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August 7, 2012

James W. Cheevers
HNSA Awards Committee Chairman
U.S. Naval Academy Museum
118 Maryland Ave.
Annapolis, MD 21402-5034

Dear Mr. Cheevers,

It is my great honor to nominate the volunteers of the Battleship New Jersey Amateur Radio Station (BNJARS), affectionately known as the "Radio Club", for the Historic Naval Ship Association's 2012 Maintenance/Preservation/Exhibition Award. The Radio Club has been instrumental in all three aspects of the spirit of the award, maintenance, preservation, and exhibition. The BNJARS began in January 2001 when a small group of Ham operators boarded the Battleship for a first hand look at what they could offer this new arrival to the Delaware River waterfront. What they found was a mass of cut wires, missing components, slots that once housed circuit boards, etc. Over a decade later, thanks to thousands of volunteer hours, many of the ship's once dead systems have been given new life by the BNJARS, adding "flavor" to each compartment guests visit making them feel as if the ship is still active and alive.

Much of the early restoration work completed by the BNJARS was done without the aid of technical manuals or drawings. This work included reactivation of the ship's 1MC public address system throughout the entire ship. Having the 1MC allows us to add wonderful interpretive aspects to the guest's experience by including the sound of the ship's watch bells, recorded announcements such as "Sweepers man your brooms", etc. In addition, they also reactivated the ship's original rotary dial phones. Both the 1MC and ship's phones provide a means for the staff and volunteers to communicate with one another and provide safety and security for our Docent guided tours as well as our general guests. The project the BNJARS completed that is probably most enjoyed by our Overnight Campers was the complete re-activation of the ship's television studio. Campers now get to use the fully operational cameras and control board and produce their own ship's news broadcasts.

One of the biggest contributions provided by the BNJARS occurred last year with the complete restoration and re-activation of the Mark 8 Range Keeper in Forward Plot. This analog mechanical computer is the centerpiece of the new Turret II Experience. During this new tour, thanks to the members of the BNJARS, guests will be able to input data into the Mark 8 Range Keeper to come up with a firing solution and then pull the trigger that fires the guns. The members of the BNJARS made it so that when the trigger is pulled a video shows the guns firing. In addition, the BNJARS also reactivated the salvo alarm, cease fire alarm, muzzle

velocity computer read out, and a score of other original equipment that will operate and add a sense of “reality” to this interactive tour.

Of course, one of the prime duties the BNJARS enjoys doing is operating the radio equipment and making contacts around the world. Since 2005 the BNJARS have sponsored the Museum Ships Weekend. During this weekend museum ships from around the world have activated the hobby of Amateur Radio from their decks in an effort to communicate with other museum ships and Amateur Radio operators far and near. This year’s Museum Ships Weekend included a total of 99 ships registered, representing 14 countries. The volunteers of the Battleship New Jersey Amateur Radio Station have earned the respect and admiration of the Battleship staff, our guests, and museums around the world, thus it is my honor to nominate them for the 2012 HNSA Maintenance/Preservation/Exhibition Award.

Sincerely,

Jason W. Hall
Vice President
Curatorial Affairs & Education