the Michigan Naval Militia also



Left: Sailors of the Michigan Naval Militia on a sailing ship. Name of the ship and the date is unknown.

Below: Sailors of the Michigan Naval Militia in Detroit. Date unknown.





Sailors of the Michigan Naval Militia, date unknown.



**Sailors of the Michigan Naval Militia, formed into a band.
Ship's name and date unknown.**

volunteered for service, most notably the more than 200 Michigan Naval Militia Sailors who would serve aboard the USS Yosemite, a 389-foot auxiliary cruiser.

With the exception of four active-duty Sailors and a small detachment of Marines aboard the Yosemite, all of the ship's crew were originally members of the Michigan Naval Militia called to active service for the war. Some 40 or so members of the 285-man crew were students or faculty members of the University of Michigan when they entered service.

Among the notables on the Yosemite's crew in 1898 were two officers: Truman H. Newberry and Edwin C. Denby, both of whom would later serve as the Secretary of the Na-



Henry B. Joy

vy. Among the enlisted men in the crew were Henry B. Joy, a future automobile magnate who in 1917 would sell (and later sell) his 600-acre Joy Aviation Field in Macomb County to the government to be used as what is now known as Selfridge Air National Guard Base – home of today's Naval Operation Support Center Detroit. Another enlisted crewman was R. Thornton Brodhead, a future Naval Reserve captain for whom the Detroit Naval Armory would one day be named.

The Yosemite was under the command of another Michigan Naval Militiaman now in the regular Navy, Commander William H. Emory.

On June 28, 1898, while on blockade duty at San Juan, Puerto Rico, the Yosemite, operating independently and under heavy enemy fire from the shore and three enemy gunboats, attacked the Spanish ship SS Antonio Lopez that was attempting to run the blockade. In an hours-long battle, the Yosemite withstood heavy enemy fire and scored numerous direct hits on the Antonio Lopez,

Truman H. Newberry

A crewman aboard the USS Yosemite, Truman H. Newberry was a founding member of the Michigan Naval Militia. For about three months during the administration of

one of the Navy's biggest boosters ever to occupy the White House – President Theodore Roosevelt – Newberry

served as the Secretary of the Navy.

Newberry, the son of a Congressman from Detroit, served as the Navy secretary Dec. 1, 1908, to March 4, 1909. He had previously served as the Navy's assistant secretary from 1905 until being named to the cabinet position in the final months of Roosevelt's presidency. He left the office when President William Howard Taft took office and installed his own cabinet.

When the U.S. entered World War I, Newberry returned to military service, re-entering the Naval Reserve and holding an adminis-

trative post in New York City at the rank of lieutenant commander. He left the Reserve shortly after the conclusion of the war.

In 1918, Newberry was elected to the U.S. Senate from Michi-

gan, defeating automotive pioneer Henry Ford in the election. In 1921, Newberry was convicted of election "irregularities" from his victory,



but that conviction was overturned by the Supreme Court. When new charges were being prepared against him in 1922 – still stemming from the election — he choose to resign from the Senate after serving about half of his six-year term, rather than face additional legal proceedings.

Newberry returned home to Michigan and engaged in various business interests until his death at age 80 in 1945.

Newberry remains, along with Edwin C. Denby, one of only two men from Michigan to have served as the Secretary of the Navy.

Edwin C. Denby

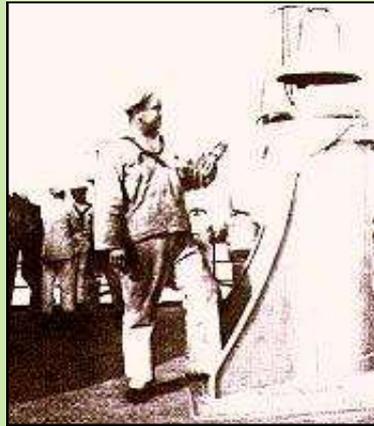
A Sailor with the forerunner of the Detroit area U.S. Naval Reserve, Edwin C. Denby was one of two men who served with the Michigan Naval Militia to later serve as the Secretary of the Navy. Both Denby and previous Navy Secretary Truman H. Newberry had served as a member of the crew of the USS Yosemite during the Spanish-American War.

Denby was appointed the Navy secretary by President William G. Harding and took office on March 6, 1921. Denby served in the pre-Dept. of Defense era when the Navy secretary was a full member of the president's cabinet.

Denby remained as Navy secretary until March 10, 1924, when he was forced to resign over allegation of his role in the Teapot Dome oil scandal of 1924.

Denby served as a member of Congress from 1905 to 1911, serving on the House Committee on Naval Affairs.

Perhaps his most notable action as Navy secretary came early in his tenure when, in 1921, he ordered U.S. Marines to ride on mail trains and trucks during a



Denby on the Yosemite as a chief petty officer gunner's mate.

period of significant theft against the mail. In a frequently repeated speech of the time, Denby said of the Marines: *"When our Corps goes in as guards over the mail, that mail must be delivered, or there must be a Marine dead at the post of duty. There can be no compromise..."*

A lawyer by trade, Denby also served in the Marine Corps himself during World War I, entering the service at the outbreak of war as a private and leaving two years later as a major.

Following his departure from federal service, he returned home to Detroit and worked as a lawyer until his death in 1929. Detroit's Denby High School is named in his honor.



Secretary of the Navy Edwin C. Denby with Naval personnel in 1923.



Seen here as an admiral, William H. Emory was one of only four “regular Navy” Sailors on the USS Yosemite in 1898 and served as the ship’s captain during the Spanish-American War. Later, Emory would be one of the commanders of the famed “Great White Fleet,” a fleet of 16 battleships and numerous support vessels — all painted white — sent on a 14-month excursion around the world in 1907 to showcase America’s new prominence as a naval power.

rendering the enemy ship inoperable and eventually run aground. Due to the actions of the Yosemite during what later became known as the Third Battle of San Juan, the blockade was maintained and the U.S. maintained control of the high seas.

In late 1898, with the end of the short war, many of the Michigan Naval Militia men opted to return to civilian duty and left the ship's crew, but left behind a new legacy of sea service by Sailors from the Great Lakes state.

The Spanish-American War and the crewing of the Yosemite would serve as the high-water mark for the Michigan Naval Militia. The state sea service was disbanded prior to the start of World War I after essentially all of its assets had been transferred to the new U.S. Naval Reserve, which was established in 1915.



The Michigan Naval Militia, and later the Michigan units of the Naval Reserve, operated primarily from locations on Belle Isle and at Detroit Memorial Park, on the Detroit River.

Following the success of the Michigan Sailors on the Yosemite, it was clear that the Michigan Naval Militia could provide a ready resource of Sailors to the American fleet. To facilitate training of Michigan Sailors, the Navy assigned the USS Yantic to Detroit in late 1898, after the brief Spanish-American War.

THE YANTIC ARRIVES

The Yantic was a 179-foot gunboat commissioned during the Civil War. The wooden-hulled ship had seen extensive action with the Union Navy during the Civil War. Following the war,

the ship had sailed around the world. Once, in 1874, the Yantic landed a shore party in Shanghai, China, to help put down a riot there. The Yantic operated from a pier on Belle Isle and was utilized by the Michigan Naval Militia to conduct annual training cruises in the Great Lakes. In 1907, the Yantic was re-assigned to the Michigan Naval Militia's 2nd Battalion, located in Houghton in the Upper Peninsula.

To replace the Yantic in Detroit, the Navy assigned a ship that the U.S. Navy had once sunk in combat. The 215-foot Don Juan Austria began life as a cruiser in the Spanish Navy, launched in 1887. In 1889, the Austria was sunk by American forces during the Battle of Manila Bay – the same battle during which the famous line “You may fire when ready, Gridley,” was uttered by an American captain.

The Austria was raised and refitted by the U.S. Navy and served around the world protecting American interests before being assigned to Detroit in 1907. The ship was also homeported along a Belle Ile pier and was used to make annual cruises. The ship was re-commissioned into the active fleet in April 1917 when the U.S. declared war on Germany to enter World War I. The ship was then sent to the East Coast for patrol duty and later escorted some transports to Europe.

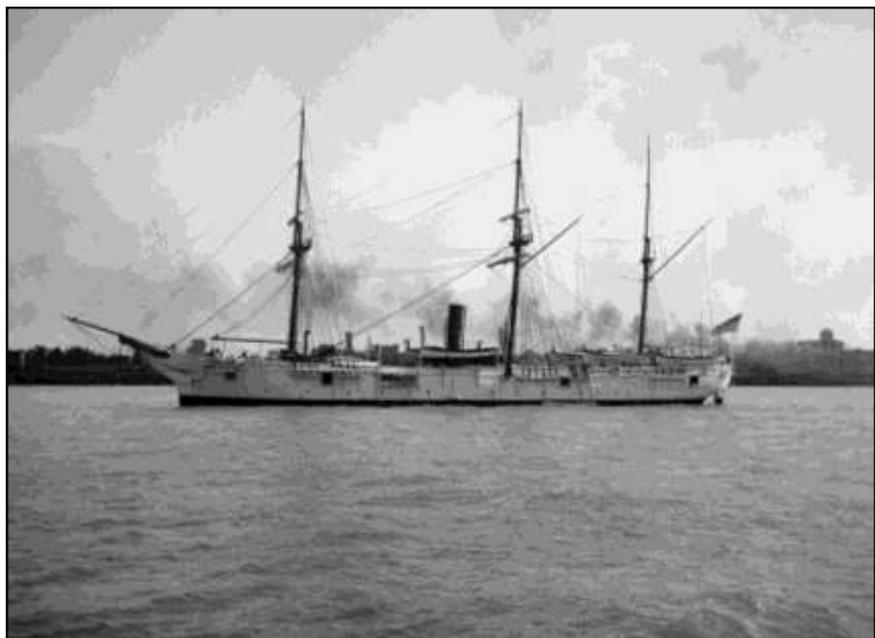
With the departure of the Austria, Detroit remained without a training ship until 1926, when the venerable Yantic was re-assigned to Detroit. Now, however, the ship was not on loan to the Michigan Naval Militia. Instead, the Yantic remained in the fleet as a ship assigned to the U.S. Naval Reserve in Detroit.

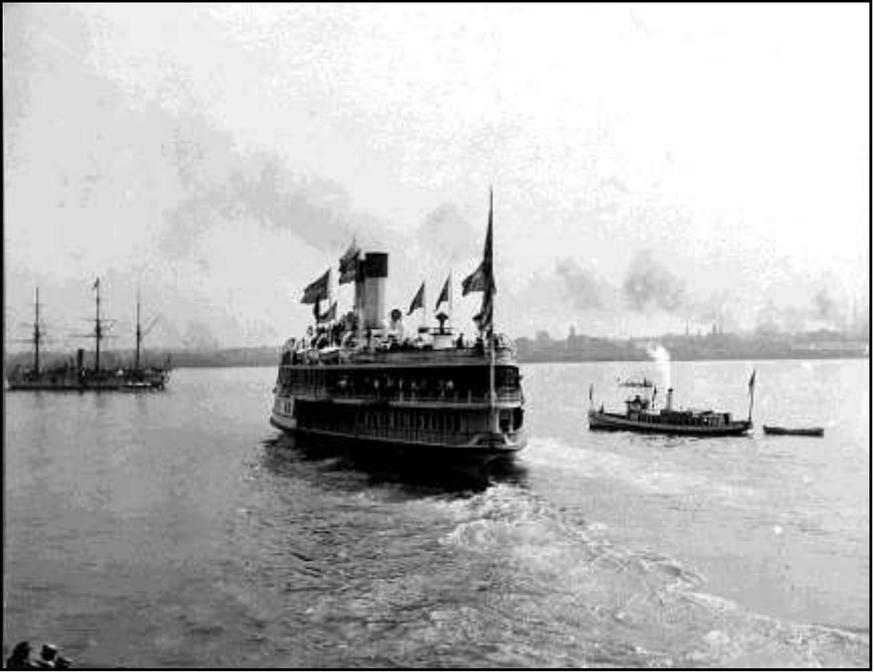
AVIATION – AND AN ARMORY

Also in 1926, Naval Reserve aviation formally was stood up



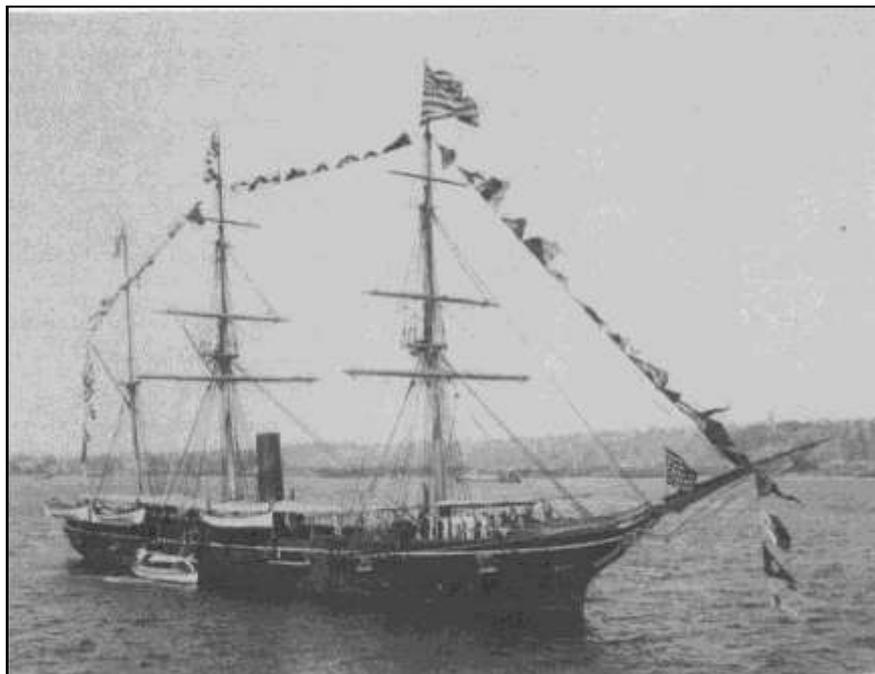
USS Yantic



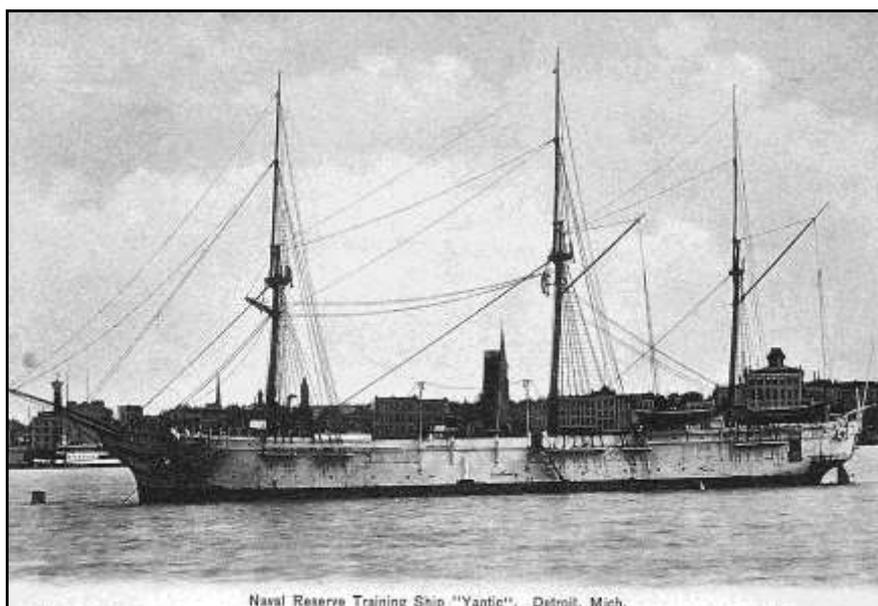


The steamer Tashmoo approaching the gunboat Yantic in preparation for a 21 gun salute from the gunboat on October 18, 1902. The ships are on the Detroit River during President Theodore Roosevelt's Great Lakes cruise. BELOW: The Yantic fires the salute to the president.





USS Yantic honors president Theodore Roosevelt with a 21-gun salute on October 18, 1902. The ships are on the Detroit River during President Roosevelt's Great Lakes cruise.



Naval Reserve Training Ship "Yantic", Detroit, Mich.



Don Juan de Austria (on the right, ABOVE, and BELOW) is seen looking up river from the Belle Isle Bridge in Detroit, sometime between July 1907 and April 1917.





The Yantic's anchor is seen outside the closed Brodhead Armory in 2007.

in the Detroit region. In July 1925, Lt. Robert Bridge and four enlisted Reserve Sailors had begun meeting with the intention of established an aviation unit in the local Reserve system. In the summer of 1926, Bridge's unit was recognized by the Navy and designated as Torpedo Squadron 31 (VT-31). In December 1926, VT-31 received its first aircraft, an NY-1 – the naval variant of a Consolidated PT-1 biplane trainer. The NY-1 was the mainstay of the Navy's aircraft inventory for about a decade, from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s. In 1927, the Naval Reservists were allowed to erect a hangar at Selfridge Field, the Army air base in Macomb County that had been opened in 1917. The new hangar allowed VT-31 to be permanently assigned an aircraft – its own NY-1. Also in 1927, a Navy Reserve hangar was built adjacent to the small air strip on Grosse Ile in the Detroit River.

With Naval aviation beginning to sprout wings in the Detroit region and the Yantic back in the Detroit River, a movement began to establish a permanent training site for the local Naval Reserve. Leading the charge was Capt. R. Thornton Brodhead, who had served on the crew of the Yosemite during the Spanish-

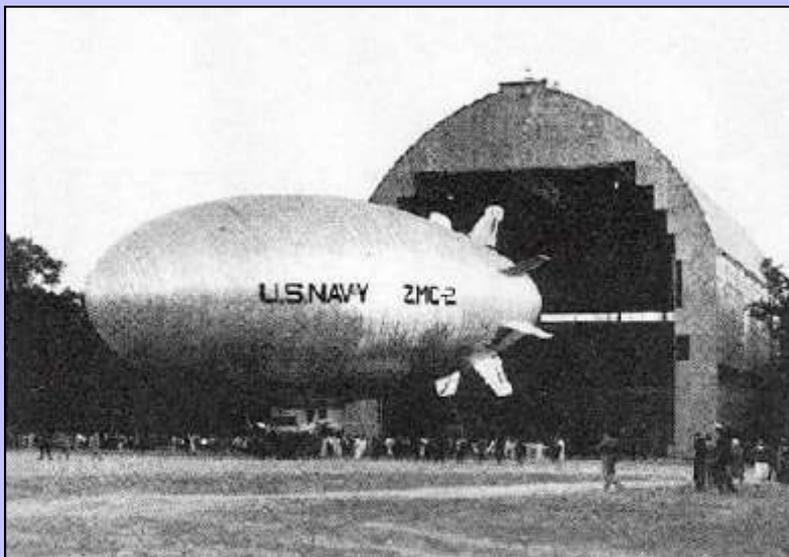


A NY-2 aircraft, similar to an NY-1, bearing the markings of VN-9R9, a squadron assigned to Naval Reserve Air Base Grosse Ile in the 1920s.

American War. Brodhead convinced the Detroit City Council and the State Legislature to contribute approximately \$300,000 and \$75,000, respectively, to construct a Naval Armory along the Detroit River. Construction began on the project in late 1928. The Armory was located on Jefferson on the city's east side, next to the bridge linking the city to Belle Isle.

While construction progressed on the Armory, an effort also began to give Naval Reserve aviation a more permanent location in the Detroit region. In 1928, construction began on a new Navy Reserve station on Grosse Ile, where a single hangar had been opened the year before. On Sept. 7, 1929, Naval Reserve Air Base Grosse Ile (NRAB-Grosse Ile) was officially commissioned. In the summer of 1928, VT-31 had been re-designated as VN-9RD9 and that unit was now assigned to Grosse Ile. Eight officers and 30-plus enlisted Sailors were assigned and, by the end of the year, a total of eight aircraft are assigned: two NY-2s, three TS-1s and three N2C-1s. Grosse Ile would continue to operate as a Reserve station until the start of World War II, when it was designated as Naval Air Station Grosse Ile as part of a major ratcheting up of

America's Tin Blimp



The ZMC-2 takes off from its hangar at Naval Reserve Air Base Grosse Ile in 1929.

The only airship of its kind in the history of American aviation, the Navy's ZMC-2 (Zeppelin, Metal Clad, 200,000-ft. capacity) was constructed at and first launched at Naval Reserve Air Base Grosse Ile.

The ZMC-2, known variously as the Tin Blimp, the Tin Bubble or as a "tinship," was the only successfully-

operated metal-skinned airship ever constructed. The ship, which was not actually made of tin, but of an alloy known as alcad. The ZMC-2 was constructed at Grosse Ile by the Aircraft Development Corp of Detroit and first launched there on Aug. 19, 1929. It was then transferred to NAS Lakehurst, New Jersey, where it remained until

America's Tin Blimp

scrapped in 1941.

The Tin Blimp was 52 feet in diameter and 150 feet long and was built as a test and prototype model for potential other metal airships. The Navy and Army each

eventually settled on the use of fixed wing aircraft and the ZMC-2 was relegated to the scrap heap of history.

The Tin Blimp's hangar remained in place at Grosse Ile until 1960, when it was torn down and the hangar roof was re-used to build a bowling alley in Trenton, Mich.

ZMC-2 Performance

Maximum speed: 70 mph

Range: 675 mi



ZMC-2 General Characteristics

Crew: 2-3 (with room for 2-3 passengers)

Capacity: 750 lb. payload

Length: 148 ft. 11 in

Diameter: 53 ft. 2 in

Height: 64 ft. 6 in

Volume: 200,100 cu ft.

Useful lift: 12,868 lb.

Powerplant: 2 × Wright J-5 Whirlwind 9-cyl. air-cooled radial piston engines, 220 hp (160 kW) each

military operations with the outbreak of the war.

With the opening of NRAB-Grosse Ile and the Armory under construction, it seemed as if 1929 would truly be a high-water mark for the Naval Reserve in 1929. A month later, however, the local Reservists would suffer a major embarrassment. On Oct. 22, the USS Yantic, tied up near the still-under construction armory on Jefferson Avenue, sunk while dockside. The sinking prompted a major investigation which eventually determined that the 65-year-old wooden ship's sinking had been caused by structural weakening, owing to "natural deterioration." The remains of the ship is still buried in a filled-in boat slip in Gabriel Richard Park, adjacent to the Armory, on the Detroit Riverfront.

The Yantic was struck from the Navy list on 9 May 1930. Until recently, ship's anchor was still on display outside the Brodhead Armory. The ship's bell was displayed inside the Armory while it remained in operation.

Finally in October 1930, dedication ceremonies for the Detroit Naval Armory were held. At the time of its opening, about 600 Reserve Sailors were assigned. With its opening, the Armory became a hub for not only naval activity in the Detroit area, but for civic and social events as well. Actress Jean Harlow attended the dedication ceremonies. Boxer Joe Louis had his first public bout at the Armory – a two-round loss in 1932 while the “Brown Bomber” and future world heavyweight champ was still fighting as an amateur. In 1936, Capt. Brodhead utilized a Works Progress Administration program to have out-of-work artists during the Great Depression create numerous murals, carvings and other artworks inside the building. President Franklin Roosevelt even made a campaign stop at the Armory during his first, successful run for the White House in 1932. During World War II, the Armory would be pressed into active service and utilized as a barracks and schoolhouse for as many 1,200 Sailors who were in die-



Originally USS YMS-113, USS Brant arrived in Detroit on July 28, 1946 and was re-christened as the Brant there on August 7, 1946.

sel mechanic and electrical schools. After the war, it reverted to Reserve use. In 1947, upon the death of Capt. Brodhead, the Armory was renamed in his honor.

THE MARINES ARRIVE

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's first notable organization in metro Detroit occurred on July 5, 1922, when the 206th Company of the Fleet Marine Force Reserve organized with an initial strength of 70 men. In 1929, this unit was re-designated and re-assigned to Toledo, Ohio. In 1938, Company D of the 8th Reserve Battalion was stood up in Detroit and assigned to the Brodhead Armory. Company D is the direct predecessor to today's 1st Battalion / 24th Regiment





1st/24 logo

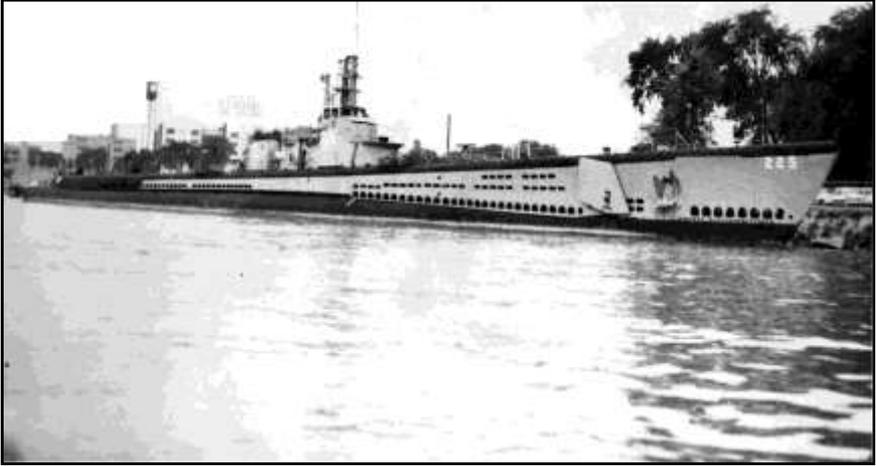
Marines. The Headquarters and Service Company of the 1st/24th Marines were the last unit to remain assigned to Brodhead, departing there in 2005 as the Armory was being closed.

Today, the 1st/24th is one of two Marine Corps Reserve units located at Selfridge ANGB. In addition to the Infantry Marines of the 1st/24th, an aviation support squadron, Detachment B, Engineer Company of Marine Wing Support

Squadron 471 is assigned to Selfridge.

During World War II, essentially the entire Naval Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve was mobilized and the organization was fully integrated with the active duty fleet. As noted above, the Brodhead Armory served as a schoolhouse for enlisted Sailors in various rates. At Grosse Ile, the air station was placed on active status and the facility became a major training hub for naval aviators. Most famous among its students was future president George H.W. Bush, who saw extensive combat duty as a pilot in the Pacific theater of the war.

After the war, as the Naval Reserve re-organized and returned to service as a strategic reserve of manpower for the fleet, a number of training ships were once again assigned to Detroit, all of which were homeported near the Brodhead Armory in the Detroit River.



The submarine USS Cero (SS-225) was assigned to Detroit as a training ship.

SUBMARINE BASE DETROIT

The first to arrive was a 136-foot minesweeper built during World War II. Known during the war as the YMS-113, the ship arrived at Detroit on Dec. 1, 1946. On Sept. 1, 1947, she was rechristened as the USS Brant (AMS-43). Her service in Detroit was to be a brief one. In the summer of 1948, she was re-assigned to Muskegon, Mich., for service there as a training ship. At the



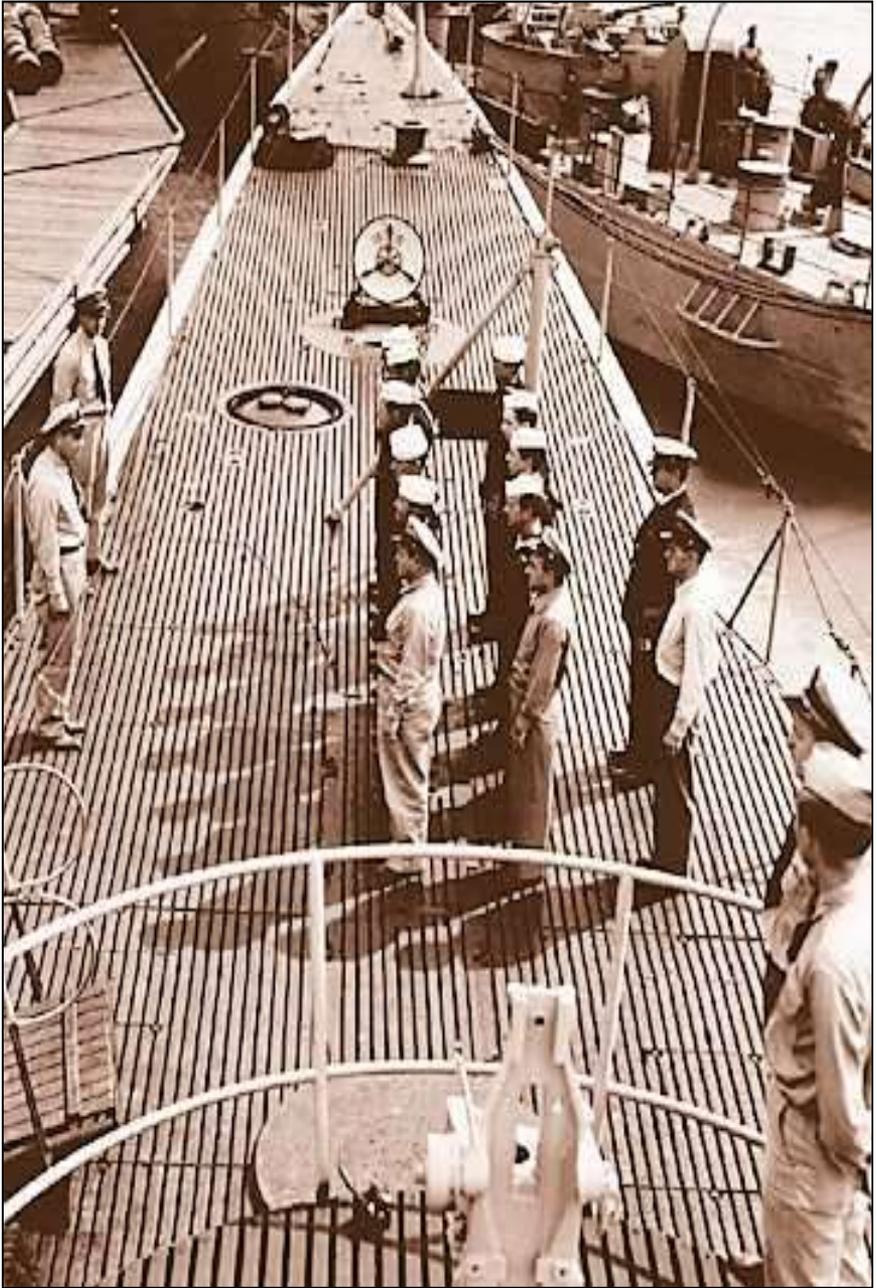
F4U Corsair WW-II fighter was flown by Naval and Marine Corps Reserve units at the Grosse Ile NAS from 1946 to 1957. This aircraft is now on display at the Selfridge Military Air Museum at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.



USS Tambor



USS Tambor and her crew at Belle Isle in the Detroit River.



In April 1947, the submarine was assigned to the Ninth Naval District to train naval reservists, and reported to the Naval Reserve Training Center, Detroit, Michigan, on December 8, 1947.



USS Amherst, a veteran of World War II action in the Pacific, was homeported in Detroit, MI from 1960-1970 where the ship operated as a training ship for Navy Reservists. Designated a patrol craft for escort and rescue (PCER), USS Amherst was built in Chicago.

Welcome Aboard . . .

**USS AMHERST
(PCER 853)**

Home Port
DETROIT, MICHIGAN
7600 E. Jefferson Ave.
N&M Reserve Training Center

Ninth Naval District Reserve Training Squadron

SHIP CHARACTERISTICS	USS AMHERST (PCER 853)
<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">USS AMHERST</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Length: 184 1/2 ft Displacement: 903 tons</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Beam: 33 ft Speed: 15 knots</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Draft: 11 1/2 ft Built: 1943</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Main Battery: 3-inch 50-caliber</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Secondary Battery: 40-millimeter</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Other Weapons: Depth charges; hedgehogs</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Main Engine: Two 900-hp GM V-12 diesels</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Full-time regular crew: Four officers and 30 enlisted men; Additional crew for training: Nine officers and 70 enlisted men.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">USS AMHERST (PCER 853)</p> <p style="margin: 0;">The USS Amherst, a veteran of World War II action in the Pacific, now has Detroit, Mich., as her home port. From here the Amherst operates as a training ship for Naval Reservists.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Designated a patrol craft for escort and rescue (PCER), the Amherst was built in Chicago. Her first battle experience was in the Philippines at Leyte, where she served as an anti-submarine and anti-aircraft screening vessel. Later she saw similar action in the assault on Luzon and the Okinawa invasion.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Specially equipped for rescue operations, the Amherst transported almost 800 survivors and casualties in the three operations. There are emergency operating and treatment facilities aboard and space available for 57 casualties.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">After 10 years of duty as a reserve training ship in the Philadelphia area, the Amherst joined the Reserve Training Squadron in 1960.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">She is named for the cities of Amherst in Ohio and Massachusetts.</p>

USN P3411 (4-60)

NINTH NAVAL DISTRICT RESERVE TRAINING SQUADRON

Visitors to the Great Lakes, and passengers onboard ferries, ore ships and merchant ships which constantly ply these lakes, frequently encounter almost alien-looking gray U.S. Navy warships, removed from the Atlantic Ocean. These warships, which form the nation's only inland naval fleet comprise the Ninth Naval District's Reserve Training Squadron.

Each summer, they provide actual underway training experience for some 8,000 Reservists. This training experience prepares them for responsible assignments aboard ships of the Navy operating in oceans throughout the world.

Each ship, a part of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, has a full-time active duty crew which keeps her in a ready status throughout the year. Crew members also serve as Instructors to Reservists who board for specialized training. During winter months, when the ships are iced in at their home ports, the training drills are held on weekends and at night. From April to October all ships of the squadron sail a series of two-week cruises with different reserve units embarked.

Although 1,000 miles from salt water, the Reserve Training Squadron fills a historical role. The U.S. Navy has sailed the Great Lakes since 1799. As far back as 1893 an inland Navy was acknowledged as ideal for training the future men of the seagoing ships. Today the Reserve Training Squadron keeps that tradition alive.

NAVAL RESERVE

Summer training cruises on the Great Lakes highlight the annual training program for thousands of Naval Reservists. These officers and enlisted men, who drill evenings throughout the year, are assigned to a ship of the squadron to put their specialized skills into actual practice.

This is the Naval Reserve in action. Men train to be ready in a national emergency. Each ship provides a "learn by doing" situation training technique which applies to ship handling, gunnery, engineering, damage control, use of air and surface radar—all identical to procedures on any Navy warship, no matter what its type. Special emphasis is given to underwater sonar detection equipment for vital training in antisubmarine warfare.

Who are the Reservists? They all are civilians. Some are Navy Veterans of World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam war. Others are young men still in high school, enlisted in a special Navy program. They train while they finish school, later to serve two years active duty with the ocean-going Navy.

All have this in common. They are part of the "civilian" Navy. They receive valuable training as specialists in a highly technical Navy. They advance in military grade. They get paid while training. They qualify for retirement benefits.

Page taken from the Welcome Aboard packet of the USS Amherst while assigned to Detroit.

end of 1949, she departed the Great Lakes for Texas coastal waters where the ship was deactivated. The Brant was returned to service during the Korean War, though not sent to the Korean Theater, and finally stricken from the rolls in 1959.

The late 1940s marked another high point in local Naval Reserve history. For about a year, two training vessels were moored in Detroit and made annual cruises with local Reservists as the crew. In addition to the Brant, 1947 saw the arrival of the first of three submarines that would eventually be assigned to the Motor City.

In 1947, the USS Tambor (SS-198) was assigned to Detroit, arriving on station on Dec. 8. The Tambor, launched in 1939, was a veteran of 12 patrols in the Pacific during World War II and had

Naval Reserve Training Ships Assigned to Detroit

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Hull number</u>	<u>Years</u>
USS Yantic	IX-32	1898-1907 and 1926-1929
USS Don Juan Austria	none	1907-1917
USS Brant	AMS-43	1946—1948
USS Tambor	SS-198	1947-59
USS Cero	SS-225	1959-1967
USS Amherst	PCER-853	1960-1970
USS Piper	SS-409	1967-1970

seen extensive combat action. The Tambor would be the longest serving of the Detroit-assigned submarines, remaining on station in the Motor City for almost 12 full years. In 1959, she was deemed no longer fit for service and was stricken from the roles on Sept. 1, 1959.

The year 1947 also brought sad news for Detroit sailors. Capt. R. Thornton Brodhead died. In honor of the captain, whose final military position had been as commander of the Naval Reserve for the Midwest District, the Armory in Detroit would be re-named in his honor in the same year.

In 1959, with the Tambor no longer fit for duty, the submarine USS Cero (SS-225) was assigned to Detroit as a training ship. The Cero had completed eight patrols during the Second

Major USNR and USMCR Units Assigned to Selfridge ANGB



Unit	Approximate Manpower (Full-time/Reserve)
Navy Operation Support Center Detroit	20/680
Joint Reserve Intelligence Support Center	10/130
Marine Wing Support Squadron 471-B	35/200
<u>1st Battalion 24 Regiment Marines</u>	<u>80/1000</u>
Total	145/2,010



USS Piper (SS-409) arrived in Detroit in 1967 and would remain homeported there until 1970. Piper was the third, and final submarine to be assigned to Detroit.



She was commissioned the United States Naval Sea Cadet Ship (USNCS) Grayfox on 26 April 1998 at Hart Plaza in Detroit, MI,. The Christening Sponsor was Mrs. Jack Kennedy, wife of the former National President of the U.S. Navy League, and the ship is now moored in Port Huron, Michigan.



ABOVE: A P-3 Orion from VP-93 over downtown Detroit, probably in 1994.

BELOW: A P-3 Orion from VP-93 over NAF-Detroit in 1994.



World War and enjoyed a highly successful record, sending more than 18,000 tons of enemy shipping to the bottom during the war. Cero would remain on duty in Detroit until 1967, when she was retired and eventually sold off for scrap.



The Cero also had a companion on the naval pier in Detroit. In 1960, the 184-foot patrol boat USS Amherst (PCER-853) arrived in Detroit for a 10-year stay. Launched late in World War II, but still in time to participate in two major Pacific island landings at Leyte and Lingayen, the Amherst would spend a full decade in Detroit before given a special assignment in the Vietnam War. In 1970, the Amherst was transferred to the Navy of the Republic of (South) Vietnam. It would remain a part of the South Vietnamese Navy until the fall of the South Vietnamese government in 1975 when her crew would escape Vietnam by sailing to the Philippines. There, the ship was assumed into the Philippine Navy, where it remained on active service, under the name *Datu Marikudo* (PS-23), well into the 2000s. The ship is no longer in active service and is believed to be tied up, waiting to be scrapped.

The late 1960s brought two major changes to Naval Reserve operations in Detroit. In 1967, the third of the three submarines to be assigned to Detroit arrived. The USS Piper, a veteran of three war patrols during World War II, was assigned to Detroit, replacing the Cero. During the Piper's career in the active fleet, the submarine made a then-record 13,724 dives. The Piper remained in Detroit until 1970 when it was fully retired and later sold for

scrap. The departure of the Piper brought an end to the submarine era in Detroit.

AVIATION CHANGES

In another major change as the 1960s were drawing to a close, NAS Grosse Ile was closed and local aviation operations were moved to Selfridge Air Force Base where Naval Air Facility Detroit was stood up. Grosse Ile officially closed in July 1969, with the move essentially complete by November of that same year. A variety of Naval aviation squadrons operated at Grosse Ile and NAF Detroit. Two notable organizations were also stood up in the mid-1970s.



Sailors of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 26 are seen on a job site in Afghanistan in this 2011 photo. The unit, with about 700 Reserve Sailors assigned to Selfridge ANGB, was named the top CB unit in the Navy in for 2011. The battalion was decommissioned in 2014.

On Sept. 1, 1973, the attack squadron VC-12 was commissioned at NAF Detroit, with A-4 Skyhawk aircraft assigned. Just two years later, in 1975, VC-12 departed NAF Detroit for assignment to NAS Oceana, Virginia. This action started at least a 20-year period where Detroit Sailors were routinely traveling to Oceana for weekend “drill.”



On July 1, 1976, what has been, to date, the final major chapter in Naval aviation in Detroit began to be written with the establishment of VP-93 “The Executioners” at NAF-Detroit (Selfridge), with P-3 Orion aircraft assigned. Over the next 20 years, VP-93’s P-3s were in active use across the Atlantic, actively hunting Soviet submarines and other threats throughout the Cold War era. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resultant reduction in the submarine threat, VP-93’s days were numbered. The unit was decommissioned on Sept. 30, 1994. The next day, NAF-Detroit became Naval Air Reserve Center Detroit – with no aircraft assigned. Nine years later, all aviation units were merged with the Naval Reserve Center Detroit at Selfridge – still with no aircraft assigned. In 2006, the NRC-Detroit would be re-designated again, to the current Naval Operations Support Center-Detroit.

While not a part of the Naval Reserve, some haze grey was returned to the Great Lakes on April 26, 1998. That’s when a former Torpedo Weapons Retriever, the Grayfox, was assigned to Port Huron as a training vessel for the Sea Cadets. The ship makes regular training patrols in the Great Lakes, often with support from Detroit-area Reserve Sailors.

Units Currently Assigned to NOSC Detroit

- Voluntrain 1325 CNE-C6F MPP 413
- NSF Sigonella NIOC GA-Detroit
- 4MAW MWSG47 PHIB CB 2 113
- NCHB 10 Fuel NMCB 25 DET 2625
- Sigonella EOC 4DB 14DC DET 4
- AP 1301 Surgemain Detroit
- NMORA 0192 OSU 1301
- USW OPS DET O 4MD 1/24
- MTOC SELF EMF GL ONE 2
- EUCOM JAC 0592 SIG 0192

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